

Preface

Supposing truth is a woman—what then? Are there not grounds for the suspicion that all philosophers, insofar as they were dogmatists, have been very inexpert about women? That the gruesome seriousness, the clumsy obtrusiveness with which they have usually approached truth so far¹ have been awkward and very improper methods for winning a woman's heart? What is certain is that she has not allowed herself to be won—and today every kind of dogmatism is left standing dispirited and discouraged. If it is left standing at all! For there are scoffers who claim that it has fallen, that all dogmatism lies on the ground—even more, that all dogmatism is dying.

Speaking seriously, there are good reasons why all philosophical dogmatizing, however solemn and definitive its airs used to be, may nevertheless have been no more than a noble childishness and tyronism. And perhaps the time is at hand when it will be comprehended again and again *how little* used to be sufficient to furnish the cornerstone for such sublime and unconditional philoso-

And we are fundamentally inclined to claim that the falsest judgments (which include the synthetic judgments *a priori*)⁶ are the most indispensable for us; that without accepting the fictions of logic, without measuring reality against the purely invented world of the unconditional and self-identical, without a constant falsification of the world by means of numbers, man could not live—that renouncing false judgments would mean renouncing life and a denial of life. To recognize untruth as a condition of life—that certainly means resisting accustomed value feelings in a dangerous way; and a philosophy that risks this would by that token alone place itself beyond good and evil.

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What provokes one to look at all philosophers half suspiciously, half mockingly, is not that one discovers again and again how innocent they are—how often and how easily they make mistakes and go astray; in short, their childishness and childlikeness—but that they are not honest enough in their work, although they all make a lot of virtuous noise when the problem of truthfulness is touched even remotely. They all pose as if they had discovered and reached their real opinions through the self-development of a cold, pure, divinely unconcerned dialectic (as opposed to the mystics of every rank, who are more honest and doltish—and talk of “inspiration”); while at bottom it is an

drives. For every drive wants to be master—and it attempts to philosophize in *that spirit*.

To be sure: among scholars who are really scientific men, things may be different—"better," if you like—there you may really find something like a drive for knowledge, some small, independent clockwork that, once well wound, works on vigorously *without* any essential participation from all the other drives of the scholar. The real "interests" of the scholar therefore lie usually somewhere else—say, in his family, or in making money, or in politics. Indeed, it is almost a matter of total indifference whether his little machine is placed at this or that spot in science, and whether the "promising" young worker turns himself into a good philologist or an expert on fungi or a chemist: it does not characterize him that he becomes this or that. In the philosopher, conversely, there is nothing whatever that is impersonal;⁷ and above all, his morality bears decided and decisive witness to *who he is*—that is, in what order of rank the innermost drives of his nature stand in relation to each other.

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How malicious philosophers can be! I know of nothing more venomous than the joke Epicurus permitted himself against Plato and the Platonists; he called them *Dionysiokolakes*. That means literally—and this is the foreground meaning—"flatterers of Dionysius," in other words, tyrant's baggage and lickspittles; but in addition to this he also wants to say, "they are all *actors*, there is nothing genuine about them" (for *Dionysokolax* was a popular name for an actor).⁸ And the latter is really the malice that Epicurus aimed at Plato: he was peeved by the grandiose manner, the *mise en scène*⁹ at which Plato and his disciples were so expert—at

⁷ Nietzsche is thinking of the "great" philosophers. Now that there are literally thousands of "philosophers," these tend to be more akin to their colleagues in other departments than to the men discussed here.

⁸ The reference is to Epicurus' fragment 238, and the ambiguity is due to the fact that Dionysius was the name of the Sicilian tyrant whom Plato had tried for several years to convert to his own philosophy.

⁹ Staging.

which Epicurus was not an expert—he, that old schoolmaster from Samos, who sat, hidden away, in his little garden at Athens and wrote three hundred books—who knows? perhaps from rage and ambition against Plato?

