
Nietzsche se beskouings oor die deugde van matigheid en generositeit

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Abstract

Nietzsche's views on the virtues of temperance and magnanimity

The concepts of temperance and magnanimity (generosity) play a central role in Nietzsche's ethic, which is basically an ethic of virtue. In his own unique way, and in accordance with his extra-moral view of life, Nietzsche recovers and re-appropriates these virtues. Considerable attention is paid to Nietzsche's "aristocratism", which is closely tied up with his reconceptualisation ("rehabilitation") of the virtues in terms of virtù (virtuosity and vitality), to which he also refers as his "moraline-free" conception of the virtues.

According to Nietzsche, the truly noble or virtuous person is one who lives beyond resentment and feelings of remorse and guilt. He lives his life from the fullness of his own being and what he can bestow on others. Such a person is characterised, first of all, by temperance – a sense of measure and proportion.

Temperance (sophrosyne, temperantia) is one of the classical virtues, but it became deformed by the moralistic view of life; it was degraded to a gloomy, suffocating mediocrity. Temperance was presented as "asceticism, as a fight with the devil, etc." The sad result was that "the best things have been slandered because the weak or the immoderate swine have cast a bad light on them" (WP 870). However, Nietzsche does not reject the virtue of temperance. He would much rather like to "rehabilitate" or revalue this virtue in such a way as to serve his own perspective of life-affirmation and will to power.

It is important to understand Nietzsche's views on temperance, like many of the other virtues, against the background of his genealogy of morals. According to Nietzsche, the ethical distinction between good and bad did not originate with those to whom "goodness" was shown, but rather with the noble, powerful, high-stationed and high-minded, who felt and established themselves and their actions as good, i.e. of the first rank, in contradistinction to all the low, low-minded, common and plebeian. It is this aristocratic "pathos of distance" that Nietzsche seeks to rekindle and rehabilitate as the true origin of ethical life. This pathos of distance basically emanates from self-respect: "The noble soul has reverence for itself" (BGE 287). For Nietzsche this means that one should realize the greatest multiplicity of drives and form-giving forces in oneself, in the most tension-fraught but "controlled" manner. This control, the imposing of some form, is a creative, artistic activity. To lead an authentically ethical life, to become a truly virtuous person, is to realize this artistic activity in an

intensified way – imposing a form on oneself without neglecting the multiplicity in oneself. Nietzsche also refers to this as a process of self-creation, of transforming the self into a work of art, of giving style to one's own existence. Thus we free ourselves from guilt, resentment and the rage against contingency. By giving up the demand that we, in our particularity, fit the requirements of the general category of subjectivity, we free ourselves from the "will of man to find himself guilty and reprehensible to a degree that can never be atoned for"(GM II,2).

Nietzsche's re-covered ethics of self-formation and self-discipline valorises the particularity and multiplicity that make the self resistant to the crippling idea of a moral, universal subjectivity. His disciplined artist sees his unruly, multiple, and particular self as the source of a singular vitality and richness he distinctively shapes. He does not seek total self-mastery (and he does not experience the vengefulness that comes with that quest) because he understands Zarathustra's observation that "one must still have chaos in one, to give birth to a dancing star" (Z P,5). It is of the utmost importance for Nietzsche that one should attain satisfaction with oneself: "only then is a human being at all tolerable to behold. Whoever is dissatisfied with himself is continually ready for revenge, and we others will be his victims, if only by having to endure his ugly sight. For the sight of what is ugly makes one bad and gloomy." (GS 290).

To attain satisfaction with oneself ultimately means to affirm life in its totality. This implies a life beyond resentment, i.e. a life that is characterised by generosity and magnanimity. Nietzsche glorifies magnanimity (megalopsychia, magnanimitas) as the "crown" of all the virtues. His description of it resembles Aristotle's portrait of "magnanimous man" in the Nicomachean Ethics, and can best be summarised by the following quote from The Will to Power: "It is richness in personality, abundance in oneself, overflowing and bestowing, instinctive good health and affirmation of oneself, that produce great sacrifice and great love: it is strong and godlike selfhood from which these affects grow, just as surely as do the desire to become master, encroachment, the inner certainty of having a right to everything. What according to common ideas are opposite dispositions are rather one disposition; and if one is not firm and brave with oneself, one has nothing to bestow and cannot stretch out one's hand to protect and support – " (WP 386)

Twee van Nietzsche se groot temas, albei onafskeidbaar van sy idees van selfbeheer en selftransendensie, is matigheid en generositeit (gulhartigheid, grootmoedigheid). Die waarlik edele of deugdelike mens is die mens wat nie leef vanuit ressentiment nie, maar wat die kuns bemeester het om sonder wroeging te leef vanuit die volheid van wat hy is en wat hy aan te bied het. Hierdie mens word onder meer gekenmerk deur 'n sin vir maat.

Matigheid (*sophrosyne, temperantia*) is een van die klassieke deugde, maar dit is in die moralistiese lewensopvatting misvorm tot 'n stomsinnige, sombere en verstikkende middelmatigheid. Matigheid is voorgestel as "asceticism, as a fight with the devil, etc." Die droewige (maar voorspelbare)

gevolg van hierdie eeuelange kampanje is dat “the best things have been slandered because the weak or the *immoderate* swine have cast a bad light on them” (WP 870). Ten spyte van hierdie misvorming verwerp Nietzsche nie die deug van matigheid nie. Hy wil dit juis “rehabiliteer” of herwaardeer om dit sodoende diensbaar te maak aan sy eie perspektief van lewensbevestiging en wil tot mag.

