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Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, ir_choi@csl.edu

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BEYOND APPEARANCE: IRONY AND THE DEATH OF JESUS IN THE MATTHEAN
PASSION NARRATIVE (26:1–27:66)

A Dissertation Presented to the Faculty of
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Exegetical Theology
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

By
InHee Cho
July 2008

Approved by

Dr. Jeffrey A. Gibbs Advisor

Dr. A. R. Victor Raj Reader

Dr. Henry L. Rowold Reader

Fiat voluntas tua in terris sicut in coelis
This work is gratefully dedicated to my beloved mother

Why do the nations conspire and the people plot in vain? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One. "Let us break their chains, they say, and throw off their fetters." The One enthroned in heaven laughs, the Lord scoffs at them.

Psalm 2:1–4 (NIV)

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One who has run a marathon knows what it takes to complete a long-distance course of running. I can compare finishing this project to running a spiritual marathon over the years.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
<i>AsSeign</i>	<i>Assemblées du Seigneur</i>
<i>AsTJ</i>	<i>Asbury Theological Journal</i>
<i>ATR</i>	<i>Anglican Theological Review</i>
BAGD	Bauer, W., W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, and F. W. Danker. <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . 2d ed. Chicago, 1979
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum lovaniensium
BEvT	Beiträge zur evangelischen Theologie
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>Bijdr</i>	<i>Bijdragen: Tijdschrift voor filosofie en theologie</i>
<i>BJRL</i>	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester</i>
<i>BR</i>	<i>Biblical Research</i>
<i>BSac</i>	<i>Bibliotheca sacra</i>
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>ChrLit</i>	<i>Christianity and Literature</i>
<i>CJ</i>	<i>Classical Journal</i>
ConBNT	Coniectanea neotestamentica or Coniectanea biblica: New Testament Series
<i>CQ</i>	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
<i>CTM</i>	<i>Concordia Theological Monthly</i>
<i>CurTM</i>	<i>Currents in Theology and Mission</i>
<i>DRev</i>	<i>Downside Review</i>
<i>DunRev</i>	<i>Dunwoodie Review</i>

<i>Enc</i>	<i>Encounter</i>
<i>EstBib</i>	<i>Estudios bíblicos</i>
<i>ETL</i>	<i>Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses</i>
<i>ETR</i>	<i>Etudes théologiques et religieuses</i>
<i>EvT</i>	<i>Evangelische Theologie</i>
EWNT	Eternal word television network
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
GBS	Guides to Biblical Scholarship
<i>HBT</i>	<i>Horizons in Biblical Theology</i>
<i>HibJ</i>	<i>Hibbert Journal</i>
<i>IBS</i>	<i>Irish Biblical Studies</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>IDB</i>	<i>The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i> . Edited by G. A. Buttrick. 4 vols. Nashville, 1962.
<i>IJT</i>	<i>Indian Journal of Theology</i>
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>Imm</i>	<i>Immanuel</i>
<i>JAAR</i>	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JES</i>	<i>Journal of Ecumenical Studies</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JHI</i>	<i>Journal of the History of Ideas</i>
<i>JR</i>	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>

<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>List</i>	<i>Listening: Journal of Religion and Culture</i>
<i>Neot</i>	<i>Neotestamentica</i>
<i>NHL</i>	<i>Nag Hammadi Library in English</i> . Edited by J. M. Robinson. 4th rev. ed. Leiden, 1996
NIBCNT	New International Biblical Commentary on the New Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
<i>NRTh</i>	<i>La nouvelle revue théologique</i>
NTAbh	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>NTT</i>	<i>Norsk Teologisk Tidsskrift</i>
<i>PerTeol</i>	<i>Perspectiva teológica</i>
<i>PRSt</i>	<i>Perspectives in Religious Studies</i>
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
RechBib	Recherches bibliques
<i>RQ</i>	<i>Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte</i>
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series

SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
<i>Scr</i>	<i>Scripture</i>
SE	<i>Studia evangelica I, II, III</i> (= TU 73 [1959], 87 [1964], 88 [1964]. etc.)
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
TD	<i>Theology Digest</i>
TDNT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . Edited by G. Kittel and G. Friedrich. Translated by G. W. Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids, 1964–1976
TS	<i>Theological Studies</i>
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WW	<i>Word and World</i>
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>

ABSTRACT

Cho, InHee, "Beyond Appearance: Irony and the Death of Jesus in the Matthean Passion Narrative (26:1–27:66)." Ph.D. diss., Concordia Seminary, 2008. [294] pp.

If the Gospel of Matthew consists of a story about Jesus' life and ministry, the Matthean Passion Narrative (MPN) is not only the literary climax but also the goal of the entire narrative (26:1–27:66). Jesus has come to save his people from their sin and to give his life as a ransom for many (1:21; 20:28). He will accomplish this divinely-willed salvation through the innocent blood of the covenant (26:28; 27:4, 6, 19, 24). This central theme of the MPN is presented through the lens of irony. Among the literary features of the MPN, the author's rhetorical use of irony (*eirōneia*) has not yet received full scholarly appreciation. Therefore, the dissertation focuses on the MPN, and specifically on how irony contributes to the theological significance of Jesus' death.

Irony operates using the phenomenon of a dualistic story. The ironist carefully presents the two worlds of the story in dynamic juxtaposition. In contrast to the lower level of story which is inferior and false, the upper level of story is superior and true. There is more than meets the eye. This situation creates an irreconcilable incongruity between these two worlds—what appears to be vs. what really is—which produces the ultimate conflict. The greater the incompatibility of appearance and substance, the more critically revealing the irony that is present.

The MPN is the very seat of revelatory irony within the Gospel of Matthew because the ironic dimension of the MPN reaches its greatest depth in Jesus' death on the cross. The Son of God saves his people by shedding his righteous blood. There exists a profoundly inescapable contrast between the nature of Jesus, as the Lord and the Son of God, and the nature of the cross, known as slavish punishment and dejection (*supplicium servile*), which he bore. Therefore, irony is inherent in the nature of the cross which is not only incompatible with but also repellent to the innocent and profoundly majestic figure of Jesus Christ. In fact, irony becomes a way of looking into the heart of Christianity which not only feeds on the saving effect of the innocent blood of Jesus (26:28) but also proclaims it (26:13).

The single most important theme of the MPN is the idea that the saving will of God governs the MPN's irony. God wills to gather and save his people who are like lost sheep without a shepherd (9:36; 10:6; 15:24) and Jesus came to his people to reclaim them as their shepherd (18:12; 25:32f; 26:31, whose true identity simultaneously encompasses Christ the Lord, the King of the Jews, the Son of God and the Son of Man. God not only wills human salvation but also the way of its achievement. According to the MPN, the passion of Jesus is described as the cup (26:39) in association with the will of God (26:42, 53–56) which only the Son of God can "drink." Jesus essentially performs the will of God through his obedience that leads to his death on the cross.

Since the locus of divine salvation is the very locus of humiliation (*supplicium servile*), the most unlikely place for divine activity, the MPN demands of a reader an ironic view of the cross to perceive the salutary impacts of Jesus' death unfolded through it. In essence, the MPN's irony enables the reader to view Jesus' passion story as an act of divine reversal which dramatically effects human salvation.

CHAPTER ONE

IRONY AND THE MATTHEAN PASSION NARRATIVE

Focus of the Dissertation

This dissertation will explore the Matthean theological expositions of the death of Jesus through the lens of irony in the Matthean Passion Narrative (26:1–27:66).¹

Irony is a literary²-rhetorical device of the author³ by which he reveals *what is hidden* (a superior level of reality), a so-called “new perspective on the real world,”⁴ behind *what is seen* (an inferior level of appearance). The reading of irony must parse both of these dimensions of meaning. Irony simply defies one-dimensional reading and underlines the complexity of reality. The reader cannot perceive the deeper meaning of the ironic words, situations or character dynamics merely through a surface level of reading but only through a “delightful leap of intuition,”⁵ which is a result of persuasion based on the “implicit flattery”⁶ between the ironist,

¹ For the sake of simplicity, the dissertation will refer to “the Matthean Passion Narrative” with the abbreviation “MPN.”

² Ronald Tanaka, “The Concept of Irony,” *Journal of Literary Semantics* 2 (1973): 43 characterizes irony as a literary convention.

³ Wayne C. Booth, *A Rhetoric of Irony* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 6–7, 137, 193; David S. Kaufer, “Irony and Rhetorical Strategy,” *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 10 (1977): 90–110; Maurice Natanson, “The Arts of Indirection” in *Rhetoric, Philosophy and Literature* (ed. Don M. Burks; West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Press, 1978), 39–40; Gail O’ Day, “Narrative Mode and Theological Claim: A Study in the Fourth Gospel,” *JBL* 105 (1986): 663; Christopher W. Tindale and James Gough, “The Use of Irony in Argumentation,” *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 20 (1987): 10; Glenn S. Holland, *Divine Irony* (London: Associated University Presses, 2000), 15–16, 23–25.

⁴ Paul D. Duke, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1985), 37.

⁵ Booth, *Rhetoric*, 12.

⁶ Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978), 229. Also, Robert Fowler, *Loaves and Fishes: The Function of the Feeding Stories in the Gospel of*

the author, and his reader. As result, irony offers its reader a superior understanding through which he is able to perceive the distinction between the reality and its shadow.⁷

In the story world, it is the implied author himself⁸ who arranges the narrative in an ironic fashion. The implied author is the ironist employing irony within his narrative in an omniscient manner, and he intends his reader to detect his literary technique. He demands that the implied reader of the narrative, in other words, an ironically capable reader, carefully follows the textual information strategically provided through a purposeful choice of words, an intentional arrangement of the story, a revealing characterization and a use of rhetorical devices so that the reader may arrive at an “ideal” understanding of the story’s reality that the author tries to convey.

Applying this understanding of irony to the MPN points to the implied author of the Gospel of Matthew as the ironist shaping the narrative. He adopts the divine perspective⁹ which governs the death of Jesus and molds his story with a view toward communicating the ironic significance of Jesus’ death to the reader. The MPN, the story of Jesus’ passion,¹⁰ is the Gospel’s most pregnant unit of irony. The salvific message of Matthew, in which a rejected, crucified Messiah saves his people and the Gentiles, is ironic by its nature since so few who witness the act of

Mark (SBLDS no. 54; Chico, Ca.: Scholars, 1981), 161 calls it as “winks at the reader.”

⁷ Mark Allan Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 31.

⁸ Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 66–77 for the first time coins the term “the implied author” and defines it as one who is constructed by the reader from the narrative. Since the dissertation adopts the principles of narrative criticism for the reading of the MPN’s irony, further discussions regarding narrative criticism and its components including the implied author and the implied reader will be examined in “Methodology of the Dissertation” of Chapter One.

⁹ Jack Dean Kingsbury, “The Figure of Jesus in Matthew’s Story: A Literary-Critical Probe,” *JSNT* 21 (1984), 4–7 notes that the implied authors of the Gospels have made God’s evaluative point of view normative for their works because what God thinks is true and right.

¹⁰ The gospel of Matthew is a story about Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection. Kingsbury, *Matthew As Story* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 1–44 and Powell, “Toward a Narrative-Critical Understanding of Matthew,” *Int* 46 (1992): 341 convincingly define the primary nature of Matthew as a story of Jesus.

salvation realize what is actually happening.¹¹ More specifically, David Rhoads and Donald Michie write that irony is rooted in the theme of the death of Jesus by recapitulating the idea that God saves and rules in ways that people do not expect.¹² Under the same observation, David B. Howell suggests that the passion account displays the evangelist's frequent use of irony,¹³ and Mark Alan Powell specifically points out that the MPN is told with tremendous irony.¹⁴ Since the ironic dimension of the MPN reaches its highest level of intensity in Jesus' death on the cross—the goal of the life and ministry of Jesus, the MPN is considered not only the literary climax but also the very seat of revelatory irony where the divinely-willed salvation is disclosed through means of irony and its enduring reversal effect.¹⁵

Irony, known and favored by intellects from different social classes, including the ancient dramatists, philosophers, and rhetoricians,¹⁶ is not an easy tool to employ for explicating the meaning of Jesus' death portrayed in the MPN without proper limit. In addition to its old and complex history, contemporary understandings of irony not only abound but also often produce different results than the traditional renderings of irony. As Chapter Two of the dissertation will show, this diversity can yield great confusion as critics search out the meaning and ramifications of particular instances of irony. Nevertheless, observations of both literary and biblical sources

¹¹ David M. Rhoads and Donald M. Michie, *Mark As Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 60; R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 169–75; Powell, *Narrative*, 31.

¹² Rhoads and Michie, *Mark*, 60.

¹³ David B. Howell, *Matthew's Inclusive Story: A Study in the Narrative Rhetoric of the First Gospel* (England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), 150.

¹⁴ Powell, *Narrative*, 49.

¹⁵ Garnett G. Sedgewick, *Of Irony: Especially in the Drama* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1935), 59 considers based on Aristotle's theory of tragedy, *Poetica*, XI that irony implies the principle of reversal of fortune.

¹⁶ Sedgewick, *ibid.*, 5 notes that irony as a literary, yet persuasive strategy is the most powerful weapon of the orator, nearly the whole panoply of the satirist.

argue for a consistent tradition of what this dissertation groups together as “conventional irony”¹⁷—a combination of verbal, dramatic, and character ironies. Under this premise, the dissertation will narrow the scope of its investigation of irony so that it only attends to these three types of irony through which the ironist of Matthew’s Gospel effectively presents and interprets the true nature and the meaning of Jesus’ death.

Accordingly, the dissertation anticipates specific outcomes revealing the significance of Jesus’ death as it relates to four themes—the Christology of the MPN: the identity of Jesus, the MPN’s governing norm: the saving will of God, the soteriology of the MPN: universal salvation, the heart of the divine reversal, and the divine victory in the MPN: the result of the cosmic clash of the Christ-event.

First, the MPN’s ironic portrait of Jesus’ death emphatically answers the question of who Jesus is. Matthew posits the greatest cause of conflict as this issue of Jesus’ identity, which builds throughout the Gospel. The ironist of the MPN presents Jesus as the King of Israel, the Christ (the Messianic Savior), and the Son of God, by means of irony, so that he turns the emphatic “no” spoken by the opponents of Jesus regarding his true identity into an irrefutable “yes” regarding the accurate view of Jesus.

Second, the MPN’s irony reveals the will of God (τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ) as the governing norm of Jesus’ death and connects the teaching about the true discipleship to this norm. Matthew constantly stresses this theme throughout the narrative and considers that it is fully accomplished in Jesus’ death. Jesus drinks “the cup (τὸ ποτήριον, 26:39),” which is a symbolic description of the will of God (τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ), and thus fulfills his father’s will through his obedience. As Jesus, the Son of God, carried out the will of God, his disciples likewise are called to bear their

¹⁷ The dissertation will present “conventional irony” in detail with each category’s definition and respective

own cross (10:3–39), the token of submission. Irony reveals bearing one’s cross and following after Jesus in this path as the most desirable pattern for true discipleship, despite the persecution and even “passion” awaiting them (10:24–25).

Third, the ironist of the MPN especially dedicates himself to revealing the message of “universal salvation,” that salvation proffered through the death of Jesus is for both Israel and Gentiles alike. In this regard 27:24–25 serves as the most ironically intensified moment within the entire Gospel of Matthew. In this way, irony is in the very nature of the soteriology of Matthew. It reveals that there is no scandal of sin that cannot be overcome by the salvation secured through the death of Jesus.

Lastly, the reading of the MPN’s irony presents the death of Jesus as the ultimate cosmic clash between God and Satan. The cross of Jesus is the place where the ultimate victory of God over Satan shines through. Indeed, Satan’s activity ironically contributes to what is intended by God’s divine will to be salvation through the death of Jesus on the cross. The dissertation will sometimes call this the “divinely willed salvation.” Even though the heat of opposition and the ferocity of violence imposed on Jesus seem to be victorious, the MPN’s ironic portrayal of the cosmic clash shows assuredly that in this conflict, Satan is in reality no match for God.

Purpose of the Dissertation

The goal of the dissertation is to show how the MPN’s conventional irony is the effective rhetorical device¹⁸ through which the theological significance of Jesus’ death is unveiled. To achieve this specific purpose, the dissertation must take some time to explain irony as a useful rhetorical device for persuasive communication, the author of the MPN as the divine ironist who

examples in Chapter Three.

¹⁸ Peter L. Hagen, “The Rhetorical Effectiveness of Verbal Irony” (Ph. D. diss., Pennsylvania State University, 1992), 8 writes that “from a rhetorical point of view, irony is among the most effective and widespread ways to

conveys the meaning of divinely-willed salvation, and the previously unanswered need for a close examination of the MPN's irony, a need as yet not met in the current biblical scholarship.

The message of the cross is not only the climax of Jesus' earthly ministry but also the goal of his life. The MPN's author delivers this core message of the Gospel by employing irony. Diverse rhetorical figures,¹⁹ more commonly called figures of speech, were well-known to ancient writers, including biblical authors who shared the common rhetorical-cultural milieu. The classic treatment which has been done on this topic is the work of the Roman rhetorician Quintilian (ca. 35 A.D.–ca. 100 A.D.), *Institutio oratoria* on which modern classifications and analyses are based. According to him, a figure of speech is a word or phrase that diverges from straightforward, literal expression.²⁰ It is crafted for emphasis, clarity or creative conveyance of meaning. Further, Quintilian has divided figures of speech into two main categories: tropes (from the Greek verb, τροπῶ, make to turn) and schemes (from the Greek noun, τό σχῆμα, form, shape, figure).²¹ Tropes and schemes are collectively known as a figure of speech “in which the actual intent is expressed in words which carry the opposite meaning.”²² The former operates through changing or modifying the general meaning of a term to provide ornament to meaning,²³

accomplish some purpose.”

¹⁹ Rhetorical figures include allegory, hyperbole, litotes, metaphor, oxymoron, pun, rhetorical question, simile, synecdoche etc.

²⁰ Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* 9.1.2, “the last book having spoken of tropes, there now follows the topic of figures . . . it should be admitted that both are seen also in Figures. They also have the same use, for they add force to the subject and provide elegance (*cum sit proximo libro de tropis dictum, sequitur pertinens ad figures . . . fatendum erit esse utrumque eorum etiam in figures. Usus quoque est idem: nam et vim rebus adiciunt et gratiam praestant*).” Translation is mine.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 8.5.35, 9.1.1.

²² William Flint Thrall and Addison Hibbard, *A Handbook to Literature* (rev. C. H. Holman; N.Y.: Odyssey, 1960), 248.

²³ Quintilian, *Inst.*, 8.6.1, 9.1.4, “a trope is a shift of a word or phrase from its meaning to another with a positive stroke . . . A trope, then, is language transferred from its original and principal meaning to another for the sake of embellishment of speech (*tropos est verbi vel sermonis a propria significatione in aliam cum virtute mutation . . . Est igitur tropos sermo a naturali et principali significatione tralatus ad aliam ornandae orationis gratia*).”

while the latter involves a deviation from the ordinary or regular pattern of words.²⁴ Based on Quintilian's theory, irony is uniquely not only a trope (*tropos*) but also a figure (*schema* or *figura*).²⁵ It belongs to the category of tropes because it uses words in a way that conveys a meaning opposite to their ordinary and expected significance.²⁶ It is a figure as well because irony represents the complexity of the whole passage and concerns the total shape of the theme.²⁷

Rhetoric is the art of speaking or writing effectively. Aristotle (384–322 B.C.) serves as an authoritative figure for the development of rhetoric, not only in his own time, but also in subsequent generations of scholarship. He explains in his book, *Rhetorica*,²⁸ that this art concerns itself with “proofs (αἱ πίστεις)” for persuasion.²⁹ In essence, rhetoric is the art of persuasion.³⁰ Under this generic understanding of rhetoric, it is clear that irony is a means of persuasion, which aims at effective communication, and not least in biblical literature.³¹ Moreover, Wayne C. Booth, a prominent student of irony in modern times, extensively expresses a special interest in the rhetorical use of irony in literature. Though he acknowledges irony as an elusive subject to

²⁴ Ibid., 9.1.4, “a figure, as its very name reveals, is a configuration of a certain speech distinct from the common and immediately obvious form (*figura, sicut nomine ipso patet, conformation quaedam orationis remota a communi et primum se offerente ratione*).”

²⁵ Ibid., 9.1.7.

²⁶ David Holdcroft, “Irony as a Trope and Irony as Discourse,” *Poetics Today* 4 (1983): 493–511 investigates irony as a trope based on Austin's theory of speech acts.

²⁷ Quintilian, *Inst.*, 9.2.46.

²⁸ Aristotle's *Rhetorica* (Ἡ Τέχνη Ῥητορική), transliterated as *Ars Rhetorica*, is the fifth century (B.C.) treatise on the art of persuasion.

²⁹ Aristotle, *Rhet.*, I.ii.2, “rhetoric is the power of discovering all the persuasive elements in a speech (ἔστω δὴ ῥητορικὴ δύναμις περὶ ἕκαστον τοῦ θεωρησῆσαι τὸ ἐνδεχόμενον πιθανόν).”

³⁰ Kenneth Burke, *Language as Symbolic Action* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 28 makes a helpful distinction between rhetoric and poetic saying “poetics is but one of the four primary linguistic dimensions . . . rhetoric, the hortatory use of language, to induce cooperation by persuasion and discussion.”

³¹ Aida Besançon Spencer, Gail O'Day, Jerry C. Hoggatt, Glenn S. Holland, and Walter Brueggemann consider irony as a useful rhetorical tool used in Scripture. See Spencer, “The Wise Fool (and the Foolish Wise): A Study of Irony in Paul,” *NovT* 23 (1981): 351; O'Day, “Narrative Mode,” 663; Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel: Text and Subtext* (Cambridge, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 57–89; Holland, *Divine Irony*, 15–16, 23–25; Brueggemann, *Solomon: Israel's Ironic Icon of Human Achievement* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of

define, he values most the rhetorical function of irony because he considers the prime function of irony is uniting or dividing authors and readers.³² That irony is a means of communication comports well with the understanding of irony as a literary strategy of the implied author of a narrative.

Furthermore, irony has been frequently used to characterize the relationship between the infinite and the finite. Irony is a staple ingredient in ancient stories of divine dealings with human beings. Man as *Homo Religiosus*³³ (man as a religious being) appreciates the idea of a being(s) superior to himself. Mercea Eliade, following Rudolf Otto, terms the divine or the sacred as *the Holy* or *the Wholly Other* (*ganz andere*)³⁴ who breaks into human experience. *Homo Religiosus* takes this revelation as the object of his religious inquiry. The religious appreciation of *the sacred* means not only recognition but also subjection. The different realities of God and man possibly signal two discrete worlds to which each respectively belongs. The relationship of these two worlds of God and man is not necessarily one of hostility but destined be one of a hierarchical order in which man's world and its perspective should be subject to the divine world and its governing perspective. Ancient literature testifies to divine dealings with humanity³⁵ and attests that the economy of divine justice often points to a discrepancy between the ways in which the gods and human beings perceive reality. In a similar way, the Scriptures identify essentially different operational principles of the two entities, God and man, and thus the ironic dynamics produced by their interactions. For example, the author of the Gospel of John employs

South Carolina Press, 2005), xii.

³² Booth, *Rhetoric*, ix, 204–05, 217.

³³ Mercea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: the Nature of Religion* (N.Y.: Harcourt, Brace, 1959), 18.

³⁴ Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-Traditional Factor in the Idea of the Divine and its Relation to the Rational* (trans. John W. Harvey; N.Y., London: Oxford University Press, 1950), 25–30.

³⁵ For example, the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, the Greek tragedies, and the prophetic literatures among various religions can represent this type of literature.

an adverb, “ἄνωθεν (from above)” to express the distance between the divine value and the human value. The author explains that all the misconceptions and the oppositions against Jesus protagonist, the sole carrier of the divine reality, are due to the fundamental difference of the origin between Jesus, whose reality is from “above,” and humanity, whose being is anchored “below.” The uniquely Johannine phrase, “you must be born from above (δεῖ ὑμᾶς γεννηθῆναι ἄνωθεν, John 3:7)” corresponds to the idea that the believer is none other than the one who adopts the divine perspective revealed through Jesus so that he may “see the Kingdom of God (ἰδεῖν τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ, John 3:3b).”

In ancient narratives, irony is a tool for communicating the divine. It is a revelatory language.³⁶ Holland makes this contribution to the exploration of the religious use of irony:

The language that scholars use to describe the ironic perspective is filled with terminology that applies equally well to the divine perspective: it is detached, it is superior, it sees things from above, it reveals the true meaning of things, it sees the present in the light of knowledge about the future.³⁷

If irony is a medium for an ironist to reveal the divine cause, this type of irony may indeed be called a divine irony and the one who communicates such irony may be called a divine ironist. Holland further employs the term “Augustan irony” to name a divine irony.³⁸ The ironist of “Augustan irony” accepts divine judgments and perspectives, the causes which create irony, and exhibits the godly control over them.

The history of divine ironists is observed within biblical material. James G. Williams³⁹ notes that the prophets of Israel stand between God and his people as intercessors. He believes

³⁶ O’Day, *Revelation in the Fourth Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 31 notes irony as “a mode of revelatory language.”

³⁷ Holland, *Divine Irony*, 60.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 54.

³⁹ James G. Williams, “Irony and Lament: Clues to Prophetic Consciousness,” *Semeia* 8 (1977): 51–71.

that God experiences the *pathos* of the contradiction between his people as they are and as he intends them to be. His people always fall short of the expectation of their calling and this is why God suffers such *pathos*. According to Williams, the prophets then adopt the same divine *pathos* in their message. The prophets are privileged in the sense that they share the divine perspective, yet they also suffer because of the disequilibrium of their generation deviating from the will of God. Williams concludes that the prophets use irony along with lament as the channels through which God communicates divine affection toward his people, and therefore the prophets are the divine ironists.⁴⁰

Likewise, in the tradition of ancient philosophy, the watershed figure, Socrates, assumed a similar role as divine ironist through his action in response to a Delphic oracle regarding his wisdom. According to Plato's *Apologia* (Apology of Socrates),⁴¹ the core of Socrates' defense at his Athenian trial is the service he has undertaken on behalf of the gods. Socrates says to the jurors (*iudices*) that his friend, Chaerophon, had asked the oracle if there were anyone wiser than Socrates, and in return Chaerophon received an answer saying "no one is wiser." Socrates says that this Delphic oracle set him on a path of divine service. Socrates interprets the Delphic oracle's praise as signifying that he is wiser than anybody because he knows that being free of pretension to wisdom is wisdom. In fact, his mission comprises of freeing men from their pretense of wisdom⁴² and exhorting them to care for its actual attainment and for the perfection of their souls.⁴³ Further, he encourages men to avoid the bondage of their concern for

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Plato, *Apologia*, 20e–21a.

⁴² Ibid., 23b, e, 28e, 38a.

⁴³ Ibid., 29e.

possessions⁴⁴ and urges them to acquire the most precious good: virtue (*virtus*).⁴⁵ In his performance of this divinely-inspired mission, Socrates was perceived by the Athenians as speaking, questioning, and acting ironically, especially through his pretension of ignorance.

As we have seen through the cases of the prophets of Israel and Socrates, divine ironists are those who adopt the divine perspective and undertake its delivery to the public as their mission. In the same way, the MPN's implied author, who is defined by the reference of the narrative and its voice, takes on the identity of a divine ironist. His perspective on Jesus' death and its theological implication is coherent with the narrative's perspective on the centrality of the cross to the divine plan of salvation. The divine ironist of the MPN arranges the words, the events, and the characters of antagonism to reveal how these seemingly tragic happenings eventually and necessarily achieve God's salvific plan for His people because salvation of man is the foremost will of God which Jesus accomplishes.

Prior to modern biblical scholars' critical engagement of irony in the canon, literary critics had developed a tremendous volume of works that illuminate the history, definition, form, and use of irony in ancient and modern literature.⁴⁶ Their thorough body of work ranges chronologically from ancient Greek dramas, including the Trilogists of tragedy,⁴⁷ via Socrates

⁴⁴ Ibid., 29e–30a.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 30a, 31b.

⁴⁶ Several founding scholars and their works in this area of study are Otto Ribbeck, "Über den Begriff des eirōn," *Rheinisches Museum* 31 (1876): 381–400; J. A. K. Thomson, *Irony: An Historical Introduction* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1926); Sedgewick, *Of Irony*; David Worcester, *The Art of Satire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1940); Alan R. Thompson, *The Dry Mock: A Study of Irony in Drama* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1948); Robert B. Sharpe, *Irony in the Drama: An Essay on Impersonation, Shock, and Catharsis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959); Edwin M. Good, *Irony in the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: The Westminster, 1965); Douglas Colin Muecke, *The Compass of Irony* (London: Methuen, 1969); John Connop Thirlwall, "On the Irony of Sophocles" (*Philological Museum* 2; repr., Geneva, N.Y.: Hobart & William Smith Colleges, 1973), 483–537; Booth, *Rhetoric*; Søren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Irony with Continual Reference to Socrates* (ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong; Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1989).

⁴⁷ Aeschylus (525 B.C.–456 B.C.), Sophocles (495 B.C.–406 B.C.), and Euripides (480 B.C.–406 B.C.).

(470 B.C.–399 B.C.), to modern German Romantic irony and American New Criticism as well as geographically from Europe to North America. Although the large quantity and excellent quality of this scholarship concerning irony serves as a strong basis for a critical reading of the MPN's irony, its excessively elaborate categorizations of irony, both in its definition and classification, make the interpretation of irony rather difficult. Even though this body of information and a well-developed interest in irony will function as a springboard for this study, discerning use of the materials at hand is therefore necessary.

In contrast to the exhaustive study of irony achieved by its general critics, the expositions of irony within biblical scholarship have been on a much smaller scale, although the fundamental hermeneutical shift occurring since 1970s has brought with it growing interest in irony.⁴⁸ By the early 1970s, literary critics had begun a new era of studying the New Testament as “literature.” Under this initiative, biblical scholars such as Norman R. Petersen, David Rhoads, Don Michie, R. Alan Culpepper, Jack D. Kingsbury and Robert C. Tannehill engaged in reading the Gospels with a literary-narrative approach.⁴⁹ Through the efforts of these biblical scholars, the Gospels began to be read as stories of Jesus, and the literary features of the Gospels such as plot, character, setting, perspective and other techniques of the implied author came under consideration. Hoggatt points out that since the 1970s irony has come to be considered a literary phenomenon worthy of exploration in its own right.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Hans W. Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1974) documented all the major limitations of the mode that had dominated biblical studies for more than a century, the historical-critical method, and pointed out the shift in hermeneutics.

⁴⁹ Norman R. Petersen, “Point of View in Mark’s Narrative,” *Semeia* 12 (1978): 97–121; Petersen, *Literary Criticism for New Testament Critics*. GBS (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978); Rhoads and Michie, *Mark*; David M. Rhoads, “Narrative Criticism and the Gospel of Mark,” *JAAR* 50 (1982): 411–34; Kingsbury, *The Christology of Mark’s Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983); Culpepper, *Anatomy*; Kingsbury, *Matthew As Story*; Robert Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke—Acts: A Literary Interpretation* (2 vols.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986, 1990).

⁵⁰ Hoggatt, *Irony*, ix.

However, the need for pursuing the study of irony within the Gospel of Matthew, specifically the MPN, anticipates filling the void because irony in the MPN, as well as in the Gospel of Matthew as a whole, has not been taken up as an independent subject by any New Testament scholar in a fashion comparable with that of other parts of the canon: the other Gospels, the Pauline epistles, and the Old Testament.⁵¹ Despite the fact that irony is used as a rhetorical device by the implied author of Matthew no significant attention has been given to the use of irony within Matthew's narrative. At best, one can find rather scattered comments on the ironic utterances, situations, and characters related to parts of Matthew.⁵² In this regard, Dorothy J. Weaver rightly concludes that "I have not succeeded in locating any major studies, whether essays or monographs, which deal with Matthew's use of irony as a literary technique."⁵³

Partial exceptions to this state of affairs include contributions by Harry Boonstra,⁵⁴ Donald Senior,⁵⁵ Mark Alan Powell,⁵⁶ Robert H. Smith,⁵⁷ Timothy B. Cargal,⁵⁸ John Paul Heil,⁵⁹ Dorothy

⁵¹ Stanley Hopper, "Irony—the Pathos of the Middle," *Cross Currents* 12 (1962): 31–40; Good, *Irony*; Jacob Jónsson, *Humor and Irony in the New Testament Illuminated by Parallels in Talmud and Midrash* (Reykjavik: Bókaútgáfa Menningarsjóts, 1965); M. Perry and M. Sternberg, "The King through Ironic Eyes: The Narrator's Devices in the Biblical Story of David and Bathsheba and Two Excurses on the Theory of the Narrative Text," *Hasifrut* 1 (1968): 263–92; M. H. Levine, "Irony and Morality in Bathsheba's Tragedy," *Journal of the Central Conference of American Rabbis* 22 (1975): 69–77; Williams, "Irony and Lament"; S. Bar-Efrat, *The Art of the Biblical Story* (Tel Aviv: Sifriat Hapoalim, 1979); Jerry H. Gill, "Jesus, Irony and the New Quest," *Enc* 41 (1980): 139–51; Adele Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative* (Sheffield: Almond, 1983); Duke, *Irony*; Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (N.Y.: Basic Books, 1981); Spencer, "The Wise Fool"; James M. Dawsey, *The Lukan Voice: Confusion and Irony in the Gospel of Luke* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1986); Hoggatt, *Irony*; Brueggemann, *Solomon*. Some of these works will be drawn on when the dissertation lays out each of the "conventional ironies" in Chapter Three.

⁵² David R. Catchpole, "The Answer of Jesus to Caiaphas (MATT. XXVI. 64)," *NTS* 17 (1970): 213–26; Birger Gerhardsson, "Confession and Denial before Men: Observations on Matt 26:57–27:2," *JSNT* 13 (1981): 46–66; Richard A. Edwards, *Matthew's Story of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985); David Hill, "Matthew 27:51–53 in the Theology of the Evangelist," *IBS* 7 (1985): 76–87; Timothy B. Cargal, "'His Blood Be upon Us and upon Our Children': A Matthean Double Entendre?" *NTS* 37 (1991): 101–12; Dorothy J. Weaver, "Power and Powerlessness: Matthew's Use of Irony in the Portrayal of Political Leaders," *SBL* 31 (1992): 454–66; Kirk Kilpatrick, *Beautiful Irony, Matthew 21:1–14* (Germantown, Tenn.: Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, 1996).

⁵³ Weaver, "Power and Powerlessness," 454.

⁵⁴ Harry Boonstra, "Satire in Matthew," *ChrLit* 29 (1980): 32–45.

⁵⁵ Donald Senior, *The Passion of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew* (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1985).

⁵⁶ Powell, *Narrative*, 27–32.

Jean Weaver,⁶⁰ and Warren Carter⁶¹ relative to the role of irony within the MPN and Matthew. Most of them are done on a minor scale with an emphasis on a specific passage or theme of the Gospel of Matthew. Senior points out that there is a special use of irony in the activity of Judas and the Jewish religious leaders in the MPN, which reveals the fact that they unwittingly assist in achieving the divine goal, namely the death of Jesus.⁶² Their violence and ignorance create the overarching event in which God manifests his triumph through ironic reversal. In his book, *What is Narrative Criticism?* Powell attests to irony as a rhetorical device employed by the Gospel writers which can be detected through a narrative-critical reading. In his analysis of the conflict in the MPN, he briefly addresses the “great irony of Matthew’s Gospel” that Jesus must “lose” his conflicts with the religious leaders and with his own disciples to win the greater conflict with Satan.⁶³

The works of Smith, Cargal, and Heil all deal with a common theme: the innocent blood of Jesus and its salvific function, which is ironically exposed through one of the most troubling statements of the New Testament⁶⁴ and the darkest, hardest verse in Matthew’s Gospel, 27: 25.⁶⁵ The insights of these scholars on the blood of Jesus are rather brief and fragmentary, not necessarily reading it within the entire context of Matthew or the MPN. Smith compares the

⁵⁷ Robert H. Smith, “The Hardest Verse in Mathew’s Gospel,” *CurTM* 17 (1990): 421–28.

⁵⁸ Cargal, “His Blood,” 101–12.

⁵⁹ John Paul Heil, “The Blood of Jesus in Matthew: A Narrative–Critical Perspective,” *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 18 (1991): 117–24.

⁶⁰ Weaver, “Power and Powerlessness,” 454–66.

⁶¹ Warren Carter, *Matthew and Empire: Initial Explorations* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2001), 51, 171.

⁶² Senior, *Passion*, 104–06.

⁶³ Powell, *Narrative*, 48.

⁶⁴ Cargal, “His Blood,” 101.

⁶⁵ Smith, “The Hardest Verse,” 421.

blood of Jesus to the blood of Abel and gives it “voice”⁶⁶ as if Abel’s blood cried out to God in accomplishing the meaning of his name (1:21–23). Both Cargal and Heil consider that this troubling verse challenges the reader to reevaluate the traditional views regarding “the intent of Matthew” in reporting the cry of the people⁶⁷ because they notice that the Matthean portrayal of the people’s rejection of Jesus is subtler in its intended meaning than it seems on surface. Yet, though they notice the complex, subtle, and important nature of the verse in defining one of the neglected Matthean themes, neither of them fully or systematically describes how this verse works ironically.

Focusing on the character depiction of the Gospel of Matthew, Weaver undertakes a focused work on the character dynamics of irony. She examines the use of irony in the characterization of the Gospels’ political figures—Herod the King (2:1–23), Herod the Tetrarch (14:1–12), and Pilate the governor (chapter 27)—and paints the virtual powerlessness of political leaders as one character group *vis-à-vis* the genuine powerfulness of Jesus, the protagonist.⁶⁸ Taking a somewhat different turn, Carter argues in his book, *Matthew and Empire*, that the Gospel protests Roman imperialism by asserting that God’s purposes and will are performed not by the empire and emperor but by Jesus and his community of disciples. Carter establishes Matthew’s imperial context by examining Roman imperial ideology through materials present in Antioch, which Carter believes to be the provenance for Matthew. He pays particular attention to

⁶⁶ Ibid., 428.

⁶⁷ Cargal, “His Blood,” 111; Heil, “The Blood of Jesus,” 117–18.

⁶⁸ Weaver, “Power and Powerlessness,” 466 concludes the Matthean use of irony in its portrayal of the characters with the statement that “Matthew invites his readers to join him on the higher ground from which he and they together can view the impotence of all human power in the political arena *vis-à-vis* the genuine potency of divine initiative.”

what he perceives as the Gospel's central irony, namely that in depicting God's ways and purposes, the Gospel employs the very imperial framework that it resists.⁶⁹

In proportion to the scarcity of literary-critical work written concerning the irony of Matthew as a whole, a literary-critical investigation of the MPN's irony as the author's rhetorical device fortifying the meaning of the death of Jesus is likewise scarce. However, despite this relative scarcity of critical work concerning the irony of Matthew and its MPN, the narrative-critical reading of Matthew prioritizing textual referentiality points to the potential existence of irony woven therein. In addition to this, the extensive sources for the study of irony provided by both the literary critics in general and the biblical scholars in the other literatures mentioned above give helpful examples which can guide the study of irony in the Gospel of Matthew, especially its thematically and dramatically climatic scene, the MPN. Therefore, this dissertation intends to contribute to this study by giving attention to the way that irony contributes to the MPN's theological explication of the death of Jesus.

Methodology of the Dissertation

This dissertation pursues the study of the MPN's irony by taking several essential steps which each chapter hereafter will describe with care. After briefly describing the outlines of the chapters, the key operative principles espoused by narrative criticism and Booth's "stable irony" will be discussed accordingly. In a nutshell, the MPN's theological implications on the meaning of Jesus' death conveyed through the lens of conventional irony will be expounded through a narrative-critical reading, which is a textual-based reading.

⁶⁹ Carter, *Matthew and Empire*, 51, 171.

Chapter Layouts

Building upon the previous explanations regarding the focus and the purpose of the dissertation, Chapter Two will present a general overview of irony in two *foci*: one, the history of irony with a suggestion of a working definition of irony, and two, the formal requirements of irony. The first part will summarize the history of irony as substantially brief as possible. It will not only analyze but also synthesize by putting forth an effort to show the unique argument made by each main critic of irony as well as an inevitable connection between these prime critics' observations on irony. As a transition, the concept of medieval and Renaissance irony will be described in brief because it shows the fundamental discrepancy regarding the understanding of irony between the ancient mind, whose conception of irony arises from which is centered in the belief of the divine, the infinite, and the holy, and the modern mind whose concept of irony is rooted in human perception of the humane, the finite, and the intellectual.⁷⁰ The discussion of irony in the modern times will attend to its noticeable growth and diverse ramifications due to the change within Western European philosophical trends and the critics' autonomy in dealing with the subject. The dissertation will not intend to exhaust the history of irony but only take on the minimum to provide the reader with some larger understanding of irony.

The second part of Chapter Two will review the formal elements of irony. In some sense, it seems that defining irony precisely is an impossible task. On the other hand, identifying what generally constitutes irony is realistic, moreover, identifying the formal requirements of irony can offer the interpretative guideposts for the reader of a narrative which operates through irony.

⁷⁰ In addition, the essential feature of the postmodern irony is a form of intense self-consciousness, that is a knowing, cynical mistrust of institutions and common truths. It seems that the postmodern ironist has a twisted sense of humor, based on the conviction that everything is derivative.

The discussion of the formal elements of irony is necessary for the sake of the efficient reading of it in the MPN.

In Chapter Three, each form and use of conventional ironies, which are chosen from the pool of ironies as the immediate interests of the dissertation, will be reviewed. The dissertation will define and explore individually verbal, dramatic and character irony⁷¹ by observing select examples pertaining to each category within ancient literature as well as within the Scriptures. If the Greco-Roman world has employed irony of antiquity within its literary boundaries and according to its conventions, the same is true of the Biblical pool of authors. To accomplish this task, the dissertation will provide some particular examples of irony in both Greek and Latin dramas, including comedy and tragedy, biblical narratives, and in the tradition around Socrates, who is regarded as the founder of irony (*eirōneia*). The selected Greek and Latin dramas are the *Nubes* by Aristophanes (c. 446 B.C.–c. 388 B.C.), the *Oedipus Rex* by Sophocles (495 B.C.–406 B.C.), the *Bacchae* by Euripides (ca. 480 B.C.–406 B.C.), and the *Metamorphoses* by Apuleius (c. A.D. 123–c. 180 A.D.). The main reason for examining these ancient sources is that they illustrate the classical examples and rhetorical models of conventional irony within literature. These sources are selected only to strengthen the understanding of irony in the dissertation. They will not receive a full comparative study, but will help the reader to acquire a skill for detecting conventional irony and a deeper familiarity with its definitions, characteristics, and functions so that he can properly decipher conventional irony within a given literary context.

Based on the critical information about irony provided by the earlier chapters, Chapter Four will launch a sequential narrative-critical reading of the MPN's irony. The concluding Chapter Five will synthesize the data to present the characteristic Matthean theological interpretation on

⁷¹ The dissertation groups these three verbal, dramatic, and character ironies as “conventional irony.”

the death of Jesus communicated through the conventional irony of the MPN in four categories⁷² as we have already summarized at the end of “Focus of the Dissertation.”

The first half of Chapter Four will define the limits of the literary unit of the MPN (26:1–27:66). The last half will explicate the MPN’s conventional irony by reading the MPN sequentially through the stance of a narrative-critical reading. Instead of lining up cases of irony under each category of conventional irony, the dissertation will expose their occurrences according to the chapter of the MPN in which it is found. In this way, the dissertation will avoid dealing with the MPN fragmentarily. Also, it will be observed that not every case of conventional irony in the MPN belongs to only one category. The ironist of the MPN interweaves his irony for the rhetorical purpose of communication. In fact, the MPN’s conventional irony is rather complex, so that the reader may detect combinations of irony, such as an instance of verbal irony with situational irony, a moment of situational irony in an example of character irony, an occurrence of character irony with a case of verbal irony, or in some cases, all in one.

Adopted Principles from Narrative Criticism

To observe the literary-rhetorical use of conventional irony within the MPN, the dissertation adopts some of the principles espoused by narrative criticism, and also makes use of Booth’s category of “stable irony.” First, the dissertation will draw upon several basic assumptions established by narrative criticism⁷³: the presence of the implied author and the implied reader, coherence of the narrative as a whole story and the authority of the text (i.e.

⁷² The four categories are the Christology of the MPN (the identity of Jesus), the MPN’s governing norm (the will of God affecting Jesus’ life and ministry to reach its meaningful fulfillment in his death), the Soteriology of the MPN (universal salvation, the heart of the divine reversal), and the divine victory in the MPN (the result of the cosmic clash of the Christ-event).

⁷³ Narrative criticism pays attention to the categories of narrative rhetoric, character, point of view and plot

governing point of view of the text), and the rhetorical-persuasive function of the narrative, in other words, the poetic function of the text with a focus on irony as a rhetorical device of the implied author.

Narrative criticism seeks to read the MPN's irony as intended by its implied author. Yet, the implied author is not identical with the real author of the text. He is a reconstruction of the reader informed and guided by the text itself.⁷⁴ All narratives have an implied author, even if the historical author is unknown.⁷⁵ The implied author is the important component of the story because he, or more correctly the narrator's voice,⁷⁶ represents⁷⁷ the perspective or the evaluating point of view⁷⁸ from which the story is told.

The manifestation of the implied author is the narrator whose distinctive voice allows the reader to perceive not only the existence of the implied author, but also his ideas and values. The close connection between the implied author and the narrator rests on the fact that the former must use a voice to tell the story in third-person narration. In Matthew as a whole, the narrator is

with an emphasis on the interrelationships of these textual elements necessarily for a critical-narrative reading.

⁷⁴ Booth, *Fiction*, 66–77; Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 147–51.

⁷⁵ Powell, *Narrative*, 6; Chatman, *ibid.*, 140. Further, Powell, "Toward a Narrative," 342–43 describes that despite our ignorance regarding the real author of the Gospel, the narrator as a "literary creation" of the Gospel's real author (or redactor) may serve as an index of that historical person's thought. And likewise the text may serve as an index of the perceptions and responses of the original audience since the implied author's perceptions and responses are presupposed by the text.

⁷⁶ Kingsbury, "Reflections on 'The Reader' of Matthew's Gospel," *NTS* 34 (1988): 455; Janice C. Anderson, *Matthew's Narrative Web: Over, and Over, and Over Again*. *Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series* 91 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1994), 48 observe the close relationships that are virtually indistinguishable between the implied author and the narrator and the implied reader and the narratee.

⁷⁷ Boris Uspensky, *A Poetics of Composition: The Structure of the Artistic Text and Typology of a Compositional Form* (trans. V. Zavarin and S. Wittig; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 56 suggests that all other points of view of the narrative must be subordinate to the point of view of the implied author.

⁷⁸ Powell, *Narrative*, 24 explains the evaluate point of view as "the norms, values, and general worldview that the implied author establishes as operative for the story, by which readers are led to evaluate the events, characters, and setting that comprise the story." The implied reader is requested to adopt authorial perspective to make sense of the text.

virtually identical with the implied author⁷⁹ since the narrator's voice always aligns with the implied author's evaluative point of view, which in turn is actualized through the words and actions of the protagonist, Jesus the Son of God, true visible representation of the divine will. Applying this principle specifically to the reading of the MPN's irony, its implied author is the divine ironist⁸⁰ whose voice depicts the story of Jesus' passion in an ironic mode.

In greater detail, the MPN's implied author, whom the dissertation will occasionally call the divine ironist, functions as a third-person,⁸¹ undramatized (not taking a role of a character within the story), and God-like person (i.e. omniscient narrator).⁸² These listed traits of the MPN's implied author are the appropriate deductions from an analysis of the voice narrating the passion story in the third person as an observant reporter with an omniscient,⁸³ knowledgeable⁸⁴ and linguistically competent⁸⁵ manner. Most importantly, the narrator of the MPN represents a reliable implied author whose voice is in complete agreement with the voice of the protagonist of the narrative, Jesus,⁸⁶ the carrier of the point of view of God,⁸⁷ which is a powerful and normative

⁷⁹ Cargal, "His blood", 103 opines that in the case of Matthew, as with most ancient literature, there is no need to distinguish between the implied author and the narrator or the implied reader and the narratee since neither narrator nor narratee emerge as characters within the story, nor is there any perceptible discontinuity between the views of the implied author and narrator or the implied reader and narratee. Further, Andersons, *Matthew's Narrative Web*, 28–29 says that the undramatized reliable narrator is indistinguishable from the implied author.

⁸⁰ "The Purpose of the Dissertation" defines the implied author of the MPN's irony as the divine ironist based on the examples provided from the ancient sources such as biblical-prophetic and the Greek philosophical tradition.

⁸¹ Powell, *Narrative*, 25; Anderson, *Matthew's Narrative Web*, 55

⁸² Anderson, *ibid.*, 70 regards the narrator is frequently privileged to have inside views of characters (Matt 9:3, 21, 16:7, 21:25), even what Jesus knows and feels (12:15b, 25; 16:8; 22:18; 26:10). His omniscience and correctness of perception are proved by Jesus. According to Anderson, the narrator knows what Jesus knows, and what he is feeling, which diminishes the distance between Jesus and the implied author.

⁸³ Most distinctively, the implied author of the MPN has the ability of mind-reading the characters (Matt 26:4, 8, 10, 16, 22, 37, 43, 59–60, 75; 27:1, 3, 14, 18).

⁸⁴ Matt 26:3, 6, 17, 20, 25, 30, 36, 47–51, 57–58, 63–74; 27:1–2, 5–8, 15, 19–20

⁸⁵ Matt 27:33, 46.

⁸⁶ Jesus, the protagonist of the narrative, is described as a reliable character. In fact, Matthew is a story about him. Jesus is always a reliable character, representing the point of view of the implied author. His reliability was confirmed from the beginning through his genealogy, birth story, baptism, fulfillment quotations, and valid

rhetorical device in itself. After all, even the reliability of God and his chosen messenger depends on the reliability of the narrator,⁸⁸ since he identifies and speaks on behalf of them.⁸⁹ Since irony requires the contrast between a higher superior point of view and a lower inferior one, this emphasis on the implied author's over-arching perspective is a crucial element in determining the irony in the MPN.⁹⁰

In relation to the implied author, "the implied reader"⁹¹ is the reader whom the implied author had in mind. As is the case for the implied author, the implied reader is a construct of the

witnesses about him from other characters within the story, the narrator, God, and even Satan. Furthermore, the author's characterization of characters reveals his evaluative point on each character or group. Therefore, a scrutiny over the dynamics between the protagonist, who not only teaches but also carries out the divine perspective governing the narrative, and the character(s) is the key tool through which the reader can penetrate the heart of the issue.

⁸⁷ Sometimes the narrator uses character(s) as a vehicle for his point of view. Such examples are found in the MPN are 26:12–13, 26–28, 39, 42, 45, 53–54, 56, 59–60; 27:1, 4, 6, 18, 54.

⁸⁸ Regarding the reliable narrator of Matthew, see Kingsbury, "The Figure of Jesus in Matthew's Story: A Rejoinder to David Hill," *JSNT* 25 (1985): 65 and Anderson, *Matthew's Narrative Web*, 55. Not every narrator projected in the Gospels has been considered reliable. Dawsey, *The Lukan Voice*, 41, 152 has suggested that Luke does employ a narrator who proves unreliable. However, Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 7 has discounted this position. Biblical narratives do not employ an unreliable narrator which is assumed due to the significance and directness of the Gospel message itself. Powell, *Narrative*, 26 mentions that modern literature sometimes employs the device of an unreliable narrator, whose views the reader is expected to challenge or discount. Yet, Powell, *ibid.*, 54 regards the narrators of the Gospels as reliable and their evaluative points of view are always true.

⁸⁹ Speaking of the point of view which is the spine of the story, Robert Weimann, *Structure and Society in Literary Theory* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1973), 246 underlines the significance of taking a stance on the narrative because the telling of a story necessarily involves establishing a perspective without which narration is impossible.

⁹⁰ Likewise, the interpretation of stable irony is not possible apart from adopting a consistent and determined perspective. Applying this to the MPN's case, the governing norm of the MPN is the divinely-willed salvation that finds its achievement on the cross of Jesus, clearly expressed in 26:39. In this regard, irony certainly functions as a characteristic literary-rhetorical device that skillfully harbors the implied author's intention whose ultimate aim is to effectively communicate the message that he intended to his reader. As we will examine below, Booth's "stable irony," the other principle adopted for this study along with a narrative-critical reading, overtly supports the same issue—an intimate connection between irony and the authorial intention.

⁹¹ If the term, "implied author" is first coined by Wayne C. Booth, the term, "implied reader" is formulated by Wolfgang Iser who influenced the development of reader-response criticism of the Gospels. There exists an essential difference between Booth and Iser in terms of the implied reader. For the former, the implied reader takes the role of the reader in the text, but for the latter, he is outside the text. On the concept of an implied reader see Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974) and also Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).

text itself⁹² “in whom the intention of the text to be thought of as always reaching its fulfillment.”⁹³ Taking this into account, the formation of an interpretive community between the implied author and the implied reader comes into the picture.⁹⁴ The concept of irony as a powerful literary-rhetoric device adopted by the implied author naturally connects with an idea of interpretive community that is implied by the narrative and its references.⁹⁵

In narrative critical terms, the text calls for any real human of any era to become its implied reader, who is one formed and guided by the text through the communication process, and whom the text ideally summons to experience its purposes reaching fulfillment.⁹⁶ Furthermore, when we consider the MPN’s implied author as the divine ironist adopting the divine perspective and irony as the means of delivery, it is not hard to imagine that his intended counterpart must be an ironically capable reader. Therefore, the ideal implied reader of the MPN’s irony is the one who carefully follows the narrative’s plot,⁹⁷ experiencing “like-mindedness”⁹⁸ with the implied author,

⁹² Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 149–150 notes that “the implied reader is distinct from any real, historical reader in the same way that the implied author is distinct from the real, historical author. The actual responses of real readers are unpredictable, but there may be clues within the narrative that indicate an anticipated response from the implied reader.”

⁹³ Kingsbury, *Matthew As Story*, 38. Especially, Edwards, “Reading Matthew,” *Listening* 24 (1989): 251–61; Howell, *Inclusive*, 110–30; Bernard Brandon Scott, “The Birth of the Reader,” *Semeia* 52 (1990): 83–102; Powell, “Toward a Narrative,” 343 all consider that the implied author must pay attention to the manner in which the reader is expected to be educated in the process of reading the narrative to accomplish the goal of the text.

⁹⁴ Powell, *Narrative*, 28.

⁹⁵ Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 229 refers this communicative interaction between the implied author and his partner, the implied reader, as “implicit flattery,” and Duke, *Irony*, 38–39 notes that “irony rewards its followers with a sense of community.” Even though Warren Carter, *Matthew: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1996), 278–79 expresses his concern for the essentially unrealistic and impossible task to grasp all the complex interrelationships that may occur within a text, it cannot be disregarded that the text provides for the contours of their interactions.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ H. J. Bernard Combrink, “The Structure of the Gospel of Matthew as Narrative,” *TynBul* 34 (1983): 61–90 and Frank J. Matera, “The Plot of Matthew’s Gospel,” *CBQ* 49 (1987): 233–53 explain that narrative criticism is interested in how the story that Matthew tells unfolds for the reader. For them, focusing on the flow of the narrative, in other words, the plot of the story, is equal to looking for the rhetorical patterns of the text. The continuity that exists between the episodes is due to the rhetorical features that preserve the story’s continuity.

⁹⁸ Powell, *Narrative*, 32.

and who accepts the divine perspective conveyed through the narrator's voice. He is summoned to be attentive to the character dynamics and the differences in values which each distinctive group of characters upholds. He makes a value judgment on the characters not based on his personal beliefs, but based on the divine point of view, the ultimate norm of the story. It is a task of utmost importance for the implied reader to adopt the governing perspective of the narrative primarily because the implied authors of biblical narrative have made God's evaluative point of view normative for their works,⁹⁹ and also because the right way of thinking is in accord with God's point of view.¹⁰⁰ As the implied reader has the freedom and ability to 'draw near' or 'distance' himself from any given character(s), he is best described as one privileged and guided by the text for a specific achievement: understanding of the story.

Moving on to the principle concerning coherence of the narrative as a whole story, the dissertation pays due attention to the authority of the text as a given entity full of necessary information for the meaningful interpretation of the MPN's irony. The boundary where the interpretative interaction between the implied author and reader occurs is none other than the finished form of the entire text.¹⁰¹ Livia Polanyi,¹⁰² Louis Mink,¹⁰³ and Robert Culley¹⁰⁴ all have

⁹⁹ Kingsbury, "The figure of Jesus," 4–7. Based on the notion that the implied author is the defender of the divine perspective, it can be said that the implied author is the foremost believer and the prime example for the reader. Powell, *Narrative*, 88–89 may be correct in thinking that that narrative criticism stands in a close relationship to the believing community since it treats the text in a manner that is consistent with a Christian understanding of the canon and seeks to interpret a given text at its canonical level. He goes further saying that narrative criticism emphasizes that a Christian doctrine of the spiritual revelation is considered to be an event that happens now, through an interaction of the reader with the text and through the active role of the Holy Spirit. In addition, Powell, *ibid.*, 24–25, points out that the Gospels allow for another way of thinking, the second perspective opposing God's perspective and representing the point of view of Satan. It is very important to notice that Satan's point of view is always incorrect though he sometimes correctly identifies Jesus as the Son of God.

¹⁰⁰ Powell, *ibid.*, 24.

¹⁰¹ Carter, *Matthew*, 276–77 describes the interactions occurring between the implied author and the implied reader as a game and asserts that it must be enjoyed within the boundary and rule of the text. Further, Powell, *Narrative*, 15 considers that narrative criticism employs a concept of the reader which makes it a more text-centered approach.

¹⁰² Livia Polanyi, "What Stories Can Tell Us about Their Teller's World," *Poetics Today* 2. 2 (1981): 97–112.

pointed out that the narrative must be self-contained, must be coherent, and must have a single unifying point, which Culley calls the story's "core cliché." Therefore, narrative criticism enables us to see the text of the Gospel of Mathew as thematically coherent document,¹⁰⁵ and at the same time it demands that the reader pursue a coherent and consistent interpretation by relying on the interrelations of the textual elements. The implied reader of the text is supposed to know or believe everything that the Gospel expects him to know or believe.¹⁰⁶ Conversely, he does not know or believe anything that the Gospel does not expect him to know or believe because necessary knowledge and the content of belief are revealed, assumed or implied within the narrative.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, narrative criticism recognizes the authority of the text by giving a hermeneutical preference to the word of the implied author over its real author since the implied author's point of view through which the story is narrated can be determined without considering anything extrinsic to the narrative.¹⁰⁸ The authority of text means not only that the narrative is allowed to speak for itself, but also that the interpretive key lies within the text itself.¹⁰⁹ In this regard, the narrative "context"¹¹⁰ is important because all interpretative activities are supposed to occur within the given information of the narrative. Accordingly, the MPN must be read in the

¹⁰³ Louis Mink, "History and Fiction as Modes of Comprehension," *New Literary History* 1 (1970): 541–48.

¹⁰⁴ Robert Culley, *Studies in the Structure of Hebrew Narrative* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976), 13–20.

¹⁰⁵ Narrative critics rejected what they saw as disintegrating methods and began to examine the Gospels as literary wholes in their completed forms.

¹⁰⁶ Powell, "Expected and Unexpected Readings of Matthew: What the Reader Knows," *AsTJ* 48 (1993): 32–48.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 32–48.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 32 notes that "we approach the story on its own terms, pretending to forget whatever extraneous information we have acquired. If we realize that we are not supposed to know something, we pretend that we don't, and so allow the story to affect us in its intended fashion."

¹⁰⁹ Powell, *Narrative*, 5–10 emphasizes the unity of the text as a whole, viewing the text as an end in itself in contrast to the view of historical criticism which treats the text as a means to an end.

¹¹⁰ Booth, "Irony and 'Ironic' Poetry," *College English* 9 (1948): 232–33, 237 highlights the importance of the context for the interpretation of irony.

whole framework of the Gospel of Matthew. And a coherent reading of the entire Gospel will show the ironically ridden, literary nature of the MPN.

The emphasis of narrative criticism on the wholeness of the story underlines the poetic function of the text,¹¹¹ namely, the implied author's use of the effective literary-rhetorical devices, such as irony, for the very end of the text: persuasive communication. Applying it to the Gospel of Matthew, Mark Alan Powell rightly points out that "Narrative criticism views Matthew's Gospel as a form of communication that cannot be understood without being "received" and "experienced."¹¹²

He further clarifies an inevitable link between narrative criticism and rhetorical features in his comparison of the difference between narrative criticism and redaction criticism with regards to perspective as an element of the narrative:

Narrative criticism focuses on rhetorical features that reveal the perspective of the narrator rather than on editorial changes that reveal the perspective of the redactor. Such features include the use of the narrative patterns, irony, redundancy, and inter-textuality.¹¹³

The rhetorical function of irony in challenging the surface meaning of things (i.e. the status quo) and thus highlighting the higher, true meaning of the text by appealing to the sensibility of the text corresponds well to the general outlook of narrative criticism.¹¹⁴

Overall, narrative criticism offers the impetus for fresh interpretation of biblical story of Jesus because it allows the story to speak to any real reader in ways that enable him or her to become the implied reader. In addition, with its emphasis on the finished form of the Gospel,

¹¹¹ Powell, *Narrative*, 8.

¹¹² Powell, "Toward a Narrative," 341.

¹¹³ Ibid., 342. Boonstra, "Satire in Matthew," 32–45 also relates that narrative criticism focuses on rhetorical features that reveal the perspective of the narrator. He specifies such rhetorical features as the use of narrative patterns, irony, redundancy, and inter-textuality.

¹¹⁴ Powell, *Narrative*, 31 says that "attention to irony is essential to narrative criticism. Our Gospels are filled

narrative criticism provides the reader an eye to appreciate the presence of the MPN's irony and its effective rhetorical function¹¹⁵ as signifying and facilitating the climax of the Matthean narrative.

Wayne C. Booth's "Stable Irony"

Booth's "stable irony" shares many points of contact with the examined principles of narrative criticism, and both together create the ground on which a narrative-critical reading of the MPN's irony can take place. Prior to Booth, Douglas Colin Muecke began pioneering work by classifying irony under several categories.¹¹⁶ Booth adopted some of his classifications, but also added another important distinction: "stable and unstable irony."¹¹⁷ Booth makes an enduring impact on the history of the study of irony by providing the idea that "stable irony" is "tamed irony" or a "less savage beast"¹¹⁸ and "unstable irony" is "untamed irony." On the one hand, Paul D. Duke expresses the essence of "untamed irony," namely, the assumption that irony is everywhere, saying

Scholars and critics who quest after ironies in a text are prone, once they have caught the thrill of the hunt, to become downright intoxicated, not only bagging their limit so to speak, but opening fire on everything in the text that moves.¹¹⁹

with ironic moments."

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 27–32.

¹¹⁶ Muecke, *Compass*, 40–215 provides several classifications of irony such as three grades of irony (overt, covert, private irony), four modes of irony (impersonal, self-disparaging, ingénue, dramatized irony), ironies pertaining to situation (irony of simple incongruity, irony of events, dramatic irony, irony of self-betrayal, irony of dilemma), general irony including cosmic irony, and romantic irony. In the preface, Muecke clarifies that the first part of the work focuses on a general account of the formal qualities of irony and a classification.

¹¹⁷ Booth, *Rhetoric*, 1–27, 233–67.

¹¹⁸ Booth, "The Pleasures and Pitfalls of Irony: or, Why Don't You Say What You Mean?" in *Rhetoric, Philosophy, and Literature: An Exploration* (ed. Don M. Burks; West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Press, 1978), 5.

¹¹⁹ Duke, *Irony*, 2.

Both Booth's phrase "untamed irony" and Duke's description of it explain that the concept of "untamed irony" exists as a kind of irony that is not rooted so much in explicit textual features as it is in the critic who is "untamed" in his freedom to interact with the text guided chiefly by his own experiences.

On the other hand, Booth's theory on "stable irony" is remarkable among the studies of irony in "its focus on a specific type of irony and its rejection of broad and finally meaningless extensions of the world 'irony' to cover nearly any complex literary statement."¹²⁰ In a nutshell, Booth's "stable irony" emphasizes that the ironist establishes the relationship to his audience-reader who is highly associative and affiliative. According to Booth, stable irony occurs when the ironist, whether implicitly or explicitly, provides the reader-audience a firm ground for discerning irony and thus subverting the surface meaning. Unstable irony, on the other hand, offers no fixed standpoint for meaningful reading. Classical stable irony, on which the dissertation will focus exhibits four characteristics: 1) it is intended (by the author), 2) covert (having been embedded in the narrative), 3) stable or fixed (not susceptible to further subjectivity of the reader), and 4) finite in application (having definite meaning). Booth calls these traits "the marks of stable irony."¹²¹ Stable irony is by no means accidental or unconscious but rather deliberately created by the author to be read and understood. It is also hidden in the deep tissue of the text because the author intends it "to be reconstructed with meanings different from those on the surface."¹²² Lastly, stable irony is characterized by both its finitude and stability. Stable irony is fixed in the sense that the reader is not allowed to undermine a reconstruction of

¹²⁰ Joseph A. Dane, "The Defense of the Incompetent Reader," *Comparative Literature* 38 (1986): 62.

¹²¹ Booth, *Rhetoric*, 3-8.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 6.

meaning that has once been made with further “demolitions and reconstructions.”¹²³ Also, it is finite in application because the reconstructed meanings are bound to a specific context that is immediate and local. Conversely, “unstable irony” is unintended, overt, and unlimited in its exposition. It literally falls to the free disposal of the imaginative reader who is limited, it seems, only by his own reference and imagination. Giving careful attention to the pitfalls of unstable irony, Booth highlights its intentionality.¹²⁴ Such intentionality of irony which lies close to the heart of the narrative,¹²⁵ in other words, “being embedded in the narrative,” invites the reader to willingly undertake some interpretative exercise, which Booth and Weaver respectively call a “delightful leap of intuition,”¹²⁶ the “intellectual dance”¹²⁷ and an “act of mental gymnastics.”¹²⁸

After all, irony is an art of indirection¹²⁹ which distinguishes itself from a direct statement. It is an author’s rhetorical attitude or *schema* of thought that requires indirection and disguise.¹³⁰ As far as the nature of the meaning that irony espouses, stable irony represents a definite meaning in that it primarily concerns not the interpretative ingenuity of the reader but authorial intention. The recognition of a localized meaning of irony, indebted to the intention of the ironist, guides the reader to see that “the art of understanding irony is even more a matter of

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Booth, “The Pleasures and Pitfalls of Irony,” 10 writes that “I simply can’t find any way to discuss how we read ironies without referring to probabilities about the intentions of real author.”

¹²⁵ Hoggatt, *Irony*, ix says, “irony lies close to the narrative’s score.”

¹²⁶ Booth, *Rhetoric*, 12.

¹²⁷ Booth, “The Empire of Irony,” *Georgia Review* 37 (1983): 729.

¹²⁸ Weaver, “Power and Powerlessness,” 454.

¹²⁹ Natanson, “Indirection,” 39–40; Linda Hutcheon, *Irony’s Edge: The Theory and Politics of Irony* (London and N.Y.: Routledge, 1994), her note on Umberto Eco, “irony must be commented upon; its identifying rhetorical nature lies in its indirection” (p.971).

¹³⁰ Claudette Kemper, “Irony Anew, with Occasional Reference to Byron and Browning,” *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900*, 7 (1967): 705.

stopping at the right spot than of knowing when to start.”¹³¹ At this juncture, some may raise the legitimate question of how authorial intention is detected. Glenn S. Holland answers this based on two criteria: external and internal.¹³² If the “collective experience” of the reader(s) regarding the author’s credibility as an ironist serves as an example for an external criterion, the text itself is the prime, internal indication of the author’s ironic intention. Holland asserts that the perception of irony by an alert, intelligent reader is only inspired by the text through its rhetorical persuasion. Overall, the adopted principles of narrative criticism share these core characteristics of stable irony because narrative criticism likewise focuses on the internal communication¹³³ between the implied author, *the ironist*, and the implied reader (i.e., “irony intended by the author”).¹³⁴ Narrative criticism gives due authority to the text itself (i.e., “irony embedded in the narrative”), and so also to irony as the rhetorical device employed to deliver an intended message (i.e., “irony having definite meaning”).

Despite the fact that Booth further classifies the sub-categories of stable and unstable ironies¹³⁵ based on his agreement with Muecke’s notion that there are multiple grades and shades of irony, he strongly believes that irony must be discovered by the reader,¹³⁶ though it also acknowledges the possibility for some readers to go astray¹³⁷ including the possibility of

¹³¹ Booth, “The Pleasures and Pitfalls of Irony,” 10.

¹³² Holland, *Divine Irony*, 39–42.

¹³³ Booth, “Empire,” 729 acknowledges that the “intellectual dance” which the reader of irony performs to understand it, brings him into a tight bonding with the ironist by forcing him to take part in his mental processes.

¹³⁴ Thus, Dane, “Incompetent Reader,” 62 says that Booth’s stable irony is “less a fact of a text than a process that occurs between the text and a reader.”

¹³⁵ Booth, *Rhetoric*, 233–277. On the one hand the sub-categories of “stable irony” include stable-covert-local (or definite), stable-overt, and stable-covert-infinite and on the other hand the sub-categories of “unstable irony” consist of unstable-overt-local, unstable-covert-local, unstable-overt-infinite, and unstable-covert-infinite. These multiplications within each genus warn us that not only the definition of irony but also the categorization of irony require a literary sensitivity, a keen-intellect, and an open mind on account of its difficult nature.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 5–6.

¹³⁷ Booth, “The Pleasures and Pitfalls of Irony,” 5. Also Gregory Vlastos, “Socratic Irony,” *Classical Quarterly*

misinterpretation on the reader's part.¹³⁸ In other words, his view of stable irony bespeaks a kind of "secret communication"¹³⁹ on the part of the implied author requiring the ironically-capable implied reader. Booth further distinguishes some shades of "stable irony" so that stable irony can vary in its degree of secretiveness based on the ad hoc purpose of the ironist.¹⁴⁰ However, he firmly rejects the practice of "uncritical minds" who call anything under "the sun ironic" when "ironic" means simply "odd" or "interesting."¹⁴¹ For Booth, "stable irony" salvages irony from the chaotic manipulations of the free thinker who takes a delight in pursuing the "wild beast," namely an "untamed irony." It is helpful to follow the four steps of reconstruction (i.e. interpretation) of irony suggested by Booth to avoid the manipulations of the unprincipled reader, perhaps due to his inexperience.¹⁴² As the first step, the reader must reject the literal meaning when he recognizes some incongruity, signaling an unspoken proposition, in statements or events. Booth considers this first step as *essential* to irony.¹⁴³ Next, the reader should try out alternative interpretation or explanation which will in some degree be discontinuous with what the surface statement seems to say. Then, the reader moves onto the third step, a decision making about knowledge or beliefs of the implied author, which are found in the work itself, because it is most unlikely that the author could arrange ironic sayings or events in specific fashion without

37 (1987): 79 points that "when irony riddles it risks being misunderstood," and Brenda Austin-Smith, "Into the Heart of Irony," *Canadian Dimension* 27 (1990): 51 notes the possibility mostly embraced by the modern that "irony as product undermines irony as process."

¹³⁸ Tindale and Gough, "The Use of Irony," 10.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁴⁰ For example, when Cicero, *In Catalinam* I.8.19, speaks of his opponent Catiline as "*virum optimum* (a noble man)," both Cicero and his audience-reader understand that the word expressed, "*optimum* (noble)," must mean "*pessimum* (wicked)." Without a doubt, Cicero's remark about the rebel of the state (*patricidia*), Catiline, uses "stable irony." It is intended by the author and is finite in its exposition, yet it is also clearly overt.

¹⁴¹ Booth, "Empire," 721.

¹⁴² Booth, *Rhetoric*, 10–14.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 10.

having intended them such. When the reader has gone through these three steps in order, though Booth sees that these steps are often virtually simultaneous,¹⁴⁴ the reader can finally try a new meaning(s) that is in harmony with which the reader knows or can infer about the author's beliefs and intentions.

In summary, the dissertation will take advantage of the principles provided by both narrative criticism in general and Booth specifically. Booth's theory shows that according to authorial intention, irony can be perceived as a stable literary device. Just as Booth considers that authorial intention establishes an evaluative point of view essential to the proper perception of irony, a narrative-critical reading prioritizes the textual features in a given narrative which reveal the regulating norm of the implied author, the ironist. Guided by these premises, the reader of the MPN not only yields himself to the authority of the text, but also considers information provided by the text sufficient for meaningful interpretation. Therefore, in the course of reading, when the reader encounters a point on which the text is silent, he does not attempt to fill the gap imaginatively beyond what the narrative supplies him. He does not force his interpretation beyond the permission of the narrative because the narrative-critical emphasis and Booth's stable irony both point to priority of the text and its referentiality rather than the reader and his poetical creativity in establishing the referential meaning of the narrative. Therefore, as far as the reading of the MPN's conventional irony is concerned, it will be the reading of the ironically capable implied reader,¹⁴⁵ because his reading of irony will follow a pattern shaped and governed by the intentional-rhetorical rubric of the narrative, which forms the implied author-reader relationship, a legitimate context for the interpretation of the Gospel's irony.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 12.

¹⁴⁵ Powell, *Narrative*, 20 well summarizes that "the goal of narrative criticism is to read the text as the implied reader." Also see Powell, "Expected and Unexpected Readings in Matthew," 32; Carter, *Matthew*, 278–79.

CHAPTER TWO

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF IRONY

Difficulty of Defining Irony

Irony, which seems to be the hot topic of the moment, is an ancient concept.¹ It is millennia old. It is a significant part of the legacy of human language and intellectual culture, having a reality of its own well before its definition came into view.² Though its presence has never been doubted throughout the history of literary criticism, the term itself is relatively new. Irony occurs both in everyday communication and literature. It ranges from the simplest form of jocularity to the most complex literary disguise. The simplest, yet crudest form of irony is found in the sarcastic expressions “Oh, yeah?” or “How nice!” These locutions combine a form of agreement with an implied denial, saying *yes* but meaning *no*,³ and conveying a very different effect than just a mere negation. In a complex rhetorical arrangement of the author-speaker, irony brings about persuasion in ways that literal speech cannot.⁴

It is a well-known fact among the literary critics that giving irony a definition is difficult. Like grasping a pervasively spreading fog,⁵ giving irony either a precise or a satisfactorily

¹ Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 5 states that irony “must really be as old as coherent speech.”

² Thomson, *Irony*, 2 notes that irony existed long before εἰρωνεία (*eirōneia*), the Greek technical term for irony, comes to mean anything like what we mean by irony.

³ Thompson, *The Dry Mock*, 3.

⁴ Booth, “Empire,” 729 notes that “such aggressive activity of reconstructing meanings, the irony has thus engaged us in a way that no straight talk ever could.” Jonathan Swift’s famous work *A Modest Proposal* is an excellent example that shows irony’s superior function to literary directedness.

