The theme of health in Nietzsche's thought

Mark Robert Letteri

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THE THEME OF HEALTH IN NIETZSCHE'S THOUGHT

by

Mark Robert Letteri

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research through the Department of Philosophy in Partial Fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts at the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

1985
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THE THEME OF HEALTH IN NIETZSCHE’S THOUGHT
by
Mark Robert Letteri

There is a theme of health in Nietzsche’s thought: Especially in some of his later writings, Nietzsche frequently talks about health, using words such as ‘sick’ and ‘healthy’. The language that Nietzsche uses when discussing health often involves evaluation. For Nietzsche, health is not a state of mere lack of illness, but rather, the capacity to overcome and benefit from sickness. Nietzsche's concept of health and his use of health-related language are basically metaphorical, relating mainly to value problems and the dynamics of the will.

The theme of health is a manifestation of two major Nietzschean tendencies. It is a manifestation of life-oriented approach to thinking, that is to say, of his naturalistic and anti-otherworldliness stances. More importantly, it is a manifestation of his emphasis on power. Because of its salience and its relationship to Nietzsche's thought as a whole, the theme of health is a substantial and integral strand of Nietzsche's philosophical vision.
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NOMENCLATURE

This scheme is modelled after the one used by Walter Kaufmann in his Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Anti-christ.

Die Geburt der Tragödie
(The Birth of Tragedy) GT

"Homer's Wettkampf"
("Homer's Struggle")

Menschliches, Allzumenschliches
(Human. All Too Human) MA

Die Morgenrothe
(Daybreak) M

Die Frohliche Wissenschaft
(Joyful Wisdom) FW

Also Sprach Zarathustra
(Thus Spoke Zarathustra) Z

Jenseits von Gut und Böse
(Beyond Good and Evil) J

Zur Genealogie der Moral
(The Genealogy of Morals) GM

Die Götzendämmerung
(Twilight of the Idols) G

Der Antichrist
(The Antichrist) A

Ecce Homo
EH

Der Wille zur Macht
(The Will to Power) WM

Generally speaking, combinations of Roman and Arabic numerals refer to major divisions and subsections respectively. With regard to Ecce Homo, capital letters are sometimes used instead of Roman numerals; these correspond to the sections of
the book which are titled after Nietzsche's other books. For all works, prefaces (Vorreden) are designated "V".

"((  ))" corresponds to a pair of square brackets.
INTRODUCTION

In everyday discourse people use words like 'healthy' and 'sick' in more or less metaphorical ways, that is to say, in ways which do not express the idea of physical disorder. For example, such words may be used in a moral sense: "He must have a sick heart to have committed that crime". Similar uses can be found in philosophical discourse. Consider the following selection from Plato's Republic:

Plainly, they ((just and unjust actions)) are exactly analogous to those wholesome and unwholesome activities which respectively produce a healthy or unhealthy condition in the body; in the same way just and unjust conduct produce a just or unjust character. Justice is produced in the soul, like health in the body, by establishing the elements concerned in their natural relations of control and subordination, whereas injustice is like disease and means that this natural order is inverted.

Quite so.

It appears, then, that virtue is as it were the health and comeliness and well-being of the soul, as wickedness is disease, deformity, and weakness.¹

Plato, though, is not the only philosopher who talks about health and sickness. Friedrich Nietzsche discusses health and sickness rather frequently in his works, especially some of his mature ones. At first glance, Nietzsche's use of health-related language may seem to represent a proclivity for clever turns of speech or mere habit. However, as I intend to demonstrate, the theme of health in Nietzsche's
thought is hardly something of little consequence. It is, on the contrary, a substantial and integral strand of Nietzsche's philosophical vision.

In A Short History of Ethics Alasdair MacIntyre makes this statement: "Health and sickness are key words in Nietzsche." Malcolm Pasley, in his essay "Nietzsche's Use of Medical Terms", asserts that "by the final stage, by 1888, one can almost say that there are no other topics, that the question of health has swallowed up everything else." It would be expected that if what MacIntyre and Pasley say is true there ought to be a wealth of secondary literature on the Nietzschean theme of health. However, my investigation of the secondary literature, including both books and journals, indicates that there is in fact a dearth of such studies. There are only two secondary sources that I know of which deal in any significant way with the theme of health. They are the abovementioned essay by Pasley and Walter Kaufmann's Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist. Kaufmann's book touches on Nietzsche's concept of health in a few places; Pasley's thesis-length essay is more detailed, not only explicating the concept of health, but also providing numerous examples of Nietzsche's use of medical language.

My suggestion as to the reason for the paucity of lit-
erature on Nietzsche's theme of health is this: Nietzsche's theme has been overlooked because it has not been seen in light of its place in his thought as a whole. I believe that if the Nietzschean theme of health is viewed with regard to the role it plays in Nietzsche's philosophy taken in its entirety, its importance will at once be obvious. If the theme of health is not viewed in such a way, it will appear to be unimportant. My aim in this project is to show the importance of the theme of health in Nietzsche's thought, and this will be pursued by treating the theme in a comprehensive manner. I will examine the theme of health by explaining the concept of health and by giving some instances of Nietzsche's use of health-related language, but more crucially, by situating the theme of health in the context of Nietzsche's thought as a whole. I shall thus go over ground already covered by Pasley and Kaufmann, but also go beyond them.

The first chapter will provide a brief exposition of Nietzsche's life-oriented approach to thinking, that is to say, of his naturalistic and anti-otherworldliness stances. It is a requisite part of my project because I believe Nietzsche's theme of health to be a manifestation of his general life-oriented approach. The second chapter will treat Nietzsche's emphasis on power, an emphasis which is discernible throughout all phases of Nietzsche's philosophy, espe-
cially his mature thought. The second chapter is of great importance, as it is intended to support my contention that Nietzsche's concept of health is a manifestation of his emphasis on power. The third chapter deals with the concept of health and with Nietzsche's use of health-related language. It will be seen that for Nietzsche health is the capacity to overcome and benefit from sickness (resistance or incapacity). In the main, Nietzsche's use of health-related language concerns value problems and the dynamics of the will, and it often serves to evaluate. The conclusion stresses that the theme of health is an integral, substantial aspect of Nietzsche's thought as a whole because of its salience and its ties to key Nietzschean motifs.

With regard to primary sources, I will draw freely from works which come from all phases of Nietzsche's career. The theme of health, however, is more prominent in the later Nietzsche than in the earlier. The theme of health is particularly evident in Der Wille zur Macht and Ecce Homo, two of Nietzsche's latest writings. Despite the fact that Der Wille zur Macht, which, as a part of the Nachlass (that is to say, the body of Nietzsche's writings not published during his lifetime), is a collection of notes which lacks completeness and Nietzsche's formal blessing concerning publication, I believe that I am justified in relying on it for the following reason. Because it is a record of the orig-
inal workings of Nietzsche's mind, its profusion of talk about health indicates the closeness of the theme of health to Nietzsche's philosophical heart, so to speak, in his maturity. It exhibits the natural tendencies of Nietzsche's thought at the end of his career, and the eminence of the theme of health suggests itself as an important and revealing fact. (Ecce Homo, which Nietzsche did intend to publish, confirms this.)
CHAPTER 1
NIETZSCHE'S LIFE-ORIENTED APPROACH

In this chapter I will discuss Nietzsche's life-oriented approach to thinking, that is to say, his naturalistic and anti-otherworldliness stances. My purpose is to suggest that the theme of health is a manifestation of his life-oriented approach to thinking, which accents the actual and earthly.

There is a strong naturalistic slant to Nietzsche's thought. By this I mean that Nietzsche tends to view human beings as "instances of a general type of animate existence," and hence emphasize the body. For Nietzsche, man is a kind of animal, and as such must be understood in large part in terms of his corporeality. (Not surprisingly, Nietzsche planned, at one point after his retirement from Basel, an extensive course of study in the natural sciences.) Nietzsche's concern is to underscore the idea that man is an organism in nature. "Behind your thoughts and feelings, my brother, there stands a mighty ruler, an unknown sage -- whose name is self. In your body he dwells; he is your body." (Z I 4) He approvingly notes that more and more decisively the question concerning the health of the body is put ahead of that of "the soul"; the latter being understood as a state consequent upon the former, and the former at the very least as a precon-
dition of the health of the soul. (WM 117)

"Belief in the body is more fundamental than belief in the soul: . . ." (WM 491) Consciousness, sometimes considered the pinnacle of man, is "the last and latest development of the organic, and consequently also the most unfinished and least powerful of these developments." (FW 489) Compared to consciousness, "the phenomenon of the body is the richer, clearer, more tangible phenomenon: . . ." (WM 489) "The body and physiology" must be taken as "the starting point", since it is in this way that we "gain the correct idea of the nature of our subject-unity, namely as regents at the head of a communality (not as "souls" or "life forces"), . . ." (WM 492) For Nietzsche, the very idea of what it is to be a human subject is to be understood in terms of man's organismal nature.

Nietzsche's naturalistic stance stresses the earthly, and assumes its priority over things construed as more or less "otherworldly". For example, Nietzsche rejects any view of man which claims that humans are composed of both a body and a "soul":

"Body am I, and soul"—thus speaks the child.
And why should one not speak like children?
But the awakened and knowing say: body am I entirely, and nothing else; and soul is only a word for something about the body. (Z I 4)

In fact, Nietzsche believes that "unnatural" concepts which
stand in opposition to life have been dominant and typical. He says:

The question will be raised why I should actually have related all these trivial and, judged according to ordinary standards, insignificant details—... I reply that these trivial details—diet, locality, climate, recreation, the whole casuistry of self-love—are inconceivably more important than everything that men have hitherto considered essential. It is just here that we must begin afresh. All the things that men have valued with such earnestness heretofore are not even realities; they are mere fantasies, or, more strictly speaking, lies arising from the evil instincts of diseased and, in the deepest sense, harmful natures—all the concepts, "God," "soul," "virtue," "sin," "Beyond," "truth," "eternal life." (EH II 10)

Nietzsche's naturalism is a foil to otherworldliness, to all ideas and values that oppose earthly life. Nietzsche's naturalism acccents life and affirms it.

Nietzsche's life-oriented approach is manifested not only in his naturalism, but also in his general anti-otherworldliness stance. Nietzsche is against otherworldliness in that he is in principle against any scheme which posits two worlds, a "real" world and an "apparent" one, that is to say, a "superior" world and an "inferior" one. Kant's distinction between the noumenal world and the phenomenal is such a scheme, as is the Judeo-Christian dichotomy between the world of "eternity" and the actual world of human existence. Nietzsche holds that "any distinction between a 'true' and an 'apparent' world—... is only a
suggestion of decadence, a symptom of the decline of life." (G III 6) Why? Because without fail, it is always actuality that gets the short end of the stick in such schemes.