It took a hundred years until Greece found out who this garden god, Epicurus, had been.—Did they find out?—

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There is a point in every philosophy when the philosopher's "conviction" appears on the stage—or to use the language of an ancient Mystery:

*Adventavit asinus,
Pulcher et fortissimus.*¹⁰

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"According to nature" you want to live? O you noble Stoics, what deceptive words these are! Imagine a being like nature, wasteful beyond measure, indifferent beyond measure, without purposes and consideration, without mercy and justice, fertile and desolate and uncertain at the same time; imagine indifference itself as a power—how could you live according to this indifference? Living—is that not precisely wanting to be other than this nature? Is not living—estimating, preferring, being unjust, being limited, wanting to be different? And supposing your imperative "live according to nature" meant at bottom as much as "live according to life"—how could you not do that? Why make a principle of what you yourselves are and must be?

In truth, the matter is altogether different: while you pretend rapturously to read the canon of your law in nature, you want something opposite, you strange actors and self-deceivers! Your pride wants to impose your morality, your ideal, on nature—even on nature—and incorporate them in her; you demand that she should be nature "according to the Stoa," and you would like all

¹⁰ "The ass arrived, beautiful and most brave."

tion? How does opium induce sleep? "By virtue of a faculty," namely the *virtus dormitiva*, replies the doctor in Molière,

*Quia est in eo virtus dormitiva,
Cujus est natura sensus assoupire.*¹⁵

But such replies belong in comedy, and it is high time to replace the Kantian question, "How are synthetic judgments *a priori* possible?" by another question, "Why is belief in such judgments necessary?"—and to comprehend that such judgments must be *believed* to be true, for the sake of the preservation of creatures like ourselves; though they might, of course, be *false* judgments for all that! Or to speak more clearly and coarsely: synthetic judgments *a priori* should not "be possible" at all; we have no right to them; in our mouths they are nothing but false judgments. Only, of course, the belief in their truth is necessary, as a foreground belief and visual evidence belonging to the perspective optics of life.

Finally, to call to mind the enormous influence that "German philosophy"—I hope you understand its right to quotation marks—has exercised throughout the whole of Europe, there is no doubt that a certain *virtus dormitiva* had a share in it: it was a delight to the noble idlers, the virtuous, the mystics, artists, three-quarter Christians, and political obscurantists of all nations, to find, thanks to German philosophy, an antidote to the still predominant sensualism which overflowed from the last century into this, in short—"sensus assoupire."

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As for materialistic atomism, it is one of the best refuted theories there are, and in Europe perhaps no one in the learned world is now so unscholarly as to attach serious significance to it, except for convenient household use (as an abbreviation of the means of expression)—thanks chiefly to the Dalmatian Boscovich: he and the Pole Copernicus have been the greatest and most successful opponents of visual evidence so far. For while Copernicus

¹⁵ "Because it contains a sleepy faculty whose nature it is to put the senses to sleep."

velli,¹² who in his *Principe* [*The Prince*] lets us breathe the dry, refined air of Florence and cannot help presenting the most serious matters in a boisterous *allegrissimo*,¹³ perhaps not without a malicious artistic sense of the contrast he risks—long, difficult, hard, dangerous thoughts and the *tempo* of the gallop and the very best, most capricious humor?

Who, finally, could venture on a German translation of Petronius, who, more than any great musician so far, was a master of *presto* in invention, ideas, and words? What do the swamps of the sick, wicked world, even the “ancient world,” matter in the end, when one has the feet of a wind as he did, the rush, the breath, the liberating scorn of a wind that makes everything healthy by making everything *run!* And as for Aristophanes—that transfiguring, complementary spirit for whose sake one *forgives* everything Hellenic for having existed, provided one has understood in its full profundity *all* that needs to be forgiven and transfigured here—there is nothing that has caused me to meditate more on Plato’s secrecy and sphinx nature than the happily preserved *petit fait*¹⁴ that under the pillow of his deathbed there was found no “Bible,” nor anything Egyptian, Pythagorean, or Platonic—but a volume of Aristophanes. How could even Plato have endured life—a Greek life he repudiated—without an Aristophanes?

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Independence is for the very few; it is a privilege of the strong. And whoever attempts it even with the best right but without inner constraint proves that he is probably not only strong, but also daring to the point of recklessness. He enters into a labyrinth, he multiplies a thousandfold the dangers which life brings with it in any case, not the least of which is that no one can see how and where he loses his way, becomes lonely, and is torn piecemeal by

¹² In the original edition and in the standard editions; Macchiavelli.