⁵ Booth describes the study of irony as looking at foggy landscapes. Booth, *Fiction*, 120 writes that “we have

comprehensive definition is notoriously slippery. An accomplished literary critic of irony, Douglas Colin Muecke, laments the conceptual fogginess of irony in his opening remark: “Getting to grip with irony seems to have something in common with gathering the mist. There is plenty to take hold of if only one could.”⁶

Thus, he opined that it is better to list examples of irony rather than define irony exactly because it is difficult to define irony comprehensively.⁷ Wayne C. Booth actually attempted to accomplish what his immediate predecessor, Muecke, had in mind: listing the cases of irony.⁸ However, he reached a discouraging conclusion which is similar to a common lament over the concept of irony. In his 1983 article, “The Empire of Irony,” Booth summarizes his attempt to list cases of irony:

I begin with a strong temptation not to discuss the empire of irony but to conduct a requiem for the terms “irony,” “ironic,” and “ironically.” A couple of years ago I began to collect written and spoken claims that this or that event or statement was ironic, and the collection became so large, and the various meanings so diverse, that I soon came to suspect that anybody who used the words could not possibly have any precise meaning in mind.⁹

Booth focuses the heart of the problem in discussing the concept of irony created by the critics through their uncritically widespread use of the term, “irony.” He says

Obviously, “irony” and “ironic” have become little more than all-purpose, flexible slot-filters, vogue words, useful whenever one does not want to choose stronger clearer terms—or dares not do so because they will be too clear—or whenever one simply has nothing to say and wants to sound educated . . . when “ironic” means

looked for so long at foggy landscapes in misty mirror that we have come to *like* fog. Clarity and simplicity are suspect, irony reigns supreme.”

⁶ Muecke, *Compass*, 3.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁸ Booth, “Empire,” 721–22 suggests a catalogue of useful synonyms for “irony” in nouns, adjectives, and adverbs as his attempt to serve those who would like to rescue the ironic terms for useful service.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 719.

simply “odd” or “interesting,” uncritical minds can quite literarily call anything under the sun ironic.¹⁰

Accordingly, though “irony” is often used, it is rather vague term.¹¹ In addition, its forms and functions are diverse, protean (*proteusartig*),¹² and polymorphous.¹³ Forms of irony may vary widely, looked at from many different angles. Furthermore, irony often casts a “veil of absurdity”¹⁴ over the object to be interpreted or communicated. However, even though irony is often associated with deliberate and strategic expressions of falsehood,¹⁵ leaving the reader-audience in the dark is not the goal of irony. Such complexity in irony creates “an aggressively intellectual exercise that fuses fact and value” because it is “coupled with a kind of subtlety that cannot be deciphered or proved simply by looking at the words.”¹⁶

In this section, the dissertation does not attempt to exhaust the history of the concept of irony since the issue is bigger than the dissertation’s capacity to examine it. Therefore, as briefly and essentially as possible, Chapter Two of the dissertation will examine the subject ignited by ancient critics of irony and progressively developed via the medieval age down to its complex transformation during the modern times. To this end, the chapter will provide the reader with a working definition of irony based on which the dissertation will unfold the theological expositions of irony within the MPN.

¹⁰ Ibid., 721.

¹¹ Svavar Hrafn Svavarsson, “On Catullus 49,” *CJ* 95 (1999): 131–138.

¹² Ribbeck, “eirōn,” 400.

¹³ Holland, *Divine Irony*, 21–22.

¹⁴ Tindale and Gough, “The Use of Irony,” 1.

¹⁵ H. P. Grice, “Logic and Conversation” in *Syntax and Semantics* (ed. Peter Cole and Jerry Morgan; N.Y.: Academic, 1975), 41–58.

¹⁶ Booth, *Rhetoric*, 44.

Early examples of irony and reflections upon it occur in Aristophanes (ca. 446 B.C.–ca. 388 B.C.), Xenophon (ca. 431–355 B.C.), Plato (ca. 427 B.C.– ca. 347 B.C.), Aristotle (384 B.C.–322 B.C.), Cicero (106 B.C. –43 B.C.), and Quintilian (ca. 35–95 A.D.). Their notions of irony have been the primary sources for the discussion of irony, particularly in relation to the definition and nature of irony. Even more, their works guided the following generations' criticism. Each early proponent of irony is indebted to his predecessor's view whether he is aware of his indebtedness or not. Even though these early critics' comments about irony are unsystematic and sporadic, they did develop the essential recognitions of irony which are significant criteria for its study to this day. Almost every student of irony refers to these ancient critics of irony, since they regulate observations of irony and provide a framework for comprehending the wide variety of ironic forms.

Lars Elleström compares irony to the famous monster of Dr. Frankenstein¹⁷ corresponding to Bert O. States' description of irony as “child of Janus, god of beginnings, and, without doubt, the most ill-behaved of all literary tropes.”¹⁸ Elleström especially analyzes the history of irony involving two complex streams: the history of the word *irony* and the history of the concepts of irony.¹⁹ Here we will briefly address the former before we get to the main entrée, the history of the concept of irony.

Brief History of the Word *Irony*

It is commonly understood that irony, εἰρωνεία, has its root in an Attic Greek verb, εἶρω (to say, speak, tell, ask). Beyond this basic understanding, there is no general agreement

¹⁷ Lars Elleström, *Divine Madness: On Interpreting Literature, Music and Visual Arts Ironically* (Lewisburg, Pa.: Bucknell University Press; London: Associated University Presses, 2002), 15.

¹⁸ Bert O. States, *Irony and Drama: A Poetics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971), 3.

¹⁹ Elleström, *Divine Madness*, 15.

concerning the etymology of the word *irony*.²⁰ Likewise, Douglas Colin Muecke acknowledges that the taxonomy of irony is very nebulous.²¹ According to Julius Porkorny, εἶρω originally comes from Indo-European *uer-* or *war-* whose basic meaning is “solemn or ceremonious speech.”²² English “word,” German “wort,” and Latin “verbum” all have their origin in this Indo-European etymology which has been further developed by the Hellenes²³ as *FEP* (*weiro*). Derivations of the word “irony,” such as εἰρων (translated as an ironist, dissembler, self-deprecator, one who *says* less than he thinks), εἰρωνεία (translated as irony, dissimulation, assumed ignorance), εἰρωνεύομαι (to dissemble, feign ignorance), εἰρωνικός (dissembling, putting on a feigned ignorance) are connected to the verb, “εἶρω,” signifying that irony primarily works with word in relation to the speech act.²⁴ Peter L. Hagen supports this by suggesting that another Greek word ῥῆμα (word) shares the same common ancestor, giving rise to ῥήτωρ (a public speaker, pleader, orator), ῥητορικὴ (rhetoric, oratory, art of speaking),²⁵ and an adjective ῥητορικός (rhetorical, oratorical). It is helpful to notice that *word*, *irony* and *rhetoric* all share the same root, and are thus historically and conceptually related. Later the Greek terms for irony and its derivatives were translated into the Latin: *ironia*²⁶ or *dissimulatio* for εἰρωνεία, *dissimulator* for εἶρων and *dissimulo* for εἰρωνεύομαι. Dilwyn Knox suggests other combinations of irony proposed by medieval and some Renaissance authors. He writes

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Muecke, *Compass*, 3.

²² Julius Porkorny, *Indogermanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, Band I (Bern: Francke, 1959), 1162–1163.

²³ The Hellenes settle the Greek peninsula about 2000 B.C. Attic Greek was one of several related languages whose parent language was Hellenic, the language spoken by the Hellenes.

²⁴ Booth, “Empire,” 724 notes the primacy of verbal irony which later became further ramified into other faces of irony. He says that “intended verbal ironies, designed by human speakers who expect them to be seen as ironies, are now only a small branch of the huge family, though once they were the whole clan.”

²⁵ Hagen, “Verbal Irony,” 16.

²⁶ The English word “irony” comes from the Latin *ironia*.

Ironia (or *hyronia*, *hironia*, etc.) derived purportedly from a Greek word *iron* (or *hyron*, *yron*, etc.) and *onoma* (i.e. ὄνομα) meaning opposite (*contra*) and term (*nomen*) respectively. Another author derived *yronia* from *yros* meaning opposite (*contra*) and *nois* (i.e. νόος/ νοῦς?) meaning mind (*mens*) because in *yronia* the speaker has in mind the opposite to his literal meaning.²⁷

Based on the Greek and the Latin renderings of irony in relation to *word*, it is not surprising that in the Greco-Roman world, as far as the history of irony goes back, it was primarily understood as a kind of dissimulation using *word*. In the course of time, adding more flesh and sinew to this basic skeleton, irony slowly gained its distinctive meaning as a literary-rhetorical device used by the author-speaker within literature.

The Concept of Irony: An Historical Survey

As the first step for reviewing the history of the concept of irony, it is reasonable to assume that the Greeks primarily developed the concept of irony. Not only the literature of the Greeks but their outlook and attitudes towards life are familiar with irony.²⁸ The definition of irony, εἰρωνεία, historically developed around the concept of the εἴρων of Greek theater, the dramatic character of the Old Comedy and Socrates, who was perceptively identified as the classic image of the εἴρων. Therefore, the study of irony finds its origins in the observation of the ancient Greek dramas and the criticism developed in relation to the figure of Socrates (470 B.C.–399 B.C.).

²⁷ Dilwyn Knox, *Ironia: Medieval and Renaissance Ideas on Irony* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1989), 11.

²⁸ Thomson, *Irony*, 2.

In Greek Old Comedy,²⁹ the εἴρων was a comic character who succeeded by making his boastful antagonist, an ἀλαζών, generally known as an imposter or quack, an object of humor.³⁰ Together with the ἀλαζών and the βωμολόχος (a low jester, buffoon), he formed one of the three stock characters of Greek Old Comedy. This earliest Greek identification of irony drawn from the image of the εἴρων mainly has to do with a deceptive mode of behavior.³¹ The εἴρων wears the *persona* (character mask) of the seeming simpleton and frequently triumphs over the ἀλαζών by making himself appear less than he actually is. In this sense, the Latin term, *dissimulator* (one who disguises) for the εἴρων can be seen as a quite accurate rendering. In stark contrast to the εἴρων, the ἀλαζών is one who boasts, exaggerates, and bustles to give an impression of superior knowledge. Yet, he is the true fool and a man of inferiority. The εἴρων and the ἀλαζών are diametrically opposite characters in their nature and function. The two figures are similar in that each one is something quite different than he appears to be. If the former usually fills the role of a protagonistic and normative figure who sets the standard challenging other characters of the story to follow, the latter serves as an antagonistic and absurd figure in self-blindness and ignorance. These two contrasting figures create a dramatic effect, that is a conflict (ἄγων or ἀγωνία), which moves the plot of the story forward to its consummation.³² The main cause of the ἀγωνία is furnished by the ἀλαζών because he is blindly confident that the belief to which he is

²⁹ Hellenistic scholars in Alexandria first established the categorization of Athenian comedy in three stages: Old, Middle and New. One important basis of distinction between Old, Middle and New Comedy is the prominence of the chorus. In Old Comedy (fifth century to the late fourth century B.C.), the contrast with the dignity and seriousness of tragedy could not be more marked. Slapstick action, scatological and sexual jokes and just about every other device of humor known to man are found in Old Comedy. Political and social satire along with literary parody is also characteristic of Old Comedy. See Roger Dunkle, *The Classical Origins of Western Culture* (N.Y.: Brooklyn College Press, 1986), 81–84.

³⁰ Ribbeck, “eirōn,” 381–400.

³¹ Kaufer, “Irony and Rhetorical Strategy,” 103; Sedgewich, *Of Irony*, 6.

³² Nothrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1957), 33–67; Francis M. Cornford, *The Origin of Attic Comedy* (ed. T. H. Gaster; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 20.

clinging is unassailable. His self-sufficiency is the main ingredient of the conflict with the εἴρων. The paradigm of Greek Old Comedy well shows that the best way to understand the εἴρων, and thus its derivative εἰρωνεία, is by observing his relation to his counterpart, the ἀλαζών. In fact, the εἴρων and the ἀλαζών are correlative terms. As Cicero puts it, the former dissimulates (or professes something less) and the latter simulates (or professes something more);³³ each explains the other. Neither is intelligible apart from the other.

In his classical study of irony with focus on Greek literature of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., Otto Ribbeck gives an historical review, reporting the appearance of irony as a technical term.³⁴ According to his observation, the word, εἴρων, meaning “cunning,” “wily,” “sly,” is introduced through comedy, specifically by an Athenian comic poet, Cratinus³⁵ (ca. 520 B.C.–ca. 423 B.C.), a six-time winner at the city Dionysia. However, its derivative, εἰρωνεία, that signifies the nature and the attitude of the εἴρων, occurs for the first time in the work *Nubes* (Clouds),³⁶ by the Greek Old Comic dramatist, Aristophanes (ca. 446 B.C.–ca. 388 B.C.). Aristophanes who is known as the Father of Comedy or the “Prince of Ancient (or New) Comedy,”³⁷ used it to denote an unscrupulous trickery.³⁸ Later, another Athenian poet and

³³ Cicero, *De officiis*, I.30.

³⁴ Ribbeck, “eirōn,” 381–400.

³⁵ Cratinus, as chief representative of the old, and the founder of political comedy, is regarded as one of the three great masters of the vigorous and satirical Athenian Old Comedy along with his contemporaries Aristophanes and Eupolis. He chiefly contributed to Old Comedy by accusing evildoers and punishing them with comedy.

³⁶ Aristophanes’ *Nubes*, a satiric comedy winning third prize at the Dionysia of 423 lampoons the sophists, who charge for their services, and the intellectual trends of late fifth century Athens. The original composition is assumed in 423 B.C. Its uncompleted revised version from 419 B.C.–416 B.C. survives.

³⁷ E. Cobham Brewer, *The Reader’s Handbook of Allusions, References, Plots and Stories* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1889), 52; Edward Latham, *A Dictionary of Names, Nicknames and Surnames, of Persons, Places and Things* (N.Y.: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1904), 101.

³⁸ Aristophanes, *Nub.*, 449.

playwright of the New Comedy,³⁹ Philemon⁴⁰ (ca. 362 B.C.–ca. 262 B.C.), further defines it as a fox, contrasting it with “straightforwardness.”⁴¹

The concept of εἰρωνεία built around its connection to the comic character, εἶρων, is not alone sufficient to explain its subsequent conceptual developments as a rhetorical device as well as a criticism of life. Here, the crucial association of εἰρωνεία with the renowned ancient Greek philosopher Socrates comes into the picture to claim its enduring impact on the history of the concept of irony. Regarding an intimate link between the εἶρων and Socrates, Norman Knox once explained that

The central fact about the history of irony in Greek use is its inseparability from Socrates’ personality and influence. But it is essential to remember that neither Socrates nor his friends ever used the word in a serious way to describe the Socratic method, and that the idealization of Socratic dialectic which modern writers have embodied in “Socratic irony” were never attached to the word irony in classical Greek and Latin.⁴²

Though we must consider Knox’s warning against an overemphasis regarding the attribution of the history of irony to Socrates alone, his assertion contains half truth. He is right that the word εἶρων and its derivatives are not often used directly about Socrates by his contemporaries. For example, Xenophon⁴³ describes Socrates in terms that conform to some

³⁹ New Comedy is Greek drama from about 320 B.C. to the mid third century B.C, lasting throughout the reign of the Macedonian rulers (ending about 260 B.C.) that offers a mildly satiric view of contemporary Athenian Society, especially in its familiar and domestic themes. Unlike Old Comedy, which parodied public figures and events, New Comedy features fictional average citizens and has no supernatural or heroic overtones. The works of Plautus and Terrence represent the trend of the New Comedy.

⁴⁰ Philemon was an Athenian poet of New Comedy. He was considered second only to his younger contemporary and rival Menander. He must have enjoyed unusual popularity. Out of his assumed ninety seven works, only fifty seven survive through titles and fragments.

⁴¹ Ribbeck, “eirōn,” 381–83.

⁴² Norman Knox, *The Word Irony and Its Context, 1500–1755* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1961), 3.

⁴³ Xenophon was an admirer of Socrates and well known for his writings on the history of his own times, the sayings of Socrates such as *Memorabilia* and *Apologia Socratis*, and the life of Greece.

definitions of irony such as depicting Socrates as a “mocker”⁴⁴ and as one who is asking questions when he knows the answers,⁴⁵ though the word does not appear in reference to Socrates in his *Memorabilia* and *Apologia Socratis*. However, many early figures who use or comment on irony—Aristophanes, Xenophon, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian—speak of irony in relation to or in memory of Socrates.

Without a doubt, the word εἰρωνεία, has long been attributed to Socrates. Thus, Søren Kierkegaard considers that Socrates was the first to introduce irony.⁴⁶ All serious discussions of εἰρωνεία followed upon the association of the word with Socrates, occurring in two contexts—the ethical and the rhetorical. If the Greek critics of irony, mainly philosophers, dominated the former context, the Roman critics, mainly rhetoricians, put their unique stamp on the latter context. Having in mind this basic distinction, the following will describe some important expositions of these prime critics of irony in their own terms.

Concept of Irony among Early Authors

Aristophanes (ca. 446 B.C.–ca. 388 B.C.). Most critics launch their discussion over irony in the late fifth century B.C. with Socrates, more precisely with the Platonic Socrates.⁴⁷ Yet, this trend curtails the earliest discussion of irony generated by Aristophanes, an early Greek comic poet. Aristophanes is a figure of significance for the discussion of the history of the concept of irony. He seems to have coined the term εἰρωνεία with the implication of hostile or deceitful pretense. Gregory Vlastos catalogues the word and its derivatives’ first appearances in

⁴⁴ Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, 4.4.9.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.2.36.

⁴⁶ Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Irony*, 6.

⁴⁷ Dane, *The Critical Mythology of Irony* (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1991), 21.

Aristophanes' comedies⁴⁸: the *Vespae* (Wasps),⁴⁹ the *Aves* (Birds)⁵⁰ and the *Nubes* (Clouds).⁵¹

Other early critics' discussions in relation to irony are seen to be direct and indirect reactions to Aristophanes' evaluative link between εἰρωνεία and Socrates as the chief sophist from his point of view.

Norman Knox has observed the meaning of εἰρωνεία as sarcastic praise and disingenuous self-deprecation, and the εἴρων as a practitioner of such sarcasm and disingenuousness which later came to be associated with the work and lifestyle of Socrates.⁵² Although it is uncertain how Socrates became the central figure in the ancient form of irony as the prototype of the εἴρων, it is likely that Aristophanes served as a chief originator of this viewpoint since the dominant sense of εἰρωνεία, a mocking pretense and deception, made its first appearance in his comedy, the *Nubes* in which Socrates is held up to ridicule. For example, Socrates is portrayed as floating in the air and contemplating the sun so that he might suspend his brain and mingle the subtle essence of his mind with the air. He is aloft, a transcendentalist, "treading the air," and like the water-cress, he thus can penetrate the things of heaven.⁵³ Careful observation, however, clarifies that Aristophanes depicted Socrates as fitting into the category of ἀλαζών rather than of εἴρων, since he criticized Socrates as one who corrupts youth, believes in strange gods, and hatches the ideas

⁴⁸ Vlastos, "Socratic Irony," 80.

⁴⁹ Aristophanes' *Vespae*, written 422 B.C., is a comic story revolving around Philocleon and his son Bdelycleon. After his failure of the *Nubes*, Aristophanes produced this comedy and won the third victory of his career at the Lenaeon festival of 422 under the pseudonym of Philonides. The play is thoroughly political in its satire on an excessive passion for litigation and juridical proceedings, which is supposed to have characterized the Athenian populace. In the *Vesp.*, 173, we find the phrase, "ὡς εἰρωνικῶς" referring to Philocleon's lying to get his donkey out of the family compound to escape.

⁵⁰ Aristophanes' *Aves* is written in 414 B.C. The play is the longest and the most lyrical among the eleven surviving plays of Aristophanes. It is known as the first extant play which embodies the Utopian theme that is to dominate so much of Aristophanes' later work. In the *Av.*, 1210, "εἰρωνεία" is applied to Iris for lying her way into the city of the birds.

⁵¹ See footnote 36.

⁵² Knox, *Irony*, 3.

in his thinkery or thought factory (φροντιστήριον)⁵⁴ that make the worse reason appear to be the better in his pretense of knowledge. Aristophanes rather portrays the character Strepsiades as an old and stupid rustic who suffers an enormous debt due to the extravagance of his horse-loving son, Phidippides as an εἴρων.⁵⁵ Aristophanes shows traces of affection toward Strepsiades difficult to comprehend or even impossible to share. One scene of the *Nubes*⁵⁶ delivers a funny conversation between Strepsiades and Socrates in the roles of the εἴρων and the ἀλαζών chiefly to expose the latter, the wise and learned Socrates, defeated in a debate by appearing foolish. Strepsiades, eager to learn the new science (τὸν ἄδικον τοῦτον λόγον)⁵⁷ from Socrates by which Sophists enable their followers to confute their creditors,⁵⁸ reduces the debate with Socrates from a highbrow theocratic issue to a trivial matter. The following is a segment of the conversation through which Aristophanes presents Socrates as the ἀλαζών

Strepsiades: Oh! Earth! What august utterances! How sacred! How wondrous!

Socrates: That is because there are the only goddesses; all the rest are pure myth.

Strepsiades: But by the Earth! Is our father, Zeus, the Olympian, not a god?

Socrates: Zeus! What Zeus! Are you mad? There is no Zeus.

Strepsiades: What are you saying now? Who causes the rain to fall? Answer me that!

Socrates: Why, these, and I will prove it. Have you ever seen it raining without clouds? Let Zeus then cause rain with a clear sky and without their presence!

Strepsiades: By Apollo! That is powerfully argued! For my own part, I always thought it

⁵³ Aristophanes, *Nub.*, 216–33.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 94. In *Nub.*, 225, Aristophanes views Socrates as “think-tank (φροντιστής),” thus his house as “thoughtery (φροντιστήριον).” These identifications of Socrates and his school were quite derogatory, meant to evoke laughter among the Athenian audience.

⁵⁵ Phidippides is a horse-racing lover as his name attests. Aristophanes, *Nub.*, 58–80 reports Strepsiades’ regret over giving the boy the name Phidippides out of many other options. He blames his wife who insisted on having some reference to a horse in his name.

⁵⁶ A brief summary of the *Nub.* is that Strepsiades, an uneducated old man, who is deeply in debt because of the extravagance of his horse-racing son Phidippides, decides call in the aid of the new science taught by Socrates to discourage his creditors with ridiculous logic, but in the end he himself with his wife falls prey to his son who has just learned the twisted and absurd logic from Socrates’ thoughtery to beat his parents.

⁵⁷ Aristophanes, *Nub.*, 116.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 89–99.

was Zeus pissing into a sieve.⁵⁹

The conversation reveals that Socrates is failing terribly in his theological debate because Strepsiades brings Socrates down to an extremely lowbrow conversation. In the *Nubes*, it seems that Aristophanes employs some versatility in his subversive applications of εἶρων and εἰρωνεία.⁶⁰ In the plays of Aristophanes, the εἶρων normally is a cunning and sly figure taking a delight in humiliating his opponent, the ἀλαζών, by disclosing his absurdity. He gives the impression of being a fool, but ultimately he triumphs, thanks to his cleverness. However, in the *Nubes*, Aristophanes paints Strepsiades as the εἶρων, yet a less conventional one because this character is by no means clever. In fact, Strepsiades is rather a perplexed fool who is not only outwitted but also physically abused by his son, Phidippides, in the end. Meanwhile, Aristophanes indirectly connects the word εἰρωνεία to Socrates in a derogatory way, revealing his perception of Socrates as a hateful εἶρων.⁶¹

Aristophanes' sarcastic portrayal of Socrates has a deep connection to his hostile attitude toward Sophists⁶² and their sophistry in general. His *Nubes* is the best example of where Aristophanes directly identifies Socrates as the Sophist who practices its well-known disguise.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 364–373.

⁶⁰ Thompson, *The Dry Mock*, 27 notices that in the Aristophanes' *Nubes*, the traditional εἶρων–ἀλαζών formula is seen little.

⁶¹ Aristophanes, *Nub.*, 415, εἶρων comes in between two words for “slippery,” μάσθλης and γλοιός. Further, in line 449, εἶρων reappears as a term of abuse spoken by Strepsiades, “a supple knave, rascal (μάσθλης εἶρων).” Thus, according to the contexts where εἶρων is in use, it seems to be one of the disreputable types Strepsiades hopes to become by associating himself with Socrates.

⁶² From as early as the sixth century B.C., thinkers in the Greek World, especially in Ionia, began to speculate about the universe—its origin and formation. These thinkers are conventionally called Presocratics since Socrates is accepted as a turning point in Greek philosophy. Cicero opines in *Tusculanae disputationes* (Tuscan Disputations) 5. 10 that “Socrates was the first to summon philosophy down from the skies . . . compelled her to engage in investigations of . . . moral questions of good and evil.” This was the beginning of Greek philosophy, so-called “the love of wisdom.” The traveling teachers called Sophists had intellectual power deeply rooted in the Presocratic philosophers. Most sophists were non-Athenians who attracted enthusiastic followings among the youth and received large fees for their services. In particular, their teachings on skepticism (a doubting state of mind) had an unusual influence on the thought of the fifth century B.C.

At his time, Sophists were well-known for their splendid twists of language, called, δισσοί λόγοι,⁶³ (two-fold words) that is a technique of stating one thing by implying another. As Aristophanes perceived, we can see elements in their work and practice of words that must have contributed to the later proliferation of irony such as antithesis evident from the μέν . . . δέ construction,⁶⁴ and δισσοί λόγοι. In fact, in the *Sophista*, Plato attests to the word *irony* associated with sophists.⁶⁵

We may suggest that Aristophanes contributed to the history of the concept of irony in two important ways. First, in his play, the *Nubes*, the εἴρων and εἰρωνεία made a radical leap from a comic figure of ancient Greek drama and its faculty to Socrates and his dialectics, and thus he seems to have initiated the following generations' interest and pursuit in the study of irony in relation to Socrates. Second, he establishes the negative implication of εἰρωνεία, something base and amoral, in his effort to attribute it to the trickery of his contemporary foe, Socrates.⁶⁶ The intellectual trends of late fifth century Athens—the growth of non-traditional forms of scientific inquiry and of new pedagogies in the education of youth, specifically rhetorical training—were considered useless, immoral, dangerous, and atheistic to Athens.⁶⁷ In this context, Aristophanes places Socrates at the center of the *Nubes* as the arch-sophist who runs an educational cult in his “thinkery” where he misleads young men to run after fame, power, and wealth. In Plato’s

⁶³ W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Sophists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 182 says that this doctrine was first attributed to Protagoras.

⁶⁴ In the *Rhet.*, (III. ix. 8) Aristotle says that the style of antithesis is pleasing, because contraries are easily understood and even more so when placed side by side. The best known fragment of a Sophist’s writing, Gorgias’ *Helena* (Encomium of Helen), begins with antithesis, “what is becoming to a city is manpower, to a body beauty, to a soul wisdom, to an action virtue, to a speech truth, and the opposite of these are unbecoming.”

⁶⁵ Plato, *Sophista*, 268a–b. Furthermore, in the same book 234c, 235a, 241b and in the *Respublica*, 598d, 602d, Plato calls the Sophist a deceitful magician.

⁶⁶ Though Aristophanes ridicules and lampoons the philosophers, specifically the sophists, he was not the first to do so. A century before him, Epicharmus (ca. 540–450 B.C.), the originator of Sicilian (or Dorian) comedy pinched philosophers.

Apologia,⁶⁸ Socrates is made to say that *Nubes* had deepened the prejudice against him. He refers to a “certain comic poet” who has slandered him,⁶⁹ and identifies this poet as Aristophanes.⁷⁰ Plato, the pupil of Socrates tries to show the inaccuracy and unfairness of the popular image of his master fueled by comedies like the *Nubes*, that played what he considered the decisive role in Socrates’ condemnation on capital charges in 399 B.C.⁷¹ Therefore, the *Nubes* yields an ambivalent reputation. On the one hand, it is partly responsible for agitating civic dissension against Socrates, leading him to an unfair execution⁷² because Socrates’ corrupting the young is a major theme of this play. There are fundamental discrepancies, however, between Aristophanes’ descriptions of Socrates that stirred up prejudice against Socrates, and Socrates’ actual career. In contrast to the sophists who charge for their service, for instance, Socrates never took money from his students in exchange for teaching them philosophy and rhetoric, and he himself frequently derided the sophists for their beguilingly crafty arguments and lack of moral scruples.

Plato (ca. 427 B.C.– ca. 347 B.C.). The modern notion of the ironic Socrates depends on a number of factors. Among them, the revised image of Socrates produced by his younger contemporary philosopher and brilliant disciple, Plato, demands our attention. Plato’s representative works—*Apologia*, *Respublica*, and *Symposium*—provide the reader with examples of the close association of irony with Socrates. He records Socrates speaking and acting

⁶⁷ See footnote 62.

⁶⁸ The *Apologia* (Apology of Socrates) is Plato’s version of Socrates’ forensic oratory given in the Athenian court as he defends himself against the charges.

⁶⁹ Plato, *Apol.*, 18d.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 19c.

⁷¹ The double charge against Socrates is well attested: Plato, *Apol.*, 24b; Xenophon, *Mem.*, 1.1.1; Diogenes Laertius 2.40; T. C. Brickhouse and N. D. Smith, *Socrates on Trial* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 30–37.

⁷² Yet a classicist, Jeffrey Henderson in *Aristophanes: Clouds, Wasps, Peace* (ed. and trans. Jeffrey Henderson; Cambridge, Mass., London, England: Harvard University Press, 1998), 5 opines that in the absence of unbiased information about Socrates, the reader must accept *Nub.* as valid information of what public viewed about Socrates in the Athens of 423–c. 416.

ironically. According to Plato, irony was a discourse style well used by Socrates.⁷³ In fact, Socrates in his humility, filled with the intention of divine service, took the mode of ironic behavior so that he might lead his interlocutors (and Plato's readers) to wisdom. It is recognized that Plato's portrait of Socrates becomes the compelling one because it is difficult to see how Xenophon's earlier portrait of Socrates could have been so influential and attracted such a crowd of followers, while the Socrates of Aristophanes is usually written off as a unfair caricature.

The first significant instances of the Greek word *εἰρωνεία* and other derivatives occur throughout the works of Plato,⁷⁴ but not always exclusively in relation to Socrates. For Plato, *εἰρωνεία* no longer meant straightforward lying, as it did for Aristophanes, but an intended dissimulation which the audience was meant to recognize. In the *Apologia*, the use of the word by Socrates implies that irony is characteristic or habitual of him.⁷⁵ However, the Socrates of Plato shares nothing with the contemptible fraud depicted in Aristophanes' *Nubes*. Developed further in Plato's *Respublica*⁷⁶ and *Symposium*,⁷⁷ irony comes to refer to a mode of life. Corresponding to this evidence, Plato portrays that even in the court Socrates begins his defense with irony,⁷⁸ a tactic which can be dangerous and self-inflicting since the jury will be easily offended by their perception of ironic Socrates as an unfaithful (i.e. not wholly serious) and vexing understater.⁷⁹ Even later, the Roman rhetorician Quintilian confirms this in the *Institutio oratoria* stating that

⁷³ Plato, *Apol.*, 20e–21a portrays that Socrates constantly presents himself as the most ignorant of men as we witness in the event of Chaerophon's Delphic oracle attesting to Socrates' superior wisdom.

⁷⁴ Leonard Brandwood, *A Word Index to Plato* (Leeds: W. S. Maney and Son, 1976).

⁷⁵ Plato, *Apol.*, 37e, 38a.

⁷⁶ Plato, *Resp.*, 337a.

⁷⁷ Plato, *Symposium*, 216e, 218d.

⁷⁸ Plato, *Apol.*, 19–20.

⁷⁹ The irony seems to be a main cause of the anger of his audience as Socrates declares in Plato, *Apol.*, 21e.

Everybody knows that nothing would have contributed more to Socrates' acquittal than if he had used the ordinary judicial method of defense, conciliated the hearts of his juries by a humble tone, and anxiously taken effort to refute the actual charge.⁸⁰

Further, Plato reports in his *Respublica*⁸¹ that Socrates' frustrated opponent, Thrasymachus, complains, "O lord, this is Socrates' well known irony! (αὕτη κείνη ἡ εἰωθυῖα εἰρωνεία Ἐωκράτους)"⁸² For a frustrated interlocutor or opponent of Socrates, irony employed by Socrates means at best "mocking pretence," "leg-pulling," "sly-foxery,"⁸³ or "dry mock."⁸⁴ Likewise, Plato's *Phaedo* also testifies to this because the Athenian accusers of Socrates in the court thought that his profession of ignorance and humility was insincere and tricky. J. A. K. Thomson presumes that when his opponents called Socrates ironical, they did not mean to compliment him since they employed εἰρωνεία in the tone of accusation.⁸⁵

Though the majority of Socrates' contemporaries are reported as regarding the essence of irony as lack of candor, it is Plato who takes up anew and enriches the concept of the εἶρων without essentially altering the basic concept of opposing appearance and reality. In the *Symposium*,⁸⁶ Plato attributes characteristic descriptions of Silenus⁸⁷ and Marsyas⁸⁸ to Socrates

⁸⁰ Quintilian, *Inst.*, 11.1.9, "nam quis nescit nihil magis profuturum ad absolutionem Socrati fuisse quam si esset usus illo iudiciali genere defensionis et oratione summissa conciliasset iudicum animos sibi crimenque ipsum sollicitate redarguisset?" Translation is mine.

⁸¹ Plato's *Resp.*, written in about 360 B.C., is a work of philosophy and political theory. It has the format of a Socratic dialogue (Σωκρατικός λόγος or Σωκρατικός διάλογος).

⁸² *Ibid.*, 336a.

⁸³ Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 11 believes that the word, irony, down to Aristotle, was a term of abuse connoting "sly-foxery" with "a tinge of 'low-bred.'"

⁸⁴ Worcester, *Satire*, 78 quotes it from *The Arte of English Poesie*, 1589.

⁸⁵ Thomson, *Irony*, 167–68.

⁸⁶ Plato's *Symp.*, written sometimes after 385 B.C., is a philosophical dialogue in the form of fictional narrative happening at the banquet of the tragedian, Agathon's house. Seven participants enjoy a discussion on the nature of love. The dialogue has been used as a socio-cultural source for the historians to explore Athenian social history and sexual behavior.

⁸⁷ Sileni, as the plural of Silenus, were companions of Dionysus, the Thracian god of wine. They were old, fat, and bold with thick lips and snubbed noses. Later the plural, "sileni," became to refer to one individual named Silenus, the teacher and faithful partner of Dionysus. It is known that Silenus possessed special knowledge and

through the speech of Alcibiades. Silenus' external appearance contrasts with the treasures (ἀγάλαματτα)—full of tiny golden statues of the gods within. Similarly Marsyas' ugliness contrasts with the beauty and charm of his music. In a similar way, Socrates is an ironically fascinating man of superior knowledge and wisdom.⁸⁹ For Plato, irony is used positively by Socrates to elicit an awakening in the mind of his interlocutor(s) through a purposefully beneficial pretense of naivety.⁹⁰

Plato seems to endeavor to give a positive portrait of Socrates who has good motives against the negative prejudice built around his teacher. This effort is reflected in his fictional narrative of a banquet, *Symposium*, where Aristophanes and Socrates are amiably drinking together as guests and friends of a tragic poet, Agathon. Plato indirectly delivers his message that though Aristophanes caused a decisive blow against Socrates' career, his teacher was a man of noble character so that he could make his bitter, vigorous accuser into a friend.⁹¹

prophesies when intoxicated. Dane, *Mythology*, 21 comments that “the image of the Silenus and the word irony provide later writers with fixed and stereotypical descriptions of Socrates, even though both the image and the word may be radically reinterpreted.” In later generation, accepting the function of *ironia* as a species of *allegoria*, Desiderius Erasmus of the fifteenth century considers Alcibiades' Sileni as an icon of the Scripture as well as a code for allegorical interpretation. Interestingly, he defines even Jesus Christ as a certain Silenus in his contrast between body and soul. See Erasmus, *Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami Opera Omnia*, Vol I (ed. Joannes Clericus; Leiden: Petri van. der Aa, 1703–1706; repr., Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1961), 771 writes “wasn't Christ a certain amazing Silenus (an non mirificus quidam Sienus fuit Christus)?” Translation is mine.

⁸⁸ According to Greek mythology, Marsyas was the son of Heracles. He was a satyr known as an expert player of the aulos, the double-piped reed instrument pipe. He challenged Apollo, the god of music and poetry, also known as the director of the muses, into a contest of music. He lost in this contest and was flayed alive losing his hide and life. Since the contest was manipulated to be judged by the muses, his defeat was anticipated.

⁸⁹ Plato, *Symp.*, 215b–d, 216d, 217a, 221d–e, 223d.

⁹⁰ Vlastos, “Socratic Irony,” 79–97 opposes the traditional understanding that irony is a “deception” drawn from a life-long ironist, Socrates. Rather, he believes that Socrates could have deceived without intending to deceive, and suggests that Socratic irony must be free from the notion of “deceit” and is better conceived as a pretension of ignorance for moral autonomy and seeking for self-knowledge. The strong moral concerns of the ironist put the burden of interpretation on the hearer.

⁹¹ Additionally, an unknown legend, probably apocryphal, relates an extraordinary incident when Socrates, not being greatly offended by the derision made against him in Aristophanes' *Nubes*, not only attended to the play's first performance (423 B.C.) but also stood and waved to the audience at the end of the play.

Aristotle (384 B.C.–322 B.C.). It is Aristotle who characteristically adorns the concepts of εἰρωνεία and its opposite, ἀλαζονεία with ethical implications. It is fair to say that Aristotle’s views on irony are not easy to express because he seems to present contradictory views of irony.⁹² He overtly uses εἰρωνεία in two contexts, the first case in the *Rhetorica*⁹³ and the second case in the *Ethica nichomachea* (τὰ ἠθικά, Nichomachean Ethics).⁹⁴ In the former, Aristotle’s εἰρωνεία is a form of showing contempt (ὀλιγωρία),⁹⁵ a means of belittling and mocking “something which appears valueless (περὶ τὸ μηδενὸς ἄξιον φαινόμενον).”⁹⁶ Irony is disdainful (καταφρονητικόν).⁹⁷ Thus, Aristotle classifies the εἰρωνες with other πανοῦργοι (knaves, villains)⁹⁸ who should be feared because of their dissembling nature. Aristotle’s εἰρωνες is more dangerous than he who speaks freely and enthusiastically.⁹⁹ Even in the *Rhetorica*, however, in his comparison of εἰρωνεία to βωμολοχία (vulgar buffoonery, ribaldry),¹⁰⁰ Aristotle evaluates irony as more befitting (ἀρμόττειν) a free (cf. noble) man than βωμολοχία. To him, εἰρωνεία as a “gentlemanly (ἐλεύθερος)” sort of jest (γελοῖα)¹⁰¹ is employed on one’s own account, and βωμολοχία on that of another (ὁ μὲν γὰρ αὐτοῦ ἕνεκα ποιεῖ τὸ γελοῖον, ὁ δὲ βωμολόχος ἕτερου).¹⁰² Joseph A. Dane rightly says that irony became not only a descriptive term but an

⁹² P. W. Gouch, “Socratic Irony and Aristotle’s *eiron*: Some Puzzles,” *Phoenix* 42 (1987): 95.

⁹³ See footnote 28.

⁹⁴ Aristotle’s *Ethica nichomachea*, written in ca. 350 B.C., is a treatise on virtue and moral characters that define Aristotelian ethics. The ten books were either edited by or dedicated to his son, Nichomachus.

⁹⁵ Aristotle, *Rhet.*, II.ii.3.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid., II.v.11.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., III.xviii.7.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

evaluative one,¹⁰³ certainly in the case of Aristotle ranking the εἴρων as socially superior to a βωμολόχος (a low jester, buffoon). Though *Rhetorica* does not overturn the general evaluation of εἰρωνεία as a form of deception, it accords it to a higher social status than some forms of direct speech.

This ambivalent concept of εἰρωνεία continues in Aristotle's *Ethica nichomachea*, a treatise on virtue and moral characters, in its association to Socrates.¹⁰⁴ It was Aristotle who first attempted to explain irony by contrasting the εἴρων and the ἀλαζών. He summarily describes both parties in the following formation,

Concerning the truth then, the middle may be called truthful, and the mean truthfulness; pretence in the form of exaggeration is imposture (ἀλαζονεία), and its possessor an impostor (ἀλαζών); in the form of understatement, self-depreciation (εἰρωνεία), and its possessor the self-depreciator (εἴρων).¹⁰⁵

In *Ethica nichomachea*, Aristotle discusses the specific virtues as means between extremes. The truthful man stands between the opposites, the ἀλαζών and the εἴρων. Aristotle believes that truth is the mean that lies between these two opposites. He explains

It seems then, the impostor (ἀλαζών) is a man who pretends to be apt to claim the things that bring glory that he does not possess, or claim more of them than he has, while conversely the self-depreciator or the mock-modest man (εἴρων) disclaims or belittles what he has. Midway between them is one who calls a thing by its own name, being truthful both in life and in word, and admits what he has (i.e. the truth about his own qualifications) without exaggeration or understatement.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Dane, *Mythology*, 45.

¹⁰⁴ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.*, III.viii.6, IV.vii.14, VI.xiii.3.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., II.vii.12, “περὶ μὲν οὖν τὸ ἀληθὲς ὁ μὲν μέσος ἀληθῆς τις καὶ ἡ μεσότης ἀλήθεια λεγέσθω ἡ δὲ προσποίησις ἡ μὲν ἐπὶ τὸ μείζον ἀλαζονεία καὶ ὁ ἔχων αὐτὴν ἀλαζών ἡ δ' ἐπὶ τὸ ἔλαττον εἰρωνεία καὶ εἴρων ὁ ἔχων.” Translation is mine.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., IV.vii.2–4, “δοκεῖ δὴ ὁ μὲν ἀλαζών προσποιητικὸς τῶν ἐνδόξων εἶναι καὶ μὴ ὑπαρχόντων καὶ μειζόνων ἢ ὑπάρχει ὁ δὲ εἴρων ἀνάπαλιν ἀρνείσθαι τὰ ὑπάρχοντα ἢ ἐλάττω ποιεῖν ὁ δὲ μέσος αὐθέκαστος τις ὢν ἀληθευτικὸς καὶ τῷ βίῳ καὶ τῷ λόγῳ τὰ ὑπάρχοντα ὁμολογῶν εἶναι περὶ αὐτόν καὶ οὔτε μείζω οὔτε ἐλάττω.” Translation is mine.

Given his doctrine of the mean, Aristotle does not consider either the εἴρων or the ἀλαζών to be virtuous, thus their traits, neither εἰρωνεία nor ἀλαζονεία, virtues. He sees both as deficiency of truth and vices lying at the opposite poles of truthfulness: the former playing down the truth and the latter playing it up. At best, they are the form of “pretense (προσποίησις),”¹⁰⁷ and two grades of blameworthiness for Aristotle. It is crucial to note that Aristotle judges that both the εἴρων and the ἀλαζών are blamed (ψεκτοί)¹⁰⁸ because they love falsehood (ψεῦδος).¹⁰⁹ He sees both the εἴρων and the ἀλαζών as having faults of character. Nevertheless, he carefully specifies that “both insincere men are blamable, but more the ἀλαζών (οἱ δὲ ψευδόμενοι ἀμφότεροι μὲν ψεκτοί, μᾶλλον δ’ ὁ ἀλαζών).”¹¹⁰ Here a twist arises. Though Aristotle regarded the εἴρων as neither pernicious nor ideal, he reserves some cautiously guarded positive evaluation for this type of figure. It makes the reader wonder why his harsh evaluation of εἰρωνεία in the *Rhetorica* takes a more moderate tone in the *Ethica nichomachea*. In this latter work, he prefers εἰρωνεία to ἀλαζονεία as if he sets the scales for the ideal behaviors in relation to a truthful man’s practice of the truth. According to Aristotle, the truly condemnable is the ἀλαζών, although both the εἴρων and the ἀλαζών go astray from the mean of the truthfulness. In this way, Aristotle portrays the real opposite to the truthful person as the ἀλαζών in a paradigm of thought that ἀλαζονεία is worse than εἰρωνεία. The following excerpts all attest to such an Aristotelian view.

Such a laudable man rather inclines to understate the truth. For, this appears in better taste because the excess (or exaggeration) is offensive (τὸ ἐπαχθεῖς).¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., IV.vii.1.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., IV.vii.6.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid., IV.vii.9, “ὁ δὲ τοιοῦτος ἐπαινετός ἐπὶ τὸ ἔλαττον δὲ μᾶλλον τοῦ ἀληθοῦς ἀποκλίνει· ἐμμελέστερον γὰρ φαίνεται διὰ τὸ ἐπαχθεῖς τὰς ὑπερβολὰς εἶναι.” Translation is mine.

Self-depreciators, who understate things seem of a more refined character (χαριέστερο), for they are thought to say not for gain but to avoid ostentation (τὸ ὀγκηρόν) . . . but those who moderately disguise themselves in understatement and understate about matters not too commonplace and obvious seem attractive. The impostor seems to be the opposite of the truthful man, for he is a worse character than [the mock-modest man].¹¹²

The contrasting Aristotelian views of irony describing irony as a form of deceit not far from the traditional view in his *Rhetoric*, and as positive gentlemanly device in *Ethica nichomachea* lead to two conclusions. One, εἰρωνεία in Greek literature down to Aristotle possessed a negative connotation (i.e. a term of abuse),¹¹³ and two, the variety in perspectives between Aristophanes, Plato, and Aristotle shows that from early times the concept of εἰρωνεία has not been an easy subject on which to reach a substantial consensus. Nevertheless, we will see major significant changes in the work of the Roman rhetoricians such as Cicero and Quintilian.

Cicero (106 B.C. –43 B.C.). The most importantly influential discussions regarding the concept of εἰρωνεία are ushered in by the Romans, Marcus Tullius Cicero and Marcus Fabius Quintilian (ca. 35–95 A.D.).¹¹⁴ These Romans caused a dramatic shift in the history of irony when they focused on the rhetorical significance of irony in contrast to the Greeks' emphasis on the ethical implications of irony. This hermeneutical shift in the dialogue about εἰρωνεία triggered the conceptual rebirth of irony on which the later perspectives on irony greatly depend. Their statements of irony fix the language in which εἰρωνεία would be discussed in Western Europe, and further strengthen the crucial associations of the word with Socrates¹¹⁵ by excluding

¹¹² Ibid., IV.vii.14, 16–17, “οἱ δ’ εἰρωνες ἐπὶ τὸ ἔλαττον λέγοντες χαριέστεροι μὲν τὰ ἤθη φαίνονται· οὐ γὰρ κέρδους ἔνεκα δοκοῦσι λέγειν ἀλλὰ φεύγοντες τὸ ὀγκηρόν . . . οἱ δὲ μετρίως χρώμενοι τῇ εἰρωνείᾳ καὶ περὶ τὰ μὴ λίαν ἐμποδῶν καὶ φανερὰ εἰρωνευόμενοι χαριέντες φαίνονται ἀντικεισθαι δ’ ὁ ἀλαζῶν φαίνεται τῷ ἀληθευτικῷ· χείρων γάρ.” Translation is mine.

¹¹³ Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 11.

¹¹⁴ The alternate spellings for Quintilian are Quintilianus or Quinctilian.

¹¹⁵ Dane, *Mythology*, 47.

the negative connotations of irony. Most importantly, these Roman authors exhibit fundamentally different views from most of the Greeks either on what εἰρωνεία is or on its moral standing. They do not perceive the pretense of εἰρωνεία as deceptive but as a laudable rhetorical skill.

In his renderings of irony, Cicero uses the words *simulator*, *dissimulator*, *dissimulatio*, *urbana dissimulatio* and phrases such as *inversio verborum*,¹¹⁶ *invertere verba*¹¹⁷ besides the Greek terms, εἶρων, εἰρωνεία and the infrequent *ironia* from which the English *irony* comes. Cicero, who was enthusiastic to offer transliterated Greek in his mother tongue, fashioned the new Latin word *ironia*. Differently from his Greek predecessors, Cicero attempts to give clear definitions of irony employing these terms on several occasions.¹¹⁸ The most famous phrase used for irony forged by Cicero is *urbana dissimulatio*.¹¹⁹ This well sums up his evaluative attitude to εἰρωνεία. Using this formulaic phrase, he defines irony in the *De oratore*.¹²⁰

Urbana dissimulatio (gentlemanly assumed simplicity, irony) is when words are spoken in contrast to their meanings (*cum alia dicuntur ac sentias*).¹²¹

In the same book, Cicero discusses irony as a part of the general theory of *facetiae* (pl. wit), figures of thought,¹²² and states at some length the value of wit to the orator.¹²³ For example, in

¹¹⁶ Cicero, *De oratore*, II.lxv.261.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, II.lxv.262.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, II.lxvi.269, 272; III. 203.

¹¹⁹ It can be translated as “gentlemanly assumed simplicity.”

¹²⁰ Cicero’s *De or.* is a treatise on rhetoric written in the early winter of 55 B.C. It is known as the most sophisticated treatment of rhetorical doctrines and deals with ancient Roman rhetorical issues by embodying them in dialogue form.

¹²¹ Cicero, *ibid.*, II.lxvii.269, “urbana etiam dissimulatio est, cum alia dicuntur ac sentias.” Translation is mine.

¹²² *Ibid.*, II.liv.218.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, II.liv.216–290, especially 236.

the *De officiis*,¹²⁴ Cicero describes Socrates as an exemplary ironist who knows how to take advantage of humor:

From the Greeks, we received Socrates delightful and witty, a genial conversationalist in his every speech, whom the Greeks name *eirōn*, in contrast to Pythagoras and Pericles who acquired the utmost influence without any cheerfulness.¹²⁵

Regarding irony as wit under the rubric of figures of thought is part of the view of many modern scholars such as Alan R. Thompson,¹²⁶ Jakob Jónsson,¹²⁷ Kenneth Burke¹²⁸ and H. S. Lang,¹²⁹ with their emphasis on the comic element as the key feature of irony.¹³⁰ As a representative, Burke considers irony as a constitutive element of motive and a synonym for comedy. Even though these scholars do not expound on the historical link between irony and humor on which they heavily rely as an essential constituent of irony, it seems likely that the traditional use of irony within the Old Greek comedy and Cicero, who treats irony as a part of the general theory of the laughable,¹³¹ more specifically as one of six main divisions of wit,¹³² serve as the immediate sources explaining an intimate relation between irony and humor.

¹²⁴ Cicero's *Off.* was written in the year of 44 B.C. at the end of Cicero's career. This is an essay composed in the form of a letter to his son with the same name, Marcus Cicero, who studied philosophy in Athens. In this book, Cicero teaches how common men become good citizens. Cicero, heavily influenced by the Greek philosophers, especially the Stoic movement, discusses what honor is and what is expedient, and what to do when they conflict.

¹²⁵ Cicero, *ibid.*, I.xxx.108, "de Graecis autem dulcem et facetum festivique sermonis atque in omni oratione simulatorem, quem εἰρωνία Graeci nominarunt, Socratem accepimus, contra Pythagoram et Periclem summam auctoritatem consecutos sine ulla hilaritate." Translation of "festivique sermonis atque in omni oratione simulatorem" as "a genial conversationalist in his every speech" is borrowed from Walter Miller's translation. See Cicero, *De Officiis* (trans. W. Miller; London: William Heinemann LTD, 1928), 111.

¹²⁶ Thompson, *The Dry Mock*.

¹²⁷ Jónsson, *Humor and Irony*.

¹²⁸ Burke, *A Grammar of Motives* (2d ed.1955; repr., Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969).

¹²⁹ Candace D. Lang, *Irony/ Humor: Critical Paradigms* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988).

¹³⁰ In opposition, scholar Hoggatt, *Irony*, 2–3 especially criticizes that Jónsson's obsessive attention to the humor of Jesus, saying it entirely misses the obvious ironies within Jesus' story.

¹³¹ Cicero, *De or.*, II.liii.216–II.lxxi.290.

¹³² *Ibid.*, II.Lxvi.264–II.lxxi.290.

Cicero treats irony in his orations in nearly all its varieties, ranging from bitter sarcasm and invective to light and playful irony. Such attention that Cicero shows in his dealing with irony characterizes it as the literary technique that the orator can use masterfully in diverse literary contexts with manifold rhetorical purposes. Beyond his echoing Aristotle's appropriation of irony fitting to a freeman's jest,¹³³ Cicero ties this favorable estimation of irony directly and exclusively to Socrates, something Aristotle avoided to preserve his doctrine of "the mean." It is quite remarkable to see that the negativity commonly attached to εἰρωνεία by the earlier Greeks seems to disappear and instead, a full grown admiration of εἰρωνεία in its association to Socrates comes to the fore. It is clear in the following remark of Cicero:

Urbana dissimulatio (irony or gentlemanly assumed simplicity) is when words are spoken in contrast to their meanings (*cum alia dicuntur ac sentias*) . . . Fannius in his "Annals" reports that Africanus, the one called Aemilianus was distinguished in this kind of speech, and describes him by the Greek word, *eirōn*, but upon the evidence of those who know these matters better than I do, I opine that Socrates far surpassed all others for accomplished wit in this strain of irony or assumed simplicity. This is a sort of humor and blended with seriousness, and suited to public oration as well as to the speech of gentlemen.¹³⁴

Certainly, Cicero's *ironia* has a very different tone from the Greek, εἰρωνεία. "Laundered and deodorized, it now betokens the height of urbanity, elegance, and good taste."¹³⁵ Cicero not only redeems irony from its connotations of abuse and mockery, but also upgrades it to a very unique position as *urbana dissimulatio* of *homo ingenuus*¹³⁶ (a free-born man, often interpreted as a noble man). For him, irony is not any more a form of deception, as was held for over 300 years,

¹³³ Aristotle, *Rhet.* III.xviii.7.

¹³⁴ Cicero, *De or.*, II.lxvii.269–70, "urbana etiam dissimulatio est, cum alia dicuntur ac sentias . . . in hoc genere Fannius in Annalibus suis Africanum hunc Aemilianum dicit fuisse egregium et Graeco eum verbo appellat εἰρωνία: sed, uti ferunt qui melius haec norunt, Socratem opinor in hac ironia dissimulantiaque longe lepore et humanitate omnibus praestitisse. Genus est perelegans et cum gravitate salsum, cumque oratoriis dictionibus tum urbanis sermonibus accommodatum." Translation is mine.

¹³⁵ Vlastos, "Socratic Irony," 84.

¹³⁶ Cicero, *De or.*, I.xxx.137.

but a courteous, sophisticated, and clever manner of speaking, part of a rhetorical strategy which aims at a particular effect. It seems evident that Cicero's refined concept of irony was clearly related to his deep conviction about Socrates as the great philosopher and teacher,¹³⁷ a man of remarkable ethics,¹³⁸ a brilliant dialectician with profound meaning in every word,¹³⁹ and a man of great and godlike virtues.¹⁴⁰

As a concluding thought, it is truly Cicero who changed the course of the criticism of irony, not only by providing εἰρωνεία with a specific definition that the Greeks did not undertake, but also by making frequent use of irony as a figure of thought¹⁴¹ in his own orations.¹⁴² He indulges in ironically assumed simplicity—*urbana dissimulatio*—affecting ignorance or lack of ability,¹⁴³ of which he deems Socrates the prototype.¹⁴⁴ Thus, he refurbishes εἰρωνεία with a new mask as something noble and effective which reflects the ironist's inner motive. His frequent employment of irony in parallel with the former use of Socrates, the great philosopher and rhetorician, helped to restore to irony a positive value based on its rhetorical quality.

Furthermore, with Cicero we also see a subtle development of irony in its concept, moving from irony of speech to irony of manner since Plato's portrait of Socrates. Plato mentions irony

¹³⁷ Cicero, *Off.*, II.xii.43.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, III.iii.11, III.xix.77.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, I.xxx.108.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, I.xli.148.

¹⁴¹ Burke, *A Grammar of Motives*, 65 points out that irony easily shifts from rhetoric to poetic because it shares a peculiar interweaving form of style and thought of figures which requires an audience to move through structured patterns of inference in interpreting what the speaker says.

¹⁴² Cicero, *In Verrem*, I.32, IV.116, VII.15.

¹⁴³ Cicero, *Pro Caecina*, VII.32, "I, inexperience in the law, unskilled in the business of litigation... wish to be your pupil in this matter (ego homo imperitus iuris, ignarus negotiorum ac litium. . . te uti in hac re magistro volo.>"; *Verr.*, V. 159, "my eloquence, which is not significant (mea eloguentia, quae nulla est)."

¹⁴⁴ Cicero, *Academicæ quaestiones*, II.16.

as a constituent of Socrates' character.¹⁴⁵ This alludes to Plato's perception that Socrates' characteristic use of ironic speech would originate from a deeper origin, his ironic life style.¹⁴⁶ Aristotle also reflects irony as a both verbal device and character trait. Surpassing the insights of these two, Cicero is more fully aware of an inevitable link between the irony of speech and the irony of manner exemplified by Socrates since for him, Socrates, the εἰρων whom the Greeks called such, was a *dissimulator* who behaved himself in the manner of *urbana dissimulatio* worthy of a noble man.

Quintilian (ca. 35–95 A.D.). Of all the ancients, Quintilian produced the most thorough work on irony. He goes further than Cicero, paying attention more to the literary dimension of irony as a specific figure of speech. We find that Quintilian polishes several aspects of irony discussed by his predecessors, especially Cicero, and expands them to more full expression.

As we previously examined that both Aristotle (*Rhetorica*, III. xviii. 7) and Cicero (*De oratore*, II. liv. 218) characterized irony in association with jest or wit, in a twelve-volume textbook on rhetoric entitled *Institutio oratoria*,¹⁴⁷ the only extant work of Quintilian, he also mentions *ironia* when speaking of wit and jests: "What is irony (*ironia*)? Is not this even a kind of joke (*iocus*) which is in the weightiest form?"¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ Plato, *Apol.*, 38a; *Resp.*, I.337a; *Symp.*, 216e.

¹⁴⁶ Vlastos, "Socratic Irony," 84–85 argues that Socrates himself lifted εἰρωνεία out of the gutter of deceit and made it an acceptable mode of life.

¹⁴⁷ Quintilian wrote *Inst.* during the last year of the reign of Emperor Domitian whose regime was harsher than earlier Roman emperors such as Nero and Caligula. This book deals not only with the theory and practice of the rhetoric but also with the foundational education and improvement of the orator himself. This work, heavily indebted to Cicero, was the most comprehensive and well-known manual for rhetoric in the middle ages and Renaissance.

¹⁴⁸ Quintilian, *Inst.*, 6.3.68, "quid ironia? nonne etiam quae severissime fit ioci paene genus est?"

Quintilian notices that the whole principle of witty speech consists in expressing things in a way other than the direct and factual one.¹⁴⁹ Yet, he carefully warns that the user of irony as a type of wit must avoid the ultimate ambiguity (*ambiguitas*)¹⁵⁰ as well as incomprehensibility, which the Greeks call *skotison* (darken!)¹⁵¹ because irony to some extent carries with it an intended obscurity for a specific rhetorical effect. Therefore, Quintilian means *ironia* to be a controlled as well as an intelligible rhetorical device carefully thought out by the ironist.

Quintilian prefers the term *ironia*, replacing the Greek εἰρωνεία, and employs it with greater frequency¹⁵² than *dissimulatio*. In *Institutio oratoria*, we can find only one explicit occasion where *dissimulatio* is singly used as a designation for irony (9.2.44). Based on these textual evidences, it seems that in the time of Quintilian, *ironia* became the preferred term for the Greek εἰρωνεία.

Quintilian's discussion of irony is primarily delivered as a part of his well referenced theorization of tropes (*tropi*) and figures (*schemata*). Quintilian especially dedicates book nine (*liber nonus*) of *Institutio oratoria* for the distinction between tropes and figures, which was not clearly made in earlier theory but by the time of Quintilian was well-established. If tropes are unnatural (παρὰ φύσιν) uses of words, figures are unnatural configurations of words or turns of thought. In his own words, a trope is language transferred from its natural and principal meaning to another for the sake of elegance in refined speech (*tropos sermo a naturali et principali*

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 6.3.89.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 8.2.16. And Dane, *Mythology*, 66 says that "irony is the authoritative solution to the ambiguous text."

¹⁵¹ Quintilian, *ibid.*, 8.2.18, "some even labor for this vice; nor is it a new vice, for I find already in Titus Livy that there was once an instructor who commended his pupils to obscure what they were saying, using the Greek word *skotison* (in hoc malum a quibusdam etiam laboratur: neque id novum vitium est, cum iam apud Titum Livium inveniā fuisse praeceptorem aliquem qui discipulos obscurare quae dicerent iuberet, Graeco verbo utens σκότισσον)." Translation is mine. *Skotison* is the first aorist imperative second person singular (cf. *luson*). Its stem is *skotis* and its aorist indicative is *eskotisa*.

¹⁵² Ibid., 6.3.68, 91; 8.6.54–56; 9.1.3, 7; 9.2.44–53; 9.2.65, 97.

significatione tralatus ad aliam ornandae orationis gratia).¹⁵³ A figure, on the one hand, is a configuration of certain words distinct from the common and chiefly obvious form (*figura conformatio quaedam orationis remota a compmuni et primum se offerente ratione*).¹⁵⁴ In the same book nine of *Institutio oratoria*, Quintilian not only devotes the section 9. 2. 44–51 to a focused treatment of irony as a figure, but also attempts on several occasions to give it a definition. According to him, irony is generally saying one thing and meaning the opposition (*contrarium ei quod dicitur intelligendum est*),¹⁵⁵ a definition that is still referred to today. In other places, essentially the same concept of irony is reiterated with a slight variance, as saying something different from what it means (*aliud dicit ac sentit*)¹⁵⁶ or indicating one thing by alluding to another (*per aliam rem alia indicetur*).¹⁵⁷

Although Quintilian considers εἰρωνεία primarily as a figure of thought¹⁵⁸ which is not very different in its generic character from a trope (εἰρωνεία *quae est schema ab illa quae est tropos genere ipso nihil admodum distat*),¹⁵⁹ for him, *ironia* is uniquely both a trope (*tropos*) and a figure (*schema* or *figura*) not like other tropes such as metaphor, metonymy, antonomasia, metalepsis, synecdoche, catachresis, allegory or hyperbole.¹⁶⁰ It is a trope because it says something different from what it means through the technique of substituting words for words, and it is also a figure because it intends the whole meaning in a configuration of language that is

¹⁵³ Ibid., 9.1.4.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. 9.1.4–5.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 9.2.44.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 9.2.45.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 9.2.97.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 9.1.3, “irony is found both among figures of thought and among tropes (*ironia tam inter figuras sententiae quam inter tropos reperitur*).” Translation is mine.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 9.1.7, 9.2.44.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 9.1.4–5.

neither expected nor ordinary. Thus, whereas a trope reveals the contrast existing between words and meaning, a figure can cover whole passages and the entire shape of the subject matter.¹⁶¹ As seen together, by examining irony in the distinction between a trope and a figure, Quintilian not only provides more literary dimension to irony but also expands the scope of irony as had never been attempted before.

In addition to describing irony in literary terms, Quintilian first treats the question of how irony is perceived, that is, how the interaction of the text, speaker, and audience are all essential to interpreting irony. He notes that there exists a close relation between irony and life exemplified by the life of Socrates: “. . . a man’s whole life (*vita universa*) may appear to hold irony (*ironia*) as was the case with Socrates. For he was called an ironist (ἐῖρων) because he assumed the role of an ignorant man in marvel at the wisdom of others.”¹⁶²

For both Cicero and Quintilian, but more so for the latter, Socrates occupies the exemplary status as an epitome of the ἐῖρων. As we previously observed through the reports of Plato, Socrates’ life as ἐῖρων elicited opposition from the part of the Athenians. According to Quintilian, the ironic trope can be readily understood by all.¹⁶³ However, the audience can misconstrue the figure, especially when the figure applies to irony as a mode of life.¹⁶⁴ In this regard, as Plato reports, the fellow Athenians of Socrates provide a classic example of those who failed to understand irony as a figure (*schema*) portraying the life of the ironist.¹⁶⁵ Quintilian

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 9.2.46.

¹⁶² Ibid., 9.2.46, “. . . cum etiam vita universa ironiam habere videatur, quails est visa Socratis nam ideo dictus ἐῖρων, agens impertium et admiratorem aliorum tamquam sapientium.” Translation is mine.

¹⁶³ For this reason, Quintilian does not allow the possibility of misconstruing Cicero’s *vir optimus* (*In Catalinam* 1.8.19) as meaning the “best of men.”

¹⁶⁴ Quintilian, *Inst.*, 6.2.15, “irony, which asks to be understood in a sense other than that of the actual words (*et ἐῖρωνεία quae diversum ei quod dicit intellectum petit*).” Translation is mine.

¹⁶⁵ Dane, *Mythology*, 51 notes that “the irony of an entire life” is a dangerous challenge to those forced to judge it.

speaks of irony as a figure (*schema*) because he suspects an inseparable relation between irony and an entire moral being.¹⁶⁶ For Quintilian, Socrates was not only a great orator¹⁶⁷ but also a morally superior philosopher¹⁶⁸ as Cicero also viewed him. Therefore *ironia*, traditionally known to him in its close association with Socrates, comes to be both a mark of literary quality and moral quality as well.

At last, passing through the generations of Cicero and Quintilian, the two great Roman rhetoricians, it appears that a long-lived derision against irony as “deception” or “pretended modesty”¹⁶⁹ characterized thus in Aristotle’s *Ethica nichomachea*,¹⁷⁰ disappears, or at least is significantly minimized. This phenomenon is primarily indebted to Quintilian’s view of *ironia* as the literary-rhetorical device operative on the ironist’s sophistication and life.

Irony in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.¹⁷¹

In large part the discussion of irony during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance was a recapitulation of the theories established in classical antiquity.¹⁷² *Ironia*¹⁷³ for this period is “well circumscribed in meaning.”¹⁷⁴ The concept of *ironia* retained its connection to Socrates to some

¹⁶⁶ Quintilian, *Inst.*, *Prooemium* 9, “we educate the perfect orator, who cannot be except in the person of a good man. Therefore, we demand of him not only outstanding ability of speech, but all the virtues of character as well (*oratorem autem instituimus illum perfectum, qui esse nisi vir bonus non potest, ideoque non dicendi modo eximiam in eo facultatem sed omnis animi virtutes exigimus*).” Translation is mine.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.11.17, 5.11.3, 10.1.83

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 8.4.23, 10.1.35

¹⁶⁹ Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 11.

¹⁷⁰ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.*, II.vii.9–II.vii.13.

¹⁷¹ Knox, *Ironia*, 1 defines the terms Middle Ages and Renaissance “as no more than convenient means of denoting the periods 600–1350/1400 and 1350/1400–1600 respectively.”

¹⁷² Elleström, *Divine Madness*, 17.

¹⁷³ The venerable Bede (*Beda Venerabilis*, ca. 672 A.D.–735 A.D.), a Benedictine monk known for his work, *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, mentioned that *ironia* was originally a Greek work, εἰρωνεία. See Bede, *Patrologiae cursus completus, Series (Latina) prima*, XCIII (ed. J. P. Migne; Paris: Migne, 1844–64), 12.

¹⁷⁴ Knox, *Ironia*, 1. Further, as the only significant exception to the well-circumscribed notion of *ironia* in the Middle Ages, Knox, 140–41 suggests Aristotle’s definition of εἰρωνεία as self-depreciation. He adds that “although

degree during the Middle Ages but more vigorously at the time of Renaissance,¹⁷⁵ for this age upheld Socrates as an exemplar of moral and philosophical virtue.¹⁷⁶ Also, the rhetorical perspectives of both Cicero and Quintilian on irony reigned for many years due to the reverence which the Middle Ages and the Renaissance had for them.¹⁷⁷

The medieval perspective on *ironia* was confined to categories of the figure or trope.¹⁷⁸ The rhetorical irony as a figure of speech was most favored.¹⁷⁹ The derogatory, pejorative senses of *ironia* derived from classical Greek εἰρωνεία were largely forgotten.¹⁸⁰ The representative intellect of the early medieval age, Isidore (ca. 560 A.D.–636 A.D.), archbishop of Seville¹⁸¹ considered irony both a trope and a figure as Quintilian previously suggested, and places *ironia*¹⁸² as a subcategory of *allegoria*,¹⁸³ whose Greek root, ἀλληγορία (its verb ἀλλ-ηγορέω) is a combination between ἄλλος (another, ὁ ἄλλος the other) and ἀγορεύειν (to say, mention, proclaim). This connection between irony and allegory is not new. Quintilian also listed both

Aristotle's term was transliterated as *yronia*, *ironia* or in some similar manner, it was only very rarely confused with *ironia* as a figure or trope and the two meanings were only mentioned together to be distinguished."

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 97–101 writes that classical and Renaissance authors often associated *ironia* with Socrates in contrast to the decline of *ironia socratica* during the Latin Middle Ages.

¹⁷⁶ Dane, *Mythology*, 1.

¹⁷⁷ Knox, *Ironia*, 2, 98–100.

¹⁷⁸ As an early source of the Middle Ages, Bede, *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina*. CXXIII (Turnhout: Brepols, 1954), 162 defines *ironia* as "a trope showing what it intends through its opposite (*ironia est tropus per contrarium quod conatur ostendens*)."

¹⁷⁹ Knox, *Ironia*, 38, 141.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 139–140. Knox notes that he found the only exception in the work of Liutprandus (ca. 920 A.D.–ca. 972 A.D., a bishop of Cremona) interpreting "εἰρωνικοῶς" as "dissemblingly."

¹⁸¹ Saint Isidore, archbishop of Seville, has the reputation of being one of the great scholars of the early Middle Ages. He was the first Christian writer compiling for his fellows the *Etymologiae* that epitomized all learning, ancient as well as modern, in 20 volumes.

¹⁸² Isidore, *Etymologiae*, I.xxvii.28 attests to the earlier use of the common medieval spellings *yronia* and *hyronia* which Renaissance authors gradually disregarded.

¹⁸³ Ibid., I.xxxvii.22–23, II.xxi.4. Yet, Angus Fletcher, *Allegory: the Theory of a Symbolic Mode* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1964), 229–30 notes that the typical understanding of medieval rhetoricians that reduced irony to its intimate association with allegory has been denounced by modern scholars as an oversimplification.

ironia and *allegoria*¹⁸⁴ (also translated in Latin by *inversio*) among the tropes which are the artistic alteration of a word or phrase from its proper meaning to another.¹⁸⁵ Quintilian considers that *inveriso*, which brings about a different intention of the speaker from what he actually says, to be an element of irony.¹⁸⁶

One important difference between the earlier writers and those of the medieval age is the latter's particular *Weltanschauung*. Edmond Reiss opines that irony may be the most meaningful term for describing the nature of medieval literature.¹⁸⁷ He says that

Medieval irony may be understood as a necessary consequence of the Christian world view of the Middle Ages. Like medieval symbolism, medieval irony is a necessary feature of the Middle Age's perception of reality, something built into the context itself.¹⁸⁸

Medieval irony carries theological characteristics, marked by faith, hope, and reconciliation, referring to the relationship between three major realities: God, man, and nature. Irony before and after the Middle Ages often pertains to negative and uncertain ideas, highlighting *discordia* (discord) and playing with *ambiguum* (ambiguity). Medieval irony, however, assumes the existence of norms governed by the ubiquitous God who has the power of bringing in the opposite. As God puts together the elements of contradiction into harmony, the medieval artists and writers¹⁸⁹ with an ironic taste enjoy imitating God by juxtaposing, contrasting, synthesizing and interconnecting the opposites. These are the raw materials of irony.

¹⁸⁴ Quintilian, *Inst.*, 8.6.44, 54.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.6.1.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.6.54.

¹⁸⁷ Edmond Reiss, "Medieval Irony," *JHI* 42 (1981): 221.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 211.

¹⁸⁹ The best known medieval writers who employed or addressed irony in their works are Valla, Erasmus, Ariosto, Machiavelli, Boethius, Chrétien, Gottfried, Dante, Boccaccio, Chaucer, Nicolaus de Bibera, and Sansovino. Sometimes *ironia* was noted in quite unexpected sources such as the Vulgate.

If the middle ages show rather less interest in Socrates as an ironic being, the Renaissance rediscovered Socrates as a central figure in the discussion of irony. Renaissance authors expanded the medieval notion of *ironia*, the figure or trope, by introducing *ironia socratica*. Drawn from texts like Cicero's *De oratore* and Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria*, Renaissance authors understood irony as a sort of enigmatic humor and wit in relation to Socrates.¹⁹⁰ However, everybody did not hold it in high esteem because some claimed it to be boastful and mocking, not at all modest.¹⁹¹ Therefore, Desiderius Erasmus¹⁹² of the fifteenth century warned preachers to use *ironia* as a figure (or trope) sparingly or use not at all.¹⁹³

As a concluding observation, it can be said that during the medieval age and the Renaissance, the ethical bearings and the rhetorical meanings of irony expounded by the Greeks and the Romans respectively embrace another dimension of irony, its religious aspect. Such a dimension of irony has been noticed in antiquity as we have observed in the case of Socrates as the divine ironist carrying out the Delphic oracle. However, the medieval world-view promoted and advanced this interpretation.

The Concept of Irony in the Modern Age

During modern times, the interest in and study of irony have experienced a radical growth and expansion.¹⁹⁴ Indeed, David Kaufer states that “in the eighteenth century, the concept of

¹⁹⁰ Knox, *Ironia*, 141.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 97–98. We can find an earlier trace of the less receptive attitude toward irony in the thirteenth century in St. Thomas Aquinas's apprehension of irony as a “vice” which “consists in belittling oneself.” See Thomas Aquinas, “Question CXIII: Of Irony,” in *Summa Theologica* (2d ed., trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province; London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1935), 114.

¹⁹² Erasmus of Rotterdam (ca. 1466 A.D.–1536 A.D.) was a Dutch theologian, humanist, and classicist who wrote in a “pure” Latin style. Employing his humanist techniques, he prepared new Greek and Latin editions—the Polyglot Bible and the *Textus Receptus*—of the New Testament. With regards to his influence on the Reformation, he is a controversial figure.

¹⁹³ Erasmus, *Ecclesiastes*, V.995.

¹⁹⁴ Tindale and Gough, “The Use of Irony,” 2.

irony was transfigured almost beyond recognition.”¹⁹⁵ By the end of the eighteenth century, irony became a grand Hegelian concept connected to the evolutionary view of history and dialecticism, and most distinctively in relation to Romanticism. If from Roman times through the middle ages down to the middle of the eighteenth century, irony was generally known as a rhetorical trope,¹⁹⁶ during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century in Germany, the concept of irony gained new and global meaning under the influence of Romantic thinkers.

The discussion of irony in the eighteenth century must begin with an illustrious classicist and critic of irony, John Connop Thirlwall. He marked the modern age of irony by ushering in a new aspect¹⁹⁷ not highlighted before. In a critical work on Sophoclean irony (1833),¹⁹⁸ he brought noteworthy attention to the understanding of irony as more than a verbal and behavioral mode in its adherence to comedy and to Socrates. Thirlwall, as a transitional figure in the study of irony, paid more attention to the ironic event, which had long been ignored. As a result, he broadened the horizon of irony to incorporate a wider range of literary genres by including tragedy. Also, Garnett G. Sedgewick, who benefited from the work of Thirlwall, focused attention to the use of irony in tragedy by pointing out that irony has a clearer edge in tragedy than in comedy.¹⁹⁹ In his study on “Sophoclean irony,” Thirlwall formulated three labels for irony—“Sophoclean,” “tragic,” and “dramatic,”—which are received as synonyms. Historically, this seems to be the first application of these terms to irony.²⁰⁰ This is why he is appropriately called the father of “tragic” as well as of “dramatic” irony. Furthermore, Thirlwall’s contribution has led scholars to

¹⁹⁵ Kaufer, “Irony and Rhetorical Strategy,” 91.