On the whole, philosophy has been quite concerned with metaphysics, and the will to the negation of this life "employs every immoral means: metaphysicians above all--." (WM 583) According to Nietzsche, traditional metaphysics is wrong-headed in a very fundamental way:

**Psychology of metaphysics.**-- This world is apparent: consequently there is a true world;--this world is conditional: consequently there is an unconditioned world;--this world is full of contradiction: consequently there is a world free of contradiction;--this world is a world of becoming: consequently there is a world of being:--all false conclusions (blind trust in reason: if A exists, then the opposite concept B must exist). (WM 579)

Metaphysicians have erroneously reasoned along the following lines:

"There must be mere appearance, there must be some deception which prevents us from perceiving that which has being: where is the deceiver?"
"We have found him," they cry ecstatically; "it is the senses, which are so immoral in other ways too, deceive us concerning the true world. . . ." (G III 1)

Plato is an example of the life-denying, phantom-valuing tradition of metaphysics. He believed:

The more "Idea," the more being. He reversed the concept "reality" and said: "What you take for real is an error, and the nearer we approach the 'Idea,' the nearer we approach 'truth.'"-- . . . Fundamentally, Plato, . . .
preferred . . . the unreal to the actual!  
But he was so convinced of the value of appearance that he gave it the attributes "being," "causality" and "goodness," and "truth," in short everything men value. (WM 572)

The problem is that what philosophers have handled for thousands of years have been concept-mummies; nothing real escaped their grasp alive. When these honorable idolators of concepts worship something, they kill it and stuff it; they threaten the life of everything they worship. Death, change, old age, as well as procreation and growth, are to their minds objections--even refutations. (G III 1)

And, importantly, "philosophers are always decadents--in the service of the nihilistic religions." (WM 461)

Nietzsche focusses his criticism on the Judeo-Christian tradition. (As will be seen in the third chapter, much of Nietzsche's use of health-related language is concerned with it.) He believes that it evidences a devaluing of actual, earthly existence. It is life-denying insofar as it professes that or acts as though

God created man happy, idle, innocent, immortal: our actual life is a false, decayed, sinful existence, an existence of punishment--Suffering, struggle, work, death are considered as objections and question marks against life, as something that ought not to last; for which one requires a cure--and has a cure! (WM 224)

The originators of Christianity "despised the body; more, they treated it as an enemy." (WM 226) To put the problem succinctly: "What hitherto has been the greatest objection
to Life?--God..." (EH II 3) The presence of God is, in Nietzsche's eyes, oppressive:

What? Never to be allowed to be alone with oneself? Never again to be unobserved, unprotected, free of leading-reins and gifts? If we are always surrounded by another, the best of courage and goodness in this world is rendered impossible. Is this importunity from Heaven, this inescapable supernatural neighbour, not enough to drive one to the Devil!--But there is no need for that, it has only been a dream! Let us wake up!(M 464)

Let us wake up! This is Nietzsche's exhortation with regard to otherworldly Christian tradition. Christian tradition prizes another, "superior" world, but denigrates actual life. The other, "superior" world is, however, only a shadow. The denigration of earthly existence is the result of the one-sided emphasis on that shadow.

It is clear that Nietzsche stands opposed to otherworldly, life-denying metaphysical philosophy and religious tradition. He argues that judgments about the value of life should not be taken literally, since judgments of value, concerning life, for or against it, can, in the end, never be true; they have value only as symptoms, they are worthy of consideration only as symptoms; in themselves such judgments are stupidities. One must by all means stretch out one's fingers and make the attempt to grasp this amazing finesse, that the value of life cannot be estimated. Not by the living, for they are an interested party, even a bone of contention, and not judges; not by the dead, for a different reason. (G II 2)
Judgments about the value of life say more about the one making them than about life itself. Thus, judgments about life made by metaphysical philosophy and religious tradition ought to be taken as symptoms of attitudes toward life, as symptoms of profoundly-rooted orientations, rather than as statements about what life is "actually" like. If the problem is approached this way, it is obvious that otherworldliness is a kind of hatred toward life.

Concerning life, the wisest men of all ages have judged alike: it is no good. Always and everywhere one has heard the same sound from their mouths—a sound full of doubt, full of melancholy, full of weariness of life, full of resistance to life. Even Socrates said, as he died: "To live—that means to be sick a long time: I owe Asclepius the Savior a rooster." Even Socrates was tired of it. What does that evidence? ... "At least something must be sick here," we retort. (G II 1)

"This life is no good, but there is another, 'better' world..."—a persistent way of thinking and valuing, despite the fact that the reasons for which "this" world has been characterized as "apparent" are the very reasons which indicate its reality; any other kind of reality is absolutely indemonstrable. (G III 6)

The positing of another, "higher", "true" world in contradiction with (or more accurately, in contradiction to) actuality is symptomatic of a life-calumniating orientation (disorientation!):

To invent fables about a world "other" than this one has no meaning at all, unless an instinct of slander, detraction, and suspicion...
has gained the upper hand in us; in that case, we avenge ourselves against life with a phantasmagoria of "another," a "better" life. (G III 6)

Has anyone ever proposed that this world is the "true" world and the other world the "apparent" one? No! It is always earthly existence that is deemed "inferior" in metaphysical philosophy and religious tradition. (WM 586)

The theme of health in Nietzsche's thought can be seen as a manifestation of his life-oriented approach. Nietzsche's naturalistic stance accents man's animality--his body, his physiology, his place in the organic world. For Nietzsche, "man is the most bungled of all the animals, the sickliest, and not one has strayed more dangerously from its instincts. But for all that, he is of course the most interesting." (A 14) Nietzsche's anti-otherworldliness stance stresses the foolishness of devaluing actual life in favour of "another", "higher" world. "General insight: it is the instinct of life-weariness, and not that of life, which has created the 'other world.'" (WM 586) It is my suggestion that the theme of health serves to direct attention to the actual and the earthly--that is, to life. Nietzsche's use of health-related language and his concept of health express his naturalism; indeed, the very words 'health' and 'sickness' have a naturalistic sense, both denotatively and connotatively. And, in a general way, the theme of health ex-
presses Nietzsche's anti-otherworldliness, since it implicitly affirms the primacy of this world—no one would mistake "health" as having a "transcendental" sense.
CHAPTER II
NIETZSCHE'S EMPHASIS ON POWER

There is an emphasis on power in all phases of Nietzsche's thought. Though it is present from his earliest writings to his latest, it is the most explicitly worked out in Der Wille zur Macht, which represents the last stage of his career. In this chapter I will investigate Nietzsche's emphasis on power with an eye to supporting my contention, to be argued for in the next chapter, that there is a significant relationship between Nietzsche's emphasis on power and his theme of health. This chapter, then, should be read with the following thought in mind: Nietzsche's concept of health, understood as the capacity to overcome and benefit from sickness (resistance or incapacity), is a manifestation of his emphasis on power.

The word for 'power' in German is Macht. Macht is related to the verb machen, which basically means "to make", but which can also mean "to do", "to effect", "to produce", "to create", "to construct", "to form", and so on. These senses are to be found in Nietzsche's talk about power. I shall take the most general Nietzschean concept of power to be this: Power is the capacity or capability to act. However, it must be added that, as will be seen shortly, action involves resistance and conflict. And thus, power is the
capacity or capability to act, it being understood that action necessarily involves obstacles and struggle.

In "Homer's Wettkampf" Nietzsche eulogizes the ancient Hellenic ideal of agon (contest). He claims that it was the ideal of agon that made Greek society flourish: "The original sense of this peculiar institution... is not that of a safety-valve but that of a stimulant." The Greeks acknowledged the necessary and positive importance of strife. The ideal of agon served a very practical purpose: "To the Ancients... the aim of the agonistic education was the welfare of the whole, of the civic society." Egoistic selfishness was channelled through the agon for the purpose of advancing Greek culture; "without envy, jealousy, and contesting ambition the Hellenic State like the Hellenic man degenerates." The ideal of agon, of striving to overcome obstacles in the pursuit of excellence, ought to be a living ambition of modern society, Nietzsche suggests.

Nietzsche's concern with contest and struggle is also evident in Menschliches, Allzumenschliches. As in "Homer's Wettkampf", culture is considered in terms of strife:

Artistic ambition. The Greek artists, the tragedians, for example, wrote in order to triumph; their whole art cannot be imagined without competition. Ambition, Hesiod's good Eris, gave wings to their genius... Thus they strive for victory over their rivals ac-
cording to their own estimation, before their own tribunal; they really want to be more excellent; then they demand that others outside agree with their own estimation, confirm their judgment. (MA 170)

But it is not just with regard to ancient Hellenic culture that Nietzsche uses the concept of power. He uses it to explain many things. For example, power is seen by Nietzsche to be at the heart of classical aristocratic ethics:

The man who has the power to requite goodness with goodness, evil with evil, and really does practice requital by being grateful and vengeful, is called "good." The man who is unpowerful and cannot requite is taken for bad. As a good man, one belongs to the "good," a community that has a communal feeling, because all the individuals are entwined together by their feeling for requital. As a bad man, one belongs to the "bad," to a mass of abject, powerless men who have no communal feeling. (MA 45)

Nietzsche also interprets knowledge in terms of power, as is evidenced in this selection:

Why is knowledge, . . . linked to pleasure? First and foremost, because by it we gain awareness of our power-- . . . Second, because, as we gain knowledge, we surpass older ideas and their representatives, become victors, or at least believe ourselves to be. Third, because any new knowledge, however small, makes us feel superior to everyone and unique in understanding this matter correctly. (MA 252)

Asceticism is understood as sublimation, a redirection of power from external objects to one's self:

For some men have such an intense need to exercise their strength and love of power that, lacking other objects or because they have always otherwise failed, it finally occurs to them to tyrannize certain parts of their own being, . . . (MA 137)
Even something as insignificant as teasing can be seen as an exhibition of and enjoyment in power over others. (Ma 103)

_Die Morgenrote_ contains similar thoughts, but the intensity is more single-minded. For example:

_The demon of power._--Not necessity, not desire--no, the love of power is the demon of men. Let them have everything--health, food, a place to live, entertainment--they are and remain unhappy and low-spirited: for the demon waits and waits and will be satisfied. Take everything away from them and satisfy this, and they are almost happy--as happy as men and demons can be. (M 262)

Power, or perhaps more properly, the desire to exercise it, is the key to culture and society as a whole:

_The striving for distinction is the striving for domination over the next man, though it be a very indirect domination and only felt or even dreamed. There is a long scale of degrees of this secretly desired domination, and a complete catalogue of them would be almost the same thing as a history of culture, from the earliest, still grotesque barbarism up to the grotesqueries of over-refinement and morbid idealism. . . . Excuse these extravagant reflections on all that may have been possible on earth through the psychical extravagance of the lust for power! (M 113)

_Nietzsche says: "When man possesses the feeling of power he feels and calls himself good; and it is precisely then that the others upon whom he has to discharge his power feel and call him evil." (M 189) Yet, even powerless can be creative:
Praise and blame.--If a war proves unsuccessful one asks who was to 'blame' for the war; if it ends in victory one praises its instigator. Guilt is always sought wherever there is failure; for failure brings with it a depression of spirits against which the sole remedy is instinctively applied: a new excitation of the feeling of power--and this is to be discovered in the condemnation of the 'guilty'. . . . To condemn oneself can also be a means of restoring the feeling of strength after a defeat. (M 140)

For Nietzsche, power and pleasure are inextricably linked:

"Effect of happiness.--The first effect of happiness is the feeling of power: this wants to express itself, either to us ourselves, or to other men, or to ideas or imaginary beings." (M 356) Power and joy are of the same skein; pleasure in the exercise of power is the ultimate reinforcer of action of any kind. In speaking of men who thirst for power, for instance, Nietzsche says that if they should one day lay down laws, then you can be sure they will put themselves in iron chains and practise a fearful discipline: they know themselves! And they will endure these laws in the consciousness of having imposed them on themselves--the feeling of power, and of this power, is too new and delightful for them not to suffer anything for its sake. (M 184)

To sum up what has been said so far about Nietzsche's emphasis on power, it can be said, in the words of R. J. Hollingdale, that for Nietzsche

life is a contest, and that the agonistic character of human existence extends into fields where one would not necessarily expect to find it. That the agon was the model for all human activity had already suggested itself to Nietzsche during his studies of Greek culture and civilization, where it seemed to
hi to stand out clearly as a fact.8

Also Sprach Zarathustra explicitly presents the concept of the will to power. Zarathustra says: "Where I found the living, there I found will to power; and even in the will of those who serve I found the will to be master."

