

THE FORMATION OF IRONIC SUBJECTIVITY THROUGH PSYCHOTHERAPY

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Abstract: This paper examines the concept of irony as developed in Kierkegaard's The Concept of Irony and proposes it as a lens for reinterpreting key aspects of personal construct psychology. Drawing on George Kelly's epistemological foundations, it argues that constructivist psychotherapy can be understood as an inherently ironic process—one that fosters subjects who recognize the contingency of their self-constructions. Richard Rorty's notion of the "ironist," along with his critique of metaphysics, is brought into dialogue with constructivist psychotherapy to illuminate both the generative possibilities and the tensions introduced by this perspective. By integrating Rorty's neopragmatist framework with constructivist theory, the paper offers a rethinking of therapeutic aims, positioning psychotherapy as a space for the formation of ironic subjectivity rather than the discovery of stable truths.

Keywords: Personal Construct Psychology, Irony, Neopragmatism, Authenticity.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Constructivist psychotherapy rests on a foundational philosophy that Kelly (1955) called constructive alternativism. Where traditional philosophies imagine knowledge as something to discover, Kelly recast it as invention, an ongoing readiness to rebuild our interpretive framework whenever the old one no longer holds. Kelly's epistemology tells us that no experience comes to us raw. It is always filtered through our constructs that give it shape and meaning. Because there is no unmediated access to a reality "as it is," we remain bound to the task of redescribing it, endlessly trying out new narratives that might serve us better than the ones we already have.

In constructivist psychotherapy, meaning is not seen as something a therapist imparts to their client, but something co-created through a

careful examination of the client's own experiential and relational world. Constructivist therapists avoid interpreting a client's experiences through normative assumptions about pathology. Instead, they work phenomenologically, listening closely to the client's evolving life narrative. Kelly's broader project can be seen as developing methods to map these meaning systems and support the experimentation needed for their reconstruction. The process is never epistemologically neutral, however, even if it avoids privileging particular value systems. Meaning may not be imposed, but the method is. Kelly's personal construct psychology is a relational theory, so the therapist's own system of constructs inevitably enters into the encounter. These constructs, whether personal or professional, are not reducible to cognitive instruments that one can suspend by remaining silent. They are embodied dispositions that

operate beyond language. Kelly's theory of symbolism makes this explicit, treating words as only one kind of construct element among many. Elements may take the form of memories, images, bodily sensations, gestures, or postures or any of the subtle events that belong to our experience (Kelly, 1955). In therapy, both verbal and nonverbal expressions belong to the personal construct system and thus function as potential vehicles of communication, each carrying the possibility of being woven into the client's transference. The psychoanalyst Steven Soldz called Kelly's theory the psychology of transference, because of its radical relational approach and lauded it as successfully leaving behind outmoded psychoanalytic metapsychological assumptions while perfecting its relational approach (Soldz, 1990).

Fischer and Kächele's (2009) study compellingly demonstrates that the symbolic life of patients mirrors the theoretical foundations of their therapists. Early in treatment, dreams adopt the symbolic logic of a Jungian or Freudian framing, for those clients that seek therapy with Jungian or psychoanalytic psychotherapists. Meanwhile, Moreira and Gonçalves (2010) reveal that the richness and structural complexity of a client's narrative evolve in tandem with the therapist's theoretical allegiance. The narrative process becomes more or less complex depending on the theoretical framework the therapist brings to the encounter. Together, these findings undercut any pretense of a neutral space in therapy. The therapist's theoretical lens doesn't merely guide intervention; it shapes the very narrative architecture through which clients shape their worlds.

Lee, Neimeyer, and Rice (2013) set out to investigate how a therapist's epistemological orientation, specifically whether it leans toward constructivism or rationalism, shapes the tone and mechanics of therapeutic engagement. Constructivist therapists appear to prioritize dialogue, co-creation, and unfolding narrative, whereas rationalist therapists tend to rely on structured, analytical interventions rooted in logic and instructive persuasion. Their empirical

findings show that constructivist practitioners not only demonstrate greater flexibility, allowing interpretations to track the rhythms of clients' own stories, but also cultivate stronger working alliances, founded on dynamic therapeutic distance and mutual attunement. Compared to rationalists, they exhibit more technical adaptability, tailoring interventions in responsive and often spontaneous ways that honor the emergent logic of the therapeutic encounter.