¹⁹⁶ Muecke, *Irony: The Critical Idiom* (London: Methuen, 1970), 15–17.

¹⁹⁷ Kaufer, *ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ Thirlwall, “Sophocles,” 483–537.

¹⁹⁹ Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 27.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 22.

pay attention to the work of individual authors and to each author's particular use of irony as a literary technique. Due to Thirlwall's distinctive emphasis on Sophoclean drama, the literary critics of irony began to compare Sophocles' own ironic style to that of other tragedians such as Aeschylus and Euripides.²⁰¹

As one moves farther into the nineteenth century, the definition of irony becomes murkier, corresponding to the expansion and experimentation with irony especially made by its critics from a German Romantic background. Romanticism is the artistic, literary, and intellectual movement that originated in Germany and England in the 1770s, and by the 1820s had swept through Europe. Comprehensively, Romanticism refers to groups of people like artists, poets, writers, philosophers, politicians and social thinkers, as well as trends of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in Western Europe. This movement stressed strong emotion as a source of aesthetic experience, particularly the experience of awe at the sublimity of untamed nature. It was a reaction against aristocratic, social, and political norms of the Enlightenment as well as against the scientific rationalization of art, literature, and nature. Accordingly, Sedgewick summarizes the Romantics' general perception that irony was not simply an artificial device of an author-speaker, but a "spiritual freedom viewing contradictions in the spectacle of life."²⁰²

Under the influence of Romanticism, the concept of irony made the remarkable jump from a literary device employed by an author to the way of life²⁰³ or consciousness of both the world

²⁰¹ See Elder Olson, *Tragedy and the Theory of Drama* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1961); Bert O. States, *Irony and Drama: A Poetics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971); Philip H. Vellacott, *Ironic Drama: A Study of Euripides' Method and Meaning* (N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 1975). The appreciation of irony based on the individual author's work is not limited to tragedy but also to comedy. Additionally, the most sought-after authors for modern critics of irony widely range from Shakespeare, Molière, Shaw, Goethe, Ibsen, Swift, Fielding to Paul de Man.

²⁰² Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 18.

²⁰³ Muecke, *Compass*, 235.

and men²⁰⁴ (*modus vitae* or *conspectus et cosmi et hominis*). The efforts of classical authors to define irony in relation to comedy and Socrates are still taken as the authoritative foundation. Yet, the attempts of the modern literary critics to define irony broadly in relation to life and world have resulted in what Haakon Chevalier characterized as “ages of irony,”²⁰⁵ and what Wayne C. Booth diagnosed as the “imperialistic expansion of irony.”²⁰⁶ Booth’s lament with a hint of warning vividly catches the attention of a student of irony:

My first temptation was to conduct a requiem, or perhaps more accurately, a simple funeral, lamenting the disappearance into meaninglessness of a once-useful concept. Of course the word “requiem” would express a forlorn hope that there might be a resurrection after all, that we might, by taking thought, understand both why irony has proved to be such an imperialistic term and how we might use it, and talk about it, without making fools of ourselves.²⁰⁷

Before the eighteenth century, as we have seen in Quintilian’s theory of rhetoric, irony was one rhetorical device among many with focus put on its explicit verbal form. It was readily understood as one of the rhetorical tropes. Yet, by the end of eighteenth century, it had expanded to become Karl Wilhelm Ferdinand Solger’s principle of aestheticism—irony as the very principle of art—and a Hegelian concept like the dialectic evolution of history. If for Solger (1780–1819), who is known as a theorist of Romanticism and of irony, irony is purely an aesthetic concept,²⁰⁸ for both Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831)²⁰⁹ and Søren Aabye

²⁰⁴ Thomson, *Irony*, 1, 14, views “irony as a criticism of life, hard to define as poetry.” And Kemper, “Irony Anew,” 705 says irony as “the *schema*, attitude, or world view continues to be neglected in studies of literature in English.” Further, Alan Wilde, *Horizons of Assent: Modernism, Postmodernism, and the Ironic Imagination* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), 2 explains irony as a modern way of thinking: a “mode of consciousness, a perceptual response to a world without unity or cohesion.”

²⁰⁵ Haakon Chevalier, *The Ironic Temper: Anatole France and His Time* (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1932), 10.

²⁰⁶ Booth, *Rhetoric*, 140.

²⁰⁷ Booth, “Empire,” 723.

²⁰⁸ Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Irony with Constant Reference to Socrates* (trans. Lee M. Capel; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1965), 331 describes Solger as the “spokesman for romanticism and romantic irony.” Also, Dane, *Mythology*, 75 calls Solger as the “aesthete of the romantic school.”

Kierkegaard (1813–1855)²¹⁰ who is indebted to Hegel in formulating his own concept of irony, it is understood as a moral concept.²¹¹ It is remarkable to notice that Hegel, whose philosophy dominated the nineteenth century, bestows a unique philosophical stamp on the idea of irony. For Hegel, the characteristic tension of irony is the center of all phenomena.²¹² Further, irony is taken as a synonym for Romanticism in Kierkegaard’s outlook,²¹³ and even as an essential attribute of God. Likewise, Booth notes that thinkers in the modern period promote “the essentially ironic nature of the cosmos” and “a striking parallel between traditional God-language and modern irony-language.”²¹⁴ Indeed, Douglas C. Muecke notes a noticeable tendency of the modern critics of irony in treating it as something like a black hole. This attitude has its root in the German Romantic ironists, who invested irony with ultimate freedom, yet destructive power:

The German Romantic ironists were on occasion inclined to exult in the freedom that irony gave them to soar above the earth, that ‘dim spot that mortals call the world.’ But some later explorers and exploiters of this free space were to find out that ‘above’ and ‘below’ became less and less meaningful and they began to wonder whether the infinite heavens were not after all only the bottomless pit, and whether the archetypal ironist were not the Devil instead of God . . . but whether irony, taken far enough, necessarily ends in nihilism and world-destruction is a matter for argument²¹⁵

²⁰⁹ His major works are *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807), *Science of Logic* (1812–1816), and *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* (1837).

²¹⁰ Dane, *Mythology*, 8 notes that Kierkegaard’s study has served as a starting point for many twentieth century studies of irony.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 9, 83. Also, Muecke, *Compass*, 246 critically attributes Kierkegaard’s subordination of irony to the ethical and the religious to Kierkegaard’s “commitment as a Christian to a closed-world ideology.”

²¹² Hegel, *Hegel’s Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (trans. E. S. Haldane; N.Y.: The Humanities Press, 1955), 400.

²¹³ In 1841, Kierkegaard, who is considered to be the founder of the modern concept of irony, presented his doctoral dissertation on irony to the University of Copenhagen. In his dissertation, *The Concept of Irony with Continual Reference to Socrates*, he provided a profound, scholarly, but mystical evaluation of irony. The dissertation depicts the inseparable relation between German Romanticism and Kierkegaard’s irony, which becomes evident in his own remark, “throughout the whole discussion I use the term “irony” and “ironist”; I could just as well as “romanticism” and “romanticist.” See Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Irony*, 275.

²¹⁴ Booth, “Empire,” 737

²¹⁵ Muecke, *Compass*, 229–30.

Under the continuing influence of Romanticism and a new literary trend, New Criticism,²¹⁶ irony of the twentieth century, so-called romantic irony or new critical irony, became the distinguishing norm of most literature,²¹⁷ a critical mark of all good literature and a way of life.²¹⁸ New Criticism is an important trend in English and American literary criticism of the mid twentieth century, from the 1920s to the early 1960s. New Critics took ambiguity and “overdetermination”²¹⁹ as important concepts and emphasized the multiple meanings simultaneously present in language. New Critics like Cleanth Brooks said that all good literature must have irony,²²⁰ and J. A. K. Thomson suggested treating irony as one treats poetry.²²¹ Methodologically, New Criticism focused on explication or “close reading”²²² of the work itself and rejected historicism’s attention to extra-textual sources such as biography and sociological evidence.

From a twentieth century perspective, the most crucial area of discussion in the history of irony is how to define romantic irony. The common, yet contradictory definition of romantic irony given by modern scholarship can be summarized as the self-conscious attitude of the artist toward the artistic work, a dialectical process involving the artist or the artistic object, the endpoint of all art, thus purely creative subjectivity, and romanticism itself. For Vladimir Jankélévitch, who was inspired by Kierkegaard, irony is not something to be defined but rather is

²¹⁶ M. H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (4th ed.; N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1991), 246–48. The movement, New Criticism, received its name from the publication of John Crowe Ransom’s book *The New Criticism* (Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1941).

²¹⁷ Dane, *Mythology*, 121.

²¹⁸ Booth, *Rhetoric*, 176.

²¹⁹ I. A. Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1936), 39 borrows Sigmund Freud’s term, “overdetermination,” sometimes translated as “ambiguities,” to refer to the multiple meanings which he believed were always simultaneously present in language.

²²⁰ Cleanth Brooks, “Irony and ‘Ironic’ Poetry,” *College English* 9 (1948): 231–37.

²²¹ Thomson, *Irony*, 2.

the subject of what medieval writers might call a meditation. More precisely, he called irony in existentialistic terms as “la bonne conscience.”²²³ Kierkegaard expressed a similar view when he said that irony is egoistical.²²⁴ The points of view of these scholars on irony stand as an expression of the modern ironists’ stance.

When Booth speaks about the “imperialistic expansion of irony,” an appropriate characterization of the modern discussion of irony, he means that the modern criticism of irony not only has embraced “disagreements multiplied beyond a given point”²²⁵ but also has fed on the chaotic results of this multiplication almost to “the point of speculative suicide.”²²⁶ This seems to be an inevitable outcome of the influence of Kierkegaard, specifically his characterization of irony in terms of “subjectivity (Subjektivität),”²²⁷ and “infinite absolute negativity (unendliche absolute Negativität)”²²⁸ along with the claim made by the German Romantics that if the world or

²²² Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 247.

²²³ Vladimir Jankélévitch, *L'Ironie ou la bonne conscience* (2d ed.; Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1950).

²²⁴ Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Irony with Continual Reference to Socrates*, 431.

²²⁵ Booth, *Rhetoric*, 133.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 133 notes that “modern criticism has multiplied contradictions, and modern theory has been led to dwell upon the chaotic results almost to the point of speculative suicide. Disagreements multiplied beyond a given point cannot help suggesting that there is no art of interpretation—only a game of competing improvisations. The critic with the most persuasive style wins, because there are after all no rules imposed by “the work itself,” and there is no referee.” Further, in “Empire,” 735, Booth quotes Kenneth Burke’s saying that “whatever I *think* I say turns out to mean something else, because ‘I’ am really an indeterminate ‘we,’ . . . every human statement is, for Burke, necessarily ‘ironic,’ when viewed from any rival, incongruous perspective.” Burke (1897–1993) is a major American theorist and philosopher whose primary interests are rhetoric and aesthetics.

²²⁷ Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Irony with Continual Reference to Socrates*, 242, 264 consider irony as a “qualification of subjectivity” and comments that Hegel is the master who theorizes subjectivity of irony. He writes that “whereas the first form of irony was not combated but was pacified by subjectivity as it obtained its rights, the second form of irony was combated and destroyed, for inasmuch as subjective was unauthorized and destroyed, for inasmuch as subjectivity was unauthorized it could obtain its rights only by being annulled.” Muecke, *Compass*, 242 notes that “Kierkegaard saw Romantic Irony as a dissolution of objectivity in the interest of a preservation of subjectivity, a process which involves in the end the reduction of all reality to the bare self-consciousness of the completely bored ironist.” Further, Muecke expresses his conviction that Kierkegaard has misrepresented Romantic irony as essentially negative and destructive which is far different from Romantic irony in Friedrich Schlegel’s perspective.

²²⁸ Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Irony with Continual Reference to Socrates*, 261 and note 128 of page 486. In fact, both phrases are borrowed by Kierkegaard from the lectures of Hegel on aesthetics.

creation provides at no point a hard and fast resistance to further ironic corrosion, then all meanings dissolve into the one supreme meaning: no meaning!²²⁹ Indeed, the investigation of irony espoused by the romanticists is an entirely different entity from the earlier discussions because they “juggle with irony until the word loses its meaning.”²³⁰ David Worcester and Alan R. Thompson well characterize this radically different nature of modern irony. The former strikingly compares the habit of modern irony to a drug habit in that “irony offers an escape from mental pain as morphine,”²³¹ and the latter conceives irony as an escape from responsibility.²³²

The radical expansion of irony shows itself in disagreements over basic categories and the respective concept for each category.²³³ Even the varied use of nomenclature employed by critics to classify irony testifies to the radical expansion of irony over the years and the genuine difficulty inherent in identifying it. Verbal irony is variously referred to as irony of speech, rhetorical, dialectic irony²³⁴ or linguistic irony.²³⁵ Character irony is termed Socratic irony,²³⁶

²²⁹ Booth, *Rhetoric*, 93.

²³⁰ Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 15.

²³¹ Worcester, *Satire*, 141–42.

²³² Thompson, *The Dry Mock*, 256. In a similar fashion, Muecke, *Compass*, 236 describes “irony as a means of avoiding decisions in situations in which a decision is either impossible or clearly unwise is, though self-protective, usually heuristic as well.”

²³³ For example, the following are various definitions made by several key critics with regard to dramatic irony or situational irony. While Thomson, *Irony*, 35 and Thompson, *The Dry Mock*, 29 describe dramatic irony in much the same terms used for verbal irony, Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 49 and Muecke, *Compass*, 61–63, 92 explain it as the sense of contradiction felt by spectators of a drama who see the character acting in ignorance of his condition. Furthermore, Duke, *Irony*, 26 and Weaver, “Power and Powerlessness,” 454–66, especially 455–56 distinguish dramatic irony from situational irony, although Richard G. Moulton, *The Moral System of Shakespeare* (London: The Macmillan Company, 1903), 209–10 and Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 48–49 define them as the same kind. It seems that under the influence of Thirlwall, most of these scholars, especially Sedgewick, chiefly consider dramatic irony as an irony that occurs on the stage. Sedgewick, *ibid.*, 49 says that “my belief, or perhaps my delusion, is that these conceptions (regarding dramatic irony) are extraordinarily fruitful in the study of drama—fruitful in ways that have been neglected. And the more distinguished the drama is, the more fruitful the idea of dramatic irony becomes.” However, this is a rather narrow understanding because it has been proven that other genres of literature also contain this type of irony. In this regard, Dane, *Mythology*, 121 correctly says that dramatic irony can mean not only “an irony pertaining to drama” but also “a dramatic form of irony.”

²³⁴ Thirlwall, “Sophocles,” 484.

²³⁵ Tanaka, “The Concept of Irony,” 46.

irony of character²³⁷ or of manner (behavioral irony).²³⁸ Dramatic irony is labeled situational, Sophoclean,²³⁹ tragic irony,²⁴⁰ practical irony,²⁴¹ irony of fate, namely, irony of events,²⁴² irony of simple incongruity, irony of self-betrayal or irony of dilemma.²⁴³ In addition to these, more classifications have sprung from the pens of various scholars.²⁴⁴ The fact that the forms of irony vary widely, as was the case for the definition of irony, indicates a noticeable weakness in current scholarship. This present condition calls out for a normative-comprehensive work, which can regulate the literary phenomena of irony, despite all of these varieties that resulted from the

²³⁶ Vlastos, "Socratic Irony," 79–97. Especially in page 86, Vlastos calls "Socratic irony" as "complex irony." According to him, in "complex" irony what is said both is and isn't what is meant in contrast to "simple" irony in which what is said is simply not what is meant.

²³⁷ Thompson, *The Dry Mock*, 7–8.

²³⁸ Ibid. And Worcester, *Satire*, 90.

²³⁹ Thirlwall, "Sophocles," 383, 494.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 483, 493–94, 536–37.

²⁴¹ Ibid., 485–87.

²⁴² Thompson, *The Dry Mock*, 29–30 and Muecke, *Compass*, 44, 102–4. Yet, Muecke tries to subtly differentiate between dramatic irony and irony of events based on their effects. In page 105, he writes that "the difference between the effect of Dramatic Irony and the effect of Irony of Events resembles the difference between suspense and surprise."

²⁴³ Muecke, *ibid.*, 99–113 places irony of simple incongruity, irony of events, dramatic irony, irony of self-betrayal, and irony of dilemma under the same category of irony that occur in "ironic situations."

²⁴⁴ Holland, *Divine Irony*, 54 speaks of Augustan irony, Muecke, *Compass*, 20 of simple and double irony, and Kemper, "Irony Anew," 705 of pedantic irony as practiced by Jesus and Socrates. According to her observation, pedantic irony stands in contrast to cosmic irony because in pedantic irony, a person having knowledge controls the known and manipulates the unknown, but in cosmic irony, the gods or blind natural law are in control, not man. Furthermore, Booth, "Irony and 'Ironic' Poetry," 233 notices comic, playful, gentle irony in contrast to Muecke, *Compass*, 54 speaks of bitter, heavy irony. Thomas Mann, "The Art of the Novel," in *The Creative Vision* (eds. Haskell M. Block and Herman Salinger; N.Y.: Grove Press, 1960), 88 says about epic irony, Muecke, *Compass*, 159–77 about Proto-Romantic, Romantic irony, and Worcester, *Satire*, 76 notes Post-Romantic (Chaucerian) irony or irony of fate. In addition to these, the list goes on to include general, universal, cosmic, modern irony (New Critical irony), self-irony, impersonal, self-disparaging, ingénue, dramatized irony found in Muecke, *Compass*, 119–51, private irony in Kaufer, "Irony and Rhetorical Strategy," 104, and *Ironie d'épreuve* as a sort of verbal irony in Henri Clavier, "La méthode ironique dans l'enseignement de Jésus," *ETR* 5 (1930): 87. Hoggatt, *Irony*, 150 reveals another name for *Ironie d'épreuve* as peirastic irony. Its origin is from the Greek verb, "πειράζειν (to make proof, of or to attempt to do)," and is intended to test the other's response. It may in fact declare the opposite of the speaker's actual intention. An excellent example of peirastic irony is to be found in Gen 19:2–3, in which the angels of the Lord test the seriousness of Lot's offer of hospitality by declaring the opposite of their true intentions. There are more ironies identifies such as irony of chance, sentimental, mediate, disjunctive, suspensive, musical, pictorial irony, architectural, culinary irony and ironic mimicry. See Linda Phyllis Austern, "Sweet Meats with Sour Sauce: The Genesis of Musical Irony in English Drama after 1600," *The Journal of Musicology* 4 (autumn, 1985–autumn,

critics' synchronic-individualistic reception of irony.²⁴⁵ This can be referred to as the ongoing need which the study of irony in general faces.

It seems clear that a distinguishing characteristic defining the history of the concept of irony in modern times is its close relation to the shifts and trends in the intellectual history of Western Europe. Thus, the modern conceptual history of *irony*, “the Devil’s face” according to Victor Hugo,²⁴⁶ has acquired paradoxical results—gaining its significance²⁴⁷ on one hand, yet losing its substance on the other.

Summary

Irony is a challenging topic of study.²⁴⁸ Far before it was given a technical name, εἰρωνεία, irony undoubtedly and persistently has been a part of human intellectual culture.²⁴⁹ Though irony is not confined to any specific culture’s possession, the Greeks are typically invoked as the place to begin understanding and defining irony. The ancient Greeks habitually employed irony in their Comedy and passed down to us the primary models of ironic speech, event, and character mainly performed on the theater. Yet, specific reflection on irony is quite limited since we observed that the ancients received it quite naturally without forming systematic conceptualizations. It is not an

1986): 472–90.

²⁴⁵ Wilde, *Horizons of Assent*, 2 comments that “irony is not a word with a history, but a modern way of thinking: a ‘mode of consciousness, a perceptual response to a world without unity or cohesion,’” and Dane, *Mythology*, 7, 33–40 criticize the ahistorical use of the definition and interpretation of irony. Also see David J. Amante, “The Theory of Ironic Speech Acts,” *Poetics Today* 2, 2 (1981): 80.

²⁴⁶ “l’ironie, c’est le visage même du diable.” It was quoted in Muecke, “Images of Irony,” *Poetics Today* 4 (1983): 404.

²⁴⁷ Kaufer, “Irony and Rhetorical Strategy,” 92 calls it as “transfiguration of irony.” Also he adds that “this . . . is not without consequences.”

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 90.

²⁴⁹ Austin-Smith, “Into the Heart of Irony,” 51 writes that “irony has a rich history as a vehicle for cultural and political criticism, with artists in various media using it as a sly, often witty means of attacking dominant cultural beliefs and practices.”

exaggeration to say that the winning of the Dionysia festival²⁵⁰ depended on how a dramatist creatively employed irony through the stock characters' familiar interactions following after the pattern of *persona* that elicits laughter from the audience-reader. In their discussions, early critics of irony heavily depend on the observation of the characteristics of an ironic figure, the εἴρων, whose image is established in his verbal and behavioral patterns that contrast with his dramatic counterpart, the ἀλαζών. The chief characteristic of the εἴρων depicted in comedy was deception or mockery, which was readily understood as the intent of εἰρωνεία. Though the εἴρων was a protagonist, he was not necessarily the audience's favorite. His reputation made him too deceptively clever to be enthralled by without taking heed. It is almost as if a sticker saying "Be careful!" were glued on the forehead of the εἴρων.

Aristophanes comes forward as the earliest important critic of irony. He exemplifies the complexity of irony. In his comedy *Nubes*, we observe some flexibility, signaling the *fluid* concept of irony in earlier times, in his portrayal of the εἴρων. Perhaps, his purpose to deride Socrates as a hateful εἴρων whose εἰρωνεία is perceived as the prime example of the Sophists causes his manipulation, playing with the conventional relationship between the εἴρων and the ἀλαζών. Though he paints Socrates in the mask of the ἀλαζών, he explicitly links εἰρωνεία to the person of Socrates. Due to his effort, εἰρωνεία and Socrates becomes a pair that generates a long and complex conceptual history of irony. However, Aristophanes' criticism of εἰρωνεία is not without problems because his personal, unwarranted enmity against his contemporary philosopher, Socrates, prevented him from producing a balanced view on irony.

²⁵⁰ The Dionysia is one of the large main religious festivals after Panathenaia held in ancient Athens in honor of the Greek god, Dionysus, who was venerated by the ancients as the god of wine and as the promoter of civilization, a lawgiver, and lover of peace. It is comprised of two sub-festivals, the Rural Dionysia and the City Dionysia, and its central event was the performances of comedies and tragedies. Among notable winners of the City Dionysia are the illustrious tragedians, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, and a comic dramatist, Aristophanes.

Unpopular implications attached to irony in relation to the Greek Old Comedy and its alleged link to sophistry cited by Aristophanes lasted throughout the following generations. However, as time moved away from the controversial figure Socrates and his contemporaries, fewer writers used the tainted lens through which irony had been examined. Plato, the architect of Socratic irony,²⁵¹ reports Socrates as an ironic being who speaks and acts ironically. In the *Apologia*, he attests to the historicity of the Aristophanic accusation made against Socrates. Significantly, in his other imaginative narrative, *Symposium*, Plato indirectly attempts to save Socrates, whose characteristic is that of irony, from a lowbred evaluation by caricaturing him as the Silenus whose admirable treasures are hidden within, despite his unworthy appearance.

The characteristic attitude of the ancient Greeks toward irony can be characterized as the ethical reception of irony.²⁵² We notice such an attitude in Aristophanes and Plato. Above all, it is Aristotle who explicates irony and its ethical value in terms of speaking and acting truthfully. In the *Ethica nichomachea*, he constructs a diametrically opposite paradigm between the εἰρωνεία, minimizing the truth, and the ἀλαζονεία, blowing up the truth, for the first time. These are the two extreme poles diverging from “the mean,” where the truth lies. According to Aristotle, neither extreme is virtue nor the behavioral mode of the truthful man. However, he does elevate εἰρωνεία as ethically more tolerable than the ἀλαζονεία by speaking of εἰρωνεία with noticeable sensitivity and at the same time with interesting ambiguity in contrast to his harsh and clear-cut dealing with the ἀλαζονεία.

²⁵¹ Dane, *Mythology*, 21 views that the association of irony with Socrates may originate with Plato, but its presence is chiefly a product of the later rhetorical tradition.

²⁵² Muecke, *Compass*, 247 notes that “that is to say, the morality of irony, like the morality of science, philosophy, and art, is a morality of intelligence.”

Bringing about a unique difference with the Greeks, the practical Romans²⁵³ began to be concerned with the literary-rhetorical aspect of irony. Both Cicero and Quintilian carve out a new mask for irony that replaces the old one fixed by the Greeks. For Cicero, irony is a trait of the freeborn. It is no longer an object of derision but a sign of urbanity, *urbana dissimulatio*. Overall, Cicero paints irony positively, with light stroke of brush as a “type of humor,” using terms like *lepos* (wit), *facetus* (elegance), *humanitas* (refinement), *dulcis* (sweet, pleasant), *festivus* (merry), *elegans* (elegant), and *urbanus* (gentlemanly, polished).²⁵⁴ Not far from Cicero’s tradition, Quintilian, the most influential rhetorician of all time, evaluates irony as a unique figure of speech, which can be both trope and scheme, different from other rhetorical devices. In Quintilian’s work, *Institutio oratoria*, we find the most extensive discussion of irony as a rhetorical device beloved by the orator. Through the Romans’ critical discussions of irony, its horizon became widened from being defined in a limited verbal sense to being embraced as a mode of thought, perhaps, of life on a deeper level. As a result, Socrates was also reevaluated as the achiever of both moral quality and rhetorical skill corresponding to the idea that irony is an outlook of life which is commensurate with an ironic life-style.

Medieval and Renaissance ideas on *ironia* were diverse, numerous and often frivolous.²⁵⁵ However, throughout the middle ages and the Renaissance, irony retains its general definition as one of the rhetorical tropes, yet is best known in its particular connection to allegory. In the

²⁵³ Horace (65–8 B.C.), *Ars poetica*, 320–325 describe the Romans’ practicality in contrast to the Greeks’ artistry “the Muse gave talent to the Greeks, she gave speech in artistic phrase to the Greeks; they longed for nothing but glory. The Romans, by many a long sum, learn in childhood how to divide a copper coin (*as*) into a hundred parts (Grais ingenium, Grais dedit ore rotundo Musa loqui, praeter laudem nullius avaris. Romani pueri longis rationibus assem discunt in partibus centum diducere).”

²⁵⁴ Cicero, *De or.*, II. ixvii. 269–70; *Off.*, I. xxix. 104–108. See also Quintilian, *Inst.*, VI. iii. 17–21.

²⁵⁵ Knox, *ironia*, 3, 150. On page 9, he writes that “discussions and definitions of *ironia* are to be found in works of various kinds, though most commonly in lexicons and glossaries, discussions of jokes, handbooks devoted to figures and tropes, and treatises and commentaries concerning grammar, poetics, epistolography, rhetoric and ethics.”

middle ages, irony is by no means repugnant, but rather expressive of the Christian faith, confirming the reconciled relationship between God and man bound by eternity. If the sense of pessimism about man's possibilities and paradoxical universe rears the ironic consciousness of the modern minds, a humble recognition of man's place in creation dominates medieval irony. Kierkegaard's nihilistic concept of irony, "absolute negativity," is perhaps not appropriate for the description of medieval irony since the spirit of the medieval age in general has its conviction in the faith that eternity is beyond irony. It resounds with the medieval understanding of *historia* (history) that all human endeavors fall into the bosom of the eschatological ultimate. Nicholas of Cusa's mystic idea of God as a *coincidentia oppositorum* (union of opposites), which holds that all things, though different, are connected together in God, is an excellent representation of the medieval ironic view²⁵⁶ because medieval irony is founded on the notion of the ultimate compatibilities of realities.

If the term *irony* was common from classical antiquity to the Renaissance, and its ubiquitous definition was saying the opposite to the intended meaning,²⁵⁷ the efforts of the modern critics to clarify the concept of irony are unwittingly ironic because these make the situation complex and murky in spite of good intentions.²⁵⁸ As a consequence, the modern criticism of irony attests to the kaleidoscopic existence of irony within art in the broadest possible way. In modern times, irony became the main criterion for determining good art, broadly embracing speech, literature, painting, music and even fashion. In this understanding,

²⁵⁶ Nicholas, *De docta ignorantia* III. 1. Nicholas (1401–1464 A.D.) of Cusa, a German cardinal, was one of the brightest philosophers, astronomers, and mathematicians of the fifteenth century. He was known for the mystical writings of Christianity, especially on the possibility of knowing God with the illumined mind, so-called the divine human mind.

²⁵⁷ Knox, *Ironia*, 19.

²⁵⁸ Erich Heller, *The Ironic German: A Study of Thomas Mann* (Boston: Little Brown, 1958), 230 writes "every attempt to define irony unambiguously is in itself ironical."

irony possesses the protean capacity to move with the flow of the Western European intellectual history. Irony is not limited any more to its literary-rhetorical quality, but has comfortably adjusted to the overall outlook of life and world. Thus, the scope of irony has been dramatically broadened, encompassing various kinds of ironic phenomena that were not considered distinctive forms of irony before. Even though irony gained its distinctively critical voice through the transformation invested in it by the modern critics, it became too much dissected, almost to the point of losing its essence, which the critics of irony commonly apprehend.

Toward a Working Definition of Irony

Notwithstanding the increasing attention devoted to irony since the eighteenth century, the study of irony remains in a varied enterprise. As we mentioned earlier, Douglas C. Muecke is quite right to suggest listing examples of irony rather than defining it exactly.²⁵⁹ Yet, by making use of the legacy of the earliest critics of irony, it is possible to yield a working definition of irony for this immediate project investigating the rhetorical use of irony in the MPN. Employing the simplest and yet the most fundamental definition of irony—the use of words to reveal something other than their literal meaning—and at the same time considering irony’s complex literary dimension, the dissertation proposes the working definition as follows: *irony is a persuasive, indirect, and economical revelation,²⁶⁰ pointing to a reality²⁶¹ different from the masked appearance on the plane of word, event, or character.* First, irony is persuasive²⁶² because it is an effective rhetorical device proven and sought after by the skillful speaker-author

²⁵⁹ Muecke, *Compass*, 19.

²⁶⁰ O’Day, *Fourth Gospel*, 31.

²⁶¹ Kaufer, “Irony and Rhetorical Strategy,” 93 calls it as “the kernel of irony.”

²⁶² The concept of “rhetorical use of irony” is the same as the idea of “persuasiveness of irony.” In Chapters One and Two, the dissertation already has examined the common emphasis regarding the rhetorical-persuasive function of irony claimed by both ancient and modern critics alike.

to which the long history of rhetoric testifies. Irony is not a tool for a fool, or a dull-mind but rather for an intellectual, a keen mind. Second, irony is by no means an ordinary literal interaction because it represents the author's ingenuity and indirection²⁶³ within the narrative. It is indirect because it is designed by an ironist with the intention of rejecting a falsely assumed belief presented on the surface level. Traditionally, Cicero defined irony as a fine device for indirection, reflected in his formula, "saying one thing and meaning another (*aliud dicere ac sentias*)."²⁶⁴ Further, irony's forceful indirectness can be analogous to Horace's whetstone (*cos*) that sharpens the knife, but of itself cannot cut (*acutum reddere quae ferrum valet, exsors ipsa secandi*).²⁶⁵ Third, irony is an economical tool of communication which is more effective than straight talk. Richard A. Lanham says that the more sophisticated the irony, the more that is implied, the less stated.²⁶⁶ Therefore, irony "communicates more in less space"²⁶⁷ in the form and condition of *reductio*²⁶⁸ (reduction/ conciseness). Finally and most importantly, irony is an act of revelation pointing to the substance or meaning of word, event, or character in communication.

The given working definition of irony will further illuminate and govern each form of "conventional irony" through which the MPN's theological messages regarding the death of Jesus are revealed.

²⁶³ Some scholars use the term "pretense" instead of "indirection." See Herbert H. Clark and Richard J. Gerrig, "On the Pretense Theory of Irony," *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General* 113 (1984): 121–22.

²⁶⁴ Cicero, *De or.*, II. lxvii. 269.

²⁶⁵ Horace, *Ars*, 303. And modern scholars such as Natanson, "Indirection," 39–40, Spencer, "The Wise Fool," 349–60 and Holland, *Divine Irony*, 156 all highlight the indirect nature of irony as its top quality. Particularly, Tindale and Gough, "The Use of Irony in Argumentation," 6 opine regarding whether irony should be spelled out or explained saying that "if the latter, then we would probably cease to have a case of irony."

²⁶⁶ Lanham, *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms*, 61.

²⁶⁷ Booth, "Empire," 729.

²⁶⁸ Tindale and Gough, "The Use of Irony," 13.

Constitution of Irony: Former Elements of Irony²⁶⁹

Once a working definition of irony is in place, identifying the formal elements of irony is also achievable. This dissertation proposes several key elements of irony including 1) the ironist, 2) a perceptive reader of irony, 3) the collaborative bond of communication between the ironist and his reader, 4) a double-layered story phenomenon,²⁷⁰ 5) a fundamental conflict (ὁ ἀγών), opposition, disparity or incomparability between the two levels of story,²⁷¹ 6) an element of “innocence,”²⁷² manifested in two ways as blind self-confidence on the part of the victim of irony²⁷³ and/or the pretension by the ironist, and 7) the literary pleasure of irony that yields an insightful revelation, an *enlightenment* in the mind of the reader. These requirements are for both the constitution and interpretation of irony.

The Ironist

The ironist forges irony for communication. The irony of a narrative arises through the intentional shaping of that narrative by the ironist.²⁷⁴ The ironist in literature is typically perceived as either the implied author, who arranges material coherently and meaningfully with an ironic intention, or a character within the narrative, who can be labeled the εἴρων. In cases where the ironist is not a character in the story but rather the omniscient, undramatized, third person implied author, his presence is felt through the narrator’s voice, as he provides

²⁶⁹ Muecke, *Compass*, 19–20 designates three elements: a double-layered story phenomenon, some kind of opposition between the two story levels, and an element of “innocence,” as the formal requirements of irony apart from the subjective and aesthetic requirements.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 19.

²⁷¹ Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 26 uses the phrase, the “clash between appearance and reality in events or language” in his explanation of dramatic irony. Also, see Muecke, *Compass*, 19–20

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 20.

²⁷³ Amante, “Ironic Speech Acts,” 80–81 calls it a “target for the irony.”

²⁷⁴ The existence of the ironist and his intentional creation of irony correspond to Booth’s theory of “Stable Irony,” which the dissertation adopts as a methodology along with the stance of narrative criticism.

information and presents the story through plot and characterization.²⁷⁵ The ironist's intention forms a rhetorical net which invites the reader into his unique communication conspiracy, that is, irony.²⁷⁶ The ironist directs language and the purposefully arranged plot of the story to be detected by his intended reader. Accordingly, he tills the ground, *the story*, and plants²⁷⁷ cues along the furrows of the plot pointing to his ironic intention, hoping to enlighten the reader with some lofty idea(s) and to share the pleasure of knowledge of hidden things. This is why David J. Amante considers that the ironist undertakes by far the most unique role since he must intend his irony and be capable of giving signals²⁷⁸ to his ironic meanings.²⁷⁹

The enterprise of the ironist is the communication of *meaning*—the content of *reality* that really matters. In this regard, interpretation of irony is similar to a treasure hunt. The ironist, into whose hands the treasure is entrusted, draws the map of signs attractive to the conscious reader who is engaged in searching for the meaning. Therefore, the ironist rejects literal judgment,²⁸⁰ namely, the child of surface reading. Otherwise, he would use an overt statement to make his point. He delights in devising a relatively new, less trodden path for meaning to follow. The ironist must be quite literarily competent and ingenious because if irony has to be disenchanting, meaning, bluntly “spelled out,” then its effect is either diminished or wrongfully negated. On the

²⁷⁵ Kaufer, “Irony and Rhetorical Strategy,” 90 mentions that “literary critics are sensitive to irony as a technique of indicating, as through character or plot development, and intention or attitude opposite to that which is actually or ostensibly stated.”

²⁷⁶ Holland, *Divine Irony*, 57–58.

²⁷⁷ Amante, “Ironic Speech Acts,” 83 asserts that “it is mandatory that some clue to irony be provided by the ironist.”

²⁷⁸ The common signals pointing to the existence of irony depend on the type of irony. Some intelligible linguistic and contextual clues of irony are: use of some form of the word *irony*, use of hyperbole, use of understatement, a lack of some sort such as lack of coherence, lack of taste, lack of continuity, lack of correspondence with reality, effective operation of the context such as repetition, the conflict between propositions regarding words, situations and characters and betrayal against exhibited knowledge and beliefs of the implied author. Some of them are mentioned in Booth, *Rhetoric*, 49–73 and Hagen, “Verbal Irony,” 11.

²⁷⁹ Amante, “Ironic Speech Acts,” 81–83.

other hand, if it is too elusive, then the intended reader will miss it. As an ironically capable reader must know *when to stop* by giving priority to the textual information, the ironist is also responsible for acquiring the skill to communicate his revelation. Though irony is a work of subtlety and shock, the ironist can be neither transparent nor too subtle.

David Kaufer theorizes that an important function of the ironist is to “bifurcate his audience”²⁸¹ by using rhetorical strategies.²⁸² According to Kaufer, the ironist possesses the ability to associate himself with or distance himself from his audience. Yet, for the very end of communication, the ironist employs a tactic: “foregrounding norms.”²⁸³ He does so to establish a thematic consistency through a congruent presentation and to form an agreement with his intended reader, which well implies his authorial intention(s)²⁸⁴ to build a cooperative relationship with the reader. Throughout the narrative, the ironist purposefully repeats the norm(s) of the story by using complementary signifiers, images, and literary cues that effectively glue episodes together under the ironic rubric of the story he intends to create. The ironist’s act of “foregrounding norms,”²⁸⁵ constructs the “yellow brick road” leading Dorothy—a committed reader of irony—safely back home: *interpreting irony*. The norms that the ironist instills make the reader’s interpretative task achievable through their function as the litmus paper indicating that

²⁸⁰ Kaufer, “Irony and Rhetorical Strategy,” 96 and Duke, *Irony*, 34.

²⁸¹ Kaufer, “Irony and Rhetorical Strategy,” 97–98.

²⁸² *Ibid.*, 100. Also, Brueggemann, *Solomon*, xii explicates irony as a literary strategy for exposing contradictions which normal perception can miss.

²⁸³ David S. Kaufer and Christine M. Neuwirth, “Foregrounding Norms and Ironic Communication,” *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* 68 (1982): 28–36. Tindale and Gough, “The Use of Irony,” 4 calls Kaufer’s “norms” as “background norms.”

²⁸⁴ Booth, *Rhetoric*, 11

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 33–34 suggests a similar idea in identifying the presence of unstated assumptions that the ironist and his reader share because his theory of stable irony is based on the notion of the authorial clues, i.e. norms or perspectives that enable the ironic communication between the two parties. Correspondingly, Kaufer, “irony and rhetorical strategy,” 93 evaluates Booth’s stable irony as an attempt to restore some of the ironist’s lost significance.

some statements, events, and characters in opposition to them are susceptible to the play of irony.²⁸⁶

The ironist occupies a spiritually high seat, keeping an “aesthetic distance”²⁸⁷ or “detached sympathy”²⁸⁸ from his characters and hiding his emotional involvement. His control over the story with a bird’s-eye view resembles the divine attribute of omniscience. Thirlwall perceives a theological cast to irony. He sees that irony, like everything else in dramatic poetry, grows out of the religious or philosophic sentiments of the poet.²⁸⁹ The ironist is like the divine—human, exercising wide, sweeping vision and complete control.²⁹⁰ Muecke supports this view by saying that God, as the ultimate “outsider,” provides an analogy for the ironist²⁹¹ because God is the ironist par excellence on the ground that he is omniscient, infinite, transcendent, absolute and free. The ironist is close to the divine point of view not only because he approaches the matter with the divine attitude and confidence²⁹² but also because he is concerned with the divine reality and objectives which operate on superior ground.²⁹³ He is free, secure, and detached. His freedom is expressed by his mobility, his security is ascertained by his elevated understanding, and his

²⁸⁶ Along this line of view, Tindale and Gough, “The Use of Irony,” 10 write that “the success of the ironic argument will depend very much upon the skill of the writer as an ironist, on his ability to relate his ideas to his reader through the initial bond of agreement.”

²⁸⁷ Thompson, *The Dry Mock*, 22.

²⁸⁸ Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 251.

²⁸⁹ Thirlwall, “Sophocles,” 489–90, 535–37.

²⁹⁰ Holland, *Divine Irony*, 54 speaks of “godly control” of the ironist.

²⁹¹ Muecke, *Compass*, 228.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, 224.

²⁹³ The dissertation calls an ironist who takes a role of a medium to reveal the divine cause, “the divine ironist.” See the detailed discussion in “Purpose of the Dissertation” of Chapter One. Especially, Williams, “Irony and Lament,” 51–74 and Hopper, “Irony—the Pathos of the Middle,” 31–40 investigate the existence of the divine ironist(s), namely, the prophets, in biblical literature.

detachment is testified to by his ability to laugh. *His freedom* is the sign of mental agility,²⁹⁴ *his security* of spiritual superiority, and *his ability to laugh* of invulnerability.

An Ironically Capable Reader

Irony does not take place without an audience.²⁹⁵ The ironist intends a happy “marriage” with the reader who is capable of detecting and decoding irony—the ironist’s encoded “love” language necessary for building a relationship. If the ironist is a character within the story, the εἴρων, his partner may be an ironic ally within the story whose perception is keen enough to understand the words and actions of the εἴρων. Yet, if the ironist is the implied author whose voice narrates the story, his intended counterpart will be an ironically capable, implied reader. Both are the constructs of the story and their presence is anchored in the narrative.

The ideal reader of irony is expected to be competent, conscious, and perceptive. He faithfully follows the textual information given by the ironist so that he knows the reality of the story better than the characters in the narrative.²⁹⁶ Hoggatt describes the role of the reader as the jury who is summoned by the ironist to pass the verdict on the issue in discussion.²⁹⁷ Therefore, the ironically capable reader should be able to demonstrate perceptive, measured judgment, as well as sensitivity towards the strategy of the ironist through which the content of the revelation is disclosed. What he accomplishes is a “sympathetic reading of the writer’s ironic intent.”²⁹⁸

One difficult question to answer is whether every real reader can be an ideal reader at his first attempt to read irony. Since irony meets the eye of the reader at a high altitude rather than

²⁹⁴ Muecke, *Compass*, 247 writes that “the ironist’s virtue is mental alertness and agility. His business is to make life unbearable for troglodytes, to keep open house for ideas, and to go on asking questions.”

²⁹⁵ Hagen, “Verbal Irony,” 10–11.

²⁹⁶ Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 229.

²⁹⁷ Hoggatt, *Irony*, 119.

²⁹⁸ Tindale and Gough, “The Use of Irony,” 6.

low ground, the reader with an attentive mind needs to climb up the ladder of information provided by the ironist within the bounds of the narrative. Unfortunately, there always would be the danger of either an under-reading or over-reading of irony due to reading errors into which a real human reader can fall.²⁹⁹ The impact of irony increases for a perceptive, skilled, and experienced reader as opposed to a dull-witted, naïve (i.e. poorly informed) and inexperienced, virgin reader. Christopher W. Tindale and James Gough discuss how the success of ironic communication very much depends on the skill of the writer as an ironist, more specifically on his ability to relate his ideas to his reader through the initial bond of agreement.³⁰⁰ They also, however, mention that some skill is called forth on the part of the reader because the ability to recognize irony comes with experience.³⁰¹ This notion appropriately corresponds to R. Alan Culpepper's view that the use of irony³⁰² encourages "repeated readings of a narrative" because "even the most perceptive reader is never sure he or she received all the signals the text is sending."³⁰³ As the narrative unfolds, the reader of irony is obliged to process the story on a deeper level by reminiscing on the information given, connecting the dots and correcting his anticipation against each disclosure that occurs in the narrative. Eventually, these activities will enable him to accomplish meaningful process towards the goal: *interpreting irony*.

Stable irony presupposes a deep sense of commitment and responsibility from the part of the reader, which is not only an attestation to a bond³⁰⁴ that he shares with the ironist but is also

²⁹⁹ Booth, *Rhetoric*, 15 mentions Hume's lists on "external hindrances" and "internal disorders" that disable the proper interpretation of irony. In 222–227, he further explicates "five crippling handicaps" of the reader: ignorance, inability to pay attention (i.e. being blind-sighted), prejudice (i.e. dogmatic), lack of practice (i.e. inexperienced), and emotional inadequacy (i.e. obstinacy).

³⁰⁰ Tindale and Gough, "The Use of Irony," 5, 10.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

³⁰² Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 151, pairs irony with symbolism.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, 151.

³⁰⁴ Thompson, *The Dry Mock*, 23. Also, Hoggatt, *Irony*, xi notes that irony requires the reader's spiritual

an inevitable product of that relationship. Through becoming a conspirator of the ironist by accepting his values and beliefs,³⁰⁵ the reader attempts to reconstruct irony,³⁰⁶ which requires willingness and humility.³⁰⁷ Reconstructing irony is analogous to building a new house in a new location.³⁰⁸ Paul D. Duke explains what this means.

In using irony an author invites the reader to reject an ostensible structure of meaning. The meaning to be rejected is often far more than the literal meaning of a particular sentence or expression, but rather a whole structured “world” of meanings or values which the author spurns . . . the perceptive reader, however, will abandon this house of meaning, mentally demolishing it, and from its rubble leap to the new structure on a higher site where the author and all sound readers dwell together. From this new house of meaning the author and perceptive reader can view the rejected structure and its uniformed inhabitants at pleasurable distance.³⁰⁹

Once again, the reader’s evaluation of whether some specific words, events or character depictions are ironic must appeal to the whole presentation of the story and the evaluative points of view of the ironist that the reader adopts as norms. The reader’s submission to the ironist’s perspective is the token of his willingness to be led, instructed and reformed.

The Implicit, Interpretative Community and the Victim of Irony

The general relationship between the ironist and the implied reader is either marked by association and sympathy or by antipathy and aloofness.³¹⁰ The ironist persuades his reader to join an “inner circle.”³¹¹ As we examined above, in Kaufer’s theory of “bifurcation,”³¹² the ironist

sensitivity.

³⁰⁵ Holland, *Divine Irony*, 51–52.

³⁰⁶ Booth, *Rhetoric*, 11 mentions the “reconstruction of irony” in a sense of the interpretation of irony. The successful reconstruction of stable irony depends on an agreement that the ironist and his intended reader share.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 12. Humility is an obvious trait demanded from the reader of irony because of the self-imposed limit of stable irony, in other words, the control of the ironist.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 11.

³⁰⁹ Duke, *Irony*, 34.

³¹⁰ Kaufer, “Irony and Rhetorical Strategy,” 94.

³¹¹ John J. Enck and Elizabeth T. Foster, eds., *The Comic in Theory and Practice* (N.Y.: Appleton-Century-

intends to place his reader in an *either/ or* situation³¹³ by subtly demanding interpretation which chooses a side, which creates a double audience as Henry W. Fowler describes:

Irony is a form of utterance that postulates a double audience, consisting of one party that hearing shall hear and shall not understand, and another party that, when more is meant than meets the ear, is aware both of that more and of the outsiders' incomprehension.³¹⁴

The social-rhetorical function of irony, which forms a unique community of interpretation between the ironist and the reader, has been discussed by a few scholars. Gerry C. Hoggatt³¹⁵ and Gail R. O'Day³¹⁶ assert that irony nurtures a sense of community, and Chaim Perelman speaks of "agreement" between the two parties.³¹⁷ Their concepts of interpretive community correspond to Wayne C. Booth's "kindred spirits,"³¹⁸ David Kaufer's "close-knit group,"³¹⁹ Kenneth Burke's "fundamental kinship,"³²⁰ and Glenn S. Holland's "our kind of person" who possesses the sympathetic view co-shared.³²¹ Although Booth notices the paradoxical nature of irony which is inclusive and at the same time exclusive, in his discussion of stable irony he gives weight to the inclusiveness of irony by explicating that "every irony inevitably builds a community of

Crofts, 1960), 4; Clark and Gerrig, "On the Pretense Theory of Irony," 122.

³¹² Kaufer, "Irony and Rhetorical Strategy," 97–98.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, 97.

³¹⁴ Henry W. Fowler, *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage* (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1959), 295–96.

³¹⁵ In his study of irony in Mark's Gospel, Hoggatt, *Irony*, 4 believes that irony serves the community of saints. Compare with the discussion of Booth, *Rhetoric*, 27–29.

³¹⁶ O'Day, *Fourth Gospel*, 31 notes that irony "reveals by asking the reader to make judgments and decisions about the relative value of stated and intended meanings, drawing the reader into its vision of truth, so that when the reader finally understands, he or she becomes a member of the community that shares that vision, constituted by those who also followed the author's lead."

³¹⁷ Chaim Perelman, *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise of Argumentation* (tran. John Wilkinson and Purcell Weaver; Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969), 208.

³¹⁸ Booth, *Rhetoric*, 28.

³¹⁹ Kaufer, "Irony and Rhetorical Strategy," 100 notes that irony pursues group cohesion.

³²⁰ Burke, *A Grammar of Motives*, 514.

³²¹ Holland, *Divine Irony*, 49–50.

believers even as it excludes.³²² On the same note, David Kaufer notes that irony makes the reader commit himself in “evaluative judgments”³²³ since irony is an evaluative expression. According to him, ironies are “intended to be transparent to an understander”³²⁴ through their “communicative function.”³²⁵

The message of irony is disclosed through a dim glass, in that it is necessary to be discerned and appreciated. A rhetorical posture of irony entices the reader into the interactive relation with the ironist and his message. The success of irony in building this relationship³²⁶ depends on the reader’s adoption of the values of the ironist.³²⁷ The ironist does not intend to spoon-feed the reader but demands attentive involvement. Due to the covert and indirect nature of irony, the ploy of the ironist has often been questioned as a tool of elitism.³²⁸ To some degree, this type of question is justified because the ironist sustains a privileged status. He is godlike in his superior knowledge and ability to engineer not only the story’s world but also the way of thinking taken by the reader. He possesses facts and understanding which characters of the narrative could not obtain or have access to. In this regard, he seems to be more than an ordinary

³²² Booth, *Rhetoric*, 28.

³²³ David Kaufer, “Ironic Evaluations,” *Communications Monographs* 48 (1981): 25.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, 26.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, 26. However, some scholars like Robert Fowler, consider the motive of irony to be exclusion rather than inclusion. See Enck and Forter, *The Comic in Theory and Practice*, 4 and Kaufer, “Irony and Rhetorical Strategy,” 95.

³²⁶ Kaufer, *ibid.*, 90.

³²⁷ Booth, *Rhetoric*, 171; Dane, “The Incompetent Reader,” 69.

³²⁸ Kierkegaard, *Concept of Irony with Continual Reference to Socrates*, 248 criticizes irony of elitism, “the ironic figure of speech has still another property that characterizes all irony, a certain superiority deriving from its not wanting to be understood immediately, even though it wants to be understood, with the result that this figure looks down, as it were, on plain and simple talk that everyone can promptly understand; it travels around, so to speak, in an exclusive incognito and looks down pitying from this high position on ordinary, prosaic talk. In everyday affairs, the ironic figure of speech appears especially in the higher circles as a prerogative belonging to the same category as the *bon ton* [good form] that requires smiling at innocence and looking upon virtue as narrow-mindedness, although one still believes in it up to a point.” Further, Holland, *Divine Irony*, 157–59 writes that “irony is elitist, that is, it is usually understood as something that sets apart an elite . . . from the masses . . . this elitism accounts in part for irony’s reputation since the time of Cicero as a gentlemanly form of discourse.”

writer, perhaps a man of clairvoyance and conviction. Likewise, irony is often talked about as something designed to deceive some readers and thus backfires by making some shrewder readers feel proud of themselves.³²⁹

The possibility that irony is for elites is neither easy nor pleasant to swallow. Certainly, irony is not for a fool, who takes words, situations, or characters as they seem at face value, especially when there are literary signals inviting him to reconsider the object of irony under discussion. Nevertheless, the reader of irony need not be viewed in elitist terms,³³⁰ because even a reader of extraordinary intelligence can unduly exert himself over the text or be blind-sided by the handicaps to which an inexperienced reader is susceptible. As result, he may completely miss the point of irony. Instead, a so-called ironically capable reader is characterized as open-minded and perceptive to a new and superior idea.³³¹ He is aware of his status as an observer and is willing to give up his perspective and dogma. In this sense, the reader's ability to recognize irony depends on the operation of the *intelligence* and *sophistication*³³² of the reader, being guided by acknowledgement and willing subjection to the authority outside him, primarily of the ironist who communicates through the text. The reader seeks to relocate himself on the higher ground of idea and value³³³ by taking the pleasure of sharing the ironist's bird's eye view.³³⁴ In the end, the

³²⁹ Booth, "The Pleasures and Pitfalls of Irony," 2.

³³⁰ Dane, "The Incompetent Reader," 53–72 underlines many attempts to define literary competence, especially Chomsky's effort, in contrast to the defense of literary incompetence. He compares the given technical standards of literary competence with the overall lack of interests in defining and assisting literary incompetence. In page 63, he says that "the victims of irony are not incompetent in Chomskyan terms . . . A victim must be able to understand the literal level of irony. Furthermore, there need not be a wide gulf separating sophisticated readers of irony from victims . . . A reader with the literary competence sufficient to make him a victim of irony can at least have the *ironic* message (which is in itself no more complex than the literal message) explained to him. In other words, he need not be a sophisticated reader in order to understand what these supposedly sophisticated messages are."

³³¹ Thirlwall, "Sophocles," 486 emphasizes that irony always involves a level of "superior understanding."

³³² Thrall and Hibbard, *A Handbook to Literature*, 248 asserts that "the ability to recognize irony is one of the surest tests of intelligence and sophistication."

³³³ Powell, *Narrative*, 30 and Weaver, "Power and Powerlessness," 466.

reader will enjoy his elevated, advantageous position by passing judgment on characters in the story.³³⁵ Technically, such an ironically perceptive reader is called the *confederate* of the ironist³³⁶ or a partner of the ironist in their “reflexive relationship.”³³⁷ It is questionable whether the confederate needs to concur with the ironist on every proposition in order to understand irony. The dissertation presupposes, however, that the ideal reader will adopt the normative point of view of the narrative, because the communication of irony means more than an intellectual exercise. It requires the reader’s submission to the idea and value which the ironist espouses on the ground that sharing values is an engagement to a presupposed relationship on a deeper level, which not only signifies but also qualifies the implicit confederacy between the two parties. In this way and only through this way, irony brings about an *impact*³³⁸ on the reader’s outlook, on a grand scale, in his life.

The ironist can target various objects about which he has a mission to expose.³³⁹ The character(s) within the story as well as the reader(s) who will grasp only the literal meaning are called the “victims” of the ironist.³⁴⁰ The most significant characteristic of the victim of irony is his confidence in his own wisdom, which eventually leads him into the intricate trap of irony. Typical cases of victims are those to whom one speaks ironically, those of whom one speaks ironically, and correspondingly, those unable to perceive that they have been ironically

³³⁴ This is what Booth, *Rhetoric*, 12 calls a “delightful leap of intuition.”

³³⁵ Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 229.

³³⁶ Kaufer, “Irony and Rhetorical Strategy,” 100; Tindale and Gough, “The Use of Irony,” 2.

³³⁷ Tindale and Gough, *ibid.*, 6.

³³⁸ Hagen, “Verbal Irony,” 13.

³³⁹ Muecke, *Compass*, 34 says that “the object of irony may be a person . . . an attitude, a belief, a social custom or institution, a philosophical system, a religion, even a whole civilization, even life itself.”

³⁴⁰ Tindale and Gough, “The Use of Irony,” 2. Also, Clark and Gerrig, “On the Pretense Theory of Irony,” 122 notes that irony generally has victims of two kinds. The first is the unseeing or injudicious person the ironist is pretending to be, and the second is the uncomprehending audience not in the inner circle.

addressed, those impotent to recognize irony not directed against them, those too inattentive to notice that they are victims of circumstances or intrigue, and those unable to understand that their own words betray them. At times, victims of irony are naïve enough to expect that the ironist will be upfront about his intention, or they may simply not yield to the authority of the ironist by adopting his view.³⁴¹ At other times, the “victims” will be characters within the narrative who are simply unaware of how the narration is ironically victimizing them. It is important to acknowledge once more that the primary intent of irony is not to exclude but rather to include (i.e. “communicate” or form “an agreement”) despite of the secretive characteristics of irony.³⁴²

Therefore, Wayne C. Booth rightly observes that

The bringing together of author and reader is the single most valued function of irony in literature . . . consider once again a value that . . . to achieve ironic communication is a worthwhile thing in itself.³⁴³

The fact that irony is favored as the means of persuasion throughout the generations testifies that the corroboration between the ironist and his reader is the primary intent of irony. Irony persuades the reader by implicitly suggesting a particular reading of the text that is under consideration.³⁴⁴ Therefore, the reading of irony is none other than the product of the reader’s adherence to “norms for communication”³⁴⁵ implanted by the ironist to assist his summoned partner. Based on this logic, the victim of irony is one who is ignorant or unmindful of these

³⁴¹ Hoggatt, *Irony*, 156 speaks of an “unyielding reader.”

³⁴² Hagen, “Verbal Irony,” 8 says that by no means is irony a transparent symbolization, but it demands of its practitioners a more than ordinary amount of attention. On the same note, Tanaka, “The Concept of Irony,” 49 speaks of the possibility of confusion in the interpretation of irony since everything depends on the hearer’s recognition of some ambiguous inference by which the ironic speaker’s intentions are recognized.

³⁴³ Booth, *Rhetoric*, 204–205, 217.

³⁴⁴ Tindale and Gough, “The Use of Irony,” 6.

³⁴⁵ Kaufer, “Ironic Evaluations,” 36–37.

background norms³⁴⁶ essential to successful communication that yields “understanding,” which is the glue for community of the ironist—the reader. The victim is an outsider not comprehending the idea and value of the reality beyond what the literal meaning of the story can supply.

A Dualistic Story—World and Its Contrast

Irony operates through a *double-layered* or *two-story phenomenon*.³⁴⁷ The ironist carefully presents the two worlds of the story, *what is apparent* and *what is hidden*, in dynamic juxtaposition by implying that there is more than meets the eye because the rhetorical play between the text and subtext of irony generates literary competencies. In contrast to the apparent text, which is inferior and transient, the hidden subtext is superior and unchangeable. In general, irony results when there is a discrepancy between what appears to be happening and what is actually happening. It occurs when the opposite of every expectation or assumption is coming true.³⁴⁸ Therefore, the competent reader must reflect on and evaluate the nature and quality of each layer of the story to reach the proper *interpretation* of irony.³⁴⁹

Each discrete story belongs in a respective conceptual world, with the two worlds in opposition in terms of their irreconcilable, unbridgeable realities. Irony lays bare a different realm of values.³⁵⁰ Each world propagandizes a respective value which requires the reader’s discernment, a so-called value judgment. The relationship between these two worlds of idea and

³⁴⁶ See footnote 461.

³⁴⁷ Muecke, *Compass*, 19. Thompson, *The Dry Mock*, 10 calls it the two levels of story.

³⁴⁸ Arthur Applebee et al., *Literature and Language: English and World Literature* (Evanston, Ill.: McDougal, Little & Co., 1992), 652.

³⁴⁹ Thompson, *The Dry Mock*, 23–29. Furthermore, Booth, *Rhetoric*, 33–39 employs the phrase, “reconstruction of irony,” in place of “interpretation,” “understanding,” “decipherment,” or “translation” of irony. He suggests the four steps of reconstruction: rejecting the literal meaning, trying out alternative interpretation or explanations, deciding about the author’s knowledge or beliefs, and finally choosing a new meaning or cluster of meanings that corresponds to the author’s idea.

³⁵⁰ Holland, *Divine Irony*, 99.

value is not complementary but rather contrasting, conflicting, and hierarchical. Each world espouses a fundamentally different perspective or a distinctive worldview that affects the very structure and presentation of the story, including the nuts and bolts of the events and the inner make-up of the characters. Therefore, it is important for the reader to construe the chief, yet contrasting perspectives, the two threads making the story meaningful and engaging.

Understanding the ideas of the story essential to “meaningful communication” of irony³⁵¹ is like bridging two worlds in opposition.

Irony arises through the clash between the two perspectives that are both expressed in a discrete story-world.³⁵² Yet, not every contradiction produces irony.³⁵³ The ironist, however, intentionally puts these two worlds together in a fundamental contrast causing the conflict.³⁵⁴ Students of irony employ different words to describe this typical two-story phenomenon of irony: (1) an appearance vs. a reality/ substance (what appears to be vs. what really is),³⁵⁵ (2) expectation vs. event,³⁵⁶ (3) how things seem to be vs. how they really are,³⁵⁷ (4) the lower, rejected, literal meaning vs. the superior, new, transcendent meaning; (5) surface meaning vs. below the surface meaning.³⁵⁸ Besides these, more descriptions of the dualistic story phenomenon

³⁵¹ Amante, “Ironic Speech Acts,” 78.

³⁵² Holland, *Divine Irony*, 157; Williams, “Irony and Lament,” 52.

³⁵³ Such as the case of paradox we will examine the difference between dramatic irony and paradox in Chapter Three, “Conventional Irony.”

³⁵⁴ Sedgwick, *Of Irony*, 38 notes that “irony in its general sense precedes and underlies the spectacle of conflict.”

³⁵⁵ Chevalier, *The Ironic Temper*, 42. Sedgwick, *Of Irony*, 13 describes Socratic irony saying, “it is a war upon Appearance waged by a man who knows reality.”

³⁵⁶ Thompson, *The Dry Mock*, 10.

³⁵⁷ Holland, *Divine Irony*, 157.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 37–38. Also, Duke, *Irony*, 34, 37 explains that in using irony an author invites the reader to reject an ostensible structure of meaning.

of irony are found.³⁵⁹ Furthermore, ancient literature characteristically depicts such a phenomenon as the distinction between the human, earthly perspective and the divine, heavenly perspective. In general, an appearance, the lower level of the story, serves as a home ground for the victim of irony in contrast to a reality, the upper level of the story, for the ironically capable reader, who is a confederate of the ironist.

The greater the contrast of appearance and substance, the more critically revelatory is the irony that is present. The superiority of substance in comparison to appearance causes both stark reversal of meaning and fresh awakening in the mind of the reader. Other terms can stand in place of “contrast” to describe the relationship between the two different worlds and their perspectives; scholars speak of disequilibrium, discrepancy,³⁶⁰ contradiction,³⁶¹ incongruity,³⁶²

³⁵⁹ Donald H. Juel, *Messiah and Temple: The Trial of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark* (SBLDS no. 31; Missoula: Scholar's Press, 1977), 73 describes it as mystery for the character vs. revelation to the reader, Duke, *Irony*, 34 as the shadowy (ostensible-apparent) world vs. the real (ideal) world, Powell, *Narrative*, 31 as the shadow vs. the reality, Dane, “The Incompetent Reader,” 64 as the ironic reading (the highest reading) which is that of the consensus vs. the literal reading which is that of the victim, and both Muecke, *Compass*, 19 and Weaver, “Power and Powerlessness,” 466 as the lower ground (the lower level of the story) vs. the high ground (the upper level of the story). Furthermore, see the discussion of vehicle and tenor, Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, 96–97, 104–05. These concepts are applicable to irony. Hoggatt applies James E. Miller's paradigm of “text and subtext” in his study of the Markan irony. It is apparent in the title, *Irony in Mark's Gospel: Text and Subtext*. In page 1, Hoggatt specifies that “the subtitle of this book—“Text and subtext”—is taken from a discussion of the relationship of language and thought in James Miller's “rhetoric of imagination,” *Word, Self, Reality* . . . Miller's distinction between text and subtext lies at the core of this rhetoric of irony. Irony occurs when the elements of the story-line provoke the reader to see beneath the surface of the text to deeper significances.” Also, Hoggatt, *ibid.*, 61 employs another words of description, the secondary vs. the primary meaning of double entendre. If the two levels of meanings are not necessarily opposed to each other, the reader is called to recognize both levels of meaning. However, certainly the primary meaning always supersedes the secondary meaning of the text in its quality and significance.

³⁶⁰ Thompson, *The Dry Mock*, 10.

³⁶¹ Muecke, *Compass*, 20.

³⁶² *Ibid.* Also, Joseph T. Shipley, *Dictionary of World Literature, Criticism, Forms, Technique* (N.Y.: Philosophical Library, 1943), 331 writes that irony is “a device whereby . . . incongruity is introduced in the very structure of the plot, by having the spectators aware of elements in the situation of which one or more of the characters involved are ignorant.”

incompatibility,³⁶³ dissonance, tension, opposition,³⁶⁴ or confrontation between incompatible elements invalidating each other.³⁶⁵

Moving away from the theory onto its practice within the story world, we can illustrate via Greek comedy,³⁶⁶ how each discrete world(view) is represented through the opposed characters, known as the εἴρων and ἀλαζών. The character called the εἴρων is an understating figure³⁶⁷ who deliberately presents himself as less than what he actually is. Nevertheless, he ultimately triumphs over the ἀλαζών, the self-deceiving impostor³⁶⁸ who grossly exaggerates himself to be more than who he really is. Historically, the Platonic Socrates embodied this triumphant figure, the εἴρων, who exposes the ἀλαζών as foolish and blind by speaking and acting on the reality that is beyond appearance. In contrast to the εἴρων, the ignorance of the ἀλαζών causes him to speak and act in ways which are to be rejected from the point of view of higher reality. Unfortunately, he is the champion of every idea denounced by the εἴρων. Yet, the ἀλαζών firmly believes that the norm to which he is clinging is unassailable. His self-sufficiency begets a dramatic conflict (ἀγών or ἀγωνία) with the εἴρων,³⁶⁹ that almost always finds its resolution in the victory of the εἴρων. Since the principles upheld by the ἀλαζών are inferior to the εἴρων's, the conflict inherent to their incompatibility produces a sense of absurdity and pain. The ἀλαζών is prone to elicit a bitter smile, which is fundamentally different from lighthearted laughter, on the reader's face

³⁶³ Williams, "Irony and Lament," 51.

³⁶⁴ Muecke, *Compass*, 20.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 29.

³⁶⁶ The dramatic characters, εἴρων and ἀλαζών show up not only in comedy but also in tragedy. In tragedy, the ἀλαζών as an individual or a group is a stock character who consists of the hostile opponent(s) of the protagonist.

³⁶⁷ Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 201.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 200.

³⁶⁹ Irony originates in a conflict. See Williams, "Irony and Lament," 52.

when his devious nature and impotence are exposed as laughable in diametrical opposition to the superiority of the εἶρων.

In essence, irony is an “outside” perspective,³⁷⁰ offering new insights. It challenges an unquestioned dogma, and confronts habitual regularity and convention with the prospect of a higher perspective lying close to the heart of reality. The reader, in his search for reality, faces the telling contrast which the dualistic story world provides and reconsiders the ostensible meaning of the story through the means of negation,³⁷¹ subtraction,³⁷² and an interpretative leap.³⁷³ A double-layered story of irony implies that the reader cannot consistently embrace both the literal and non-literal meanings of irony.³⁷⁴ He accepts one and rejects the other since, from the point view of the ironist, one is superior to the other.

An Element of Innocence

The idea of “innocence” as an ingredient of irony largely depends on Douglas C. Muecke’s contribution. Irony requires either the ironist or the victim to exhibit “innocence” in distinctive ways. The innocence of the former means literary dexterity as well as control in contrast to the latter’s ignorance and impotence. Muecke opines that

There is in irony an element of “innocence”; either a victim is confidently unaware of the very possibility of there being an upper level or point of view that invalidates his own, or an ironist pretends not to be aware of it.³⁷⁵

³⁷⁰ Holland, *Divine Irony*, 38.

³⁷¹ Booth, *Rhetoric*, 18–19, 22–23, 25, 27. The operation of negation distinguishes irony from other figures.

³⁷² *Ibid.*, 27.

³⁷³ Duke, *Irony*, 15, 34, 37. And Weaver, “Power and Powerlessness,” 454 describes it as “an act of mental gymnastics.”

³⁷⁴ Kaufer, “Irony and Rhetorical Strategy,” 97.

³⁷⁵ Muecke, *Compass*, 20.

We previously mentioned two kinds of victims: the character within the story and the imperceptive reader outside the story. In general, the victim of irony is the character in the story (sometimes certain character group), who functions as the *ἀλαζών*,³⁷⁶ on the far end of the scale from his counterpart, the *εἴρων*. The reader can become the victim of irony by forming an agreement with the *ἀλαζών* rather than with the *εἴρων*, generally known the ironist. This condition eventually leads him to failure as an implied reader of irony, namely, the ironically capable reader whom the ironist summons him to be. Such a reader proves himself inadequate in reading irony. His adherence to the ideas rejected by the ironist³⁷⁷ is distance from the ironist.

The typical victim exhibits “innocence,” not comprehending the ironic saying, the ironic situation or his own role as the victim of irony. The term “innocence” as a constitutive element of irony refers not to the victim’s ethical disposition but to his naïvete regarding the dual-layered reality of the story. Therefore, the dissertation prefers specific expressions such as blind confidence or arrogant ignorance to the term “innocence.” If the guilt of the *innocent ἀλαζών* is his “confident unawareness or impercipient,”³⁷⁸ the guilt of the *innocent* reader implies his stubbornness or inexperience. That “innocence” is “being guilty” is oxymoronic, yet characteristically possible in the arena of irony.

In the story world, the *ἀλαζών* assumes that he is surely right in his speaking and acting. Clinging to the lower level of the story, “nothing can be wrong,” he says to himself. Yet, his strong conviction regarding his stability testifies to his role as a victim.³⁷⁹ He does not have the ability to understand the bigger picture of reality beyond the world of appearances in which he

³⁷⁶ Ibid., 30 notes that “the irony of most ironic situations cannot exist without a complementary alazony.”

³⁷⁷ In footnote 299, Muecke talks about the various objects of irony that the ironist can target to repudiate.

³⁷⁸ Muecke, *Compass*, 30.

³⁷⁹ Ibid., 20.

finds himself at home. The sense of security of the ἀλαζών often corresponds to the idea that he is a man of ὕβρις (insolence). He is intellectually blind and spiritually arrogant.³⁸⁰ He is not capable of suspecting that things may not be as he supposes or expects them to be because he does not have a single bit of doubt that he is mistaken. Therefore, Muecke says, “Simple ignorance is safe from irony, but ignorance compounded with the least degree of confidence counts as intellectual hubris and is a punishable offence.”³⁸¹

The other kind of “innocence” exhibited by the ironist, technically the εἴρων, is a totally different concept. It is not the kind of self-inflicted blindness carried by the ἀλαζών, but rather a low-keyed dissimulation (*dissimulatio, simulatio*) or pretense (προσποίησις)³⁸² that the ironist takes up as his chosen mode. Unlike the ἀλαζών, the ironist is a man of superior knowledge and ideas. To communicate values that he highly esteems, he chooses to speak and behave as less than who he actually is. In other words, the ironist operates in and behind an “innocent *persona*,”³⁸³ a disguise of his ego. The ancient Greeks thought once that the disguise of innocence favored by the ironist was contemptible, a tool of willful beguilement or deception. However, commentators since Aristotle have seen irony in speaking or writing as a sign of sophistication for learned freeborn. The innocence of the ironist is considered the ironist’s unique tactic as well as the ability to filter out those who are compatible with himself³⁸⁴ and simultaneously disclose

³⁸⁰ Ibid., 38 describes that the victims of irony are “too confident of their wisdom and too ignorant of their ignorance.”

³⁸¹ Ibid., 30.

³⁸² Ibid., 20 notes one exception to this that “in sarcasm or in very overt irony the ironist does not pretend to be unaware of his real meaning and his victim is immediately aware of it.” Also see further discussion regarding the pretense of irony, Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 5.

³⁸³ Muecke, *Compass*, 34.

³⁸⁴ The compatible reader of the ironist can be described as one who is able to perform the “intellectual dance,” teaming with the ironist. Booth, “Empire,” 729 describes the “intellectual dance” as the reader’s mental process for understanding, which yields a tight bond with the ironist.

the impropriety of those who are not with him. It is a strategy to catch two rabbits by throwing a single stone. In other words, to “understand irony” is commensurate to “understanding the ironist’s innocence,” and the ironist’s innocence creates a covert irony.

Through the purposeful operation of innocence, the ironist produces the insiders as well as the outsiders within and outside the story world. He may gain some confederates characterized by their mental agility and spiritual compliance. However, through the same innocence, he also risks creating a gradually widening gap between himself and the imperceptive readers. Irony assumes a critical, intellectual distance which highlights the radically different perspectives that eventually divide the readers. However, irony is principally designed for the communication, not of what is said, but of what remains unsaid.³⁸⁵ How irony works is a quite intriguing enterprise. Even though not all opposing elements create irony,³⁸⁶ the most revealing irony is presented when the intensity caused by disparity between the opposite perspectives corresponds to the relationship between unawareness of the victim and the indirectness of the ironist.³⁸⁷ Therefore, the degree of subtlety of the silent ironist hidden behind the innocent *persona* is telltale of the degree of misperception that the victim can presume.

Rarely, the pretense of the ironist can be made transparent or overt in statements like “it is ironical that” or “I am saying ironically.” In this case in which the ironist gives up his “innocence,” Booth’s stable irony, which requires that the ironist conceals his intent, is absent. When the ironist is blatantly honest about his intention by setting aside the secretiveness entitled

³⁸⁵ Holland, *Divine Irony*, 46.

³⁸⁶ Muecke, *Compass*, 29–30 writes that “it is not being ironical merely to place a bucket of water alongside a fire even with the intention of eventually extinguishing it. We have the formal requirement of opposing elements; we need in addition an ironic intention, that is, a pretence that one has no sinister designs upon the fire.”

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 32 says that “the irony may be more striking either by stressing the ironic incongruity or by stressing the ironic ‘innocence.’”

to irony,³⁸⁸ he loses the grip of attraction since his innocence provides both the pulling power and the reader's pleasure in reaping insight and understanding.

The Reward of Irony

The successful reading of irony benefits the implied reader of irony with appropriate rewards. Irony is something like a treasure hunt that requires the reader to decipher an intricate map riddled with clues and inferences, and grants him a hidden treasure, that is, *pleasure*,³⁸⁹ in return.

Irony by its nature is intellectual, economic, and reflexive. It leaves a spiritual etching on the mind of an attentive, yielding observer. Garnett G. Sedgewick writes that "Its force derives from one of the keenest and oldest and least transient pleasures of the reflexive human mind—the pleasure in contrasting Appearance with Reality."³⁹⁰

Since irony is an invitation to mutual interaction toward the goal of communication, membership and pleasure are secured when irony is properly perceived.³⁹¹ Irony is characteristically "pleasant"³⁹² for both the ironist himself and his reader. As we examined earlier in an overview of the conceptual history of irony, Cicero noticed that irony is different from literal speech where the speaker's thoughts are in strict harmony with the thing said.³⁹³ He is the first one who pays attention to the intrinsic pleasure that is felt by ironist because saying one thing and meaning another is inherently gratifying for the speaker. Likewise, the reader

³⁸⁸ Tindale and Gough, "The Use of Irony," 12 and Sonia S'hiri, "Literary Discourse and Irony: Secret Communion and the Pact of Reciprocity," *Edinburg Working Papers in Linguistics*, no. 2 (1991): 126–42.