Wat Nietzsche te sê het oor die deug van matigheid word uitstekend toegelig in ’n onlangse artikel van Paul van Tongeren in *Phronimon* (sien Van Tongeren 2001). Op gevaar af van herhaling gaan ek vervolgens slegs kortliks wys op enkele aspekte van Nietzsche se opvattinge oor matigheid, waarna ek ’n meer uitgebreide behandeling sal gee van sy beskouings oor generositeit.

I

Volgens Nietzsche vereis egte matigheid wilskrag. Dit is ’n uiting van ’n sterk wil wat, gekonfronteer met ’n veelvoud van magtige en botsende kragte, nie daarvoor terugdeins of dit probeer ontken nie, maar dit juis in ’n gees van onderlinge wedywering en spanning verwelkom. “The faith in the pleasure of moderation – that pleasure of the rider on a fiery steed! – has been lacking hitherto. The mediocrity of weaker natures has been confused with the moderation of the strong!” (WP 870). Egte matigheid beteken beheersdheid, en dit veronderstel ’n sin vir maat, vir proporsie, vir goeie smaak. Die menslik lofwaardige of voortreflike kwaliteite moet in proporsie, d.w.s. in ’n eweredige verhouding tot mekaar gebring word. “The natural delight of aesthetic natures in measure, the enjoyment of the beauty of measure, was overlooked or denied, because one desired an anti-eudaimonistic morality” (ibid.). Aangedryf deur ’n neerhalende en selfvernederende opvatting van wat substantief waardevol (en onwaardig) is in hulleself, neig die swakkes en mateloses om “oor boord te gaan” met hulle fanatisme en hulle asketisme. Die egte matige persoon word daarenteen gekenmerk deur “Pleasure in forms; taking under protection everything formal, the conviction that politeness is one of the greatest virtues; mistrust for letting oneself go in any way” (WP 943).

Tradisioneel word daar in die deugdeleer onderskei tussen die deugde wat op die self gerig is en dié wat op die ander gerig is. Nietzsche handhaaf nie self hierdie onderskeid nie, maar in terme daarvan moet sy weergawe van matigheid (en ook van ander deugde soos generositeit) vierkantig binne die eersgenoemde kategorie (dié van self-gerigtheid) geplaas word. Nietzsche is bekend daarvoor dat hy deurgaans afwysend staan teenoor altruïsme (gerigtheid op die ander), en hy verag die deugde wat tradisioneel daarmee in verband gebring is. Uit sy opmerkings oor beleefdheid in die

pas aangehaalde passasie blyk nogtans duidelik dat matigheid wel betrekking het (of 'n betekenisvolle impak kan hê) op ander persone met wie Nietzsche se deugdelike/matige mens in ontmoeting tree. Aanstons sal ons sien dat dit des te meer nog die geval is waar die deug van generositeit ter sprake kom.

Dit is belangrik om Nietzsche se beskouings oor matigheid, soos oor enige van die ander deugde, steeds te verstaan teen die agtergrond van sy genealogie van die moraal. Laasgenoemde moet deurentyd in ag geneem word wanneer daar gekyk word na sy eie taksering van tradisionele onderskeide soos dié tussen goed en kwaad, deug en ondeug, altruïsme en egoïsme. Dergelike onderskeide kan volgens Nietzsche alleen begryp ("herwaardeer") word as hulle teruggevoer word na hulle punt van oorsprong (die "oer-toneel" van hulle ontstaan), en dit is vir Nietzsche die aristokratiese etos met sy patos van distansie en sy onderskeid tussen goed ("vornehm") en sleg. Van belang is hier die volgende passasie uit *Zur Genealogie der Moral*:

Now it is plain to me ...: the judgment "good" did *not originate* with those to whom "goodness" was shown! Rather it was "the good" themselves, that is to say, the noble, powerful, high-stationed and high-minded, who felt and established themselves and their actions as good, that is, of the first rank, in contradistinction to all the low, low-minded, common and plebeian. It was out of this *pathos of distance* that they first seized the right to create values and to coin names for values ... The pathos of nobility and distance, as aforesaid, the protracted and domineering fundamental total feeling on the part of a higher ruling order in relation to a lower order, to a "below" – that is the origin of the antithesis "good" and "bad" ... It follows from this origin that the word "good" was definitely *not* linked from the first and by necessity to "unegoistic" actions, as the superstition of these genealogists of morality would have it. Rather it was only when aristocratic value judgments *declined* that the whole antithesis "egoistic" "unegoistic" obtruded itself more and more on the human conscience – it is, to speak in my own language, the *herd instinct* that through this antithesis at last gets its word (and its words) in. And even then it was a long time before that instinct attained such dominion that moral evaluation was actually stuck and halted at this antithesis (as, for example, is the case in contemporary Europe: the prejudice that takes "moral", "unegoistic", "*désintéressé*" as concepts of equivalent value already rules today with the force of a "fixed idea" and brain-sickness). (GM I,2)¹

Nietzsche se herwaardering en herwinning van matigheid asook sommige ander deugde moet, teen die agtergrond van hierdie passasie, verstaan word as 'n poging om weer iets van die verlore aristokratiese etos in die hede te laat herleef. Hy verwys dikwels na homself as 'n voorstander van "moraline free" *virtù*² (in die pre-Sokratiese Griekse, Romeinse en Renaissance sin van die woord), en nie van deug ("virtue") soos misvorm en

geperverteer deur die Christendom, die Kantianisme en ander moralismes nie. En as deug – in die sin van *virtù* – toevallig ook voordele inhou vir die “kudde” (die swakkes en die minderwaardiges), dan is dit ’n onbedoelde gevolg wat Nietzsche heeltemal koud laat.

