

Contents

Acknowledgements | 8

Introduction | 9

Post-Postmodernism, Postirony, and New Sincerity | 10

Genre Matters | 11

Creative Nonfiction – Memoir and Autocriticism | 18

New Voices in Contemporary Literature | 21

Dave Eggers – Counter-Cultural Hero and Idealist | 23

David Foster Wallace – Changing the Tone of Contemporary Literature | 25

Jonathan Lethem and Nick Flynn – Postirony's 2nd Generation | 33

Synopsis | 34

Postirony – Conceptualizing an Idea | 37

Richard Rorty – The Liberal Ironist | 42

Linda Hutcheon – Irony's Edge | 46

David Foster Wallace – How Irony Spread | 47

Irony – An All-Embracing Attitude | 51

Jedediah Purdy – A Return to Traditional Values | 55

Alex Shakar – The Savage Girl | 57

The Postironic – A Philosophical Stand | 59

Reading the Postironic – Audience, Narrator, and Metalepsis | 65

Audiences – Preliminary Thoughts | 68

Metalepsis | 69

Audience – Narratee and Narrative Audience | 70

Dave Eggers – Living the Postironic | 89

Meta-Autobiography | 90

Trauma – True Feelings and the Plot | 92

The Nonfictional Frame | 95

Struggling With Postmodernism 100
“I Want to Be Doing Something Beautiful” –
Narrating Dave and Narrated Dave 105
The Narrated Dave 110
The Narrating Dave and His Audience 117
Justifying the Narrative 120
Concluding <i>AHWOSG</i> 123

David Foster Wallace – Hope and Despair; The Postironic Condition | 127

“Author’s Foreword” – Faking Memoir, Talking Truth 131
The Audience and the Autobiographical 135
Subjectivity, Veracity, Sincerity 139
“Author’s Foreword” Part II –
Autocriticism, the Reader, and Postirony 142
A Supposedly Fun Thing I’ll Never Do Again 148
The Text Within the Text – Critique as Reassurance 152
The Wallace Style – Footnotes, Asides, and Metafiction 155
Free Choice vs. Pampered Into Despair 156
Desperation Cruise 161
Concluding “Fun Thing” 164
Consider the Lobster 166
The Audience of the Lobster 170
Concluding Wallace 171

A Second Generation Emerges | 175

Nick Flynn – Reenacting Memoir 175
Jonathan Lethem – Postironic Ecstasy 185

Conclusion | 191

Identifying the Enemy – Irony’s Reign 193
The Nonfictional Frame 195
Autobiography – Postironic Idiosyncrasies 196
Reading Postironic Differences 197
Postirony in Autobiography 198
Postirony in Autocritical Essays 198
Concluding Thoughts 199

Works Cited | 201

What's engaging and artistically real is, taking it as axiomatic that the present is grotesquely materialistic, how is it that we as human beings still have the capacity for joy, charity, genuine connections, for stuff that doesn't have a price? And can these capacities be made to thrive? And if so, how, and if not why not?

David Foster Wallace 1993