(Z II 12) The will to power is the disposition to overcome:

And life itself confided this secret to me: "Behold," it said, "I am that which must always overcome itself. Indeed, you call it a will to procreate or a drive to an end, to something higher, farther, more manifold; but all this is one, and one secret. . . ."(Z II 12)

In the same vein: "A table of values hangs over every people. Behold, it is the table of its overcomings; behold, it is the voice of its will to power."(Z I 15)

Jenseits von Gut und Bose, the work which follows Also Sprach Zarathustra, continues the explicit presentation of the concept of the will to power:

Granted, . . . that we succeeded in explaining our entire instinctive life as the development and ramification of one fundamental form of will--namely, the Will to Power, as my thesis puts it; granted that all organic functions could be traced back to this Will to Power, and that the solution of the problem of generation and nutrition--it is one problem--could also be found therein; one would thus have acquired the right to define all active force unequivocally as Will to Power. The world seen from within, the world
defined and designated according to its "intelligible character"—it would simply be "Will to Power," and nothing else. (J 36)

Nietzsche states: "A living thing seeks above all to discharge its strength—life itself is Will to Power; self-preservation is only one of the indirect and most frequent results thereof." (J 13) He insists that one must think profoundly to the very basis and resist all sentimental weakness; life itself is essentially appropriation, injury, conquest of the strange and weak, suppression, severity, obtrusion of peculiar forms, incorporation, and at the least, putting it mildest, exploitation; . . . (Anything that lives) will endeavour to grow, to gain ground, attract to itself and acquire ascendency—not owing to any morality or immorality, but because it lives, and because life is precisely Will to Power. . . . "Exploitation" does not belong to a depraved, or imperfect and primitive society; it belongs to the nature of the living being as a primary organic function; it is a consequence of the intrinsic Will to Power, which is precisely the Will to Life. —Granting that as a theory this is a novelty—as a reality it is the fundamental fact of all history; let us be so far honest towards ourselves! (J 259)

Having shown the crucial role of power in Nietzsche's thought up to the early 1880's, I shall now provide a detailed exposition of the concept of the will to power as found in Der Wille zur Macht, which represents the last years of Nietzsche's philosophical career. As I intend to demonstrate in the next chapter, Nietzsche's concept of health is a manifestation of his emphasis on power especially as it appears in the concept of the will to power.
I suggest that the concepts of health and the will to power share a common element in that they both involve the idea of enhancement of capacity through the overcoming of resistance or incapacity.

Nietzsche's concept of the will to power is rather easy to misunderstand if care is not taken to be thorough with regard to its explication. For example, consider the following excerpt from a general textbook of philosophy:

For Judeo-Christian values, such as humility, Nietzsche substituted an ethics of power, the principle that might makes right, as a logical consequence of Darwin's statement as to the survival of the fittest, because the best-fitted individuals desire not merely to survive but to acquire power over others.9

This is intended to be a concise explanation of the concept of the will to power. Is it an accurate one? No! I believe that it is inaccurate for several reasons. First, though Nietzsche often speculates about mankind's development and future, he rejects the prevailing nineteenth-century understanding of evolution, namely, the Darwinian understanding.10 Second, power may involve not only power over others but also power over one's self and the external world of nature. Third, and most importantly and fundamentally, power does not necessarily equal just brute strength, although that is the formula that the explanation suggests. "Might", or brute strength, is assuredly not the foundation of Nietzsche's philosophy of power.11
does indeed say: "What is good? Everything that heightens the feeling of power in man, the will to power, power itself." (A 2) This, however, does not commit Nietzsche to the position that "might makes right". In fact, Nietzsche points out this possibility: "One pays heavily for coming to power: power makes stupid." (G VII 1) Brute strength or sheer force is only one aspect of power, and not even the most valuable:

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We are still on our knees before strength--after the ancient custom of slaves--and yet when the degree of worthiness to be revered is fixed, only the degree of rationality in strength is decisive: we must assess to what extent precisely strength has been overcome by something higher, in the service of which it now stands as means and instrument! (M 548)
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As will be seen shortly, Nietzsche's concept of the will to power is a rich, complex construct. The textbook example cited above is guilty of oversimplifying and caricaturing Nietzsche's concept of the will to power by emphasizing brute strength, a not uncommon move, I believe. Nietzsche's approval of power and the will to power as good does not mean that he must approve of all power-related activity, any more than if Freud said that sexuality was good "in itself" he would necessarily be committed to the position that rape is good.

Force, mechanistically understood, is acceptable enough to Nietzsche as a partial explanation of the world's nature.
However, he sees the need to posit a will to account for the conative character of organic reality. The will he supposes is, as Gilles Deleuze puts it, "both a complement of force and something internal to it."\textsuperscript{14}

The victorious concept "force," by means of which our physicists have created God and the world, still needs to be completed; an inner will must be ascribed to it, which I designate as "will to power," i.e., as an insatiable desire to manifest power; or as the employment and exercise of power, as a creative drive, etc.\textsuperscript{(WM 619)}

Nietzsche claims that "all driving force is will to power, that there is no other physical, dynamic or psychic force except this."\textsuperscript{(WM 688)} "What is 'active'?--reaching out for power."\textsuperscript{(WM 657)}

Life as a special case (hypothesis based upon it applied to the total character of being--) strives after a maximal feeling of power; essentially a striving for more power; striving is nothing other than striving for power; the basic and innermost thing is still this will. \textsuperscript{(Mechanics is merely the semiotics of the results.)\textsuperscript{(WM 689)}}

The will to power is the essential disposition of the quanta of force which comprise the organic world to exercise and enhance their capacities.\textsuperscript{15}

In certain moments, Nietzsche stresses that power must be construed quantitatively. He says:

Our knowledge has become scientific to the extent that it is able to employ number and measure. The attempt should be made to see whether a scientific order of values could be constructed simply on a numerical and mensur-
al scale of force—All other "values" are prejudices, naiveties, misunderstandings. They are everywhere reducible to this numerical and mensural scale of force. The ascent on this scale represents every rise in value; the descent on this scale represents diminution in value. (WM 710)

Hence, Nietzsche asserts: "What determines rank, sets off rank, is only quanta of power, and nothing else." (WM 355)

Clearly, he is concerned with avoiding bias by aiming to be as objective and rigorous as possible. Nevertheless, Nietzsche recognizes that mere quantity is not adequate to provide a comprehensive explanation of the world, such as it is. He says:

Qualities are insurmountable barriers for us; we cannot help feeling that mere quantitative differences are something fundamentally distinct from quantity, namely that they are qualities which can no longer be reduced to one another. (WM 565)

The conative character of the organic world must be understood in large part in terms of quality. Nietzsche asks:

Might all quantities not be signs of qualities? A greater power implies a different consciousness, feeling, desiring, a different perspective; growth itself is a desire to be more; the desire for an increase in quantum grows from a quale; in a purely quantitative world everything would be dead, stiff, motionless. — The reduction of all qualities is nonsense; what appears is that the one accompanies the other, an analogy—(WM 564)

Our inability to escape quality is not an objection just because of the utter inescapability involved;16 "all our sensations of value (i.e., simply our sensations) adhere precisely to qualities, i.e., to our perspective "truths"
which belong to us alone and can by no means be 'known'!

(WM 565) A merely quantitative, mechanistic approach will not suffice; quality is a necessary idea:

"Mechanistic interpretation": desires nothing but quantities; but force is to be found in quality. Mechanistic theory can therefore only describe processes, not explain them.

(WM 660)

Deleuze says: "Forces have quantity, but they also have the quality which corresponds to their difference in quantity: the qualities of force are called 'active' and 'reactive'." As will be suggested in the next chapter, the qualities "active" and "reactive" are translatable as "healthy" and "sick".

The ideas of control and subordination are very important in the concept of the will to power. Nietzsche speculates:

"Life" would be defined as an enduring form of processes of the establishment of force, in which the different contenders grow unequally. To what extent resistance is present even in obedience: individual power is by no means surrendered. In the same way, there is in commanding an admission that the absolute power of the opponent has not been vanquished, incorporated, disintegrated. "Obedience" and "commanding" are forms of struggle. (WM 642)

Commanding and obeying relate to the microscopic as well as the macroscopic: "The aristocracy in the body, the majority of the rulers (struggle between cells and tissues)." (WM 660) In the body, "the higher type (of bodily ability)"
possible only through the subjugation of the lower, so that
it becomes a function." (WM 660) Generally then,

there is a will to power in the organic pro-
cess by virtue of which dominant, shaping,
commanding forces continually extend the
bounds of their power and continually simpli-
fy within these bounds: the imperative grows.
"Spirit" is only a means and tool in the
service of higher life, of the enhancement of
life; . . . (WM 644)

In between the organic world as a whole and the body
and its minute parts lies the individual human being. It
is in the individual human being that commanding and obey-
ing can be found at their greatest and most productive.
Nietzsche says:

In Summa: domination of the passions, not
their weakening or extirpation! -- The greater
the dominating power of a will, the more
freedom may the passions be allowed.
The "great man" is great owing to the free
play and scope of his desires and to the yet
greater power that knows how to press these
magnificent monsters into service. (WM 933)

The issue is strong will versus weak will:

The multitude and disregregation of impulses
and the lack of any systematic order among
them result in a "weak will"; their coordina-
tion under a single predominant impulse re-
sults in a "strong will": in the first case
it is the oscillation and the lack of gravi-
ty; in the latter, the precision and clarity
of direction. (WM 46)

As Kaufmann says: "Great power reveals itself in great
self-mastery." (WM 933) Great self-mastery requires that one be
able to both command and obey: one must be able to subor-
dinate parts of oneself in the service of a commanding will
which harmoniously and productively exercises one's capacities and enhances them. Great power is the ability to confront the difficult and turn it to one's advantage.