In hierdie opsig kan Nietzsche se herwaardering van waardes en deugde eenvoudig geïnterpreteer word as ’n omkering sonder meer, ’n beweging terug na die egoïsme wat gediskrediteer geraak het deur die morele opvatting van die lewe. So ’n interpretasie is egter ’n ooreenvoudiging van Nietzsche se standpunt. Dit hou nie genoegsaam rekening met sekere aspekte van sy denke nie. In verskeie tekste stel Nietzsche dit duidelik dat die lang geskiedenis van die kudde-moraal nie somaar tersyde gestel of herroep kan word nie. Of hulle dit nou verdien of nie, die kudde is tans die heersersklas en hulle beskik oor die mag om hulle waardes op almal af te dwing. Erger nog: die hoogste en edelste lede van moderne samelewings is self ook erfgename van dieselfde geskiedenis wat gelei het tot die hegemonie van die kudde, en hulle moet dus *hulleself*, tesame met die kudde, te bowe kom. Verder, op ’n meer konseptuele vlak, word matigheid (en ook die ander deugde wat Nietzsche hoog ag) medebepaal en medegekonstitueer deur verhoudings tussen persone. Sommige van die “vorme” wat die matige persoon respekteer is vorme van *interaksie* (’n mens kan byvoorbeeld nóg beleefd nóg onbeleefd wees teenoor jousef), en om ’n sin vir maat en proporsie te handhaaf impliseer minstens ook gedeeltelik die vermoë van die self om homself in verhouding tot ander mense te verstaan. Die afsondering en distansiering waarvan Nietzsche praat, moet nie te sterk in ’n ruimtelike of territoriale sin opgevat word nie, en dit is ook slegs gedeeltelik in ’n fisiese sin te begryp.

Die afsondering of patos van distansie wat so kenmerkend is van die edele mens, is vir Nietzsche geen doel op sigself nie. Dit maak deel uit van ’n oorkoepelende strategie tot selfontplooiing en selfskepping, en dit kom basies voort uit *eerbied vir die self*: “The noble soul has reverence for itself” (BGE 287). Daarby beteken eerbied vir die self by uitstek eerbied vir die agonistiese en spanningsvolle veelvuldigheid wat die self in homself huisves. Dit word treffend deur Van Tongeren (2000: 240-41) soos volg verduidelik: “The German word for reverence is ‘Ehrfurcht.’ The ‘Ehrfurcht vor sich’ from section 287 is the overcoming of a ‘Furcht vor sich’ which is mentioned in section 292. It is quite normal that [one] ‘often runs away from himself, often is afraid of himself.’ It is not easy to endure this agonistic plurality (‘how many spirits do we harbor’ – BGE 227) in oneself ... It is very hard ‘to conserve oneself’ (BGE 41) when one has to safeguard the plurality one harbors and is not allowed to adhere to one particular identity or commitment, nor to one’s detachment from all attachments.” Van Tongeren haal dan die volgende gedeelte uit *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* aan wat die argument goed saamvat:

Not to remain stuck to a person – not even the most loved – every person is a prison, also a nook. Not to remain stuck to a fatherland ... Not to remain stuck to some pity – not even for higher men into whose rare torture and helplessness some accident allowed us to look. Not to remain stuck to a science – even if it should lure us with the most precious finds that seem to have been saved up precisely for us. Not to remain stuck to one's own detachment, to that voluptuous remoteness and strangeness of the bird who flees ever higher to see ever more below him – the danger of the flier. Not to remain stuck to our own virtues and become as a whole the victim of some detail in us ... One must know how *to conserve oneself*: the hardest test of independence. (BGE 41)

Egte deugdelikheid kom voort uit selfrespek, en ware selfrespek beteken om staande te bly tussen twee gevaarlike uiterstes: dogmatisme ("overestimation of the nook in which [one] sits" – GS 366) aan die een kant, en verstrooiing en verbrokkeling ("[to] be seduced into dilettantism, into becoming an insect with thousand feet and thousand antennae ... a pied piper of the spirit, in short a mis-leader" – BGE 205) aan die ander kant (Van Tongeren 2000: 240). Om tussen hierdie gevare staande te bly vergoed en konstante waaksaamheid. Dit impliseer 'n volgehoue stryd en inspanning. As sodanig bly dit 'n *ideaal wat nooit volkome verwesenlik kan word nie*, en wat dus in 'n sekere sin *bomenslik* is. Miskien is dit die eintlike betekenis van Nietzsche se idee van die *Übermensch*: dit funksioneer as 'n limiet-begrip wat die hoogste vorm van menswees, die uiterste vorm van deugdelikheid aandui, en dit kan alleen maar *benader* word sonder om dit ooit volkome te bereik.³ Dit is die geheimenisvolle en ongenaakbare waarheid (die waarheid van ewige "wording" en nie die waarheid van "syn" nie) wat Nietzsche wil hê ons moet erken en wat volgens hom as maatstaf moet geld vir 'n goeie en deugdelike lewe. Dit is die waarheid wat Nietzsche bedoel wanneer hy die volgende stelling maak: "the strength of a spirit can be measured by how much 'truth' it could take, more clearly, to what degree it *needed* it attenuated, veiled, sweetened, blunted, and falsified" (BGE 39).

