

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-05081-5 - Nietzsche's Last Laugh: Ecce Homo as Satire

Nicholas D. More

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

NIETZSCHE'S LAST LAUGH

Nietzsche's *Ecce Homo* was published posthumously in 1908, eight years after his death, and has been variously described ever since as useless, mad, or merely inscrutable. Against this backdrop, Nicholas D. More provides the first complete and compelling analysis of the work, and argues that this so-called autobiography is instead a satire. This form enables Nietzsche to belittle bad philosophy by comic means, attempt reconciliation with his painful past, review and unify his disparate works, insulate himself with humor from the danger of "looking into abysses," and establish wisdom as a special kind of "good taste." After showing how to read this much-maligned book, More argues that *Ecce Homo* presents the best example of Nietzsche making sense of his own intellectual life, and that its unique and complex parody of traditional philosophy makes a powerful case for reading Nietzsche as a philosophical satirist across his corpus.

NICHOLAS D. MORE is Professor of Philosophy at Westminster College.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-05081-5 - Nietzsche's Last Laugh: Ecce Homo as Satire

Nicholas D. More

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-05081-5 - Nietzsche's Last Laugh: Ecce Homo as Satire

Nicholas D. More

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

NIETZSCHE'S LAST LAUGH

Ecce Homo as Satire

NICHOLAS D. MORE



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-05081-5 - Nietzsche's Last Laugh: Ecce Homo as Satire
Nicholas D. More
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education,
learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107050815

© Nicholas D. More 2014

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without the written
permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2014

Printed in the United Kingdom by Clays, St Ives plc

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-107-05081-5 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of
URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication,
and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain,
accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-05081-5 - Nietzsche's Last Laugh: Ecce Homo as Satire

Nicholas D. More

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

for Tico

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-05081-5 - Nietzsche's Last Laugh: Ecce Homo as Satire

Nicholas D. More

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

We must rest from ourselves occasionally by contemplating and looking down upon ourselves, and by laughing or weeping over ourselves from an artistic remoteness.

Nietzsche (*GS* 107)

There's nothing we philosophers like better than to be mistaken for artists.

Nietzsche to Georg Brandes, 4 May 1888 (*KGB* 3.5.1030)

That the deepest spirit must also be the most frivolous, this is almost the formula for my philosophy: it could be that I, above all other 'greats,' have indeed become cheerful in an unlikely manner.

Nietzsche to Ferdinand Avenarius,
10 December 1888 (*KGB* 3.5.1183)

Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>page</i> ix
<i>Abbreviations, citations, sources</i>	x
Prologue	I
Introduction	2
<i>Ecce Homo's</i> reception	3
Ways of reading Nietzsche	5
Secondary literature on <i>Ecce Homo</i>	8
Principles and structure of the present study	18
PART I WHAT IS <i>ECCE HOMO</i> ?	21
1 Nietzsche deigns to read himself	23
2 A question of genre	27
PART II WHAT IS THE MEANING OF <i>ECCE HOMO</i> ?	37
3 <i>Ecce Homo</i> as satire: analysis and commentary	39
The title: <i>Ecce Homo</i>	39
The subtitle: <i>How One Becomes What One Is</i>	44
The Foreword	48
“On this perfect day . . .”	57
Why I Am So Wise	59
Why I Am So Clever	87
Why I Write Such Excellent Books	101
The Birth of Tragedy	114
The Untimely Ones	125
Human, All Too Human	128
Daybreak	147
The Gay Science	165

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-05081-5 - Nietzsche's Last Laugh: Ecce Homo as Satire
Nicholas D. More
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

viii

Contents

Thus Spoke Zarathustra	168
Beyond Good and Evil	178
On the Genealogy of Morals	179
Twilight of the Idols	184
The Case of Wagner	188
Why I Am a Destiny	196
PART III WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF <i>ECCE HOMO</i> ?	205
Conclusion	207
<i>Bibliography</i>	212
<i>Index</i>	222

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-05081-5 - Nietzsche's Last Laugh: Ecce Homo as Satire