¹³ Extremely brisk and lively manner.

¹⁴ Small fact.

gin. It was rather the way a distinction or disgrace still reaches back today from a child to its parents, in China: it was the retroactive force of success or failure that led men to think well or ill of an action. Let us call this period the *pre-moral* period of mankind: the imperative "know thyself!" was as yet unknown.

In the last ten thousand years, however, one has reached the point, step by step, in a few large regions on the earth, where it is no longer the consequences but the origin of an action that one allows to decide its value. On the whole this is a great event which involves a considerable refinement of vision and standards; it is the unconscious aftereffect of the rule of aristocratic values and the faith in "descent"—the sign of a period that one may call *moral* in the narrower sense. It involves the first attempt at self-knowledge. Instead of the consequences, the origin: indeed a reversal of perspective! Surely, a reversal achieved only after long struggles and vacillations. To be sure, a calamitous new superstition, an odd narrowness of interpretation, thus become dominant: the origin of an action was interpreted in the most definite sense as origin in an *intention*; one came to agree that the value of an action lay in the value of the intention. The intention as the whole origin and pre-history of an action—almost to the present day this prejudice dominated moral praise, blame, judgment, and philosophy on earth.

But today—shouldn't we have reached the necessity of once more resolving on a reversal and fundamental shift in values, owing to another self-examination of man, another growth in profundity? Don't we stand at the threshold of a period which should be designated negatively, to begin with, as *extra-moral*? After all, today at least we immoralists have the suspicion that the decisive value of an action lies precisely in what is *unintentional* in it, while everything about it that is intentional, everything about it that can be seen, known, "conscious," still belongs to its surface and skin—which, like every skin, betrays something but conceals even more. In short, we believe that the intention is merely a sign and symptom that still requires interpretation—moreover, a sign that means too much and therefore, taken by itself alone, almost nothing. We believe that morality in the traditional sense, the morality of intentions, was a prejudice, precipitate and perhaps provisional

morality in itself, being the height, the *attained* height of man, the sole hope of the future, the consolation of present man, the great absolution from all former guilt. They are at one, the lot of them, in their faith in the community as the *savior*, in short, in the herd, in "themselves"—

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We have a different faith; to us the democratic movement is not only a form of the decay of political organization but a form of the decay, namely the diminution, of man, making him mediocre and lowering his value. Where, then, must we reach with our hopes?

Toward *new philosophers*; there is no choice; toward spirits strong and original enough to provide the stimuli for opposite valuations and to revalue and invert "eternal values"; toward forerunners, toward men of the future who in the present tie the knot and constraint that forces the will of millennia upon *new* tracks. To teach man the future of man as his *will*, as dependent on a human will, and to prepare great ventures and over-all attempts of discipline and cultivation by way of putting an end to that gruesome dominion of nonsense and accident that has so far been called "*history*"—the nonsense of the "greatest number" is merely its ultimate form: at some time new types of philosophers and commanders will be necessary for that, and whatever has existed on earth of concealed, terrible, and benevolent spirits, will look pale and dwarfed by comparison. It is the image of such leaders that we envisage: may I say this out loud, you free spirits? The conditions that one would have partly to create and partly to exploit for their genesis; the probable ways and tests that would enable a soul to grow to such a height and force that it would feel the *compulsion* for such tasks; a revaluation of values under whose new pressure and hammer a conscience would be steeled, a heart turned to bronze, in order to endure the weight of such responsibility; on the other hand, the necessity of such leaders, the frightening danger that they might fail to appear or that they might turn out badly or

degenerate—these are *our* real worries and gloom—do you know that, you free spirits?—these are the heavy distant thoughts and storms that pass over the sky of *our* life.

There are few pains as sore as once having seen, guessed, felt how an extraordinary human being strayed from his path and degenerated.²⁰ But anyone who has the rare eye for the over-all danger that “man” himself *degenerates*; anyone who, like us, has recognized the monstrous fortuity that has so far had its way and play regarding the future of man—a game in which no hand, and not even a finger, of God took part as a player; anyone who fathoms the calamity that lies concealed in the absurd guilelessness and blind confidence of “modern ideas” and even more in the whole Christian-European morality—suffers from an anxiety that is past all comparisons. With a single glance he sees what, given a favorable accumulation and increase of forces and tasks, might yet be *made of man*; he knows with all the knowledge of his conscience how man is still unexhausted for the greatest possibilities and how often the type “man” has already confronted enigmatic decisions and new paths—he knows still better from his most painful memories what wretched things have so far usually broken a being of the highest rank that was in the process of becoming, so that it broke, sank, and became contemptible.