'n Deugdelike lewe, so kan ons dit saamvat, is 'n lewe wat in die teken staan van 'n volgehoue spanning – 'n spanning wat op verskeie vlakke bestaan: Daar is eerstens die spanning tussen die self en die "ander" (ander mense, ander interpretasies of perspektiewe, maar uiteindelik ook die ganse sosio-historiese konteks waarin hy homself bevind). Tweedens is daar die spanning wat die self in homself ondervind, die spanning tussen die verskillende passies, deugde, persoonlikheidseienskappe en "identiteite" wat hy in homself huisves:

... the highest man, if such a concept be allowed, would be the man who represented the antithetical character of existence most strongly, as its glory and sole justification – Commonplace men can represent only a tiny nook and corner of this natural character: they perish when the multiplicity of

elements and the tension of opposites, i.e. the precondition for greatness in man, increases. (WP 881)

The highest man would have the greatest multiplicity of drives, in the relatively greatest strength that can be endured. Indeed, where the plant "man" shows himself strongest one finds instincts that conflict powerfully ..., but are controlled. (WP 966)

Die beheer waarvan hier sprake is moet op so 'n wyse uitgeoefen word dat dit nie die veelvuldigheid negeer en daarmee ook die spanning ophef nie. En dit is 'n groot kuns. Dit verg takt, soepelheid, goeie smaak, subtiliteit, genuanseerdheid, vindingrykheid en skeppende verbeeldingskrag – al die kwaliteite wat ons normaalweg assosieer met die wêreld van die kuns en kunstenaarskap. Van Tongeren (2000: 242) stel dit soos volg: "The highest human would realize the greatest multiplicity in the most tension-fraught but 'controlled' manner. This control, the imposing of some form, is a creative, artistic activity: 'We have *many types* in us. We coordinate our *inner stimuli as well as the outer ones* into one image or in a sequence of images: as artists."⁴ Not only does Nietzsche recognize the realization of this ideal in some artists, as for example in Goethe and Hafiz (GM III,2), but in general he considers this to be the task of the highest human beings in our day: to realize this artistic activity in an intensified way, imposing a form on oneself without neglecting the multiplicity in oneself. Here we find the domain of art back in Nietzsche's revaluation of morality."

Van Tongeren wys vervolgens daarop dat "this art of living is to a large extent carried out in the art of disguise, the play of masks ... 'the tremendous manifoldness of practice, art, and the mask' (BGE 242)." Ek gaan nie hier verder in op hierdie fassinierende aspek van Nietzsche se filosofie en Van Tongeren se bespreking daarvan nie. Ek volstaan met enkele opmerkings van Van Tongeren (ibid.: 242-43): "The theme of masking is strongly present in *Beyond Good and Evil*, often explicitly related to the ideal of nobility. In part the mask will be an inevitable effect of the noble multiplicity." Die verhevenheid van edele mense is geleë in hulle gekompliseerdheid en meerdimensionaliteit. Hulle het meervoudige of meerduidige identiteite wat hulle ontoeganklik en moeilik peilbaar maak, of, soos Nietzsche dit stel: "around every profound spirit a mask is growing continually, owing to the constantly false, namely *shallow*, interpretation of every word, every step, every sign of life he gives." (BGE 40). Maar hierdie groot geeste skep self ook hierdie maskers, nie slegs omdat hulle behoefte het aan afstandelikheid midde-in die alledaagse sosiale omgang nie (BGE 288 en 290), maar (en dit geld veral in die hedendaagse omstandighede) omdat dit hulle in staat stel "to realize this struggle between different possibilities, this agonistic multiplicity which they are. Masks are instruments to adopt an identity and at the same time not to identify oneself with this

identity but to take distance from it..." Nietzsche self stel dit soos volg: "it is characteristic of more refined humanity to respect 'the mask' and not to indulge in psychology and curiosity in the wrong place" (BGE 270).

Ek wil weer kortliks terugkeer na Nietzsche se idee van selfbeheersing as artistieke selfskepping – sy idee van *die self as 'n kunstwerk*. Ek wys hier in die eerste plek op die belangrike passasie in *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* waar Nietzsche selfdissipline in verband bring met die vermoë om "styl te gee" aan jou lewe:

One thing is needful. – To "give style" to one's character – a great and rare art! It is practiced by those who survey all the strengths and weaknesses of their nature and then fit them into an artistic plan until every one of them appears as an art and reason and even weaknesses delight the eye. Here a large mass of second nature has been added; there a piece of original nature has been removed – both times through long practice and daily work at it. Here the ugly that could not be removed is concealed; there it has been reinterpreted and made sublime ... In the end, when the work is finished, it becomes evident how the constraint of a single taste governed and formed everything large and small. Whether this taste was good or bad is less important than one might suppose, if only it was a single taste! (GS 290)

Hierdie selfdissipline is net vir diegene met "strong and domineering natures that enjoy their finest gaiety in such constraint and perfection under a law of their own." Hierteenoor is dit die swakker tipes "without power over themselves that *hate* the constraint of style" – miskien juis omdat daar geen eenvoudige kitsformule is om styl te gee aan jou lewe nie.

Om styl te gee aan jouself beteken, soos Honig (1993: 62) dit mooi stel, "to develop a signature, an individuality, by working with, reshaping, and exploring the possibilities contained in and presented by raw materials that we did not choose." Nog dieper gesien beteken dit, soos Honig tereg aandui, dat "we free ourselves of the rage against contingency by beautifying, deifying, sometimes concealing, and thereby unifying until we are satisfied with ourselves, until we have recovered ourselves by, in effect, re-covering ourselves... By giving up the demand that we, in our particularity, fit the requirements of the general category of subjectivity, we free ourselves from the 'will of man to find himself guilty and reprehensible to a degree that can never be atoned for.'⁵ Nietzsche's re-covered self-discipline liberates us from the rage against contingency *because* it operates according to a principle of selectivity, because it is governed by a single taste, and because its object is particular." (ibid.)