³⁸⁹ Booth, *Rhetoric*, 13 depicts it as an emotional effect of irony.

³⁹⁰ Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 5.

³⁹¹ Holland, *Divine Irony*, 57–58.

³⁹² Booth, "Empire," 727, 729.

³⁹³ Cicero, *De or.*, II. LXXI. 289.

experiences pleasure by achieving proper competence as a partner of the ironist. The competent reader of irony experiences very compact process: (1) suspicion of irony, (2) the moment of shock, then, (3) the aha-moment, the enlightenment which is not an instant gratification but an enduring effect modifying the reader's perspective.

The pleasure that irony begets is somewhat close to humor.³⁹⁴ Irony often includes a comic element because it creates an absurd, laughable situation in which true relation to reality is discovered in an embarrassing incongruity. Thus, "laughter and understanding"³⁹⁵ are often appropriate responses to irony. However, the essential quality of ironic laughter is neither carefree nor frivolous, because irony is an outcome of painful discord and conflict.³⁹⁶ Thus, Glenn S. Holland once defined irony as the mixture of pleasure and pain.³⁹⁷ And Alan R. Thompson rightly observes that if pure comedy is the effect of a sudden contrast which gratifies our feelings without hurting them, irony results from a comic situation when we are also pained.³⁹⁸ In this sense, "dry mock"³⁹⁹ is a quite suitable name for irony, since the laughter caused by irony withers on the lips of the reader.⁴⁰⁰

Though the corrective and didactic function of irony is suitable for the comic in its exposure of the chronic absurdity of the victim,⁴⁰¹ it is not in fact a device of amusement per se.⁴⁰²

³⁹⁴ We observed the historical treatment of irony as a sort of wit by ancient critics, especially Cicero and Quintilian, in "Concept of Irony among Early Critics" of Chapter Two.

³⁹⁵ Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Irony of American History* (N.Y.: Scribner's, 1962), 167.

³⁹⁶ Thompson, *The Dry Mock*, 5 notes that the implication of what is said is in painfully comic contrast to its literal meaning.

³⁹⁷ Holland, *Divine Irony*, 52.

³⁹⁸ Thompson, *The Dry Mock*, 19.

³⁹⁹ Worcester, *Satire*, 78 calls irony "dry mock," adopting the practice of a sixteenth century writer.

⁴⁰⁰ Thompson, *The Dry Mock*, 15.

⁴⁰¹ Holland, *Divine Irony*, 52.

⁴⁰² Thompson, *The Dry Mock*, 10.

Irony does not aim at the momentary playfulness as comedy does.⁴⁰³ It is rather serious in forcing the reader to choose the high cause of reality worthy of consideration. In the end, irony benefits the reader with a perspective that is only reached by crossing the ironic bridge lying between the two significantly different worlds of idea and quality.

⁴⁰³ Ibid., 11–12.

CHAPTER THREE

CONVENTIONAL IRONIES

During the lengthy and intricate history of the study of irony, scholars have recognized various forms of irony.¹ Acknowledging this, the dissertation will narrow the scope for the reading of MPN's irony to the three traditionally recognized forms of irony: verbal, dramatic, and character irony, which the dissertation groups as "conventional irony."

Well before irony had acquired its technical terminology, these three types of irony had been recognized by their frequent occurrences. Also, each "conventional irony" has made a distinctive progress of its own amid the flow of the comprehensive history of irony. Chapter Three will describe each form of conventional irony and give examples of each. In response to both the intrinsic subtlety of irony and the difficulty caused by the critics' widely-varying reception of irony, the dissertation will tighten the definition of conventional irony as it pertains to each form. Next, the dissertation intends to build firsthand experience with conventional ironies by observing them within ancient classical literature as well as the Scriptures.²

These writings will be examined because they provide fundamental examples of the actual occurrence of irony, especially the long-established classical examples of conventional irony within literature. These sources are selected to strengthen the reader's understanding of irony and

¹ Consider that Ribbeck, "eirōn," 400 characterizes irony protean (*proteusartig*).

² The selected Greek and Latin dramas are *Nubes* by Aristophanes (c. 446 B.C.–c. 388 B.C.), *Oedipus Rex* by Sophocles (495 B.C.–406 B.C.), *Bacchae* by Euripides (ca. 480 B.C.–406 B.C.), and *Metamorphoses* by Apuleius (c. A.D. 123–c. 180 A.D.). For biblical writings and their use of irony, see footnote 51 of Chapter One.

make him acquire the skill for detecting conventional irony, to deepen familiarity with definitions, characteristics, and functions of irony, and finally to properly decipher “conventional irony” within a given literary context. There is no intention of offering a full comparative study.

Conventional irony requires an attentive and ready reader to read between the lines since irony is catching “the hidden” behind “the apparent.” In his book, *Metamorphoses*, the ancient ironist, Lucius Apuleius well advises “lector intende, laetaberis (you reader, pay attention! You shall delight!)”³ to instruct an ideal attitude for his intended reader. When the reader retains *intentio* (concentration) proper to the interpretation of irony,⁴ he can effectively perceive the existence of conventional irony. Sometimes, the reader may detect combinations of irony, such as an instance of verbal irony with dramatic irony, a moment of dramatic irony in an example of character irony, an occurrence of character irony with a case of verbal irony, or in some cases, all in one. Though on these occasions the reader will experience a difficulty in distinguishing each irony in a strict sense, it should be appreciated that an ironist can mix ironies together to draw out the best rhetorical effect of irony and enhance the meaning of the text as well as to provide the pleasure of a careful reading in the mind of the reader.

Verbal Irony

Verbal irony is the most ancient, the most frequently employed, and the simplest form of irony. Though verbal irony is in the simplest form, it does not mean that its implication is simple. To grasp its full nuance, it is necessary for the reader to follow the plot of the story closely by paying due attention to the whole context, since no irony is non-contextual.

³ Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, I. 1.

⁴ See the section, “An Ironically Capable Reader” in Chapter Two. The dissertation defines the ideal reader of irony as one who is experienced, skilled (trained), and perceptive. In other words, he is one who fulfills the role of the implied reader by reading the narrative woven with irony from the stance of the implied author.

Verbal irony arises from the nuanced interaction of written words, speech or placement of words such as word-play.⁵ Originally this one concept, “an ironic mode of speech,” dominated the entire discussion of irony.⁶ This corresponds to the fact that the alleged root of εἰρωνεία (a technical term for irony) is derived from the Greek verb, εἶρω (to speak, say).⁷ One observes the preeminence of verbal irony in the listings of definitions given by English dictionaries. Most of them place the concept of irony pertaining to words and speech as the primary definition of irony and the concept of irony pertaining to events and situations as the secondary. For example, both the Oxford English Dictionary and the American Heritage Dictionary define irony in an identical way as following.

1. A figure of speech in which the intended meaning is the opposite of that expressed by the words used; usually taking the form of sarcasm or ridicule in which laudatory expressions are used to imply condemnation or contempt. 2. A condition of affairs or events of a character opposite to what was, or might naturally be, expected; a contradictory outcome of events as if in mockery of the promise and fitness of things.⁸

1. The use of words to convey the opposite of their literal meaning. 2. Incongruity between what might be expected and what actually occurs.⁹

Verbal irony pertains to speech or word(s) which the implied author places into the mouths of characters within a narrative. It is designed to bring about the ironic reversal of the meaning of speech or word(s). As a literary-rhetorical device of the ironist, it creates a gap or incongruity between what is said by the speaker-author and what is immediately or later understood by the

⁵ Good, *Irony*, 81–114. Especially, Williams, “Irony and Lament,” 63 talks about the kind of word-play used by ancient Israelite narrators which juxtaposes the same or similar words in such a way as to produce irony, so-called, *paronomasia*.

⁶ Thirlwall, “Sophocles,” 483 calls verbal irony as the “most familiar species of irony.”

⁷ See the discussion of “Brief History of the Word, Irony” of Chapter Two, “General Overview of Irony.”

⁸ J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, ed., *The Oxford English Dictionary VIII* (2d ed.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989),

⁹ *The American Heritage Dictionary* (3d ed.; N.Y.: Laurel, 1994), 443.

audience-reader. The ironist stylistically places words in an ironic manner. He chooses words pointing to certain connotations or senses for the reader, which can be construed through his overall reading history.¹⁰ The verbal deliberation of the ironist must be hidden from the victim of irony and disclosed to the reader, the confederate of the ironist.¹¹

Verbal irony was traditionally categorized as one of the *tropes*.¹² It is tongue-in-cheek and requires an intelligent and attentive reading of things beyond the surface of what has been said. The ironist says one thing (i.e. proposition) but implies another,¹³ or more specifically, signifies the opposite of what he says.¹⁴ In an actual speech, his tone and verbal gestures¹⁵ can indicate that he wants to communicate something sharply different from the ostensible meaning of his statement. The ironic speaker knows how to manipulate an ironic tone that can signify a contrast between what he simply says and what he really means.¹⁶ However, in a written text, the ironist, unable to rely on the inflection of a voice, employs words spoken by characters to establish a distinctive literary tone that will convey his ironic attitude toward the matter at hand and therefore demand “the reading between the lines.”¹⁷

¹⁰ Thompson, *The Dry Mock*, 4.

¹¹ In clarification, the dissertation considers the MPN’s ironist as the implied author of the Gospel and the implied reader as his confederate.

¹² Holdcroft, “Irony as a Trope,” 493–511. Also, see the discussion of the dissertation, “Concept of Irony among Early Critics” of Chapter Two, with a focus on Cicero and Quintilian.

¹³ We previously examined that Cicero, *De or.*, II. lxxvii. 269 gives the most essential definition of irony, “saying one thing and meaning another (*aliud dicere ac sentias*).” This definition is applicable to all of conventional ironies.

¹⁴ Thompson, *The Dry Mock*, 4.

¹⁵ Tindale and Gough, “The Use of Irony in Argumentation,” 9, 11. In conversation, a speaker’s attitude and evaluation toward what he is talking about partly become visible through his choice of tone of voice and attending verbal gestures.

¹⁶ Christopher R. Reaske, *Mirrors: An Introduction to Literature* (3d ed.; N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1988), 197; Applebee, *Literature and Language*, 901.

¹⁷ Applebee, *Literature and Language*, 901.

The account of “Cupid and Psyche” by Lucius Apuleius¹⁸ provides good examples of verbal irony that attract a perceptive reader. The story goes that a certain king and queen have three daughters of remarkable beauty, but the beauty of the youngest, Psyche, is so extraordinary that the sheer poverty of human language can not describe it properly.¹⁹ Her beauty provokes the jealousy of Venus because men turned their devotion to this young girl by deserting her altars.

Venus arranges revenge against Psyche with her son, Cupid, and commissions him to drop bitter water drawn from one of the two fountains in Venus’ garden on Psyche. However, approaching Psyche in her sleep, Cupid becomes mesmerized by her beauty, and by mistake wounds himself with his own arrow. Psyche, henceforth frowned upon by Venus, suffers forlorn solitude despite of all her incomparable charms. Kings, nobles, and young men all eagerly cast their eyes upon her, but nobody presents himself to demand her in marriage. Meanwhile, her sisters get married. Her parents, suspecting divine hostility (*caelestibus odiis et irae superum metuens*), consult the ancient oracle of the Milesian god and get a gloomy response that they should desert Psyche on a lofty mountain crag for her destined cruel, wild and reptilian monster husband (*saevum atque ferum vipereumque malum*).²⁰

Yet, what really happens on the superior level of story is that Cupid, falling in love with Psyche, prepares a nuptial for himself and extravagantly arranges all the situations to make it happen. Psyche, despairing and saddened by her misfortune, is led into her abode prepared by the god himself and eventually begins to enjoy all the heavenly luxuries and comforts ready for her.

¹⁸ Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* IV. 28–V. 31. *Metam.* is the lengthy fictional narrative, later called “The Golden Ass.” The story is narrated in a first person named Lucius, who, because of his curiosity to learn about magic, is transformed into an ass. Both before and after taking the form of an ass, Lucius hears various tales which he recounts in this book so that his reader too may enjoy them. After being used and misused by the various sorts of men of class and occupation he finally regains his human form through the intervention of the goddess Isis.

¹⁹ Ibid., IV. 28, “at vero puellae iunioris tam praecipua, tam praeclara pulchritude nec exprimi ac ne sufficienter quidem laudari sermonis humani penuria poterat.”

²⁰ Ibid., VI. 32–33.

The circumstances are quite engaging and mysterious. She has not only vocal attendants without form but also an unknown husband who comes only in the hours of darkness and flees before the dawn. In time, Psyche becomes pregnant. Being inflamed by his ardent affection toward Psyche, Cupid often assures her with his words of love and passion, all the while charging her to make no attempt to see or reveal him.

After a honeymoon of some time, Psyche begins longing to reunite with her family, imploring Cupid to show her favor. Finally, under the firm stipulation that she must guard the secret, otherwise she will lose all her bliss, Cupid permits Psyche to invite her sisters to their extraordinary home filled with celestial delights and wonders. As soon as her sisters lay their eyes on Psyche's unimaginable privileges and happiness, an uncontrollable jealousy begins to consume them within. Thus, the sisters begin to grumble over their ordinary lives and brood evil thoughts to harm Psyche. They become bold and sly, and decide to give her ill advice. In this context we meet the following verbal irony in which the sisters, being ignorant of the reality beyond their perception, speak the truth, that is what is exactly intended to be declared by the ironist:

Psyche, you are not the little girl you used to be, but you are now yourself a mother. Think what a good thing for us you are carrying in your purse! With what delight you will make our entire house happy! O how the joy of that golden baby will bless us! If he resembles his parents, as he ought to, in beauty, he will be absolutely born a Cupid.²¹

Psyche's sisters are spiritually double blind folded because they have not only a devious intention²² but also false information regarding Psyche's husband as a monster, based on the oracle that their parents had once received. In contrast to the ignorance of the sisters, the reader,

²¹ Ibid., V. 14, "Psyche, non ita ut pridem parvula, et ipsa iam mater es. Quantum, putas, boni nobis in ista geris perula! Quantis gaudiis totam domum nostrum hilarabis! O nos beatas, quas infantis aurei nutrimenta laetabunt! Qui si parentum, ut oportet, pulchritudini responderit, prorsus Cupido nascetur."

knowing the context of the story, understands that such a twist of information regarding who is the real husband of Psyche adds flavor and dramatic suspense to the story. Therefore, the ironies observed in this love affair between Psyche and Cupid are not only situational because Cupid, being commissioned by his mother, Venus, to carry out vengeance against Psyche, falls as the very victim of his own arrow and therefore frustrates his mother's will. The ironies are also verbal because Psyche's sisters strike the reality by unknowingly deliberating that their sister is indeed with the child of Cupid himself, whose identity is *a god of Love*²³ and whose beauty is beyond expression.²⁴ Employing verbal irony, Apuleius often uses it overtly to reveal the characters' true nature. He, the narrator, indirectly depicts the inferior quality of Psyche's sisters by speaking aloud "those worthy sisters (sorores egregiae),"²⁵ which clearly implies the opposite.

As all ironies do, verbal irony implies an ironist, someone consciously employing a technique behind the scene.²⁶ Talking about verbal irony means talking about the ironist's techniques and strategies²⁷ because this type of irony is closely bound to the ironist's specific tactic and control over words. On one hand a reader may encounter a character in the story the ironist as an ironic speaker. As he is getting a broader picture of the story, however, the reader further gains insight that the implied author is the chief ironist who creatively entrusts ironic words in the characters' mouths. Dorothy Jean Weaver explains this as following:

²² Ibid., V. 9 and 15 speak of their envy (*gliscentis invidiae*) and pretended affection (*affectione simulata*).

²³ Ibid., V. 23, "thus, being ignorant of it, Psyche of her own accord fell in love with Love (*sic ignara Psyche sponte in Amoris incidit amorem*)."

²⁴ Ibid., V. 22 gives an elaborate description of the beauty of Cupid.

²⁵ Ibid., V. 9.

²⁶ Muecke, *Compass*, 42.

²⁷ Ibid., 43.

Verbal ironies are those in which the ironist communicates the irony in his/her own voice or in the voice of an “innocent” character within the narrative itself.²⁸

Within the context of the story, the character, generally the protagonist, who speaks representing the norms and values of the ironist, can also be known as the εἴρων. In other words, the εἴρων is the representation of the implied author, the master ironist of the narrative. On other occasions, however, this master ironist also permits the ἀλαζών to speak ironically in his ignorance and self-unawareness so that the very speaker falls into the trap of his own verbal irony. In such a cases, the targeted effect of verbal irony is a self-mocking of the ἀλαζών.

For example, in the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector in Luke 18:9–14, Jesus, the narrator of the parable, places an ironic word of self-rebuke in the mouth of the Pharisee as a representative of those “who think in themselves that they are righteous and have a contempt for everybody else (τοὺς πεποιθότας ἐφ’ ἑαυτοῖς ὅτι εἰσὶν δίκαιοι καὶ ἐξουθενοῦντας τοὺς λοιποὺς, 18:9).” The Pharisee and the tax collector go up to the temple to pray and exhibit starkly contrasting attitudes in their supplication. The former brags that he is spiritually superior to the so-called *sinner*,²⁹ while the latter identifies himself as a *sinner* by imploring the mercy of God.³⁰ The word of the Pharisee, “God, I give thanks to you that I am not like other men (ὁ θεός, εὐχαριστῶ σοι ὅτι οὐκ εἰμὶ ὡς περ οἱ λοιποὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, 8:12),” brings about an ironic reversal from a self-glorification to a self-mockery because Jesus, the ironist himself, immediately explains that the one who is justified (δεδικαιωμένος, 8:14) in God’s sight is the tax collector not the Pharisee. Therefore, the word of the Pharisee, ignorantly claiming self-

²⁸ Weaver, “Power and Powerlessness,” 455.

²⁹ Luke 18:11, “robbers, unjust, adulterers or even like this tax collector (ἄρπαγες, ἄδικοι, μοιχοί, ἢ καὶ ὡς οὗτος ὁ τελώνης).”

³⁰ Luke 18:13, “God, be merciful to me a sinner (ὁ θεός, ἰλάσθητί μοι τῷ ἁμαρτωλῷ).”

knowledge of his excellence, testifies to his wretchedness and spiritual estrangement from God. His faulty and limited awareness of the self, accompanying his arrogant self-praise, is a deadly combination of characteristics, which not only deters the grace of God but also makes him scarcely open his mouth without betraying himself.

David's conversation with Nathan, the prophet, exhibits another example of the ἀλαζών's self-criticism. The verbal irony of 2 Samuel 12:1–6 depicts David as ἀλαζών. God has sent Nathan to David, one who had sinned against God by committing adultery with Bathsheba and killing her husband, Uriah. Instead of chiding him directly, Nathan tells David a story of a poor man with one little ewe lamb. The poor man cherishes that lamb as if it were a daughter to him (וַתְּהִי־לּוֹ כֶּבֶת, 12:3). However, the rich man snatches it away to serve his guest with it. On hearing this, David becomes enraged and says to Nathan “as the Lord lives, the man who has done this shall surely die! (חַי־יְהוָה כִּי בְן־קִמּוֹת הָאִישׁ הָעֹשֶׂה זֹאת), 12:5b.” There exists a strikingly obvious inconsistency between David's unrepentant ignorance of the serious nature of his own injustice against Uriah, his faithful servant (2 Sam 11:7–13), and his rage and discerning judgment on the rich man's misdeed fabricated in Nathan's story. Nathan's choice of language in his portrayal of the story is self-descriptive enough to reflect David's deed: the poor man in love with his little ewe lamb stands for Uriah, the little lamb in the bosom of the poor man represents Bathsheba, and the rich man full of greed and destruction stands for David. However, Nathan's ingenious story that could have elicited David's voluntary confession of sin does not occur. Rather, David utters an irony which indirectly identifies him as the criminal deserving death (12:5b). David's moral and spiritual oblivion seem to be beyond remedy when he confidently speaks that he will make the rich man pay his due commensurate to his crime, without noticing that his crime is greater than the rich man's wrongdoing. If a fair payment appropriate for the rich man, who stole *a little ewe lamb*, is his own death, what punishment would be reasonable for

David, who not only coveted and stole his neighbor's wife but also carried out the actual murder of that innocent man? In this way, the saying of David in 2 Samuel 12:5 exemplifies a powerful self-condemnation delivered through the ironic sayings of the ἀλαζών in his absurdity and unawareness. The narrator of 2 Samuel has placed the words on David's lips, creating the ironic statement of which David is ignorant.

There has been confusion acknowledged by the critics in distinguishing verbal irony from other figures of speech, and particularly sarcasm. Here, we will briefly suggest fundamental differences between verbal irony and sarcasm so that we may avoid confusion that gets in the way of the proper interpretation of verbal irony.

Although verbal irony and sarcasm are not the same,³¹ sarcasm is quite often mistaken for verbal irony because the two concepts have become so intertwined. Basically, in both cases, the meaning of what the author says and what he means by it creates an opposition. Regarding which one of these two, verbal irony or sarcasm, is the generically broad category, there seems to be a division among the literary critics. Cleanth C. Brooks notes sarcasm as the most direct and blatant form of irony,³² and David J. Amante views it as the minimal form of irony.³³ On the other hand, Jerry C. Hoggatt considers verbal irony a bigger concept than sarcasm which is a subgenre of verbal irony. He notes four forms of verbal irony—deliberate ambiguity, sarcasm, hyperbole, and meiosis, that are uttered with the speaker's full consciousness.³⁴ Conversely, Douglas C. Muecke views irony as belonging under the umbrella of sarcasm.³⁵

³¹ Thrall and Hibbard, *A Handbook to Literature*, 248.

³² Cleanth Brooks, "Irony as a Principle of Structure," in *Literary Opinion in America* (ed. M. D. Zabel; N.Y.: Harper & Brothers, 1951), 730.

³³ Amante, "Ironic Speech Acts," 80.

³⁴ Hoggatt, *Irony*, 85.

³⁵ Muecke, *Compass*, 54–55.

Perhaps, the following observations might be helpful. Often, sarcasm is viewed as a suitably characteristic tone for the ironist,³⁶ because even though the ironist of the narrative avoids a personal tone, he may retain a sarcastic edge³⁷ in his voice. That is why verbal irony is frequently misjudged as sarcasm.³⁸ Therefore, it is necessary to observe fundamental differences between them so that the terms are not employed without discrimination. Albert N. Katz opines that the major distinction between them is that ridicule is an important element in sarcasm, but not in verbal irony.³⁹ For this reason, David Holdcroft evaluates sarcasm as a more low-brow version of irony.⁴⁰ And Douglas C. Muecke suggests that whereas the ironist pretends to be innocent in his intent, the author of sarcasm does not pretend to be unaware of his real meaning and does not anticipate his reader going unaware of it.⁴¹ If victimization, in other words, praise for blame, is a goal of sarcasm by letting the reader to be caught in a net of the author's craft, verbal irony rather intends "meaningful communication,"⁴² which gains "confederates."⁴³ Some verbal irony is sarcastic, but if it ends there, it turns out to be failed, ineffective irony. Further, sarcasm is more vocally oriented than verbal irony.⁴⁴ When it is spoken, sarcasm is emotionally

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 64.

³⁷ Abrams, *A Glossary*, 99 writes that "sarcasm, to which an added clue is an exaggerated inflection of the speaker's voice, is a common form of irony in dormitory persiflage."

³⁸ Thompson calls verbal irony with a heavy tint of sarcasm, the "dry mock," which he used it for his book title. He writes of verbal irony that it is "almost always offensive." See, Thompson, *Dry Mock*, 5. Another scholar such as R. Reed Lessing, *Jonah* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2007), 23 relates irony to satire that "irony serves to point out inconsistencies in a situation between what is and what ought to be. In this sense, it is closely related to satire, which uses irony."

³⁹ Albert N. Katz, "The Uses and Processing of Irony and Sarcasm," *Metaphor and Symbol* 15 (2000): 1-4.

⁴⁰ Holdcroft, "Irony as a Trope," 495.

⁴¹ Muecke, *Compass*, 20.

⁴² Amante, "Ironic Speech Acts," 78.

⁴³ Kaufer, "Irony and Rhetorical Strategy," 100 and Tindale and Gough, "The Use of Irony in Argumentation," 2. Also consult "The Implicit Community between the Ironist and His Reader, and the Victim of Irony" of Chapter Two, "Constitution of Irony: Former Elements of Irony."

⁴⁴ Kaufer, "Ironic Evaluations," 25 writes that "as a rhetorical trope, irony has traditionally been associated with simple communicative formulas such as saying other or the opposite of what one means, speaking in a sarcastic

bitter, crude, and cutting speech in contrast to the cool,⁴⁵ dispassionate, and calculated indirection of irony.⁴⁶ In fact, in many cases sarcasm written in texts is harder to distinguish it from a verbal irony.

Dramatic Irony

Dramatic irony, which has been given various names,⁴⁷ pertains to a deliberately ironic event or situation within the narrative. This concept applies not to statements but to events, situations and broad structures—the plot of the story.⁴⁸ Broadly speaking, dramatic irony is considered a plot device.⁴⁹ This type of irony illumines the duality of the difference between what appears to be happening and what is actually happening.⁵⁰

Dramatic irony had long been underemphasized in relation to or in comparison with verbal irony until the nineteenth century when John Connop Thirlwall ushered in the concept of dramatic irony as the outcome of his study on the Sopclean tragedy.⁵¹ Thirlwall begins his

tone, purposely contradicting oneself, and more.”

⁴⁵ Thrall and Hibbard, *A Handbook to Literature*, 248 uses the term, “coolness” to describe the mental and spiritual status of the ironist. This concept has some other synonyms such as “detachment” or “indirection.” Muecke, *Compass*, 93–94, 114, 216–17, explains detachment as the behavioral mode of the ironist. Especially, in page 94, he writes that a satirist “may be motivated by indignation, disgust, or contempt; but as an ironist he will conceal his real feelings under a show of dispassionate logic, gravity, or urbanity, or even go beyond neutrality to express the opposite of what he really feels by pretending sympathy, earnestness, or enthusiasm.”

⁴⁶ Thrall and Hibbard, *A Handbook to Literature*, 248 coins the term, “unemotional detachment,” on the part of the ironist, and further writes that “it (irony) is usually lighter, less harsh in its wording though in effect probably more cutting because of its indirectness. It bears, too, a close relationship to innuendo.”

⁴⁷ Such as situational, sophoclean, tragic or practical irony, irony of fate or irony of events. See further discussion in “The Concept of Irony in the Modern Age” of Chapter Two.

⁴⁸ Tanaka, “The Concept of Irony,” 45–47.

⁴⁹ Aristotle, *Poet.*, VI considers plot, so-called “the arrangements of the incidents,” as the first principle, the most important feature of tragedy. Shipley, *Dictionary*, 331 defines dramatic irony “as a device whereby . . . incongruity is introduced in the very structure of the plot, by having the spectators aware of elements in the situations of which one or more the character involved are ignorant.”

⁵⁰ Applebee, *Literature and Language*, 652.

⁵¹ Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 22 explains that prior to Thirlwall’s essay, there is no recorded use of the term, dramatic (i.e. Sophoclean or tragic) irony as applied to irony. Also See “The Concept of Irony in the Modern Age” of Chapter Two, “General Overview of Irony” for the discussion on Thirlwall as a transitional, watershed figure in

article with a straightforward statement that “some readers may be a little surprised to see irony attributed to a tragic poet.”⁵² Although the concept of dramatic irony only came to scholarly attention in 1833⁵³ and the term was not universally acceptable as late as 1907,⁵⁴ this type of irony has been employed since ancient times. Thirlwall paid due attention to the ironic event, which had long been ignored. As a result, he broadened the horizon of irony to incorporate a wider range of literature by including Tragedy.

Tragic irony as a synonym for dramatic irony refers not only to an irony pertaining to dramatic tragedy but also to an irony that has tragic overtones. The dissertation cautiously employs the term, “dramatic irony” despite the following shortcomings. First, dramatic irony can give the impression that this type of irony mainly belongs to the theater. Garnett G. Sedgewick represents this view saying, “Dramatic irony, in brief, is the sense of contradiction felt by spectators of a drama who see a character acting in ignorance of his condition.”⁵⁵

Even though dramatic irony originally referred to the irony of events as exhibited in a play,⁵⁶ it is not found only in drama; but also broadly includes any dramatic form of irony⁵⁷ which attends to an ironic situation. Second, the concept of dramatic irony is the child of Thirlwall’s monumental study of the Sophoclean tragedies. Therefore, Thirlwall’s dramatic irony primarily concerns Sophocles’ use of irony as the author’s technique to highlight the tragic elements of his

the study of irony in modern times.

⁵² Thirlwall, “Sophocles,” 483.

⁵³ The publication year of Thirlwall’s essay.

⁵⁴ Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 23 writes that “as late as 1907, Arthur Sidgwick, crediting Thirlwall with the first use of the phrase in English, could still write as if in doubt about ‘Dramatic Irony, as it has been called.’”

⁵⁵ Sedgewick, 49. Also Muecke, *Compass*, 105 gives an identical view that “dramatic irony is pre-eminently the irony of the theater, being implicit in the very nature of a play.”

⁵⁶ Thompson, *The Dry Mock*, 29–30.

⁵⁷ Dane, *The Critical Mythology of Irony*, 121.

writings.⁵⁸ However, dramatic irony is actually found not only in tragedy but also in comedy. The effects brought forward in each case may be different. If the dramatic irony used in tragedy points to the significance of the situation and stirs up the reader's sense of ἐλεός (pity) and φόβος (fear),⁵⁹ the irony of events used in comedy makes the outcome incongruous to the expectation in a painfully comic way.⁶⁰ Therefore, the dissertation specifically defines dramatic irony as pertaining to the ironic event or situation that brings about the reversal of meaning in that very circumstance.⁶¹ Such irony is not limited to one genre of literature.

Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* is esteemed, perhaps, more than any other writing of antiquity as a fine specimen of dramatic irony.⁶² In this tragic play, Oedipus, the king of Thebes, assumes the role of a doomed hero who unknowingly kills his own father, Laius. The entire story hinges on the secret of Oedipus of which he himself is ignorant.⁶³ When he was an infant, Oedipus was deserted by his parents, Laius and Jocasta, as they attempted to thwart the horrible oracle that their son would be a great threat against the kingship as well as their marriage. Yet, Oedipus was rescued by a shepherd and raised in the court of the king Polybus of Corinth. Later, the adult Oedipus hears of the rumor that Polybus and his wife, Merope are not his actual parents, and leaves Corinth. On the road to Thebes, being ignorant of his past, Oedipus fatefully meets his

⁵⁸ It is known that Sophoclean irony works in a way that his tragic character behaves ironically in the way that he sees the yellow caution signs proclaiming personal calamity ahead, but does what he is about to do anyway.

⁵⁹ According to Aristotle, *Poet.*, IX, XIV, these senses will guide the reader to experience the spiritual "κάθαρσις (purification)."

⁶⁰ Thompson, *The Dry Mock*, 9–14.

⁶¹ Applebee, *Literature and Language*, 161.

⁶² Thirlwall, "Sophocles," 494, 536. And Holland, *Divine Irony*, 69 reiterates Thirlwall's view.

⁶³ Interestingly, Sophocles supplies an ironic cue in the very name of "Oedipus," telling this figure to be the generator of irony surrounding his life. Peter L. Rudnytsky, *Freud and Oedipus* (N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1987), 266 notes that the Greek meaning of *Oedipus* can be *know-foot* based on the analysis that the first syllable of Oedipus' name, *oido*, means "I know" and the second syllable, *pous*, means "foot." Therefore, the ironic point of his name becomes evident because Oedipus was completely *unknowing* of his own destiny, thus, he fell hard in his futile actions such as the search for Laius' murderer and the emphatic denial of his fallibility.

biological father, Laius, argues over which wagon has the right-of-way, and being driven by his unchecked pride, slays his own father, Laius.

Meanwhile, the kingdom of Thebes was under the curse of the riddle of the Sphinx. Before his entry to the city, Oedipus solves that riddle and sets the kingdom free from malice. As a liberator, Oedipus is welcomed by the Thebans and given the throne of Thebes, which was the throne of Laius, the former king of Thebes and the father of Oedipus, as well as the widowed queen, Jocasta, the biological mother of Oedipus.

In the meantime, a plague came over the city. Therefore, the Thebans make cry out to their new king, Oedipus to find the murderer of Laius because Apollo's oracle explains that the cause of the plague has to do with the murder of Laius, the former king of Thebes, and the cure lies in bringing his murderer into justice. As Oedipus undertakes his investigation, the blind, aged prophet, Tiresias entreats him to quit the search. Yet, Oedipus, being obstinate, accuses Tiresias of murdering Laius and conspiring with Creon, Jocasta's brother to overthrow Oedipus. Thus, the search continues, and Oedipus inevitably comes closer to the tragic upshot, ultimately learning that he is a patricide as well as a violator of the natural law by being the husband of his own mother, Jocasta. Laius and Jocasta once received an old prophecy that her son should kill his father and have children with his mother. To prevent its fulfillment, the queen had deserted their infant son, Oedipus, in the mountains. However, as we have seen, despite all these efforts to bend their gloomy fate, Oedipus, being oblivious in his past, came across his father and killed him. It is utterly tragic that Oedipus comes in the center of all these incidents of horror, cannot be exempt from culpability regardless of his innocent ignorance, and comes to the realization that the ancient prophecy has been fulfilled in each dreadful detail. He turns out to be the victim of his own fate and finitude. Correspondingly, the story ends with the characters' acceptance of their dooms. Jocasta, in her honor, hangs herself and Oedipus stabs out his eyes to be blind. In all

of these events, the reader is *knowing* in contrast to Oedipus' *unknowing*, because he takes advantage of the superior knowledge of the old prophecy on which the entire story hinges. Therefore, the reader can experience the dramatic irony that the story produces and develops.

Dramatic irony does imply an ironist, who is the implied author responsible for the narrative. The ironist as master of the situation deliberately conceals an ironic event or more precisely the meaning of the event, from the characters of the narrative while simultaneously disclosing it to the reader. He intends the reader's knowledge of events wrought by the interactions of the characters to surpass that of the characters. Therefore, dramatic irony emerges from the contrast between the perception of a situation by the character who is ignorant⁶⁴ or has a limited understanding of the real state of affairs and the reader who is fully aware of what is really happening. The reader of dramatic irony, standing outside the narrative, has the privilege of observing the events from a different vantage point than the characters. He has a much larger reservoir of information for the proper understanding of the nature of the events. The reader of dramatic irony is called upon for "reminiscence and anticipation"⁶⁵ because he should reconstruct the story on his repertoire of knowledge in the process of establishing a distinctive subtext of his own.⁶⁶

The story of Ehud's killing of Eglon, King of Moab, in Judges 3:12–25 serves as an example of dramatic irony that illustrates the reader's privileged status of knowledge and the way that his reminiscence and anticipation cooperate in interpreting the irony. Judges 3:12–15 draws the reader's attention to the ultimate, divine control over the situation as the norm. It was

⁶⁴ Shipley, *Dictionary*, 331.

⁶⁵ Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 44 considers these two elements as common functions of a great dramatic irony, at least in tragedy.

⁶⁶ Hoggatt, *Irony*, 2.

God who placed Israel under the sway of Eglon for eighteen years because Israel was evil (רַע) in the sight of the Lord.⁶⁷ Also, it is the same Lord who, hearing Israel's cry for help, raised up for them a deliverer, Ehud, the son of Gera, the Benjaminite, a left-handed man.⁶⁸

Commissioned by God, Ehud prepares himself with a double-edged sword to carry out the assassination of Eglon. As usual, Ehud presents the tribute of Israel to Eglon, in a gesture to make Eglon *un-gird*, while he himself *girded* (וַיִּחַזְקֵהוּ)⁶⁹ with a deadly weapon with a specific purpose in mind. The dramatic irony of this story highlights the reader's superior knowledge and Eglon's ignorance as the victim. Ehud's actual carrying out the killing of Eglon is quite delicately depicted. Ehud's "secret message (דְּבַר־סֵתֶר)"⁷⁰ for the king adds a thrill to the picture because it entices Eglon's voluntary isolation with Ehud alone so that Ehud can bring out the reality of the "secret message." As soon as Eglon sent out his attendants, a second time Ehud says more specifically that he has "a message from God (דְּבַר־אֱלֹהִים)"⁷¹ for him, which intrigued Eglon to hear even more. In this way, Ehud methodically makes his way to approach Eglon as a hunter patiently but systematically zooms in on his prey.

Dramatic irony often couples with good suspense. The reader who is fully aware of Ehud's undertaking of the divine commission consciously recollects the information and anticipates its completion. Therefore, when Ehud says to Eglon that he has a secret word from God, they can concur that it is all true but in a substantially different way than the surface of the story. On

⁶⁷ Judg. 3:12, 14.

⁶⁸ Judg. 3:15.

⁶⁹ Judg. 3:16.

⁷⁰ Judg. 3:19.

⁷¹ Judg. 3:20.

hearing the statement of Ehud, “Oh! King, I have a message from God for you” (Judg. 3:20; LXX, Αωδ λόγος θεοῦ μοι πρὸς σέ βασιλεῦ), the reader experiences suspense because he anticipates otherwise than does Eglon. Ehud’s statement points to an ironic event in which what appears to happen will betray what is going to happen. This is why Robert Alter explains “this statement is a rather obvious but nevertheless effective piece of dramatic irony.”⁷² What Ehud has for Eglon is actually from God on the ostensible level, but not a *word* (דְּבַר), which glides into his ear but a *thing* (דָּבָר),⁷³ a *sword* (חֶרֶב), with which Ehud stabs Eglon’s belly. Another level of complexity in this dramatic irony is revealed in the word of Ehud that he has a “secret (סֵתֶר)” word for the king. Again, it is strikingly true when the reader recollects how Ehud hid the sword “on his right thigh under his clothes (בְּיָמִינוֹ עַל יָרֵךְ יְמִינוֹ)”⁷⁴ and further that Eglon chose to be left alone with Ehud so that the *word* (דְּבַר) of God, in its true nature, the sword from God, will fulfill its goal in secrecy.

The privileged status of the reader in knowing more than the characters reflects his participation in the upper level of the double-layered stories. The fundamental clash between the two levels of the story exposes a certain character or group as blind to the reality which the upper level of the story endorses. Therefore, the reversal of fortune of the characters,⁷⁵ what Aristotle terms as “περιπέτεια”⁷⁶ is key, since dramatic irony requires a reader of superior knowledge

⁷² Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 40.

⁷³ The Hebrew term, דְּבַר, can cover wide range of meanings such as speech, word, message, matter or thing.

⁷⁴ Judg. 3:16.

⁷⁵ Aristotle, *Poet.*, XI.

⁷⁶ According to Aristotle, the *peripeteia* means the reversal of the situation in the plot of a tragedy, in other words, the change of fortune for the hero. An event occurs contrary to the audience's initial expectations and is therefore surprising. Nonetheless, it appears as a necessary outcome of the preceding actions.

regarding the real make-up of the situation in contrast to the characters' blind-sightedness of an event in which they are involved.

The most dramatic scene of the *Bacchae* of Euripides⁷⁷ begins when frenzied Agave enters, carrying the head of her slain son, Pentheus, the grandson of Cadmus the former king of Thebes. This provides an excellent example of dramatic irony that underlines the character's utter unawareness of reality and its tragic result. This story is horrific in that the mother, who beheaded her son as if he were a wild beast and carried his blood-soaked head in her arms, slowly comes to a realization of her own unspeakable crime.⁷⁸ Being lost in her Bacchic madness, Agave meets her father Cadmus and engages in a conversation that unfolds the dramatic irony of the tragic event of which she is unaware. Gazing at Agave's bloodstained hands, Cadmus perceives an affliction coming upon his household, while in her ecstasy, Agave boasts of her valor and prize, and puzzles about her father's lament. Following is a segment of their conversation, depicting the two essentially different understandings of the affair's condition.

Cadmus: O anguish measureless that blasts the sight! O murder
compassed by those wretched hands! Fair victim this to cast before the Gods, and bid to
such a banquet Thebes and me! Woe for our sorrows!—first for thine, then mine! How hath
the God, King Bromius, ruined us!—just stroke—yet ruthless—is he not our kin?
Agave: How sour of mood is greybeard eld in men, how sullen-eyed! Framed in his
mother's mould a mighty hunter may my son become, when with the Theban youth he
speedeth forth questing the quarry! But he can do naught save war with Gods! Father, thy
part it is to warn him. Who will call him hitherward to see me, and behold mine happiness?

⁷⁷ Euripides wrote this famous tragedy, *Bacchae*, in Athens before 405 B.C, sometime between the production of *Orestes* in 408 B.C. and his death in ca. 406 B.C. This play is known as the most difficult of all the Greek tragedies to interpret despite its literary quality. In *Bacch.*, Euripides attends to the question of religion, especially the wild and orgiastic worship of the god, Dionysus, the son of Zeus and Semele, daughter of the Theban king, Cadmus. The mysterious birth of Dionysus is revealed by Euripides in this play when Semele, who was once loved by Zeus, asked that the god come to her in his majestic light. Zeus granted her wish and appeared to her in a great flash of lightning by which she was consumed. Before she died, she gave birth prematurely to Dionysus, and Zeus saved the life of the child by opening his own flesh and fostering the infant therein. In due course, Dionysus is brought forth by a mysterious second birth.

⁷⁸ Euripides, *Bacchae*, 3. 1024–1152.

Cadmus: Alas! When ye are ware what ye have done, with sore grief shall ye grieve! If to life's end ye should in this delusion still abide, ye should not, thought unblest, seem all
 Agave: What is not well here?—what that calls for grief?
 Cadmus: First cast thou up thine eye to yonder heaven.
 Agave: Lo, so I do. Why bid me look thereon?
 Cadmus: Seems it the same? Or hath it changed to thee?
 Agave: Brighter—more limpid—lucent than erewhile.⁷⁹

Cadmus functions as the projection of the ironist. His staccato questions shake Agave in her frenzy to get to the point which matters most.

Cadmus: to what house camest thou with bridal-hymns?
 Agave: Echion's—of the Dragon—seed, men say.
 Cadmus: Thou barest—in thine halls, to thy lord—whom?
 Agave: Pentheus—born of my union with his sire.
 Cadmus: Whose head—*whose*?—art thou bearing in thine arms?
 Agave: A lion's—so said they which hunted it.⁸⁰

Agave's noxious innocence marked by her ignorance of the situation is manifested in her own statements. Euripides exploits Agave's innocence as the scene unfolds. As the suspense, corresponding to the gravity of this tragedy, grows, Euripides rushes Agave's realization, not even allowing her to have a moment for gasping. He lets Agave brag about her game in wanton insolence (ὕβρις), then immediately takes a drastic turn and places her under the light of painful awakening, “No! wretched! wretched! Pentheus' head I hold (οὐκ ἀλλὰ Πενθέως ἡ τάλαιν' ἔχω κάρα!)”⁸¹

Since dramatic irony arises in the situation of contradiction, it is sometimes confused with the paradox of impossible situation or position. Having in mind that not every contradiction creates irony equips the reader to critically filter out dramatic irony from among many quasi-ironic situations. The essential difference between dramatic irony and paradox lies in their

⁷⁹ Ibid., 1242–1267 (Way, LCL).

⁸⁰ Ibid., 1273–1278 (Way, LCL).

⁸¹ Ibid., 1284 (Way, LCL).

evaluation of the worlds in juxtaposition. If the former creates a hierarchical order of views in which one is superior to the other in its quality, the latter yields a puzzle or dilemma in which value judgment gets vague because its premises, though they seem to be contradictory, do not really imply contradiction.⁸² If the situation presented by dramatic irony is bound to the matter of “true and false” or “superior and inferior,” that of a paradox is not so. The situation of Buridan’s ass⁸³ best exemplifies a paradoxical situation which should not be confused with dramatic irony. An ass placed exactly in the middle of two stacks of hay of equal size and quality is unable to engage in moving toward either side because the alternative course of choice is equally attractive, desirable and accessible. This paradoxical situation causes the ass a dilemma of fortune that he must starve until he reaches a decision. For this case to be an ironic situation, the observer should be able to make a value judgment of “either/or” based on some external criteria that points to the discrepancy of quality between the two objects of interest.

Character Irony

Scholars have noted that one of the main functions of irony is to reveal character.⁸⁴ The traditional perception of character irony⁸⁵ chiefly relies on old comedy, specifically the paradigm

⁸² Matt 13:13 and Mark 8:18 serve as examples for this. They show Jesus’ use of paradox in his teaching, “they have ears but hear not,” and “they have eyes but see not.”

⁸³ Jack Zupko, *Jean Buridan: Portrait of a Fourteenth-Century Arts Master* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), 258 explains that this paradox is named after the fourteenth century French philosopher Jean Buridan. The classical example of Buridan’s ass goes back to Aristotle, *De Caelo*, 295b 31–34 in which he depicts a man in a dilemma, placed equal distances from food and drink. The man remains unmoved because he is as hungry as he is thirsty.

⁸⁴ Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 50. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 37 writes that “as elsewhere in biblical narrative, the revelation of character is effected with striking artistic economy.” Remember that the dissertation provided a working definition of irony as *irony is a persuasive, indirect, and economical revelation* in the last section, “Summary Providing a Working Definition of Irony” of Chapter Two.

⁸⁵ Also called “Socratic irony.” See Vlastos, “Socratic Irony,” 79–97; *Essays on the Philosophy of Socrates* (ed. Hugh H. Benson; N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1992), 66–86; Alexander Nehamas, *The Art of Living: Socratic Reflections from Plato to Foucault* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 46–101; Diskin Clay, *Platonic Questions: Dialogues with the Silent Philosopher* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 93–101; Holland, *Divine Irony*, 90–101.

of εἴρων—ἀλαζών. Later it became inseparable from Socrates, the epicenter of εἴρωνεία (irony), who takes on the behavioral mode of the εἴρων to devalue what others value. By employing irony, Socrates characterizes his wrongheaded opponent, the ἀλαζών, as a man of superficiality.

Historically, character irony has been less discussed by the critics, in spite of its antiquity. Muecke says that the two kinds of irony most familiar to English-speaking people are verbal and situational ironies.⁸⁶ The reason for the unpopularity of character irony in scholarly discussions can be inferred through a consideration of its origin. Although the ancient εἴρων—ἀλαζών paradigm has its roots deep in old comedy, the history of εἴρωνεία shows that it only began to gain significant attention through its conjunction with Socrates. Yet, the tool with which Socrates disclosed the ignorant self-absorbance of the ἀλαζών was *verbal* irony. Thus, character irony originally was overshadowed by the popularity of verbal irony,⁸⁷ which comprises Socrates' famous pedagogic methodology, ἔλεγχος (transliterated as *elenchus*), the so-called “Socratic debate” or “dialectic method of inquiry.”⁸⁸

Among many critics of irony, Alan R. Thompson has emphasized that character irony is its own discrete form. He defines character irony as irony of character or of manner,⁸⁹ in which a person's true character is shown to be in painfully comic contrast to his overt appearance or

⁸⁶ Muecke, *Compass*, 42.

⁸⁷ Frye, *The Great Code: the Bible and Literature* (N.Y.: Harcourt, 1982), 8 writes that “his celebrated “irony” was a momentous step in transforming the use of language: it implied renouncing the personal possession of wisdom in favor of an ability to observe it.”

⁸⁸ The *elenchus* is the technique Socrates uses to investigate the nature or the definition of ethical concepts. Its general rule is that Socrates' partner must answer every question according to his own beliefs. Socrates undertakes a disavowal of knowledge to begin his critical question that starts from his partner's initial statements. Meanwhile, he seeks clarification of that claim and eventually gets to the point to elicit his partner's consent that will turn out to be inconsistent with the initial claim. In this way, Socrates exposes and challenges his partner's mental confinement or absurdity. See, Gregory Vlastos, “The Socratic Elenchus” (ed. Julia Annas; vol. 1 of *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 27–58.

⁸⁹ Thompson, *The Dry Mock*, 7–8. Also, Worcester, *Satire*, 90 defines character irony with the term “irony of manner.”

manner. Yet, Thompson's definition of character irony is rather too narrow because he shows a tendency to define every irony according to the form of its comic element.⁹⁰ The dissertation will not fully support Thompson's view because his emphasis on the comic element as the key feature of irony unfortunately excludes other examples of Character irony that may not necessarily convey the comic trait. It is not a definite attribute of character irony to elicit laughter. Rather, it can painfully exposes the drastic contrast and reversal between the two essentially opposite characters: the temporarily powerful nature of ἀλαζών vs. the ultimately superior nature of the underdog, εἴρων. Therefore, the dissertation reshapes the view of character irony by defining it more broadly as irony pertaining to a character and his way of life which results in the reversal of how status is assigned or perceived.

In the story world, character irony deals with the deliberately ironic relationship of the characters in the narrative. Its basic model arises from the sharp contrast between two diametrically opposite characters, especially regarding their values, and operates through an irreconcilable conflict between εἴρων and ἀλαζών. If the former stands for a protagonist who espouses the narrative's normative values, the latter will represent an antagonistic figure, a false or shadowy being. The clash of the perspectives on values demonstrated between these two characters will be persistent and perhaps irreconcilable.

The author of character irony conventionally depicts the image of the ἀλαζών as a cowardly windbag who is a foolish victim. The dominant characteristic of the ἀλαζών is for him to talk and act continuously in ignorance of his condition. His role is significant only because he functions as a foil to disclose the εἴρων, the true victor. Let's not forget that Cicero understood the εἴρων

⁹⁰ Other scholars, who emphasize the comic element as the key feature of irony, are Jónsson, *Humor and Irony*, Burke, *A Grammar of Motive* and Lang, *Irony/ Humor*. Burke considers irony as a constitutive element of motive and a synonym for comedy. In opposition, scholar C. Hoggatt especially criticizes Jónsson's obsessive attention to the humor of Jesus' sayings, which entirely misses the obvious ironies within Jesus' story, *Irony*, 2–3.

and the ἀλαζών as correlative terms⁹¹ and that neither is intelligible apart from the other. On the surface level of the story, in other words, the world of appearance,⁹² the ἀλαζών seems to be prosperous and secure as do his unprincipled claims against truth. In contrast to the ἀλαζών, the εἴρων adopts a low-key voice and manner. Yet, his true character is not hidden to the reader. His qualities, impossible to be completely concealed by any means, somehow ooze out and attract the reader's attention. The ironist typically prefers a bold presentation of the ἀλαζών's absurdity and a contrastingly subtle characterization of the εἴρων. By doing so, he uses character irony by means of a distinctive pattern that reveals the irreconcilable natures of these two characters and thus causes a dramatic conflict that moves the plot forward. Nevertheless, it is important to notice that the εἴρων—ἀλαζών paradigm does not equally apply to every incident of character irony as if all cases were molded by one cast. There can be a wide range of literary creativity and intentionality of the ironist. Yet, character irony always entails the ironic exposure of the true nature or abiding quality of a character, thus upholding the εἴρων and denouncing the ἀλαζών. Such a reversal publicly discloses the true status and quality of the ἀλαζών as essentially condemnable so that the reader should dissociate himself from him, and simultaneously endorses the triumphal value and nature of the εἴρων as a superior character so that the reader should associate himself with him.⁹³

The Matthean use of irony in its portrayals of the political as well as the religious leaders supplies excellent examples of the ironic function of the traditional εἴρων—ἀλαζών paradigm and its reversal on the plane of the characters. Dorothy Jean Weaver has examined irony as the

⁹¹ Cicero, *De officiis*, I. 30.

⁹² Chevalier, *The Ironic Temper*, 42 and Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 13.

⁹³ Regarding an ὀρθόδοξος (right in opinion) reader as the confederate of the ironist, see the section, "The Implicit Community between the Ironist and His Reader, and the Victim of Irony" of Chapter Two.

device for the Matthean depiction of the character contrast between Jesus and key political leaders in their authority and potency.⁹⁴ Though she was not specific in labeling type of irony the ironist of Matthew employed to disclose the true nature of the political leaders who are in opposition to “who Jesus is,” it is apparent that Weaver meant to point out the revelatory function of irony in her use of the terms such as “personal characteristics,” the “characterization,” and “character portrayal” throughout her article. Irony reveals the *powerfulness* of Jesus who appears as *powerless* by undermining the seemingly powerful pretenders—Herod the king (2:1–23), Herod the tetrarch (14:1–12), and Pilate the governor (chapter 27). Likewise, Weaver concludes that “Matthew invites his readers to join him on the higher ground from which he and they together can view the impotence of all human power in the political arena vis-à-vis the genuine potency of divine initiative.”⁹⁵ It is all the more true that rulers directly and indirectly exhibit unfitting traits while Jesus is portrayed in his true kingly nature through a variety of implicit and explicit indicators.⁹⁶

Furthermore, the Matthean portrayal of the Jewish religious readers heavily depends on the ironist’s use of character irony. Consider accusations made against Jesus as a blasphemer (9:1–8) and Beelzebul (12:22–28) by the religious leaders. The essential information given by the narrator regarding Jesus’ divine sonship (1:1, 18, 20)⁹⁷ as the savior of his people (1:21–23)⁹⁸ and

⁹⁴ Weaver, “Power and Powerlessness,” 454–66.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 466. Also see Carter, *Empire*, 57–74.

⁹⁶ Weaver, “Power and Powerlessness,” 454–66 describes the inappropriate traits of the political leaders as “terrified,” “deceiving,” and “passive” for Herod the king, “deeply superstitious and fearful” for Herod the tetrarch, and “vulnerable,” “indecisive,” and “impotent” for Pilate.

⁹⁷ Further passages that identify Jesus as the Son of God are 2:15; 3:17; 4:3, 6; 7:21; 8:29; 10:32–33; 11:25–27; 12:50; 14:33; 15:13; 16:16–17; 17:5; 18:10, 14, 19, 35; 20:23; 24:36; 26:29, 39, 42, 53, 63; 27:40, 43, 54; 28:19.

⁹⁸ The name of Jesus highlights his purposefully salvific ministry on earth. His name reoccurs throughout the Gospel of Matthew both directly and indirectly.

the religious leaders as the sons of the evil (“child of hell,” 23:15),⁹⁹ undercuts all these accusations against Jesus. From the early chapters on, the Matthean narrative guides its reader with the proper information regarding the person of Jesus to refute all the false claims thrown against the identity of the protagonist. Disclosing information essential to an appropriate perception of an individual character at a steady pace is the prelude for the ready reversal of fortune intended by the ironist himself.

Matthew indirectly emphasizes the issue of βλασφημέω (to blaspheme or speak against God, 9:3; 26:65 cf. 27:39).¹⁰⁰ At the first incident of accusation, in chapter 9, Jesus is blamed for his act of forgiving as blasphemy. Indeed, Jesus has the authority to forgive as he speaks it publicly, “the Son of Man has the authority on earth to forgive sins (ἐξουσίαν ἔχει ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἀφιέναι ἁμαρτίας, 9:6).” Therefore, it is not Jesus, but his very accusers who are the blasphemers, in fact, against God himself who calls Jesus, his beloved son (3:17; 17:5), the savior of his people whose task is to offer salvation and the forgiveness of sins to his people (1:21; 26:28).

Also, the religious leaders’ assessing Jesus’ exorcism by the prince of the demons, Beelzebul, is a demonstration of their ludicrous stupidity which is destined to bring about a drastic reversal in the mind of the reader who has a superior knowledge of “who they are”¹⁰¹ in contrast to “who Jesus is.” Chapter 4 narrates that Jesus overcame the tempter with his

⁹⁹ Kingsbury, “The Developing Conflict between Jesus and the Jewish Leaders in Matthew’s Gospel,” *CBQ* 49 (1987): 57–73 notes that in the Gospel of Matthew, the Pharisees as well as other religious leaders appear to serve as a personification of evil, which the dissertation regards as the chief ἀλαζών.

¹⁰⁰ Jeffrey A. Gibbs, *Matthew 1:11–11:1* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006), 455 mentions that “this verb can refer to human maligning other humans. More commonly in the LXX and the NT, the verb refers to human demeaning or maligning God in some way. When one is guilty of ‘blaspheming’ God, however, this does not always involved something as dramatic as ‘claiming to be God himself,’ ‘speaking in the holy name of God,’ or something like that. The context will have the lead the way in specifying the meaning.”

¹⁰¹ As early as chapter 3: 7 the religious leaders are identified as a “brood of vipers,” a description that is repeated in later chapters with other negative descriptions attributed to them.

unswerving reliance to both the words of God and his heavenly father himself. Jesus did defeat the evil spirit in person as the Son of God with the help of the Spirit of God, whose descending upon Jesus at his baptism is attested to in 3:16.¹⁰² Therefore, Jesus saying in 12:28, “but if I cast out the demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you (εἰ δὲ ἐν πνεύματι θεοῦ ἐγὼ ἐκβάλλω τὰ δαιμόνια, ἄρα ἔφθασεν ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ),” exposes as void the accusation made by the religious leaders, who are in actuality a corporate accomplice of the *evil* one, Beelzebul himself.

Walter Brueggemann offers another example of character irony in Matthew’s narrative. He proposes that it is pivotal to understand the interface of theological intentionality and ironic articulation in order to properly interpret the character of King Solomon, who is presented in memory and tradition in ancient Israel in relationship to the ideal concept of royal power. Brueggemann observes that the Solomonic narrative in the Old Testament presents Solomon, a constructed model of royal power as a great, faithful, admirable king on the surface level which betrays what “the thickness of the literature tells.”¹⁰³ The ironic revelation of the true status and condition of Solomon as an individual king is best exposed when he is compared to Jesus, the King of Israel, who also belongs to the Davidic lineage. Brueggemann perceives the contrast implied between the two figures to be total.¹⁰⁴ Several criteria drawn from the Gospel of Matthew confirm this view. First, the close examination of the Matthean sketch of Jesus’ lineage, especially when it comes to Solomon, shows that the author of Matthew depicts it oddly by not calling the mother of Solomon by her personal name, Bathsheba, but rather as “the wife of Uriah

¹⁰² “And when Jesus was baptized, he came up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and appearing upon him (βαπτισθείς δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εὐθὺς ἀνέβη ἀπὸ τοῦ ὕδατος· καὶ ἰδοὺ ἠνεώχθησαν αὐτῷ οἱ οὐρανοί, καὶ εἶδεν τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ καταβαῖνον ὡσεὶ περιστέρην καὶ ἐρχόμενον ἐπ’ αὐτόν).”

¹⁰³ Brueggemann, *Solomon*, xii.

(Matt 1:17).”¹⁰⁵ It is the author’s ironic gesture, not wanting to make too much of the scandalous origin of Solomon, and at the same time not wanting to be silent about it. The author stands between the two perspectives that operate on the two different levels of story: one presents the problematic origin of Solomon as a king on the surface level and the other, underlines the divine, continuous operation through this genealogy on the level of reality. Acknowledging such a dualistic paradigm allows the reader to perceive the ironic portrait of Solomon as the foil for the truly ideal King, Jesus.

Second, in Matt 6:24–34, specifically verse 29,¹⁰⁶ Jesus singled out Solomon as “a cipher for failed wealth and for futile, empty self-securing.”¹⁰⁷ The description of Matt 6:29 revealing Solomon’s surprisingly inferior status becomes more striking when we consider the Deuteronomic portraits of Solomon in his unusual acquisitions of wealth and glory.¹⁰⁸ After all, Solomon, despite the scriptural description as an ideal king, yields his place and finds his end in the figure Jesus Christ, the King “who is greater than Solomon (Matt 12:38–42).” The ironic exposition of Solomon’s inferior status and quality in blunt contrast to Jesus’ superior origin and identity testifies that the character revelation of irony can encompass the entire Scriptures with consistent themes.

In sum, as the above examples show, character revelation is one of the fundamental functions of irony that should not be ignored because characters are the main constituents of the story. Literally, without characters, there is no story and with irony, the story effectively

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 245–53.

¹⁰⁵ Compare to the other three mothers whose names (“Tamar,” 1:3; “Rahab” and “Ruth,” 1:5) the author of Matthew specifies in relation to the Davidic lineage.

¹⁰⁶ Matt 6:29, “λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐδὲ Σολομὼν ἐν πάσῃ τῇ δόξῃ αὐτοῦ περιεβάλετο ὡς ἐν τούτων” (yet, I tell you that not even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these).

¹⁰⁷ Brueggemann, *Solomon*, 246.

¹⁰⁸ Deut 17:16–17; 1 Kings 3–11.

discloses the inner beings of characters and their relational dynamics, which are useful landmarks for defining the subtext of the text, the underlying connotative meanings.

CHAPTER FOUR

IRONY OF THE MPN

The MPN is the literary division acquired through a narrative-critical reading of the entire story of Matthew¹ because the literary-rhetorical dimension of the Gospel points to its culmination in the MPN.² In other words, if the Gospel of Matthew consists of a story about Jesus' life and ministry, the Matthean Passion Narrative (26:1–27:66) is the goal of the entire narrative. Jesus has come to save his people from their sin and to give his life as a ransom for many (1:21; 20:28). He will accomplish this divinely-willed salvation through shedding his innocent blood of the covenant (26:28; 27:4, 6, 19, 24, 33). This central theme of the MPN is presented through the lens of irony.³

The first half of Chapter Four will delineate the MPN as 26:1–27:66 from the stance of the literary-rhetorical indicators of the text and include a brief examination of the Matthean scholarship trying to limit the MPN as well. The foremost goal of limiting the MPN is to

¹ The major event, the death of Jesus, is an integral part of the Gospel which unit must be expounded in a close connection to the progression and emphases of other parts of the story. Northrop Frye's idea supports the importance of perceiving the MPN in relation to other parts of Matthew. Frye, *The Great Code*, xiii states that "no book can have a coherent meaning unless there is some coherence in its shape." In other words, a story is not a coincidental happening but an outcome of the author's intentional lay-out as Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), 45 notes that plot is "an organization that humanizes time by giving it form" and Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 52–53 writes that the narrative blocks of a story are arranged by the implied author, creating "a logic of connection and hierarchy."

² "Methodology of the Dissertation" of Chapter One explains in detail the principles of narrative criticism and Booth's stable irony adopted for the reading of the MPN's conventional irony.

³ Craig S. Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids; Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 607 comments that irony is latent in the Matthean Passion narrative. He writes that "Matthew thus expands the irony already latent in the Passion Narrative: the travesties of justice, the confessions of Gentile like Pilate and Roman soldiers, the recollections of Satan's testing in the words of the religious leaders at the cross, and

circumscribe the immediate context for the MPN's conventional ironies. Then, the second half of Chapter Four will zoom in on the MPN's use of irony, specifically on how irony contributes to the theological significance of Jesus' death. Both these dimensions of the investigation of the MPN will show the reader that the MPN is not only purposefully crafted by the implied author ironist but also highly interactive with other parts of the Gospel, of which certain traits characterize a narrative-critical reading of the MPN as a comprehensive and consistent enterprise.

Limit of the MPN (26:1–27:66)

The gospel of Matthew is a *story* about Jesus' life, death and resurrection.⁴ Although there are debates over the original use of Matthew as an ancient *bios*,⁵ a catechism,⁶ a lectionary,⁷ an administrative manual or an apologetic-polemical treatise,⁸ Jack Dean Kingsbury and Mark Alan Powell, both proponents of narrative criticism, convincingly define the primary nature of Matthew as a story of Jesus.⁹ Kingsbury details three story lines in Matthew: the story of Jesus,

so forth.”

⁴ In his monumental attempt to investigate Christian origins and the New Testament without divorcing theology from history, N. T. Wright suggests that the New Testament must be read as the stories. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (3 vols.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 6 writes that “the New Testament, I suggest, must be read so to be understood, read within appropriate context, within an acoustic which will allow its full overtones to be heard. It must be read with as little distortion as possible, and with as much sensitivity as possible to its different levels of meaning. It must be read so that the stories, and the Story, which it tells can be heard *as* stories, not as rambling ways of declaring unstoried ‘ideas.’”

⁵ P. L. Shuler, *A Genre for the Gospels: the Biographical Character of Matthew* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 92–109.

⁶ Ernst von Dobschütz, “Matthew as Rabbi and Catechists,” in *The Interpretation of Matthew* (ed. Graham N. Stanton; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), 1–27.

⁷ M. D. Goulder, *Midrash and Lection in Matthew* (London: SPCK, 1974), 70–94.

⁸ B. W. Bacon, “The Five Books of Matthew against the Jews,” *The Expositor* 15 (1918): 56–66.

⁹ Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story*, 1–44; Powell, “Toward a Narrative,” 341.

of the disciples, and of the opponents of Jesus, the religious leaders of the Jews¹⁰ because the story of Jesus is inseparably integrated with the stories of the disciples and of his opponents.

The Gospel of Matthew is a narrated or discoursed story of the life and mission of Jesus.¹¹ Technically, a story is a narrated sequence of events in their temporal and causal connections,¹² namely, the *what* of the narrative.¹³ Characteristically, a story as a teaching and learning tool attempts to communicate¹⁴ and creates an effect in the mind of the reader through its story-world which is constructed by the telling of the narrator.¹⁵ As a building is constructed according to its blueprint, a meaningful story is coherently wrought according to the perspective and plot of the implied author that are intended to be found in the deep innards of the story. Therefore, limiting

¹⁰ Kingsbury, "The Developing Conflict," 57–73; Powell, "Toward a Narrative," 341–46.

¹¹ The story of Jesus as a whole consists of the major and the minor blocks of the story which Seymour Chatman respectively calls "kernels" and "satellites." See Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 53–56. Matera, "The Plot of Matthew's Gospel," 240 further elaborates the theory saying that though both kernels and satellites refer to events that construct the story, not all events are equal in their significance. A kernel which is also called "macrostructure," by Combrink, "The Macrostructure of the Gospel of Matthew," *Neot* 16 (1982): 1–20, is a major event or crux according to Matera, "The Plot of Matthew's Gospel," 243. Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 53 defines the kernel as hermeneutically significant because it advances the plot of a story by raising and answering questions. Therefore, missing or misinterpreting kernel(s) of a story means incomplete understanding of the narrative. If kernels are the major arteries of the story, supplying oxygen and nutrition essential to life, then satellites, the groups of minor events, are the regional veins around them, assisting or making more complex the function of the arteries to which they are connected. For the case of missing satellites of a story, Chatman, *ibid.*, 54 opines that though omission of a satellite will impoverish the narrative aesthetically, the logic of the story will not be affected because the satellite's main function is filling in, elaborating and completing the kernel.

¹² Gerard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1980), 33–85 pays attention to temporal relations of events within a story. And Edward Morgan Forster, *Aspects of the Novel* (N.Y.: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1927), 86 considers the principle of causality as a definitive characteristic of the plot of a story. Further, Powell, *Narrative*, 42 explains that "the perception of causal links between episodes in the Gospels is a feature of narrative criticism new to biblical studies. Under the dominance of historical criticism, the Gospels were usually treated as collections of various pericopes that were not intrinsically related to each other. . . Narrative criticism, however, looks for logical progressions of cause and effect."

¹³ Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 9. In this book, Chatman, 31–34 also defines "discourse" as the *how* of the narrative or the modus of presentation.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 28 suggests a narrative as a communication which embraces two parties, a sender and a receiver. And each party entails three personages such as the real author, the implied author, and the narrator for a sender and the real reader, the implied reader, and the narratee for a receiver.

¹⁵ Jeffrey A. Gibbs, "Let the Reader Understand: the Eschatological Discourse of Jesus in Matthew's Gospel" (Ph.D. diss., Union Theological Seminary, 1995), 32 notes that "to read a story as a story is to attend to this story-world and not to treat it as a means to another end."

the MPN requires an experienced reader to perceive the story's plot¹⁶ and the point of view¹⁷ of the implied author through attentive and repeated reading of the text.

The Gospels suggest their implied authors' point of view aligns with God's perspective,¹⁸ which is true and normative for their works.¹⁹ Likewise, the implied author of Matthew is faithful to the particular perspective which he adopts from God. Accordingly, in his effort to maintain God's point of view, the implied author of Matthew selects events necessary for an informative story, decides their relevance, and arranges them in a congenial manner in order to keep their thematic connection as coherent as possible.

The Gospel of Matthew presents the divinely-willed salvation in Jesus (1:21; 26:39, 54) as the key perspective of the implied author through which he narrates and characterizes the events

¹⁶ As the relation between the kernels and satellites implies the logic of hierarchy, the design of the implied author, the so-called "plot," testifies to the logic of connection. Aristotle, *Poet.*, section 7–10 underlines unity as a key characteristic of a plot. Also, Carter, "Kernels and Narrative Blocks: The Structure of Matthew's Gospel," *CBQ* 54 (1992): 466 explains that plot is skillfully arranging a story episodically. The temporal and causal sequence of the story is not a random creation of the author, but rather a carefully thought-out structure. In speaking of the importance of plot for a narrative-critical reading of a story, Powell, "Toward a Narrative," 343–44 mentions that "plot" and "structure" are two differently nuanced concepts in a strict sense, illustrating the changes in which narrative criticism critically differs from the historical-critical traditions. He furthers that "whereas redaction critics have focused on the book's *compositional structure*, narrative critics have focused on its *plot structure*." In a nutshell, the plot is an engineering plan of the implied author to maneuver the flow of the story with continuity between episodes while maintaining rhetorical patterns and particular logic. See Combrink, "Matthew as Narrative," 61–90 and Matera, "The Plot of Matthew's Gospel," 240.

¹⁷ Speaking of the plot of a story makes addressing the implied author's point of view unavoidable because the arrangement of events has an inevitable link to the central narrative logic. According to Powell, *Narrative*, 24, the point of view refers to "the norms, values, and general worldview that the implied author establishes as operative for the story." Reading a story is a creative act in the sense that the reader engages the story-world and experiences being the implied reader envisioned by the text, but not in the sense that he may replace the implied author's existence, which is evident by the logic of the narrative in its shape and idea. The point of view and the plot of a story interact closely. Though Matera, "The Plot of Matthew's Gospel," 240 identifies the first feature of a plot as "an organizing principle which gives logic and meaning to disparate events," Kevin Smyth, "The Structural Principle of Matthew's Gospel," *IBS* 41 (1982): 207 explains that a plot itself is an outcome or manifestation of the *ruling idea* which causes and governs the formation of a story. This "ruling idea" is the implied author's point of view which gives the plot of a story organization and meaning. In other words, perceiving the point of view that governs the story is the best way for the reader to gain a bird's eye view over the story's integral structure since the reader will recognize kernels retrospectively at the end of the reading. Therefore, in an analogy, the plot and the point of view are like a pair of horses pulling a chariot (i.e. the story) driven by the author of the text, challenging and attending to each quality and function.

¹⁸ Carter, *Matthew*, 146–47 notes that "the story of Jesus is told from God's perspective."

¹⁹ Kingsbury, "The figure of Jesus," 4–7.

and characters of the story.²⁰ In brief, a red thread weaving through reoccurring thematic dots of Matthew begins from 1:21: the divine exposition of the meaning of the name of Jesus, “one who will save his people from their sins.” 1:21 functions as the epicenter of the story of Jesus’ life and death for the first Gospel.²¹ Meanwhile, a question unanswered lingers in the mind of a perceptive reader, which is not about *who* Jesus is but *how* Jesus will save his people. The MPN especially purports to communicate “how” aspect of the divine salvation. In the flow of Matthew’s narrative, Peter’s confession of Jesus (16:16) finally establishes a time proper for Jesus to begin to predict explicitly the reality of his death (i.e. first passion prediction, 16:21)

²⁰ The story of Matthew is the story of Jesus the Messiah (i.e. Christ), as the genealogy, the prelude of the story indicates (1:1). The genealogy of Matthew reveals that God is in control and purposefully measures human history. Though history seems to flow aimlessly, it is God who is sovereign over it and redeems it. It seems that the implied author’s unpretentious simplification of genealogy is intentionally done to underline two factors: one, the divine decisive supervision over history and two, the singly unique father-son relationship between God and Jesus (1:18, 20, 23; 3:17; 16:17; 17:5). Jesus’ filial relationship to God is significant for the development of the story because such a relationship explains the Son’s authority in revealing his heavenly Father’s will (13:35; 17:5) to save men (1:1, 21). In other words, the person and mission of Jesus are the essence and manifestation of the divine saving will. Therefore, without Jesus, who is the only saving agent commissioned by God himself, there is no history or grace of salvation toward men. The narrative segment of 1:1–4:11 clearly describes God as the director of the salvation history. God not only initiates the story of Jesus (1:1, 18, 20), but also identifies it with the salvation history (1:21–23). In this light, Carter, *Matthew*, 160 explains that the author presents God as the initiator of the plot. He says that “God acts to overrule human processes (“before they lived together,” 1:18) and wishes (1:19–20) in the conception of Jesus. In so doing, God acts to save humans from sin and to be revealed (1:21–23) through Jesus.” Especially, 1:18–25 is of utmost importance, like an engine for the entire story, answering two questions: first, “who is Jesus?”—the issue of the identity of Jesus and two, “why has he come?”—an issue of his ministry in relation to the divine will. 1:18–25 functions as the bedrock on which the entire story of Jesus is founded which cannot be gotten rid of without damaging the narrative logic and cause. It characterizes the whole story of Matthew as the divine involvement in human history with the specific goal of salvation for mankind. Once again the crux idea of the Gospel is that Jesus, the Messiah-Savior came among his people to save them from their sins (1:21) according to the divine master plan (1:23; 2:5–6; 26:39). As God chooses the name, *Jesus* for his Son and invests him with the meaning best reflecting his steadfast saving will toward men (1:1, 20–21; 2:6, 15; 3:3, 15; 4:13–16, 19), the person of Jesus truly represents the presence of the Emmanuel God (1:23, 28:20) and the ministry of Jesus manifests the reality of the kingdom of heaven (3:2; 4:17; 6:10; 10:7; 11:12; 20:1; 21:43; 22:2; 25:1) among the people. In essence, the Matthean story of Jesus is encapsulated as the story of the divine salvation carried out by God’s son.

²¹ Kingsbury, *Matthew As Story*, 45 emphasizes the significance of the name, Jesus for the saving story of Matthew. He expounds that ““Jesus” is the personal name of the protagonist of Matthew’s story. Although Joseph is the one who gives Jesus his name (1:25), he does so on instructions from the angel of the Lord (1:20). Ultimately, therefore, God himself is the source of Jesus’ name. As to meaning, “Jesus” denotes that “God [is] salvation,” and the angel touches on this as he tells Joseph that Jesus “will *save* his people from their sins” (1:21). Accordingly, the force of the name “Jesus” is that in the one thus called, God is active to save. Hence, of all the traits Matthew ascribes to Jesus in the course of his story, the one most fundamental is that he is “saving.””

which expresses fundamentally the “how” of 1:21.²² Correspondingly, God’s will for human salvation from the angel’s message to the necessity of the first passion prediction, directs the story from the beginning to the end in its fulfillment on the cross of Jesus. To reach its fulfillment, the divinely-willed salvation undergoes the phases of conflict between Jesus and characters such as Satan, the Jewish religious leaders and the disciples. And conflict must come to a crisis, and in the life of the Christ Jesus that crisis is the cross.²³

The story of Jesus’ passion (26:1–27:66) begins with an overt prediction of the death of Jesus that will come about within a specific time frame, Passover, which is only two days away (26:2). The passion of Jesus, which has been both foreshadowed and explicitly predicted by Jesus himself in the early chapters of Matthew (2:1–23;²⁴ 16:21; 17:22–23; 20:18–19), is finally approaching its finish line. The Gospel of Matthew progressively has built the idea that there is no other way of achieving the *forgiveness of sins* other than Jesus’ righteous death and the shedding of his innocent blood (26:28; 27:4, 25) from the early chapters (1:21; 23:35 cf. 2:16–

²² Merrill C. Tenney, *New Testament Survey* (rev.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1985), 151 exposes a similar idea by observing recurring phrase, “from that time began Jesus . . .” in the Gospel. He considers this Matthean phrase presents the two stages of Jesus’ life with distinction. He writes that “the two points of division are Matthew 4:17, “*From that time* [italics ours] began Jesus to preach, and to say, Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,” and Matthew 16:21, “*From that time* [italics ours] began Jesus to show unto his disciples that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up.” The former of these two passages indicates the rise of Jesus’ preaching career, which brought him into public prominence. The latter passage marks the beginning of the decline of his popularity and points toward the culmination of his career at the cross. The fact that these two foci of his life are so clearly marked in the Gospel indicates the avowed purpose of the author to present two aspects of Jesus’ biography, and shows that he had a unitary concept of that life as a whole.”

