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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.

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Ecce Homo as Satire

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for Tico

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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)

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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:

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

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.

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KGB *Nietzsche Briefwechsel: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari. 25 vols. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1975–2004.

KGW *Nietzsche Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari. 24 vols. and 4 CDs. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1967–2006.

KSA *Kritische Studienausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino 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.

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