Because we forget that valuation is always from a perspective, a single individual contains within him a vast confusion of contradictory valuations and consequently of contradictory drives. This is the expression of the diseased condition in man, in contrast to the animals in which all existing instincts answer to quite definite tasks... The wisest man would be the one richest in contradictions, who has, as it were, antennae for all types of men—as well as his great moments of grand harmony—a rare accident even in us! (WM 259)

On the other hand, it must be said that great self-mastery is not achieved through scorched-earth policies. Castration and extirpation are instinctively chosen by those who are too weak-willed, too degenerate, to be able to impose moderation on themselves;... ((they require)) some kind of definitive declaration of hostility, a cleft between themselves and the passion. Radical means are indispensable only for the degenerate; the weakness of the will—or, to speak more definitely, the inability not to respond to a stimulus—is itself merely another form of degeneration. (GV 2)

And it is of course possible for one to be powerful for the wrong reasons, so to speak. The ascetic, as previously mentioned, is indeed powerful—but his power is possible only through his miserly, life-stultifying orientation. Worse, though, is the case in which a will to nothingness is operative. In such a case there is a profound lack of
The exhausted want rest, relaxation, peace, calm—the happiness of the nihilistic religions and philosophies; the rich and living want victory, opponents overcome, the overflow of the feeling of power across wider domains than hitherto. All healthy functions of the organism have this need—and the whole organism is such a complex of systems struggling for an increase of the feeling of power.-----(WM 703)

Nietzsche's emphases on vitality and on commanding and obeying are also expressed in his concepts of the Dionysian and the Apollonian respectively. Nietzsche identifies the Dionysian with insuperable, positive vigour:

The word "Dionysian" means: . . . an ecstatic affirmation of the total character of life as that which remains the same, just as powerful, just as blissful, through all change; the great pantheistic sharing of joy and sorrow that sanctifies and calls good even the most terrible and questionable qualities of life; the eternal will to procreation, to fruitfulness, to recurrence; the feeling of the necessary unity of creation and destruction.(WM 1050)

Nietzsche identifies the Apollonian with form, direction, and order; it is "the urge to perfect self-sufficiency, to the typical 'individual,' to all that simplifies, distinguishes, makes strong, clear, unambiguous, typical: freedom under the law."(WM 1050) In the last phase of his career, Nietzsche subsumes the Apollonian under the Dionysian.19 For instance, Nietzsche christens Goethe's faith Dionysian, saying that what Goethe wanted "was totality; he fought the
mutual extraneousness of reason, senses, feeling, and will . . . ; he disciplined himself to wholeness, he created himself. "(G VIII 49)

For the purposes of this project, perhaps the most important thing to note about the concept of the will to power is that Nietzsche sees obstacles not as impediments to power but as tonics. He asserts:

The measure of failure and fatality must grow with the resistance a force seeks to master; and as a force can expend itself only on what resists it, there is necessarily an ingredient of displeasure in every action. But this displeasure acts as a lure of life and strengthens the will to power! (MM 694)

Power can be exercised only in relation to contrarieties, since the very idea of power, in Nietzsche's understanding, involves the notion of friction. The idea of power without the notion of friction is empty—the idea of power must, per force (!), involve the notion of at least one element operating upon at least one other element, whether these two elements are considered as essentially alien to one another or as parts of a postulated unity. For example, one person may exercise his capacities toward another person or the natural environment. As well, a person's drive A might triumph over his drive B (in fact, Nietzsche suggests that in a postulated unity there is a confederation of wills, with perhaps one dominating will20). Thus, "opposites, obstacles are needed; therefore, relatively, encroaching units—" (MM 693) Obsta-
cles are not, for Nietzsche, mere obstacles; they may result in increased power on the part of the opposed. Obstacles are an integral aspect of the processes of life and growth:

The will to power can manifest itself only against resistances; therefore it seeks that which resists it—this is the primeval tendency of the protoplasm when it extends pseudopodia and feels about. Appropriation and assimilation are above all a desire to overwhelm, a forming, shaping and reshaping, until at length that which has been overwhelmed has entirely gone over into the power domain of the aggressor and has increased the same.--(WM 656)

Nietzsche interprets pleasure and displeasure as epiphenomena of power or the lack of it, and he cannot say emphatically enough that all expansion, incorporation, growth means striving against something that resists; motion is essentially tied up with states of displeasure; that which is here the driving force must in any event desire something else if it desires displeasure in this way and continually looks for it.-- For what do the trees in a jungle fight each other? For "happiness"?— For power!—(WM 704)

Obstacles are crucial to the project of self-enhancement, and the higher is distinguished from the lower by the nature of agents' orientations to the exercise of power and the friction inherent therein:

The higher man is distinguished from the lower by his fearlessness and his readiness to challenge misfortune: it is a sign of degeneration when eudaemonistic valuations begin to prevail (--physiological fatigue, feebleness of will--). . . . Abundant strength wants to create, suffer, go under: . . . (WM 222)
Let me conclude this chapter with the following thoughts, which should be kept in mind while reading the next one. Nietzsche's emphasis on power is evident throughout the entirety of his thought, and is especially crucial at the end of his career, at which time he very explicitly develops the hypothesis of the will to power. In Nietzsche's scheme of the world, life is essentially characterized as an inclination to exercise and enhance power (capacity). Obstacles are necessarily involved in the exercise of power, since a force can expend itself only against some other thing. Obstacles, though, are not necessary only in the sense that they are integral to the very idea of the exercise of power--they are necessary because they can act as spurs to the enhancement of power. It is only through the overcoming of obstacles that power is enhanced; it is only through frictional activity (and not inertia) that power grows. Challenge is requisite to the increase of power. Nietzsche's concept of health can be conceived of in these terms: Health is the capacity to overcome and benefit from sickness (resistance or incapacity). Conversely, sickness is the inability to overcome and benefit from resistance or incapacity itself. The concept of health can be seen as a manifestation of Nietzsche's emphasis on power especially as it is represented in his hypothesis of the will to power. Both the concept of health and the hypothesis of the will to power share this common idea: Capacity is the capacity to
overcome and benefit from obstacles. It is probably no accident that the concept of health and the hypothesis of the will to power are both the most salient at the same period of Nietzsche's career.
CHAPTER III
THE THEME OF HEALTH

In this chapter I shall do two things. First, I will provide a formal explication of Nietzsche's concept of health, which has heretofore only been cursorily touched on. I shall do this with a view to understanding Nietzsche's concept of health in light of what has been said so far, with special reference to the second chapter. Second, I will show the concept of health in action, so to speak, by offering examples of Nietzsche's use of health-related language. In probing Nietzsche's use of health-related language I intend to show how such language can serve as evaluative language.

The following selection from Die Froliche Wissenschaft is an excellent introduction to Nietzsche's concept of health, and is valuable enough to be cited in its entirety:

Health of the Soul.--The favourite medico-moral formula (whose originator was Ariston of Chios), "Virtue is the health of the soul," would, for all practical purposes, have to be altered to this: "Thy virtue is the health of thy soul." For there is no such thing as health in itself, and all attempts to define a thing in that way have lamentably failed. It is necessary to know thy aim, thy horizon, thy powers, thy impulses, thy errors, and especially the ideals and fantasies of thy soul, in order to determine what health implies even for thy body. There are consequently innumerable kinds of physical health; and the more one again permits the
unique and unparalleled to raise its head, the more one unlearns the dogma of the "Equality of men," so much the more also must the conception of a normal health, together with a normal diet and a normal course of disease, be abrogated by our physicians. And then only would it be time to turn our thoughts to the health and disease of the soul, and make the special virtue of everyone consist in its health; but, to be sure, what appeared as health in one person might appear as the contrary of health in another. In the end the great question might still remain open:—Whether we could do without sickness for the development of our virtue, and whether our thirst for knowledge and self-knowledge would not especially need the sickly soul as well as the sound one; in short, whether the mere will to health is not a prejudice, a cowardice, and perhaps an instance of the subtlest barbarism and unprogressiveness? (FW 120)

Nietzsche's naturalistic tendency is evident in the above passage: he says that the question of the health of the body is more primary than that of the health of the soul. However, it is clear that he wishes to speculate about the latter as well as the former. Nietzsche's key suggestion is that health and sickness ought not to be artificially separated, as they are really two sides of one coin. This point is explicitly made by Nietzsche in Der Wille zur Macht:

Health and sickness are not essentially different, as the ancient physicians and some practitioners even today suppose. One must not make of them distinct principles or entities that fight over the living organism and turn it into their arena. That is silly nonsense and chatter that is no good any longer. In fact, there are only differences in degree between these two kinds of existence: the exaggeration, the disproportion, the nonharmony of the normal phenomena constitute the pathological state . . . . (WM 47)
Kaufmann states that for Nietzsche health may be defined "as the capacity to overcome disease-- . . ." 1 He explains that Nietzsche "valued not only health ((as commonly understood)) but also suffering and sickness; . . ." 2 As R. J. Hollingdale puts it: "'Health' appears to signify, not the absence of sickness, but the capacity to resist and exploit sickness: . . ." 3

The following selection from Der Wille zur Macht bears out these ideas:

Health and sickliness: one should be careful! The standard remains the efflorescence of the body, the agility, courage, and cheerfulness of the spirit--but also, of course, how much of the sickly it can take and overcome--how much it can make healthy. That of which more delicate men would perish belongs to the stimulants of great health. (WM 1013)

As has been intimated, sickness may be taken to mean resistance or obstacles, and as will be seen in the pages to come, it may also be taken to mean incapacity, sickliness.

Health, then, may be stimulated to growth by sickness.

Pasley affirms that for Nietzsche health was recognized in the vigorous search for fresh stimuli and fresh obstacles, and in the power to make triumphant use of them. This heroic idea of health, as self-increasing, all-conquering vigour in action, was certainly the one which he in due course made emphatically his own. 4

Nietzsche's concept of health is a deliberate foil to "the mere will to health . . ." (FW 120) which is the anemic ideal of health as a minimum of disturbance. Quite simply, Nie-
zsche acknowledges that health and sickness, the positive and the negative, are intertwined, and that the negative has a very necessary role in the shaping of the positive. Health cannot be an untroubled state of pure freedom from sickness because health is what it is only through sickness. Health is a vigorous, ongoing process involving turbulence—it is not a pristine state of inertia. The healthy and the sick are always found together, and tension always accompanies them:

To distinguish in every movement (1) that it is in part exhaustion from a preceding movement (satiety from it, the malice of weakness toward it, sickness); (2) that it is in part newly-awakened, long slumbering, accumulated energy—joyous, exuberant, violent: health. (WM 1012)

Nietzsche says that "almost every man is decadent for half his life." (WM 864) "The great 'adventurers and criminals' and all men, especially the most healthy, are sick at certain periods of their lives:--the great emotions, the passions of power, love, revenge, are accompanied by profound disturbances." (WM 864) Nietzsche admits that he himself has both healthy and sick aspects: "Agreed that I am a decadent, I am also the very reverse." (EH I 2) Nietzsche believes this to be an essential precondition (perhaps the essential precondition) of his thinking:

To view healthier concepts and values from the standpoint of the sick, and conversely to view the secret work of the instinct of decadence out of the abundance and self-confidence of a rich life—this has been my
principal experience, what I have been longest trained in. If in anything at all, it was in this that I became a master. Today my hand is skillful; it has the knack of reversing perspectives; the first reason perhaps why a *Transvaluation of all Values* has been possible to me alone.\(^{(EH \text{ I 1})}\)

The Nietzschean question is not "How can I avoid sickness?" but rather "Sickness is a fact; how can I overcome it and thus be more able to overcome?" The issue is not health versus sickness: it is health *in the midst of sickness*.