²³ Tenney, *ibid.*, 156.

²⁴ Chapter two identifies Jesus, the Messiah–Savior (1:1, 17–18, 21) as the King of the Jews (2:2). Yet oddly enough, the King of the Jews is recognized and for the first time worshipped by the Gentiles (2:8), the magi from the East (2:1–2) not by the Jews. As early as chapter two, the life of the infant Jesus is described as being in danger because of the threat of King Herod (2:1–3). This same chapter further depicts a wider unwelcoming attitude on the part of Jerusalem represented by her religious leaders (2:3; 8:10; 15:24; 23:37). All Jerusalem (πᾶσα Ἱεροσόλυμα, 2:3), the city of the God of Israel (5:35; 21:1–9), together with Herod the king is “disturbed at (ἐταράχθη, 2:3)” the arrival of her loyal Messiah (1:1, 17; 2:2). It is the beginning of the seeds of the conflict which moves the story of Jesus forward to its resolution in the death of Jesus. If 1:18–25 strategically discloses Jesus’ identity as early as possible and raises the most significant question essential to the understanding of the life and mission of Jesus, “how will Jesus save his people from their sins?,” the presentation of chapter two regarding an initial conflict between

18; 14:1–10). The MPN provides three literary evidences that glue together the core issues regarding the person and ministry of Jesus progressively developed throughout the Gospel into a perspective essential to digest the meaning of the death of Jesus: Jesus the Christ Savior (*who*) carries out the divine-willed salvation (*what*) by shedding his innocent blood on the cross (*how*). First, the name of *Jesus*, “he will save his people from their sins,” constantly reappears throughout the Gospel and more intensely so in the MPN²⁵ as if the implied author intends to remind his reader that the essence of Jesus’ entire ministry is *saving the people* which attests to his perfect devotion as the Son who carries out his Father’s will (3:17; 12:18; 17:5). Second, the implied author of the MPN intentionally uses the adverb “τότε” at strategic sites in chapter 26 (vv. 3, 14, 16, 50, 56) to reinforce the idea that what drives Jesus’ passion to its fulfillment, namely, his innocent death on the cross, is the divine necessity (τὸ θέλημα του θεου) and the *modus* of divine salvation intended by God himself as well. Third, as the MPN progresses, its various scenes—the disciples’ denial and flight (26:31–35, 56, 69–75), the arrest (26:47–56) of Jesus, the trials (before Caiaphas, 26:57–68; before Pilate, 27:11–26), the mockery of the soldiers (27:27–31), the crucifixion and death of Jesus (27:32–56), and the burial of Jesus (27:57–66)—all testify that Jesus himself singly carries out this divinely-willed task of salvation.²⁶ The idea that the Son of God must die to save men is foreign to men, as shown by the fact that Peter, the representative of the disciples of Jesus, rebukes the idea passionately. In facing Peter’s rebuke against his prediction of an imminent death (16:22), Jesus precisely characterizes his disciple’s attitude as being under Satan’s influence (16:21–22) to halt the divine

Jesus and his people in the form of a power clash makes an early connection to the MPN (26:1–27:66).

²⁵ Matt. 26:1, 4, 6, 10, 17, 19, 26, 31, 34, 36, 49–51, 55, 57, 59, 63–64, 69, 71, 75; 27:1, 11, 16–17, 20, 22, 26–27, 37, 46, 50, 54–55, 57–58.

²⁶ Matt. 26:56b reports that “then all the disciples deserted him and fled (τότε οἱ μαθηταὶ πάντες ἀφέντες αὐτὸν ἔφυγον).”

saving plan that steadily runs its due course (16:23). Jesus is mindful of his Father's will as shown in the incidents of his baptism (3:13–17) and temptation in the wilderness by Satan (4:1–11). He is so unwaveringly determined to carry out the will of God (6:23 echoing 4:4, 7, 10) that he even sacrifices his own life (16:23–25), which is about to be narrated in the MPN (26:39, 54). It is clear that the divine saving will does not require human counsel or consent for its actualization. Therefore, as Jesus alone understands his Father's saving will (16:23b), he alone will bring it to its consummation.

Approaching it from different perspectives and criteria, some Matthean scholars limit the MPN differently.²⁷ For example, Raymond E. Brown, in his comprehensive study regarding the death of Jesus in the four Gospels, considers the unit of the MPN to be 26:30–27:66.²⁸ It is interesting to observe that Brown does not begin the MPN with 26:1–2 though he explains that “Matt. 26:1–2 is a parallel for Mark 14:1 and so starting the passion narrative there once again includes the Last Supper.”²⁹ Instead, Brown views Jesus going with disciples to the Mount of Olives (26:30–35) after sharing the Last Supper, which was factually a Passover meal,³⁰ as a transitional episode which ends in Jesus' burial (27:66)³¹ based on Matthew's use of “then (τότε, 26:31)” indicating a break.³² Now, Jesus is accompanying the disciples onto the actual site where he reaffirms the divine saving will (26:39) and is consequently arrested. However, Brown's model does not explain how the burial of Jesus (27:57–66) and its satellite event, the guarding of

²⁷ Raymond E. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave* (vol. 1, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1993), 38–39 notes that there are various theories as to how Matthew should be divided and more difficult is discerning where Matthew draws the demarcation between the passion and the resurrection of Jesus.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, I.38, I.117–145, II.1284–1313.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, I.38.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, I.122–26.

³¹ *Ibid.*, I.39.

³² *Ibid.*, I.127

the tomb (27:62–65) correspond to the MPN’s beginning (26:30–35). It raises the question of why the scene of Jesus’ crucifixion and death (27:32–56) instead of the burial of Jesus does not conclude the MPN as the outcome of his obedience to the will of God (26:39, 53–54) to which the earnest prayers of Jesus at Gethsemane attest (26:39, 53–54). A similar problem is observed in Donald Senior’s limit of the MPN (26:1–27:56). Senior provides a rather simple explanation that the passion of Jesus begins with a final formal introduction to the passion (26:1–5) and meets its end at the climatic death scene (27:45–56).³³ Also, Senior leaves out the burial narrative (27:57–66) on the ground that through the addition of an adverb, “there (ἐκεῖ, 27:55),” Matthew reinforces the connection of the women with the acclamation of the centurion with his soldiers (27:54) and that the Matthean burial narrative is clearly oriented to the resurrection account.³⁴ In essence, if Brown leaves out the proleptic preparation of Jesus’ burial by a woman at Bethany and yet concludes the MPN with the burial scene of Jesus, Senior properly begins the MPN with Jesus’ immanent death prediction and his burial anticipated through anointing of Jesus by a woman at Bethany (26:12), he, however, ends the MPN at the crucifixion scene by leaving out the actual burial of Jesus and its satellite event, the placement of the guards securing his tomb.

Unlike Brown and Senior’s narrow scoping of the MPN, some Matthean scholars broadly outline the MPN by including all the elements of Jesus’ passion such as persecution, conflicts, trials, death and resurrection (i.e. vindication). This model clearly emphasizes an inseparable link between Jesus’ death, resurrection, and great commission all together as the recapitulation of the divine saving will and celebration of its fulfillment. Richard A. Edwards contours the MPN as 26:1–28:20. He places 28:1–20 under the heading; “The Son’s Obedience Vindicated,” as a

³³ Donald Senior, “Matthew’s Special Material in the Passion Story: Implications for the Evangelist’s Redactional Technique and Theological Perspective,” *ETL* 63 (1987): 273, footnote 4.

³⁴ *Ibid.* In fact, Senior mistakenly suggests a wrong verse, 27:56 for *ekei*. This adverb is found in 27:55.

subdivision of 27:27–28:20: “The Son’s Death and Vindication.”³⁵ Jack Dean Kingsbury further broadens the MPN’s scope by defining it as 16:21–28:20. According to Kingsbury, Matthew’s Gospel is specifically a story of Jesus’ life,³⁶ he who is the Son of God. He structures Matthew into three main parts in an attempt to integrate the entire story of Jesus within the Christological theme: the person of Jesus the Messiah (1:1–4:16), the proclamation of Jesus the Messiah (4:17–16:20), and the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah (16:21–28:20).³⁷ Therefore, the MPN proper implied by Kingsbury sees Jesus’ first passion (& resurrection) prediction in 16:21 as the beginning, yet also the climax of the revelation of Jesus the Messiah. However, Kingsbury himself acknowledges that “Matthew did in fact intend that this formula should indicate the broadest divisions of the Gospel.”³⁸

To be sure, 26:1–5 provides a contextual transition by narrating Jesus’ passion prediction (26:2) immediately following the lesson of Jesus on the final age and his exhortation for vigilance in chapter 25. As if the implied author is underlining the control and authority of Jesus over his death, the corresponding plot of Jesus’ opponents to kill him (τότε, then, 26:3) fittingly comes after to the last passion prediction of Jesus (26:2). Yet, the MPN properly begins and Jesus’ burial in a way of forming an inside *inclusio* within the MPN. The first is the proleptic anointing of Jesus for his burial by a woman at Bethany (26:6–13). The second is the account of the actual burial of Jesus (27:57–61). Jesus declares that the woman at Bethany who wholeheartedly participates and prepares the fulfillment of the divinely-willed salvation in his imminent death by preparing his burial (26:12) must be remembered wherever *this Gospel* (τὸ

³⁵ Edwards, *Matthew’s Story of Jesus*, 91–95.

³⁶ Kingsbury, *Matthew*, x.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 9, 161–167.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 8.

εὐαγγέλιον τοῦτο, 26:13) is preached throughout the world (26:10–13). The content of this Gospel is nonetheless the saving will of God toward his people (1:21) and the salvation proffered by Jesus' innocent death on the cross (26:42). Therefore, it is noteworthy that the implied author speaks of the redeeming death of Jesus, which is the essence of this *Gospel* (4:13; 9:35; 24:14; 26:13), as *vaticinium ex eventu* (prophecy after event) by letting Jesus mention it as if it has already happened.

A Narrative-Critical Reading of the MPN's Conventional Ironies

The major arguments of the dissertation focus on the presence of the MPN's conventional ironies as the rhetorical device of the implied author, the so-called divine ironist,³⁹ and their impact on the theological exposition of the death of Jesus.⁴⁰ Therefore, in this last half of Chapter Four, the dissertation will methodologically zoom in on the textual sites of conventional ironies which contain interwoven verbal, situational, and character ironies central to the plot of the MPN.

A narrative-critical reading examines the structure of the Gospel of Matthew without reference to any particular source theory. As Chapter One of the dissertation explains in detail, the reading of the MPN's conventional irony depends on the adopted principles of narrative criticism: coherence of the narrative as a whole story, the presence of the implied author and also his counterpart, the implied reader, the authority of the text, and the rhetorical-persuasive strategies of the narrative, specifically, irony as the rhetorical device of the implied author⁴¹

³⁹ From now on, the dissertation will use the terms interchangeably to designate the one who intentionally envisioned and accordingly embedded conventional ironies in the MPN.

⁴⁰ See Chapter Three, "Conventional Ironies," of the dissertation for detailed information regarding the implied author of the Gospel as the divine ironist.

⁴¹ David M. Gunn, "Narrative Criticism," in *To Each its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and Their Application* (ed. S. McKenzie and S. Haynes; Louisville: Westminster/ John Knox, 1993), 171–95.

along with Booth's textual-bound "stable irony."⁴² Narrative criticism is interested in how the story of the MPN unfolds for its implied reader. Its principles guide the implied reader to focus on the flow of the narrative, thematic continuity between episodes and literary-rhetorical features like irony that preserve its continuity in order to persuade. Meanwhile, the implied reader looks for rhetorical patterns⁴³ to identify the causal links that provide the narrative with its particular logic and purpose⁴⁴ by paying attention to the story lines which depict the development of the most significant characters and their relational dynamics which create events.

Relying on these observations, the implied reader of the Gospel of Matthew will recognize that the Gospel as a whole is interrelated. Matthew's story of Jesus synergistically predisposes the implied reader's reactions to what follows so that it may create the best possible context for receiving the MPN's rhetorical thrust, namely the revelation of Christ's death which is the MPN's *telos* through conventional ironies. In other words, the implied author of the MPN (26:1–27:66) skillfully employs irony as a rhetorical device to communicate as well as augment Matthean theology with regard to the death of Jesus.

In this second half of Chapter Four, the dissertation will explicate the MPN's conventional ironies section by section.⁴⁵ Instead of lining up cases of irony under each category of conventional irony, the dissertation will expose their occurrences according to the chapter of the MPN in which they are found. In this way, the dissertation will avoid dealing with the MPN fragmentarily. In addition, it is worth noting that not every case of conventional irony in the

⁴² Chapter One of the dissertation explicates adopted principles from narrative criticism and Booth's stable irony under the title, "Methodology of the Dissertation."

⁴³ Combrink, "Matthew as Narrative," 61–90.

⁴⁴ Matera, "The Plot of Matthew's Gospel," 233–53.

⁴⁵ The MPN can be divided up into several scenes: chapter 26:1–56 (Jesus' proleptic burial anticipated through the anointing of Jesus by a woman at Bethany, Gethsemane, and arrest of Jesus), 26:57–27:10 (the first interrogation of Jesus in Sanhedrin), 27:11–26 (the second interrogation of Jesus before Pilate), 27:27–56 (the scene of

MPN belongs to only one category. The MPN's ironist interweaves his irony for the rhetorical purpose of communication. In fact, the MPN's conventional irony is rather complex,⁴⁶ so that its reader may detect combinations of irony, such as an instance of verbal irony with situational irony, a moment of situational irony in an example of character irony, an occurrence of character irony with a case of verbal irony, or in some cases, all in one.

Introduction to the Context of the MPN

God wills to gather and save his people who are like lost sheep without a shepherd (τὰ πρόβατα τὰ ἀπολωλότα μὴ ἔχοντα ποιμένα).⁴⁷ Jesus came to his people to reclaim them as their shepherd (ποιμήν), whose true identity simultaneously encompasses Christ the Lord, the King of the Jews, the Son of God and the Son of Man in humility. The implied author of Matthew steadily discloses through Jesus' direct and indirect passion predictions (ch. 2; 12:40; 16:21; 17:12, 22–23; 20:18–19; 21:38, 39; 23:34; 24:9; 26:2, 11–12) throughout the Gospel that God not only wills human salvation (1:21), but also the way in which it is achieved.⁴⁸ In a definite fashion, the MPN portrays the passion of Jesus as the cup (τὸ ποτήριον, 26:39) in association with the will of God (τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, 26:42, 55–56) which only the Son of God can *drink*. In other words, Jesus essentially accomplishes the *saving* will of God (τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ as revealed in 1:21) through his obedience that leads to his death on the cross.

crucifixion), and 27:57–66 (the burial of Jesus).

⁴⁶ Tanaka, "The Concept of Irony," 47 notes that "though it is easy, in principle, to distinguish event and linguistic irony, it is not so simple a matter in literary contexts."

⁴⁷ Matt. 9:36; 10:6; 15:24. Further, the Gospel of Matthew portrays Jesus as the shepherd (ποιμήν) in 18:12; 25:32f; 26:31.

⁴⁸ Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Theology* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1981), 55 explains that a theocentric approach to the New Testament is necessary because it enables us to see God in Christ reconciling the world to himself through his initiative.

Prior to the MPN, Matthew demonstrates the substantial difference between the divine perspective and human perspective which is an essential ingredient for irony in 11:25–26, 13:11–15 and 15:11–20. These passages show that what God has willed to reveal his ways to infants (νηπίοις, 11:25) but that his plan will be concealed from the wise and understanding (σοφῶν καὶ συνετῶν, 11:25). According to the Gospel of Matthew, infants (νηπίοις) are those who depend on the revelation of the divine will disclosed by Jesus (11:27; 16:17), the sole carrier of the divine perspective. These “infants” stand in stark contrast to the wise and understanding (σοφῶν καὶ συνετῶν) who assert their own understanding of the will of God (9:3, 11–17, 34; 12:3–8, 14–45; 15:1–11; 16:1–4; 19:4; 21:16, 42; 22:29–31).⁴⁹ The implied author of Matthew thus establishes the wise and understanding (σοφῶν καὶ συνετῶν) as a distinctively negative character group, i.e. hypocrites (15:7; 22:18; 23:13, 15, 25, 27, 29; cf. 6:2, 5, 16), whose blind pride in their own knowledge and understanding becomes the target of Jesus’ acute reprehension just as the ἀλαζών is the object of scorn and ridicule for the εἴρων.

From the beginning of the MPN, its ironist implies a double-layered story phenomenon surrounding the life and death of Jesus which projects two sharply contrasting perspectives. In fact, within the stories of the Gospel, it is hard to find a vignette that carries through and embodies this kind of immense gap between the heavenly perspective and the earthly perspective more than the story of Jesus’ passion. The ironist of the MPN emphasizes Jesus’ authority and control over his own passion,⁵⁰ though it seems on the ostensible level of the story that his

⁴⁹ Kingsbury, *Matthew As Story*, 15, 137, 145 considers “infants” in the section 11:2–16:20 are the disciples of Jesus (11:25–27) who are enlightened in contrast to the wise in Israel who are darkened and without understanding. More specifically, Richard T. France, *Matthew: Evangelist & Teacher* (Illinois: InterVarsity, 1989), 286 considers the wise and understanding as Israel’s leaders who are in fact blind and without understanding. Also, Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 8–20* (ed. Helmut Koester; trans. James E. Crouch; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 162–63 identifies the wise and understanding with the “entire religious aristocracy” in contrast to the νηπίοι with the “Am ha arez.”

⁵⁰ Anthony J. Saldarini, *Jesus and Passover* (N.Y.: Paulist, 1984), 62 mentions that Matthew emphasizes Jesus’ sovereign control over his death and the self-giving implied in his actions. Also, John P. Heil, *The Death and*

opponents are in charge of it. As we already have seen, the strategic use of an adverb τότε (then) by the ironist in chapter 26 effectively communicates that Jesus becomes conductor of his own requiem by willingly giving up himself (26:3, 14, 24, 50, 56) for the divine cause (26:42, 53–54).⁵¹ First Jesus had predicted his imminent betrayal and death (26:2) in relation to the Jewish feast, Passover (26:2, 17–19).⁵² Only then (τότε) did the chief priests and the elders of the people gather under the leadership of Caiaphas, the high priest, (26:3) and take counsel together to arrest Jesus by trickery and to kill him (26:4). In other words, even the immediately following murder plot against Jesus by the religious leaders is subject to Jesus' full control of his destiny corresponding to his prediction of the imminent passion and death.⁵³ Therefore, it is observed that within a brief time of transition from 26:2 to 26:4, the ironist reveals the two story-worlds phenomenon essential for a meaningful interpretation of the entire panorama of Jesus' passion. As 26:2 shows on the upper level of the story, it is Jesus who willingly takes up the cross to achieve his Father's saving will (1:21; 3:15; 18:14; 26:28, 39, 54). Yet, 26:4 describes what is happening on the lower level of the story: the opponents of Jesus plan to kill (ἀποκτείνωσιν; cf.

Resurrection of Jesus: A Narrative-Critical Reading of Matthew 26–28 (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 33 treats the death of Jesus as the divine necessity.

⁵¹ The implied author of Matthew frequently employs an adverb, “τότε (then)” throughout the Gospel. Yet, he more frequently uses this adverb in chapter 26 (13 times) than in any other chapter. The implied author repeats this adverb in chapter 26 to illuminate the authority and control of Jesus over his own passion (26:3, 14, 50, 56) and to characterize the narrative's flow fast, dramatic, and determinative (26:16, 36, 65, 67). In other cases, it functions as a temporal particle (26:31, 38, 45, 52, 74). See Howell, *Matthew's Inclusive Story*, 154–160.

⁵² Logically, if the Passover has nothing to do with Jesus' passion, it must be determined why the implied author even bothers to mention it (4 times, 26:2, 17, 18, 19). Although the MPN is not specific in linking Jesus with the motif of the lamb of God who carries away the sins of the world as the Gospel of John does (1:29, 36), it is not hard to notice that the implied author of the MPN portrays the preparation of the coming death of Jesus for the salvation of his people (1:21) in the light of the preparation of the Passover meal (26:17–19). Jesus' predictions that he would be delivered up and killed (i.e. crucifixion) on the Passover day (26:2) are enough to create the paschal lamb image in the mind of the reader since the paschal lamb is the very symbolic object which is delivered up and killed on the Passover.

⁵³ Howell, *Matthew's Inclusive Story*, 154 mentions that “the final section of the Gospel is introduced with a prediction of the imminent passion and crucifixion during the Passover feast (26:2) which gives the implied reader the impression that Jesus is in full control of his destiny . . . the theme of rejection is encountered immediately as Matthew reports the Jewish leaders planning a way to kill Jesus (26:3ff.)”

12:14, ἀπολέσωσιν) Jesus by stealth (δόλω). There exists a fundamental contrast and inconsistency in this picture for while Jesus orchestrates his own death with determination and sovereignty, his opponents plot to *seize* Jesus by *stealth*, thus showing their ignorance of the identity and power of Jesus. An unbridgeable disequilibrium of perspectives is exhibited between these two main parties of the story: Jesus the protagonist and the antagonist, a group of his opponents, which not only represent the different perspectives of God and men but also cultivate ironies pointing to the reality vs. shadow situation surrounding the death of Jesus. Since 26:1–5 serves as the transition or introduction to the MPN, the ironist from the beginning signals the presence of the two contrasting perspectives that governs the unfolding of the story of Jesus passion and death.

Chapter 26 and Conventional Ironies

A Situational Irony of the Disturbance (ὁ θόρυβος) among the People (26:1–5). The first irony detected in the MPN is a situational irony coming into view in 26:5, “But they said, ‘not during the feast, lest there be a tumult among the people (ἐλεγον δέ· μὴ ἐν τῇ ἑορτῇ, ἵνα μὴ θόρυβος γένηται ἐν τῷ λαῷ).” This situational irony surrounding an assumed θόρυβος must be read in relation to the scene in which the *stirred* up crowds in one accord shout for the crucifixion of Jesus (σταυρωθήτω, 27:22–23). Ignorant of the superior reality that Jesus not only foresees his violent death but also endorses its fulfillment, his opponents (i.e. the chief priests and the elders of the people, 26:3, 47) begin to plot against Jesus. They reach a unanimous decision to arrest and kill Jesus, avoiding the feast due to the potential tumult (ὁ θόρυβος) that may occur among the people (ἐν τῷ λαῷ, 27:5).

Before expounding an irony in relation to tumult, let us attentively look into the narrative’s contrasting realities hidden behind the draped yet penetrable curtain of irony. First of all, there exists a sharp contrast in the quality of character between Jesus and his opponents. If the former,

as the Messiah Savior, the Son of God, the Son of David and the Son of Man (1:1, 17, 21; 2:2, 4–6 3:17; 4: 3, 6; 9:6; 16:16; 17:5; 21:9), encompasses all the power and might that one can imagine, his opponents, the Jewish religious leaders, are associates to the evil one (13:19, 38) who is the arch enemy of God (4:8–9). Further, Jesus cares for the people, yet his opponents fear them (21:26 cf. 10:28) and act to destroy them (23:15).⁵⁴ Secondly, another kind of contrast is examined in these two characters’ words and actions. Jesus makes it clear that he will be betrayed and crucified by the hands of the high priests and the elders of the people (οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι τοῦ λαοῦ, 26:2, 3–5), specifically at the time of the Passover (τὸ πάσχα, 26:2).⁵⁵ As 26:2 shows, Jesus possesses superior knowledge regarding his opponents’ identity and the details of his passion involving both his betrayal and crucifixion. Jesus’ mention of the Passover as the immediate temporal context for his passion sheds a theological light on the nature of his mission which is about to be accomplished through his death on the cross.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ When we remind ourselves of 1 John 4:18, “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love (NRS),” the religious leaders’ fear of the crowds clearly speaks to their lack of love and care toward the people which contrasts to the Matthean emphasis on Jesus’ reoccurring “do not fear” message to both the people and his disciples who exhibit weakness and are lost in doubt (14:27; 17:7; 28:5, 10). This is why Jesus has compassion on the crowds, who are like sheep deprived of their shepherd (πρόβατα μὴ ἔχοντα ποιμένα, 9:36; 10:6; 15:24; 25:32–33) and emphatically proclaims to his opponents that he desires mercy not sacrifice in harmony with God (9:13; 12:7; 23:23). Without a doubt, Jesus is the kingly shepherd for whom the distressed and helpless sheep are longing (2:6) and to whom they beg for mercy (9:27; 15:22; 17:15; 20:30–31). He will gather these lost sheep by willingly laying down his life for them (26:31). John P. Heil, “Ezekiel 34 and the Narrative Strategy of the Shepherd and Sheep Metaphor in Matthew,” *CBQ* 55 (1993): 698–708 examines the Matthean use of the metaphor of shepherd and sheep in relation to the tradition of the Jewish Scriptures (Mic. 5:1; 2 Sam. 5:2; Zech. 13:7), especially Ezek 34 as the key text providing the semantic field for the Matthean shepherd metaphor. He writes, 707, that “there is a subtle rhetorical progression in the references to Jesus as shepherd. Although it is implied throughout the shepherd metaphor that Jesus is *the* shepherd, the fact that he is not explicitly so designated until his prediction that God will strike him as *the* shepherd (26:31) intensifies its shock. He is the shepherd struck by God with suffering and death but raised again to continue as the shepherd who brings his scattered sheep back to Galilee and sends them to all peoples. Although Jesus authorizes his disciples to be his fellow shepherds, the term “shepherd” is never explicitly applied to them. This enhances the status of Jesus as *the* shepherd upon whom they—and thus the readers—depend both as his sheep and as his fellow shepherds.”

⁵⁵ Brown, *The Death of the Messiah*, I.119.

⁵⁶ Saldarini, *Jesus and Passover*, 62–63 writes that in Matthew “Passover and Jesus’ crucifixion go together in God’s plan . . . just as the sacrifices in the Temple atoned for sins and the Passover lamb saved the Israelites from death, Jesus’ self-sacrifice saves believers from sin through bringing about their forgiveness.” In contrast, Brown, *The Death of Messiah*, I.156 considers that it is dubious to keep finding Passover motifs after the Last Supper, since

Historically, the Passover is the day of significance for the Jews to commemorate God's miraculous saving deed on behalf of his people (i.e. Israel, 1:21; 2:6; 13:15; 15:8; 27:25).⁵⁷ Therefore, Jesus' depiction of the Passover as the opportune time (ὁ καιρός, 8:29; 21:34; 26:18)⁵⁸ for his own death underlines two factors: one, the death of Jesus is not only God's act of salvation but also the completion of God's plan (i.e. Jesus' accomplishment of καιρός) through his Son, and two, as the saving will of God brought about the Passover for his people in the past, the same enduring divine saving will governs the MPN and once again enacts the redeeming death of the Son of God for his people (1:21; 27:25).⁵⁹ In this way, the ironist of the MPN casts a soteriological tone over the Passover by depicting it as both the temporal and theological setting for Jesus' passion,⁶⁰ which is in essence the fulfillment of the divine salvation (1:21; 18:14; 26:28, 42, 54) and mercy (9:13, 27; 12:7; 15:22; 17:15; 20:30–31).⁶¹ More specifically, it is worth noting that the ironist of the MPN allows only Jesus and his disciples to address the name of the feast as the Passover four times (τὸ πάσχα, 26:2, 17, 18, 19) in contrast to the religious leaders' indefinite designation of it as simply the feast (ἡ ἑορτή, 26:5). By doing so, the ironist emphasizes that what is about to happen through the death of Jesus on the cross must be understood in the light of the Passover, which is best understood as the definite saving act of God. Perhaps, the ironist's seemingly intentional depiction of the religious leaders not calling the

Matthew seems to forget that feast once the supper is over.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 1–4.

⁵⁸ Senior, *Passion of Jesus*, 57 notes that Judas' use of εὐκαιρία in 26:16 and Jesus' use of καιρός in 26:18 are semantically related.

⁵⁹ R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew* (NIBCNT; Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007), 969 notes that the approach of the Passover festival provides both the historical and the theological context for the Matthean passion narrative.

⁶⁰ Heil, *The Death and Resurrection of Jesus*, 24–25, 30, 75.

⁶¹ Keener, *Matthew*, 624–33 explains that Jesus' mission climaxing in his death signifies a new Passover because Jesus' body and blood provide a new covenant, the ultimate act of redemption in a strikingly new way.

feast by its name but rather alluding to it with an indefinite term is devised to subtly point out their careless treatment of God's saving presence and action in the midst of the people (11:16–24; 12:38–42; 16:1–4). In this way, the ironist exposes not only the false perspective of the religious leaders toward God's saving plan but also their apathy and even negligence toward God's saving will and commitment to his people (i.e. the faithful covenantal God, 1:1; 6:10; 18:14; 20:28; 26:28 and all the prophetic fulfillments in the person and ministry of Jesus). This explains why the religious leaders set themselves against God himself by persecuting God's beloved Son (3:17; 17:5), whose person and mission are the very embodiment of the saving will of God (1:21; 9:6, 13; 12:7; 23:23). The spiritual blindness of the religious leaders is the crucial element for the MPN's irony⁶² because their unawareness of reality, fueled by envy (27:18) solidifies the contrasting double-layered story phenomenon of the MPN: the story of Jesus vs. the story of his opponents.

From the beginning of their plot to kill Jesus, the Jewish religious leaders determine to avert a tumult (ὁ θόρυβος, 26:5) since they conceive that it would be a hindrance to their scam (ὁ δόλος, 26:4) to do away with Jesus. From the fabric of the narrative, it becomes obvious that the Jewish religious leaders at best consider Jesus to be one of the prophets (21:4, 11, 45–46), yet threatening (21:15–16; 27:18) and false/ blasphemous one (9:3; 26:64–65).⁶³ Therefore, seeing Jesus as their rival, stealing affection from and authority over the people (διὰ φθόνου, 27:18),⁶⁴

⁶² In Chapter Two of the dissertation, we have examined the constitutive elements of irony such as an ironist, an ironically capable reader, a double-layered story phenomenon, a fundamental contrast between the two story worlds, a victim of irony, innocence, and the pleasure of irony. Among them, it has been expounded that the victim of irony and innocence go hand in hand. Notice that the innocence of the victim of irony does not necessarily mean his ethical naiveté but more so self-deceptive confidence, spiritual ignorance or unawareness. See the section, “Constitution of Irony: Former Elements of Irony” of Chapter Two of the dissertation for more detailed discussions.

⁶³ Brown, *The Death of the Messiah*, I.27.

⁶⁴ France, *Matthew*, 1054 describes the religious leaders' jealousy is out of their misconception of Jesus as a rival. He writes that “Pilate's assessment of the situation shows a shrewd awareness of the domestic politics of his subjects. See p. 1046, n. 4, for the term I have translated “rivalry.” Pilate's perception is valid: the purpose of Jesus'

the religious leaders try to prevent Jesus from gaining some favorable defense from the crowds who have, with varying degrees of certainty, regarded Jesus as a prophet (21:11 cf. 21:26), the Son of David (9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30–31; 21:9, 15) and one who teaches with authority, not like their scribes (7:29; 21:23; cf. 21:27; 28:18). Meanwhile, the Gospel repeatedly attests to the characteristic evasiveness and unlawfulness of the religious leaders. Therefore, Jesus rightly speaks of them as filling up the measure of their fathers by persecuting and shedding the innocent blood of those who have been commissioned by God (i.e. the prophets, the priests, the wise, 11:9; 21:23–27; 23:31–37 cf. 5:12; 13:57; 14:3–5) among the people.

Yet, as the story of Jesus' passion progresses, what actually happens in the trial of Jesus at the court of Pilate (27:20–24) displays quite an opposite situation. In contrast to the religious leaders' effort to isolate Jesus from the people so that they may prevent the people from *securing Jesus' life*, which they are eager to destroy (2:3–4, 13; 12:14; 27:20), the very uproar (θόρυβος) of the people that they were determined to avoid (26:5) turns out to be the best and opportune time (cf. ἡ εὐκαιρία, 26:16) for *securing the death of Jesus*. The people, whose loyalty to Jesus is wrongly assumed by their religious leaders, function as the main cause motivating Pilate. Pilate is so fearful of the possible θόρυβος (27:24) among the crowds that he gives in to the demand of the crowds incensed by the very same jealous religious leaders (27:18), to crucify Jesus. Both the religious and political parties represented respectively by the Jewish religious leaders and Pilate (27:24 cf. Herod the tetrarch, 14:9–11) commonly share the fear of disturbance among the people.

trial was not to punish a breach of the law but to get rid of a man whose claims threatened the status and authority of the current Jewish leaders.”

It would be helpful here to examine briefly who are the crowds (ὄχλοι) in the Gospel of Matthew⁶⁵ and how they function since the crowds take a distinctive role in the Matthean passion narrative. To answer these questions is by no means easy or simple.⁶⁶ Through a narrative-critical reading one thing becomes obvious that the implied author of Matthew distinguishes the crowds from the Jewish religious leaders who are chronically hostile against Jesus.⁶⁷ Though it can be suggested that the Matthean crowds are corporately transparent,⁶⁸ they are not a flat character.⁶⁹ In fact, they exhibit both positive and negative traits.⁷⁰ Yet, most importantly, the crowds are not only the object of Jesus' saving ministry (9:36; 11:7; 12:15, 46; 14:14; 15:10, 30, 32–36; 19:2) but also they recognize in some sense that God and his wisdom are working in Jesus (9:8, 33; 15:31; 21:8–9; 22:33). Regarding the ethnic constitution of the crowds, according to the first

⁶⁵ Through a redactional-critical stance, J. R. C. Cousland, *The Crowds in the Gospel of Matthew* (Supplements to Novum Testamentum; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 39–43, 50–51 considers that Matthew employs the term, *ochlos* differently from other Synoptic Gospels. He explains that unlike both Mark and Luke, *ochlos* is the only word that Matthew uses to characterize the crowds during Jesus' public ministry and that Matthew significantly prunes and omits Mark's crowd due to the former's more exalted Christology.

⁶⁶ Cousland, *ibid.*, 5–7 finds no agreement among the New Testament scholars about the crowds in Matthew's gospel. He writes that "while a broad spectrum of opinion is not uncommon within New Testament scholarship, the case of the crowds, with their chameleon-like capacity to fit a variety of interpretations, is out of the ordinary... a variety of interpretation is simply that Matthew's depiction of the crowds is decidedly protean. At the root of his portrayal is what can only be described as a fundamental ambivalence or ambiguity, which makes it far from clear how the role of the crowds to be construed." The inherent ambiguity of Matthew's portrayal of the crowds is also recognized by Warren Carter, "The Crowds in Matthew's Gospel," *CBQ* 55 (1993): 54, 67. Carter considers that the ambivalence of the crowds reflects the situation confronting the Matthean audience.

⁶⁷ E. P. Sanders and Margaret Davies, *Studying the Synoptic Gospels* (London: SCM, 1989), 203–20 opines that up to the Matthean passion account, the crowds are largely described receptive to Jesus in contrast to the Jewish religious leaders, which view stands in opposition to the positions of Jack D. Kingsbury and Anthony J. Saldarini. Kingsbury, *The Parables of Jesus in Matthew 13: A Study in Redaction Criticism* (London: SPCK, 1969), 24–28 views that the crowds along with the Jewish religious leaders comprise the "Jews," from whom Jesus turns away or that the crowds symbolize the Jewish community of Matthew's day. And Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian–Jewish Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 38 considers that the crowds symbolize the Jewish community of Matthew's day.

⁶⁸ Cousland, *The Crowds in the Gospel of Matthew*, 270–80.

⁶⁹ If Kingsbury, *Matthew As Story*, 23–24 treats the crowds as a flat character, C. Clifton Black, "Depth of Characterization and Degrees of Faith in Matthew," page 604–23 in *SBL 1989 Papers* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989) and Cousland, *The Crowds in the Gospel of Matthew*, 49 categorize the crowds as a "round" character.

⁷⁰ Carter, "The Crowds in Matthew's Gospel," 64–65.

Gospel they are most likely Jewish (4:25; 7:28–29; 9:33)⁷¹ on the ground that Matthew deliberately associates the crowds with Israel who is historically the people of God.⁷² Nevertheless, the possibility that the crowds comprise a mixture of the Jews and the Gentiles (Decapolis, 4:25; 15:23–25, 29–39), which helps the implied reader to envisage Gentiles among the crowds, cannot be completely ruled out. Then, what is the distinction between ὁ λαός and ὁ ὄχλος? If the former refers to people in a generic sense,⁷³ more specifically to Israel in relation to the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies (2:6; 13:15; 15:8 cf. 4:15–16),⁷⁴ the latter, though they are Jewish, is not synonymous with the former, yet it has a “considerable semantic overlap.”⁷⁵ In other words, λαός semantically covers both the Jewish religious leaders (i.e. the leaders of the people)⁷⁶ and the Jewish crowds.⁷⁷ Unfortunately, the Jewish religious leaders are the persecutors of the Messianic Savior who has been sent to redeem Israel (1:21) and the crowds at best fit the image of lost sheep without a shepherd (9:36; 10:6; 15:24; 18:12; 25:32–33; 26:31). Based on these, the reason why the implied author of Matthew uses *laos* in 27:25 can be assumed that he employs strategically yet ironically the term *laos* to denote the formal identity of

⁷¹ John Bowman, “The Significance of Mt. 27:25,” *Milla wa-Milla* 14 (1974): 27.

⁷² Brown, *The Death of the Messiah*, I.58–59. If one takes the former position that the crowds are Jewish, he must answer who are then these Jews or how they do distinguish themselves from other Jewish characters such as the Jewish religious leaders and the disciples of Jesus. Cousland, *The Crowds in the Gospel of Matthew*, 48–51, considers that Matthew’s characterization of the crowds falls somewhere midway between the Jewish religious leaders and the disciples of Jesus in that Matthew’s crowds are constant, uniform, and unobtrusive as a foil to the ministry of Jesus.

⁷³ J. A. Fitzmyer, “Anti-Semitism and the Cry of ‘All the People,’ ” *TS* 26 (1965): 669.

⁷⁴ Cousland, *The Crowds in the Gospel of Matthew*, 78–80.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 94.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 77 mentions the Matthean usage of λαός in relation to the ruling body in Jerusalem.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 76 explains that “in Matthew, the crowds are only mentioned after Jesus has begun his ministry, and, in the same way, once the crowds side with their leaders at 27:25, they are not mentioned again. Afterward, the leaders describe them as the λαός (27:64; cf. 26:5) and, finally, Matthew as a narrator identifies them as “the Jews” (Ἰουδαίοις, 28:15). What this observation suggests, therefore, is that Matthew has refracted his picture of the λαός into its constituent parts during the public ministry of Jesus. The people of Israel can be divided into two camps—the “leaders of the people” and “the crowds.” ”

the multitude in relation to the party claiming the innocent blood of Jesus. In this way, 1:21 and 27:25 creates a theologically overarching and hermeneutically informative *inclusio*, which indicates that indeed Jesus has been sent primarily for the lost sheep of Israel (15:24).⁷⁸ Lastly, the crowds in Matthew function as a single recognizable or unified *persona*⁷⁹ which significantly influences the perspective of the story through their explicit evaluative comments on Jesus' identity such as the Son of David, the prophet, and the teacher of authority.⁸⁰

In contrast to the depiction of the positive disposition of the crowds toward Jesus in the previous narrative, the MPN, especially the trial scene of Jesus before Pilate, presents the crowds drastically susceptible to external influences and therefore unreliable. By doing so, the ironist presents irony subtly underlining the reality of the story, exposing the religious leaders' empty fear that the people may save Jesus. Therefore, the ironic situation anticipated in 26:5 makes the implied reader perceive the commotion (θόρυβος) of the people (λαός cf. 27:25) as an inevitable situation for the divinely-willed salvation to be achieved (26:42). Despite their common determination not to stir up a commotion among the people, both the religious leaders and Pilate respectively persuade (27:20) and agitate the people (27:17, 21–24) and by doing so, eventually push the people into a corner where there is no option other than invoking the blood (i.e. death) of Jesus. In this ironic way, which Pilate rightly evaluates as “getting nowhere” (οὐδὲν ὠφελεῖ, 27:24)⁸¹ and beyond his control, the people are brought together as a single, identifiable group

⁷⁸ Later, the section, “A Verbal Irony of 27:24–25 Including the People in God’s Salvation” will fully describe this *inclusio*.

⁷⁹ Bowman, “The Significance of Mt. 27:25,” 27 considers that the Matthean *ochlos* (the Jewish mass) play a very significant role in the drama of salvation as one of the *dramatis personae*. Craig S. Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 671 makes an interesting point that the Crowds of Matthew speak and act in uniformity, which choric quality has some affinities with the chorus in Greek tragedy.

⁸⁰ James M. Gibbs, “Purpose and Pattern in Matthew’s Use of the Title “Son of David,” *NTS* 10 (1964): 446–64 emphasizes Matthew’s heightened role for the crowds and a theologically interdependent link between Jesus and the crowds.

⁸¹ John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, Mich.: 2005), 1176 interprets differently the

which is held accountable for the death of Jesus along with other political and religious authorities of the day. Therefore, they ironically surrender themselves under the forgiveness of sins for all (20:28; 26:28 cf. the authority of Jesus to forgive sins, 9:8) that is secured by the death of Jesus.⁸² In essence, the divine proper time (καιρός) for which Jesus awaits (26:18) ironically embraces this unbecoming time of θόρυβος.⁸³ In other words, the irony of θόρυβος defines the nature of ὁ καιρός in an inevitable relation to the death of Jesus (26:2–5, 18 cf. 26:16)⁸⁴ as a crisis with which the people faces, demanding them to make a crucial, yet conscious choice between Jesus whom they have received as the Son of David (21:1–9) and the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee (21:10–11) and their religious leaders without authority (7:28–29; 23:13–36 cf. 9:33). Evidently, the fear of the religious leaders that the people will create a tumult that somewhat will benefit Jesus turns out to be an empty concern. Eventually, the people took a side with their religious leaders and began to bring about a riot to do away with Jesus (27:22–25 fulfilling 12:14). Therefore, the reversed situation of θόρυβος indirectly highlights the total impotence of the Jewish religious leaders which condition ultimately reflects the powerless status of Satan in comparison to God’s sovereignty in fulfilling his will of salvation through the righteous death of his Son Jesus (27:29, Ps 22:8; 27:35, Ps 22:9; 27:43, Ps 22:9; 27:46, Ps 22:2).

irony of θόρυβος that “with not a little irony Matthew reuses θόρυβος γίνεσθαι (lit. ‘a riot to happen’) to echo the language of 26:5. With the help of Judas, the Jerusalem leadership has succeeded against Jesus to an extent that is beyond all its wildest hopes. The riot that was feared would be the popular reaction to the Jewish arrest of Jesus is now being provoked instead by Pilate’s slowness in agreeing to the crowd’s clamour for Jesus’ crucifixion.”

⁸² An illuminating aspect of this situational irony is that God truly makes use of evil for good, which deliverance corresponds to the theology crystallized in the story of Joseph (Gen. 50), another ironic deliverance of God from the past.

⁸³ Senior, *Passion of Jesus*, 57 explains that *kairos* means “opportune time,” fulfilling God’s decisive and eschatological act of salvation. Further, Senior perceives an irony that arises in the different use of *kairos* employed respectively by Jesus (26:18) and Judas (26:16). In 57–58, Senior says that “ironically, both Judas and Jesus seek the same *kairos*, the deliverance of the Son of God into the hands of sinful people. One does it to snatch up thirty pieces of silver; the other, to give his life on behalf of the many.”

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 79.

On the surface level, the religious leaders seem to control over the people by stimulating the very commotion (27:20–24) which they once strove to avert (26:5), it is not in fact an act of consistency but of opportunism which is not greatly different from their constant mannerism in dealing with Jesus: stealth (26:4). The death of Jesus as the divine time proper for the forgiveness of the sins of the people (1:21; 20:28; 26:28) ironically requires the people's willing commitment to deject Jesus and shed his innocent blood as a whole. In this ironic way, the divine salvation through the death of Jesus, which is pure grace itself, reclaims his people scandalized and gone astray in totality once and for all that the history of men cannot repeat it.

A Character Irony from the Contrast between a Woman at Bethany and the Disciples of Jesus (26:6–16). This unit expresses a character irony contrasting qualities and perspectives of the characters surrounding Jesus, especially between a woman at Bethany and the disciples of Jesus as a corporate character group.⁸⁵ To illustrate this character irony (26:6–16), it is necessary to examine the implied author's characteristic use of words.⁸⁶ For example, throughout the Gospel, the implied author characteristically employs the verb, ἀκολουθεῖν (to follow, to accompany). This verb is recognized as an important Matthean term dividing scholarly opinions regarding whether it is used literally or in a positive, theological way.⁸⁷ In fact, instances of ἀκολουθεῖν in Matthew attest to both cases. Yet, the majority cases are theologically employed despite the fact that some scholars consider that 4:25, 8:1, 10, 9:19, 12:15, 14:13, 19:2, 20:29, 34 and 21:9 show plainly literary use of ἀκολουθεῖν, mostly in relation to the crowds physically

⁸⁵ Throughout the Gospel of Matthew, its implied author depicts the disciples of Jesus as a consolidated character group distinct from other types of groups such as the Jewish religious leaders and the crowds. See Matt. 5:1; 8:23; 9:14, 19; 12:1–2; 13:10, 36; 14:15, 19, 26; 15:2, 12, 23, 33, 36; 16:5; 17:6, 13, 19; 18:1; 19:10, 13, 25; 21:6, 20; 24:1, 3; 26:8, 17, 19, 35, 56; 27:64; 28:13, 16.

⁸⁶ Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 3–20 explains that the implied author can reveal character within the story either by directly telling the reader about them or by showing the reader what the characters are like.

⁸⁷ Jack D. Kingsbury, "The Verb Akolouthein ("To Follow") as an Index of Matthew's View of His Community," *JBL* 97 (1978), 57.

following after Jesus.⁸⁸ J. R. C. Cousland's thorough work argues that the Matthean use of the verb ἀκολουθέω is ecclesiological,⁸⁹ Christological, and salvation–historical (*heilsgeschichtlich*).⁹⁰ Cousland explains the import of the verb ἀκολουθεῖν in relationship with two character groups: the disciple of Jesus and the crowds.⁹¹ He concludes that for the disciples it is not only ecclesiological insofar as the following of the disciples establishes the example for the followers of Jesus but also Christological since their calling solely depends on Jesus' initiative.⁹² According to Cousland, though the following of Jesus by the crowds does not mean emerging discipleship or any formal commitment to Jesus,⁹³ the following of the crowds is likewise Christological as well as salvation–historical because the crowds draw attention to the person of Jesus and his ministry, especially as the Son of David whose healing and mighty works foreshadow the blessed messianic age.⁹⁴ Elaborating further on the Matthean Christological use of ἀκολουθεῖν, it cannot be missed that whenever Jesus commands someone to follow after him, Jesus specifies that he himself is the object of ἀκολουθεῖν and deliberately links the action with discipleship, requiring “cost and commitment,”⁹⁵ which are equal to the Matthean concepts,

⁸⁸ F. Filson, *The Gospel according to St. Matthew* (Harper's New Testament Commentaries; N.Y.: Harper, 1960), 219. Specifically, Kingsbury, “The Verb Akolouthein,” 61 writes that “*akolouthein* proves to be without metaphorical significance in the “crowd passage” 4:25; 8:1, 10; 12:15; 14:13–14; 19:2; 20:29; and 21:9.” Yet, for the case of 20:34 that the two blind men gained sight by Jesus followed him, scholars like J. C. Fenton, *Saint Matthew* (Pelican Gospel Commentaries; Baltimore; Penguin Books, 1963), 325 and D. Hill, *The Gospel of Matthew* (New Century Bible; London: Oliphants, 1972), 290 suggest that these two men accompanied Jesus as his disciples.

⁸⁹ Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 21–28* (ed. Helmut Koester; trans. James E. Crouch; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 424.

⁹⁰ Cousland, *The Crowds in the Gospel of Matthew*, 172.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 145–71.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 153–59.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 100, 148–152, 163–172.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 58 suggests critical twin principles: cost and commitment that mark *akolouthein* discipleship. He writes that “it becomes apparent that, in the logia, *akolouthein* connotes discipleship, for its use each time is marked by the twin factors of cost and commitment.” M. Franzmann, *Follow Me: Discipleship according to Saint Matthew* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1961), 5–7 similarly speaks of complete committal.

denying oneself and bearing the cross. On Jesus' command (8:22; 9:9; 10:38; 16:24; 19:21), some, the disciples of Jesus, follow after him (8:23; 19:27–28; 27:55),⁹⁶ yet some fail even though an invitation of following is extended (8:19; 19:21).⁹⁷ Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the Matthean use of the verb, ἀκολουθεῖν, readily conveys far more than the followers' physical accompaniment with Jesus.⁹⁸ Rather, the implied author intends to employ this verb Christologically to describe characters' meaningful association with Jesus and more narrowly to convey a specific theological undertone—becoming a disciple—by exclusively letting Jesus wield the command or invitation of ἀκολουθεῖν.

Another characteristic verb that the implied author characteristically uses in order to group together the characters sympathetic to Jesus and distinct from other characters apathetic or hostile toward Jesus is προσκυνεῖν (to kneel, worship). Προσκυνεῖν is a favorite verb of

⁹⁶ Though Kingsbury opines cost and commitment as the key ingredients identifying the use of *akolouthein* in relation to discipleship, he considers that 27:55 employs *akolouthein* in the literal and local sense of accompaniment from place to place. He downplays the appended notation that they were “waiting on him” not as a comment characterizing women as disciples of Jesus. See Kingsbury, “The Verb Akolouthein,” 61. However, Matthew duly stresses the action of service or ministering (4:11; 8:15; 25:44), especially in direct link to Jesus' life of service for others (20:28). And after all, is it not what Jesus teaches his disciples *to serve* which essentially epitomizes cost and commitment (20:25–28)? In this conjuncture, the case of women's following after Jesus and ministering him must be reconsidered as the Matthean description of discipleship. In the same vein, France, *Matthew*, 1086 considers that the women followed Jesus as disciples. Also see Keener, *Matthew*, 689 writes that “whereas the male disciples feared for their lives and were nowhere to be found, the women followed all the way to the tomb. In that culture women were relegated to a marginal role in discipleship at best, and not permitted to be disciples of rabbis . . . but these women had followed Jesus as disciples in whatever ways they could . . . , even ways that would have appeared scandalous in that culture.”

⁹⁷ In 8:19 a scribe voluntarily offers Jesus to *akolouthein* him. Jesus does not outright reject the scribe and gives him the prospect of cost and commitment to *akolouthein* him. And in 19:21 Jesus extends his invitation to *akolouthein* him to a rich young man who wishes to be perfect. Yet, he becomes grieved at Jesus' command to give up his possessions and follow after Jesus. The implied author of Matthew implies the failure of both men to *akolouthein* Jesus by describing them calling upon Jesus as “teacher (διδάσκαλε, 8:19; 19:16)” because unbelievers, strangers and enemies address Jesus in Matthew never with “Son of God,” unless it be in mockery or blasphemy, but with “teacher (8:19; 12:38; 19:16; 22:16, 24, 26 cf. rabbi, 26:25, 49). Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 53, 92, 115 and his article, “The Title ‘KYRIOS’ in Matthew's Gospel,” *JBL* 95 (1975): 255 point out that the title *kyrios* is found only in the mouth of disciples and believers, characterizing the person who utters it as acknowledging that Jesus is the one of exalted status who wields divine authority.

⁹⁸ France, *Matthew*, 325–31 considers that the Matthean use of *akolouthein* denotes discipleship in the broader sense.

Matthew.⁹⁹ Quite a few people, either individually or in a group, *worship* him in wonder and reverence (2:2, 8, 11; 14:33; 28:9, 17) and with supplication (8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 18:26; 20:20) as they experience the person and ministry of Jesus. The implied author employs προσκυνέιν to describe the genuine attitude of those who experience Jesus' extraordinary person or his mighty acts which are proper only to God.¹⁰⁰ More specifically, προσκυνέιν with the participle πεσῶν (prostrating, 2:11; 4:9; 18:26) stresses on the act of worshipping exclusively reserved for God.¹⁰¹ Therefore, in the early chapter of Matthew, the magi's prostrating before and worshipping an infant Jesus reveals the child of divine origin and majesty.¹⁰² In fact, in his overcoming the temptation of Satan in the wilderness, Jesus proclaims that προσκυνέιν is a proper act that can be rendered only to God (4:9–10). It seems that the implied author of Matthew does not intently draw the distinction regarding the divine status of Jesus between pre- and post-Easter since the disciples of Jesus worship him as the Son of God (14:33), while the same act of προσκυνέιν is rendered to Jesus after his resurrection (28: 9, 17).¹⁰³ Therefore, as we have examined, the implied author's characteristic choice of words such as ἀκολουθεῖν and

⁹⁹ J. M. Nützel, "προσκυνέω," *EWNT* III, 419–23.

¹⁰⁰ Guido Tisera, *Universalism according to the Gospel of Matthew* (European University Studies XXIII; Frankfurt am Main, Germany: Peter Lang, 1993), 57.

¹⁰¹ Marie-Joseph Lagrange, *Évangile selon Saint Matthieu* (7th ed.; Paris: Gabalda, 1948), 30

¹⁰² Davies and Allison, *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, I, 248 and R. E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narrative in Matthew and Luke* (N.Y.: 1977), 174.

¹⁰³ Tisera, *Universalism according to the Gospel of Matthew*, 57. Also, Hurtado, *How on Earth*, 141–42 explains the characteristic use of προσκυνέω in the LXX (e.g., Exod. 20:5; Deut. 4:19; Josh. 23:19) and also in the New Testament (e.g., 1 Cor. 14:5; Matt. 4:9–10; Luke 4:7–8) referring to the gesture of reverence given to a deity and therefore meaning "worship." In 145–151, 159, Hurtado further singles out the use of προσκυνέω in Matthew and explains that the author of Matthew purposefully employs προσκυνέω to describe homage offered to the earthly Jesus. He considers that the Gospel Matthew clearly reflects the cultic reverence of the exalted Jesus in early Christian circles. In 146, he writes that "as noted already, the term προσκυνέω is a recurrent feature of Matthew's narrative vocabulary, with thirteen occurrences, a frequency exceeded only by the twenty-four uses in Revelation among the New Testament writings. Moreover, ten of these Matthean occurrences describe homage offered to Jesus, which makes it Matthew's favorite word to designate the reverence given to Jesus by people. Of these ten uses, eight are in scenes where the earthly Jesus is given reverence (the remaining two uses in scenes where disciples reverence the risen Jesus, 28:9, 17)."

προσκυνέειν and his regulated application of them to the characters close to Jesus is by no means aimless, but rather well reflects his intention to inform his reader of what are typical behaviors for the followers of Jesus.¹⁰⁴ This is why the opponents of Jesus are described neither following nor worshiping Jesus in this Gospel.

In an attempt to expound the proposed character irony of 26:6–16, the verb, ἀγανακτέειν (be indignant) in 26:8 can be seen as another case of the implied author's specific use of a verb to present the close link between characters who share similarities that are significant for the development and meaning of the story. The verb, ἀγανακτέειν in v. 8 illustrates that the disciples of Jesus behave in a similar manner to the religious leaders. There are three incidents in which this verb is employed by the implied author. Two of them are applied to the disciples (20:24; 26:8) and one to the Jewish religious leaders (21:15). All these cases show that the two parties share a common characteristic: both have unjustifiable anger.

The case of 21:15 depicts the religious leaders' anger as unsubstantiated and unjust, corresponding to their unjust nature. Jesus enters Jerusalem in the midst of a lively welcome by a very large crowd following and shouting exuberantly (21:8–10). Jesus proceeds to the temple, and there he reclaims the temple as a house of prayer by banning commercial activities and by driving out the money changers (21:12–13), and he also heals the blind and the lame (21:14). Watching all this, the religious leaders become indignant at Jesus. The implied author, sharing the ability of penetrating the mind of the characters with Jesus, is outspoken in telling why they are angry at Jesus. He bluntly clarifies that the religious leaders are incensed with hatred because they saw the wonderful things that Jesus did and heard the children acclaiming him as the Son of

¹⁰⁴ J. R. Edwards, "The Use of Προσερχομαι in the Gospel of Matthew," *JBL* 106 (1987): 65–74 considers that the author of Matthew employs also προσέρχομαι to explain as the people's cultic or especially reverential attitude toward Jesus which means more than physical approach.

David (21:15). This is best described as jealousy (φθόνος, 27:18) which in a later scene of the MPN, Pilate correctly identifies the cause of the Jewish religious leaders' hatred and violence against Jesus. Based on the textual information, it is not a matter of dispute that the anger of the religious leaders at Jesus is unjust because it is due to their jealousy, conceiving Jesus as a rival who endangers them of losing authority over the people (9:6, 8; 21:23, 27; 23:2) and therefore their reputation and security as well (7:29).

Surprisingly, the disciples of Jesus also act in a similar vein as the religious leaders by showing their distasteful anger when it comes to seeking power and authority. When the ten disciples heard how the two sons of Zebedee with their mother besought Jesus to bestow on them a special favor by letting them to sit at the right and left hand of Jesus in his kingdom (20:21), the rest of the disciples became fissionary and *got angry at them* (ἠγανάκτησαν, 20:24). Perceiving dissension among his disciples, Jesus teaches them regarding true discipleship which is epitomized as loving and humble service for others.¹⁰⁵ The disciples of Jesus must desert the way that the world exerts its power and authority over men (20:25–26b). Instead, whoever would be great among the people of God must be a servant and whoever would be first among the people of God must be a slave (20:26–27), just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve men (8:20; 20:28a). Jesus gives his life as a ransom for many (20:28b) by humbly emptying and lowering himself.¹⁰⁶ As Jesus' life determinately moves toward its consummation

¹⁰⁵ Jesus does not overlook his disciples' digression from his teachings, the principles of the Kingdom of Heaven. In his Sermon on the Mount in chapters 5–7, Jesus taught his disciples and the crowds the principles of the Kingdom of Heaven such as being poor in spirit (5:3), being meek (5:5), being merciful (5:7), being pure in heart (5:8), being a peacemaker (5:9) and being humble and not judging brothers (7:1–5). The frivolous nature and the shortcoming of Jesus' disciples are further contrasted with Jesus when the implied reader considers how the latter is deeply concerned with the righteousness of God and acts on it (3:15; 5: 6, 10, 20; 6:33; 21:32).

¹⁰⁶ David R. Bauer, *The Structure of Matthew's Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (JSNTSup, 31; Sheffield: Almond, 1988), 61 writes that "Jesus declares that one of the characteristic of members in the eschatological community is 'meekness' (5.5), a term which Matthew connects with 'humility' or 'lowliness' (11.29); apparently, these terms are at least generally synonymous for Matthew. Jesus demands lowliness of his followers in 18.3–4 and 23.12. But Matthew presents Jesus as the prime model of meekness and lowliness. In 11:29 Jesus declares himself,

to his death in the form of humble servant, it heavily contrasts with the glory-seeking actions of the disciples (cf. 18:1–4) and therefore exposes the ten disciples’ unjustifiable and unbecoming rage against the sons of Zebedee. Ones who ask Jesus a favor for power and authority as well as those who begrudge them are of no difference in their failure to learn from their teacher, whose path is set on service for others, which ultimately translates into *saving* men (1:21; 8:25; 9:21–22; 14:30; 20:28; 26:28; 27:40, 42).

Taking together the above expositions of the verb ἀγανακτέω and its implications in revealing the characters’ aptitude, the last incident that reports the disciples’ anger in 26:6–16 once more points out their shortcomings. Importantly, this section harbors a character irony faithfully revealing the contrasting qualities between the disciples as a group and a woman at Bethany. While Jesus stays in the house of Simon the leper at Bethany, an anonymous woman from that region approaches Jesus with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfumed oil and pours it on his head while Jesus is reclining at the table (26:6–8). When the disciples see this, they become enraged (ἠγανάκτησαν, 26:8a) because they consider the woman’s behavior an extravagant and pointless *waste*.¹⁰⁷ They complain that they would sell the woman’s expensive oil for a large sum of money and help out the poor with that money (26:9). With this complaint, the disciples consciously place themselves above the woman by implying her behavior is thoughtless and even selfish. It is indeed an embarrassing scene to picture. While a woman pays her respect to Jesus by adorning him with a fragrant oil of choice, the disciples cannot hold their tongue and rebuke her, criticism which is somewhat commensurate to chiding their teacher for permitting her action. This awkward picture raises a question in the mind of the implied reader:

‘I am meek and lowly in heart’, and Matthew reinforces Jesus’ point of view then he interprets the triumphal entry with the prophetic words, ‘Behold, your king is coming to you, humble and mounted on an ass’ (21.5).”

¹⁰⁷ Matt 26:8b, “why this waste?” (εἰς τί ἡ ἀπώλεια αὐτῆς;)

“Is her action really extravagant? Is not the one whom she anoints after all the Christ, the Son of the living God whom the disciples previously worshipped in awe and veneration? (14:33; 16:16; 17:4–6)” “Are the disciples truly concerned with the poor?” “Is their anger at a woman fair and just?”

However, the perceptive implied reader knows all too well how the disciples repeatedly fall short of the ideal standards about which Jesus painstakingly has instructed them throughout the Gospel. They are far less than perfect (τέλειός, 5:48), and are men of little faith who are inconsistent and prone to doubt (ὀλιγόπιστοι, 6:30; 8:26; 14:31; 16:8). In other parts of the Gospel, the reader observes how the disciples were rather heartless toward the least such as children (19:13–15) and a Canaanite woman in need, desperately crying out to Jesus for the deliverance of her daughter who was severely possessed by a demon (15:21–23).¹⁰⁸ The disciples are portrayed as disregarding children coming toward Jesus to receive blessing for the patriarchal society of the ancient world (i.e. the *paterfamilias* structure) used to be hardly concerned with the rights of women and children.¹⁰⁹ They are pictured as being quite annoyed by and indifferent to a Canaanite woman (15:22) persistently begging Jesus for mercy (15:23). Certainly, children and a woman, especially of Gentile origin, best fit all the criteria for the least and the poor of a society for whom the disciples claim they have a deep concern. Perhaps, the disciples are concerned with the money itself that the woman might have spent in purchasing a costly perfume all gone to *waste*. Sometimes the implied author openly reveals the immaturity of Jesus’

¹⁰⁸ Bauer, *The Structure of Matthew’s Gospel*, 61 points out that mercy is one of the essential characteristics of true disciples. Jesus taught his disciples to be merciful (5:7), implying that mercy is one of the fundamental elements of the will of God. In Matthew, Jesus not only becomes the very model of mercy (i.e. his association with the sinners and healings the sick) but also he repeatedly stresses on mercy (9:13; 12:7; 23:23).

¹⁰⁹ Ancient society is best depicted by the household and within this hierarchical societal structure, a child has no voice of right or choice along with women and slaves. In this regard, tremendously useful scholarly works have been done. See Marilyn B. Arthur, “Early Greece: The Origins of the Western Attitude Toward Women,” in *The Ancient World: The Arethusa Papers* (ed. John Peradotto and J. P. Sullivan; Albany: SUNY press, 1984), 7–59.

disciples by depicting them as having taste for not only the position of power and authority (20:20–28) but also wealth (19:16–30). For example, in chapter 19, a rich young man (19:16, 20, 22) comes to Jesus and asks him how he can acquire eternal life (19:16). Jesus advises him to sell all his belongings and *follow* him (ἀκολουθεῖ μοι, 19:21). On hearing this, the young man becomes discouraged and sad because of his great fortunes and the difficulty of giving them up (19:22). Jesus uses this grieving young man’s case to instruct his disciples that it will be harder for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle (19:23–24). Being exceedingly amazed at Jesus’ saying (ἐξεπλήσσοντο σφόδρα, 19:25), Peter, the representative voice of the other disciples, oddly enough asks Jesus what they will *have* for the price they have paid in forsaking everything and following him (19:27). It is obvious Peter does not comprehend the essence of the teaching that true discipleship requires one to willingly *give up their possessions and follow Jesus* in total reliance and subjection. Peter’s straightforward inquiry well reflects his inner thought that he expects something in return as a reward for his voluntary abandonment of “what he had” which was once important for him. In addition to Peter’s case, Judas serves an extreme example of being a victim of material-oriented symptoms or the worldly concern that affected all the disciples. 26:15 pictures Judas heavily concerned with what he will get for betraying his master (τί θέλετέ μοι δοῦναι, κἀγὼ ὑμῖν παραδώσω αὐτόν; 26:15a). It is quite tragic when we recollect how Jesus earnestly taught the disciples not to serve money (μαμωνᾶς, 6:24) and not to worry about earthly possessions (6:25–32; 13:3–9, 22), but seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness (6:33 cf. 3:15; 26:54) and Jesus himself serves the very example of these teachings (8:20).

Knowing his disciples’ inner thought (γνοῦς, 26:10), namely their motive for rebuking the woman at Bethany, Jesus says to them “Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good service for me (τί κόπους παρέχετε τῇ γυναικί; ἔργον γὰρ καλὸν ἠργάσατο εἰς ἐμέ,

26:10).”¹¹⁰ Jesus has the power to penetrate one’s inner thoughts.¹¹¹ When the implied author describes Jesus reading the mind of the characters, the ideas or intents of the characters which Jesus perceives are always negative ones. As much as Jesus sees through the religious leaders’ destructive intent (12:15) and malice toward him (22:18), he reads clearly his disciples’ thoughts that are often characterized by little faith (16:8) and indiscretion (26:10). Therefore, Jesus’ open commendation of a woman’s work as a “good service (ἔργον καλόν, 26:10)” for him in response to the disciples’ censure against the woman in their heart ironically invalidates the disciples’ concern for the poor and exposes their inappropriate dealing with the Son of God (14:33; 16:16; 17:4–6) in contrast to the woman’s wholeheartedness and rendering her best in service of Jesus.

As Jesus further explains, the disciples will always have the poor with them (Deut. 15:11) and therefore they will have many chances to serve them if their concern for the poor is reliable and sincere (26:8–9). Yet, they will not always have Jesus since the days will come when Jesus will be taken away from them (9:14–15; 26:57). Therefore, it is all the more expected for the disciples to cherish the presence of Jesus with them as the wedding guests rejoice with the bridegroom as long as the bridegroom is with them (9:15a). However, this was obviously not the case for the disciples in their dealing with Jesus. If they took Jesus’ passion prediction (i.e. approaching suffering and death) to heart (26:2), they should have not looked contemptuously (26:8) at a woman rendering her best service to Jesus, who is after all the Son of God (14:33; 16:16).¹¹² To say that the disciples show little regard for Jesus and his words is not an overly

¹¹⁰ Nolland, *Matthew*, 1054 notes that ἔργον καλόν ἠργάσατο is “literally ‘she has worked a good work’, with a deliberate play between the cognate noun and the verb. Matthew probably intends an echo of the ‘good deeds’ of 5:16 which draw others to glorify God.”

¹¹¹ Howell, *Matthew’s Inclusive Story*, 176, 191.

¹¹² Heil, *The Death and Resurrection of Jesus*, 26 also points out a similar doubt that “that the disciples value giving alms to the poor as more important than this hospitable anointing of Jesus (26:9) causes the reader to wonder whether they have appreciated Jesus’ pronouncement of the imminence and significance of his death during the Passover (26:2).”

harsh evaluation. The narrative plainly evidences it by showing that all the disciples numbered as the twelve partake in heartless treatment of Jesus which is in no way commensurate to the *good work* (ἔργον καλόν, 26:10) of the woman at Bethany. As soon as Jesus interprets the woman's service to him as the preparation for his death and burial to illuminate his disciples' blind-sightedness to the reality (τότε, 26:14), Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went to the chief priests and pledged to *betray* (παραδίδωμι, 26:15) his teacher and Lord (26:25) for thirty pieces of silver (26:14–15).¹¹³ In the scene immediately following the passion (i.e. the arrest of Jesus in Gethsemane), all the other disciples unmistakably become deserters of Jesus as well (26:31, 56).

It is crucial for the implied reader of irony to understand that the woman's anointing of Jesus is more than an affectionate gesture. As Jesus explicates the higher reality which his disciples crudely miss, her action has a theological significance in that she timely (26:2, 16) and proleptically (cf. 21:17–19) prepares his burial correspondent to his final prediction of impending death (26:2).¹¹⁴ She is the only character whom Jesus describes as fully and positively participating in Jesus' passion throughout the entire Matthean narratives.¹¹⁵ Jesus assures (ἀμήν λέγω ὑμῖν, 26:13) that her service to him (26:10) will be remembered wherever this Gospel (τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦτο, 26:13), namely, the entire saving ministry of Jesus and its consummation in his death, is proclaimed.¹¹⁶ Her action ironically stands in contrast with Peter's aforementioned

¹¹³ France, *Matthew*, 977 notes that “the devotion of the unnamed woman is sharply contrasted with the treachery of one of Jesus' inner circle, and her uncalculating generosity with his sordid bargaining.”

¹¹⁴ W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew* (ICC, vol 3; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 447 comments that Jesus interprets the woman's action as a prophetic deed.

¹¹⁵ Senior, *Passion of Jesus*, 54 notes that “the woman has “done beautiful thing” to Jesus (26:10) because she alone understands that the *kairos* has come.” Further, on a minor scale, the magi's offering myrrh (2:11), which the ancients have used for burial of the dead, to an infant Jesus can be linked with a woman's anointing Jesus that points to and prepares the death of Jesus at this birth and at the dawn of his passion.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 54–55 considers that though the exact reference of the Matthean phrase “*this Gospel*” is not clear, Senior believes that it is likely that Matthew employs the term to mean the “good news” proclaimed through the story of Jesus' passion and death. Also, Luz, *Matthew 21–28*, 338 explains what “*this gospel*” means. Luz writes

rebuke of Jesus at the time when Jesus revealed his path inevitably leading to the cross (16:21–24). On an ostensible level, one may easily consider that Peter’s resistance in accepting his teacher’s prediction of suffering and death is out of affection and care. Yet, irony does not support the guises which cover reality, even though it makes them seem plausible. Once again, the reality that governs the story of Jesus’ life and death is the divinely-willed salvation according to which God initiates the birth of Jesus as well as characterizes the presence and the entire mission of Jesus among his people as salvific. In this light, the woman at Bethany participates in the passion and death of Jesus in a significant way which the disciples, though being repeatedly informed about the reality of the passion and death of Jesus, fail to do. Therefore, she functions as an ironic foil for the disciples of Jesus, more specifically their spiritual shortsightedness and inappropriateness. Her silent, yet determined action of service to Jesus is not only proved good (καλόν, 26:10) by Jesus, but also makes an ironic counterpart to the disciples’ vainglorious allegiance to Jesus and their constant failure in understanding his words. Notice that Jesus speaks on her behalf. This makes her silence, even without a name, more appropriate for a character irony, because the reality of his death, as Jesus explicates, proves her character and intent valid and meaningful (26:10–13) in relation to the divine saving will of which the disciples are ignorant.¹¹⁷ She is not a mindless woman as the disciples presumably conclude in their heart. In reality, the disciples invite self-humiliation on themselves in contrast that Jesus acknowledges a woman’s action valuable. Therefore, this character irony arises in contrasting dynamics between the disciples of Jesus and the silent woman at Bethany,

that “it is not inconceivable that it refers to the passion narrative. Thus for Matthew the story of the suffering of Jesus is part of the gospel.”

¹¹⁷ France, *Matthew*, 973 writes that “the focus on unnamed woman to the discomfiture of the disciples gives further expression to the gospel principle that the last will be first and the first last, and prepares us for the final act of the story, when it will be Jesus’ women followers rather than the men who stay with him (27:55–56, 61; 28:1). The anonymity of this woman in Matthew and Mark is the more remarkable in that her deed is to be a perpetual

yet her actions speak loudly communicating to the implied reader the persistent imperfection of the disciples and their disengagement for the divine saving will, which has been directly taught and manifested by their teacher and Lord, Jesus.

A Character Irony in Relation to the Disciples of Jesus Seen Through the Representation of the Trio: Peter and the Two Sons of Zebedee (26:30–75). After every circumstance essential to bring about the death of Jesus (26:2), such as the resolution of the religious leaders to destroy Jesus (26:3–5), a proleptic preparation for the burial of Jesus by a woman at Bethany (26:6–13) and Judas' seeking an opportunity (εὐκαιρία, 26:16)¹¹⁸ to hand him over to the religious leaders (26:14–16, 24–25) has been set in motion, Jesus and his disciples gather to have the Passover meal (τὸ πάσχα, 26:17–21a). In this last Passover supper, Jesus makes the covenant with his disciples which involves the offering of his body and blood (26:26–28), clearly implying his death (26:2). Especially, when Jesus takes the cup, he specifies it as the *blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins* (τὸ αἷμά μου τῆς διαθήκης τὸ περὶ πολλῶν ἐκχυννόμενον εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν, 26:28). Jesus' institution of the covenant, the meaning of which is substantially signified by the blood, nicely recalls the message of 1:21 and 20:28, both defining Jesus' person and entire life as the Messiah savior of the people who has come to save them from their sins.¹¹⁹ It is significant that finally in 26:28, the mystery of the way of God's salvation for his people is most timely exposed by the Messiah savior himself (1:1,16–18; 2:5–6) at the dawn of his passion. If 1:21, an encapsulation of the divinely-willed salvation, serves as the epicenter leading out and overarching the entire story of Jesus' life and death, God forgiving the sins of the people through the shedding of his Son's blood (1:18–23;

memorial to her (v.13). She is to be remembered, but she has no name!"

¹¹⁸ Senior, *Passion of Jesus*, 57.

¹¹⁹ Brown, *The Death of the Messiah*, I.139.

3:17; 14:33; 16:17; 17:5) is the “how” aspect of 1:21. Notice that Jesus speaks from the upper level point of view that is equal to the divine saving will. Nobody can understand the conjoining reality of the death of Jesus and the salvation of men without adopting God’s point of view. Throughout the Gospel and the MPN in particular, there exists a fundamental distance between Jesus and the characters, which is created by the latter’s chronic failure in or lack of understanding the revelation of the former when he reveals the salvific intent of God in his ministry. The opponents of Jesus never listen to his teachings in their willful rejection of him (9:1–4, 33–34; 12:24; 21:15; 27:18) and the crowds are susceptible to influences and capricious in their acceptance of Jesus (11:16–19; 13:13–15, 19; 15:10). The disciples of Jesus are not an exception, consistently exhibiting serious shortcomings in understanding and following after Jesus’ instructions (13:51; 16:12; 17:13).