Honig wys daarop dat, soos Kant reeds in die *Kritik der Urteilskraft* aangetoon het, die probleem van kontingensie slegs as probleem na vore tree wanneer ons probeer om die wêreld "objektief" te ken: "The process of

objective knowing subsumes particulars under general categories – concepts – that relegate the particular to the realm of the unknowable or contingent: they suppress difference. The problem of the particular, of the contingent or different, disappears if we give up on this project or explanation via subsumption. And we can do this through art.” (ibid.) Waar Kant egter ’n analogie “vasstel” tussen die sfeer van die kuns (skoonheid, partikulariteit) en die sfeer van moraliteit, dus ’n versoening wil bewerkstellig tussen die twee sfere, daar sien Nietzsche in die “skone” (of die “sublieme” soos Kant dit ook noem), in die kuns, ’n *alternatief* vir die “impositional constructions of morality, just as he sees in his re-covered self-discipline an alternative to the self-discipline of the moralists.” (ibid.: 63)

Hierop lewer Honig nog die volgende treffende kommentaar: “Nietzsche’s re-covered self-discipline valorizes the particularity and multiplicity that make the self resistant to the formation of moral, responsible subjectivity. His disciplined artist sees his unruly, multiple, and particular self as the source of a singular vitality and richness he distinctively shapes. He does not seek total self-mastery (and he does not experience the vengefulness that comes with that quest) because he understands Zarathustra’s observation that ‘one must still have chaos in one, to give birth to a dancing star.’⁶ Neither does he expect total submission. He knows that his canvas is not passive and that artistry is interactive. He is responsive to the self as he shapes it.” (ibid.)

Die selfdissipline van die moraliste word daarenteen gekenmerk deur haatdraende selfontkenning, simptome van ’n onuitroeibare misnoegdheid of ontevredenheid met die self. Dit is waarom Nietzsche dan die volgende sê:

For one thing is needful: that a human being should *attain* satisfaction with himself, whether it be by means of this or that poetry and art; only then is a human being at all tolerable to behold. Whoever is dissatisfied with himself is continually ready for revenge, and we others will be his victims, if only by having to endure his ugly sight. For the sight of what is ugly makes one bad and *gloomy*. (GS 290)

Die kunstenaar, anders as die moralis, word nie “bad and gloomy” gemaak deur die “sight of what is ugly” nie, want hy meet homself nie aan die een of ander onbereikbare (transendente) en universele standard nie. Hy besef die wysheid van Zarathustra se vermaning:

Do not be virtuous beyond your powers! And do not ask anything improbable of yourselves! Follow in the footsteps of your father’s virtue! How would you climb high if the will of your fathers did not climb with you? ... And you should not pretend to be saints in those matters in which your fathers were vicious! (Z IV,13: “Of the Higher Man” 13)

Hieraan voeg Zarathustra die volgende bemoedigende woorde toe:

And if great things you attempted have turned out failures, does that mean you yourselves are – failures? And if you yourselves have turned out failures, does that mean – man is a failure? If man has turned out a failure, however: very well! Come on! (ibid.: 14)

The higher its type, the less often does a thing succeed. You Higher Men here, are you not all – failures? Be of good courage, what does it matter! How much is still possible! Learn to laugh at yourselves as a man ought to laugh! ... And truly, how much has already succeeded! How rich this earth is in good little perfect things, in well-constituted things! Set good little perfect things around you, you Higher Men! Things whose golden ripeness heals the heart. Perfect things teach hope. (ibid.: 15)

Die hoëre of verhewe mense van wie Nietzsche gewag maak, is die enkelinge wat selftevredenheid of selfgenoegsaamheid bereik het. Dit beteken egter nie dat hulle onkrities op hulleself, passief en onverskillig is nie⁷ (dit sou bloot simptome wees van die nihilisme), maar wel dat hulle, anders as die moraliste, nie vanuit 'n gevoel van self-misnoegdheid hunker na iets buite hulleself wat aan hulle “verdorwe” en miserabele bestaan sin kan gee nie. Hulle deugdelikheid bestaan nie in 'n afkerigheid van hulleself en van die lewe nie, maar juis in die volledige afirmasie van hulleself en daarmee saam ook van die lewe in sy geheel. Dit dui op 'n bestaan anderkant of verby ressentiment, en dit is 'n bestaan wat getuig van generositeit, gulhartigheid of grootmoedigheid.

II

In talle passasies dwarsdeur die werk van Nietzsche kom die begrip *generositeit* (“magnanimity”) ter sprake. Myns insiens neem dit 'n sentrale, uiters belangrike plek in in sy filosofie.⁸ As daar één woord of begrip is waarmee ons Nietzsche se opvatting van deugdelikheid kan “saamvat”, dan is dit waarskynlik “generositeit”. Hierdie begrip is nie vreemd in die tradisie van die deugde-etiek nie. Generositeit (*megalopsychia, magnanimitas*) is een van die tradisionele deugde, en dit is veral bekend as een van die sg. pre-Christelike, “aristokratiese” deugde. In tallose passasies gebruik Nietzsche die uitdrukkings *Seelengröße, Größe der Seele* en *geistiger Größe* (grootmoedigheid, ruimgeestigheid, “greatness of soul” en “greatness of spirit”), asook *Grossmut* (grootmoedigheid, “magnanimity”) wanneer hy verwys na sy “ideale” of edele mens.⁹ Kaufmann wys in sy Nietzsche-boek (hoofstuk 12,vi) asook in sy inleiding tot *Ecce Homo* op die sterk ooreenkomst tussen Nietzsche se opvatting van die edele mens en Aristoteles se beskrywing van die “magnanimous man” in die *Ethica Nichomachea* (IV,iii). Hy meen trouens dat laasgenoemde 'n leitmotief is in Nietzsche se *Ecce Homo*.