These cited studies show that even the simplest interventions in psychotherapy carry the imprint of the therapist's theory. In constructivist practice, routine questions illustrate this clearly. Asking, "What is the opposite of X?" presupposes Kelly's notion that constructs are inherently bipolar, that meaning requires the tension between opposing poles of each construct in a complex system of constructs. Similarly, the question "Why is this important?" assumes that clients organize experience hierarchically, reflecting PCP's claim that some constructs hold greater significance than others. These two examples reveal how even seemingly neutral queries are suffused with theoretical commitments, shaping the way clients are invited to make sense of their worlds even if we don't impose any particular meaning onto our clients. A constructivist therapist does not *teach* theory to clients. Nevertheless, the questions the therapist asks inevitably bear the imprint of how they think and of what they are able to hear, both of which are, in turn, shaped by constructivist commitments. A question is therefore never a benign or neutral intervention, even when posed within a deliberately non-directive stance, as is often the case in constructivist therapy. Through questioning, therapists tacitly highlight what counts as salient, invite certain forms of reflection rather than others, and thus enact their theoretical outlook. Such findings and conclusions invite a deeper question: what kind of subjectivity is cultivated through long-term constructivist psychotherapy? When clients tacitly take up some of our theoretical assumptions, what consequences does this have for how they come to understand themselves and how they go on to live their lives? This paper proposes that one

outcome of reconstructive constructivist therapy is the formation of an *ironic subjectivity*.

2. UNKNOWING AS METHOD

Colebrook (2004) points out that irony has several meanings, often creating confusion. This paper will present a continuous and evolving understanding of irony originating from Quintilian's conception that begins with Plato's Socrates. This conception of irony relies on a "sense of life's capacity to thwart language and understanding" (Colebrook, 2004, p. 22).

By feigning ignorance Socrates does not merely invite answers but orchestrates a space in which interlocutors must confront what they believe they know and articulate the contours of their own thinking. Hegel reads this irony not as a clever trick but as a philosophical posture that exposes the inadequacy of received and unquestioned wisdom. Socratic irony is fundamentally subversive.

Kierkegaard (1989) insists that Socrates' ignorance is not an act, but a lived commitment to self-examination and the ongoing negotiation of what counts as truth. In this light, the Socratic method models a practice in which knowing and not-knowing are entwined, a continual process that unsettles superficial certainties and opens the way for new ways of construing one's world. In dialogues like *Euthyphro*, Socratic irony does not aim to produce knowledge in the conventional sense. Rather, these dialogues often culminate in *aporia*, a state of profound puzzlement that suspends resolution and opens the space for deeper inquiry. The aim of Socratic irony is not to create knowledge, but to question it (Colebrook, 2004; Stewart, 2015).

Hegel, in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, regarded this gesture as a historic rupture, a mental turning point, one of the pivotal points in the development of Western thought. By questioning received wisdom, Socrates introduces inwardness into ethical life, dislocating the source of authority from the external polis to the interiority of the self (Hegel, 2021; Stewart, 2015). Even the simplest examples of irony found

in Plato's dialogues represent an entirely new form of moral consciousness (Colebrook, 2004; Vlastos, 1991). This is why, when we talk about irony, we are talking about subjectivity, not cognition or rhetorics.

Platonic dialogues suggest that Socrates was guided by an inner voice, the daimon, whose sole function was to negate. Whatever he believed or whatever the polis decreed, this voice challenged and unsettled it, creating a constant tension between public norms and private reflection. In embodying the daimon, Socrates enacts a radical form of ironic subjectivity. His autonomy is not affirmed through assertions but through the persistent refusal to accept ready-made truths. His irony is not ornamental rhetoric for debate; it is a disciplined practice of negation, a continual distancing from the conventions and assumptions that structure everyday life, and a subtle, yet profound, subversion of authority. Precisely because of the latter, Hegel (2021) writes that, while Socrates was right to doubt everything, the Athenians were right to kill him, as his presence was disruptive for the political life of the polis. What is particularly important to note about the daimon is that it represents neither an objectively external entity nor a direct affirmation of the subjective will of Socrates. Instead, the daimon is located in between, neither subjective nor objective, but instead as an impersonal presence that takes no sides (Stewart, 2015). The significance of Socrates is poignantly summarized by Stewart (2015, p. 44):

What Socrates was doing was undermining the traditions, public morality, and values of the state. Socrates set off a revolution that led to the recognition of the individual as something absolute and irreducible. In this sense he is the forerunner of some of the values of our modern world. So it is natural that from our perspective today we find him a sympathetic figure. Hegel reminds us, however, that this should not make us lose sight of the radicality of Socrates' message in his own time.