Though the healthy and the sick are fundamentally intertwined, it is possible to speak of two general types of people which are quite separate from one another. These are the healthy and the sick types. Nietzsche says that

> the first condition of success, as every physiologist will admit, is that the man be basically sound. A typically morbid nature cannot become healthy at all, much less by his own efforts. On the other hand, to an intrinsically sound nature, illness may even act as a powerful stimulus to life, to an abundance of life.\(^{(EH \text{ I 2})}\)

He is noting that, all other things being equal, one must already have at least some tendency to health if one is to be capable of growing more healthy. I suggest that this makes perfect sense. The difference between the healthy type and the sick type is that while for the healthy type sickness may act as a tonic (as mentioned in the above selection), for the sick type sickness is not a challenge but a passively accepted phenomenon. The sick type is not af-
flicted with a sickness "but (with) sickliness: the lack of strength to resist the danger of infections, etc., the broken resistance; morally speaking, resignation and meekness in face of the enemy." (WM 47) The healthy type, in contrast, is characterized by an inherent soundness, and even an excess of strength: "Abundant strength wants to create, suffer, go under: ..." (WM 222) The healthy person need not fear that the next challenge will be his undoing. For the healthy type, challenge is not a signal to flee but rather an opportunity to prove oneself. "It is only a question of strength: to have all the morbid traits of the century, but to balance them through a superabundant, recuperative strength. The strong man." (WM 1014) Nietzsche's personal testimony in the following passage illustrates his ideal of health quite well:

It is thus that I now regard my long period of illness: it seemed then as if I had discovered life afresh, my own self included. I tasted all good and even trifling things in a way in which others could not very well taste them--out of my Will to Health and to Life I made my philosophy... For I wish this to be understood: it was during those years of most lowered vitality that I ceased from being a pessimist: the instinct of self-recovery forbade a philosophy of poverty and desperation... ((An excellent human being)) divines remedies against injuries; he knows how to turn serious accidents to his own advantage; whatever does not kill him makes him stronger... ((An excellent human being)) is strong enough to make everything turn to his own advantage. (EH I 2)
It is noteworthy that in the above passage Nietzsche speaks of health and life in the same breath. His pairing of 'health' and 'life' reinforces the contention, put forth in the previous chapter, that Nietzsche's use of health-related language serves to direct attention to life and the earthly. He explicitly states that health and life are the bases of his thought, saying that "out of my Will to Health and to Life I made my philosophy. . . ."(EH I 2) Nietzsche's thought is consciously life-oriented, and 'health' points to life and the earth. Moreover, Nietzsche's conjunction of health and life obviously alludes to his preference as to the kind of life that is desirable. Nietzsche's preference is dynamic, vigorous life--"healthy" life (as will be seen later in this chapter).

As I have suggested, the concept of health is a manifestation of Nietzsche's emphasis on power. It is this idea that I shall now defend. First, a brief recapitulation of points from the previous chapter that are crucial for the purposes of the present argument. The will to power is the essential disposition of the quanta of force which comprise the organic universe to exercise and enhance their capacities. The exercise of power (capacity) necessarily involves resistance. The idea of power without the notion of resistance is bloodless. "All events, all motion, all becoming, as a determination of degrees and relations of force, as a
struggle--"(WM 552) Without struggle, goal-oriented behaviour is next to meaningless. To put the point succinctly: "In general, every thing is worth as much as one has paid for it." (WM 969) (Thus, for instance, Nietzsche says that "debauchery kills enjoyment . . . " (WM 29)) Struggle, obstacles, resistance and strife are not aspects of existence to be wished away, for to wish them away would be to render existence spineless, so to speak. Resistance is indispensable to the exercise and especially the enhancement of capacity (or power). It is not only just present, but even sought after!

Pleasure and displeasure are mere consequences, mere epiphenomena--what man wants, what every smallest part of a living organism wants, is an increase of power. Pleasure or displeasure follow from the striving after that; driven by that will it seeks resistance, it needs something that opposes it--Displeasure, as an obstacle to its will to power, is therefore a normal fact, the normal ingredient of every organic event; man does not avoid it, he is rather in continual need of it; every victory, every feeling of pleasure, every event, presupposes a resistance overcome.

Let us take the simplest case, that of primitive nourishment: the protoplasm extends its pseudopodia in search of something that resists it--not from hunger but from will to power. Thereupon it attempts to overcome, appropriate, assimilate what it encounters: what one calls "nourishment" is merely a derivative phenomenon, an application of the original will to become stronger.

Displeasure thus does not merely have to result in a diminution of our feeling of power, but in the average case it actually stimulates this feeling of power--the obstacle is the stimulus of this will to power. (WM 702)
Obstacles provide the challenge needed to prompt the exercise of power and its enhancement.

Now in Nietzsche's thought health is the capacity to overcome and benefit from sickness. Sickness is to be understood as either resistance or incapacity to overcome. Considering what has been said so far about Nietzsche's philosophy of power, it is clear that there is a similarity between the hypothesis of the will to power and the concept of health. Both the idea of the will to power and the idea of health contain a certain element, namely, the notion of an agent which exercises its capacity or capacities in the overcoming of a resistance or obstacle and a consequent enhancement of the agent's capacity or capacities. Health and the will to power, then, share a common element.

The question which arises from the recognition that the concepts of health and the will to power share a common element is this: Are the two concepts the same (since they do share a similar form) or are they separable, and if so which one is more fundamental? The fact that the hypothesis of the will to power and the concept of health are most prominent at the end of Nietzsche's career ought not to lead one to conclude that the two ideas are identical. For in reality, the theory of the will to power is a quite specific mani-
estion of Nietzsche's general emphasis on power—an emphasis which, as explained in the previous chapter, is to be found throughout Nietzsche's thought. That Nietzsche's emphasis on power is more long-standing and pervasive than the theme/concept of health is reason enough to conclude that the concept of health is a manifestation of Nietzsche's emphasis on power. There is another reason, though, why the matter should be viewed this way. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Deleuze believes force to be interpretable in two ways: "Forces have quantity, but they also have the quality which corresponds to their difference in quantity: the qualities of force are called 'active' and 'reactive'." I shall substitute for "active" and "reactive" the designations "healthy" and "sick". My suggestion is this: In Nietzsche's thought the designations "healthy" and "sick" refer to the qualitative aspect of the will to power which corresponds to the quantitative aspect of the same. On the one hand, there is a tendency on Nietzsche's part to speak about the will to power in terms of "quanta" and so on—in quasi-mechanical terms, in other words. On the other hand, Nietzsche appreciates the importance of quality (value), and thus he talks evaluatively about the will to power. Nietzsche's way of saying that something (an instance of the will to power) is either good or bad is to say that it is either "healthy" or "sick". This is of course a generalization, but the last section of this chapter will flesh it out with examples and
confirm it. In sum, then, the hypothesis of the will to power and the concept of health share a common element but are not identical with one another, as the concept of health is a manifestation of Nietzsche's emphasis on power, especially as it is found in its formulation at the end of Nietzsche's career.

Before concluding this section of the present chapter, it must be noted that some strands of Nietzsche's thought do not support my contention that the Nietzschean understanding of health is that of dynamic capacity. Pasley holds that there are two different concepts of health in Nietzsche's thought. One is the concept that I have offered, while the other is that of health as a kind of balance. Pasley claims that the latter understanding is evidenced especially in Nietzsche's middle-period works:

Temperance, temperateness, self-restraint and the right measure are for the time being key-words in Nietzsche's vocabulary, and whether he is dealing with the emotional or moral health of the individual, or with the 'healthiness' of a work of art or of a culture or of a political system, his temporary assumption is that health resides in a proper equilibrium.

For example, in Menschliches, Allzumenschliches Nietzsche states:

Now, if science produces ever less joy in itself and takes ever greater joy in casting suspicion on the comforts of metaphysics, religion, and art, then the greatest source of pleasure, to which mankind owes almost its
humanity, is impoverished. Therefore a higher culture must give man a double brain, two chambers, as it were, one to experience science, and one to experience nonscience. Lying next to one another, without confusion, separable, self-contained: our health demands this. (MA 251)

Pasley concludes that the overriding Nietzschean sense of health is that of health as dynamic capacity. Either concept of health would support my suggestion that the theme of health is a manifestation of Nietzsche's life-oriented approach to thinking. However, the concept of health as the capacity to overcome and benefit from sickness is the concept that fits neatly with Nietzsche's emphasis on power--and in any case it undoubtedly is the more salient one. This, then, is why I have concentrated on it in the present essay.

I shall now show the concept of health in action, so to speak, by offering examples of Nietzsche's use of health-related language. Unlike Pasley, I will focus, as I have been doing, on the terms 'health' and 'sickness' and other closely associated terms, rather than on Nietzsche's use of medical terms generally. I shall proceed in this manner because it seems to me that Nietzsche's use of words like 'illness' and 'health' and 'sickly', the way that he uses such words, is the evidence that demonstrates the evaluative function of the theme of health. The theme of health is a manifestation of Nietzsche's life-oriented approach to thinking.
and of his emphasis on power, and the following examples have been chosen because they are expressive of the interpretation of Nietzsche's philosophy that has been presented heretofore. More importantly, though, they have been chosen because I take them to be typical of the theme of health insofar as the theme of health serves an evaluative function. As will be seen in the following pages, Nietzsche's health-related discussions and remarks are evaluational in nature much of the time, and in fact one of the most obvious things about his talk about health is that he tends to use words like 'sick' and 'healthy' much the way others use words like 'bad' (or perhaps 'evil') and 'good'. If Nietzsche the "immoralist" has a "moral" vocabulary, then that vocabulary is centred on the words 'health' and 'sickness'. Nietzsche's theme of health concerns, in the main, value problems and the dynamics of the will, and one of his most frequent targets (if it is not the target of his criticisms) is the Judeo-Christian tradition. Since a large portion of Nietzsche's use of health-related language relates to the Judeo-Christian tradition (and especially Christianity), and since his use of such language in this regard is often highly evaluative in nature, I shall concentrate on the said tradition. I will conclude the chapter by presenting some of Nietzsche's most positive remarks about health, that is to say, some of his thoughts about health as a desirable ideal (this in contrast to his almost uniformly negative speculations about Christianity).
In Nietzsche's view, the problem with Western civilization is that "every kind of decay and sickness has continually helped to form overall value judgments; that decadence has actually gained predominance in the value judgments that have become accepted; . . ." (WM 39) Nietzsche speculates:

Such a total aberration of mankind from its basic instincts, such a total decadence of value judgments—that is the question mark par excellence, the real riddle that the animal "man" poses for the philosopher. (WM 39)

This, however, is not to say that sickness does not have a crucial role in life:

The concept of decadence. — Waste, decay, elimination need not be condemned; they are necessary consequences of life. The phenomenon of decadence is as necessary as any increase and advance of life; one is in no position to abolish it. Reason demands, on the contrary, that we do justice to it. (WM 40)

Nietzsche states: "Decadence itself is nothing to be fought; it is absolutely necessary and belongs to every age and every people. What should be fought vigorously is the contagion of the healthy parts of the organism." (WM 41) Sickness is an integral part of life; it should act as a stimulus and challenge. Overcoming and increase of capacity should be the results of its promptings. Sickness may help instead of hinder, as in the case of Christianity, which can perform a valuable function insofar as it "is a cure, at least a means of taming (—under certain circumstances it serves to make sick: which can be useful in breaking savagery and brutality)." (WM 236) Christianity may "civilize": 
The struggle against the brutal instincts is different from the struggle against the sick instincts; to make sick may even be a means of mastering brutality. Christian psychological practice often leads to the conversion of a brute into a sick and consequently tame animal. (WM 238)

In Western civilization, though, the potentially helpful role of sickness in the development of an elite has not materialized. Sickness, understood as sickness, is a tyrant instead of a tool. It is the rule; it exists virtually unchecked. Western civilization has not "done justice" to sickness; it has capitulated in the face of it.