Tersaaklik is veral die volgende opmerkings van Aristoteles in die *Ethica Nichomachea* Boek IX en IV (sy skets van die “magnanimous man”):

So it is right for the good man to be self-loving, because then he will both be benefited himself by performing fine actions, and also help others. But it is not right for the bad man, because he will injure both himself and his neighbours by giving way to base feelings. (EN IX,viii: 1169a)

Well, a person is considered to be magnanimous if he thinks that he is worthy of great things, provided that he *is* worthy of them ... magnanimous people are concerned with honour, because it is honour above all that they claim as their due, and deservedly ... It would seem that the magnanimous man is characterized by greatness in every virtue ... magnanimity seems to be a sort of crown of the virtues, because it enhances them and is never found apart from them. This makes it hard to be truly magnanimous, because it is impossible without all-round excellence ... At great honours bestowed by responsible persons he will feel pleasure, but only a moderate one, because he will feel that he is getting no more than his due, or rather less, since no honour can be enough for perfect excellence. Nevertheless he will accept such honours, on the ground that there is nothing greater they can give him. But honour conferred by ordinary people for trivial reasons he will utterly despise, because that sort of thing is beneath his dignity. And similarly with dishonour, because it cannot rightfully attach to him ... but he will also be moderately disposed to wealth, power, and every kind of good and bad fortune, however it befalls him ... He is disposed to confer benefits, but is ashamed to accept them, because the one is the act of a superior and the other that of an inferior. When he repays a service he does so with interest, because in this way the original benefactor will become his debtor and beneficiary ... Another mark of the magnanimous man is that he never, or only reluctantly, makes a request, whereas he is eager to help others. He is haughty towards those who are influential and successful, but moderate towards those who have an intermediate position in society, because in the former case to be superior is difficult and impressive, but in the latter it is easy; and to create an impression at the expense of the former is not ill-bred, but to do so among the humble is vulgar – like using one’s strength against the weak ... He does not nurse resentment, because it is beneath magnanimous man to remember things against people, especially wrongs; it is more like him to overlook them ... (EN IV,iii: 1123b-1125a)

In hierdie teksgedeelte van Aristoteles kan verskeie temas geïdentifiseer word wat ook in Nietzsche se opvattinge oor deugdelikheid ’n belangrike rol speel. Daar is sterk raakpunte met Nietzsche se idees oor gesonde selfsug, eerbiedwaardigheid, ongelykheid of rangverskille tussen mense, die “skenkende deug”, gulhartigheid, matigheid en beleefdheid teenoor minderes, grootmoedigheid, en vryheid van ressentiment. En soos Aristoteles sou mens miskien ook al hierdie (en ander) kwaliteite wat deur Nietzsche hoog aangeslaan word kon saamvat in ’n enkele begrip, ’n soort “kroon van die deugde”, naamlik generositeit.

Dit is interessant dat Nietzsche soms wanneer hy spesifiek van generositeit praat, dit in verband bring met selfopoffering en onbaatsugtigheid. So stel hy byvoorbeeld in *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* dat die edele en genereuse mens in die oë van die swak tipes eintlik dwaas en onbeholpe voorkom, en wel in die sin dat hy nie uit nuttigheidsoorwegings en eiebelang handel nie:

Common natures consider all noble, magnanimous feelings inexpedient and therefore first of all incredible ... they see the noble person as a kind of fool; they despise him in his joy and laugh at his shining eyes ... What distinguishes the common type is that it never loses sight of its advantage, and that this thought of purpose and advantage is even stronger than the strongest instincts; not to allow these instincts to lead one astray to perform inexpedient acts – that is their wisdom and pride. Compared to them, the higher type is more *unreasonable*, for those who are noble, magnanimous, and self-sacrificial do succumb to their instincts, and when they are at their best, their reason *pauses* ... The taste of the higher type is for exceptions, for things that leave most people cold ... This is the eternal injustice of those who are noble. (GS 3)¹⁰

Hierdie verstommende – haas onbegryplike – passievolheid en onbaatsugtigheid van die genereuse mens kom volgens Nietzsche tipies tot uitdrukking in die kortstondigheid van sy woede – en in sy vergiffenisvolheid – teenoor diegene wat hom kwaad aangedoen het:

Magnanimity and related matters – Those paradoxical phenomena, like the sudden chill in the behavior of an emotional person, or the humor of a melancholic, and above all *magnanimity* as a sudden renunciation of revenge or of the satisfaction of envy, appear in people who harbor a powerful centrifugal force and experience sudden satiety and sudden nausea. Their satisfactions are so quick and strong that they are followed instantly by wariness and aversion and flight into the opposite taste. In this opposite, the cramp of feeling is resolved – in one person by a sudden chill, in another by laughter, in a third person by tears of self-sacrifice. The magnanimous person ... appears to me as an extremely vengeful person who beholds satisfaction so close at hand and who drains it so fully and thoroughly to the last drop, in *anticipation*, that a tremendous and quick nausea follows this quick orgy, and he now rises “above himself”, as they say, and forgives his enemy, and even blesses and honors him. With this violence against himself, with this scorn for his lust for revenge that a moment ago was still so powerful, he merely yields to a new impulse that has now attained power over him ... Magnanimity contains the same degree of egoism as does revenge, but egoism of a different quality. (GS 49)