Kierkegaard (1989) believed that irony plays a role in shaping human subjectivity comparable to

the role of doubt in scientific inquiry. Science cannot exist without a critical stance, without doubt that is systematic and methodical. Similarly, a fully human existence similarly requires the presence of irony.

3. FROM ROMANTICISM TO AUTHENTICITY

Søren Kierkegaard wrote his doctoral thesis on irony and published it in 1841 as *On the Concept of Irony with Continual Reference to Socrates* (Kierkegaard, 1989). In this book, he redefines irony as a mode of being and an existential stance that allows us to find our own authenticity. The central thesis is that irony is a mode of existence that involves a tension between infinite freedom and finite existence, between authenticity and belonging, autonomy and dependence on social structures. For Kierkegaard, irony is simultaneously a liberating force, fostering autonomy and critical thought, and a potentially unsettling or isolating stance, because it places the individual in a relation of constant questioning and consequential incompleteness. Kierkegaard sharpens the concept of irony by differentiating its two important operative modes, each defined by a distinct engagement with meaning and ironists' relational commitments.

Romantic irony operates as a free-floating, deconstructive force, endlessly unravelling inherited structures without offering reconstruction, in its extreme, a kind of nihilistic play with signification (Stewart, 2015). Mastered irony, by contrast, is a disciplined posture, a reflective detachment that supports the ethical work of self-formation. In this mode, ironic inquiry allows the individual to step back from unexamined beliefs and socially inherited norms, allowing authentic commitment to self and others to slowly emerge and continue to be scrutinized as one goes through one's life. Stewart (2015) recognizes mastered irony, as Kierkegaard's form of irony, being distinct from but a continuation of Socratic irony, and distinct from the detached Romantic irony which doubts and subverts for the sake of doubting and subverting. Mastered

irony leads to disobedience, just like Socratic irony or Romantic irony, but unlike the latter, it does not aim to destroy society nor meaning, but to question and emancipate the ironist from the flawed social order. This aspect of mastered irony leads a person not to abandon their connection to the society, but to engage more deeply.

Kierkegaard's study of irony is inseparable from his critique of the German Romantic tradition, which he encountered and studied through figures such as Schlegel and Novalis. Romantic irony, in his reading, embodies a restless, almost anarchic play with meaning. It continually negates inherited cultural and philosophical norms, exposing the underlying contingency of all claims to knowledge, beauty, and truth. While exposing such contingencies is not incompatible with mastered irony, the Romantic ironic subject delights in the endless mobility of signification, taking pleasure in the constant and infinite negation of conceptual frameworks. As Kierkegaard (1989) argues, this form of irony fails to anchor itself in any ethical or existential project, remaining untethered. It is emancipatory in its critique, yet nihilistic in its refusal and inability to guide the self toward a constructive mode of existence. Romantic irony is, therefore, a form of perpetual critique without creation, an engagement with freedom that risks leaving the subject suspended in paralyzing doubt or indeterminacy.

Mastered irony retains the critical, distancing function of irony, the capacity to expose the provisional nature of inherited beliefs and socially sanctioned truths, but it situates this capacity within a disciplined, ethical framework. Unlike the Romantic ironic subject, the practitioner of mastered irony does not remain in infinite deconstruction. Rather, irony is harnessed as a reflective instrument through which the individual can examine the structures of their own consciousness and the norms they have absorbed. In this sense, mastered irony functions dialectically. It negates unexamined beliefs, creating distance from uncritical adherence to convention, but it does so with the explicit aim of reconstructing the self as an autonomous ethical agent.

Mastered irony is inseparable from Kierkegaard's broader existential project. It is an ethical stance as much as an epistemological one. Irony enables the subject to navigate the tension between finite existence and infinite possibility, between socially inherited norms and the demands of authentic selfhood. By engaging in ironic reflection, the individual cultivates a form of self-conscious freedom that is neither purely skeptical nor merely playful, but disciplined, purposeful, and oriented toward the formation of a coherent, self-directed life. The irony of Socrates, which Kierkegaard elevates as the paradigmatic model, exemplifies this process. The Socratic professed ignorance destabilizes assumptions and opens a space for dialogue, yet it is exercised with a view toward cultivating virtue and insight. Mastered irony, then, is not the suspension of judgment for its own sake but the deliberate creation of reflective distance as a precondition for ethical deliberation and commitment.