Nicholas D. More

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Kathy Higgins, Bob Solomon, Louis Mackey, and to Louis's student, Mark Jordan. Their guidance and kind words over a span of many years made this work possible in ways I am sure they do not realize. Thanks also to Mark Murray, Betty Kane, Jim Staley, Joe Sullivan, Kent Emery, Katherine Tillman, Stephen Rogers, Dan Smith, Bud Luepke, Ellen Bergen Ruggia, Christopher Middleton, Nina Sidhra, Karen Mottola, Damian Love, Kabilan Selvakumar, Michelle Birke Paustenbaugh, Mary Beth Mader, Margret Grebowicz, Thomas Kammel, Kelly Oliver, Richard Badenhausen, Mary Jane Chase, Michael Popich, Laura Landon, Friedrich Nietzsche, and my dear siblings and parents. I extend special thanks to Teresa Knight and Craig Waterman for discussing many of this book's ideas with me and reading various complete drafts. Separate sabbatical leaves from Westminster College supported the principal writing and later revision of the work; I am grateful to this bastion's support of teaching and scholarship, and to my many students and colleagues who encourage and renew my thinking every fall and spring. Thanks to my current readers – I encourage you to write to me after marking this book. Parts of the present work were first published as an article in *Philosophy and Literature*, 35/1 (2011), 1–15 (“Nietzsche's Last Laugh: *Ecce Homo* as Satire,” copyright © 2011 The Johns Hopkins University Press), reprinted with permission by The Johns Hopkins University. My thanks to Garry Hagberg and Denis Dutton for their kind support. I offer additional thanks to Dee Mortensen and several anonymous readers, both at Cambridge University Press and elsewhere, whose comments and criticisms helped make this a better discussion all around. Thank you as well to Rob Lock at Hart McLeod for the arrestingly arch book cover design. Finally, special thanks to my editor Hilary Gaskin, and to Anna Lowe, Emma Collison, Fleur Jones, Joanna Breeze, and everyone at Cambridge for their timely good cheer and professional excellence; I owe them a great deal for bringing this book to fruition in its present form. And yet – all my gratitude and love to Tico, the best comic thinker I know, or could ever hope to know. I always write with you in mind.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-05081-5 - Nietzsche's Last Laugh: Ecce Homo as Satire

Nicholas D. More

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Abbreviations, citations, sources*

In quoting a passage from Nietzsche, I have abbreviated the fourteen works he intended and prepared for publication according to the English translation of the title, as follows:

<i>AC</i>	<i>The Antichrist</i>
<i>BGE</i>	<i>Beyond Good and Evil</i>
<i>BT</i>	<i>The Birth of Tragedy</i>
<i>CW</i>	<i>The Case of Wagner</i>
<i>D</i>	<i>Daybreak</i>
<i>DD</i>	<i>Dithyrambs of Dionysus</i>
<i>EH</i>	<i>Ecce Homo</i>
<i>GM</i>	<i>On the Genealogy of Morals</i>
<i>GS</i>	<i>The Gay Science</i>
<i>HH</i>	<i>Human, All Too Human</i>
<i>NCW</i>	<i>Nietzsche Contra Wagner</i>
<i>TI</i>	<i>Twilight of the Idols</i>
<i>UM</i>	<i>Untimely Meditations</i>
<i>Z</i>	<i>Thus Spoke Zarathustra</i>

Chapter and section or aphorism number, not page numbers, follow the book's abbreviation. For example, "TI 10.2" refers to the tenth chapter in *Twilight of the Idols* ("What I Owe the Ancients"), to the second section or numbered part in that chapter. (Nietzsche's book prefaces or epilogues are identified as such.)

Editions of Nietzsche's collected works in German are abbreviated as follows, with numbers referring to volume and letter, section, or aphorism number.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-05081-5 - Nietzsche's Last Laugh: Ecce Homo as Satire

Nicholas D. More

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Abbreviations, citations, sources*

xi

- KGB* *Nietzsche Briefwechsel: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli andazzino Montinari. 25 vols. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1975–2004.
- KGW* *Nietzsche Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli andazzino Montinari. 24 vols. and 4 CDs. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1967–2006.
- KSA* *Kritische Studienausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli andazzino Montinari. 15 vols. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1999.

For Nietzsche's books, I have used the translations of Judith Norman, Walter Kaufmann, Duncan Large, and R. J. Hollingdale (please see the Bibliography), in consultation and comparison with the corrected critical German edition of Nietzsche's works in *Digitale Kritische Gesamtausgabe Werke und Briefe* – based on *KGW* and *KGB*, above. Translations of Nietzsche's letters and notebook material are my own.

Aside from Nietzsche's texts (or other texts where custom dictates section citation), numbers in citations refer to page numbers. Full reference information for abbreviated citations appears in the Bibliography.