Generositeit kan in die werk van Nietzsche ook in verband gebring word met gevoelens van selftrots en van voldoende mag, wat volgens hom die setel is van die “virtues that incur costs”. Hieroor skryf hy soos volg:

As members of society we believe we ought not to practise certain virtues from which as private persons we acquire the highest honour and a certain satisfaction, for example mercy and consideration for transgressors of all kinds – in general any action by which the interests of society would suffer through our virtue. No bench of judges may conscientiously practise mercy: this privilege is reserved to the king *as an individual*; one rejoices when he makes use of it, as proof that one would like to be merciful, even though as a society one absolutely cannot be. Society thus recognizes only those virtues that are advantageous, or at least not harmful to it (those that can be practised without loss, for example justice). Those virtues that incur loss cannot, consequently, have come into existence *within society* ... They are thus the virtues belonging among non-equals, devised by the superior, the individual; they are the virtues of *rulers* bearing the sense: "I am sufficiently powerful to put up with palpable loss, this is a proof of my power" – and are thus virtues related to *pride*. (HAH-WS 34)¹¹

Nietzsche word nooit moeg om te wys op die pervertering van die deugde binne die kader van die moralisme nie. Dit geld ook die deug van generositeit. Sy eie siening oor generositeit formuleer hy bondig soos volg:

It is richness in personality, abundance in oneself, overflowing and bestowing, instinctive good health and affirmation of oneself, that produce great sacrifice and great love: it is strong and godlike selfhood from which these affects grow, just as surely as do the desire to become master, encroachment, the inner certainty of having a right to everything. What according to common ideas are opposite dispositions are rather *one* disposition; and if one is not firm and brave with oneself, one has nothing to bestow and cannot stretch out one's hand to protect and support – (WP 386)¹²

Ware generositeit is slegs moontlik wanneer 'n mens leef in totale selfbevestiging en selfgenoegsaamheid. Dit impliseer 'n bestaan wat verhewe is bo die moralistiese onderskeid tussen goed en kwaad en die gepaardgaande skuldgevoelens en selfkastyding. Die waarlik genereuse mens ken geen berou, geen skuldgevoel en geen selfverwyt nie. Hy beskou dit as lafhartigheid, en leef eerder in vrymoedigheid en in trots op wat hy is en wat hy doen of gedoen het – wat nie beteken dat hy skaamteloos of gewetenloos is nie:

Against remorse. – I do not like this kind of cowardice toward one's own deeds; one should not leave oneself in the lurch at the onset of unanticipated shame and embarrassment. An extreme pride, rather, is in order. After all, what is the good of it! No deed can be undone by being regretted; no more than by being "forgiven" or "atoned for". One would have to be a theologian to believe in "guilt": we immoralists prefer not to believe in "guilt". We hold instead that every action is of identical value at root – and that actions that turn *against* us may, economically considered, be nonetheless useful, generally desirable actions ... There are actions which are *unworthy* of us: actions that, if regarded as typical, would reduce

us to a lower class of man. Here one has only to avoid the error of regarding them as typical. There are other kinds of actions of which we are unworthy: exceptions born of a particular abundance of happiness and health, our highest floodtide driven so high for once by a storm, an accident: such actions and "works" are likewise not typical. One should never measure an artist by the standard of his works. (WP 235)

Kenmerkend van die genereuse mens is dat hy nooit die aandag op homself trek nie, nie sy eie weldade aan die groot klok hang nie, maar eerder "anoniem" handel:

It is so unmagnanimous always to play the bestower and giver and to show one's face when doing so! But to give and bestow and to conceal one's name and awareness one is bestowing a favour! Or to have no name, like nature, in which the most refreshing thing of all is that here we at last no longer encounter a giver, a bestower, a 'gracious countenance' – To be sure, you have frivolously sacrificed even this refreshment, for you have put a god into nature – and now everything is again tense and unfree! ... 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 been only a dream! Let us wake up! (D 464)

In 'n sekere sin gaan generositeit met beskeidenheid gepaard, mits dit nie in 'n valse, skynheilige, moralistiese sin opgevat word nie:

There is true modesty (that is, the recognition that we are not the work of ourselves); and it well becomes the great mind because it is precisely he who can grasp the idea of his complete unaccountability (also for the good he creates). One hates the immodesty of the great man, not to the extent that it comes from a sensation of his own strength, but through it he evidences a desire to experience this strength by wounding others, treating them in a domineering way and seeing how they will put up with it. As a rule this behaviour is even a sign that he lacks a calm certainty of his strength and thus leads men to doubt his greatness. To this extent immodesty is from a prudential point of view very inadvisable. (HAH I,588)¹³

Kenmerkend van die edele en genereuse mens is ten slotte sy dankbaarheid en erkentlikheid teenoor diegene van wie hy iets ontvang het. Nietzsche verduidelik dit soos volg:

The reason the man of power is grateful is this. His benefactor has, through the help he has given him, as it were laid hands on the sphere of the man of power and intruded into it: now, by way of requital, the man of power in turn lays hands on the sphere of his benefactor through the act of gratitude. It is a milder form of revenge. If he did not have the compensation of gratitude, the man of power would have appeared unpowerful and thenceforth counted as such. That is why every community of the good, that

is to say originally the powerful, places gratitude among its first duties.
(HAH I,44)