The *over-all degeneration of man* down to what today appears to the socialist dolts and flatheads as their “man of the future”—as their ideal—this degeneration and diminution of man into the perfect herd animal (or, as they say, to the man of the “free society”), this animalization of man into the dwarf animal of equal rights and claims, is *possible*, there is no doubt of it. Anyone who has once thought through this possibility to the end knows one kind of nausea that other men don’t know—but perhaps also a new task!—

²⁰ Perhaps an allusion to Richard Wagner.

spect for philosophy and opened the gates to the instinct of the rabble. Let us confess how utterly our modern world lacks the whole type¹¹ of a Heraclitus, Plato, Empedocles, and whatever other names these royal and magnificent hermits of the spirit had; and how it is with considerable justification that, confronted with such representatives of philosophy as are today, thanks to fashion, as much on top as they are really at the bottom—in Germany, for example, the two lions of Berlin, the anarchist Eugen Dühring and the amalgamist Eduard von Hartmann¹²—a solid man of science may feel that he is of a better type and descent. It is especially the sight of those hodgepodge philosophers who call themselves “philosophers of reality” or “positivists” that is capable of injecting a dangerous mistrust into the soul of an ambitious young scholar: these are at best scholars and specialists themselves—that is palpable—they are all losers who have been brought back under the hegemony of science, after having desired *more* of themselves at some time without having had the right to this “more” and its responsibilities—and who now represent, in word and deed, honorably, resentfully, and vengefully, the *unbelief* in the masterly task and masterfulness of philosophy.

Finally: how could it really be otherwise? Science is flourishing today and her good conscience is written all over her face, while the level to which all modern philosophy has gradually sunk, this rest of philosophy today, invites mistrust and displeasure, if not mockery and pity. Philosophy reduced to “theory of knowledge,” in fact no more than a timid epochism and doctrine of abstinence—a philosophy that never gets beyond the threshold and takes pains to deny itself the right to enter—that is philosophy in its last throes, an end, an agony, something inspiring pity. How could such a philosophy—dominate!

¹¹ The German word *Art* in this context could mean manner, but the same word near the end of the sentence plainly means type.

¹² Eugen Dühring (1833-1921) and Eduard von Hartmann (1842-1906) were highly regarded at the time. Dühring was a virulent anti-Semite; Hartmann attempted to amalgamate Schopenhauer's philosophy with Hegel's.

history of what had been thought before: altogether an *impossible* literature, unless one knows how to flavor it with some malice.

For into these moralists, too (one simply has to read them with ulterior thoughts, if one *has* to read them), that old English vice has crept which is called *cant* and consists in *moral Tartuffery*; only this time it hides in a new, scientific, form. A secret fight against a bad conscience is not lacking either, as it is only fair that a race of former Puritans will have a bad conscience whenever it tries to deal with morality scientifically. (Isn't a moral philosopher the opposite of a Puritan? Namely, insofar as he is a thinker who considers morality questionable, as calling for question marks, in short as a problem? Should moralizing not be—immoral?)

Ultimately they all want *English* morality to be proved right—because this serves humanity best, or “the general utility,” or “the happiness of the greatest number”—no, the happiness of *England*. With all their powers they want to prove to themselves that the striving for *English* happiness—I mean for comfort and fashion¹⁴ (and at best a seat in Parliament)—is at the same time also the right way to virtue; indeed that whatever virtue has existed in the world so far must have consisted in such striving.

None of these ponderous herd animals with their unquiet consciences (who undertake to advocate the cause of egoism as the cause of the general welfare) wants to know or even sense that “the general welfare” is no ideal, no goal, no remotely intelligible concept, but only an emetic—that what is fair for one *cannot* by any means for that reason alone also be fair for others; that the demand of one morality for all is detrimental for the higher men; in short, that there is an order of rank between man and man, hence also between morality and morality. They are a modest and thoroughly mediocre type of man, these utilitarian Englishmen, and, as said above, insofar as they are boring one cannot think highly enough of their utility. They should even be *encouraged*: the following rhymes represent an effort in this direction.