To Nietzsche's eyes, thus, Christianity is an affliction. On the whole, "it is itself a symptom of sickness, propagates decadence; ..." (WM 236) Instead of at least producing a few substantially good effects, the Christian tradition which afflicts Western civilization has created an invalid, has minimized the possibility of real health.

"Illness makes men better": this famous opinion, which one encounters throughout the centuries, in the mouth of the sage as often as in the mouth and maw of the people, makes one wonder. As to whether it is valid, one would like to ask: were morality and illness originally connected, perhaps? The "improvement of man," regarded as a whole, e.g., the undeniable softening, humanizing, mellowing of the European within the last millennium--is it perhaps the result of long hidden and mysterious suffering and failure, abstinence, stunting? Has "illness" made the European "better"? Or, in other words; is our morality--our modern sensitive European morality, ... the expression of a physiological regression?--(WM 395)
Nietzsche laments the paucity of genuine, powerful striving in Western civilization:

Nothing would be more costly than virtue: for one would in the end have turned the earth into a hospital; and ultimate wisdom would be "everyone as everyone else's nurse." To be sure, one would then possess that much-desired "peace on earth"! . . . How little beauty, high spirits, daring, danger! How few "works" for the sake of which life on earth is worth while! And, alas, no more "deeds" whatever!(WM 395)

Christianity seeks to transform the world into a sick ward.

Nietzsche is emphatic about the Judeo-Christian tradition and Christianity especially being a history of sickness and sickness; he says:

I have asked myself if all the supreme values of previous philosophy, morality, and religion could not be compared to the values of the weakened, the mentally ill, and neurotics: in a milder form, they represent the same ills.--(WM 47)

Physiology of the nihilistic religions. Each and every nihilistic religion: a systematized case history of sickness employing religious-moralistic nomenclature.(WM 152)

Christianity is the decadent form of the old world sunk into deepest impotence, so that the sickest and unhealthiest elements and desires come to the top.(WM 173)

Nietzsche sees Christianity, the heritage of Western civilization, as exhibiting some of the worst tendencies of human nature: denigration of actual, earthly, physical, passional existence; syrupy-sweet altruism; self-flagellation disguised as humility; bowing, scraping, and grovelling in front
of invented gods; revenge and pettiness instead of confidence and strength directed toward challenging and perhaps even dangerous goals. Christianity represents, in Nietzsche's view, hatred of life and a lack of really affirmative power. Strong, threatening impulses are branded "evil" and extirpated rather than being controlled and channelled; actual existence is scuttled in favour of "another", "higher" world; humility and "brotherly love" are held up as ideals but only out of fear and weakness ("When stepped on, a worm doubles up. That is clever. In that way he lessens the probability of being stepped on again. In the language of morality: humility." (G I 31)); man prostrates himself before "gods", though his devotion to them merely provides an excuse to inflict narrow-mindedness on others; obstacles and resistance and incapacity are not regarded as calls to battle but as proof of the inherent wretchedness of life; lack of practical and spiritual power instigates not genuine remedial action but programmatic retribution against the gifted, who are denounced as "prideful" and "godless". The Christian orientation is the antipode to a healthy orientation, that is to say, one founded in vital capacity which embraces the world, such as it is, and strives to enhance itself.

The highest religious and moral values of the West signify, according to Nietzsche, a lack of life-affirmation, and hence of life. They signify, to put it another way, spiritu-
al sloth: "Two totally different states confounded: e.g., the *calm of strength*, which is essentially forebearance from reaction (type of the gods whom nothing moves)—and the *calm of exhaustion*, rigidity to the point of anesthesia." (WM 47)

In short, Christianity is evidence of pure nihilism:

"Now I understand clearly what was once sought above all when teachers of virtue were sought. Good sleep was sought, and opiate virtues for it. For all these much praised sages who were teachers of virtue, wisdom was the sleep without dreams: they knew no better meaning of life. . . . "Blessed are the sleepy ones: for they shall soon drop off." (Z I 2)

Christianity, "instead of encouraging death and self-destruction (which are the logical ends of its nihilism), protects everything ill-constituted and sick and makes it propagate itself—" (WM 247) Furthermore: "If one does not feel such a disposition as an extreme immorality, as a crime against life, one belongs with the company of the sick and possesses its instincts oneself—" (WM 246)

To Nietzsche Christianity makes man, a possible mountain, into a molehill. One of its primary emphases is culpability and blame. It explicitly holds that all people, regardless of distinctions, are wretched sinners, barely deserving of "salvation". Self-abnegation and the inducement of guilt are the key tactics in this diminution and rendering impotent of man:
To be unable to have done with an experience is already a sign of decadence. This reopening of old wounds, this wallowing in self-contempt and contrition, is one more illness, out of which no "salvation of the soul" can arise but only a new form of soul sickness--These "states of redemption" in the Christian are mere variations of one and the same diseased state--interpretations of the epileptic crisis by a certain formula supplied, not by science, but by religious delusion.

One is good in a sickly manner when one is sick-- . . .

One is healthy . . . when one feels that the "bite" of conscience is like a dog biting on a stone--when one is ashamed of one's remorse--

Previous practice, . . . held a man to be cured when he abased himself before the cross and swore to be a good man--But a criminal who with a certain sombre seriousness cleaves to his fate and does not slander his deed after it is done has more health of soul--The criminals among whom Dostoevsky lived in prison were one and all unbroken natures--are they not worth a hundred times more than a "broken" Christian?(WM 233)

Christianity is, quite simply, an exquisitely morbid phenomenon:

Man, imprisoned in an iron cage of errors, became a caricature of man, sick, wretched, ill-disposed toward himself, full of hatred for the impulses of life, full of mistrust of all that is beautiful and happy in life, a walking picture of misery: this artificial, arbitrary, recent abortion that the priests have pulled up out of their soil, the "sinner": how shall we be able, in spite of all, to justify this phenomenon?(WM 397)

With the sick, humility and "brotherly love" evidence want, lack of power, lack of self-esteem. With the sick, "altruism" is a response to feelings of worthlessness:

The preponderance of an altruistic mode of valuation is the consequence of an instinct
that one is ill-constituted. The value judgment here is at bottom: "I am not worth much": a merely physiological value judgment; even more clearly: the feeling of impotence, the absence of the great affirmative feelings of power (in muscles, nerves, ganglia). This value judgment is translated into a moral or religious judgment, . . . (the predominance of religious and moral judgments is always a sign of a lower culture): it seeks to establish itself by relating to spheres in which it recognizes the concept "value" in general. The interpretation by means of which the Christian sinner believes he understands himself is an attempt to justify his lack of power and self-confidence: he would rather consider himself guilty than feel bad for no reason: it is a symptom of decay to require interpretations of this sort at all. (WM 373)

"The suffering, desperate, self-mistrustful, in a word the sick, have at all times had need of entrancing visions to endure life (this is the origin of the concept "blessedness")." (WM 852) Thus Christianity's one-sided accent on man's "higher" nature and a "higher" world. To Nietzsche its unnaturalness is a blunder and even worse:

All the things men have valued with such earnestness heretofore are not even realities; they are mere fantasies, or, more strictly speaking, lies arising from the evil instincts of diseased and, in the deepest sense, harmful natures—all the concepts, "God," "soul," "virtue," "sin," "Beyond," "truth," "eternal life." . . . (Such harmful natures are) the products of disease and the instinct of revenge: they are so many monsters, rotten, utterly incurable, avenging themselves on life. . . . I would be their very opposite. It is my privilege to be extremely sensitive to any sign of healthy instincts. There is not a morbid trait in me; even in times of serious illness I have never
Nietzsche deplores the pallor of religious ideals. "What stuffy and sickroom air arises from all that excited chatter about 'redemption,' love, blessedness, faith, truth, 'eternal life'!" (WM 187) Religion has downgraded life in eulogizing the "higher":

What meaning have those lies, those ancillary concepts of morality, "Soul," "Spirit," "Free Will," "God," if their aim be not that of the physiological ruin of mankind? When one is no longer serious about self-preservation and the increase of bodily energy, i.e., of life; when anemia is made an ideal and the contempt of the body is construed as "the salvation of the soul," what can all this be if not a recipe for decadence? (EH M 2)

Any emphasis on the "higher" can only serve to distract attention from those things which make up the most obvious foundation of human life:

The concepts "soul," "spirit," and last of all the concept "immortal soul," were invented to despise the body, to make it sick and "holy," to inspire a terrible levity towards all those things in life which deserve to be treated seriously, questions of nutrition, housing, intellectual diet, care of the sick, cleanliness, and weather. Instead of health, we find the "salvation of the soul"—in other words, a folie circulaire fluctuating between the convulsions of penitence and the hysteria of redemption. (EH IV 8)

The "higher" is only one aspect of man, and to elevate it into an ideal is to deny integrity to man:

Whence, then, comes the sickness and ideological unnaturalness that rejects this doublingness ((of man as "higher" and "lower"))—that teaches that it is a higher thing to be efficient on only one side? Whence comes the...
hemiplegia of virtue, the invention of the
good man?—(WM 351)

To oppose good and evil, to set them up as absolute contrarieties, is to misinterpret man's situation:

In summa: he ((the good man)) denies life, he grasps that when good is the supreme value it condemns life—
Therewith he ought to consider his ideology of good and evil as refuted. But one cannot refute an illness ((emphasis mine)). And so he conceives another life!—(WM 351)

It must be realized that although Christianity is symptomatic of exhaustion, it is not therefore innocuous. In fact, Christianity is destructive. Nietzsche says that "one has only what one needs to have." (WM 1040) This follows:
"One wants weakness: why? Usually because one is necessarily weak." (WM 47) Christians are sickly and weak, and it is these things that they crave; the tragedy, however, is that they do not just themselves wallow in sickliness and weakness, but foist decrepitude upon others—upon the gifted.