After Jesus once more predicts his death and its meaning through the Passover meal (26:26–29), the company of Jesus goes out together to the Mount of Olives (26:30).¹²⁰ There Jesus says to his disciples that *all of them will fall away* because of him (“in me”) in the same night (πάντες ὑμεῖς σκανδαλισθήσεσθε ἐν ἐμοὶ ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ ταύτῃ, 26:31).¹²¹ He further interprets his disciples’ flight in relation to the fulfillment of prophecy that God will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered (26:31; Zech. 13:7).¹²² Previously, the implied author

¹²⁰ Brown, *ibid.*, I.148 says that the Mount of Olives has scriptural resonance with the story of David’s flight from Jerusalem in II Sam 15. It is a meaningful exposition when we consider that Matthew specifically portrays that Jesus enters Jerusalem among the people welcoming him as the Son of David.

¹²¹ Ibid, I.127 writes that “Matt adds “in me,” conformable to the Matthean preference for using an “in” phrase to specify an absolute “scandalized”: 11:6; 13:57; 26:33; cf. Mark 6:3. This clarifies that their scandal will be focused on Jesus.”

¹²² The LXX of Zech 13:7 reads that “‘arise, o sword, against my shepherds and against my fellow–citizens,’ says the Lord almighty. Strike the shepherds and scatter the sheep. And I will bring my hand upon the shepherds (ρομφαία ἐξεγέρθητι ἐπὶ τοὺς ποιμένας μου καὶ ἐπ’ ἄνδρα πολίτην μου λέγει κύριος παντοκράτωρ πατάξατε τοὺς ποιμένας καὶ ἐσπάσατε τὰ πρόβατα καὶ ἐπάξω τὴν χεῖρά μου ἐπὶ τοὺς ποιμένας).” Brown, *ibid.*, I.129–30 gives a helpful explanation about Matthew’s allusion to Zech. 13:7 that “the context in Zech leaves the passage obscure. Earlier, in Zech 11:4–14 God had instructed someone to become a shepherd, ready to care for the sheep and be slain

has described Jesus as a shepherd (ποιμήν)¹²³ who came to his people, i.e. the lost sheep,¹²⁴ to reclaim and rule over them. Yet, to achieve this, the Scripture says that the shepherd will be stricken by God and his sheep will be scattered. This seemingly disastrous picture explains the mode of the divine salvation quite unexpectedly to the eyes of men as much as the birth of the Son of God in a human flesh defies the ordinary understanding of men.

To the prediction of Jesus regarding the disciples' corporate falling away from him, Peter hastily responds with an oath that though all the other disciples may fall away because of Jesus, he will never (οὐδέποτε) dilute his fidelity to Jesus (26:33). It is true that Peter frequently seems to be compelled to say or do something without investing much thought or without really meaning it. Therefore, Peter's strong self-confidence in his superiority to other disciples in the service of Jesus nurtures a character irony that eventually exposes his unreliability and betrays his positive expectation of himself. Despite his leadership and courage (14:28–29), his initiative to explore and learn the important spiritual matters (15:15; 17:4; 18:21) and his positive

by those who traffic in sheep; yet at the end of Zech 11 (vv. 15–17) God raises up a shepherd who does not take care of the sheep—thus in one chapter a good shepherd and a worthless shepherd. Zech 12 begins with a threat against Jerusalem/Judah but ends with a spirit of compassion being poured out on Jerusalem. The alternation between positive and negative seems to carry over to Zech 13:7–9, the passage that Mark/Matt cit. In itself 13:7 is not a future prophecy but an invocative of destruction against the shepherd and the sheep; yet 13:9 describes a third of the whole as a purified remnant of God's people . . . more likely, in my judgment, of the two Zech shepherd roles, the NT has concentrated on the positive picture in Zech 11:4–14 for describing Jesus . . . the import of the Mark/Matt citation is that since Jesus the caring shepherd who brought the flock into being is to be struck down, the sheep will no longer receive his care and will be scattered." Also, France, *Matthew*, 978 mentions that Matthew invites the reader to consider the "price" of Jesus with that of the rejected shepherd in Zech 11:4–14, who is a paradoxical messianic figure.

¹²³ Matt 18:12; 25:32–33 ; 26:31.

¹²⁴ Matt 2:6; 9:36; 10:6; 15:24. Consider that Jesus came from the Davidic lineage as the Son of David whose primary vocation was a shepherd (1 Sam. 17:12–15; cf. Ps. 23). Heil, "Ezekiel 34," 699–702 explicates that the Gospel of Matthew describes Jesus as the fulfillment of the future Davidic leader who is God's messianic shepherd in light of Ezek. 34:23. Heil especially emphasizes both the role of Jesus God's Davidic shepherd, fulfilling Ezek 34:30 (the promise of Emmanuel) and Jesus' expansion of the shepherding function to include his disciples and the readers. He writes, 702, 705, that "the shepherd metaphor exhibits its versatility as Jesus continues his commissioning of the disciples in 10:16...now the sheep are not limited to the people of Israel (2:6; 9:36; 10:6; 15:24), to the disciples (10:16), or to believers (18:12–14) but include the righteous among all peoples. The disciples—and thus the readers—are advised not only to act like the shepherd who brings back the one strayed sheep among "these little ones" (τῶν μικρῶν τούτων, 18:6, 10, 14) who believe in Jesus but also to become the sheep who

interactions toward Jesus (16:16–18; 17:4), neither his understanding of the will of God nor his dedication to doing it (12:50 cf. 6:10; 7:21) equal to bearing one’s cross as Jesus taught the disciples (10:38; 16:24) bear actual fruits (6:30; 8:26; 16:8; 17:20; 19:27; 20:24). Most importantly, in relation to the unfolding of the MPN, Peter explicitly stands against Jesus’ open statements regarding his death, denying himself and bearing the cross (10:38–39) which are in perfect agreement with the divine saving will (16:21–23; 26:31–33, 35).¹²⁵

It is important to notice how the implied author presents Peter as an individual (10:2; 14:28–31; 17:1, 4; 26:33) as well as representative of the rest of the disciples of Jesus (15:15; 16:13–28; 18:21–35; 19:27).¹²⁶ In fact, it is hard to strictly distinguish between these two portrayals because Peter is most likely an encompassing dramatic *persona* of the disciples as a whole.¹²⁷ The case of Peter well exemplifies that as the opponents of Jesus share similar characteristics and behavioral parameters, the disciples of Jesus also possess coherent traits in their nature, attitudes and ideas in relation to Jesus. In fact, the voice and action of Peter not only represent other disciples’ attitudes toward Jesus but also influence them, a case of which we observe in the character irony of 26:30–36. Therefore, an irony intended by the ironist in relation to a character, Peter, may very well apply to all the other disciples.

care for the needs of even one of “these least ones” (τούτων τῶν ἐλαχίστων, 25:40, 45), who represent Jesus.”

¹²⁵ Kingsbury, *Matthew As Story*, 15 notes the stark contrast between Jesus’ view of his passion and the disciples’ view.

¹²⁶ Matera, *Passion Narratives and Gospel Theologies: Interpreting the Synoptics through Their Passion Stories* (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist, 1986), 103 describes that Peter is much more than merely “one of them.” Peter is the first-called (4:28) and functions as leader and spokesman of all the disciples in the Gospel narratives.

¹²⁷ Kingsbury, “The Figure of Peter in Matthew’s Gospel as a Theological Problem,” *JBL* 98 (1979): 71–74 discusses about the Matthean portrait of the “salvation-historical supremacy” of Peter in two ways: one, Peter as the spokesmen of the disciples, and two, Peter as typical or representative of the disciples in Matthew’s story.

Knowing his disciples too well,¹²⁸ Jesus responds to Peter's pledge of unwavering loyalty (26:33) with a completely opposite prediction that Peter will deny (ἀπαρνέομαι) him three times this very night, before the cock crows (26:34). It is not without meaning that Jesus specifically predicts that in such a short time his disciple's allegiance would be turned into a desperate denial. Being oblivious to himself and the reality of the death of Jesus orchestrated by the divine saving will, once again Peter assures Jesus without hesitation, in fact, too *boldly*, that even if he has to die with Jesus, he shall not (οὐ μή, 26:35) disown (ἀπαρνέομαι) Jesus. Moved by Peter's heroic resolution, all the other disciples likewise claim that they shall not deny Jesus, despite the prospect of death (ὁμοίως καὶ πάντες οἱ μαθηταὶ εἶπαν, 26:35).¹²⁹

The disciples' over-confidence in making an oath without considering consequences and in claiming to possess qualities which they do not possess is not a new phenomenon. Earlier when the sons of the Zebedee entreated Jesus through their mother to assign them special positions of authority and power in the kingdom of God (20:20–21), Jesus euphemistically alluded to his death as an act of “drinking the cup” (τὸ ποτήριον, 20:22; 20:28; 26:39) in relation to a given passion prediction in 20:18–19, and questioned them as to whether they could drink the cup which he was about to drink. Without a moment of self-reflection, the Sons of Zebedee said that they could (δυνάμεθα, 20:22), thus claiming unknowingly a participation in the death of Jesus on a superior level of reality (20:22; 26:27–28, 39). The corporate voice of the disciples in 26:35, saying that they shall faithfully adhere to Jesus even to death (ὁμοίως καὶ πάντες οἱ μαθηταὶ εἶπαν) is not a different kind of voice from the voice of the sons of Zebedee saying that they could drink the cup. Whether as an individual or as a group, the disciples wear the same mask

¹²⁸ Keener, *Matthew*, 634 explains that “Jesus knows better than his disciples do what his disciples are made of.” Keener comments that when Jesus warningly predicts the disciples’ fall because of him, he probably means apostasy (cf. 5:29–30; 13:41; 16:23; 17:27; 18:6–9).

and behave in an identical way. Despite the disciples' alleged willingness to join in the mission of Jesus culminating in his death (16:21; 17:21–22; 20:18–19; 26:2), the story of the MPN ironically witnesses that Jesus alone carries out this task (20:28) without a single soul beside him. Therefore, each stage of the passion of Jesus inevitably put the disciples both individually and corporately to the test regarding their outspoken loyalty and service to their Lord and teacher, Jesus. In other words, the MPN provides the lab test for examining the disciples' spiritual adequacy i.e. whether they follow through their words (20:22; 26:35).

To properly interpret the whole panorama of the character irony revolving around Peter (26:31–35), the implied reader must consider together the following scenes of the MPN: the prayer of Jesus and his arrest in Gethsemane (26:36–56) and the trial of Jesus before the Sanhedrin (26:57–75) which behavior of Peter that brackets. In these scenes, Peter's dealing with the violent progression of Jesus' passion betrays his promises (26:33–35) and therefore ironically reveals him a person of *alazonic* nature. Right after the disciples' allegiance to Jesus has been declared, Jesus, accompanied by his disciples, moves to a place, Gethsemane, where Jesus prepares for his final hour (ὁ καιρός μου, 26:18) with earnest prayers and in fact, the arrest of Jesus finally takes place (26:50). Jesus once again selects three disciples, Peter and the two sons of Zebedee (James and his brother John), to take with him (26:37). It is intentional for the ironist to be specific about which disciples Jesus chooses to make them participants in his last hour of grief (26:37–38) and prayerful preparation for his impending death (26:36, 38). Certainly Matthew's Gethsemane scene has parallels to Matthew's Transfiguration.¹³⁰ Jesus has previously selected the trio to accompany him in his transfiguration on a mount (17:1). These three had the

¹²⁹ The fact that all the disciples join with Peter shows that Peter is a representative figure.

¹³⁰ A. Kenny, "The Transfiguration and the Agony in the Garden," *CBQ* 19 (1957): 445–48 and Luz, *Matthew* 21–28, 395.

privilege to experience Jesus on a totally new and exalted level. Jesus revealed his heavenly glory before their naked eyes. Linking these three disciples with their exclusive experience of the divine epiphany of Jesus raises a fair question of whether they will behave differently in their service and understanding of Jesus than the other disciples. Yet, the MPN is quite straightforward in telling that these three represent the other disciples in their intention and behavioral mode. The MPN not only depicts a striking commonness among these three in that they all publicly pledged their loyalty to Jesus with enormous self-confidence and ignorance, but also categorizes the rest of the disciples with the trio in their partaking in the same type of vows (20:22; 26:35). All the disciples of Jesus in one way or the other commit themselves in making a promise that they will not deny (ἀπαρνέομαι, 26:35) Jesus even if death will be the ultimate price.

Now the proper time comes for the disciples as a corporate character to testify to their golden heart and the trustworthiness of their words of loyalty and obedience pledged to Jesus while the cloud of death is approaching fast. Jesus takes with him the same trio from the Mount of Transfiguration and locates them near where he prays. With his prescience of death making him deeply sorrowful and distressed (26:37–38),¹³¹ Jesus asks his chosen disciples to stay awake with him (γρηγορεῖτε μετ’ ἐμοῦ, 26:38),¹³² goes a little beyond (them) (προελθὼν μικρὸν, 26:39)

¹³¹ Heil, *The Death and Resurrection of Jesus*, 43 considers Jesus’ awareness of imminent death and sorrow bringing him close to death as the cause of his distress. Heil connects Jesus’ sorrow at approaching death with allusions to the biblical psalms of lament and in accord with his portrayal as the “suffering just one” (Ps 40:12–13; 42:9–11; 55:5–6; 116:3–4; Sir 51:6–12). And Brown, *The Death of the Messiah*, I.155–56 notes the favored interpretation regarding Jesus’ anguish on the Mount of Olives, which lies in the ranges of sorrow on a level of that produced by an awareness of imminent death (i.e. Ps 55:5) and sorrow bringing him close to death. He adds that “if Jesus is the weary prophet in Mark/Matt, in part it is because he foresees his disciples scandalized and scattered by his arrest and death, after they have betrayed and denied him. The very thought of this is enough to kill him, and he will ask God to be delivered from such a fate.”

¹³² Previously, Jesus has exhorted his disciples with an imperative of “being awake (γρηγορέω)” especially in relation to the last days (i.e. the Matthean eschatology, 24:42–43; 25:13). It is noteworthy that the implied author attempts to portray the death of Jesus as the beginning of the last days by emphasizing the earnest biddings of Jesus to be vigilant at the time of his encroaching death. The end of the age will come with the glorious returning of the Son of Man. Yet, according to the Gospel, the death of the Son of God, the Christ Savior, is a necessary precursor to his second coming when he will bring the end of the age with him. Most certainly, the Gospel which core message

and falls on the ground.¹³³ There he begins to earnestly entreat his father (πάτερ μου, 26:39, 42) to remove the cup from him (26:39 cf. 20:22), yet if the cup cannot pass away unless he drinks it, let God's will be done (26:42, 44). Jesus' demand to "watch" (γρηγορέω) to the three means more than staying physically awake, but it has a sense of alert togetherness which Jesus clearly stresses by saying, "watch *with me* (26:38)." In between the three offerings of the supplication (26:38, 42, 44), Jesus returns to the trio and finds them asleep (26:40, 43, 45). How grossly inappropriate is it for them to be found in such laxity and carelessness at the most sinister hour of death as attested to by Jesus himself in his own words "My soul is deeply grieved, even to death!" (περίλυπός ἐστιν ἡ ψυχὴ μου ἕως θανάτου, 26:38) The contrast between the weighty hour (26:18) characterizing the death of Jesus running its divinely-willed course and the disciples' spiritual negligence toward Jesus' passion is striking. The disciples not only have heard the repeated passion predictions of Jesus (16:21; 17:22–23; 20:18–19; 26:2) on their way to Jerusalem (16:21; 20:17–18; 21:1, 10) but also at the Passover meal, which is probably no more than several hours ago prior to the scene at Gethsemane (26:36). They heard of more grim details from Jesus regarding the unfolding passion such as his betrayal by one of the disciples (26:20–21) and his being deserted by the rest of them the very same night (26:31). Taking all these situations into consideration, the trio's sleeping (26:40, 43, 45) not far away from Jesus while he prostrates himself alone in darkness and deep distress, facing the threatening yet

(26:13) rests on the achieved salvation of men through the death of Jesus, must be proclaimed until the end of the age (26:13; 28:18–20). Therefore, the Matthean eschatology is closely related to the death of Jesus (i.e. soteriological) on the grounds that his death not only launches the countdown of the last days but also the risen Jesus from the dead shall come again as the Son of Man, the judge of the World (10:23; 13:41–42; 16:27–28; 19:28; 24:27–30, 37–39, 44; 25:31; 26:64).

¹³³ Luz, *Matthew 21–28*, 396 provides an interesting insight regarding Jesus' falling on the ground to pray in Gethsemane. He writes that "Jesus goes a little farther in order to pray alone, as he himself has ordered (cf. 6:4–6) and also did himself (cf. 14:23). He falls on his face, not as an expression of deepest despair but in the same way Abraham did when he spoke with God (Gen 17:3, 17; cf. Num 22:31; 1 Kgs 18:39; Dan 8:17). Thus Jesus is not only desperate; he is at the same time pious."

inevitable reality of death, certainly makes the implied reader question the value of their words of loyalty and solidarity.¹³⁴ Furthermore, as the deeds of Jesus testify to his person, the actions of the disciples likewise mirror who they are. It seems that stupor in which status the disciples are found is symbolically the best description of their unfruitful, negligent and unregenerated inner condition. The voice of the ironist attests to that as the physical distance which Jesus removes himself from the disciples is significantly minor (26:39), and the duration of his prayer is not unbearable for the disciples.¹³⁵ Consider that when Jesus found them asleep the second time, he said to Peter, “So could you not watch with me one hour? (οὕτως οὐκ ἰσχύσατε μίαν ὥραν γρηγορῆσαι μετ’ ἐμοῦ; 26:40)”¹³⁶ The disciples’ pathetically presence with a fully vigilant Jesus at the hour when their promised loyalty is duly requested, as well as their failure in presenting themselves ready servants even for one hour, show the implied reader not to trust their claim that they will voluntarily share death with Jesus (26:35) by drinking the cup (20:22; 26:27, 39). Without further ado, while Jesus is wholeheartedly preparing himself to drink the cup, the disciples themselves give in to a slumber, reflecting their weakness and empty pledge (26:41).

Finishing his prayers, Jesus wakes up the disciples and announces to them the approaching of his betrayer (26:46). Corresponding to Jesus’ announcement, Judas, the very betrayer of Jesus (ὁ παραδιδούς, 26:25, 46, 48) draws near with a large crowd of armed forces, comes up to Jesus

¹³⁴ Brown, *The Death of the Messiah*, I.156 notes that a present imperative of *grēgorein* in Matt 26:38 demands the three continuance and solidarity. Brown further explains historically what is the specific reason for which the three are told to watch. He says that “as part of the Passover night watch, even as Exod. 12:42 inculcates a “watch” to be kept to the Lord for all generations.”

¹³⁵ Ibid., I.164 notes that *mikron* is here used adverbially which is more often temporal than spatial.

¹³⁶ Ibid., I.148 mentions that in 26:41 the Matthean Jesus addresses Peter in the plural, for Peter functions the representative of all other disciples. Also see France, *Matthew*, 1007. Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 14–28* (WBC, vol 33B; Dallas; Texas: Word Books, 1995), 783 notes that Jesus’ command to “watch” later develops into a standard feature in ethical catechism in the NT, meaning spiritual awareness (1 Cor 16:13; Col 4:2; 1 Thess 5:6; 1 Peter 5:8 and also as the command to pray, Eph 6:18; 1 Thess 5:17; 1 Peter 4:7).

(προσελθὼν τῷ Ἰησοῦ, 26:49)¹³⁷ and hands his teacher over to them with a kiss (φιλέω, 26:48), which is itself an ironic act of beguilement, pretending intimacy and affection yet actually meaning separation and treachery (26:47–49).¹³⁸ Judas greets Jesus “rabbi” (χαίρει, ῥαββί, 26:49)¹³⁹ and Jesus calls Judas “friend” (ἑταίρει, 26:50).

The latter term reminds the perceptive implied reader of the teachings of Jesus about the kingdom of heaven in two parables: the workers of the vineyard (20:1–16) and the wedding banquet (22:2–14). In the first parable, the workers being hired early in the morning for a denarius a day who have worked in the vineyard all day long complain to the householder who is paying the same wage to the ones who were hired at the end of day and worked only one hour. The vineyard owner calls one of them “friend” (ἑταίρει, 20:13), reminds them of their agreement regarding wage (20:13) and redirects their wrongheaded idea of justice by emphasizing his generosity and compassion to the needy matter (20:15). In the second parable of king’s marriage feast for his son, a guest who is found without a suitable garment for the feast (22:11) is once again called a “friend” (ἑταίρει, 22:12) by the king himself. The king ordered his servants to bind that unprepared and ungrateful guest for treating the king’s invitation trivially (26:14), and to throw him into the outer darkness (26:13). Considering Jesus calling someone a friend as a

¹³⁷ Edwards, “The Use of Προσέρχομαι in the Gospel of Matthew,” 67–68 provides several examples in which people approach Jesus in their implicit recognition of his exalted status as a teacher. In this article, Edwards opines that Matthew uses the term consistently to reveal the messianic or exalted status of Jesus.

¹³⁸ Brown, *The Death of the Messiah*, I.254–55 writes that “the Judas kiss, a sign of affection or love used to betray, entered the repertory of Christian imagery; and the evangelists were surely aware of that possibility when they described it. Already Prov 27:6 had inculcated distrust of the kisses of an enemy, and in the flow of the Gospels the readers know that Judas is now an enemy. But on the level of history or of verisimilitude, how are we to understand Judas’ use of the kiss? If it was a normal greeting that could be used by any acquaintance or a customary greeting between Jesus and the disciples, then it could fit into the plot of those who had paid Judas to avoid noisy resistance and hence into Judas’ desire to appear disarmingly normal. If it was not a normal greeting but an unusual gesture implying special attention, then Judas was a malevolent hypocrite.” Also, Luz, *Matthew 21–28*, 416 depicts the kiss as a sign of honor and affection. Yet, in the MPN’s case, Judas clearly has misused it.

¹³⁹ Previously in 23:7–8 Jesus forbids his disciples to call or greet each other with this title since it is the typical use of salutation by the religious leaders in their attempt to distinguish themselves from the ordinary and claim honor.

typical address for he who becomes last by falling short of grace and understanding (20:16; 22:14), the ironist indirectly reveals Judas' falling short of grace and self-willed separation from Jesus through the means of Jesus' calling him friend (ἑταῖρε, 26:50).¹⁴⁰

At the signal of Judas, the soldiers attempt to lay their hands on Jesus as if he is a robber (26:55). Then, one of those accompanying Jesus draws a knife and strikes the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear (26:50–52). Yet, Jesus halts any violent resistance from his companions and allows his opponents to seize him so that the Scriptures would be fulfilled (26:56).¹⁴¹ Then, all the disciples forsake him and flee as he announced in 26:31, “All of you will fall away because of me this night; for it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered’ (πάντες ὑμεῖς σκανδαλισθήσεσθε ἐν ἐμοὶ ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ ταύτῃ, γέγραπται γάρ· πατάξω τὸν ποιμένα, καὶ διασκορπισθήσονται τὰ πρόβατα τῆς ποίμνης).” The divinely willed course of striking the shepherd and the dispersion of his sheep has begun.

At the flight of the disciples, the soldiers arrest the defenseless Jesus and lead him to the gathering of the high priest, Caiaphas, with the scribes and the elders (26:57). Verse 58 reads that Peter follows Jesus at a distance, enters the courtyard of the high priest, and sits with the guards to see the end. This verse is filled with ironic descriptions of the actions of a character. Earlier we have examined how the implied author characteristically uses *akolouthein* (“to follow”) to metaphorically describe the relationship between Jesus and a disciple, implying cost (i.e. self-

¹⁴⁰ Brown, *The Death of the Messiah*, I.256 similarly explains irony in Jesus' use of the term, *hetairos*. It is certain that *hetairos* is not considered as a normal greeting of Jesus to a member of the Twelve. This title has nothing to do with intimate and loyal relationship. In fact, as Brown notices, there is no example of *hetairos* used within Jesus' discipleship in the canonical Gospels.

¹⁴¹ Birger Gerhardsson, *The Mighty Acts of Jesus according to Matthew* (trans. Robert Dewsnap; Lund: GWK Gleerup, 1979), 89 notes that “the whole of Jesus' ministry takes place “according to the scriptures.”” Also, Brown, *ibid.*, I.277 writes “the element of “must” (*dei*) appears in the fulfillment reference of v.54: “It must happens thus.” In the first passion prediction (Matt 16:21): “Jesus began to show his disciples that it is necessary [*dei*] for him to go away to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes.” Now Jesus makes explicit what was implicit there: His knowing what he must do was related to what the Scriptures said.”

denial) and commitment (i.e. bearing the cross). As the characters receptive to Jesus' teaching and ministry characterize themselves in a responsive action of following (ἀκολουθέω), Peter still follows Jesus (δὲ Πέτρος ἠκολούθει αὐτῷ, 26:58), yet *from afar* (ἀπὸ μακρόθεν, 26:58) in a *secretive* manner.¹⁴² Following Jesus has nothing to do with secretiveness. It requires public manifestation, a so-called open confession of faith in Jesus. Jesus taught his disciples the significance of confessing (ὁμολογέω) him before men.¹⁴³ He will acknowledge before his Father in heaven (10:32) the ones who confess him publicly. Chapter 10 further identifies confessing Jesus as bearing one's cross in spite of tribulation (10:34–42). It is worth noting that the first reference to crucifixion in Matthew is not in relation to Jesus, but to the disciples (10:38; 16:24).¹⁴⁴ Therefore, denying (ἀρνεόμαι, ἀπαρνεόμαι) Jesus before men is emphatically not acceptable for the followers of Jesus (10:33) because public denial of Jesus is a sign of defeat and failure in bearing one's cross. In this light, it becomes clear that what the disciples pledged to Jesus at the dawn of his passion, that they would never deny him (26:33) even though they should face death (26:35b), was none other than the promise of bearing their crosses and following Jesus to death (i.e. drink the cup, 20:22; 26:39). Yet, Jesus' corresponding prediction of the disciples' denial of him (i.e. falling away, 26:33) sketches the embedded, superior level of reality that the disciples will terribly fail in carrying out this particular task.

¹⁴² Heil, *The Death and Resurrection of Jesus*, 57–58 considers that Peter's following Jesus from afar has an origin in the Old Testament. He notes that "although all the disciples had left Jesus and run away after his arrest (26:56), Peter is still following him, but only 'at a distance' (*apo makrothen*). With its allusion to LXX Ps 37:12, "My friends and my associates have drawn near and stand opposite me, and my companions stand at a distance [*apo makrothen*]," Peter's apprehensive following from afar contributes to the portrait of Jesus as the "suffering just one." Peter's distance from Jesus demonstrates how his discipleship is disintegrating."

¹⁴³ Birger Gerhardsson, "Confession and Denial before Men: Observations on Matt 26:57–27:2," *JSNT* 13 (1981): 59 opines persecution and the public confession of Jesus in such context have a theological significance. He views that there is a positive divine intention behind persecutions against Jesus' followers and the interrogations to which they are subjected because they will have opportunity in that official place to witness or to offer testimony regarding Jesus.

¹⁴⁴ Bauer, *The Structure of Matthew's Gospel*, 60.

Ironically, Peter secretly following after Jesus from a distance implies some connection still remaining between Jesus and this disciple.¹⁴⁵ Yet, soon enough his strong threefold vow to Jesus, “I will never desert you (ἐγὼ οὐδέποτε σκανδαλισθήσομαι, 26:33),” “I shall die with you (i.e. even though I must die with you, κἂν δέη με σὺν σοὶ ἀποθανεῖν, 26:35)”¹⁴⁶ and “I will never deny you (οὐ μὴ σε ἀπαρνήσομαι, 26:35),” comes under a sizzling test.¹⁴⁷ The moment for public confession of Jesus approaches Peter in an intense and dangerous time and environment. In fact, in such a situation, whether Peter confesses or denies Jesus can determine his fate in either bearing the cross or avoiding the cross (10:32–42).

Now the story unfolds as follows. While Peter is sitting outside *with* the servants in the courtyard (26:58, 69), a slave girl comes and questions him about his companionship with Jesus the Galilean (26:69). Peter publicly denies being *with* Jesus (ὁ ἠρνήσατο ἔμπροσθεν πάντων, 26:69–70) as if he does not understand her statement.¹⁴⁸ As he physically withdraws further from the courtyard, reflecting his reaction to the unfavorable situation, another maid spots him and says to the bystanders that Peter was *with* Jesus of the Nazareth (26:71). The second time Peter denies her accusation with an oath that he does not know the man, Jesus (πάλιν ἠρνήσατο μετὰ

¹⁴⁵ Heil, *The Death and Resurrection of Jesus*, 57–58 writes that “although all the disciples had left Jesus and run away after his arrest (26:65), Peter is still following him, but only “at a distance” (*apo makrothen*). With its allusion to LXX Ps 37:12, “My friends and my associates have drawn near and stand opposite me, and my companions stand at a distance [*apo makrothen*],” Peter’s apprehensive following from afar contributes to the portrait of Jesus as the “suffering just one.” Peter’s distance from Jesus demonstrates how his discipleship is disintegrating.”

¹⁴⁶ Here Peter’s use of *dei* which echoes the divine necessity pertinent to the ministry and death of Jesus (16:21) creates a verbal irony because Peter, who once strongly rejected the idea of the suffering and death of Jesus (16:22) is now ironically stressing his voluntariness to share it. Soon enough the words of Peter betray himself on two levels: one, according to the divine will all the disciples of Jesus must be scattered, and two, Peter chooses to disown Jesus in his own accord.

¹⁴⁷ Kingsbury, “The Figure of Peter,” 74 considers the promise of solidarity made by Peter to Jesus in 26:35 clearly communal since Peter’s voice in this is representative. Therefore, all other disciples share Peter’s denial of Jesus.

¹⁴⁸ Gerhardsson, “Confession and Denial before Men,” 54 defines the verb *arnesthai* that “one is denying his attachment to someone he is supposed to belong with; one does not want to know of him, one does not want to know of him, one does not acknowledge any connection with him.”

ἔρκου ὅτι οὐκ οἶδα τὸν ἄνθρωπον, 26:72). At last, the bystanders doubting Peter come up to him and say with conviction that he is one of the entourage of Jesus (“Certainly you too are one of them, for even your speech betrays you,” 26:73). In fear and desperation, Peter attempts to quiet once for all the voices questioning him as a companion of Jesus by emphatically cursing Jesus (καταθεματίζω)¹⁴⁹ and swearing (ὀμνύω) that he does not know (οὐκ οἶδα, an equivalent for a verb, “to deny,” ἀρνέομαι, ἀπαρνέομαι) the man (26:74). As we have seen, Peter, who once stoutly pledged that he would die *with* Jesus (26:35), denies in panic his association *with* Jesus by placing himself *with/ among* the servants, those who have no meaning to him. Peter’s three denials of Jesus¹⁵⁰ match up to his three pledges to Jesus earlier in the MPN (26:31–35),¹⁵¹ and they reveal an ironic inconsistency in Peter, indeed, a corporate trait of the disciples of Jesus as a whole.¹⁵² In their blind (i.e. *alazonic*) confidence and their lack of perception of reality despite Jesus’ faithful teachings and interpretations to assist their understanding, the disciples too boldly

¹⁴⁹ The verb *anathematizein* is usually transitive and has an object stated, here in the text the object is unstated but implied. Peter’s curse has been interpreted among the New Testament scholars either Peter’s placing himself under a curse or Peter’s cursing Jesus as a strong denial of the latter reflecting Jewish polemics directed against Jewish-Christian Jesus-devotion as seen Acts 26:9, 11 and 1 Cor 12:3. Interestingly, Peter’s trial at the time of Jesus’ trial before the Roman governor Pilate reflects Pliny the younger’s *Epistulae.*, 10.96.3, written in ca. 110 A.D., in which Pliny reports that he provided a defendant accused of being a Christian the threefold opportunity to recant (i.e. curse) the name of Jesus and offer a sacrifice to the image of Caesar as the proof of innocence to walk out free. A. N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978), 25–26 confirms this type of practice is an established one in Roman court in the time of New Testament. Based on ancient sources regarding the cursing of Jesus such as Justin (*Dialogus cum Tryphone* 47:4; 95:4; 108:3; 133:6) and Pliny the Younger (*Ep.*, 10.96), it is more likely that Peter is cursing Jesus rather than himself. The same view that Peter curses Jesus in the third denial is supported by G. Bornkamm, *Jesus of Nazareth* (1956; ET London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1960), 212; Helmut Merkel, “Peter’s Curse,” in *The Trial of Jesus: Cambridge Studies in Honour of C. F. D. Moule* (ed. Ernst Bammel; SBT 13; Naperville, Ill.: Alec R. Allenson Inc., 1970), 66–71 and Gerhardsson, “Confession and Denial before Men,” 54–55.

¹⁵⁰ Merkel, “Peter’s Curse,” 66 mentions that “challenged three times about his attachment to the Nazarene, Peter three times denies his Lord.”

¹⁵¹ Peter’s three pledges are “even if all desert you (i.e. fall away on account of you), I never desert (you)” (πάντες σκανδαλισθήσονται ἐν σοί, ἐγὼ οὐδέποτε σκανδαλισθήσομαι, 26:33), “even if I have to die with you” (καὶν δέη με σὺν σοὶ ἀποθανεῖν, 26:35a), and “I will never disown you” (οὐ μὴ σε ἀπαρνήσομαι, 26:35b).

¹⁵² Luz, *Matthew 21–28*, 462 opines that the author of Matthew depicts Peter as the model of the Christian of “little faith,” a mixture of trust and fear (14:28–31), faith and protest (16:16–20), apostasy and remorse.

make pledges that are easily broken.¹⁵³ Though the disciples apparently behave as ardent admirers of Jesus and speak commendably by giving Jesus noble promises when everything goes fair and square, they are out of touch with reality as far as the saving mission of Jesus is concerned just as much as the other imperceptive characters of the MPN. This is why they all together disown Jesus when the hour of the divine reality comes upon them. Therefore, the MPN and its espoused ironic reality of the death of Jesus function as the lab test for examining the disciples' alleged loyalty to Jesus and their readiness (cf. γρηγορέω, 26:38, 40–41) to suffer what is commensurate with bearing one's cross. As result, an irony disclosing the fundamental discrepancy between the disciples' words and their actions subtly exposes the disciples as the *alazonic* figures of swelled confidence, pretension, and little faith.¹⁵⁴ However, though the MPN's character irony presents the disciples of Jesus as unreliable, it also does not fail in communicating that the disciples are by no means deserted by Jesus, since Jesus promised that he would reunite with them in Galilee after the resurrection (26:32; 28:7). Jesus' re-gathering the disciples who are gone astray is the exact reversal of their previous scattering. It is certainly astonishing that Jesus gave the disciples this hope of reunion well implying the forgiveness of committed sins while he was announcing the betrayal, denial and flight of his disciples without a single exception (26:31–35).

¹⁵³ Jesus has previously taught his disciples not to vow or make an oath in relation to its seriousness that any religious vow in mind of God must be fulfilled. See Matt. 5:34, 36; cf. 23:16, 18, 20–23; 26:74.

¹⁵⁴ It must be admitted that the characteristics of the *eirōn–alazōn* paradigm for irony, which have been taken from the old Greek comedy and the case of Socrates, do not always square with other occurrences of irony. The *eirōn* is not necessarily a dissembler or simpleton in a negative sense as in the same way that the opponents of Socrates defined him as such. However, it is true that almost all the time he serves as a protagonistic, normative, and paradigmatic figure, who establishes the superior value that overthrows the lower. And it also must be recognized that there is a level of difference in evaluating *alazōn*. For example, Jesus' disciples in the MPN serve as the *alazonic* figures in a corporate sense (with Peter as their representative), but not in the sense that they are utterly doomed or oblivious. The reader does not wish to follow their path but not to the same degree of rejection that he does not want to follow the Jewish religious leaders, who are the single most important corporate *alazōn* in Matthew.

In brief, a character irony in relation to the disciples of Jesus, especially Peter, reveals that the death of Jesus is the reality unavoidable for the disciples of Jesus, providing the most appropriate context for the public confession of Jesus that eventually results in bearing one's own cross following after the example of Jesus. Regardless of their adamant pledge of loyalty to Jesus, all the disciples terribly fall short of their words surmounting to the dejection of Jesus. Therefore, a stark contrast between the disciples' void promise of allegiance and Jesus' absolute commitment in completing his Father's will depicts Jesus as an ideal and sole carrier of the divinely willed salvation. In this way, the ironist sheds limelight on Jesus, carrying out his task inseparable from the innocent suffering and undeserving death without defense and in silence which are in fact the tokens of his impregnable resolution and single-mindedness in the service of God (i.e. fulfilling the will of God, 6:10; 18:14; 26:42).

Verbal Ironies Pertaining to the Interrogations of the Jewish Religious Leaders in the First Trial of Jesus before the Sanhedrin (26:59–68). The MPN contains strings of biting verbal ironies revealing important Matthean theology in relation to the meaning of the death of Jesus. Many of them are contained in the interrogations of Jesus and the mockeries from the opponents of Jesus. The pleasurable illumination which the perceptive implied reader of these verbal ironies will obtain depends on his observation of how these ironies bring about a reversal, eventually exposing the opponents of Jesus as the *victims* of their own words and therefore marking them as the sinners who are in need of forgiveness (1:21; 20:28; 26:28).¹⁵⁵ Ironically, this forgiveness can only be offered by Jesus, their apparent victim.

¹⁵⁵ Howell, *Matthew's Inclusive Story*, 242 notes the Jewish leaders as the primary victims of Matthean irony.

Jesus is arrested and handed over to an assembly of the Jewish religious leaders (the Sanhedrin, 26:57, 59) and there he undergoes the first trial.¹⁵⁶ Seeking false testimony against Jesus, the religious leaders come up with two false witnesses (18:16)¹⁵⁷ to condemn Jesus (26:4, 59; 27:1; Ps. 27:12), an incident which once again testifies to their treachery (δόλος, 26:4).¹⁵⁸ Also, we have previously been given literary evidences revealing the inappropriate nature of the religious leaders throughout the Gospel: sly (26:4), unjust (26:59), lack of fear of God (2:1–16; 21:13), without authority (7:29; 21:23–27), hypocritical (6:2, 5, 15; 15:7; 22:18; 22:13, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29),¹⁵⁹ spiritually ignorant (12:3, 5; 19:4; 21:16; 22:31), envious (27:18), greedy and self-indulgent (23:25), pretentious and vainglorious (23:1–7), and most of all, evil. From the early chapters of Matthew, the implied author consistently portrays the religious leaders as a corporate character group whose dominant trait is synchronically or collectively *evil* (9:4; 12:34, 39, 45; 16:4; 22:18).¹⁶⁰ Their evil nature completely corresponds to Satan since they are a “brood of vipers (3:7; 12:34),” “serpents (23:33)” and corporately “a child of hell (23:15).”

The fundamentally evil nature of the religious leaders makes the implied reader reasonably doubt whatever claims they make against Jesus. Furthermore, since the implied reader is privileged to possess substantial information regarding the identity and mission of Jesus provided

¹⁵⁶ Keener, *Matthew*, 644 points out that the trials scenes are “heavily laden with ironies” on the ground that the trials of Jesus reveals the hiddenness of the kingdom (13:31–33). He says that “apart from those who share the correct presuppositions, the kingdom’s presence remains ambiguous to those it confronts (e.g., 26:64). Ironically, the kingdom remained obscure even to many of those providing religious and political leadership to others.”

¹⁵⁷ The proper number of witnesses needed for the death sentence is mentioned in Num 35:30; Deut 17:6; 19:15.

¹⁵⁸ The Jewish religious leaders’ treachery against Jesus further entails lack of fear of God in doing injustice (Pr. 6:19).

¹⁵⁹ As the implied author of Matthew employs several characteristic verbs to group together some characters homogenous in their nature and behavioral mode, he also applies typical Matthean titles to character groups. For example, if a title, “men of little faith (ὀλιγόπιστοι),” is exclusively used for the disciples (6:30; 8:26; 16:8; 17:20), the description “hypocrites (6:2, 5, 15; 15:7; 22:18; 22:13, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29)” is particularly used for the Jewish religious leaders, the opponents of Jesus.

¹⁶⁰ Kingsbury, *Matthew As Story*, 19 and Powell, *Narrative*, 62–63, 66–67.

through the voice of the implied author and other credible witnesses of Jesus (God himself, John the Baptist, minor characters such as the magi, etc) to which the characters within the story have no access, he can see the inevitably ironic circumstance of the trial of Jesus which clearly operates on two different perspectives, reflecting a clash between the truth vs. falsehood or the reality vs. the shadow in relation to the figure Jesus. A deadly combination of the evilness of the opponents of Jesus together with their willful rejection and spiritual blindness, rightly labels them a corporate ἀλαζών of the MPN—the prime opponents and persecutors of the protagonistic and normative εἴρων, Jesus. Therefore, any character within the story who willingly shares their intention to do away with Jesus is one of them, as Jesus says in 12:30, “He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters” (ὁ μὴ ὦν μετ’ ἐμοῦ κατ’ ἐμοῦ ἐστίν, καὶ ὁ μὴ συνάγων μετ’ ἐμοῦ σκορπίζει).

The two false witnesses come forward and give a false testimony against Jesus that “This man said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days’” (οὗτος ἔφη δύναμαι καταλῦσαι τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ διὰ τριῶν ἡμερῶν οἰκοδομῆσαι, 26:61).¹⁶¹ The testimony of the two witnesses is untrue in the sense that they fabricate an announcement of Jesus as if he mentioned his ability and power bringing about the actual temple destruction as well as its reconstruction within three days. This same false witness surfaces again in a

¹⁶¹ Though the Gospel does not report that Jesus actually made such a claim except that Jesus has consistently predicted that he will be killed by the hands of his opponents and on the third day be raised (16:21; 17:23; 20:19 cf. 12:40), this false testimony indirectly points to the profound connection of Jesus to the temple in 24:1–2. It is true that Jesus never explicitly claimed that he himself has the power to destroy the temple, he did predict the devastating destruction of the sacred temple. Before further exposition, consider the significance that the temple of Jerusalem holds in the history of the people of God. Israel’s rise and fall has revolved around the temple. Since Babylonians had destroyed the first temple in 587 B.C., Israel, who “looked to Jerusalem, and its Temple, as the centre of their homeland, and as their very *raison-d’être* as a people, had been faced with the mounting tension between the faith they professed and the facts they perceived.” The desecrations and tribulations against the temple of God continued in various forms up to the time of Jesus, such as the Syrian ruler Antiochus Epiphanes’ setting up his image as a god (167 B.C.) causing the Maccabean revolt in 164 B.C., Pompey’s walking straight into the Holy of Holies in 63 B.C., and Herod the Great’s attempt to rebuild it, far short of its original glory. Based on these historical evidences, the temple of Jerusalem always has been the object of utmost reverence, serious expectation, and religious aspiration of

blasphemy of the passers-by at the site of the cross (27:39). They taunt Jesus nailed to the cross by saying, “You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself (καταλύων τὸν ναὸν καὶ ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις οἰκοδομῶν, σῶσον σεαυτὸν, 27:40)!” Yet, ironically what they say in a false accusation actually points to the superior reality of what the death of Jesus actually brings about. Notice that at the very hour of the death of Jesus, the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom (ἰδοὺ τὸ καταπέτασμα τοῦ ναοῦ ἐσχίσθη ἀπ’ ἄνωθεν ἕως κάτω εἰς δύο, 27:51).¹⁶² It is not a trivial matter that the drastic change made in the temple at the death of Jesus is listed first among other apocalyptic and cosmological portents immediately following Jesus yielding up his spirit (27:50–53). As Jesus visited the Jerusalem temple and cleansed it as his first activity performed at his entrance to Jerusalem (21:10–13),¹⁶³ its corresponding completion in terms of a change in the temple occurs at the death of Jesus.¹⁶⁴ The curtain of the temple symbolizes the entrance to the Holy of Holies in the Jerusalem temple which demarcates the barrier between God and men, between the holy and the mundane.¹⁶⁵ Therefore, the fact that the curtain of the temple draped before the Holy of Holies, the seat of God’s presence, is completely torn (*velum scissum*) at the death of Jesus,¹⁶⁶ theologically implies that the death of

the ultimate restoration and vindication of Israel as the divinely consecrated priestly nation.

¹⁶² Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 849 comments that “the splitting of the curtain ἀπ’ ἄνωθεν ἕως κάτω, “from top to bottom,” together with the passive verb ἐσχίσθη, “was split,” implying divine action, points to the event as an act of God.”

¹⁶³ Daniel M. Gurtner, *The Torn Veil: Matthew’s Exposition of the Death of Jesus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 98–99, 124–126 points out the significance of the temple in the Matthean narrative, functioning as both a “character” and a “(deliberate) setting” which highlights Jesus the protagonist. Gurtner observes that the author of the Gospel of Matthew is intentional in his choice of location and issues in relation to the temple and its cult. Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 598 explains that Jesus as messianic king enters the temple to purge it.

¹⁶⁴ Davies and Allison, *Saint Matthew III*, 132 comments that Jesus’ purgation of the temple (21:12–13) anticipates Jesus’ restoration of the temple.

¹⁶⁵ Tenney, *New Testament Survey*, 89 notes that “the division between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place was a thick double veil, which shut off the inner sanctuary from prying eyes.”

¹⁶⁶ Gurtner, *The Torn Veil*, 138 introduces his “analysis of the Matthean *velum scissum* pericope” in two aspects that “first is that it occasions an apocalyptic opening of heaven whereby the following material is conveyed

Jesus creates a new, unhindered, universal, righteous and blood-bought path to God which perfectly realizes the governing perspective of the Gospel and the MPN: the divinely-willed salvation.¹⁶⁷ In other words, if the veil of the temple symbolizes its prohibition of “physical and visual accessibility to God,”¹⁶⁸ the person Jesus embodies the accessibility of God which corresponds to Matthew’s Emmanuel Christology.¹⁶⁹

An ironic spin of a false accusation against Jesus in relation to the temple exemplifies how irony works as a powerful rhetorical device of the MPN’s ironist. Not telling it directly, the MPN’s ironist uses the unwitting false witness of the opponents of Jesus to reveal that the death of Jesus in fact *renews* the meaning and the purpose of the temple.¹⁷⁰ Chapter 21 tells us that it was Jesus who witnessed the desecration of the temple by merchants and the intended function of the temple being frustrated by corruption and exploitation,¹⁷¹ mainly encouraged by the Jewish

as a heavenly vision depicting the sovereignty of God despite the tragic event of Jesus’ death. The second is that the rending of the veil depicts the cessation of its function, which I have argued is generally to separate God from people . . . the most common views associate the *velum scissum* with the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 70 C.E. and with statements about accessibility to God found in Hebrews. The former is not without its problems and warrants careful scrutiny and discussion, . . . the latter, accessibility to God, is quite valid but in itself is incomplete and likewise warrants further review.” For a position relating this Matthean *velum scissum* pericope to the temple destruction in 70 C.E. as the fulfillment of Jesus’ prophecy of destruction (27:40), see Davies and Allison, *Saint Matthew III*, 631.

¹⁶⁷ Guthrie, *New Testament Theology*, 55 mentions that “Christ’s mission enables man to come to God in face of the sin which has wrought havoc in the relationship.” Also see Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 849.

¹⁶⁸ Gurtner, *The Torn Veil*, 189.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 201.

¹⁷⁰ In his study of the prophetic hope of Israel, Ronald E. Clements, *Old Testament Theology: A Fresh Approach* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1978), 146 writes that “a further basic theme, or model, of the prophetic hope is the belief in an ultimate glorification of Mount Zion as the centre of a great kingdom of peace. Jerusalem itself becomes a place of the greatest importance, with its rebuilt temple looked to as the place where God’s ‘glory’ or ‘presence’ would appear (cf. Ezek 48:35; Mal 3:1). To this the nations would come as an act of pilgrimage and homage, rather in the way that their representatives had done long before in the short-lived kingdom of David.” When we consider the Matthean emphases on Jesus as the Son of David (i.e. the King of the Jews), Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem for his passion and Jesus’ relation to the Temple (and the Law), it becomes evident that the implied author of Matthew portrays Jesus as the one who accomplishes the prophetic hope of the Old Testament regarding the restoration of the glory of God among Israel through the restoration of the temple. Also, regarding a close link between the restoration of the temple of God and the Son of David, see Davies and Allison, *Saint Matthew III*, 636.

¹⁷¹ Richard J. Bauckham, “Jesus’ Demonstration in the Temple,” pages 72–89 in *Law and Religion: Essays on the Place of the Law in Israel and Early Christianity* (ed. B. Lindars; Cambridge: James Clarke, 1988), 84.

religious leaders (21:12–13), and took the initiative of cleansing it. He condemned the religious leaders, for that they had turned the temple, a house of the prayer (Isa 56:7) into a den of robbers (21:13; Jer 7:1–11), which is figuratively equal to *destroying* the temple which is the very false charge against Jesus (26:61). Ironically, the false witnesses naming Jesus as a pretender to destroy as well as to rebuild the temple reflects Jesus' serious displeasure when he witnesses the spiritual demise of the temple and therefore, the divine necessity that the new path to God must be established through the drastic divine initiative like the death of Jesus (27:51).¹⁷² It is not Jesus who destroys the temple, but the religious leaders and the people of God in their unbelief (13:15; 15:8).¹⁷³ Yet, Jesus, as one who is greater than the temple (12:6), is the one who is about to renew (i.e. destroy and rebuild) the temple of old that is far alienated from the teachings of the Law which is none other than the saving will of God (9:13; 12:7–8; 23:23). Further, it is interesting to notice that Jesus treats this false accusation against him with an ironic silence (26:63)¹⁷⁴ similar to how a typical εἴρων behaves in a reserved or non-committed manner in his dealing with his boisterous counterpart, ἀλαζών. The silence of Jesus increases the ironic intensity of this false witness which later turns into a verbal irony exposing the very accusers of Jesus as the victims of their own word, because the beauty of verbal irony lies in the fact that one(s) who stands against a protagonistic-normative figure speaks the truth or the perspective bearing the reality of the

¹⁷² Gurtner, *The Torn Veil*, 182 considers that the true identity of Jesus as the Son of God whose death is “life-giving” and “new-age-inaugurating” is revealed when the veil of the temple is torn (i.e. “the veil of the heavenly firmament is opened”). Gurtner nicely summarizes the meaning of the torn veil of the temple, 201 that “this turning of the ear inaugurated by the death of Jesus and depicted by the Matthean *velum scissum* text resonates with the language of a restoration of the people of God from the exile of their sins. Indeed, from the beginning of the First Gospel, Jesus’ primary messianic role is that of Israel’s restoration. This restoration is inaugurated at Jesus’ death and awaits his return for final consummation. According to Ezek 37, such a restoration will involve people defined not by their ethnicity but by their relation to Jesus, the ‘true Israel.’ ”

¹⁷³ Ibid, 99 notes that “Matthew is positive towards the temple in general, affirming the validity of its sacrifices and the presence of God within it. Yet the temple’s destruction is imminent not because Matthew sees intrinsic problems with it, but because it is mismanaged by a corrupt Jewish leadership.”

¹⁷⁴ France, *Matthew*, 1024 relates Jesus’ remaining silent to the image of God’s suffering servant, oppressed

story in a combination of blind confidence and condemnable ignorance. By employing a verbal irony, the ironist makes the reading more intricate than simply reading plain statements explaining what is really going on in the upper level of story. This essentially requires the implied reader's "leap of intuition."¹⁷⁵

While Jesus is keeping silent in response to a false accusation, the high priest adjures him to tell them whether he is the Christ, the Son of God (ἐξορκίζω σε κατὰ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ζῶντος ἵνα ἡμῖν εἴπῃς εἰ σὺ εἶ ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, 26:63). Through the interrogations conducted by the Sanhedrin, the MPN's ironist clarifies that the prime cause of Jesus' death is none other than the issue of "who Jesus is," especially his divine sonship.¹⁷⁶ There is an impressive thematic continuity shown here in Matthew. Such continuity connects Satan's concern with the identity of Jesus at the temptation (4:1–11) and here in the MPN at the end of the temptation (26:63–66) in the associates of Satan, in the religious leaders of Israel, in Caiaphas and later at the scene of crucifixion in the mockers. Each of these entities aligns himself with Satan by echoing his accusing voice (4:3, 6; 8:29). All of them in one way or another challenge the identity of Jesus who is in fact the Christ¹⁷⁷ and the Son of God.¹⁷⁸

and afflicted and about to be "led to the slaughter" portrayed in Isa. 53:7.

¹⁷⁵ Booth, *Rhetoric*, 12.

¹⁷⁶ Erwin Buck, "Anti-Judaic Sentiments in the Passion Narrative according to Matthew," pages 165–80 in *Anti-Judaism in Early Christianity: Volume 1 Paul and the Gospels* ("Studies in Christianity and Judaism No. 2; eds. P. Richardson and D. Granskou; Waterloo, Ontario; Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1986), 172–73 explains the reason for the opposition against Jesus, especially from the Jewish religious leaders, is the identity of Jesus as the Son of God. He notes that "it is evident that for Matthew the title "Son of God," more than any other, constitutes the point of conflict between Jesus and the Jewish opposition."

¹⁷⁷ Jesus the Christ, Matt. 1:1, 16–18, 21; 2:4; 11:2; 16:16, 20; 22:42; 23:10; 26:63, 68; 27:17, 22 and Jesus Emmanuel 1:23; 18:20; 28:20.

¹⁷⁸ Jesus the Son of God (including Jesus' descriptions of God as his *heavenly* Father), Matt 2:15; 3:17; 7:21; 8:29; 10:32–33; 11:25–26; 12:50; 14:33; 15:13; 16:16–17; 17:5; 18:10, 14, 19, 35; 20:23; 24:36; 26:29, 39, 42, 53, 63; 27:40, 43, 54; 28:19 cf. 4:3, 6.

God himself, directing the birth of Jesus in flesh (1:1, 17–23; 2:5–6, 13–15, 20–23) according to his will to elect Jesus as the Savior Christ for his people (1:21; 4:12–17), testifies to Jesus’ sonship at his baptism and transfiguration. Jesus is the beloved Son of God in whom God is pleased (3:17; 17:5). The testimony of God is the ultimate and the most reliable source regarding the person and mission of Jesus. Whoever confesses Jesus as the Christ and the Son of God, has had it revealed to them from God himself (16:16–17). Just as Satan challenges the identity of Jesus (4:3, 6), attempting to divert the Son of God from his devotion to carrying out his Father’s will (4:3–4, 6–7, 9–10), so the chief priest condemns Jesus in his conviction that the victim standing before them and taking up silence as his defense cannot be the Christ and the Son of God. However, the ridicule of the religious leaders creates a bitter verbal irony bringing three significant theological points home: One, the opponents of Jesus are truly associates of Satan whose accusatory voice and intention resembles Satan’s at the first site of the temptation of Jesus. Two, the opponents of Jesus in fact ironically utter the undeniable truth regarding the person of Jesus, that he is indeed the Christ and the Son of God as God himself is the witness of Jesus as well as the source of that revelation (16:16–17).¹⁷⁹ To be sure, when the religious leaders speak in the same words of Peter’s confession regarding who Jesus is, their statements do not mean they have received the divine revelation which is regarded as the sign of God’s blessing endowed upon the follower of Jesus as in the case of Peter (“Blessed are you, Simon Barjona! μακάριος εἶ, Σίμων Βαριωνᾶ, 16:17a). Therefore, when the ironist puts the same words explicating Jesus’ identity in the jeering mouths of the religious leaders, it is clearly for the sake of creating a bitter verbal irony, through which he eventually intends to expose the self-victimized status of the opponents of Jesus, since their words perfectly betray them.

¹⁷⁹ Brown, *The Death of the Messiah*, I.471 notes that 26:63 is virtually identical confession by Peter in 16:16.

Finally, the third effect of this verbal irony regarding the person of Jesus discloses the bigger picture hidden behind an appearance. Since God is the most reliable source of revelation that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God (16:17), when the opponents of Jesus abuse the identity of Jesus in their mocking, they certainly taunt (i.e. blaspheme) God by unwittingly making Him a liar about Jesus.¹⁸⁰ In doing so, they indirectly identify themselves as enemies and accusers of God. In this interrogation by the high priest, the implied reader sees through an ironic lens a hidden cosmic conflict between God and Satan surrounding the issue of the person of Jesus. Jesus once again treats his opponents' accusation in a reserved and noncommittal manner, saying "You have said so (σὸ εἶπας, 26:64)."¹⁸¹ By letting Jesus respond with such a reserved and indirect word, the MPN's ironist imports two points as in the analogy of killing two birds with one stone. First, by letting the opponents of Jesus declare all the truth regarding Jesus in their arrogant assumption, the ironist reverses the moment of accusation against Jesus by the opponents as the moment of self-invited condemnation for the latter. Second, the verbal irony hidden in the interrogation by the high priest, Caiaphas exposes an ironic dynamic existing between the two courts and the two verdicts in parallel with the scheme of the double-layered story phenomenon: the Sanhedrin vs. the court of God and the defendant, Jesus, guilty as an

¹⁸⁰ Bauer, *The Structure of Matthew's Gospel*, 70 also notices irony in that the religious leaders accuse Jesus of blasphemy for claiming to be the Son of God, when in fact they are the ones who blaspheme. Yet, Bauer's reasoning comes from a different angle that the religious leaders employ false testimony to put kill Jesus and that "though their proceedings are shrouded in a cloak of legality, it is an act of murder, for Jesus is innocent (27.4, 25) and indeed righteous (27.19)."

¹⁸¹ Heil, *The Death and Resurrection of Jesus*, 61 notes that "refusing to participate in the high priest's oath, Jesus replies with the indirect affirmation "You have said it" (26:64), the same reply that indicated Judas' self-condemnation for his betrayal (26:25). Jesus thus turns the oath back upon the high priest, indicating that his own words have condemned him of putting God's Messiah to death." Also Catchpole, "The Answer of Jesus to Caiaphas," 214–15 summarizes a growing tendency to understand σὸ εἶπας as ambiguous or non-committal among Jewish interpretation. Through a redactional-critical reading, Catchpole, 226 concludes that Matt 26:64 is "affirmative in content, and reluctant or circumlocutory in formation." Catchpole especially considers Jesus' answer to Caiaphas affirmative because the exertion of power in the Temple is the Messiah's prerogative, and this view is finally confirmed by Matt 27:40: "You who would destroy the Temple and build it in three days, save yourself if you are the Son of God."

alleged pretender of being the Christ and the Son of God vs. the defendant, the religious leaders, *guilty!* as they speak against Jesus.

Jesus further affirms his messianic divine sonship in conjunction with his previous revelation that he is the messianic *Kyrios* (22:41–46).¹⁸² He decisively proclaims to his opponents that they will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power coming on the clouds of heaven (26:64 cf. 3:11–12), which sufficiently reminds the religious leaders of passages from the Old Testament (Dn 7:13; Ps 110:1)¹⁸³ portraying the Messiah’s exalted status and his eschatological coming as the judge of the world, more narrowly indicating his future vindication and triumph over the Jewish authorities now condemning him to death.¹⁸⁴ At hearing this, the high priest tears his clothes in rage and announces that Jesus blasphemes¹⁸⁵ and that they do not

¹⁸² Kingsbury, “The Title KYRIOS,” 248, 255 considers the title *kyrios* as an auxiliary Christological title that attributes divine authority to Jesus in his capacity as the Christ, the Son of David, the Son of God or the Son of Man.

¹⁸³ LXX Dn 7:13, “I saw in the night visions, and behold, on the clouds of heaven, *one* like the Son of Man coming. And he who is like the ancient of days was present and the attendants were standing before him (ἐθεώρουσαν ἐν ὄραματι τῆς νυκτὸς καὶ ἶδον ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ὡς υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου ἦρχετο καὶ ὡς παλαιὸς ἡμερῶν παρῆν καὶ οἱ παρεστηκότες παρῆσαν αὐτῷ)”; Ps 110:1, “A psalm of David. The Lord says to my lord, ‘sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool (τῷ Δαυιδ ψαλμός εἶπεν ὁ κύριος τῷ κυρίῳ μου κάθου ἐκ δεξιῶν μου ἕως ἂν θῶ τοὺς ἐχθρούς σου ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν σου).” Larry W. Hurtado, *How on Earth Did Jesus Become a God: Historical Questions about Earliest Devotion to Jesus* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005), 26 considers that the uniquely close association of Jesus with God is reflected in the way that earliest Christians understood Psalm 110. He notes that the earliest Christians “saw God and Jesus in the opening words where ‘the Lord says to my lord, Sit at my right hand . . . (110:1).’ ”

¹⁸⁴ Heil, *The Death and Resurrection of Jesus*, 61 and Brown, *The Death of the Messiah*, I.506–8.

¹⁸⁵ Luz, *Matthew 21–28*, 430–31 explicates that “of what did Jesus’ blasphemy consist? There are two possibilities. Either there is no blasphemy, and with his portrayal the evangelist wants to give the impression that the high priest and the Sanhedrin intentionally and maliciously created one, or there was in that day also a broader understanding of blasphemy as a capital offense that would make their reaction understandable. I think that this second solution is correct.” Hurtado, *How on Earth*, 154 reports a generally accepted view among scholars regarding the historicity of Jesus-devotion and the conflict between church and synagogue reflected in the Synoptic Gospels that the Gospels’ accounts of Jewish authorities accusing Jesus of blasphemy are “at least partially shaped by, and are reflections of, Jewish responses to (Jewish) Christian Christological claims and devotional practice.” Observing the Gospel of Mark, especially the Markan passages (i.e. the Markan scene of Jesus’ Sanhedrin trial, 14:61–62) reflecting the actual experiences of Jewish Christians called to account before Jewish authorities for their devotion to Christ and charged with blasphemy, Hurtado, *ibid.*, 167 considers that “arraignments of Jewish Christians before Jewish authorities must be dated no later than the probable time of the writing of Mark’s Gospel, ca. 65–72 C.E.” And D. R. A. Hare’s particular study of the theme of Jewish persecution in the Gospel of Matthew narrowly dealing with the issue of conflict between the Jewish non-Christians and the Jewish Christians views the interrogation of the Jewish authorities against Jesus in Matt. 26:63–63 as a reflection of the Jewish rejection of the claims made on behalf of Jesus by his followers as a divine being. See Hare, *The Theme of Jewish Persecution of Christians in the*

need further witnesses to find Jesus guilty (26:65).¹⁸⁶ Without hesitation, the religious leaders as a group respond to Caiaphas that Jesus deserves death (26:66; 27:20 cf. 2:13). The MPN's ironist has consistently emphasized throughout the story that Jesus is the saving presence of God among the people and his prime task is fulfilling the divinely-willed salvation through his anticipated innocent-obedient death (1:21; 12:14; 16:21; 17:22–23; 20:18–19; 26:2, 28). Therefore, when the opponents of Jesus declare that Jesus is worthy of being put to death by imposing a guilty verdict on Jesus as a blasphemer (26:65) who pretends to be the Christ, the Son of God (26:64), they turn themselves into mockers of God, the author of the death of his beloved Son. No other reason is given in the Gospel as the cause for the death of Jesus except the single-minded devotion of the Son of God to his Father's saving will (3:15; 5:17; 6:10; 18:14; 26:39, 42).¹⁸⁷

A string of verbal ironies continues as the passion story progresses from verbal harassments to the physical abuse of Jesus by his opponents. Naming Jesus as a blasphemer deserving death, the religious leaders spit in the face of Jesus, and strike and slap him (26:68). Their derision accompanies undignified beatings of Jesus, saying “*Prophecy* to us, oh! you Christ, who is that *struck* you? (προφήτευσον ἡμῖν, χριστέ, τίς ἐστιν ὁ παίσας σε; 26:68).” It is ironic that the Jewish leaders here unwittingly fulfill Jesus’ *prophecy* regarding what will happen

Gospel according to St. Matthew, SNTSMS 6 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 17, 133–35.

¹⁸⁶ The religious leaders’ characterizing Jesus as a blasphemer is a case of a character irony. Previous to the MPN, a character irony in relation to the issue of blasphemy occurs in chapter 9 where the first accusation of the religious leaders against Jesus is reported. In chapter 9, Jesus is blamed for his act of forgiving as blasphemy. Indeed, Jesus has the authority of forgiveness as he speaks it publicly, “the Son of Man has the authority on earth to forgive sins (ἐξουσίαν ἔχει ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἀφιέναι ἁμαρτίας, 9:6).” Therefore, it is not Jesus, but his very accusers who are the blasphemers against the Savior whose task is to offer the forgiveness of sins to his people (1:21; 9:6; 26:28). Likewise, 26:65 provides an attentive reader of irony another example of character irony revolving around the accusation of blasphemy. Being ignorant of the essential information that God is the bedrock source for the revelation of Jesus as the Christ and the Son of God (16:17), the opponents of Jesus accusing him as a blasphemer who claims the sonship to God conversely condemn themselves, not Jesus, as the blasphemers, defiantly standing against the true verdict of God regarding Jesus, his beloved Son (1:1, 18; 3:15; 17:5 cf. 2:15; Hos 11:1).

¹⁸⁷ Buck, “Anti-Judaic Sentiments,” 176 says that “Matthew, even more than the other gospel writers, emphasizes that Jesus’ suffering is in keeping with the will of God; in fact, that the passion amounts to a fulfillment of Scripture Matthew maintains this even when he cannot cite any specific passages from the Law or the Prophets

to him in 26:31.¹⁸⁸ Such cruelty which the religious leaders exhibit against Jesus proves their victim's previous verdict on them as ones without mercy (23:23) a trait which stands in a stark contrast with Jesus and his personification of the divine mercy (9:13; 12:7). Throughout the Gospel, the implied reader witnesses that the people in need have come to Jesus seeking mercy and they never returned with empty hands (9:27; 15:22; 17:15; 20:30–31).

The beleaguerment of Jesus by the religious leaders in 26:68 harbors two further verbal ironies exposing the latter as self-defeated since they unintentionally tell the truth about their apparent victim, Jesus. First, when they tauntingly call Jesus the Christ, in fact, they speak rightly about Jesus whether they believe it or not. Therefore, the arrow of mockery which the opponents of Jesus launch to prick Jesus takes its ironic turn of reversal, comes back to its shooters and wounds their credibility. Once again, the MPN's ironist effectively confirms Jesus as the Christ¹⁸⁹ through the means of the abusive language of his opponents.¹⁹⁰ Second, humiliating Jesus with undignified beatings, the religious leaders invite him to *prophecy* who strikes him (26:68). This is another revelatory site of verbal irony. Right before his arrest the same night, Jesus *prophesied* to his disciples that "God will strike the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered (26:31)." The Matthean textual information confirms that Jesus is the shepherd and ones who are with him are the sheep. Jesus who is the divine shepherd (18:12;

which must be fulfilled by the suffering of the Messiah."

¹⁸⁸ Heil, *The Death and Resurrection of Jesus*, 63, 67.

¹⁸⁹ Jesus the Christ, Savior 1:1, 16–18, 21; 2:4; 11:2; 16:16, 20; 22:42; 23:10; 26:63, 68; 27:17, 22.

¹⁹⁰ It is a striking fact that both the narrator and almost all the main characters within the story make mention of *who Jesus is* either through a direct or an indirect means of speech such as verbal irony. Following are the representative cases where each party of the narrative speaks of who Jesus is: the narrator (1:1–19), God (3:17; 17:5), the angels (1:20), John the Baptist (3:3, 11–12), the disciples of Jesus (14:33; 16:16), the devil (4:3, 6) and its associates (8:29), the religious leaders as a corporate group (26:63, 68), the crowds (12:23; 21:11), the mockers (27:39–44), the political powers such as Herod (2:4, 8) and Pilate (27:11, 17), the marginal characters such as the magi (2:2), the blind men (9:27–28), the centurion with his soldiers (27:54) and even an object such as a written charge placed above the head of Jesus on the cross (27:37).

25:32–33) rules over (2:6) and saves his people (18:12, 14; cf. 1:21; 26:28). In 26:31 Jesus, the shepherd himself, interprets the reality of his passion encompassing its all satellite events (arrest, betrayal and death) by employing the picture of the shepherd being stricken. Yet, the core message of this picturesque depiction of his passion lies in the fact that it is God who strikes the shepherd (26:31; Zech. 13:7) according to his will (6:10; 8:14; 26:42). Jesus will let himself be stricken (26:67) as he drinks the cup (20:22–23; 26:39) in his filial devotion and obedience to God the Father (3:14–15; 6:10; 26:39, 42, 44, 53–54). In this light, the ignorance of the religious leaders concerning the divine reality, specifically the perfect harmony existing between God’s will to save his people (1:21; 18:11, 14; i.e. forgiveness of sins, 9:6; 20:28; 26:28) through the death of his Son, Jesus and the total commitment of the Son of God to accomplish it, is laid bare through the use of irony. Under the reality of this overarching salvific plan of God which necessarily brings about the death of Jesus (26:28), all the earthly authorities, both the religious and political powers dealing with Jesus with the pretension of wielding power over the life and death of Jesus turn out to be utterly ironic to the point of absurdity (27:1) because the death of Jesus is primarily the *divine must* (δεῖ, 16:21; 17:22–23; 20:17–19; 26:1–2, 24a).¹⁹¹

Chapter 27 and Conventional Ironies

A Verbal Irony as Self-Criticism of the Religious Leaders (27: 4–6). After deliberation over killing Jesus (27:1),¹⁹² all the chief priests and the elders of the people (21:23; 26:3) hand their victim over to Pilate (27:2) the Roman governor of Judea to legitimize the capital sentence

¹⁹¹ Being indebted to Brown, *The Death of the Messiah*, 2.1435–44 and Douglas Moo, *The Old Testament in the Gospel Passion Narratives* (Sheffield: Almond, 1983), 325–28, Carter, *Matthew*, 212 also considers Jesus’ death according to God’s will in close relation to the Abrahamic tradition that the Son of God (2:15; 3:17) must suffer to the point of sacrifice as Isaac, the son of Abraham once foreshadowed.

¹⁹² Heil, *The Death and Resurrection of Jesus*, 67 interprets Matt 27:2, “They bound him, led him away and handed him over to Pilate the governor” ironic in a sense that the same Jewish leaders who cruelly mocked Jesus’ power to “prophesy” (26:67–68) take a role in confirming Jesus’ detailed passion prediction in Matt 20:18–19.

against Jesus.¹⁹³ Then (τότε, 27:3a), Judas, seeing that Jesus is condemned, regrets (μεταμέλομαι, 27:3) and brings back the thirty pieces of silver which he took as the price for handing Jesus over (26:15) to the chief priests and the elders. Judas the betrayer (10:4; 26:15–16, 21, 23–25, 45–46, 48) in his contrition confesses, “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood (ἡμαρτον παραδοὺς αἵμα ἄθωον, 27:4).”¹⁹⁴ This concise statement of guilt characterizes Judas a truly tragic figure just as Jesus mentioned earlier: “the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed. It would be better for that man if he had not been born (26:24).”

The confession of Judas declaring the innocence of Jesus does not function as verbal irony which in general overturns what the speaker says in his imperceptibility or misconception of reality. Contrarily, Judas means exactly what he says as the result of self-realization (τότε ἰδὼν Ἰούδας ὁ παραδιδούς αὐτὸν ὅτι κατεκρίθη, 27:3 cf. 27:1). Here Judas is a tragic figure rather than an ironic figure. He finally gets a sense of what a horrific crime he has committed against his teacher (26:18, 25, 49) and the Lord (22:42–45; 26:22). His character is tragic because his repentance (μεταμέλομαι, 27:3)¹⁹⁵ finds its resolution in a meaningless self-condemnation by

¹⁹³ Brown, *The Death of the Messiah*, 1.710 explains why Jesus was brought to Pilate. He writes that “except for some agreed upon, automatically punishable crimes, the execution of capital punishment was under the control of the Roman prefect/procurator, not of the Sanhedrin authorities.”

¹⁹⁴ O. Michel, “*Metamelomai*,” *TDNT* 4. 626–28 evaluates Judas’ repentance (μεταμεληθεὶς, 27:3) as simple “remorse” or merely a change of heart since the term used is not *metanoein* but *metamelomai*.

¹⁹⁵ The verb, μεταμέλομαι (to rue, to regret, to feel repentance) occurs three times in the Gospel. The other two cases (21:29, 32) beside the case of Judas (27:3) depict a hopeful situation that one’s heart can change. In his conversation with the religious leaders who challenge the authority of Jesus (21:23), Jesus made them confess their ignorance (21:27) by questioning where the baptism of John originated, whether it is from heaven or from men (21:25). Jesus further spoke in a parable of a man who had two children to reveal the religious leaders’ stubbornness in their disbelief of him as well as to illuminate them regarding the importance of repentance. On the other hand since μεταμέλομαι is the way through which the Gentiles and the sinners whom the religious leaders consider the outsiders to the grace of God join in the kingdom of God which Jesus ushers in. In this parable (21:28–30), a father equally asked his two children to go to work in the vineyard. The first one said no but afterwards he changed his mind (μεταμέλομαι) and went to work. The second son did exactly opposite to what the first son did to his father. Jesus said that the first son did the will of God by changing his heart, and clearly implies that the religious leaders stand for the second son in the parable in contrast to the tax collectors and the harlots who stand for the first son

taking his own life (27:5),¹⁹⁶ neglecting faith in Jesus and the possibility of forgiveness (20:28; 26:28), deserting the chance of bearing the fruit worthy of repentance (3:8)¹⁹⁷ and not counting on the promise of Jesus that after his *rising from the dead* (i.e. resurrection, 16:21; 17:22–23; 20:18–19 cf. 28: 6–7), he shall meet his disciples (26:32–33) in spite of their *betrayal* which all the disciples commit against Jesus.

Though Judas' confession itself is not a form of irony, it promotes the reading of the MPN's irony, especially verbal ironies pertaining to the statements of the religious leaders in 27:4–6. Most importantly, Judas' confession regarding the innocent blood of Jesus coheres with and proclaims the goal of the life and mission of Jesus which has been envisioned from the beginning of the Gospel. Judas' confession makes the perceptive reader retrospect and specifically focus on the Matthean theme of "blood." Earlier, the implied author has substantially and purposefully underlined the theme of "blood" in conjunction with qualities such as "righteousness" and "innocence."¹⁹⁸ By doing so, he discloses that the innocent-righteous blood has an inviolable saving effect, an idea which perfectly corresponds to Jesus' interpretation of

because when John came to them in the way of righteousness, the former did not believe in him but the latter did repent and believe in him (21:31–32). Judas should have gone further from repentance (μεταμέλομαι, 27:3) to something better, such as hoping in the forgiveness of the sins which Jesus himself promised to bring about (26:28). However, Judas ended his repentance with self-destruction that is far away from bearing any fruit as John the Baptist once proclaimed "therefore bear fruit that befits repentance (ποιήσατε οὖν καρπὸν ἄξιον τῆς μετανοίας, 3:8 cf. 7:20; 12:33; 21:19)." Further, according to the Gospel's governing perspective, the divinely-willed salvation, it is fair to say that Judas' self-destruction is anti-Gospel (26:13) to God willing to save the people from their sins through his Son, the appointed saving agent.