Kierkegaard's critique of Romantic irony and his formulation of mastered irony together show a central tension in modern thought, the balance between the liberatory potential of critique and the ethical imperative of self-formation. Romantic irony demonstrates the power of critical reflection to undermine received meanings, yet without disciplined direction it risks engendering alienation or nihilism. Mastered irony, by contrast, channels the deconstructive capacity of irony into the (re)constructive mission of authentic selfhood.

Kierkegaard's vision aligns with constructivist psychology in that authenticity is not a given but a project constantly in the process of becoming. This entails continual engagement with others in both Kierkegaard's thought and in Kelly's personal construct psychology (PCP). Kierkegaard anticipates Kelly's process thinking and sees the self as being a form of motion rather than a static entity (Kelly, 1955). Ironic existence facilitates and directs this perpetual motion in the direction that the ironist consciously chooses. If the self is seen as a deeply personal and ongoing revision of one's commitments to one's needs and significant

others, mastered irony becomes a necessary tool for such ethical work, it allows the person to interrogate their constructs without collapsing into meaninglessness.

4. VOCABULARY AND EMBODIMENT

Richard Rorty was a leading figure in contemporary pragmatism, known for his rejection of foundationalist epistemology and his argument that knowledge is contingent, conversational, and rooted in social practices. His work remains both influential and controversial for challenging traditional conceptions of truth and objectivity, while proposing a vision of philosophy as a cultural endeavor aimed at fostering freedom and solidarity rather than uncovering universal truth. Frazier (2006) sees Rorty as successfully continuing Kierkegaard's project of bringing Socratic irony into contemporary life. The constructivist tone of Rorty's philosophy has been elaborated previously, through Kelly's and Rorty's shared pragmatic heritage (Miletic, 2017).

Rorty's conception of irony articulated in *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (1989/2007), highlights the contingency of language, selfhood, and belief more generally. The ironist is someone who refrains from treating their own self and the beliefs it contains as universal or final, emphasizing the contingent and fluid nature of both social practices and self-structures. This stance allows the individual to remain open to alternative modes of being while fostering a reflective distance from their own beliefs, a quality Rorty sees as central to personal freedom and democratic engagement with others.

Rorty defines the ironist by leaning on three criteria (Rorty, 1989/2007):

1. An ironist has "radical and continuing doubts" about her¹ final vocabulary, because she has witnessed others with vastly different explanatory powers;

¹ Pronoun assignment is Rorty's. He refers to ironists as females and metaphysicians as males.

2. She realizes that her own vocabulary can never dissolve doubts about its own contingency;
3. She does not think that her vocabulary is closer to reality than others.

Rorty (1989/2007) defines the final vocabulary as that point at which attempts to justify a belief turn into a kind of circular reasoning, when we have no higher concepts to appeal to in order to justify a part of our vocabulary. In PCP terms, final vocabularies are roughly the same as core structures. The vocabulary is final in the sense that it represents a core of one's subjectivity, but it remains open to change just like core constructs. Much like core constructs, a person's final vocabulary is neither solely cognitive nor verbal (Miletic, 2017; Rorty, 1989/2007).

Rorty's notion of redescription (Rorty, 1989/2007) is a process which involves substituting a vocabulary or enriching it in a way that produces new meaning, effectively altering the ironist's sense of reality. Redescription involves a number of changes from a PCP point of view, but most importantly it includes reconstructive change.

The ironist's epistemology is constructivist. Ironists rather think in terms of narratives than correspondence. Ironists are interested in narrative pluralism rather than settling on one story. It is in this context that we can best understand the doubts Rorty talks about in connection to ironist subjectivity (Rorty, 1989/2007). These are not paralyzing doubts, but the ironist's way of being in the world, her particular way of relating to herself, not a source of anxiety so much as an embodied awareness of one's own contingency. These doubts keep her attentive and animated in her ongoing project of redescription (reconstruction).

An ironist recognizes that her worldview is shaped by her particular vocabulary - a vocabulary formed through countless contingencies, including the shifting influences of culture and her own past experiences. Beyond this vocabulary, she has no access to the world "as it is in itself". In this sense, Rorty's ironist can

be seen as a thoroughgoing constructivist. Her way of being in the world is grounded in this awareness, enabling her to critically reflect on and revise her vocabulary whenever she encounters situations that might be better addressed through alternative ways of speaking.