The compassionate Christian.— The reverse side of Christian compassion for the suffering of one’s neighbour is a profound suspicion of all the joy of one’s neighbour, of his joy in all that he wants to do and can.” (M 80) The problem is that "man sees in every feeling of indisposition and misfortune something for which he has to make someone else suffer—in doing so he becomes conscious of the power he still possesses and this consoles him.” (M 15) "What is morality really? The instinct of decadence; it is the exhausted and
disinherited who in this way take their revenge and play the master—"(WM 401) The sickly are creative in their own negative, weak way:

In Christianity, three elements must be distinguished: (a) the oppressed of all kinds, (b) the mediocre of all kinds, (c) the discontented and sick of all kinds. With the first element Christianity fights against the political nobility and its ideal; with the second element, against the exceptional and privileged (spiritually, physically--) of all kinds; with the third element, against the instinct of the healthy and happy. When a victory is won, the second element ((the demand for "equal rights")) steps into the foreground, for then Christianity has persuaded the healthy and happy to its side (as warriors in its cause), . . .(WM 215)

It is clear that for Nietzsche Christianity is the sickness of the Western world. Why is it, though, that it has lasted for so long? The answer is this: Christianity has lasted as long as it has because it appeals to the mediocre— and the mediocre are always in great supply. This is not to suggest that mediocrity can or ought to be done away with. In fact, its victory is not entirely anti-biological,11 "A high culture can stand only upon a broad base, upon a strong and healthy consolidated mediocrity."(WM 364) The problem, however, is that Christianity is simply too stifling and enervating to do anyone any good. It is too ennervated and enervating to be of help in developing mankind; it can only be a dead weight around the neck of Western civilization, so to speak. And it is Nietzsche's intention to act as the
Western world's doctor, to diagnose its illness. (He actually wrote an outline for a proposed project called "The Philosopher as Cultural Physician".12)

There is a difference, though, between an ordinary relationship of doctor and patient and the relationship between Nietzsche and his "patient". In an ordinary relationship between a doctor and a patient, the patient respects the doctor's advice. In the relationship between Nietzsche and Western civilization, the patient is not amenable to accepting the doctor's diagnosis. He does not want to know about it!

Thinking about illness!--To calm the imagination of the invalid, so that at least he should not, as hitherto, have to suffer more from thinking about his illness than from the illness itself—that, I think, would be something! It would be a great deal! Do you now understand our task? (M 54)

The patient "works against a corroborating system of treatment, here it is the invalid's instinct against that which is good for him—"(WM 236) For the patient, the prospect that he is sick is frightening, since, in the absence of abundant affirmative power, his sickness is all he has. Nietzsche speculates:

A physiologist interested in a disease and an invalid who claims to be cured of it do not have identical interests. Let us suppose the disease is morality—for it is a disease—and that we Europeans are the invalids; what subtle torment and difficulties would arise if we Europeans were at the same time inquisitive spectators and physiologists!
Would we then really desire to be free of morality? Would we want to be? Quite apart from the question whether we could be. Whether we could be "cured."—(WM 273)

The sick may have some recognition that there is something wrong, but ultimately they recoil from the most obvious explanation. Unfortunately, with the sick "health of soul is regarded as sickness, as suspicious—"(WM 248) The sick transvalue values! Nietzsche says: "A typically morbid nature cannot become healthy at all, much less by his own efforts."(EH I 2) Thus, "the decadent, as such, invariably chooses those remedies which are bad for him."(EH I 2)

Where are the new physicians of the soul?—It has been the means of comfort which have bestowed upon life that fundamental character of suffering it is now believed to possess; the worst sickness of mankind originated in the way in which they have combated their sicknesses, and what seemed to cure has in the long run produced something worse than that which it was supposed to overcome. The means which worked immediately, anaesthetising and intoxicating, the so-called consolations, were ignorantly supposed to be actual cures; the fact was not even noticed, indeed, that these instantaneous alleviations often had to be paid for with a general and profound worsening of the complaint, that the invalid had to suffer from the after-effect of intoxication, later from the withdrawal of intoxication, and later still from an oppressive general feeling of restlessness, nervous agitation and ill-health. Past a certain degree of sickness one never recovered—the physicians of the soul, those universally believed in and worshipped, saw to that.—

Nietzsche continues:

It is said of Schopenhauer, and with justice,
that after they had been neglected for so long he again took seriously the sufferings of mankind; where is he who, after they have been neglected for so long, will again take seriously the antidotes to these sufferings and put in the pillory the unheard-of quack-doctoring with which, under the most glorious names, mankind has hitherto been accustomed to treat the sicknesses of its soul? (M 52)

The healthy "always instinctively select the proper remedy in preference to harmful ones; ... " (EH I 2) The sick botch cures for the following reason: "The error in treatment: one does not want to fight weakness with a systeme fortifiant, but rather with a kind of justification and moralization; i.e., with an interpretation." (WM 47) The sick merely interpret their situation, without actually changing it. Rather than confronting the reality of their illness, the sick indulge their weakness and incapacity and thus fail to see that their only hope is a method that strengthens. The sick merely interpret and moralize, and thus explain away their true condition—"In life, we are only as sojourners from another world"; "Our suffering and lack prove the wretchedness of the temporal"; "All people are sinners, and hence, base"; "Absolute equality is the only valid rule of conduct for all people"; "Our vulnerability is the fault of the strong, who are like evil wolves"; "We, the meek, shall inherit the earth someday". Such interpretations involve a shirking of responsibility for one's situation and future. One is powerless, so one makes up stories to explain one's powerlessness away and even turn it to one's advantage. It is no wonder that
with "self-cures"

every operation becomes an injury, an amputation even of those organs whose energy is a precondition of any return to health. And the most that is achieved is never healing, but only the substitution of one set of evil symptoms for another—(WM 248)

I would like to note that although much of Nietzsche's philosophical criticism in general and much of his talk about health in particular relate to Christianity, Nietzsche does see nihilism and hence sickness in other aspects of Western culture as well. Even when the Judeo-Christian tradition is on its deathbed, even when the implications of the pronouncement "God is dead"(FW 125) unfold, nihilistic thought, that is to say, life-denying thought born of weakness, will still exist. People will continue to adhere to worn-out moral notions, though the religious impetus behind them has died out. People will continue to live and think according to "absolute" valuations which, while comforting, will eventually reveal their own spuriousness and thus bring profound disappointment. They may be "cheerful" and "optimistic", but such an attitude is really only a whistling in the dark.13 Science, a modern "god", will not suffice as a replacement for previously trusted anchors. Nietzsche warns of

the dangerous, life-corroding, and life-poisoning element in our scientific pursuits: Life is diseased, thanks to this dehumanized piece of clock-work and mechanism, thanks to the "impersonality" of the workman, and to
the false economy of the "division of labor." The end, namely, culture, is lost sight of: modern scientific activity as a means to it produces barbarism. (EH U 1)

Nietzsche centres his health-related language on Christianity especially because he believes it to be the single most important reason for the failure of Western civilization to be a "high culture." (WM 864)

I shall now turn to some of Nietzsche's more positive comments about health. I will begin with a few of Nietzsche's remarks on the artist (a type of man that Nietzsche generally esteems). As always, it should be kept in mind that Nietzsche is of the opinion that "we cannot do without sickness, ... We need the abnormal, we give life a tremendous choc by these great sicknesses." (WM 778)

Nietzsche makes the following startling statement: "It is exceptional states that condition the artist--all of them profoundly related to and interlaced with morbid phenomena--so it seems impossible to be an artist and not to be sick." (WM 811) What are such states?

Physiological states that are in the artist as it were molded into a "personality" and that characterizes men in general to some degree:
1. intoxication: the feeling of enhanced power; the inner need to make of things a reflex of one's own fullness and perfection;
2. the extreme sharpness of certain senses, ... 
3. the compulsion to imitate: ... (WM 811)

Despite the "sickness" of the artist, Nietzsche holds that
the artist is a superior type of human being. He says that
by now we have learned better than to speak
of healthy and sick as of an antithesis; it
is a question of degrees. My claim in this
matter is that what is today called "healthy"
represents a lower level than that which un-
der favorable circumstances would be healthy
--that we are relatively sick--
The artist belongs to a still stronger race.
(WM 812)

The artist is superior because of this: "What would be harm-
ful and morbid in us, in him is nature-----"(WM 812) In oth-
er words, the artist is able to control strong passions and
unusual modes of perception which might very well be problem-
atic for others who lack the artist's capacity. For example,
the artist is not carried away by strong perceptual impinge-
ments, unable to resist--he deals with them creatively by
channelling them and using them for his own advantage. The
weak, on the other hand, cannot resist; "precisely the
strength to suspend activity, not to react, is sickest of all
under the influence of weakness: one never reacts more quick-
ly and blindly than when one should not react at all.--"(WM
45) Another example: While the artist relishes great emo-
tions and passions of all kinds, and transforms them for his
own ends, "almost all the passions have been brought into ill
repute on account of those who were not sufficiently strong
to employ them--."(WM 778) Thus,

the extreme exhaustion of all morbid natures
after their nervous eccentricities has noth-
ing in common with the states of the artist,
who does not have to atone for his good peri-
ods-- He is rich enough for them; he is able
to squander without becoming poor.(WM 812)
The artist, then, is an exemplar of the healthy type. He is powerful enough to grapple successfully with potentially or actually threatening conditions and gain in the process.

In Nietzsche's eyes, health is dynamic capacity:

Nothing but questions of strength: how far to prevail against the conditions that preserve society and against its prejudices?--how far to unchain one's terrible qualities through which most people perish?--how far to oppose truth and reflect on its most questionable sides?--how far to oppose suffering, self-contempt, pity, sickness, vice, with the query as to whether one cannot become master of them? (--what does not destroy us makes us stronger--)--finally: how far to acknowledge in one's mind the rule, the commonplace, the petty, good, upright, the average nature, without letting oneself be vulgarized by them?--(WM 934)

The issue is affirmation versus negation:

Points of view for my values: whether out of abundance or out of want?--whether one looks on or lends a hand--or locks away and walks off?--whether out of stored-up energy, "spontaneously," or merely stimulated reactively, and provoked? whether simple, out of a paucity or elements, or out of overwhelming mastery over many, so they are pressed into service when they are needed? . . . whether sick from sickness or excessive health? . . . whether one seeks resistance or avoids it? (WM 1009)

A healthy person does not merely survive despite the odds--he flourishes!

A full and powerful soul not only copes with painful, even terrible losses, deprivations, robberies, insults; it emerges from such hells with a greater fullness and powerfulness; and, most essential of all, with a new increase in the blissfulness of love. (WM 10-30)

A healthy person is not only able to confront the threaten-
ing, but actually gravitates toward it. Nietzsche explains that

broadly speaking, a preference for questionable and terrifying things is a symptom of strength; while a taste for the pretty and dainty belongs to the weak and delicate. . . .