¹⁹⁶ Keener, *Matthew*, 656 treats the fall or apostasy of Judas and other disciples equally as disciples' weakness and comments on the exposure of disciples' weakness as cause for repentance (26:75; cf. 26:31–32), not sorrow unto death as the case of Judas (27:5).

¹⁹⁷ In the case of Peter, Heil, *The Death and Resurrection of Jesus*, 66 considers Peter's removing himself from the high priest's courtyard (i.e. going outside) and weeping bitterly (26:75) as complete repentance. He says that "although Peter had denied Jesus rather than die with him, he not only repents but has nothing to do with those unjustly putting Jesus to death."

¹⁹⁸ See Matt 2:16 (massacre of innocent children around Bethlehem); 11:1–9 and 14:1–13 (beheading of John the Baptist); 23:29–36 (the murder of all the righteous blood: the blood of the prophets, of the wise and of the scribes); 26:28 and 27:4 (Jesus' innocent blood).

shedding his blood for the forgiveness of sins (26:28). In fact, Judas exemplifies the need that he and all other sinners have for the forgiveness that the innocent blood of Jesus will effect.¹⁹⁹

Therefore, Judas' confession regarding the innocent blood of Jesus brings all the literary and conceptual elements strategically dispersed throughout the Gospel pointing to the death of Jesus together into a singly important outlook that Jesus dies by shedding innocent blood to save the people from their sins (1:21; 9:5–6, 13) according to the divine saving will (6:10; 18:14; 26:39, 42).

Judas' declaration of the innocence of Jesus before the Jewish religious leaders, associates of the crime, is tantalizingly piercing to the implied reader because although his confession is a statement of truth, it does not have power on its own to amend a wrongful situation inflicted on Jesus, but rather it reinforces the murderous intent of the opponents of Jesus, as 27:4 shows. When Judas returns the thirty pieces of silver to the religious leaders (27:3) and confesses that he has sinned by betraying the innocent blood of Jesus (27:4), the religious leaders answer him indifferently "What have we to do with that? That is your problem! (τί πρὸς ἡμᾶς; σὺ ὄψη, 27:4)." When a disheartened Judas leaves them, the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver that has been thrown by Judas into the temple (27:5), say, "It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since they are the price of blood (οὐκ ἔξεστιν βαλεῖν αὐτὰ εἰς τὸν κορβανᾶν, ἐπεὶ τιμὴ αἱματός ἐστιν, 27:6; cf. Deut 23:18)." Though stubbornly being unaffected and unmoved by Judas' confession regarding the innocence of Jesus, the religious leaders cannot go without betraying themselves in their own words. Matthew 27:6 contains a verbal irony that discloses the guilt of the religious leaders even as their callousness shows their indifference to conscience—

¹⁹⁹ Heil, *The Death and Resurrection of Jesus*, 68.

stricken Judas.²⁰⁰ In 27:6, the religious leaders acknowledge in their ignorance that the money which they had paid to Judas was indeed the *price of blood* (τιμὴ αἵματός), which means that they bought the blood of Jesus, namely the death of Jesus. A simple question further highlights the ironic nature of their statement, exposing their guilt and attacking their pretension of innocence: if Jesus is guilty as they charge him to be (26:65–66), what is the need for them as prosecutors to purchase the blood of the defendant in the first place? Purchasing the blood of Jesus once again testifies to chronic stealth (26:4) and lawlessness as their modes of behavior (12:14; 21:33–46; 23:13–35; 26:59–60; 27:18). Further, the religious leaders imply the returned money is *unlawful* by saying that it is not lawful (οὐκ ἔξεστιν, 26:7) for them to restore it to the treasury of the temple. Why do they consider the returned money, which they once had paid to Judas, *unlawful* unless their intent and actions in use of that money is *unlawful*? They end up purchasing with that money the potter’s field which is known as the Field of Blood to bury strangers in (27:7–10). Therefore, taken together, the religious leaders’ remark regarding the price of the blood of Jesus that is unlawful is an ironic self-criticism spoken in their spiritual blindness and lack of fear of God as Jesus diagnosed in chapter 23. Indeed, they are *guilty* as well as *unlawful* on the account that they intended to buy the blood of the innocent (αἷμα ἀθῶνον,

²⁰⁰ Heil, *ibid.*, 69 notes that the “price of blood (27:6)” is drenched with irony for the reader. From a different perspective, Heil, 69–70 mentions the dramatic irony in relation to the price of blood. He writes that “the dramatic irony heightens as they attempt to dispose of the blood money by purchasing “the potter’s field as a burial place for foreigners” (27:7). In deeming the price/value of Jesus’ blood as unworthy for the temple and fit only to buy an unclean burial place for unclean people, the Jewish leaders are unwittingly disclosing for the reader the true “value” and “price” of Jesus’ innocent blood. They show the salvific “value” of Jesus’ blood, which purchases a burial place for the “foreigners” or “strangers” (*xenoi*) with whom Jesus identifies himself: “I was a stranger [*xenos*] and you welcomed me” (25:35, 38, 43–44). They also show the tragic “price” of Jesus’ blood, which purchases a burial place for the “foreigners,” who will replace the people of Israel in God’s kingdom . . . the chief priests fulfill the tragedy prophesied by Jeremiah (27:9–10) as they “took the thirty pieces of silver” (see 27:6), the paltry “price/value” (*timēn*) with which they, as “some of the sons of Israel,” tragically “set a price” (*etimēsanto*) upon the Jesus they ironically reject as the truly “valued/priced” one (*tetimēmenou*) of God’s people of Israel.” For other scholars who notice the ironic nature of the price of blood or the price of Jesus, see Davies and Allison, *Saint Matthew*, 978, 1041–45.

27:4 and τιμὴ αἵματός, 27:6) for an unlawful purpose.²⁰¹ In the response of the religious leaders to Judas' remorse in his realization of having betrayed the *innocent blood*, the ironist turns around the religious leaders' remark of indifference as an ironic self-exposure, identifying them as those who are deserving death (ἐνοχός θανάτου ἐστίν, 26:66).²⁰² In this way, the ironist clearly communicates an absurdity surrounding the death of Jesus: innocent Jesus has to be killed by the hands of the guilty. It is evident that the death of Jesus carried out by his opponents is painfully *illegitimate* despite their seeking its *legitimacy* by bringing the case to the Roman governor, Pilate.

Though Jesus is innocent (i.e. righteous, 27:19) and not deserving the condemnation of death as the verbal irony of 27:6 discloses, he is not a mere victim as the appearance of the story relates on the surface level. Ironically, the invincible power of the death of Jesus lies in his very innocence, which shows that the life of Jesus conforms to the divine purpose. It is the divine saving will that provides the *legitimacy* of the innocent death of Jesus since it is the way willed by God through which salvation will be proffered to his people (1:21; 16:21; 17:22–23; 20:18–19; 20:22; 26:28, 39, 42). In the past, God's ways have seen the death of the just and the innocent whom he sent among the people of Israel (23:29–30). God's saving work in human history through the suffering and death of the innocent fundamentally requires an ironic

²⁰¹ Strikingly, on the level of inter-textual reading, the Jewish religious leaders as the corporate opponents of Jesus perfectly fit the bill for the descriptions of the abominable traits which God hates in Proverbs 6:16–19, “there are six things which the Lord hates, seven which are an abomination to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and a man who sows discord among brothers (RSV).” All seven categories of evil which God abhors, the Jewish religious leaders, representing the Jews, commit against Jesus throughout the Gospel and most intensely in the MPN, in their intent to bring about the death of Jesus. Their opposition and violence against Jesus is not only ironic but also strikingly tragic because they, in fact, stand against God himself for Jesus is the beloved Son of God as the Gospel consistently attests.

²⁰² D. A. Carson, *Matthew* (The Expositor's Bible Commentary 8; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1984), 561 notes that “Judas recognizes that he is not only guilty of betrayal but that Jesus whom he has betrayed is “innocent.” The Jewish leaders' callous response “What is that to us?” is both a Semitic and classical idiom. But their own words condemn them, for it *should* have been something to them. Judas has betrayed innocent blood; they

perspective in order to be understood. Therefore, making sense of the innocent death of Jesus based only on the human cause, in other words, a reading of the MPN without perceiving the divine reality governing the entire life and death of Jesus, terribly fails because the innocent death of Jesus sounds irrational, foolish and even pathetic.²⁰³ There is no other way given by God for the salvation of men other than the shedding of the innocent blood of Jesus which once for all perfects the saving will of God (i.e. the Scriptures, 3:15; 6:10, 33; 21:32; 26:24, 39, 42, 54, 56) and provides a foundation for the eschatological community of faith (26:63–64; 27:37, 51–53; 28:18–20).

A Character Irony of Jesus as the Messianic King of the Jews (27:1–37) in Comparison to Pilate as an Earthly Ruler (ἡγεμῶν, 27:2). The implied author of Matthew pays a great deal of attention to Jesus as the promised Messiah who is coming from the house of David (2 Sam 7:13–14).²⁰⁴ Both the teaching of the kingdom of heaven and the royalty of Christ are emphasized in Matthew. Furthermore, as David has an inseparable connection with Jerusalem as his capital, so this Gospel refers to it with distinction: the city of the great king (πόλις ἐστὶν τοῦ μεγάλου βασιλέως, 5:35 cf. 2:2; 21:5; 27:11, 37). Jesus' controversial title, "the King of the Jews," which is quite interchangeable with Jesus, "the Son of David" in its concept

have condemned innocent blood."

²⁰³ There is an obvious parallel here to Pauline theology, where for some, who have high regard for themselves as the wise or the intellectual, the Christian proclamation of the innocent death of Jesus as the way of divine salvation is considered folly (μωρία, 1 Cor 1:18). Yet, the foolishness of God is wiser than men (1 Cor 1:25) because a seemingly foolish faith in the innocent death of Jesus ironically saves those who believe (1 Cor 1:21).

²⁰⁴ Tenney, *New Testament Survey*, 151 considers that Matt. 1:1 ("The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the son of Abraham") announces the theme of the Gospel of Matthew in relation to the Messianic fulfillment through Jesus. He writes that "the phraseology reminds one of the book of Genesis, which is divided into sections by the use of the same phrase, 'the book of the generations of . . . ' or 'the generations of . . . ' (Gen 2:4; 5:1; 6:9, *et al.*). Each occurrence of this phrase marked a stage in the development of the Messianic promise. The links in the history of God's people are carried forward through Genesis, and one appears in Ruth 4:18, where the Messianic line ends with David. Matthew picks up the genealogy at this point and illustrates its fulfillment in the person of Jesus."

and usage, plays an important role in Matthew.²⁰⁵ By this title, both Jews and Romans alike revile and mock Jesus, the protagonist.²⁰⁶ The Jewish religious leaders are agitated (21:15) and become jealous (φθόνος, 27:18)²⁰⁷ because even the children received Jesus as the Son of David (21:15). Likewise, the Romans, represented by political-military power, cast their suspicion on Jesus as a potentially rising political threat against the Roman government, the apprehension of which is comprehended in Pilate's calling Jesus the King of the Jews (27:11).²⁰⁸

Matthew has already strongly established Jesus' royal identity as the Son of David in chapter 21. Within the Jews, there exists further difference between the crowds in general and their religious leaders in their reception of Jesus as the Son of David. As the Gospel describes, if the Jewish crowds often view and acclaim Jesus as a king who perhaps stems from David's line (9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30–31; 21:9) though their capriciousness sways them swiftly,²⁰⁹ the Jewish religious leaders look askance at Jesus and are *indignant* (ἠγανάκτησαν) with him because the children of Jerusalem have acclaimed him to be the Son of David (1:1; 21:15). According to chapter 22, the Jewish religious leaders not only do not understand the identity of the Christ, but also reject the idea that Jesus is that anticipated Christ of Israel coming from the lineage of David. They are grossly out of touch with *reality*, since the implied author provides to his reader

²⁰⁵ Kingsbury, *Matthew As Story*, 45–49.

²⁰⁶ Keener, *Matthew*, 653 emphasizes that the title, “King of the Jews,” is the dominant christological title of Matthew and “this title constitutes a double irony in that those who apply it intend it ironically, but the Gospel tradition ironically inverts the irony so that they have described him accurately.”

²⁰⁷ France, *Matthew*, 1054.

²⁰⁸ Keener, *Matthew*, 651 notes that “once could reasonably argue that the Gospels emphasize a Sanhedrin trial so that Jesus dies for religious rather than political reasons (Fredriksen 1988: 117); but the admission of claiming Messiahship in some form would naturally lend itself to Romans charge of treason; Roman authorities would understand the messianic category in political terms.”

²⁰⁹ Jesus enters Jerusalem as the King of Zion, the promised royal Messiah (21:5, Zech 9:9; 1:1; 2:6, Micah 5:2, 9:36) amid the people's initial welcome and shout of joy (21:9–11). However, 21:1–27 places the story of Jesus in an ironic context where the confrontation and opposition sensitize the imminent reality of the death of Jesus, exposing the capricious nature of the people's exaltation (οἱ ἔκραζον, 21:9a) which quickly turns into an unchecked clamor of condemnation (οἱ ἔκραζον, 27:23).

the truth regarding the person of Jesus, who is truly and thoroughly the Messiah (i.e. the Christ)—Savior,²¹⁰ the Son of God,²¹¹ the Son of David,²¹² and the Son of Man.²¹³

After the Pharisees try to test Jesus (22:34–40) by asking what is the greatest commandment of the Law (22:36), Jesus redirects the issue to the more fundamental question, *who the Christ is*, of whom the Scriptures faithfully witness (22:41–46). Consider that the Gospel frequently alludes and employs the Old Testament prophecies in relation to the Messiah, the Son of God and the suffering servant to point out that Jesus is the fulfillment of them.²¹⁴ In this regard, Jesus’ question to examine the understanding of the Jewish religious leaders regarding the identity of the Christ, in other words, their understanding of the Scriptures, in its essence is quite pointed because it reveals the heart of the relational problem that the Jewish religious leaders experience with Jesus. They reject Jesus solely because they do not know *who Jesus is*, in fact, the Christ and the Son of God (1:1, 18–21; 2:15; 3:17; 16:16–17; 17:5). Jesus throws a theologically compact question to the religious leaders, “What do you think of the Christ? Whose son is he?” (τί ὑμῖν δοκεῖ περὶ τοῦ χριστοῦ; τίνοϋ υἱόϋ ἐστίν; 22:42) and the latter answer him without hesitation that the Christ is the Son of David (22:42), an answer which may reflect the

²¹⁰ Jesus the Christ (Messiah), Savior 1:1, 16–18, 21; 2:4; 11:2; 16:16, 20; 22:42; 23:10; 26:63, 68; 27:17, 22 and Jesus Emmanuel 1:23; 18:20; 28:20.

²¹¹ Jesus the Son of God 2:15; 3:17; 4:3, 6; 7:21; 8:29; 10:32–33; 11:25–27; 12:50; 14:33; 15:13; 16:16–17; 17:5; 18:10, 14, 19, 35; 20:23; 24:36; 26:29, 39, 42, 53, 63; 27:40, 43, 54; 28:19.

²¹² Jesus the Son of David (Jesus the King of the Jews) 1:1; 2:2, 6; 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 18:23; 20:30–31; 21:5, 9, 15; 22:2, 42; 25:34, 40; 26:31; 27:11, 29, 37, 42.

²¹³ Jesus the Son of Man 8:20; 9:6; 10:23; 11:19; 12:8, 32, 40; 13:37, 41; 16:13, 27–28; 17:9, 12, 22; 19:28; 20:18, 28; 24:27, 30, 37, 39, 44; 25:31; 26:2, 24, 45, 64.

²¹⁴ Howell, *Matthew’s Inclusive Story*, 252 summarizes that “a prominent aspect of Jesus’ obedience to the will of God in Matthew is his acceptance of the role of the meek and lowly Servant of God. He fulfills Isaianic Servant prophecies (8.17; 12.18–21) both in his healing ministry and in the way he withdraws from Pharisaic opposition and avoids Messianic self-advertisement. He has come to serve others (20.28) and this way of service means a suffering which culminates on the cross.” Also, Kingsbury, *Matthew*, 31–32, 35 explains Matthew’s view the history of salvation that Matthew regards Old Testament times as the “time of prophecy” and regards the “time of Jesus (earthly-exalted)” as the “time of fulfillment.”

learned contemporary view of the Scriptures. Yet, Jesus again questions them, “How is it then that David by the spirit calls him, saying ‘the Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand, till I put your enemies under your feet? If David then calls him Lord, how is he his son?’” (22:43–45). To this question of Jesus, the religious leaders become mute in their wit’s end, and do not dare to ask him more questions, perhaps more correctly, they do not dare to test (22:35) him with more questions.

Through this dialogue with the religious leaders, Jesus drastically restores the true understanding of the identity of the Christ, the promised King of the Jews: the Christ is both the Son of David (1:1, 20) and more importantly the Son of God (1:18–21; 3:17; 17:5).²¹⁵ It is quite illuminating to observe that the high priest, Caiaphas, on behalf of the Sanhedrin, interrogates Jesus as to whether he is the Christ, the Son of God (26:63) with the intention of derision. Ironically, the source of this interrogation by Caiaphas conjoining the Christ with the Son of God is coming from Jesus’ exposition in 22:43–45, and here the head of the opponents of Jesus blindly borrows his defendant’s self-exposure as the Messianic Son of God delivered in the form of a rhetorical question. Therefore, Caiaphas as a spokesman of the entire body of the religious authority of the Jews ironically repeats Jesus’ indirect self-disclosure as the Christ and the Son of God, whom David himself reveres as the Lord (22:41–46).

Based on the above Matthean deliberation regarding Jesus as the Christ and the Son of God coming from the Davidic lineage, the interrogation of Jesus by Pilate regarding whether He is the King of the Jews (27:1–23) brings about a pointed reversal of the status and quality of characters through a character irony.²¹⁶ In this scene alone, the ironist frequently uses the title ἡγεμῶν (a

²¹⁵ Kingsbury, *Matthew As Story*, 45–49.

²¹⁶ Heil, *The Death and Resurrection of Jesus*, 199 briefly notes that “the reader, who knows that Jesus is indeed “the King of the Jews” in the sense as the Son of Man (26:63–64), experiences the irony that Pilate is

ruler or governor)²¹⁷ all in reference to Pilate (27:2, 13, 17, 22, 24): seven times the noun refers directly to Pilate (27:2, 11 (x2), 14, 15, 21, 27) and one time describing a function of ἡγεμῶν as one sitting at the judgment seat (καθήμενός δὲ αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τοῦ βήματος 27:19). Correspondingly, the personal name of the protagonist, “Jesus,” who is in fact the promised *ruler* of Israel (ἡγούμενος, 2:6, Mich 5:1, 3; 21:5),²¹⁸ also occurs with notable frequency (27:1, 11(x2), 16, 17, 20, 22, 26, 27, 37, 46, 50, 54, 55, 57, 58). Matthew mentions repeatedly the name of Jesus, “He will save his people from their sins (1:21),” throughout the Gospel²¹⁹ and more intensely in the MPN,²²⁰ a phenomenon which is telling of the implied author’s deep soteriological conviction about Jesus. The frequent occurrences of the designation of Pilate as ἡγεμῶν and of “Jesus,” the name of the ruler of Israel, as his counterpart is not fortuitous but rather deliberate. Therefore, Jesus, standing before the ἡγεμῶν, Pilate, creates a sharp character irony that exposes Pilate’s inadequacy in judging Jesus, whose kingship is the manifestation of the kingdom of God. To

unwittingly playing his role in establishing how Jesus is truly “the King of Jews” precisely by mocking his kingship.”

²¹⁷ *A Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (revised and augmented by F. Wilbur Gingrich and Frederick W. Danker from Walter Bauer’s Fifth Edition, 1958; Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), 343 defines ἡγεμῶν as prince and of imperial governors in the provinces, especially of the procurators or prefects in Judea such as the case of Pontius Pilate. Tenney, *New Testament Survey*, 14 provides helpful information to understand the Roman provincial governance. According to Tenney, “the Roman government was of two kinds. The provinces that are relatively peaceful and loyal to Rome were under proconsuls (Acts 1:7) who were responsible to the Roman Senate. The more turbulent provinces were under the authority of the emperor, who often stationed armies in them, and they were governed by prefects, procurators, or propraetors who were appointed by the emperor and answerable directly to him . . . Palestine in the time of Christ was under the supervision of the emperor, whose agent was the prefect Pontius Pilate (Matt 27:11; translated “governor”).” For the variant, see Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (2nd ed.; N.Y.; United Bible Societies, 1994), 65.

²¹⁸ Matt 2:6, “And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come forth a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel (καὶ σὺ Βηθλέεμ, γῆ Ἰούδα, οὐδαμῶς ἐλαχίστη εἶ ἐν τοῖς ἡγεμόσιν Ἰούδα· ἐκ σοῦ γὰρ ἐξελεύσεται ἡγούμενος, ὅστις ποιμανεῖ τὸν λαόν μου τὸν Ἰσραήλ).”

²¹⁹ Matt 1:1, 16, 18, 21, 25; 2:1; 3:13, 15–16; 4:1, 7, 10, 17; 7:28; 8:4, 10, 13–14, 18, 20, 22, 34; 9:2, 4, 9–10, 15, 19, 22–23, 27–28, 30, 35; 10:5; 11:1, 4, 7, 25; 12:1, 15; 13:1, 34, 53, 57; 14:1, 12–13, 16, 27, 29, 31; 15:1, 21, 28–29, 32, 34; 16:6, 8, 13, 17, 21, 24; 17:1, 4, 7–9, 17–18, 22, 25–26; 18:1, 22; 19:1, 14, 18, 21, 23, 26, 28; 20:17, 22, 25, 30, 32, 34; 21:1, 6, 11f, 16, 21, 24, 27, 31, 42; 22:1, 18, 29, 41; 23:1; 24:1, 4.

²²⁰ Matt 26:1, 4, 6, 10, 17, 19, 26, 31, 34, 36, 49, 50, 51, 52, 55, 57, 59, 63, 64, 69, 71, 75; 27:1, 11, 16, 17, 20,

explicate this, it is necessary to observe the Matthean *inclusio* that chapters 2 and 27 together create. The implied author of the Gospel invites his reader to connect these two parallel scenes, the courts of the king, Herod, and of Pilate to gain an important insight in relation to the meaning of the death of Jesus. There are striking similarities between these two chapters that nicely enclose the story of Jesus as a whole: the person Jesus as the Christ and King, characters (or character groups) in persecution against Jesus, the issue at stake which incurs the conflict, and an ironic resolution of that conflict.

At the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king (βασιλεὺς, 2:1), wise men from the East came to Jerusalem to worship the newborn king of the Jews (ὁ τεχθεὶς βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων, 2:2). Herod was troubled at the arrival of the promised Christ King (1:1; 2:4–6), and all of Jerusalem consisting of the Jews and their religious leaders were troubled with him (2:3). Being threatened, Herod launched a massacre, eradicating all the male children in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in order to eliminate his assumed rival, Jesus, the King (βασιλεὺς, 21:5; 25:34, 40). As chapter 2 describes, the earliest conflict between Jesus the protagonist and Herod the antagonist pertains to the issue of kingship or rulership. Therefore, the conflict between an earthly king, Herod, a delegated king of the Roman Emperor over Judea and Jesus, the God-sent King who is the sole channel of blessing for all the nations (the Son of Abraham, 1:1) along the inevitable resolution of that conflict in persecution against the latter, not only foreshadow a death-driven path for Jesus, the Christ King but also present a double-layered story world typical to irony in relation to the issue of the Kingship of Jesus. It is clear that the coming of the promised Christ King to the people of God is the operation of the higher story. Therefore, though Herod makes a vain attempt to thwart God's will

22, 26, 27, 37, 46, 50, 54, 55, 57, 58.

from running its course, he, in his ignorance, ironically precipitates the completion of the prophecies (2:14, Hos 11:1; 2:17–18, Jer 31:15) regarding the Christ King Jesus (1:1; 22:41–45; 26:64). Furthermore, the Kingship of Jesus Christ is not limited to the ethnic Jews, but widely includes the Gentiles represented by the presence of the Magi, whose worship of the newborn King of Jews makes a stark contrast to the cold-shoulder response and disturbance among the Jews toward their long waited Messiah King.

In a nice juxtaposition, as the Kingship of Jesus was at the heart of the conflict between Jesus and Herod, so the trial of Jesus before Pilate, the governor of Judea, resumes a similar conflict in its characteristic and dynamics created by these two parties. Pilate interrogates Jesus “Are you the King of the Jews?” (σὺ εἶ ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων; 27:11) a question which reminds the reader of information given in Jesus’ birth narrative, that Jesus is indeed the King of the Jews whose origin is from God.²²¹ Furthermore, at the beginning of the story of Jesus, the birth narrative, just as Herod the king, a political power of the day formed an alliance with Jews and their religious leaders to accomplish his murderous intent against Jesus, at the end of the story, the MPN, Pilate, another political power figure is approached by the same opposing entity of Jesus, the Jews (27:15) and their religious leaders (27:20), the death of Jesus. Most importantly, if Herod attempted to resolve the conflict with Jesus, the Christ King by placing Jesus under the grip of death, Pilate, as a *de facto* and *de jure* delegated authority of jurisdiction in place of the Roman emperor (ἡγεμῶν), completes what was begun by Herod, by sentencing Jesus to death on the cross (27:24–26), where the great divine reversal turns the death of Jesus

²²¹ Heil, *The Death and Resurrection of Jesus*, 71 likewise reads an irony in the interrogation of Jesus by Pilate. He notes that “the reader, who knows that Jesus is indeed “the King of the Jews” in the sense that he is the messianic Son of God through suffering, dying, and rising as the Son of Man (26:63–64), experiences the irony that Pilate is unwittingly playing his role in establishing how Jesus is truly “the King of Jews” precisely by mocking his kingship.”

into the public manifestation of God's kingly rule (27:54).²²² The death of Jesus implies neither an end nor defeat of the Kingship of Jesus, but it is an ironic reversal, in other words, the way of God through which Jesus the Christ King is enthroned on his eternal Kingdom (27:37)²²³ and rules his people (2:6; 4:17; 6:10; 10:7; 11:12; 16:28; 26:29, 64).

The implied reader has learned of the divine Kingship of Jesus in his unique filial relationship to God as expressed in the early chapters of Matthew. The reader, then, cannot miss the character irony brought forth in the dynamics between these two powerful figures, Pilate and Jesus, in their representation of sharply different origins of power (27:1–37). Here, the truly superior, heavenly, and divine βασιλεύς (King) is present before a lowly, earth-bound, human ἡγεμῶν (ruler or prince). The narrative testifies that if Pilate sits on a terrestrial βῆμα (the judgment seat, 27:19), Jesus sits at the right hand of God, on a heavenly throne (19:28; 25:31; 26:64, Ps. 110: 1).²²⁴ Matthew has been developing from the beginning of his Gospel the fact that all the earthly rulers—e.g. Herod the king, Herod the Tetrarch, and Pilate—comprise a flat character group.²²⁵ All these temporarily sit on an earthly βῆμα to rule over the Jews. Yet, their status either as a king or ruler is meager and transient in comparison to the eternal Kingdom of God in which Jesus the Christ King wields his everlasting Kingship. Thus, all the human

²²² Not only the Roman soldiers' unwitting establishment of Jesus through ridicule and violence (27:27–31) but also the written charge that they place over the head of Jesus on the cross, "This is Jesus the King of the Jews (27:37)," are strikingly ironic because all these abuses only highlight the indisputable identity of Jesus, the King of the Jews, in an unexpected way.

²²³ Consider the inscription, "This is Jesus the King of the Jews (οὗτός ἐστιν Ἰησοῦς ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων, 27:37)," written on the head of the cross on which Jesus was crucified and lifted up high.

²²⁴ France, *Matthew*, 1051 briefly comments regarding the *bēma* that "Jesus stands before the seated governor (v.19), an ironic reversal of the destined position of Jesus as the seated judge of the world (25:31)." Also, Davies and Allison, *Saint Matthew*, 586 notices an irony that Pilate sits as judge while Jesus, the one who is worthy of the judgment seat (25:31), stands before him.

²²⁵ Weaver, "Power and Powerlessness," 456–66 paints the virtual powerlessness of political leaders as one character group vis-à-vis the genuine powerfulness of Jesus, the protagonist. Also see Carter, *Matthew and Empire*, 57–74.

counterparts of the Christ King, in their authority and power, are identified together as a corporate ἀλαζών of earthly pretension, in diametrical contrast to the one genuine figure of heavenly power, Jesus, who is worthy of sitting at the right hand of Power (ἐκ δεξιῶν τῆς δυνάμεως, 26:64; 28:18 cf. 13:54) and who will come as the Judge of the World in his glory (24:30). In this light, who truly judges whom? And who is the true King, not only of Jews (1:1; 2:6; 21:5; 22:7, 11, 13; 25:34; 27:11, 37) but also of the Gentiles (2:1–2, 10–11; 4:15–17; 11:20–23), commanding due worship and acknowledgement from the world? (“Hail, King of the Jews!” 27:29). Only the implied reader of this character irony may answer perceptively in light of the revelation of Jesus the Christ King that irony brings in through its portrayal of the contrasting characters in power.

A Dramatic Irony of Παραδίδομι (A Violent Act of Betrayal in the MPN). As it is necessary for the MPN’s ironist to reveal who Jesus is, it is also important that he inform his reader about both how Jesus saves his people, as well as who is in need of the forgiveness of sins which Jesus has come to offer. By employing a verb, παραδίδομι (to hand over, deliver up, or betray) as a typical action of violence and injustice that the characters adopt against Jesus, the ironist identifies a comprehensive body of opponents of Jesus.²²⁶ This verb occurs most extensively in chapters 26–27 of the MPN, and all uses are related to the actual betrayal, arrest and abuse of Jesus.²²⁷ The ironist’s logic in employing this verb of malice and treachery is to establish the idea that one who takes the action of betraying Jesus is guilty against God. Specifically, all the cases of παραδίδομι in chapter 26 refer to Judas, the very betrayer (ὁ παραδιδούς, 26:25, 46, 48). Though it is true that Judas, one of the twelve disciples of Jesus

²²⁶ Davies and Allison, *Saint Matthew*, 555 considers that the verb παραδίδομι is richly connotative.

²²⁷ The verb παραδίδομι occurs in various forms fifteen times in chapters 26–27. See Matt 26:2, 15, 16, 21, 23, 24, 25, 45, 46, 48; 27:2, 3, 4, 18, 26.

(26:14, 21, 22, 47), is the immediate agent of handing Jesus over (10:4) to the hands of the persecutors (i.e. the chief priests and scribes, 20:18), which are in fact the hands of the sinners (17:22; 26:45), the same act of injustice and violence against the innocent Jesus (27:4, 18–19) is also shared by the religious leaders and Pilate alike. The MPN clarifies that the religious leaders are not merely initial recipients of the betrayed Jesus by Judas (26:15). They are also the *betrayers* themselves. After resolving to put Jesus to death (27:1, 20), a death which has been premeditated and foreshadowed earlier in the Gospel (2:13; 12:14; 22:7), the religious leaders *hand Jesus over* to Pilate the ruler (παρέδωκαν Πιλάτῳ τῷ ἡγεμόνι, 27:2; διὰ φθόνον παρέδωκαν αὐτόν, 27:18) who can legitimately carry out the death of Jesus.

Moreover, despite Pilate's attempt to clear his name from the guilt of condemning Jesus by making the self-deceptive declaration that "I am innocent of this man's blood, see to it yourself (ἀθῶός εἰμι ἀπὸ τοῦ αἵματος τούτου· ὑμεῖς ὄψεσθε, 27:24)," he is just as condemnable because he likewise *delivers* Jesus up to the crowds (27:26), who are crying out for the crucifixion of Jesus. Pilate's responsibility in shedding the innocent blood of Jesus (cf. 27:4) is undeniable, not only because he is identified through his action in handing over Jesus as one of the corporate betrayers of Jesus along with Judas and the Jewish religious leaders, but also because he consciously carries out injustice in spite of his conviction of the innocence of Jesus, echoing back to Judas' heart wrenching yet dejected confession of the same nature. In fact, Pilate chooses political expediency over justice even though he rightly perceives that his subjects, the Jewish religious leaders, deliver Jesus up to him out of an unlawful motive: envy (διὰ φθόνον, 27:18).²²⁸ Further, his suspicion of the unjust nature of the persecution mounted against the defendant, Jesus, is reinforced by his wife's earnest testimony of the innocence of Jesus as informed through

²²⁸ France, *Matthew*, 1054.

a dream (27:19), a communication tool the Gospel portrays as an authoritative and reliable channel for God to communicate to men (1:20; 2:12–13, 19, 22). However, Pilate, a being of a powerless power in his characteristic similarity with other figures of authority in Matthew such as Herod the king and Herod the tetrarch, becomes driven by fear of the tumult (27:24 cf. 26:5) and consequently grants the outcry of the crowds side by side with their instigators (27:20). Therefore, Pilate's self-proclamation of his innocence (ἄθῳός εἰμι, 27:24; ὑμεῖς ὄψεσθε, 27:24 cf. 27:4),²²⁹ declares with a biting verbal irony that Pilate is by no means innocent (ἄθῳός).

Pilate's claim of innocence is ironically self-betraying as well as self-exposing; he is nothing more than a pathetically impotent and sly ἠγεμῶν exploited by his devious subjects. Further, Pilate's washing his *hands* (27:24)²³⁰ as a symbolic action (Deut 21:1–9; Ps 26:6; 73:13; Isa 1:15–16) declaring innocence of involvement in the murder of Jesus in fact precisely nails him as the subject of the very *hands* of the killer, as Jesus has specified that he would *be handed over* (παραδίδοται) to the *hands of the sinners* (26:45) or to the *hands of men* (17:22), a synecdoche which broadly encompasses the Jewish religious leaders, the people (of Jerusalem, i.e. Jews, 1:21; 2:1–3; 27:24–25) and the Gentiles. There is, further, an astonishing and ironic message hidden in this circumstance. Since they are undeniably sinners in their unjust dealing with the innocent blood of Jesus, they unwittingly place themselves under the invincible power of divine salvation, the forgiveness of sins (1:21; 9:11–13; 18:14; 20:28; 26:28), as the subjects of Jesus, their ostensible victim.

²²⁹ Heil, *The Death and Resurrection of Jesus*, 75–76 observes that when Pilate tells the crowds crying out for the crucifixion of Jesus, “You see to it (27:24),” he ironically throws back upon the Jewish people the guilt for Jesus' blood that their leaders tried to ignore when they told the repenting Judas, “You see to it (27:4).”

²³⁰ Some scholars like E. Schweizer, *The Good News According to Matthew* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1975), 508; D. Patte, *The Gospel According to Matthew: A Structural Commentary on Matthew's Faith* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 380 and S. van Tilborg, *The Jewish Leaders in Matthew* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972), 93–94 consider that the purpose of reporting Pilate washing his hands before the crowd is to exonerate Pilate and the Romans.

On further observation of the ironist's use of the verb παραδίδομι, considering the involvement of the disciples of Jesus in an act of παραδίδομι is not out of place. We have examined earlier, through both character and verbal ironies that the disciples create in their interactions with Jesus and other characters such as the woman at Bethany, how they exhibit the traits appropriate for an ἀλαζών, such as empty self-confidence in their own words and actions. Certainly, the ironist does not depict the disciples of Jesus as an ideal example for the reader of irony to fully appreciate. Though the disciples of Jesus do at times create contrasting dynamics with the opponents of Jesus, there is a fine line distinguishing the disciples from the Jewish religious leaders who are the clearly identifiable ἀλαζών of the MPN. The disciples are never portrayed as ones who are hopelessly perverted or without penitent hearts, and so there is hope of regeneration through the forgiveness of sins which the covenant of the blood of Jesus accomplishes (26:28). In the earlier narratives of Matthew, though Jesus chastised the disciples as men of little faith (6:30; 8:26; 16:8; 17:20), they are called also blessed by Jesus (13:16; 16:17; 24:46 cf. 5:3–11).²³¹ Without a doubt, they are too weak both in body and spirit to keep up their enthusiasm and affection toward their Lord (26:41).

Yet, the ironist's programmed use of παραδίδομι unveiling the overarching relationship between the characters and Jesus in the Passion narrative startlingly shows that even the disciples join the parade of *those who are betraying* Jesus.²³² Consider that the initial betrayal of Jesus

²³¹ Ulrich Luz, "The Disciples in the Gospel according to Matthew," page 98–128 in *The Interpretation of Matthew* (Issues in Religion and Theology 3; ed. Graham Stanton; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 102–3 characterizes the disciples of Jesus described in Matthew. He notes that "in short, the only point at which Matthew has quite consistently "improved" the picture of the disciples is in his elimination of the Marcan motif of their failure to understand . . . Jesus is the teacher who leads his disciples to understanding. Understanding is related to the teaching of Jesus. Faith and understanding are separated in Matthew. The disciples are men of little faith, but they do understand Faith is directed to the person of Jesus; understanding is related to his teaching." However, the MPN depicts the disciples failing in both categories of faith in the person of Jesus and of understanding in the teaching of Jesus.

²³² Luz, *Matthew 21–28*, 331 considers that the verb, παραδίδοσθαι, is a christologically charged word that

comes from *one of the twelve*, as the ironist meticulously repeats by placing this painful fact in the words of Jesus spoken to the disciples (26:14, 21, 22, 47). As Peter represents the other eleven disciples in his zeal to follow after Jesus, Judas takes a leading role in breaching the bond of community boasted of by all the other disciples (16:21–22; 26:22, 31–35). One may more leniently evaluate the eleven disciples’ shortcomings in their failing to keep fidelity to Jesus by deserting him at the time of crisis than Judas’ initial betrayal of the innocent blood, as he later comes to a daunting realization of the hateful nature of that crime. Though such a distinction in relation to the level of guilt commonly shared among the disciples can be fairly assumed,²³³ the Matthean exposition of the issues involving ἀπαρνέομαι (or ἄρνεομαι, to deny, disown) and σκανδαλίζω (to fall into sin), drawn from the very teachings of Jesus, suggest a different picture that *simply all have sinned* as far as the betrayal and death of Jesus are concerned. The disciples, once again being represented by Peter, do *deny Jesus* (26:34–35, 70, 72, 75) in contrast to Jesus’ teaching not to deny him publicly (10:32–33) but to *deny themselves* (ἀπαρνέομαι) to take up their cross and follow him (16:24). To a greater extent, all the disciples fall into sin (σκανδαλίζω, 18:6, 8–9; 24:10) by *rejecting Jesus*²³⁴ (11:6; 13:57; 26:31, 33) which is exactly what Jesus has taught his disciples to be prepared to avoid in advance. In essence, the death of Jesus is not only the *καιρός* (8:29; 26:18) for Jesus to manifest his perfect obedience to God publicly as God himself made Jesus known as his beloved Son (3:17; 17:5); it also is the *καιρός* for the disciples

reminds the readers of God’s plan in relation to the passion and death of Jesus.

²³³ France, *Matthew*, 997.

²³⁴ *A Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 752 defines σκανδαλίζω, “cause to be caught or to fall, i.e. cause to sin (the sin may consist in a breach of the moral law, in unbelief, or in the acceptance of false teachings.” Further, it lists a case of σκανδαλίζω pass. with ἐν τινι meaning “be led into sin, be repelled by someone, take offense at someone, of Jesus; by *refusing to believe in him* or by *becoming apostate fr. him* a person falls into sin.” Italicized mine.

of Jesus to transcend their secretly spoken confession of Jesus to the public declaration of him, but in this καιρός they all fail.

Lastly, what about the involvement of the people in betraying Jesus? An ironic turn of the act of παραδίδωμι locates the people as another type of character group in the MPN in the whole picture of divine salvation accomplished in the life and death of Jesus. Already in chapter 1, the ironist has made an indissoluble bond between Jesus and the people, for Jesus will save his people (τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ) from their sins (1:21). This statement must be understood as a programmatic declaration characterizing the nature of the relationship between these two parties, the former as the Christ Savior and the latter as the sinners, by zooming in on the issue of the sins of the people. Without explaining plainly, the MPN's ironist indirectly recapitulates the prelude of the salvific life and mission of Jesus, that he has come to save his people from their sins (1:21), through an ironic turn of the act of παραδίδωμι by answering "to whom is Jesus finally entrusted?" or "by whom is the death of Jesus (i.e. shedding his innocent blood, 26:28) actualized?"

Pay attention to the following circular course of παραδίδωμι illuminating the clear bond between the Christ Savior and his people. As we have seen, the violent and unjust action of παραδίδωμι against Jesus has begun with Judas, one of the twelve. Judas *hands Jesus over to* (26:15–16; 27:4) the Jewish religious leaders, the original character group hatched the idea of destroying Jesus (12:14) and actually carry out the plot to kill him (26:3–4; 27:20). Then, the Jewish religious leaders *hand Jesus over to* (27:2) the political power of the day, Pilate, representing non-Jewish authorities just as Jesus predicted that he should be handed over to the Gentiles to be mocked, flogged and crucified (τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, 20:19; 27:27–31 cf. εἰς χεῖρας ἀνθρώπων, the hands of men, 17:22). Despite his failure in giving a guilty verdict to Jesus, which is commensurate to the capital sentence ("Why, what evil has he done?" 27:23), without a legal

basis, Pilate once again *hands Jesus over* to the *people* (1:21; 27:26)²³⁵ who ultimately finalize the shedding of the innocent blood of Jesus (27:4, 19, 24–25) by persistently crying out of one accord for his crucifixion (27:20–23). At the end of the whole cycle of the murderous act of παραδίδωμι, it is disclosed that Jesus is finally and unmistakably *handed over to the people* (27:25–26, ὁ λαός) whom Jesus has come to save in the first place.

A further elaboration of the Matthean *inclusio* in relation to the people explains not only their ultimate and decisive involvement in the death of Jesus but also an ironic relationship which they maintain with Jesus Christ. The implied author of Matthew skillfully contrasts things essential to a meaningful reading of the Gospel. He uses the technique of *inclusio*, which places the similar idea or message at the front and back of the story, so that he brings the entire story under an overarching theme. For example, he locates the promise of Emmanuel in 1:23 and resumes the same idea in 28:20 to identify Jesus as the fulfillment of 1:23—God is with his people through the person of Jesus. Another case of *inclusio* is related to the prospect of the death of Jesus. As early as chapter 2:3, the implied author of Matthew describes King Herod and all Jerusalem, including both the religious leaders and the people, with him as disturbed at the news of the birth of their Messiah King promised by the prophet Micah (2:6; Micah 5:1–3). When King Herod is determined to destroy Jesus (2:13), the Jews (i.e. the people of Jerusalem) with their religious leaders were on the same page with him in their subjection to Herod’s murderous intent.²³⁶ From the beginning of the story of the life and mission of Jesus, it is

²³⁵ Cargal, “His Blood,” 107–8 points out that Matthew does not intend to exonerate Pilate who ultimately fulfils Jesus’ prophecy (27:26) and delivers him to be crucified.

²³⁶ Kingsbury, *Matthew As Story*, 48–49 writes that “the manner in which Herod reacts to the perceived threat the infant Jesus to the adult Jesus. Both Herod and they reveal themselves to be “spiritually blind” (2:3; 27:63); “fearful” (2:3; 21:46); “conspiratorial” (2:7; 12:14); “guileful” and “mendacious”; “murderous” (2:13; 12:14) . . . in Matthew’s story, Herod is the precursor of the religious leaders and his opposition to Jesus foreshadows theirs.”

sufficiently ironic that Jesus comes to save his people from their sins (1:21) and yet his people are ready to kill him.

The corresponding *inclusio* of 2:3 occurs in 27:20 of the MPN and these two disparate scenes are intricately connected. In chapter 2, the people identified as all Jerusalem (πᾶσα Ἱερουσόλυμα, 2:3) are closely associated with the political leader (king Herod) and the Jewish religious leaders (all the people's chief priests and the teachers of the law, 2:4) who harbor ill-will against Jesus. Once again, at the scene of the trial of Jesus before Pilate in chapter 27, all the people of Jerusalem (πᾶς ὁ λαός, 27:25, cf. 1:21; 21:1) present themselves as deeply involved in the killing of Jesus in alliance with another political power figure, Pilate and their religious leaders. Yet this time the people themselves function as a decisive force who bring about the death of Jesus by eagerly crying out for his the crucifixion. The Matthean use of Jerusalem implies both a place (2:1; 16:21; 20:17–19; 21:1) as well as the people of God to whom the promise of the Messiah King has been announced through the prophets (2:3; 21:10; 23:37). In short, the people are by no means neutral in dealing with Jesus Christ, but clearly sinful by committing an active sin against Jesus. Therefore, they are in need of the forgiveness of sins that ironically Jesus brings through the death in which they themselves participate.

In summary, on the plane of dramatic irony, an act of παραδίδωμι against Jesus surfaces as the common *modus operandi* shared by the major character groups in the MPN. Though παραδίδωμι is an act of violence bringing about separation, the ironic twist of παραδίδωμι acted against Jesus turns out to be the way through which the ironist reconnects the characters committing sins against Jesus with the Christ Savior, who bestows the forgiveness of sins by taking up the cross. Further, as Jesus does not distinguish between Jews and Gentiles in their crime of rejecting and persecuting him, a fact which is reflected when Jesus describes his opponents collectively as the hands of men (17:22) or the hands of the sinners (26:45), the

forgiveness of sins which Jesus establishes through the covenant of blood (26:28) comprehensively benefits *all* (1:21; 18:14; ἀντὶ πολλῶν, 20:28; 26:28; 27:25). This is an ironic effect of παραδίδωμι designed by the ironist to communicate that though different shades and grades of quality exist among the characters in their dealing with Jesus, the corporate act of the betrayal of Jesus commonly carried out by them implies that the people of God, including both Jews and Gentiles, are sinners. The proof of the divine power and authority embodied in the life and death of Jesus is the forgiveness of Jesus, claiming the sinners as His own.

A Verbal Irony of 27:24–25 “Including” the People in God’s Salvation. The striking verbal irony of 27:24–25 depicts the Matthean emphasis on universal salvation as the heart of divine reversal. 27:24–25 has been considered one of the most troubling and difficult statements of the New Testament.²³⁷ There is a long history of interpretation which evaluates the cry of the people (πᾶς ὁ λαός, all the people) as voluntarily positioning themselves under the same curse as Judas, a self-invoked curse (27:3–5).²³⁸ Furthermore, the cry of imprecation is often interpreted as a prophecy of judgment against Israel by focusing on their role in Jesus’ execution.

Especially, it has been proposed that in verse 25, the author of Matthew has invented an anti-Jewish polemic²³⁹ or anti-Jewish theme²⁴⁰ with the intention of locating Israel beyond the reach of

²³⁷ Bowman, “The Significance of Mt. 27:25,” 26–31; Smith, “Matthew 27:25: The Hardest Verse in Matthew’s Gospel,” 421; Cargal, “His Blood,” 101.

²³⁸ John Dominic Crossan, “Anti-Semitism and the Gospel,” *TS* 26 (1965): 189–214 examines New Testament scholarship regarding the subject. Particularly, Patte, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 380 writes that the cry indicates that the people voluntarily put themselves under the same cursed status of Judas. From a different point of view, Davies and Allison, *Saint Matthew*, 591 considers that the people’s cry out for the blood of Jesus is not a self-curse but a declaration of responsibility.

²³⁹ K. W. Clark, “The Gentile Bias in Matthew,” *JBL* 66 (1947): 165–82; Donald Senior, *The Passion Narrative according to Matthew: A Rédactional Study* (BETL 39; Leuven: Leuven University, 1975), 257, 260; J. P. Meier, *The Vision of Matthew: Christ, Church, and Morality in the First Gospel* (New York: Paulist, 1979), 199; Francis Wright Beare, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981), 460, 531; Daniel Marguerat, *Le Jugement dans l’évangile de Matthieu* (Le Monde de la Bible 6; Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1981), 376; Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 565; E. Buck, “Anti-Judaic Sentiments in the Passion Narrative According to Matthew,” in *Anti-Judaism in Early Christianity: Volume 1. Paul and the Gospels* (ed. P. Richardson and D. Granskou; Waterloo, Ont.: 1986); J. D.

salvation on the basis of this murderous cry.²⁴¹ However, what critics miss here is the great divine reversal that, despite the grim situation, elegantly brightens behind the mask of verbal irony. The reading of the MPN's irony strongly supports the need for a re-evaluation of the traditional views regarding Matthew's supposed Anti-Semitic intent in reporting the cry of the people.²⁴² As a result of the narrative-critical reading of the MPN's irony, the dissertation discloses 27:25, "All the people answered, 'let his blood be on us and on our children' (πᾶς ὁ λαὸς εἶπεν τὸ αἷμα αὐτοῦ ἐφ' ἡμᾶς καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ τέκνα ἡμῶν)" as the most ironically pregnant moment within the entire Gospel of Matthew, but for different reasons than those previously advanced.²⁴³ In this verse of ironic reversal, the perceptive reader of irony encounters a gracious spark of divine grace at a time of unspeakable atrocity!

Crossan, *The Cross that Spoke. The Origins of the Passion Narrative* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1988), xiii, 100, 397–98; Ulrich Luz, *The Theology of the Gospel of Matthew* (trans. J. Bradford Robinson; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1993), 146.

²⁴⁰ Herman Hendrickx, *The Passion Narratives of the Synoptic Gospels* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1977), 143–44 mentions that Matthew as a Jewish Christian writing for Jewish Christians emphasizes the tragedy of the Jews rejecting their Messiah. He considers that the anti-Jewish theme is especially prominent in the passion narrative in contrast to the positive ecclesial theme that Matthew espouses.

²⁴¹ Meier, *The Vision of Matthew*, 200; G. Strecker, *Der Weg der Gerichtigkeit, Untersuchung zur Theologie des Matthäus* (FRLANT 82: Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1962), 116–17; D. Marguerat, *Le jugement dans l'évangile de Matthieu* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1981), 376–77; W. Sanders "Das Blut Jesu und die Juden: Gedanken zu Matt 27, 25," *US 27* (1972), 170. Sanders argues that the Matthean author's view of the imminence of the *Parousia* prevented seeing the guilt being passed on to the next generation.

²⁴² Peter J. Tomson, *Presumed Guilty: How the Jews Were Blamed for the Death of Jesus* (trans. Janet Dyk; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), x, 58–76 summarizes how the passion story of Jesus in general stands at the center of the debate of what the Jesus movement has to do with the Jews or more specifically, anti-Jewish sentiment. He examines this matter in two aspects: one positive and one negative. In his preface Tomson writes that "The positive response is that Jesus and his first followers were Jews and remained Jews. The beginnings of Christianity must therefore be understood from the perspective of Judaism. The negative response is that Christians dissociated themselves from non-Christian Jews and began to view them as hostile competitors. They even came to assume that this was Jesus' intention. After this separation, to be a Christian appears to be synonymous with being anti-Jewish. For these two reasons we cannot discuss Jesus without involving the Jews."

²⁴³ Bowman, "The Significance of Mt. 27:25," 26; Eduard Schweizer, *The Good News According to Matthew* (trans. David E. Green; Atlanta: John Knox, 1975) and Cargal, "His Blood," 111 notices that something is not quite right with the traditional views regarding the intent of Matthew in reporting the Jewish people's crying out for the crucifixion of Jesus (27:25). Regarding irony present in 27:25, Smith, "Matthew 27:25," 428 interestingly points out that the traditional misunderstanding of 27:25, the hardest verse of the first Gospel, is because it is ridden with irony. Without full exposition, Smith briefly opines that "unlike John, Matthew trusted readers to catch the irony. Unfortunately he was overly optimistic and has suffered misunderstanding as a consequence."

From the early chapters on, the ironist stresses the issue of the people's sin, i.e. their estrangement from God (13:15; 15:8). The people who encounter Jesus are an evil, adulterous (γενεὰ πονηρὰ καὶ μοιχαλὶς, 12:45; 16:4), faithless and perverted generation (τῇ γενεᾷ ταύτῃ τῇ πονηρᾷ, 17:17). After all, Jesus came to call the sinners (26:45) not the righteous (9:13) and to save them (1:21), recall that the dramatic irony of παραδίδωμι, examined above, brings all the major characters of the Gospel under the same status of *having sinned against Jesus by persecuting or rejecting him*. Further, it is noteworthy that the ironist closely connects the chief opponents of Jesus, the Jewish religious leaders, with the people by identifying the former as leaders of the latter: “all the chief priests and scribes of the people (πάντας τοὺς ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ γραμματεῖς τοῦ λαοῦ, 2:4),” “the chief priests and the elders of the people (οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι τοῦ λαοῦ, 21:23; 26:3; 26:47)” or “all the chief priests and the elders of the people (πάντες οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι τοῦ λαοῦ, 27:1).”²⁴⁴ In this way, the ironist builds up an indissoluble link between the two parties and exposes the non-neutral status of the people in dealing with their Christ—Savior.

It is of utmost significance to notice that Jesus, the one who will save his people from their sins (σώσει τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν, 1:21) constantly recurs in chapter 27 at the time when the people once again show their allegiance to their religious leaders in forming a corporate hostility against Jesus (cf. 2:3). Hubert Frankemölle argues that if ὁ λαός (the people) in 1:21 means *das neue Gottesvolk* (the new people of God),²⁴⁵ the addressed nation in 27:25

²⁴⁴ Buck, “Anti-Judaic Sentiments,” 171 writes that “whatever may be the precise significance of the Matthean coalition of the Jewish leadership in their opposition to Jesus, it seems clear that Matthew does not simply intend to shift the responsibility for the suffering of Jesus unto the Jewish leaders and away from the Jewish people. His focus on the elders as “elders of the people” is calculated to draw the Jewish *people* into the limelight as well. It is as representatives of the *people* that the elders function in Matthew’s passion narrative.”

²⁴⁵ G. Bornkamm, G. Barth and H. J. Held, *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew* (NLT, 2nd ed.; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971), 325 consider his people as the church, i.e., the new people of Gd.

points to *kollektiv vorgestellte repräsentanten des ungläubigen Judentums* (a collective group representing the unbelieving Jews).²⁴⁶ The dissertation opposes his view because the *λαὸς αὐτοῦ* of 1:21 is none other than the people of Israel, which are the same people mentioned in 27:25 (*πᾶς ὁ λαὸς*)²⁴⁷ because the genealogy of Jesus (1:1–20) clearly elaborates the identity and the place of the people (1:21) in relation to the history of Israel. Contrary to this, *ὁ ὄχλος* (the crowd) in Matthew, even though it is portrayed as the object of Jesus’ continuing mission, is a more loosely defined group likely a mixture of the Jews and the anonymous multitude of ordinary people,²⁴⁸ clearly a multitude outside the circle of the disciples of Jesus.²⁴⁹ Repeatedly, Matthew reports that unnamed crowds were drawn to Jesus and accompanied him during his entire ministry. While some scholars view these two terms, *ὁ λαός* and *ὁ ὄχλος*, as synonyms,²⁵⁰ a narrative-critical reading of the Gospel shows that the use of *λαὸς* in the vast majority of cases in Matthew narrowly refers to the Jews.²⁵¹ Thus, the ironist’s shift of the subject in the cry of rejection from the *ὄχλος* (27:20, 24) to *πᾶς ὁ λαὸς* (all the people, 27:25)²⁵² including future

²⁴⁶ Hubert Frankemölle, *Jahwe-Bund und Kirche Christi: Studien zur Form und Traditionsgeschichte des „Evangeliums“ nach Matthäus* (NTAbh, NF 10, 2d ed.; Münster: Aschendorff, 1984), 218–20.

²⁴⁷ Cousland, *The Crowds in the Gospel of Matthew*, 84–86, 94.

²⁴⁸ It is appropriate to ask whether the Matthean crowds comprise of the Jews and the Gentiles. Regarding this, though Cousland, *ibid.*, 53 notes that the Crowds can be Jewish, gentile, both, or vary depending on the particular point in Jesus’ ministry, he asserts that the crowds of Matthew are exclusively Jewish. In 97, he writes that “Matthew 4:24–25 describes the crowds as coming from a number of regions, but only the Decapolis can be regarded as a distinctively gentile territory. Even here, it is highly probable that Matthew has interpreted it as a Jewish region, given its one-time inclusion in the Davidic kingdom.”

²⁴⁹ Tomson, *Presumed Guilty*, 58–59.

²⁵⁰ H. Strathmann, ‘*λαός*’, *TDNT* 4 (1967) 51; H. Kosmala, “‘His Blood on Us and on Our Children’ (The Background of Mat. 27:24–24),” *ASTI* 7 (1968–9), 96–98.

²⁵¹ Fitzmyer, “Anti-Semitism,” 669 and E. Schweizer, *The Good News According to Matthew* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1975), 509.

²⁵² Fitzmyer, *ibid.*, 669–71 explains that in his own way the Evangelist wrestles with the problem of “the rejection” of Israel, with which Paul in a different way wrestled in Romans (9–11). He considers that the main purpose of reporting the crying of the people (27:25) is not to condemn the Jews of all ages but that the Evangelist explains his Jewish-Christian readers why it is that the Gentiles were not coming into the kingdom of God. Saldarini, *Matthew’s Christian-Jewish Community*, 29–32 claims that *pas ho laos* does not mean the entire Jewish people, but rather the bulk of Jews in Jerusalem. He considers that the *laos* of 1:21, 2:6 and 4:16, 23 only has a

generations (τὰ τέκνα ἡμῶν, our children), must intend “the whole nation of Israel”²⁵³ by creating an *inclusio* with ὁ λαὸς of 1:21 as we have examined previously.²⁵⁴ In fact, the *inclusio* of ὁ λαὸς in 1:21 and 27:25 embraces another layer of *inclusio* in the broader spectrum considering the presence of the Gentiles side by side with ὁ λαός. It is worth perceiving that the promise of Immanuel manifest in the person of Jesus (1:23) encloses the story of Jesus by forming an *inclusio*. 28:20, as a prophetic declaration of 1:21 underlying an indissoluble link between Jesus and the people (λαός, 1:21) creates an *inclusio* with 27:25 where all the people (πᾶς ὁ λαός) self-assertively identify themselves as ones who are guilty of the innocent blood of Jesus and therefore they are indeed in need of the salvation proffered by Jesus.

The ironist of the MPN is clear that the Christ Savior (1:1, 21) has been primarily sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (15:24), whom he collectively identifies as ὁ λαός. Correspondingly, Jesus makes his journey to Jerusalem (2:1, 3; 3:5; 16:21; 20:17–18; 21:1, 10) where he accomplishes the divinely-willed salvation as the Christ Savior of his people. Yet, the MPN’s ironist does not exclude the Gentiles who historically stand outside the boundary of the people of God (or the covenant of Israel) from the salvation secured through the innocent death of Jesus (26:28); to the contrary, purposefully he locates both entities, the Jews and the Gentiles, at the birth as well as at the death of Jesus. By doing so, the ironist communicates that not only Jews, but also the Gentiles have an encounter with and experience of Jesus by being essentially involved in life and death of Jesus. The narrative relates the worshipping presence of the Gentiles

theological implication.

²⁵³ Beare, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 531; J. Crossan, *The Cross that Spoke*, 262–63; D. Patte, *The Gospel According to Mathew: A Structural Commentary on Matthew’s Faith* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 380; W. Trilling, *Das Wahre Israel: Studien zur Theologie des Matthäus-Evangeliums* (SANT 10; 3d ed.: München: Kosel, 1964), 72.

²⁵⁴ Gurtner, *The Torn Veil*, 127 considers that 1:21 and 26:28 create an *inclusio* in relation to the relationship between Jesus’ death and the forgiveness of sins that his death brings about.

represented by the magi from the East (2:1–2, 11) at the birth narrative of Jesus,²⁵⁵ whose very name specifies his identity as the Christ Savior for *his people*: the Jews (ὁ λαὸς αὐτοῦ, 1:21).²⁵⁶ Later, the ironist of Matthew’s narrative once again conjoins the presence of the Jews and the Gentiles at the crucifixion scene of Jesus. This time the implied author places the Gentiles at the foot of the cross of Jesus as another type of witness represented by the Roman centurion with his soldiers *confessing* Jesus as the Son of God (27:54), when all the Jewish people (πᾶς ὁ λαὸς, 27:25) persuaded by their religious leaders (27:20) commit violence against Jesus by demanding his crucifixion. It is astonishing to notice a paradigm in which the implied author subtly describes through the layered *inclusio* of ὁ λαὸς that the receptivity of the Gentiles toward Jesus counterbalances the hostility of the Jews against Jesus at the crucial moments of his life. In this way, the implied author keeps a balance between the Christ Savior promised to the Jews (1:1, 17–18, 21; 2:5–6; 15:24; 21:5, 10; 27:11, 37) and the Christ Savior sacrificed for *many* (8:11–12; 15:21–28; 18:14; 20:28; 26:28; 28:18–19). In fact, the Gospel portrays Jesus as the only true Israel (2:15, Hos 11:1) and signifies as well that the people of God (1:21) are defined by their relationship to Jesus beyond ethnic orientation.

On an explicit level, the people’s cry for the crucifixion of Jesus appears to be an attempt to sever their relationship with Jesus once and for all. However, from the superior perspective of irony, the ironist is communicating that Jesus, who saves his people (1:21), perfects salvation at this very climatic moment, the zenith of rejection and violence from his people.²⁵⁷ The verbal

²⁵⁵ Tisera, *Universalism according to the Gospel of Matthew*, 56–57.

²⁵⁶ The most Matthean use of ὁ λαὸς refers to the Jewish people including the dispersed generation (4:15–16). In most cases, ὁ λαὸς is specifically coupled with the Jewish religious leaders, the synagogue or the prophecies of the Old Testament, all of which characteristically represent the ethnic Jews. See Matt. 1:21; 2:4, 6; 4:16, 23; 13:15; 15:8; 21:23; 26:3, 5, 47; 27:1, 25, 64.

²⁵⁷ Heino O. Kadai, “Luther’s Theology of the Cross,” page 230–72 in *Accents in Luther’s Theology: Essays in Commemoration of the 450th Anniversary of the Reformation* (ed. Heino O. Kadai; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing

irony of 27:25 becomes more evident in the light of 26:28— “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins” (ἐστὶν τὸ αἷμά μου τῆς διαθήκης τὸ περὶ πολλῶν ἐκχυννόμενον εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν).²⁵⁸ There arises here a chilling form of verbal irony, in that all the people (πᾶς ὁ λαός) cry out for his blood (τὸ αἷμα αὐτοῦ) in ignorance of their relationship to it.²⁵⁹ Earlier, the ironist of the Gospel had substantially underlined the theme of “blood” in conjunction with qualities such as “righteousness” and “innocence” which in all the cases, such as massacre of innocent children around Bethlehem executed by Herod the king in his attempt to destroy Jesus (2:1–18), the beheading of John the Baptist, one who came to the people of God in righteousness (14:1–10; 21:32 cf. 3:15) and the shedding of the innocent blood of the righteous and the prophets sent by God (23:19–36) is clearly exemplified. Indeed, the innocent and righteous blood has an inviolable saving effect from sins and evil (1:21; 20:28; 26:28). Therefore, when πᾶς ὁ λαός, the whole nation of Israel, claims their responsibility in τὸ αἷμα αὐτοῦ (his blood), they link themselves with “the innocent blood of Jesus,”²⁶⁰ and proclaim

House, 1967), 238 reports the understanding of Luther, the Reformer that “as Luther came to recognize the full sweetness of God’s love in the cross, he realized that the cross also had an epistemological dimension. It offered clues to understanding the mysteries of divine revelation. This formed the backbone of the *theologia crucis* . . . An equally important aspect of *theologia crucis*, the cross event, was that it revealed the mystery of God’s revelation and afforded insight into the secrets of God’s dealings with men.”

²⁵⁸ Senior, *Passion of Jesus*, 166 claims that the entire Gospel depicts Jesus’ death in a consistent manner, encapsulated in 26:28. Senior writes, 167–68 that “no other Gospel presents the salvific impact of Jesus’ passion in such explicit terms. Through his obedient death Jesus triumphs over death and that breakthrough is extended to all of God’s people.”

²⁵⁹ In her study of innocent blood of Jesus in the first Gospel in relation to the Old Testament understanding of bloodguilt and purgation, purity and pollution with particular focus to the Jewish legend of the death of Zechariah, Catherine Sider Hamilton, ““His Blood Be upon Us”: Innocent Blood and the Death of Jesus in Matthew,” *CBQ* 70 (2008):85, 98–100 rather reads irony not in the people’s decision for bloodshed (27:25), but in the resurrection of the holy people in Jerusalem at the moment of Jesus’ death (27:52), which is faithful to the traditional Jewish hope of Israel for restoration. In the same vein, Hamilton interprets the meaning of the covenant of the blood of Jesus in 26:28 in relation to the temple destruction in A.D. 70. She writes, 100, that “as the covenant people take defilement upon themselves, the covenant is made again in the blood of Jesus. As the temple is destroyed, the temple cult is fulfilled in Jesus, in the blood poured out for the forgiveness of sins. The city is razed, but it is in the holy city that the risen ones will walk. Jesus’ blood, as Matthew describes it, is poured out not only for the destruction of the covenant people and the temple but for their restoration. The restoration of Israel, however, happens in Jesus.”

²⁶⁰ Matt 27:4, 6, 19, 33, 24.

unwittingly that they too, come under this irrefutable salvation, the forgiveness of sins (εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν, 26:28). According to the Gospel of Matthew, who can be a more appropriate candidate for the ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν (the forgiveness of sins) than πᾶς ὁ λαὸς (all the people)? Through this ironic reversal, the people of God unknowingly declare themselves to be under the grace proffered through the death of Jesus.²⁶¹ Furthermore, this verbal irony of 27:25, together with the subsequent confession of the Roman soldiers (“Truly this was the Son of God,” 27:54)²⁶² in the following scene, reveals that the divinely-willed salvation is universal, embracing both the Jews and the Gentiles.²⁶³ The Roman centurion’s acknowledgement of Jesus as the Son of God, the Christological title which has been a stumbling block for the Jewish religious leaders,²⁶⁴ is a quite significant incident because according to Matthew the confession of Jesus’ divine sonship has to do with God’s revelation (16:17). The salvation of Jesus manifests itself universally by including πᾶς ὁ λαὸς (all the people, 27:25a) through the ironic reversal of their rejection, and also by extending the scope of ὁ λαὸς αὐτοῦ (his people, 1:21) to the Romans (27:54), another set within the wider group identified as Jesus’ opponents.²⁶⁵ By involving both sides of the extended people of God, Matthew emphasizes the universal characteristic of the divinely-willed

²⁶¹ Heil, *The Death and Resurrection of Jesus*, 76.

²⁶² It is noteworthy that the Roman centurion and his companies confess Jesus as the Son of God in their awe of witnessing the earthquake (ἰδόντες τὸν σεισμὸν καὶ τὰ γενόμενα ἐφοβήθησαν σφόδρα) at the moment of the death of Jesus (27:54). According to the Gospel, the apocalyptic phenomenon σεισμός (earthquake, storm) or its cognate verb σείω (to shake, move to and fro, disturb) indicates the divine portent or the impact of Jesus’ presence among the people (8:24; 21:10; 27:54; 28:2 cf. 2:3). Therefore, it is important to perceive the fact that the Romans become receptive and confess Jesus means that they are also included into the experiential boundary of Jesus’ salvific presence and ministry.

²⁶³ Heil, *The Death and Resurrection of Jesus*, 87 focuses on the Gentiles taking advantage of the ironical price that the Jewish people pay for shedding the blood of Jesus. He further opines that the Roman soldiers’ confession qualifies them as representatives of the people to whom the kingdom of God will be given when it is taken from the Jewish people because of their rejection of Jesus (21:43). Also see Keener, *Matthew*, 687.

²⁶⁴ Buck, “Anti-Judaic Sentiments,” 172–73.

²⁶⁵ Hill, “Matthew 27:51–53,” interprets the inclusion of the Roman centurion’s confession in 27:54 that “the Gentile community has become believers and the universal mission commanded at the end of the Gospel by the risen Lord (28:16–20) is realized, proleptically, at the cross.”

salvation,²⁶⁶ just as the entire ministry of Jesus has evidenced his strong compassion and unceasing concern for both groups. Here it becomes obvious that the blood of the covenant (τὸ αἷμά μου τῆς διαθήκης, 26:28; the sacrificial blood of the covenant, Exod. 24:3–8²⁶⁷ cf. the New Covenant characterized by a universal knowledge of God and the forgiveness of sins, Jer. 31:31–34; 32:37–41; Heb. 8:6–13)²⁶⁸ that Jesus *pours out* benefits the Gentiles as well,²⁶⁹ in connection with the Matthean introduction of Jesus not only as the Son of David but also the Son of Abraham (1:1).²⁷⁰ The Gospel of Matthew not only concentrates on the Kingdom of God (cf. the

²⁶⁶ Kingsbury, *Matthew As Story*, 93 notes that “ironically, what also happens is that God turns Jesus’ death to advantage for all humankind, for through his death, Jesus atones for sins and becomes the one through whom God henceforth grants salvation to all humans, Jews and Gentiles alike (1:21; 26:28).”

²⁶⁷ France, *Jesus and the Old Testament: His Application of Old Testament Passages to Himself and His Mission* (Canada: Regent College Publishing, 2000), 66–67.

²⁶⁸ Heil, “The Blood of Jesus,” 118–19; Keener, *Matthew*, 627–32; France, *Matthew*, 993–94.

²⁶⁹ Heil, *The Death and Resurrection of Jesus*, 37 explains that “as the blood of sacrificed animals was “poured out” by priests on the altar as a sin offering to atone for this sins of the people (Lev 4:7, 18, 25, 30, 34), so the blood that will be “shed” or “poured out” by the death of Jesus represents a sacrifice for the atonement of sins “for,” that is, “on behalf of” (*peri*), “many” people...that the atoning blood of Jesus will be poured out one behalf of “many” (*pollōn*), a common Semitic expression for “all” people, indicates the universal nature of the covenants, which brings forgiveness and salvation to all.”

²⁷⁰ Matt 1:1, “The book of genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham (Βίβλος γενέσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ υἱοῦ Δαυὶδ υἱοῦ Ἀβραάμ).” Tisera, *Universalism according to the Gospel of Matthew*, 32–39 delineates the importance of Jesus, the Son of Abraham in the Gospel of Matthew. There is no direct literary contact between “the Son of Abraham (Matt 1:1)” and the Genesis texts which report God’s promises made to Abraham. According to Tisera, the relationship is rather to be established in terms of ideas implied by the Son of Abraham which evokes the idea of promise to Israel and the nations. Tisera opines that the presence of Abraham in the heading gives Jesus a special weight and matches that of David. The name “Abraham” is repeatedly attested three times in the genealogy of Jesus (Matt 1:1, 2, 7) and outside the genealogy, four times more (3:9(x2); 8:11; 22:32). Tisera considers Jesus takes the baton of Abraham as an eschatological figure and stretches salvation beyond the Jewish confines. In other words, Jesus is the one who will realize the promise of the blessings for all the nations. To the question that how the nations’ involvement in the idea of universalism is implied in Matt 1:1, Tisera provides several reasons to support the idea: one, the position of the Son of Abraham defines the genealogy of Jesus (βίβλος γενέσεως) which echoes the same expression in Gen 2:4, implying a universalism in largest sense, two, the position of the Son of Abraham in regard to Jesus in the genealogy (1:16) determines the role of Jesus. If the promise made to Abraham moves forward along with the generations towards its realization, Jesus is not only the goal of the succession of generations initiated by Abraham (1:2) but also Jesus for the first time realizes the blessing for all nations promised to Abraham, and three, Matt 28:16–20 with the explicit commission to go to all nations and Matt 1:1 with its theme of universalism enclose the entire Gospel. Also, see Fenton, *Saint Matthew*, 37 and Carson, *Matthew*, 62 and Gibbs, *Matthew 1:11–11:1*, 76–77. Especially, Gibbs, 77, comments that “it should be emphasized that the Gospel of Matthew only hints at the outreach to the Gentiles; it does not really come to much explicit expression until the concluding and climactic Great commission (28:16–20), though see also 24:14, a statement by Jesus that projects out into the time *after* his death and resurrection. In emphatic and repeated way in Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus is the Messiah of Israel; he is the royal Son of David. However, already in God’s first choosing of

divine Kingship) suited to a community that still has a deep appreciation and understanding of Judaism by identifying Jesus as the Son of David, i.e. the Messiah fulfilling the Davidic covenant (1 Chron 17:11–14; 2 Chron 6:16; 2 Sam 7:10–13, 16), but also preserves the essence of the Abrahamic covenant, which emphasizes that God’s blessing benefits Abraham and his seed as well as all the families of the earth through him (Gen 12:1–3; 15:18–21; 22:16–18).²⁷¹ Again, there is a full circle around the name of *Jesus* (1:21), who is the single source of hope for the nations (i.e. *many*,²⁷² 20:28; 26:28; Γαλιλαία τῶν ἐθνῶν, Galilee of the Gentiles, 4:15–16) to which 12:28 attests, “In his name the nations will put their hope (τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ ἔθνη ἐλπιοῦσιν).”

Another astonishing ironic reversal comes next when even the Jewish religious leaders, the chief persecutors of Jesus and an ungodly pack of the criminals, are not eliminated from the divine salvation and forgiveness of sins. Notice Jesus’ position: hung between two *robbers* (λησται, 27:44)²⁷³ together with the release of Jesus Barabbas, a *robber* (27:38, 44) in place of Jesus.²⁷⁴ Previously, when Jesus had entered Jerusalem as the Davidic Messiah King, he went

Abraham, there was the promise of blessing for “all the nation,” have heard in 1:1 in Matthean counterpart to what St. Paul makes much more explicit in Gal 3:6–19, where he teaches that Christ is himself the collective singular “Seed” of Abraham, in order that Abraham’s blessing might come to all the collective “seed” of God’s people—including the Gentiles.”

²⁷¹ Tisera, *Universalism according to the Gospel of Matthew*, 33–36 expounds the Old Testament to establish the meaning of Jesus as the “Son of Abraham” on the ground that the link between Jesus and Abraham, the first Jewish Patriarch, in the genealogy places Jesus in the context of the history of Israel. Not only with Abraham, the history of Israel takes its shape but also Abraham serves the prominent bearer of the promise initiated by God (Gen 12:1–3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14) that effects perpetually the next generation.

²⁷² Joachim Jeremias, “*Polloi*,” *TDNT* 6. 537–38; Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* (N.Y.: Scribners, 1966), 226–31.

²⁷³ *Lestēs* is the accusatory title usually used for the lower class Jewish brigands resisting Rome due to political, economic and religious pressure. See Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, 171. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah*, I.283–84 opines that the attempt to use the synoptic PN references to *lēstai* to show that historically Jesus was or was considered to be a revolutionary is simplistic and anachronistic based on his investigation regarding the usage of *lēstēs* in Josephus, *War*, which points out that there is no record of revolutions against the prefects of Judea during the time of Jesus’ public ministry.