Importantly, this ironic stance is not merely epistemic but *existential*. Rorty's ironist does not reject reality, she remains embedded in it. Her irony is embodied in her willingness to change, to respond, to redescribe herself while maintaining her relational commitments. In this way, irony becomes a stance of *engaged openness* rather than cynical withdrawal. In Kierkegaardian terms, Rorty's ironist is an embodiment of mastered irony.

Rorty also provides us with the opposite pole of irony, allowing us to frame this tradition of thought, from Socrates to Kierkegaard, in a fully constructivist way, in the form of a bipolar. While irony occupies one pole, marked by doubt, contingency, and the playful redescription of our most central beliefs when new experiences call for it, its opposite is metaphysics, the way of being that treats language as anchored in ultimate reality. From this metaphysical position, our words are not seen as provisional tools but as mirrors of what truly is, carrying the promise of uncovering a final vocabulary that captures the world once and for all.

For the metaphysician, the task of thought is to discover rather than create, to reveal the necessary structures underlying different phenomena (and his own subjectivity) rather than to experiment with new ways of speaking. Where the ironist views all vocabularies as contingent products of human imagination, the metaphysician experiences their own worldview as inevitable and binding. Thus, the irony–metaphysics construct captures a fundamental tension between the openness of redescription and the stability of truth conceived as timeless and final. For Rorty, the metaphysician relies on common sense in the absence of irony. Here, common sense refers to the metaphysician's inability to recognize inherited vocabularies as contingent.

5. IRONIC SUBJECTIVITY AND CONSTRUCTIVIST PSYCHOTHERAPY

While it is a staple of constructivist therapy to refrain from imposing meaning, research cited at the beginning of this paper shows that something certainly is imposed. Perhaps a constructivist psychotherapist won't impose meaning in the sense of dictating values or giving advice, but they will certainly produce a very specific interpersonal space that will influence the client's decision-making and thinking. The therapist's presence in the therapy room, as well as the questions they choose to ask, imparts certain ideas that become embedded in the client's psyche. The client will learn to see the world as a constructivist, and they will begin to structure at least some aspects of their experience through a constructivist lens, a theory they may not know, but a theory that they internalize and embody. Their choices and ways of understanding themselves will begin to reflect constructivist ideas – epistemology and phenomenology.

As this overview of existential perspectives on irony demonstrates, fostering ironic subjects does not involve imposing any particular set of values. An ironist is free to hold a wide spectrum of values. What distinguishes the ironist from the metaphysician is not the content of construing, rather the way the ironist relates to them. The metaphysician takes his values as being objective and timeless, whereas the ironist is aware of their contingent nature.

Irony as a form of subjectivity contains within itself core constructivist ideas. Irony, understood through a constructivist lens, is deeply tied to epistemology, through its negativity, aiming to undermine claims to knowledge and places doubt at the core of its relationship to structures, self-structures and other power structures. It reveals that our knowledge is never final or absolute but is always contextual, relational, and contingent, shaped by the interpretive frameworks we inhabit. Kierkegaard emphasized that our deepest commitments (ethical, spiritual, relational) are ultimately leaps of faith, choices not grounded in certainty but in lived, ongoing engagement with the world. From this perspective, irony arises

when we recognize the fragility of these commitments and the impossibility of securing a final, ultimate foundation for them.

Rorty's idea of the ironist captures this stance perfectly. The ironist embodies a form of mastered irony: they see their own beliefs, vocabularies, and identities as historically constructed and revisable, yet they continue to live and act within them, realizing their values and relational commitments as best as they know in the moment never forgetting that, just like everything else, they too must be forms of motion. This is not a detached cynicism but a way of being that embraces fluidity and impermanence, accepting that who we are is always in the making. Rorty's ironist must be seen in the light of Hegel's understanding of Socratic irony. This is not cognitive posturing, not a rhetorical device, but a way of being in the world, as a relational being, as a being forever bound to groundless and hypothetical knowledge claims. By holding our constructs lightly - aware of their contingency yet committed to them in the moment - we can engage in relationships and projects without clinging to fixed truths. This form of irony enables us to move, adapt, and transform, living fully within the tension of never fully arriving, never standing still.