It is a sign of one's feeling of power and well-being how far one can acknowledge the terrifying and questionable character of things; and whether one needs some sort of "solution" at the end. (WM 852)

The healthy person and the sick person alike negate. The healthy person, though, negates on the basis of a general attitude which is affirmative. Conversely, the sick person negates out of weakness, fear, and pettiness. "No" can only be worthwhile if it is born of "Yes". Nietzsche's ideal is one who is "innocence and forgetting, a new beginning, a game, a self-propelled wheel, a first movement, a sacred 'Yes.' For the game of creation, my brothers, a sacred 'Yes' is needed: . . . "(Z I 1) Only from a general standpoint of affirmation can negation be genuinely powerful and fruitful.

What must not be confused with . . . ((reactionary nay-saying)): pleasure in saying No and doing No out of a tremendous strength and tension derived from saying Yes--peculiar to all rich and powerful men and ages. A luxury, as it were; also a form of bravery that opposes the terrible; a sympathetic feeling for the terrible and questionable because one is, among other things, terrible and questionable: the Dionysian in will, spirit, taste. (WM 1020)

A basically affirmative orientation leans toward the diffi-
cult:

Is there a pessimism of strength? Is there an intellectual predilection for what is hard, awful, evil, problematical in existence—a tendency that is the result of well-being, exuberant health, a fullness of existence? Is there perhaps suffering involved in that very overfullness? (EH V 1)

The ancient Greeks had a pessimism of strength, for their tragic art was fuelled not by resignation in the face of the tribulatory nature of human existence but by triumphant affirmation of life despite its inherent suffering.

Whence then must tragedy have sprung? Perhaps from joy, from strength, from exuberant health, from overfullness. And what then, physiologically speaking, is the significance of that madness, the Dionysian madness, out of which grew comic as well as tragic art? What? Is it possible that madness is not necessarily a symptom of degeneration, of decline, of a decadent culture? Perhaps this is a question for alienists—there are neuroses of health? (EH V 4)

And so Nietzsche's answer to the question "Is pessimism necessarily the sign of decline, of decay, of failure, of exhausted and debilitated instincts? . . ." (EH V 1) is "No!": Greek tragedy is an excellent example of how it is possible to "transform these horrible reflections on the terror and absurdity of existence into representations with which man may live." (GT 7) Even resentment, the hallmark of the sick man, is found in the healthy person; but in the healthy person, it is a feeling that is controlled and mastered. It does not cause the healthy person to burn up with pettiness, for the healthy typically overcome difficulties, and even
this most dangerous of feelings:

Illness is a sort of resentment in itself. . . . And nothing consumes a man more quickly than the emotion of resentment. . . . Resentment should above all be forbidden the sick man--it is his special danger: unfortunately, however, it is also his most natural propensity. . . . Resentment born of weakness is harmful to no one more than to the weak man himself--conversely, with a fundamentally rich nature, resentment is a superfluous feeling, which, if one remains master of it, is almost a proof of riches. (EH I 6)

A healthy disposition is Nietzsche's ideal, and such a disposition necessarily involves the most vibrant components:

The affirmative affects: pride, joy, health, love of the sexes, emnity and war, reverence, beautiful gestures and manners, strong will, the discipline of high spirituality, will to power, gratitude toward earth and life--everything that is rich and desires to bestow and that replenishes and gilds and immortalizes and deifies life--the whole force of transfiguring virtues, everything that declares good and affirms in word and deed--(WM 1033)

Greek tragic art evidences powerful affirmation, and in fact their culture as a whole is esteemed by Nietzsche, who calls the Greeks the "truly healthy ones" who are the standard for what is to be called healthy in a people. 14

What do any latter-day men, the children of a fragmentary, multifarious, sick, strange age, know of the range of Greek happiness; what could they know of it! . . .

When the Greek body and the Greek soul "bloomed," and not in conditions of morbid exaltation and madness, there arose that mysterious symbol of the highest world-affirmation and transfiguration of existence that has yet been attained on earth. . . .
One only needs to pronounce the word "Dionysus" in the presence of the best latter-day names and things, . . .(and) at once we feel that our best things and moments have been judged. Dionysus is a judge! -- Have I been understood? (WM 1051)

Nietzsche has indeed been understood if it is acknowledged that affirmative power, i.e., health, is the fulcrum of his table of values.

Nietzsche insists on the need for

spirits of a different calibre than seems really feasible in this age; spirits rendered potent through wars and victories, to whom conquest, adventure, danger, even pain, have become a need; for such a consummation we need habituation to sharp, rare air, to winter wanderings, to literal and metaphorical ice and mountains; we even need a kind of sublime malice, a supreme and most self-conscious insolence of knowledge, which is the appanage of great health; we need (to summarise the awful truth) just this great health! (GM II 24)

Nietzsche speaks in the name of

the new, the nameless, the hard-to-understand, we firstlings of a yet untried future--we require for a new end also a new means, namely, a new healthiness, stronger, sharper, tougher, bolder and merrier than any healthiness hitherto. (FW 382)

These healthy ones are "healthier than people would like to admit, dangerously healthy, always healthy again, . . ." (FW 382) Their healthiness is *great healthiness--such healthiness as one not only possesses, but also constantly acquires and must acquire, because one continually sacrifices it again, and must sacrifice it!" (FW 382) The self-appointed
task of these healthy ones is to explore the
still undiscovered country before us, the
boundaries of which no one has yet seen, a
beyond to all countries and corners of the
ideal known hitherto, a world so over-rich in
the beautiful, the strange, the questionable,
the frightful, and the divine, that our curi-
osity as well as our thirst for possession
thereof, have got out of hand—alas! that
nothing will now any longer satisfy us! How
could we still be content with the man of the
present day after such peeps, and with such a
craving in our conscience and consciousness?—
(FW 382)

It is this "great healthiness" that is the precondition of
the Zarathustra-type—of the "higher man". What of this
ideal? Here is Nietzsche's exhilarating answer:

Another ideal runs on before us, a strange,
tempting ideal, full of danger, to which we
should not like to persuade any one, because
we do not so readily acknowledge any one's
right thereto: the ideal of a spirit who
plays naively (that is to say involuntarily
and from overflowing abundance and power)
with everything that has hitherto been called
holy, good, inviolable, divine; to whom the
loftiest conception which the people have
reasonably made their measure of value, would
already imply danger, ruin, abasement, or at
least relaxation, blindness, or temporary
self-forgetfulness; the ideal of a humanly
superhuman welfare and benevolence, which may
often enough appear inhuman, for example,
when put by the side of all past seriousness
on earth, and in comparison with all past so-
lemnities in bearing, word, tone, look, mo-
rality and pursuit, as their truest involun-
tary parody,—but with which, nevertheless,
perhaps the great seriousness only commences,
the proper interrogation mark is set up, the
fate of the soul changes, the hour-hand
moves, and tragedy begins . . . (FW 382)

"Tragedy begins . . ."—as is the case with Greek tragic art,
the abovementioned ideal attests a powerful affirmation of
life in the face of the awful and challenging. What could be healthier than such an affirmation?
CONCLUSION

In this essay I have called attention to a little-studied Nietzschean theme, the theme of health. I believe that the importance of the theme of health in Nietzsche's thought is rather easily underestimated if the theme is not viewed in terms of Nietzsche's philosophy as a whole. In order to do the theme of health justice, then, I have presented it in relation with certain key strands of Nietzsche's thought in its entirety. My aim has been to show that the theme of health is a substantial and integral aspect of Nietzsche's philosophical vision.

My project of relating the theme of health with key strands of Nietzsche's thought as a whole has involved relating the theme to (1) Nietzsche's life-oriented approach and (2) Nietzsche's emphasis on power. Nietzsche's life-oriented approach is manifested in his naturalism and anti-otherworldliness. Both of these accents point to life, the earth, actual existence. Nietzsche's health-related language reflects his naturalism, and also is a tacit rebuttal of otherworldliness. Thus, as I have suggested, the theme of health in Nietzsche's thought is a manifestation of his life-oriented approach. Perhaps more crucially, Nietzsche's concept of health as the capacity to overcome sickness or sickness and benefit therefrom is a manifestation of his empha-
sis on power. Nietzsche's emphasis on power is evident throughout all phases of his thought, and is most developed at the end of his career in the form of the hypothesis of the will to power. The will to power is the essential disposition of the quanta of force comprising the universe to exercise and enhance their capacities. Obstacles and resistance are necessarily involved in the exercise of power, and in fact it is only through the facing of challenges that capacity can be enhanced. In a similar way, health entails sickness or sickliness, and it is only through the overcoming of these things that health, understood as capacity, can be enhanced. Nietzsche's use of health-related language is often evaluative, and health and sickness can be seen as the more obviously qualitative aspects of the will to power. If Nietzsche has a consistent evaluational vocabulary, then 'sick' and 'healthy' are certainly key words in that vocabulary.

Nietzsche's talk about health can be problematical. As Pasley says, Nietzsche "was well aware . . . of the dangers of wholesale analogizing, but he also recognized that philosophers are inveterate analogizers and that he could not avoid the habit." Nevertheless, the Nietzschean theme of health stands as a substantial part of his thought, at least because of its prominence, and as well it is an absolutely integral part, since it succinctly emodies major motifs of Nietzsche's thought as a whole. I would like to conclude
this essay with the following passages, which, I believe, en-
capsulate Nietzsche's dynamic, life-oriented, healthy world-
view:

Remain seated as little as possible; trust no thought that is not born in the open, to the accompaniment of free bodily motion--nor one in which your very muscles do not celebrate a feast. . . . A sedentary life, . . . is the real sin against the Holy Ghost. (EH II 1)

A maxim, the origin of which I withhold from scholarly curiosity, has long been my motto: 
Ingresunt animi, virescit volnere virtus.
("The spirits increase, vigor grows through a wound." 2)
FOOTNOTES

Introduction

1Plato, The Republic of Plato, trans. with Introduction and notes by Francis MacDonald Cornford (London: Oxford University Press, 1941; Oxford University Press, 1979), Ch. XIV 444.


Chapter I


2ibid.


Chapter II

1Schacht, Nietzsche, p. 225.

2ibid.

This is the interpretation of Nietzsche's position that his translator (Maximilian A. Mügge) offers.

Nietzsche, "Homer's Struggle", in *Early Greek Philosophy*, p. 58.

ibid., p. 61.

ibid., pp. 51, 58-59.


See, for example, *WM* 685, G IX 14.

Brute strength is a kind of power—but not the only kind, and not the highest.

See, for instance, Bertrand Russell's insufferably glib treatment in his *A History of Western Philosophy*.

Hollingdale, *Nietzsche*, p. 87.


Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 44.

ibid., p. 42.


ibid., p. 129.

*WM* 715.

Chapter III

Conclusion


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Mark Robert Letteri was born in Windsor, Ontario in 1961. He received a B.A. in Psychology from the University of Windsor in 1982. After completing his M.A. in Philosophy at the same institution, he will pursue Ph.D. studies at the University of Waterloo.