Hail, dear drudge and patient fretter!
“More drawn out is always better.”

¹⁴ Nietzsche uses the English words “comfort” and “fashion.”

Call that in which the distinction of the European is sought "civilization" or "humanization" or "progress," or call it simply—without praise or blame—using a political formula, Europe's *democratic movement*: behind all the moral and political foregrounds to which such formulas point, a tremendous *physiological* process is taking place and gaining momentum. The Europeans are becoming more similar to each other; they become more and more detached from the conditions under which races originate that are tied to some climate or class; they become increasingly independent of any *determinate* milieu that would like to inscribe itself for centuries in body and soul with the same demands. Thus an essentially supra-national and nomadic type of man is gradually coming up, a type that possesses, physiologically speaking, a maximum of the art and power of adaptation as its typical distinction.

The tempo of this process of the "*evolving European*" may be retarded by great relapses, but perhaps it will gain in vehemence and profundity and grow just on their account: the still raging storm and stress of "national feeling" belongs here, also that anarchism which is just now coming up. But this process will probably lead to results which would seem to be least expected by those who naïvely promote and praise it, the apostles of "modern ideas." The very same new conditions that will on the average lead to the leveling and mediocritization of man—to a useful, industrious, handy, multi-purpose herd animal—are likely in the highest degree to give birth to exceptional human beings of the most dangerous and attractive quality.

To be sure, that power of adaptation which keeps trying out changing conditions and begins some new work with every generation, almost with every decade, does not make possible the *powerfulness* of the type, and the over-all impression of such future Europeans will probably be that of manifold garrulous workers need of a master and commander as of their daily bread. But while the democratization of Europe leads to the production of a

type that is prepared for slavery in the subtlest sense, in single, exceptional cases the *strong* human being will have to turn out stronger and richer than perhaps ever before—thanks to the absence of prejudice from his training, thanks to the tremendous manifoldness of practice, art, and mask. I meant to say: the democratization of Europe is at the same time an involuntary arrangement for the cultivation of *tyrants*—taking that word in every sense, including the most spiritual.

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I hear with pleasure that our sun is swiftly moving toward the constellation of *Hercules*—and I hope that man on this earth will in this respect follow the sun's example? And we first of all, we good Europeans!—

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There was a time when it was customary to attribute "profundity" to the Germans, as a distinction. Now that the most successful type of the new Germanism lusts after utterly different honors and perhaps misses "pluck" in everything profound, some doubt may almost be timely and patriotic as to whether that former praise was not based on self-deception—in short, whether German profundity is not at bottom something different and worse, and something that, thank God, one is about to shake off successfully. Let us make the attempt to relearn about German profundity: nothing more is needed for this than a little vivisection of the German soul.

The German soul is above all manifold, of diverse origins, more put together and superimposed than actually built: that is due to where it comes from. A German who would make bold to say, "two souls, alas, are dwelling in my breast,"⁴ would violate the truth rather grossly or, more precisely, would fall short of the truth by a good many souls. As a people of the most monstrous mixture

⁴ Goethe's *Faust*, line 1112.

The German soul has its passageways and inter-passageways; there are caves, hideouts, and dungeons in it; its disorder has a good deal of the attraction of the mysterious; the German is an expert on secret paths to chaos. And just as everything loves its simile, the German loves clouds and everything that is unclear, becoming, twilit, damp, and overcast: whatever is in any way uncertain, unformed, blurred, growing, he feels to be "profound." The German himself is not, he *becomes*, he "develops." "Development" is therefore the truly German find and hit in the great realm of philosophical formulas—a governing concept that, united with German beer and German music, is at work trying to Germanize the whole of Europe.

