Nietzsche’s metaphysics of the will to power implies the ontological concept of value whence is derived the operative concept of value that informs the globalized world. In this essay, I shall first elucidate that ontological concept, in other words I shall ask and answer the question “What is value?” in the perspective of Nietzsche’s thinking. Subsequently, I shall outline Nietzsche’s diagnosis of the present world-instant in its nihilistic becoming under the more and more open and avowed sway of the will to power. The insight into the nihilistic character of this becoming will finally allow to indicate in what sense the operative values of the globalized world are derived from the value concept that emerges in Nietzsche’s metaphysical position and what this implies for the being of contemporary man.¹

¹ The intention of the following elucidation is to present Nietzsche’s thinking not from an outside, neutral standpoint, but, so to speak, from the inside. The reader unfamiliar with this style of interpretation should therefore not be surprised if, along the way, he will not find the rhetoric signals by which scholars usually mark the “autonomy” of their standpoint with respect to the position they discuss. However, the “inside perspective” that this essay attempts does not imply an uncritical adherence to the interpreted position. In fact, the interiority in the metaphysical issue that concerns Nietzsche’s thinking demands a critical overcoming of his position that only a thinking that is itself not metaphysical is capable of. Both the determination of a metaphysical position as such and the first attempt to formulate a grounding position that is not metaphysical, we owe to the thinking of Martin Heidegger, or what is known as his Denkweg. The present essay draws its guidance from this Denkweg and its confrontation with Nietzsche’s thinking, without for that in any way matching the scope and depth of this confrontation. The term “metaphysics” is here used in Heidegger’s sense, and therefore does not coincide with Nietzsche’s grasping of what is “metaphysical”. For Nietzsche, “metaphysics” is essentially the same as what he defines as “Platonism” or “idealism”. As a consequence, he would himself never refer to his own thinking as being “metaphysical”. – Heidegger’s lecture courses, as well as other texts on Nietzsche (but not the latest ones), are in the two volumes of his Nietzsche (Pfullingen: Neske 1961). The main reference for this essay is the text “Nietzsches Metaphysik” (Vol. 2, pp. 257-333).
1. Values as Conditions Posed by the Will to Power

In asking the question “What is value?” in the perspective of Nietzsche’s thinking, we are not simply illustrating the position of a particular thinker on a given concept named “value”. Though this word and concept is undoubtedly common, and a number of philosophers treat of values, only Nietzsche’s metaphysics is rightfully and necessarily a thinking through values. The reason for this is that only this thinking gives rise to an ontological concept of value that characterizes a grounding position of philosophy.\(^2\) In other words, in this thinking, insofar as it is claimed by, and in turn preserves and articulates, the principle itself of all value-posing or valuing, value is the answer to the fundamental question of metaphysics, i.e. “What is a being insofar as it is?”. When value has the status of a determination of the being of beings, something is, and can be said to be, only insofar as it is constituted and functions as a value, while that which does not show this constitution and capacity is not.

The scope of Nietzsche’s metaphysics of values marks its central role for the attempt to diagnose the fundamental trait that governs and shapes our “globalized reality”. In fact, this reality not only contains something like values; rather, it is, for the first time, a reality that is, as such, constituted as a totality of values. In this reality, that which we call “sense” is entirely absorbed and surrogated by value. Accordingly, in this reality thinking through values, or valuing (i.e. computing values), is the only true form of thinking, which entirely supplants the form of thinking known as “judgement”. Valuing itself now appears as the only true manner of judgement. Value as a form of being, and valuing as a form of thinking, are today universal, self-evident and unquestionable, and as such already “naturally” and implicitly in place whenever each single one of us experiences, feels, senses, reflects, ponders, studies, plans, organizes, builds, creates, foresees, recalls, etc. – so much so that it appears as if everything had always been, and could always only be, a matter of value, and as if all thinking had always been, and could only be, a matter of valuing.

At a closer look, the unquestionable and unquestioned character of values and valuing, together with their self-evidence and universal scope, is revealing of their non-original, derived constitution. The values that inform the globalized world appear as the essential trait of things, when in fact they cannot exhibit any essential content. Moreover, they act as if