6. THERAPY AS PRODUCTION OF IRONY

Psychotherapy, at its core, is a process of transformation. Individuals typically enter therapy with the aim of change. Traditionally, this change has been framed in terms of symptom reduction, the generation of insight, or the resolution of internal conflicts (Bateman & Holmes, 1995).

From a constructivist perspective, however, the focus is not merely on healing a fixed self, but on reshaping the ways in which individuals relate to their own narratives, roles, and identities. Constructivists understand both life and the person as ongoing processes (Leitner, 2019; Kelly, 1955). Addressing one complaint or resolving one internal conflict is inevitably provisional, for the continuous flow of reality will give rise to new challenges, conflicts, and insights. Our

commitment to personal choice, freedom and autonomy is bound to clash with our relational commitments, continuously presenting us with relational and ethical challenges, asking us to develop more creative ways to show reverence and honour those that we relate to and who help us co-create our systems of constructs (Leitner, 2019). The therapeutic goal, then, is to enable clients to consciously guide their own development, making informed choices grounded in enhanced self-awareness and a deliberately chosen direction, aware of the relational contingency of their own being. In other words, clients are invited to traverse the three cycles Kelly describes, while recognizing that none of these cycles is definitive and that their outcomes are always contingent and potentially unstable.

Within this framework, irony emerges as a unique and powerful tool. Irony allows clients to step outside of their taken-for-granted constructs, viewing their beliefs and self-understanding not as immutable truths but as contingent, historically situated creations, stories that could have been different, and can still become different. By fostering this ironic way of being, psychotherapy can help clients engage with their experiences more flexibly, opening the possibility for profound and ongoing personal transformation. Creating ironic subjects in psychotherapy means cultivating a form of awareness in which clients can hold their commitments and values critically but meaningfully. This does not mean detachment or cynicism. As Richard Rorty argues, the ironist is someone who recognizes the revisability of their vocabulary while continuing to live fully within it. An ironist can acknowledge that their current way of making sense of the world is not final or absolute yet still act with passion and responsibility. From a therapeutic standpoint, this shift is invaluable: it enables clients to approach their suffering, relationships, and goals as ongoing processes, rather than fixed problems to be solved once and for all and turns their existence into a particular form of subjectivity capable of undermining itself when the world and their own needs call for it.

In constructivist psychotherapy, we already create ironic subjects, at least partially and

unconsciously. Research by Lee, Neimeyer and Rice (2013) and Moreira and Goncalves (2010) suggests that even without wanting to do so, constructivists shape the psychological life of their clients with constructivist theory. Doing so fully, consciously and intentionally would involve psychotherapy deliberately guiding clients toward this stance, accentuating those aspects of the therapeutic process that reinforce the ironist way of being.

Many forms of psychological distress arise when individuals cling too tightly to their constructions, treating them as unquestionable truths. While being a metaphysician gives one certainty, it also makes one destined to suffer in a world that constantly changes, where every construction eventually has to be replaced. Irony provides a different pathway: rather than simply replacing one construct with another in therapy, the client learns to experience all constructs as provisional, opening space for flexibility, play, and creativity. In this way, therapy becomes not merely a process of substitution but of superordinate level transformation. What we transform are not values; instead, a set of constructs is created in the core structure that allows a person to go through life in such a way that they are able to go through successive reconstructions and other adjustments that the ongoing process of living brings about.

Furthermore, irony supports existential and relational freedom, both values supported and encouraged by PCP. Kierkegaard spoke of the necessity of passionate commitments in the face of uncertainty, while also recognizing that these commitments are made without ultimate guarantees. Psychotherapy that incorporates irony does not strip clients of their values or relationships; rather, it equips them to relate to those values differently. By learning to embrace life as a series of ongoing revisions, clients can engage more deeply with others, free from the rigidity of needing to defend their current self-narrative at all costs. This stance fosters resilience and adaptability, allowing individuals to navigate transitions, losses, and conflicts without losing their sense of agency.

In a world marked by rapid social and cultural change, psychotherapy's task is not merely to restore individuals to a previous equilibrium, but to prepare them to live well amid flux and uncertainty. By intentionally fostering ironic subjectivity, therapy can help clients develop the capacity to remain engaged and committed while knowing that nothing is ever final. This vision reframes psychotherapy as a space not only for healing but also for existential growth, cultivating selves who are always in motion, always able to act decisively knowing and embracing the contingent nature of their present-moment subjectivity.

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