Samevattend kan van Nietzsche se aristokratiese, genereuse mens die volgende gesê word: Hy is 'n passievolle, selfsugtige, eiegeregtige en selfgeldende mens, maar tegelykertyd word hy ook gekenmerk deur selfbeheersing, selfrespek, beleefdheid, offervaardigheid, onbaatsugtigheid, dankbaarheid en erkentlikheid, en bo alles 'n gebrek aan haatdraendheid en wraakgierigheid. Hy leef vanuit 'n totale bevestiging van homself, van die wil tot mag, van die lewe self. As sodanig is hy noodwendig 'n "immoralis" in die sin dat hy homself verhewe ag bo die moralistiese onderskeid tussen goed en kwaad en die skuldgevoelens en selfkastyding wat daarmee gepaard gaan. Dit beteken nie dat hy oneties is of 'n voorstander is van etiese relativisme, onverskilligheid en willekeur nie. Hy handhaaf wel deeglik (vir homself) 'n onderskeid tussen goed en sleg. Hy "skep" sy eie waardes en "stilleer" homself tot 'n deugdelike mens, en wel deur die dissiplinerende en kultivering van sy passies en deur 'n kontinue herwaardering van die oorgelewerde sienings van waardes en deugde. In die proses kom hy noodwendig in botsing met, en verkeer hy in 'n nimmereindigende stryd (*agon*) met die "ander" – die "ander" in homself en buite homself (d.w.s. inter- sowel as intra-subjektief). Waardes en deugde is vir hom geen ewige groothede nie, en hulle het geen supra-historiese, transendente oorsprong nie. Hulle is inherent aan die lewe en word telkens in 'n bepaalde handelingskonteks op 'n unieke wyse deur uitsonderlike individue voortgebring.

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Notas

- 1 Vgl. ook D 45 wat handel oor die "Twofold history of good and evil".
- 2 Sien bv. A 2 waar Nietzsche hom uitdruklik afgrens van 'n moraliserende benadering tot die deugde, en dit eerder in verband bring met die aristokratiese siening van deug as "deugdelik" of voortreflik: "What is good? – All that heightens the feeling of power, power itself in man. What is bad? – All that proceeds from weakness. What is happiness? – The feeling that power *increases* – that a resistance is overcome. *Not* contentment, but more power; *not* peace at all, but war; *not* virtue, but proficiency (virtue in the Renaissance style, *virtù*, virtue free of moralic acid). The weak and ill-constituted shall perish: first principle of *our* philanthropy. And one shall help them to do so. What is more harmful than any vice? – Active sympathy for the ill-constituted and weak – Christianity ..."
- 3 Van Tongeren (2000: 245) stel dit nog sterker: "Nietzsche explicitly rejects an understanding of this concept of the overman 'as an idealistic type of a higher kind of man' (EH Books 1). All this underscores the suggestion that the overman is primarily a name for an ideal that is and remains at a distance from human life. It might be approached, but it is never completely realized: 'Never yet has there been an overman' (Z II, On Priests)."
- 4 Van Tongeren verwys hier na KSA 11,25[375] en 25[362].
- 5 Honig verwys hier na GM II,2.
- 6 Sien "Zarathustra's Prologue", Z P,5.
- 7 In WP 951 merk Nietzsche op dat "self-satisfaksie" in die gewone sin van die woord nie deel uitmaak van die edele mens se karakter nie: "Even 'self-satisfaction' is *not* part

of it; one should be adventurous, experimental, destructive also toward oneself – no beautiful-soul twaddle – . I want to make room for a more robust ideal.”

8 Sien Schoeman 2004.

9 Sien bv. HAH I,521, 588; D 315, 393, 459, 464, 556; GS 3, 49; BGE 212; EH III Z,6; WP 928, 935, 981, 984, 1040.

10 Vgl. WP 317: “Virtue has all the instincts of the average man against it ...” Vgl. voorts D 459 (“The magnanimity of the thinker”), veral die slotsin: “The fairest virtue of the great thinker is the magnanimity with which, as a man of knowledge, he intrepidly, often with embarrassment, often with sublime mockery and smiling – offers himself and his life as a sacrifice.”

11 Nietzsche het moontlik dit in gedagte wanneer hy die volgende stel: “As the power and self-confidence of a community increase, the penal law always becomes more moderate ... the ‘creditor’ always becomes more humane to the extent that he has grown richer; finally, how much injury he can endure without suffering from it becomes the actual *measure* of his wealth. It is not unthinkable that a society might attain such *consciousness of power* that it could allow itself the noblest luxury possible to it – letting those who harm it go *unpunished*. ‘What are my parasites to me?’ it might say. ‘May they live and prosper: I am strong enough for that!’ The justice which began with ‘everything is dischargeable, everything must be discharged’, ends by winking and letting those incapable of discharging their debt go free: it ends, as does every good thing on earth, by *overcoming itself*. This self-overcoming of justice: one knows the beautiful name it has given to itself – *mercy*; it goes without saying that mercy remains the privilege of the most powerful man, or better, his – beyond the law” (GM II,10).

12 Vgl. WP 932: “Well-meaning, helpful, good-natured attitudes of mind have not come to be honored on account of their usefulness, but because they are states of richer souls that are capable of bestowing and have their value in the feeling of the plenitude of life. Observe the eyes of benefactors: what one sees is the antithesis of self-denial, of hatred for the *moi*, of ‘Pascalism’.”

13 Vgl. WP 948: “Essential: that one does not think one’s life important; that one insists unconditionally on good manners on the part of everyone with whom one comes into contact (at least, when they do not belong to “us”); that one is neither familiar, nor genial, nor merry, nor modest, except *inter pares*; that one *always maintains poise*.”