Twitter Thread by The Chivalry Guild

The Chivalry Guild
@ChivalryGuild

A thread on sarcasm—

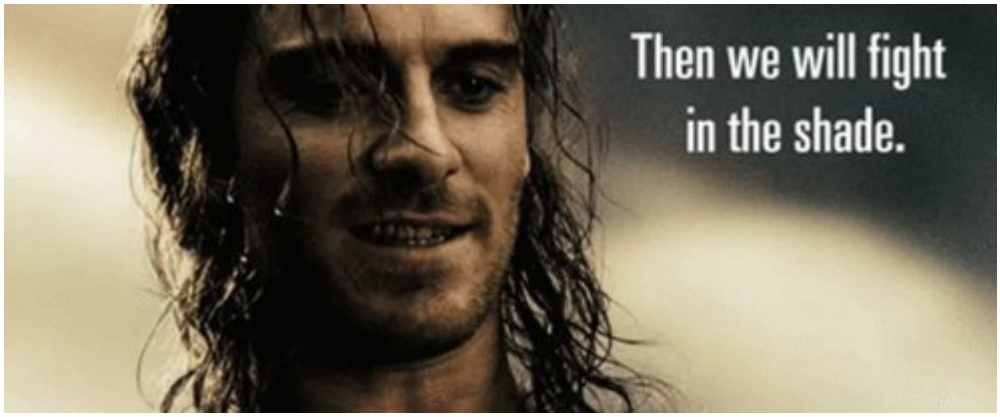


I posted the other day that we should be careful with sarcasm and was surprised by how many people thought I was against banter, wittiness, comic relief, ribbing your friends, dark humor, etc.

That is not the case! My problem with sarcasm is that it's not actually funny.

I get the impression that these critics would call Stelios (Dienekes) "sarcastic."

But this joke is not at all sarcastic.



Terms need to be defined. This entry from the Cambridge Dictionary captures sarcasm the most clearly:

sarcasm

noun [U]

US /ˈsɑːr.kæz.ᵊm/ **UK** /ˈsɑː.kæz.ᵊm/

the use of remarks that clearly mean the opposite of what they say, made in order to hurt someone's feelings or to criticize something in a humorous way:

- *"You have been working hard," he said with **heavy** sarcasm, as he looked at the empty page.*

Sarcasm is perfectly suited to those junior high exchanges in which someone asks an obvious question and the clever person throws the obviousness back in the face of the person who asked:

"Are you going to Johnny’s party?"
"Nooo, I’m going to be a total loser and stay home."

Sarcasm seems to reach its culmination in network sitcoms, which were a crucial part of my generation's education.

This is sarcasm (accompanied by a laugh track):



There’s something mediocre and small in true sarcasm—perhaps because sarcasm is so easy. There's also something brutal. The etymology of sarcasm goes back to the Greek sarkazein "to speak bitterly, sneer," literally "to strip off the flesh."

Thomas Carlisle wrote, "Sarcasm I now see to be, in general, the language of the devil; for which reason I have long since as good as renounced it."

https://t.co/zTmo911V9N

> It\u2019s always just a cheap shot disguised as humor. Occasionally it\u2019s done well - majority is just meanness. Prov 26:18,19 Like a madman who shoots fiery missiles, arrows, and death* 19 Is the man who plays a trick on his

> neighbor and says, \u201cI was only joking!\u201d
>
> — WesternWalking (@westernwalking) February 20, 2023

Sarcasm enthusiasts insist wit is involved. Urban Dictionary gives this example:
Guy 1: Oh, you're painting your fence today?
Guy 2: No, I'm milking cows on jupiter, while drinking light soda and driving.
Guy 1: Was that sarcasm?
Guy 2: Now, why would you think that?

Forgive me if I don’t see the wit. It actually seems to require very little wit to just say what is obviously not true.

https://t.co/uKtX4Huz42

> What this culture thinks is smart:
> Saying the opposite of what you mean.
>
> What is smart:
> Saying what you mean.
>
> Snark is not a substitute for wit.
>
> — Andrew Algra (@AndrewAlgra) February 19, 2023

I must confess that my problem is not just with sarcasm but also with irony, which is a much broader idea—too broad to properly address here. I worry that irony precludes the development of a heroic heart.

It teaches us to always hedge with our language, so as to avoid being caught genuinely liking something, which someone else might call "cringe."

Irony becomes a way of life which is not capable builds anything—it only criticizes, exposes, debunks. Irony also has a bad habit of admiring itself.

https://t.co/zDPhglJbFj

> A large part of this modern irony and sarcasm are a poison in our veins. It makes people act like twats and then they mock anything serious while being completely unfunny.
>
> — C\U0001f90dMFY (@AhComfy) February 20, 2023

One of the tragedies of tyrannical times like ours is that they might encourage or even necessitate sarcasm or irony. Speak indirectly, or else get the cancelled axe!

But this is obviously far from ideal, and even then these tools should be used with caution.

More and more, I’m feeling the need to be watchful of my words. Speech is a literally godlike power and should be used with great care. God spoke the universe into existence, and then created us in his image—which means our words have incredible power.