Foreigners stand amazed and fascinated before the riddles posed for them by the contradictory nature at the bottom of the German soul (brought into a system by Hegel and finally set to music by Richard Wagner). "Good-natured and vicious"—such a conjunction, preposterous in relation to any other people, is unfortunately justified all too often in Germany: let anyone live for a while among Swabians! The ponderousness of the German scholar, his social bad taste, gets along alarmingly well with an inner rope-dancing and easy boldness which has taught all the gods what fear is. Whoever wants a demonstration of the "German soul" *ad oculos*⁹ should merely look into German taste, into German arts and customs: What boorish indifference to "taste"! How the noblest stands right next to the meanest! How disorderly and rich this whole psychic household is! The German drags his soul along: whatever he experiences he drags. He digests his events badly, he never gets "done" with them; German profundity is often merely a hard and sluggish "digestion." And just as all chronic invalids, all dyspeptics, love comfort, Germans love "openness" and "*Biederkeit*": how comfortable it is to be open and "*bieder*"!¹⁰

Perhaps the German of today knows no more dangerous and successful disguise than this confiding, accommodating, cards-on-

⁹ For the eyes.

¹⁰ The word has no exact English equivalent but might be rendered "four-square."

ruption, and the highest desires gruesomely entangled; the genius of the race overflowing from all cornucopias of good and bad; a calamitous simultaneity of spring and fall, full of new charms and veils that characterize young, still unexhausted, still unwearied corruption. Again danger is there, the mother of morals, great danger, this time transposed into the individual, into the neighbor and friend, into the alley, into one's own child, into one's own heart, into the most personal and secret recesses of wish and will: what may the moral philosophers emerging in this age have to preach now?

These acute observers and "oiterers" discover that the end is approaching fast, that everything around them is corrupted and corrupts, that nothing will stand the day after tomorrow, except one type of man, the incurably mediocre. The mediocre alone have a chance of continuing their type and propagating—they are the men of the future, the only survivors: "Be like them! Become mediocre!" is now the only morality that still makes sense, that still gets a hearing.

But this morality of mediocrity is hard to preach: after all, it may never admit what it is and what it wants. It must speak of measure and dignity and duty and neighbor love—it will find it difficult to conceal its irony.—

There is an *instinct for rank* which, more than anything else, ~~is a sign of a high rank, there is a delight in the nuances of reverence that allows us to infer noble origin and habits. The refinement, graciousness, and height of a soul~~ is tested dangerously when something of the first rank passes by without being as yet protected by the shudders of authority against obtrusive efforts and ineptitudes—something that goes its way unmarked, undiscovered, ~~tempting, perhaps capriciously concealed and disguised, like a living touchstone.~~ Anyone to whose task and practice it belongs to search out souls will employ this very art in many forms in order to determine the ultimate value of a soul and the unalterable, innate

dom belong just as necessarily to slave morality and morals as ~~aristocratic reverence and devotion are the regular symptom of an aristocratic way of thinking and evaluating.~~

This makes plain why love *as passion*—which is our European specialty—simply must be of noble origin: as is well known, its invention must be credited to the Provençal knight-poets, those magnificent and inventive human beings of the “*gai saber*”⁹, to whom Europe owes so many things and almost owes itself.—

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Among the things that may be hardest to understand for a noble human being is vanity: he will be tempted to deny it, where another type of human being could not find it more palpable. The problem for him is to imagine people who seek to create a good opinion of themselves which they do not have of themselves—and thus also do not “deserve”—and who nevertheless end up believing this good opinion themselves. This strikes him half as such bad taste and lack of self-respect, and half as so baroquely irrational, that he would like to consider vanity as exceptional, and in most cases when it is spoken of he doubts it.

He will say, for example: “I may be mistaken about my value and nevertheless demand that my value, exactly as I define it, should be acknowledged by others as well—but this is no vanity (but conceit or, more frequently, what is called ‘humility’ or ‘modesty’).” Or: “For many reasons I may take pleasure in the good opinion of others: perhaps because I honor and love them and all their pleasures give me pleasure; perhaps also because their good opinion confirms and strengthens my faith in my own good opinion; perhaps because the good opinion of others, even in cases

⁹ “Gay science”: in the early fourteenth century the term was used to designate the art of the troubadours, codified in *Leys d'umors*. Nietzsche subtitled his own *Fröhliche Wissenschaft* (1882), “*la gaya scienza*,” placed a quatrain on the title page, began the book with a fifteen-page “Prelude in German Rhymes,” and in the second edition (1887) added, besides a Preface and Book V, an “Appendix” of further verses.