²⁷⁴ Keener, *Matthew*, 669 writes that “why would Pilate have sought to release Jesus? Possibly because it was

straight to the temple of God and cleansed it because the temple²⁷⁵ had been turned into a den of robbers (σπήλαιον ληστών, 21:13) under the custody of the religious leaders. Jesus' rebuke and correction of the situation are meant to place an initial responsibility upon the Jewish religious leaders who are permitting "the desecration of merchants,"²⁷⁶ and therefore breeding and enhancing the brotherhood of robbers as they themselves are robbers. With this clarification, Jesus' positioning between two robbers on the cross, rather specific information given by the ironist, implicitly presents the idea that the death of Jesus is enacted even for the greater *robbers*, the religious leaders (21:13),²⁷⁷ who came to arrest Jesus as if he was a robber (ὁ ληστής, 26:55) and who are stubbornly ignorant of Jesus' work of salvation in their close association with Satan. In this way, irony is in the very nature of the Soteriology of Matthew. It reveals that there is no scandal of sin that cannot be overcome by the salvation (i.e. the forgiveness of sins, 1:21) secured through the death of Jesus because after all, the great divine reversal ironically resides in the scandal of the cross, which is the sole remedy for the scandal of sin. Nobody is shut out from the salvation achieved through the innocent blood of Jesus, (τὸ αἷμα αὐτοῦ, 27:25) and there is no sin irreparable in/within the grip of the remedial death of Jesus (9:10–13; 20:28).

Verbal Ironies Pertaining to the Mockery by the Opponents of Jesus (27:7–31, 35–44).

With regard to Jesus' identity as the Christ and the Son of God, the most concrete examples of verbal irony appear in 27: 39–44 in the form of a threefold mocking at the foot of the cross

safer to release Jesus, the "so-called Christ" (27:17, 22), than alternatives like Barabbas, who, like those ultimately executed with Jesus, was a "robber" (27:38, 44; Mk 15:7), the aristocracy's derisive title (shared by Josephus) for insurrectionist."

²⁷⁵ "A house of prayer" (Isa 56:7); "My glorious house," (Isa 60:7).

²⁷⁶ Kingsbury, *Matthew As Story*, 81.

²⁷⁷ Heil, *The Death and Resurrection of Jesus*, 80 proposes that the two robbers hang with Jesus ironically represent the Jewish leaders.

from passers-by, from the religious leaders, and from the two robbers beside Jesus.²⁷⁸ Also, the Roman soldiers mocked Jesus' kingship (27:27–31), yet in fact, they speak more truly than they know as the irony hidden behind their abusive language (27:29) and accompanying physical abuse (27:28–31) exposes. They hail Jesus as “King of the Jews” and decorate him with a scarlet robe, a crown of thorns and a staff in faked honor for a helpless want-to-be king of their subjects. However, Jesus is the King of Jews (1:1 and *pars.*; the Son of David) and yet he is the Christ, the Lord of Lords (22:41–46), whose origin is from God himself (3:17; 17:5; the Son of God), surpassing any human royal origin with its utmost splendor (i.e. Caesar).²⁷⁹ The tantalizingly piercing truth regarding Jesus' royal Lordship is projecting like vapor from the scene full of the unbridled abuses and taunts from the enemy against the self-giving King of the Jews.

The mocking of the religious leaders, the chief priests with the scribes and elders (οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς ἐμπαίζοντες μετὰ τῶν γραμματέων καὶ πρεσβυτέρων, 27:41), especially exhibits full-blown verbal irony.²⁸⁰ Their derision blatantly yet ignorantly reveals full scale all three essential dimensions of who Jesus: the Christ Savior, “He saved others; he cannot save himself (27:42a, ἄλλους ἔσωσεν, ἑαυτὸν οὐ δύναται σῶσαι),”²⁸¹ the King of Israel, “He is the King of Israel (βασιλεὺς Ἰσραὴλ ἐστίν, 27:42b),” and the Son of God, “He trusts in God. Let God deliver him

²⁷⁸ Keener, *Matthew*, 673, 682 notes that the mockery by the opponents of Jesus (27:27–44) “rings with tragicomic irony.” For example, the Roman soldiers mocked Jesus' kingship in their ignorance that they were abusing a king greater than any the world had ever know.

²⁷⁹ Carson, *Matthew*, 573 explains that “for a crown (v.29) the soldiers plaited a wreath of thorns from palm spines or acanthus and crushed it down on Jesus' head in imitation of the circlet on the coins of Tiberius Caesar (cf. TDNT, 7:615–24, 632f.). The staff they put in his hand stood for a royal scepter; and the mocking, “Hail, King of the Jews!” corresponded to the Roman acclamation “Ave, Caesar!” and capped the flamboyant kneeling.”

²⁸⁰ Keener, *ibid.*, 607 comments that the mockery of the religious leaders at the cross ironically reflect Satan's testing.

²⁸¹ Carson, *Matthew*, 577 describes that ““he saved others” (v.42) is probably an oblique reference to Jesus' supernatural healing ministry. “But he can't save himself” is cutting because it questions that same supernatural power. But there is level on level of meaning. For the Christian reader “save” has full eschatological overtones. And though Jesus *could* have saved himself (26:53), he could *not* have saved himself if he was to save others.”

now if he desires him, for he said, I am the Son of God (πέποιθεν ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν, ῥυσάσθω νῦν εἰ θέλει αὐτόν· εἶπεν γὰρ ὅτι θεοῦ εἰμι υἱός, 27:43).”²⁸² In this instance of verbal irony, the ironist turns his dimmer switch on its highest scale in the expectation that the reader cannot miss the revelation of irony. What can be more utterly ironic than the chief accusers of the protagonist declaring the actual truth concerning their victim’s identity at the very scene of his execution? Here, the religious leaders, who assume that they are entrusted with the Word of God for the guidance of Israel (i.e. “sitting on Moses’ seat,” 23:2), turn confrontationally against God and stand against his verdict that Jesus is his beloved Son (2:15; 3:17; 17:5), and in so doing, they echo the voice of Satan from the temptation of Jesus in chapter 4 (4:3, 6). On numerous occasions, the implied author of Matthew has highlighted Jesus’ intimate filial relationship with God²⁸³ in contrast to his opponents’ bond with Satan.²⁸⁴ Regarding all of these, it seems that the MPN intentionally places the verbal irony of 27:41–43 in the mouth of the chief corporate opponent of Jesus, the ἀλαζών of the MPN to attain two climactic ends simultaneously: the revelatory public declaration of Jesus’ identity, and once again, the ἀλαζών’s unwitting self-condemnation. Furthermore, the author uses the ironic leitmotif σώζω (to save) in 27:42 to underscore the identity of Jesus as the Savior. A red thread woven through recurring thematic points of Matthew in relation to the divinely-willed salvation begins in 1:21, the divine exposition of the meaning of the name *Jesus*: “One who will save his people from their sins.”

²⁸² Ibid. Carson reads an “unconscious allusion” of Psalm 22:8 in the third of the three taunts, “He trusts in God (v.43).”

²⁸³ Jesus the Son of God, Matt 2:15; 3:17; 4:3, 6; 7:21; 8:29; 10:32f; 11:25–27; 12:50; 14:33; 15:13; 16:16–17; 17:5; 18:10, 14, 19, 35; 20:23; 24:36; 26:29, 39, 42, 53, 63; 27:40, 43, 54; 28:19.

²⁸⁴ According to the Matthean narrative, the religious leaders are portrayed as a single character group and they bear a common trait, which is “evil.” Their “evil” trait completely corresponds to the trait of Satan (“evil,” 9:4; 12:34, 39, 45; 16:4; 22:18. “brood of vipers,” 3:7; 12:34; 23:33. “child of hell,” 23:15. Satan who is “the evil one,” 13:19, 38). Identifying the intention and attitude of the religious leaders with Satan is one of the inevitable viewpoints that the implied reader of the Gospel of Matthew acquires through a narrative-critical reading of Matthew as a whole.

1:21 functions as the epicenter of the story of Jesus' life and death for the first Gospel. Indeed, Jesus came to save the people and he dies for them according to the saving will of God.²⁸⁵

Therefore, the religious leaders' ignorant mocking, "He saved others; he cannot save himself," (ἄλλους ἔσωσεν, ἑαυτὸν οὐ δύναται σῶσαι, 27:41–42) imports the full panorama of Jesus' saving ministry into the mind of the reader. In this way, the verbal irony of 27:42 discloses that Jesus does not save himself, not because he is unable to do so,²⁸⁶ but because he is the obedient Son of God who will carry out the divine saving will as he drinks the cup (ποτήριον, 20:22–23 ; 26:27–28, 39, 42) in selflessly yielding himself to that cause.²⁸⁷ Despite his unsurpassable heavenly glory to which the Transfiguration (17:1–9) testifies,²⁸⁸ Jesus dies as the reviled one (Deut 21:23) in place of *many* (20:28) to complete the divine saving will towards his people (1:21; 18:14; 20:28; 26:28, 39, 42; 27:25).

A Dramatic Irony of the Crucifixion of Jesus (27:31–36) as the Defeat of Satan.

The MPN's irony presents Jesus' death as the ultimate cosmic clash between God and Satan. Earlier in the Gospel, Jesus contended with Satan prior to his public ministry (4:1–11), and defeated him (4:4, 7, 10) through his irrefutable devotion to God and his calling to be God's

²⁸⁵ See Matt 1:21; 8:25; 9:21–22; 10:22; 14:30; 16:25; 19:25; 24:13, 22; 27:40, 42, 49). It is true that Jesus saves others but not himself. Especially, pay attention to his teaching in 16:25.

²⁸⁶ Matthew describes Jesus as "able" "mighty" in chapters, 3:11; 8:2; 9:28; 17:1–9; 20:22; 26:42, 53, 61.

²⁸⁷ Heil, *The Death and Resurrection of Jesus*, 81.

²⁸⁸ After Peter's confession of Jesus as "the Christ, the Son of the living God (16:16)" which originated from the divine revelation (16:17), Jesus is transformed (Gk., μεταμορφώθη; Lt., *transfiguratus est*) into heavenly form (cf. 2 Peter 1:16–18, "of his sovereign majesty") before three disciples, Peter, James and John, ones who reappear in the scene of Gethsemane in chapter 26. Jesus transformation brings about an outward change matching his inward reality. His veiled divine nature (Heb 10:20) is substantially glimpsed in the transfiguration. According to Johannine theology, the incarnation of Jesus is a personification of the *Shekinah* glory of God dwelling among his people (John 1:14). Also, Phil 2:5–11 witnesses the mystery of an invisible God in a visible human form that the transfiguration of Jesus lays bare before the eyes of men. In his glory, Jesus is talking with the significant figures of the Old Testament: Moses and Elijah. It was commonly believed that Moses as the prime transmitter of the Law and Elijah as the most prominent prophet of the Old Testament who would reappear before the coming of the Messiah (Mal 4). Therefore, inter-textual readings take Moses and Elijah to represent the Law and the Prophets respectively and their recognition of and conversation with Jesus indirectly testify to the truthfulness of the words of Jesus as Jesus proclaimed that he came to fulfill the Law and the Prophets (Matt 5:17–19; Col 2:14–17).

true Son. However, the satanic presence does not end here but rather reappears in Matthew in the tempting and accusing voices of Jesus' antagonists.²⁸⁹ The accusations and challenges raised by the Jewish religious leaders concerning the person and ministry of Jesus align themselves with those of Satan in chapter 4, especially since the implied author of Matthew depicts the Jewish religious leaders as a "stock" character group²⁹⁰ with a one-sided, evil nature. For example, the high priest's interrogation in the trial scene, "If you are the Christ, the Son of God" (26:63), echoes the very wording of Satan, Jesus' foremost interrogator, in the temptation of Jesus (4:3, 6): "If you are the Son of God."

Surprisingly, Peter, the spokesman of Jesus' disciples also falls into the same category in his attempt (16:23) to divert Jesus from his course of obeying the divine will and drinking the cup: the cross (26:42, 27, 39). By attending to Peter's rebuke of Jesus, the implied reader gains insights beneficial to interpreting the dramatic irony surrounding the death of Jesus as the cosmic clash between God and Satan. This is the moment when an attentive implied reader peeks at the intention of Satan to divert the progress of the divinely-willed salvation carried out through the person and ministry of Jesus. Satan knows the *time* of Jesus as the incident of two demoniacs of the region of Gadarenes shows. Coming out of the tombs, they cried out to Jesus, "What have you to do with us, Son of God? Have you come hear to torment us before the *time* ? (τί ἡμῖν καὶ σοί, υἱὲ τοῦ θεοῦ; ἦλθες ὧδε πρὸ καιροῦ βασανίσαι ἡμᾶς; 8:29)" According to the Gospel, the *time* which the two demoniacs are concerned with none other than the *time* (καιρός, 26:18) of

²⁸⁹ Previously, the dissertation opined that despite in fact that Matthean scholars have hardly attempted to define God and Satan as characters within the narrative, the dissertation considers them as invisible characters in the background, yet ones taking a fundamental role, since they direct the narrative to its destined course. As Matthew designed the voice of God to be heard through the voice of Jesus, the carrier of the divine will, so he does with the voice of Satan through the voice of his associates.

²⁹⁰ Forster, *Aspects of the Novel*, 65–82, 103–18 explains that a "stock" character is one-dimensional with a single, consistent, and predictable trait. Also, for the discussion of "character trait", see Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 121.

which Jesus is mindful. This is the *time* when God perfects his saving will toward his people through the innocent blood of Jesus, which establishes a new covenant for the forgiveness of sins (1:21; 20:28; 26:28). Therefore, Jesus' admonition of Peter, standing in opposition to his passion prediction as if Satan is speaking by borrowing Peter's lips, imports the idea that Satan desires Jesus not to "Go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised (16:21)." Truly, Satan is an obstructive enemy of Jesus (ὑπάγε ὀπίσω μου, σατανᾶ· σκάνδαλον εἶ ἐμοῦ, 16:23) embodying what is in the mind of men (ὅτι οὐ φρονεῖς τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀλλὰ τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, 16:23) in diametrical contrast to Jesus' embodiment of what God wills as the Scriptures avowedly point to (3:15; 27:54).

However, what really happens in the MPN yields a strikingly opposite outcome (27:31–36): the associates of Satan, the religious leaders, fulfill precisely what Satan wants to prevent from happening. Superficially, it seems that they prevail in their conflict with Jesus, but in actuality they only unwittingly assist as Jesus accomplished the divinely-willed salvation. Previously, when the Pharisees accused Jesus of driving out demons by Beelzebub, the prince of demons (12:22–24 cf. 9:33–34; 11:18; 17:18), Jesus exposed the malicious nature of their accusation²⁹¹ as well as their impotence in understanding any significance wrapped around the person and ministry of Jesus by rectifying their thoughts (τὰς ἐνθυμήσεις αὐτῶν, 12:25) with the statement, "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand" (πᾶσα βασιλεία μερισθείσα καθ' ἑαυτῆς ἐρημοῦται καὶ πᾶσα πόλις ἢ οἰκία μερισθείσα καθ' ἑαυτῆς οὐ σταθήσεται, 12:25). It becomes obvious in the MPN in light of

²⁹¹ Though the Pharisees practice exorcism and consider it as a typical religious practice that is owed to faith in God of Israel, they seeing Jesus casting out demons label it as a demonic presentation. Jesus following rhetorical question to them, "And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast (them) out? Therefore, they shall be your judges (καὶ εἰ ἐγὼ ἐν Βεελζεβούλ ἐκβάλλω τὰ δαιμόνια, οἱ υἱοὶ ὑμῶν ἐν τίνι ἐκβάλλουσιν; διὰ τοῦτο αὐτοὶ κριταὶ ἔσονται ὑμῶν, 12:27)," clearly exposes the Pharisees' obstinate, unjust and jealous nature, all which traits continue to work in them in dealing with Jesus in the MPN.

12:25 that the kingdom of Satan is divided since its members frustrate the will of its leader. It only proves the ignorance as well as the incapability of Satan on the cosmic level because every ironic situation in the MPN advances the victory of Jesus in his deeper conflict with Satan.²⁹² Together with the foreseen victory of Jesus over Satan, Satan's total impotence in relation to the person and ministry of Jesus yields an ironic laugh in the mind of the reader. The salvific death of Jesus on a cross, the very sign of condemnation and mercilessness, is in essence the sign of God's efficacy, that he *rescues through a victory*²⁹³ which is cannot be discerned on the surface level of the story. The seeming defeat of Jesus as a cursed criminal on the cross (Deut 21:23) is precisely conducted as the heavenly operation to achieve the divine necessity.²⁹⁴

Further, interpreting the dramatic irony surrounding the death of Jesus as the cosmic clash between God and Satan paints a unique portrait of Peter. As one of the main characters of the MPN, Peter is certainly one of a kind. In him, the two contrasting perspectives pulling and pushing the story of the death of Jesus, essential elements for the presence of irony operating on the two disparate story-worlds undergo a test. Peter as a person can be seen as a microcosm of the larger battle ground where the cosmic clash between God and Satan occurs and the conflict

²⁹² Jean Daniélou and Henri Marrou, *The First Six Hundred Years* (vol. 1 of *The Christian Centuries*; N.Y.: Philosophical Library, 1959), 78–79 indicates the cross as the symbol of Christ's irresistible power and divine efficacy. Also, Powell, *Narrative*, 48–49 observes that the MPN is told with "tremendous irony" mainly because the religious leaders bring about the very thing Satan would prevent. In 48, he writes that "the great irony of Matthew's Gospel, however, is that whereas the religious leaders want to bring Jesus to the cross, Satan wants to keep him from it (cf. 16:21–23). Accordingly, the conflict between Jesus (or God) and Satan is also resolved in Matthew's passion narrative, but this conflict is clearly resolved in Jesus' favor."

²⁹³ The phrase, "rescue through victory" is borrowed from Theodore Roosevelt, the twenty-sixth President of the United States. He used this slogan as his foreign policy of rescuing Jewish refugees from Hitler. Though the following generation of historians criticize Roosevelt for not only keeping acquiesce but also that this particular policy was disingenuous, the dissertation borrows the concept only to highlight God's rescue of human beings opposed by the reality of sins through an incomparable victory of once-for-all without imposing any of the historical values attached to this slogan.

²⁹⁴ Carson, *Matthew*, 574 writes that "in Christian perspective the curse on Jesus at the cross fulfills all OT sacrifices: it is a curse that removes the cruse from believers—the fusion of divine, royal prerogative and Suffering Servant, the heart of the gospel, the inauguration of the new covenant, and the power of God."

between God's perspective and the Satanic perspective finds its resolution. An example should explain this further.

The implied author of Matthew presents several authentic witnesses of Jesus who testify to the meaning of the life and mission of Jesus, ranging from the narrator, the celestial beings (angel), the crowds, the demons, the minor characters being healed by Jesus, the receptive Gentiles, the disciples of Jesus in most cases that Peter is their spokesman to most importantly, God himself. The implied author gives weight to the *vox (voces, pl) Dei* (the voice of God) authenticating Jesus with a unique stamp of filial relationship to God as the most authoritative and reliable source of information about Jesus. In fact, though God remains in the background of the Gospel, his presence and perspective are by no means insignificant, for he is both the conductor of his determined saving will toward men and the author of the redeeming death of Jesus as its fulfillment. While Matthean scholars have attempted to define several constituent character groups in the Gospel, including Jesus, his disciples, the crowds, the religious leaders, and other minor characters, God and Satan have hardly been treated appropriately as characters. The dissertation considers them as invisible characters in the background, yet as ones taking a fundamental role, since they direct the narrative to its destined denouement. While Jesus lives and progresses according to the saving will of God which is epitomized as the cup (ποτήριον, 26:27–29, 39) that Jesus takes to drink,²⁹⁵ Jesus' opponents nurse their malice toward him and finally execute their lethal plot. In other words, if the divine will of salvation stands as the goal for the life and death of Jesus, Satan not only is the prototype of a corporate opponent of Jesus (i.e. *alazōn*), but also the sole explicable source for their vileness. This Matthew implies through Jesus' statement that the father of the religious leaders, his opponents, is the evil one (3:7; 12:34;

²⁹⁵ Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 783 describes the cup as a metaphor for the suffering and death that Jesus is about to face.

13:38; 23:33). As Matthew designed the voice of God to be heard through the voice of Jesus, the carrier of the divine will, so he reveals the voice of Satan through the voice of his associates. The presence of God is most certainly testified to through his obedient Son whose entire life and mission are devoted to bearing the cross.

The first voice of God approving Jesus as his beloved Son comes in 3:17, at the baptism of Jesus: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased (οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν ᾧ εὐδόκησα).” The third voice of God, echoing the first voice of divine attestation to Jesus, reappears in the transfiguration of Jesus in 17:5: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Listen to him! (οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν ᾧ εὐδόκησα· ἀκούετε αὐτοῦ).” Meanwhile, Peter’s confession in 16:16, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God (σὺ εἶ ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ζῶντος),” takes the role of the second voice of God testifying to Jesus on the grounds that Jesus identifies it as none other than a truthful revelation of God spoken through the lips of Peter by saying, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Barjona, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven (μακάριος εἶ, Σίμων Βαριωνᾶ, ὅτι σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα οὐκ ἀπεκάλυψέν σοι ἀλλ’ ὁ πατήρ μου ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, 16:17).” Examining the timings of the *vox (voces, pl) Dei* reveals the indirect announcements made by the implied author to show the different stages of the saving mission ushered in by Jesus and the crucial function of Peter’s confession in this scheme. Below is a rough diagram illuminating the relationship between the *vox Dei* and the ministry of Jesus, and the significant placement of the death of Jesus as the goal of the entire life and ministry of Jesus within this dynamic.²⁹⁶ The diagram does not

²⁹⁶ An undeniable connection between the transfiguration of Jesus and the passion of Jesus is further highlighted by the presence of the trio of disciples: Peter and the sons of Zebedee, namely, James and John (20:20). As these three disciples witness the proleptic glory of Jesus to which Jesus will return (26:64) after his fulfillment of the divinely-willed salvation for which he came (1:21), they also witness the agony of Jesus at his *kairos* for death (26:18). Also, as the exposure of the divine nature of Jesus and his Sonship to God reaches its height (17:2–3), the prediction of the death and resurrection of Jesus is likewise intentionally emphasized by repetition (17:11, 22–23)

intend to claim some sort of chiastic structure built in but rather help the reader to easily perceive corresponding thematic connections between the voice of God attesting to Jesus' identity as the Son of God and the mission of Jesus nicely pacing with God's own witnesses regarding his Son.

God speaks three times in a recognizable way in the Gospel. We hear God's direct voice two times in 3:17 and 17:5, both proclaiming the identity of Jesus as his beloved Son. In between, God once more gives an indirect witness of Jesus as the Son of the living God (16:16–17) through Peter's voice. In fact, Peter functions as a medium through which the competing voices of God and Satan are spoken. Furthermore, Satan's temptations of Jesus (chp 4 and 16:21–23) meaningfully sandwich Peter's confession of Jesus (16:16) and Jesus' passion prediction (16:21) as the destiny of the Son of God.

A. The first witnessing voice of God at the Baptism of Jesus (3:17), corresponding to the inception of the first stage of the public ministry of Jesus.

B. Satan's temptation of Jesus in his attempt to divert him from the path of his unwavering filial devotion to God (3:15 cf. 6:10; 26:39, 54) by questioning the Sonship of Jesus (4:3, 6, 9).

C. Peter's confession of Jesus (16:16), functioning as the second witnessing voice of God which is immediately followed by Jesus' passion prediction (16:21).

B'. On hearing Jesus' passion prediction, Peter rebukes Jesus (16:21). Jesus responds to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! (16:23)," recalling his

for a short time in a succession to 16:21. Yet, the death of Jesus is still a stumbling block (11:6; 26:31, 33) for the disciples because of the discrepancy between the divine manifestation of Jesus in glory (16:16–17; 17:2–3, 5) and the sorrowful shadow of a swiftly approaching death cast over it not only confuses them but also thrusts them to the point of grief (16:22–23; 17:23). Therefore, in a striking parallel, as this trio failed in understanding the reality and the meaning of the death of Jesus in chapter 17, they fail again at the moment of the crisis (i.e. Gethsemane) due to their weakness (26:41, 45) and lack of faith ("oh, ye of little faith," 6:30; 8:26; 16:8; 17:20) in spite of their promises

treatment and victory over Satan in the temptation of chapter 4.

A'. The third witnessing voice of God at the Transfiguration of Jesus (17:5), exactly echoing the verbiage of 3:15 and corresponding to the inception of the second stage of the ministry of Jesus, concluding in his death on the cross (1:21; 18:14; 20:28; 26:28; 27:24–25).

As we have seen through the above delineation, Peter's *voice* has been used for both God and Satan at a transitional scene of the Gospel, chapter 16.²⁹⁷ God and Satan, the major hidden characters of Matthew, make their presence known through Peter's speaking the uncompromising principle of each side in a drastic contrast and conflict in relation to the death of Jesus. Yet, the divine saving perspective carried out by Jesus (1:21) must win as foreseen in Jesus' proleptic victory over Satan, achieved through his absolute filial obedience to God in the temptation (4:1–11).

A Character Irony of Πλάνοσ (Impostor, 27:63–64) in Relation to the Will of God.

The day after Jesus has been laid in the tomb of Joseph from Arimathea (27:57–61), the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate (27:62) and asked him to secure Jesus' tomb until the third day (27:64), lest the disciples of Jesus go and steal him away (27:64). They support their request by recalling that they have heard Jesus (1:21), *that impostor* (ἐκεῖνος ὁ

of solidarity and loyalty not to desert Jesus (26:33–35) but to accompany him even to death (20:20–22).

²⁹⁷ The dissertation notices that chapter 16 of the Gospel of Matthew, specifically Peter's confession regarding the identity of Jesus as the Son of the living God (16:16) serves a transitional marker for the entire Gospel. In brief, a thread weaving through the reoccurring thematic points of Matthew begins in 1:21, the divine exposition of the meaning of the name of Jesus: "One who will save his people from their sins." 1:21 functions as the epicenter of the story of Jesus' life and death for the first Gospel. Up to chapter 9, Jesus vigorously unfolds his threefold ministry representing his embodiment of the saving presence of God among the people. In 9:6, Jesus attests to his authority to forgive sins, resuming the theological manifesto of 1:21. Meanwhile, an unanswered question lingers in the mind of a perceptive reader which is not about who Jesus is but *how* Jesus will save his people. This *how* aspect of the divine salvation the Gospel of Matthew strives to answer. According to Matthew, Peter's confession of Jesus finally establishes a time proper for Jesus to begin to predict the reality of his death (i.e. first passion prediction, 16:21) which corresponds to the idea of 1:21.

πλάνοϛ),²⁹⁸ say that “After three days I will rise again (27:63).”²⁹⁹ As usual, it is implied that the religious leaders are afraid of the possible commotion (θόρυβος, 26:5) among the people, as well as losing authority over them due to Jesus, whom the religious leaders consider a threatening religious figure (i.e. a false teacher in the name of a prophet), constantly exposing their inadequacy and lack of authority as ones who sit on Moses’ seat (23:2). They ascertain that the last *deception* (πλάνη) of Jesus will be worse than the first (27:64) if the disciples of Jesus take away his body and deceive the people with the fabricated news that Jesus has been raised from the dead (27:64). This remark itself is ironic, foretelling Jesus’ great commission to his reunited disciples in Galilee (28:18–20).³⁰⁰

The implied reader of the MPN’s irony knows that it is not Jesus but the religious leaders who adopt *deception* (πλάνη)³⁰¹ as their destructive mode of behavior in contrast to the open ministry of Jesus (26:55–56). They are the masters of *deceit* (δόλος, 26:4). Therefore, they are the ones who ironically are entitled to be called *impostors* (πλάνοι), not Jesus. Even the interplay between the development of the story and the textual information comprehensively identifying Jesus entirely defies Jesus being called an impostor. Yet, the definition of impostor ironically fits the collectively evil nature of the Jewish religious leaders, inwardly exhibited in their thoughts,

²⁹⁸ Nolland, *Matthew*, 1236 notes that πλάνοϛ (‘deceiver’) has not previously played a role in the Matthean Passion Narrative. Though this is its only Gospel occurrence, the cognate verb πλανᾶν is used in 24:4, 5, 11, 24 in relation to the false prophets and messiahs against whose deception Jesus warns.

²⁹⁹ Senior, *Passion of Jesus*, 154 notes irony hidden in the remark of the religious leaders. He says that “the leaders themselves recall Jesus’ predictions of his triumph over death (“ . . . we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, ‘After three days I will rise again’ ”), a telling irony as the Gospel stands on the brink of the resurrection story. With another touch of irony on Matthew’s part, the leaders also predict that the disciples will proclaim to the people: “He has risen from the death,” a wary anticipation of the great missionary commission that will conclude the Gospel (28:16–20).”

³⁰⁰ Senior, *ibid.*, consider 27:64 as another ironic hint revealing the Christian community’s universal mission that would begin with the death and resurrection of Jesus.

³⁰¹ *A Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 665 defines ἡ πλάνη as wandering from the path of truth, error, delusion, deceit, deception to which one is subject.

words and actions throughout their interactions with Jesus. As the dissertation identifies the religious leaders as a corporate ἀλαζών, the chief opponents and enemies of Jesus, it seems that ἀλαζών shares the close semantic undertone with πλάνοσ, whose main trait is characterized by πλάνη³⁰² as ἀλαζών is characterized by ἀλαζονεία³⁰³ despite the fact that defining an identical semantic origin between them is impossible.³⁰⁴ Therefore, the derision of the religious leaders, the story's ἀλαζών, who simultaneously appropriate the definition of πλάνοσ, naming Jesus, *impostor*, creates a moment of truth bringing a biting revelation. Irony is hidden in that remark which is self-revelatory as well as self-condemning for they are truly the shameless *impostors*.³⁰⁵

We may further explain how Matthew's narrative portrays the two contrasting parties—Jesus and the religious leaders—in relation to the divine saving will (τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, 6:10; 7:21; 12:50; 18:41; 21:31; 26:39, 42), the norm of the story. According to Matthew, the will of God stands in close relation to the Law.³⁰⁶ Throughout the Gospel, Matthew connects several theologically loaded expressions such as “lawful” (ἐξεστίν, 12:2, 4, 10, 12; 14:4; 19:3;

³⁰² Ibid., 666 defines ὁ πλάνοσ as deceiver or impostor as Liddell-Scott lexicon correspondingly defines ὁ ἀλαζών as a false pretender, impostor or quack. As further proof, Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, 172 likewise defines the *alazons* as impostors in his explanation of three types of comic characters: the *alazons*, the *eirons* and the *bomolochoi* (buffoons).

³⁰³ Frye, *ibid.*, 34 explains that ἀλαζονεία has been interpreted as pretension and arrogance in word and deed or other vices such as Jewish pride in the New Testament and in other early Christian literature. Based on this evidence, considering the Matthean character of the Jewish religious leaders as a corporate ἀλαζών seems to be quite reasonable based on their words and deeds clearly exhibiting ἀλαζονεία, most specifically in their interactions with Jesus, the *ironic* protagonist of the Gospel.

³⁰⁴ Derrett J. Duncan, “Jesus as a Seducer (ΠΛΑΝΟΣ=ΜΑΤ‘ΕΗ),” *Bijdragen* 55 (1994), 44–45 notes the difficulty of delineating the philological and semantic origin of the verb, πλανῶν.

³⁰⁵ Kingsbury, *Matthew As Story*, 162 point out the irony revolving around the religious leaders that “in abjectly repudiating Jesus, the leaders achieve the opposite of what they had intended: far from purging Israel from error, they plunge it into fatal error, for they make both themselves and the people responsible for the death of the one who is in fact the Son of God and through whom God proffers salvation to Israel; unwittingly, therefore, the leaders make themselves responsible for Israel's loss of its privileged place among the nations as God's chosen people (15:13–14; 21:37–43; 22:7; 27:20–25).”

³⁰⁶ Bauer, *The Structure of Matthew's Gospel*, 60–61 mentions that “in Matthew's Gospel Jesus is the epitome of obedience to the will of God . . . Matthew employs the Old Testament fulfillment quotations in part to demonstrate the conformity of Jesus to the will of God as revealed in the scriptures (26.53–56).”

20:15; 22:17; 27:6) and “bearing fruit” (καρπός, 3:8, 10; 7:16–18; 12:33; 13:8, 26; 21:19, 34, 41, 43) to the concept of “doing the will of God” (6:10; 12:50; 21:31; 26:42 cf. τὸ ποτήριον 26:39). Thus, Matthew describes the nature of the Law, which has previously been proclaimed to Israel through prophets and reinterpreted by Jesus, as active and life oriented. This Law of God requires the listener’s proper response (9:14–17) and the action of bearing fruits which will receive a commensurate reward (μισθός, 5:12, 46; 6:1, 2, 5, 16; 10:41, 42; 20:8).

How these expressions, “lawful (ἔξεστιν)” and “bearing fruit (καρπός),” relate to the issue of “doing the will (θέλημα) of God” becomes clear through an attentive reading of Matthew with a focus on Jesus as the sole perfect doer of the will of God, through whom the fulfillment of the Law is achieved.³⁰⁷ The narrative exposes the essential understanding of the Law as early as in the Sermon on the Mount (chps 5–7) through the teaching of Jesus, who is the carrier of the divine law and wisdom. Jesus likewise proves that he is not only the truly authoritative interpreter of the will of God (7:28–29; 21: 23; 22:33), but also the one who perfects it through his filial obedience as the divine voice attests (3:17; 17:5 cf. 12:18). The Sermon on the Mount well defines Jesus’ position with regard to the Law. Jesus demands a righteousness (5:20 cf. 3:15; 6:33) that exceeds the standard of Jewish legalism (5:10, 20), for it is inward, not outward; mercy-oriented, not legalist; taken by the heart, not by a code. Jesus presents the highest standard of the Law as God himself: “You therefore shall be perfect (τέλειος), as your heavenly Father is perfect (5:48).”³⁰⁸

³⁰⁷ Gerhardsson, *The Mighty Acts of Jesus according to Matthew*, 89 notes that in everything Jesus fulfils the demands of the law.

³⁰⁸ Furthermore, Jesus decisively presents himself as the object of *Shema* (Deut 6) in his commandment that “You have heard that it was said to them of old time . . . but I say unto you (5:21–22)” as he actualizes the glory of *Shekinah* (1:18–21, 23; 17:1–8; 28:20) in his person and ministry as the saving agent of God. This exposition is well supported by the voice of God in the transfiguration which succinctly, yet emphatically, exhorts the accompanying disciples of Jesus that “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; *listen to him* (17:5).” Also, in order to communicate Jesus as the promised Messiah, the Gospel makes liberal use of quotations from the Old Testament,

Within this framework, it is noteworthy that the word *ἕξεστί* (lawful) begins to appear in chapter 12. The narrator frequently uses this legal term *ἕξεστί* in chapter 12 (12: 2, 4, 10, 12, then 19:3; 22:17), where an intense conflict between Jesus and his opponents concerning the issues of the Law begins to grow in the temple of Jerusalem, the center of Jewish worship.³⁰⁹ The religious leaders question Jesus' authority in his interpretation of the Law and believe that what Jesus teaches and does is not *ἕξεστί*.³¹⁰ However, in ironic contrast to the case of Jesus, Matthew shows that much of the understanding and commitment of the religious leaders to the Law is empty and in fact, "lawless" (23:28) as well unfruitful (12:3, 5; 19:4; 21:16, 42; 22:31)³¹¹ because they are opposing, therefore undoing the will of God which is manifested and proclaimed through Jesus, his beloved Son (3:17; 17:5). In taking counsel to destroy Jesus (12:14), they reveal the full degree of their lawlessness (23:28) against Jesus, the righteous one, who interprets the Law with irrefutable authority as the embodiment of the will of God. Jesus declares himself to be greater than the temple (ὅτι τοῦ ἱεροῦ μείζον ἐστίν ὧδε, 12:6),³¹² and the Lord of the Sabbath (κύριος γάρ ἐστίν τοῦ σαββάτου ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, 12:8) who desires *ἔλεος* (mercy) rather than *θυσίαν* (sacrifice). He is not a mere symbol of the divine presence and will, but he himself is the actual manifestation of the divine saving presence and will.

especially "the fulfillment" passages from the writings of the prophets. Such an effort in describing Jesus as the promised Messiah Savior for the people of God illuminates another side of message that the Old Testament, which is represented by the combination of the Law and the Prophets in Matthew is none other than the divine testimony to the promised Messiah.

³⁰⁹ Howell, *Matthew's Inclusive Story*, 139; John P. Heil, *The Death and Resurrection of Jesus: A Narrative-Critical Reading of Matthew 26–28* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 16.

³¹⁰ F. Matera explains that in chapter 12 the opposition to Jesus comes primarily from the religious leaders (12:1–14, 24–32) with regards to the significant subject matter of the Law and the Sabbath in *Passion Narratives and Gospel Theologies: Interpreting The Synoptics Through Their Passion Stories* (N.Y.: Paulist, 1986), 132.

³¹¹ In these passages, Jesus challenges the religious leaders' knowledge and perception of the Scriptures with his methodical question, "have you not read?" (οὐκ ἀνέγνωτε;).

³¹² Some English versions (NKJ, NIV, ASV, KJV) properly interpret "ὅτι τοῦ ἱεροῦ μείζον ἐστίν ὧδε" (12:6) as a reference to Jesus, "one greater than the temple is here."

Most importantly, Jesus view of the will of God is completely different from the view of the ones who firmly believe they know the will of God expressed in His Law. In this ever-polarizing conflict between the protagonist and the antagonist, the task of irony is to expose the fundamental discrepancy between the true teacher of the Law who perfectly obeys as well as performs the will of God, and the ostensible teachers of the Law (23:2), the religious leaders, who are not only without authority in their teaching of God’s will, but also without understanding of it. Therefore, it is ironically observed on the plane of superior reality that the opponents of Jesus, the learned of the Law, are in fact the “un”-doers of the will of God because they are in direct opposition to the Son of God who reveals and fulfills the will of God that the Law espouses. They actually practice *what is unlawful* according to the Law (23:1–39; 26:4; 27:3–6, 18) revealing their true identity as the corporate *impostor* (πλάνοσ, ἀλαζών), feeding on sheer deception (πλάνη, ἀλαζονεία).

In summary, the ironist succeeds in showing why Jesus has to die from the perspective of his opponents. The ironic situation of chapters 26–27, the scene of Jesus’ trial and death, reveals that the Law,³¹³ which the accusers of Jesus claim to uphold, condemned the most marvelous and authoritative teacher of the Law (7:28; 13:54; 22:33) to death. It is a tragic irony that Jesus had to die as an evil imposter (27:63) and a blasphemous pretender (9:34; 12:24; 26:65), while the very contaminators of the Law and true evil-doers³¹⁴ accomplished their malicious plot culminating in Jesus’ death. However, here we find the divine reversal reasserting itself through a character

³¹³ Charges that have been brought against Jesus in relation to the Temple (26:61) and his divine Sonship (26:64) reflect their concern for the Law.

³¹⁴ They are sons of the chief *alazōn* of Matthew, “Satan.” See Matthew’s categorical portrayal of the religious leaders in relation to Satan, who is the usurper of the heavenly throne (4:8–9).

irony, namely that the divine will of salvation³¹⁵ has been achieved, even through the impostors' unlawful (οὐκ ἔξεστιν) practice of the Law against Jesus.

³¹⁵ Matt 1:21; 3:13–17; 16:21; 17:22–23; 20:18–19; 26:28, and 26:55–56, “... τοῦτο δὲ ὅλον γέγονεν ἵνα πληρωθῶσιν αἱ γραφαὶ τῶν προφητῶν (all this has taken place, so that the scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled).”

CHAPTER FIVE

THEOLOGY OF THE MPN: THE MEANING OF THE DEATH OF JESUS SEEN THROUGH THE LENS OF IRONY

To this point the dissertation has been progressively built to explicate the Matthean theology of the death of Jesus through the lens of irony, namely, the implied author's rhetorical device for meaningful communication and effective persuasion. Here, the dissertation will summarize the results of the narrative-critical reading on the MPN's ironic portrayal of the cross in four main categories: 1) the Christology of the MPN: the identity of Jesus, 2) the MPN's governing norm: the saving will of God, 3) the Soteriology of the MPN: universal salvation, the heart of the divine reversal, and 4) the divine victory related by the MPN: the results of the cosmic clash in the Christ—event. All these come under one great thematic constant that Jesus, the Christ Savior, has come to save his people according to the saving will of God (i.e. the divinely-willed salvation).

The Christology of the MPN: The Identity of Jesus

The MPN's ironic portrayal of Jesus' death emphatically answers the question of *who Jesus is*, in other words, *what to make of Jesus*. Matthew posits the greatest cause of conflict as this issue of the identity of Jesus, which builds throughout the Gospel.¹ The MPN's ironist especially imposes a distinctive weight on Jesus, who is the Christ (the Messianic Savior), the

¹ The Gospel of Matthew stresses Jesus as the Christ Savior, the King of the Jews (Jesus the Son of David), the Son of God, and the Son of Man. Despite the fact that other titles are the objects of the MPN's irony, the title "Jesus the Son of Man" does not function ironically.

King of Jews (the Son of David), and the Son of God, by means of irony, so that he turns the emphatic “no” into an irrefutable “yes” regarding the true view of Jesus. In the hands of the ironist of the MPN, irony is like a dimmer switch. He strategically adjusts the ironic intensity throughout the Gospel, building from the dim intimation of early chapters to the luminous revelation of a crucified Son of God in the MPN. By doing so, the ironist accomplishes two purposes within the MPN’s narrative: one, on the plane of the characters themselves, making a spiritually blind ἀλαζών to be more agitated by the blatant straightforwardness of the revelation, and two, on the plane of the implied reader, thrusting him into an engaging encounter with the truth at the moment of enlightenment.

From the beginning of the Gospel, the truth about the person of Jesus has been sufficiently communicated to its implied reader through the means of reliable witnesses.² Entering the Matthean world, one reads the placard displayed on the front beam of the gate, “Jesus the Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham (1:1)” in the report of the genealogy. This initial declaration that *Jesus* is the Christ (Messiah), the Son of David and the Son of Abraham guides the view of the implied reader of the Gospel regarding the person Jesus as well as events revolving around this main figure. In fact, this up-front description of the identity of Jesus is, in a way, an epitome of the entire story of Matthew essentially condensing what *has happened* in the life and death of Jesus because Jesus had to live the life of the Christ accomplishing all the theological implications of being the Son of David as well as the Son of Abraham, although his actual Father is God alone (1:18–23; 2:12–15, 19–21; 3:17).³

² Matt. 1:1, 17–18 (the narrator), 1:20–21; 2:13 (an angel of the Lord), 1:22–23; 2:5–6, 15, 17–18, 23 (the Scriptures, the Prophets), 2:7, 9–10 (the heavenly portent, the star cf. 27:51–53), 3:1–3, 11–14 (the forerunner of Jesus, an incumbent prophet), 3:17 (God himself cf. 17:5).

³ Though Jesus Christ is the Son of David, David is not the father to Jesus as Joseph is not described in a technical expression of the father–son relationship in terms of someone being father of someone describing human biological origin (i.e. the characteristic use of a verb, γεννάω, 1:2–15). Purposefully the implied author of Matthew

Yet, the full implication of 1:1 becomes clear under the light of 1:21, the divine exposition of the meaning of the name of this Christ, *Jesus*: “He will save his people from their sins” (αὐτὸς σώσει τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν). This is crucial not only because it affects all the aspects of interpretation on the part of the reader regarding the true nature of the presence and ministry of Jesus but also because it is the ruling divine perspective, triumphing other subsidiary perspectives, regarding the person and ministry of Jesus. The idea that 1:21 espouses is that Jesus Christ is the saving agent of God without par,⁴ since Jesus alone embodies God’s eternal and merciful presence (1:23; 9:13; 12:7; 18:20; 23:23; 28:20). God himself is not only the Father of Jesus, but gives through an angel the prophetically purposeful name, *Jesus*, to his Son. Therefore, it is certain that the governing Matthean evaluative point of view for the reading of the story of the life and death of Jesus is from God, as the divine revelation that Jesus, the Davidic Messiah (i.e the King of Jews) and the Son of God has primarily come to save his people from their sins. In essence, the name of *Jesus* (1:21) has a non-negotiable etiological as well as teleological basis that does justice to as well as makes sense of the death of *Jesus*.⁵ In

sets aside the account of the birth of Jesus to clarify the divine sonship of Jesus to God without par within the history of Israel. When the genealogy finally reaches Joseph, a male descendant of David who takes the role of legal paternity of Jesus, the implied author abandons the usual γεννάω (be father of, bear) to describe the relationship between Joseph and Jesus. Rather he exposes the mystery surrounding the birth of Jesus by revealing the maternity side of Jesus and leaving out the information about any human father. Yet, the essential information regarding the Father of Jesus follows soon after (1:18–25) through an angelic delivery that Jesus is the divine child whose heavenly father reaffirms it three times with his own voice at the strategic sites of Matthew benefiting a meaningful reading of the story (3:17; 16:16–17; 17:5).

⁴ In his discussion of the early Church history regarding the devotion to Jesus as one God and one Lord, Hurtado, *How on Earth*, 46–55 considers Jesus as the principal agent of God unprecedentedly exceeding many principal agent figures appearing in the history of Israel. He writes that “although a number of the specific ways that Jesus is characterized in early Christian writings have interesting similarities and parallels in the references to these “principal agent” figures, there is a crucial difference that makes them all fall considerably short of serving as an adequate/full analogy for the place held by Jesus in early Christian circles . . . in early Christian circles Jesus is recipient of the sorts of expressions of devotion that are otherwise reserved for God alone, and which simply have no analogy in Jewish tradition of the Second-Temple period.” In this sense, Matt 1:1 and 1:21 echo back, as well as illuminate each other, by highlighting that Jesus is the saving agent of God without par whose status is the Christ Savior and whose unique mission as the Savior accomplishes the divine promises given to David and Abraham, perfecting the saving history of God among the people, Israel.

⁵ In the oriental world, especially under the influence of Confucianism, a paternal name giving is an important

other words, the passion of Jesus is where the *how* aspect of 1:21, characterizing the life of Jesus as purpose-driven, is fully answered at the climax of the MPN, the death of Jesus on the cross (20:28; 26:27–28, 39 cf. 20:22).

As the meaning of the name, *Jesus* unmistakably relates the life of Jesus to the ultimate *deed* of bearing the cross, the life of the disciples of Jesus also come under the full implications of this name, Jesus. In other words, the disciples of Jesus are likewise called to bear their own cross (10:37–39) and follow after him, despite the persecution and even suffering-ridden path awaiting them (10:24–25). This name, *Jesus*, crystalizes the identity of the Son of God as the Christ Savior for the people. For this name, the disciples also walk on the foreboding path of their own “passion,” lying close to the cross of Jesus.⁶ Indeed, the cross of Jesus serves as the proto-pattern and the prolepsis for the cross of his disciples.

The MPN, especially the interrogations and the mockery hurled at Jesus by his opponents in the scenes of the trials and crucifixion, are full of ironic spins on the name of Jesus in its inseparable connection with the initial proclamation of the person of Jesus in 1:1. The main trait of the chief opponents of Jesus (i.e. the Jewish religious leaders and the people of Jerusalem as their corporate accomplice) is their chronic ignorance of *who Jesus is* in lethal combination with willful rejection, hostility and spiritual blindness that have a long history to which the cases of the persecuted servants of God within the history of Israel attest (23:34–39). Yet, when the

part of culture. It is generally understood that giving a meaningful name accompanies an expectation that the child will fully live up to the significance of the name and therefore honor his parents during his lifetime and afterwards. Giving a name with an intended meaning as well as living with a consciousness of the meaning of one's name can be seen as a form of self-prophecy which is mindful of the whole life journey.

⁶ The connection between the significance of the name of Jesus and the suffering of the believers has been attested by both historical and biblical records. Pliny the Younger, *Ep.*, 10.96 expresses his dilemma of whether he would punish a Christian on account of the crime adhering to the name (Jesus Christ) without any crime besides. Also the New Testament faithfully and prophetically announces and reports the actual extreme danger and opposition that the followers of Jesus had faced due to their devotion to the name of Jesus. See Matt 10:18, 22; Acts 26:9; 1 Tim 6:1; 1 Peter 4:14.

MPN's ironist reveals the silhouette of Jesus' full messianic identity at a time of extreme tension, this invites his reader to take a stance that joins the stream of true confession of Jesus, as the Gentile centurion exemplifies ("Truly, this was the Son of God," 27:54). Irony subverts all the condemning and derisive remarks against the person of Jesus—"Are you the Christ, the Son of God? (26:63)," "Prophecy to us, Christ, who is the one who hits you? (26:68)," "Are you the King of the Jews? (27:11)," "This is Jesus the king of the Jews (27:37)," "Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God! (27:40)" "He saved others, but he can't save himself! He is the king of Israel! (27:42)" "He trusts in God. Let God rescue him, for he said, 'I am the Son of God' (27:43)"—into sharply pointed statements of truth that Jesus is indeed the Christ Savior and the King of Israel (i.e. the Son of David) to which 1:1 and 1:2 testify.⁷ The more the opponents of Jesus in their ignorance and hubris try to mar the reputation of Jesus with blasphemies, the more intensely the ironist of the MPN employs the God-given name of *Jesus* in anticipation of its fulfillment to increase the tragic atmosphere surrounding the death of Jesus as well as to reveal an astonishing discrepancy between the divine and the human operations bringing about the death of Jesus. Eventually, irony tells its perceptive reader that despite the apparently tragic

⁷ It is a special Matthean emphasis that Jesus Christ is none other than the Son of God as Jesus himself precisely clarifies through his dialectical questioning of the Pharisees (22:41–46), the learned of the Scriptures and those claiming authority over interpretation of the Law (23:1). What Jesus implies by conceptualizing that the Christ is the Lord (κύριος) of David (22:45) in a reflection of Psalm 110:1 is that the Christ is the Lord (κύριος, cf. 3:3; 23:39) who possesses attributes and honor which are reserved only for God. Likewise, in his study of 1 Cor 8:5–6 and Phil 2:6–11 as the primitive sources for the Christ devotion developed in the early Christianity, Hurtado, *How on Earth*, 49–50, 94 explains that "Lord (κύριος)" as a devotional title for Jesus Christ most likely functions as the Greek equivalent of *Adonay*, the reverential alternative for the sacred Tetragrammaton in Hebrew. Also see Alan F. Segal, "The Resurrection: Faith or History?" in *The Resurrection of Jesus: John Dominic Crossan and N. T. Wright in Dialogue* (ed. Robert B. Stewart; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006), 216. Hurtado further delineates that the universal acclamation, "Jesus' Christ is Lord" implies that Jesus is "linked with God in ways that, rightly understood, are startling and unequalled." Therefore, in Matthew, the ideas of the Davidic Messiah and the Son of God converge in the person of Jesus and in the MPN, the opponents of Jesus, comprehensively covering both Jews and Gentiles concomitantly reaffirm the Messiahship, the Kingship and the divine Sonship of Jesus in the form of taunting and abuse which ultimately betray and stupefy the scoffers themselves. For the Matthean use of the title, "the Lord" addressing both God and Jesus, see Matt 1:22; 2:15; 3:3; 4:7, 10; 7:21–22; 8:2, 6, 21, 25; 9:28; 11:25; 12:8; 14:28, 30; 15:22, 25, 27(x2); 16:22; 17:4, 15; 18:21; 20:30–31, 33; 21:3, 9; 22:37, 43–45; 23:39; 24:42; 26:22.

death of Jesus on the surface level of the story, it is precisely the divine economy of salvation operating in the person of *Jesus* (1:21; 20:28; 26:28).

The full implications of Jesus being called the Son of Abraham in 1:1 are also realized in the MPN when the death of Jesus gives rise to the Gentiles' confession of Jesus as the true Son of God (27:54 cf. 3:17; 16:16; 17:5). The tradition of Abraham concerning all humankind represented by the Gentiles (i.e. the nations) provides a meaningful semantic ground on which the implied reader views the Matthean strategic insertions of the Gentile worshipping presence toward Jesus at crucial moments, such as the birth and death of Jesus. It helps the implied reader to perceive Jesus as the universal Savior transcending time and ethnicity. Consider the unique status of Abraham in the history of Israel: he himself was a stranger to God (Gen. 12:1–8), yet God called him into covenant with Him.⁸ The implied author of Matthew does not employ the title of Jesus—the Son of Abraham—with explicit irony. The implication of this title, however, theologically illuminates Jesus' person and ministry as the true Son of God. Jesus who is the Son of Abraham (1:1) reflects as well as accomplishes the meaning of the presence and purpose of Israel, being once called as the son of God (Hos 11:1), among the nations. In fact, the Abrahamic tradition and mission are fundamentally integrated with the identity and role of Israel as a whole (i.e. the people of God or his people, 1:21) because Israel is called to be a kingdom of priests, a holy nation (Exod 19:6), light of the nations (Isa 2:2–5; 42:6; 49:6; 51:4; Mic 4:1–5) and the source of rivers flowing out to water and heal the rest of the world (Ezek 47:7–12; Zeph 3:20). Seen through these textual evidences, the Old Testament undoubtedly testifies to the fate of the nations intricately and inseparably bound up with that of Israel which beginning traces back the person, Abraham. Strikingly, the narratives of Matthew including its MPN identify Jesus as the

⁸ Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, 262 notes that Abraham emerges in the book of Genesis as the divine solution to the plight of men.

true Israel (2:15; Hos. 11:1) who takes up and fulfills the Abrahamic covenant as well as the Davidic covenant as the divine Messiah King for the people of God.

In summary, the MPN's ironic portrait of who Jesus is in his death faithfully squares with the declaratory statements of 1:1 and 1:21 regarding the identity of Jesus: Jesus Christ⁹ is the Son of God.¹⁰ He is the Lord himself in perfect communion with God the Father.¹¹ His total submission to God's saving will (1:21; 9:6; 18:4; 20:28; 26:28, 39) is the foremost important information enhancing the view of Jesus perfecting what has been promised by God to David and Abraham as the divine Savior (1:21). Indeed, the person of Jesus is the climax of the entire history of the people of God as a nation since Jesus is the Son of David¹² whom Israel has long waited to bring about their restoration. Jesus, however, is not an ordinary human king but the Lord himself (κύριος), reclaiming his original dominion and authority over his people through the unexpected means of laying down his life (i.e. shedding the innocent blood) for the forgiveness of sins of the people (1:21; 20:28; 26:28). The encompassing Matthean theology of the death of Jesus further suggests that in the person of Jesus blessing is secured, even for the nations transcending the boundary of the religious and political entity, Israel, because Jesus, the Son of Abraham, is the scion promised in whom all nations (cf. Gen 12:1–3; 17:1–18; 22:15–18), seeing the light of salvation, may put their hope (4:15–17; 12:18–21; 21:43; 24:14; 25:32; 27:54; 28:19).¹³

⁹ Matt 1:1, 16–18, 21; 2:4; 11:2; 16:16, 20; 22:42; 23:10; 26:63, 68; 27:17, 22, etc.

¹⁰ Matt 2:15; 3:17; 4:3, 6; 10:32–33; 11:25–27; 12:50; 14:33; 16:16–17; 17:5; 20:23; 24:36; 26:39, 42, 53, 63; 27:54; 28:19, etc.

¹¹ Matt 1:22; 3:17; 4:7, 10; 11:25–27; 17:5; 22:44; 26:54; 28:20, etc.

¹² Matt 1:1; 2:6; 9:27; 15:22; 20:30–31; 21:5, 9; 27:11, 29, 37, 42, etc.

¹³ Also notice the worshipping and confessing presence of the Gentiles at the birth (2:1–2) as well as at the death of Jesus (27:54).

The MPN's Governing Norm: The Saving Will of God

The saving will of God (τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ) is the *raison d'être* of the story of Jesus' life and death. It also governs the MPN's irony and causes the ironic portraits of Jesus and his ministry. Matthean passages, such as 1:21; 3:15; 18:14; 20:28; 21:31; 26:28 and especially 26:39, 42, 53–54 in the MPN, manifestly support the idea that God wills to gather and save his people, who are like lost sheep without a shepherd (τὰ πρόβατα τὰ ἀπολωλότα μὴ ἔχοντα ποιμένα 9:36; 10:6; 15:24), through Jesus, the shepherd (ὁ ποιμὴν 2:6; 18:12; 25:32f; 26:31), who is none other than the Son of God and the Davidic Messiah. God not only wills human salvation but also the way it is achieved through the one who unites these multifaceted roles with one goal in mind: saving the people of God from their sins (1:21).

The MPN, therefore, describes the passion of Jesus as “the cup” (τὸ ποτήριον 26:39) in association with the will of God (τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ 26:42, 55–56) which only the Son of God can “drink.” As 6:10 and 26:42 (also 12:50; 21:31) show, Jesus is concerned with the will of God above all and essentially performs the will of God through his perfect obedience that ultimately leads to his death on the cross.¹⁴ Thus, the salvation that is proffered through the death of Jesus on the cross (i.e. the shedding of innocent blood, 20:28; 26:28) is best defined as the divinely-willed salvation which serves as the *telos* of the entire story of Matthew. According to the first Gospel, the salvific death of Jesus on the cross best fits the description of the Gospel (τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, 4:23; 9:35; 24:14; 26:13, 58). What God wills must prevail.¹⁵ It is the Matthean depiction that God is ironically “seen” in the image of dejected Jesus.

¹⁴ Jesus' obedience as an essential element of the death of Jesus is also mentioned in Hurtado, *How on Earth*, 104.

¹⁵ In his exposition of Jesus' humiliation and exaltation covering significant theological issues of incarnation, death and resurrection of Jesus in Phil 2:6–11, Hurtado, *ibid.*, 91 identifies God as the ultimate authority and the key actor, his actions and purposes giving meaning to all else.

Irony reveals the meaning of Jesus' death, which operates on a superior level of reality. Jesus has come to save his people from their sin and to give his life as a ransom for many (1:21; 9:6; 20:28; 26:28). Jesus in his person and ministry serves as the living example of the saving will of God and accomplishes this divinely-willed salvation through his innocent blood of the covenant (26:28; 27:4, 6, 19, 23, 33), which is the central theme of the MPN presented through the lens of irony. The implied author of Matthew purposefully begins the story of Jesus with the divine exposition of the meaning of the name of Jesus, "one who will save his people from their sins" (1:21) which functions as the epicenter of the story of Jesus' life and death for the first Gospel. Recurring passion predictions of Jesus (16:21; 17:22–23; 20:18–19) along with Jesus' recognition of his death as the divine *must* (16:21; 20:23; 26:54; the cup in association with the will of God, 26:39, 42, 55–56) clarifies the "how" of 1:21, which constitutes the blood of the new covenant of Jesus for the forgiveness of sins (26:28), bringing about a ransom for many including his people, Israel (20:28).

More definitely, irony is rooted in the theme of the death of Jesus, since God saves and rules in ways that the people do not expect, which is best exemplified in the cross of Jesus. The great incompatibility between who Jesus is (1:1, 21) and the cross on which Jesus is hung creates the greatest depth of irony, revealing the reality hidden behind a gloomy appearance. For example, the Davidic Messiah, the King of the Jews, who is rejected in the most shameful death of the lower class (*humiliores*), gloriously rules from the cross that is the symbol of the most slavish humiliation (*supplicium servile*).¹⁶ Irony, mainly operating on the dual story-world that is

¹⁶ It is meaningful to interpret Jesus slavish death on the cross in relation to the Pauline theology in Phil 2:6-11, especially verse 7 that "but emptied himself, taking a form of slave, and being made in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross (ἀλλὰ ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν μορφὴν δούλου λαβὼν, ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος καὶ σχήματι ἐυρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος ἑταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου, θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ)." Translation is mine. For ancient historians' comments on the cross as a punishment see Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, I.26.6; Seneca, *Epistola*, 101;

in dramatic conflict and contrast, surprises its reader when it reaches the point of exposing that the Davidic Messiah, who is in fact the Son of God, saves his people through shedding his righteous blood.¹⁷ Once again, there exists a profoundly inescapable contrast between the nature of Jesus, as the Lord and the Son of God, and the nature of the cross which he bore as the fulfillment of the divine will. Since the cross as the sign of a curse (Deut 21:22–23) and slavish punishment is the most unlikely place for divine activity,¹⁸ the MPN demands that its implied reader take an ironic view of the cross to perceive the salutary impact of Jesus' death which is unfolded through it. There is no other way of achieving the *forgiveness of sins* other than Jesus' righteous death and the shedding of his innocent blood (26:28; 27:4, 25) which the implied author of Matthew progressively has built from the early chapters (1:21; 23:35 cf. 2:16–18; 14:1–10). Thus, the irony of the MPN in relation to the death of Jesus sheds light on the nature of Christianity in two aspects: first, human sin and predicament, deserving terminal separation from God, prepare the context in which the divine irony takes its course, and second, God saves his people through unexpected means, the undeserved death of Jesus, which highlights both the divine initiation and adamant saving will. Accordingly, the MPN's ironist subtly presents the

Cicero, *Contra Verres*, 5.169; Valerius Maximus, *Historia Augusta* 2.7.12; Tacitus, *Histories* 2.72, 4.11; Columella, *De re rustica* 1.7.2, "the ancient men used to consider the extreme of the law as the extreme of crucifixion (*summum ius antique summam putabant crucem*)." Translation is mine.

¹⁷ Matt 27:3–4, 6, 19, 23–24.

¹⁸ Kadai, "Luther's Theology of the Cross," 232–33 gives a helpful background information regarding the cross and crucifixion as a hateful punishment that "crucifixion as such does not appear in early Christian art. Probably the earliest (2d century) remaining pictorial presentation of the crucifixion of Christ was drawn during the second century by hostile hands. On the wall of the Domus Gelotiana in Rome, a building used as a school for imperial pages, one sees a drawing of a crucified ass with the Greek inscription "Alexamenos (adores) God." Not until the fourth century did Christians begin to represent in art form the narrative of the death of Christ. Why did the Passion narrative appear so relatively late in Christian art? Several reasons come to mind. Perhaps there is some truth to the conjecture that since the cross remained a sign of foolishness and a stumbling block to the Graeco-Roman world, believers found it more advantageous to stress the resurrection of their Lord rather than draw attention to His ignominious death . . . The lowly, suffering Jesus of the Passion story simply did not fit into the scheme of patristic Christology. The Greek fathers were more impressed by the doctrine of the Incarnation than the Vicarious Atonement."

death of Jesus as an inevitable reality for the salvation of man because the scandal of human sin requires the scandal of the cross (Gal 5:11; Rom 5:15–19).¹⁹

In summary, the cross of Jesus as the *maximus locus* (supreme site) of irony demands that the implied reader adopt the divine perspective on the reality of Jesus' death as the sole cause for the salvation of his people (1:21; 20:28; 26:28). Likewise, the MPN's ironist carefully locates the death of Jesus within the comprehensive picture of the salvation history of the people of God, but not as one of many but as unprecedented, by presenting the death of Jesus as the modus through which God achieves his persistent saving will, essentially summing up the content of divine righteousness (3:15) and the Scriptures (i.e. prophecy fulfilled, 26:54).²⁰ In a broad application, since irony is inherent to the nature of the cross which is not only incompatible with but also repellent to the innocent and profoundly majestic figure of Jesus Christ (1:1, 1:21), it becomes a way of looking into the heart of Christianity which not only feeds on the saving effect of the innocent blood of Jesus (26:28) but also proclaims it (26:13).

The Soteriology of the MPN: Universal Salvation, the Heart of the Divine Reversal

Looking into the MPN, especially the Jewish people's crying out for the crucifixion of Jesus by undertaking responsibility for the blood of Jesus (27:24–25), yields a striking Gospel message which can only be perceived through the lens of irony. In the most striking way the hidden reality, clouded by the willful rejection of Jesus by the people is revealed; that the

¹⁹ The following scholars discuss the perception of crucifixion with regard to ancient people and the death of Jesus on the cross in particular: John T. Carroll and Joel B. Green, *The Death of Jesus in Early Christianity* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers: 1995); Ellis Rivkin, *What Crucified Jesus? The Political Execution of A Charismatic* (Nashville: SCM, 1984); Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *To Advance the Gospel: New Testament Essays* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), 125–46; R. Larry Overstreet, "Roman Law and the Trial of Jesus," *BSac* 135 (1978): 323–32; David Flusser, "The Crucified One and the Jews," *Imm* 7 (1977): 25–37; Martin Hengel, *Crucifixion in the Ancient World and the Folly of the Message of the Cross* (trans. John Bowden; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977).

²⁰ In his exposition of Matt 3:15–16a, Gibbs, *Matthew 1:1–11:1*, 179–81 considers the Matthean concept of fulfilling righteousness as an acting that is being carried out by both John and Jesus in the action of John baptizing Jesus. He particularly emphasizes the dominant Old Testament sense of God's "righteousness" as his "saving deeds"

innocent blood which they desire for the sake of destruction is in truth the way desired by God himself to offer salvation that is truly universal.

Since Jesus has come to save his people from their sins (1:21), that the Jews would be cut off from their Savior Lord is not envisioned and foreseen by the Gospel despite their willful rejection and murderous intent. The surface level reading of the Matthean accounts of the life and mission of Jesus, and especially the people's active involvement in bringing about the death of Jesus, understandably has been used as evidence of some anti-Jewish themes or polemics within Matthean biblical scholarship. Nevertheless, irony invites a deeper level of reading of the story in light of a constant thematic focus (i.e. the divinely-willed salvation). This deeper reading enables the implied reader to see that the MPN does not fail in presenting Jesus as accomplishing the meaning of his name by saving his people, even at their condemnable nadir.

It is the crucial information embedded in the story that the innocent blood indeed has a salvific effect. Throughout their history, the Jewish people have shed much innocent blood of the commissioned servants of God who were wholly committed to redirect the people of God to God himself. As Jesus' profound identity surpasses all the previous divine delegates advancing the salvation history (1:1 and its par.), it is obvious that the MPN's ironist intends to define the innocent blood of Jesus as the completion of the cycle of shedding innocent blood (23:35–36) with regard to both its terminal effect and meaning. It is precisely irony which can provide the implied reader with a delicate tool of examination to penetrate below the surface of the tragic scene in 27:24–25, and reveal that the people of God, in demanding the innocent blood of their divine Savior and King with evil intent, in fact proclaim the gracious operation of God, who

and its present fulfillment in his Son, Jesus' deeds, that is, an enactment of the divine plan of salvation.

searches unceasingly for sinners (9:10–13; 12:7; 18:14) and who can reclaim his people even in the midst of their utmost infidelity and sin in disowning the Son of God.

The innocent blood of Jesus that forgives the sins of the people (1:21; 20:28; 26:28) is thoroughly universal in two aspects. First, the salvific effect of the innocent blood of Jesus will not only be shed for the current people of God who gang up against Jesus and clamor for his death, but also for the future unknown generations afterwards (“and upon our children,” 27:25). Second, the salvific innocent blood of Jesus is operative for all mankind despite the fact that Jesus came as the Davidic Messiah and initially died under the specific charge of being the King of the Jews (27:37). Consider that Matthew subtly implies the extension of the people of God (1:21) by including the worshipping and receptive Gentiles in presence of Jesus at both his birth and death in stark contrast to the Jews, well-corresponding to Jesus’ strong compassion and constant concern for both groups evidenced throughout his entire ministry. The dramatic confession of the Roman soldiers (“truly, this was the Son of God,” 27:54) convinces the implied reader not only that Jesus is manifestly God’s messianic royal Son, but also that Jesus’ innocent blood is effective for the salvation of the Gentiles also (i.e. many, 20:28)²¹ since the people beyond the ethnic limit of the Jews dramatically come to the understanding of Jesus, the Son of God by witnessing his death (27:51–54). In this way, the nations (i.e. all peoples, Gen 12:1–3; 17:1–18; 22:15–18) become subject to the blessing of God, imparted through the Son of Abraham (1:1). Here it becomes obvious that the blood of the covenant (τὸ αἷμά μου τῆς διαθήκης, 26:28 cf. the New Covenant, Jer 31:31–34) that Jesus establishes through his death perfects as well as exceeds the other covenants made between God of Israel and his people in the

²¹ Also consider Matt 8:11–12; 9:6; 15:21–28; 18:14; 26:28; 28:18–19.

past in terms of its quality and salvific scope benefiting both the Jews and the Gentiles.²² In truth, Jesus becomes the accursed one of God in place of his people whose identity in Matthew crosses over ethnic and socio-political boundaries. With this illumination and theological thrust which the MPN's irony insinuates, its ironically capable reader joins in the confession that Jesus Christ is truly the Son of David and the Son of Abraham (1:1), ushering in universal salvation for many (i.e. sinners, 17:22; 26:45; 27:38).

The Divine Victory Related by the MPN: The Results of the Cosmic Clash of the Christ-Event

The death of Jesus on the cross declares the divine triumphant. The irony of the cross which Jesus endures to bear is by no means the *locus* of permanent humiliation or defeat. Rather, it is where the cosmic clash between God and Satan occurs and the conflict between God's perspective and the Satanic perspective finds its resolution, i.e. the exposure of Satan's fundamental impotence and his irretrievable defeat in the ultimate battle with God.²³

God overturns the ordinary idea of victory and invests it with a new definition through the case of the seeming powerlessness of the crucified Jesus' kingship and divine sonship. The ironist of the MPN presents God in the quality of the archetypal ironist, "He who sits in heaven will laugh" (Ps 2:4) whose perspective the ironist adopts and with which he narrates the story of

²² In his explication of the relationship among literature, history and theology, Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, 122 suggests a useful assumption of the first century Jewish and Christian understanding of the divine saving/ covenantal actions in relation to all humans on the ground that Jews and Christians in the first century regarded the actual events in which they were taking part as possessing, in and of themselves, ultimate significance and they believed strongly that the events concerning Israel and her fate were not "bare events," but possessed an "inside," a "meaning," which transcended mere chronicle.

²³ The ironic manifestation of divine victory through the seeming defeat of Jesus on the cross recapitulates the divinely ordained conflict between the seed of the serpent (i.e. "the brood of vipers" in Matthew) and the Seed of Eve in Gen 3:13-15 (NKJ), "and the LORD God said to the woman, "what is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." So the LORD God said to the serpent, "because you have done this, you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."

Jesus. God is the ultimate authority over the salvation history and Jesus, the Son of God in whom God is well pleased (3:17; 17:5), satisfies every detail of the divine saving will, most radically through his death. The MPN witnesses to Jesus' absolute control over his death. Though on the surface the situation leading up to his passion seems to go terribly in the MPN, every incident occurs on the specific time table (ὁ καιρός μου, 26:18 cf. 8:29) and direction of Jesus.

The implied author of Matthew implicitly distinguishes the contrasting characters within the story whose conflict in ideas and values nurtures the presence of irony and intensifies its rhetorical function. God and Satan are part of the story world of Matthew; they are the important characters influencing the nature and actions of the other characters behind the curtain of the stage on which the lower level of the story is enacted.²⁴ As the disciples of Jesus are initially called out and taught by Jesus, the Son of God whose ideas and values are in a perfect harmony with God the Father, the chief opponents of Jesus, the Jewish religious leaders, are in an indissolubly tight association with Satan, whose intent is in total opposition to God and the principles of the Kingdom (i.e. rulership) of God (4:1–11; 16:21–23). Jesus alone among the story's characters plays the role of the normative, protagonistic, and paradigmatic ἥρωον (3:11–15; 21:23–27; 26:63–64; 27:11–14), willingly wearing a mask of lowliness in spite of his profound identity (1:1, 21; 3:17; 16:16; 17:1–5) and possession of the divine authority (7:29; 9:6; 8:27 cf. 28:18) in order to accomplish the saving will of God toward his people. The Jewish religious leaders, by stark contrast, comprise a corporate body in the role of the unlawful, antagonistic, and culpable ἀλαζών (the MPN's equivalent, πλάνοος, 27:63) as the opponents of Jesus. The Matthean narrative clearly identifies these opponents of Jesus as a single character group holding a communal trait, *evilness* (9:4; 12:34, 39, 45; 16:4; 22:18) originated from “the

²⁴ Powell, *Narrative*, 24–25 likewise considers God and Satan as characters or figures in the story.

evil one,” Satan (13:19, 38) because they are “the brood of vipers” (3:7; 12:34; 23:33) and “child of hell” (23:15) in a drastic contrast to the quality of Jesus as the Son of God who is *perfect* in God’s eyes (3:17; 17:5), and thus, so is his will. Yet, through the reversal which is irony, the victim of violence, the εἴρων, in his enduring silence and willing submission to the will of God (1:21; 3:15; 6:10; 18:14; 20:22, 28 26:28, 39, 54) turns out to be the ultimate victor, and the chief ἀλαζών in their willful rejection due to envy (φθόνος, 27:18), deception (δόλος, 26:4; πλάνη, 27:64), deadly blind self-confidence and blasphemous ignorance (9:3; 12:24; 26:65 cf. 27:39) become the victims of their own division and violence (12:22–28). As accomplices of Satan, they ultimately bring about what actually their leader (i.e. father, 3:7; 12:34; 23:15, 33) strives to halt from happening (4:8–10; 16:21–23). Therefore, the death of Jesus is where the divine perspective and the Satanic perspective clash, not in a sense of equality but in a sense of disequilibrium and defeat for the latter.

The cosmic checkmate that Jesus proleptically announces in his triumphant overcoming of the temptation by Satan in the wilderness (4:1–11) through his unyielding filial obedience to the will of God the Father, reemerges in the MPN, which offers the implicit image of Satan in a precipitous dilemma, neither moving forwards nor backwards while his associates make a wrong turn, unwittingly eschewing their master’s desire to hinder the divine will. Therefore, on the plane of the MPN’s irony, the ἀλαζών is by no means on par with the εἴρων, except in the sense that it constitutes diametrically contrasting qualities to the εἴρων. In essence, the death of Jesus seen through the lens of irony imports the idea of the cross victorious because God’s saving will has been climactically achieved in his Son’s death.²⁵ Therefore, on the theological landscape, the

²⁵ It is worth noting that the second-century apocryphal literature such as the Gospel of Peter (10:39–42) depicts the cross of the resurrected Jesus as the sign of the divine victory proclaiming the Gospel message to those who are sleeping that engenders faith in Jesus Christ. See Charles L. Quarles, “The Gospel of Peter,” in *The Resurrection of Jesus: John Dominic Crossan and N. T. Wright in Dialogue* (ed. Robert B. Stewart; Minneapolis:

death of Jesus on the cross—the definite sign of slavish and lowly punishment—causes a perspectival upheaval like an unprecedented earthquake, changing the scenery of Christian faith permanently. For the salvific death of Jesus on the cross ironically exposes Satan as impotent, even as the cross proclaims the unassailable and irreversible divine victory over death and the devil on a cosmic level.

Fortress, 2006), 106–120 for a scholarly treatment on this topic.

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VITA

InHee Cho

October 25, 1973

Seoul, South Korea

Collegiate Institutions Attended

Luther University, Seoul, South Korea, B.A in Theology, 1997

Graduate Institutions Attended

Luther Seminary, Seoul, South Korea, M.Div., 1999

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, U.S.A., M.A in Exegetical Theology, Biblical Studies, 2001

Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri, U.S.A., M.A in Classics, 2008

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, U.S.A., Ph.D in Exegetical Theology, Biblical Studies, 2008

Previous Theses and Publications

Translation, Good News Journal, Issue 12 on *Revelation*

Trinummus in Sixteen Plays of Plautus: An Encyclopedia with Bibliography. Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri, 2006

Truculentus in Sixteen Plays of Plautus: An Encyclopedia with Bibliography. Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri, 2006

An article, *The Matthean Theology of the Death of Jesus Seen through the Lens of Irony* read at SBL Regional Meeting (Central States) in St. Louis, Missouri, 2008

Psalms 1 in Student Devotions, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, 2003

Psalms 32 in Devotions for Lent, Joint Seminary Lenten Devotional for 2008, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri and Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Current Memberships in Academic Societies

SBL, AAR