Contents

INTRODUCTION You Are Being Sarcastic, Dude 1 *The Argument 9*

CHAPTER ONE

Good Morning, America 15

The Ironist Sensibility: A Poorly Drawn Sketch 29 Two Manifestations of a Social Character: Ironic & Cool 35 Cool 45 Recent Talk about Contemporary Irony 52 Irony & Cynicism 59 An Extended Note on Nostalgia 68

CHAPTER TWO

Excursus on the Genesis of Irony as a Worldview 73 Irony in an Early American Vein: Two Figures Every American Ought to Know 81

CHAPTER THREE

European Romanticism Ushers in New Meanings of Irony 87 *Romanticism 89 German Romantic Irony 96 Søren Kierkegaard 104 Modernism Redux 108*

Fun, pop culturey, refs to known things

CHAPTER FOUR

Irony and Civic Trust 111 Irony Is Just Another Word for the Disintegration of Measurable Social Capital 115 Jeremiads: The Social Tonic 130

CHAPTER FIVE

Trust, Civil Society, and the Social Contract 147 Social Contract 155 Protestant Values in the Social Contract 162

CHAPTER SIX

The Descent of Inner Dependence 173 Augustine 175 Reformation 178 Calvinism and the Self 184

CHAPTER SEVEN

Inward, Christian Soldiers 195 An American Religion 202 Emerson 205

The Wake of Romanticism 209 And Now: The Debate Recast! 212 Resolve 219 Elected Official, Heal Thyself 223

CHAPTER EIGHT Conclusion (i.e. Everything Summed Up Nicely) 227

Notes 235 Bibliography 247 Index 257 More serious, less fun, but more substantial

Again like beginning