

Value and the subject of security: The Nietzschean moment

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Values and modernity³

Scholars have often analysed Nietzsche as a kind of exit from modernity and entry into postmodernity. He provides an immensely powerful critique of the modern era, its fascination with science, with metaphysics and with morality. In this sense, he is a historian of mentalities. A sharp-eyed observer of his culture and an analyst who critically documents historically anchored changes in way we see and experience the world.

Less visible but equally important is Nietzsche's astute insights not into history and the ebb and flow of changes it brings, but into the temporality of experience, of our relation to what *is* as a function of what *has been*. Nietzsche understands and tries to express not only the changes of human culture in time. He studies not only the difference between what is and what has been, but also digs into the far more elusive pathos of that change, the troubling and contradictory experience of what is lived through the thought of what is not, what has been, or what could be.

A certain *pathos of temporality* is at the core of Nietzsche's critique of values and of valuation. It is not, the regret of nihilism that is Nietzsche's primary concern--as so many read him--but rather the notion that values are inhabited, even caused by, the possibility of the exhaustion of values.

Thus in a fragment from early 1887 Nietzsche says the following about what he considers 'the ambiguous character of our modern world'

Feelings about values are always behind the times; they express conditions of preservation and growth that belong to times long gone by; they resist new conditions of existence with which they cannot cope and which they necessarily misunderstand: thus they inhibit and arouse suspicion against what is new (Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm, 1968: 69).

The well-rehearsed Nietzschean thesis about the decline of values in modernity, nihilism as a kind of character fault of the modern personality, builds, in effect, upon a certain evolution in the subject. The modernity of modern subjectivity is in this sense inseparable from its negotiation of values.

Morality and security

A first cut approach to Nietzsche and security must be worked through and put behind us. An essential line needs to be drawn between morality and values. For Nietzsche, moral values are just one of several possible value systems. He regularly thematizes other values, such as aesthetic values, cognitive values and religious values, in addition to moral values. His well-known argument in this context is that the moral values are unrightfully given privilege relative to other values. Much of his philosophical project is dedicated to genealogically sorting through the origins of this privilege. The genealogy of morality, which is unfolded in several of Nietzsche's works, is the history of a relation to customs, to traditions and a notion of significance and worth based upon repeated action in a collective setting. Morality is understood as one's obedience or sacrifice to customs, customs whose origins are too distant to permit a clear understanding of where the essential value premises of the values might lie.

For example in *Daybreak* (1881) he argues that

morality is nothing other (therefore *no more!*) Than obedience to customs, of whatever kind they may be; customs, however, are the *traditional* way of behaving and evaluating' (1997: 10).

In this sense morality is linked to a kind of determinism. It corresponds to set of principles of predictability, of security understood as knowledge of the where we are going. Morality, according to Nietzsche, provides *protection* against the unknown. Thus in Nietzsche's reconstruction, all that is linked to the unknown has been gradually been assigned a moral character. *Contingency*, the *undecided* and *undecidable*, is conceptualized through history of the West, as immoral.

This sense of the moral has as a consequence a pragmatic function it provides what Nietzsche calls 'security' against the unknown. Knowledge, determinism, predictability and the security they bring is supplanted in human history by morality. Morality fills the gaps and provides security. Since the lack of knowledge is the human condition, its supplanting through morality is our curse and our bane.

In this, its most general form, 'morality' is for Nietzsche a provider of security, a protection.

It was morality that protected life against despair and the leap into nothing, among men and classes who were violated and oppressed by *men*: for it is the experience of being powerless against men, not against nature, that generates the most desperate embitterment against existence. Morality treated the violent despots, the doers of violence, the 'masters' in general as the enemies against whom the common man must be protected, which means first of all encouraged and strengthened (1968: 36).

Morality, in this sense, is a means of mobilising human energies in situations of material weakness or vulnerability. Where physical inferiority or impotence cannot be overcome by

physical means, morality can be mobilised as an inner or natural superiority, attached to a deeper, more essential and thus more authentic strength.

Much has been made of Nietzsche's nihilism as a kind of appeal to kind of general, banal acceptance of the notion that nothing has value, and that by asserting that nothing has value, somehow values will thereby be abolished. This simplification does not hold up to a careful reading of Nietzsche's texts. It is less interesting for Nietzsche whether transcendental values exist as is the position from which evaluation, the ascription of value and its insertion into the social, the cultural and the political, is made. Thus in *Human, All too Human*, he insists that

‘All judgments about the value of life have developed illogically and therefore unfairly’.

This is true, he says for four reasons. First, what is evaluated is never complete, its scope and boundaries, both ontologically and epistemologically, cannot be ascertained or fixed prior to the evaluation; second, and consequently because falsity in the way evaluation totalizes its object; third, because all evaluations are based on incomplete or inadequate knowledge; finally, because

the standard by which we measure, ‘our own being’, is not an inalterable magnitude, we are subject to moods and fluctuations, and we would have to know ourselves as a fixed standard to be able justly to assess the relation between ourself and anything else whatever (1996: 28).

This is the meaning of Nietzsche's ‘nihilism’: The origin or foundation of nihilism is not nihilistic. On the contrary it is the consequence of a subjective evaluation. It is rather that all ascriptions of value, including the ascription of nihilism, are fundamentally incoherent. This is not some unfortunate empirical chance, it lies necessarily in the structure of evaluation itself: ‘All evaluations are premature’, says Nietzsche, ‘and must be so’. In short, Nietzsche's thesis is not an ontological claim about the existence (or even being) of values. It is far more an assertion about the ambiguity, ambivalence or incoherence of the subject position of value ascription. The position from which values are ascribed or assessed is not outside of values.

Moreover, it is not controversial to say that in Nietzsche's thought there are no objective master values, and that all effects of such values flow from one conception or another of the will to power. This is made quite clear in many of Nietzsche's texts, particularly in the fragments collected and published under the title *The Will to Power*. The logic of valuation however remains incompletely explored. A certain conception of security is the key to it. For Nietzsche, the critique of morality is a particular case of the his critique of values. All evaluation, all practice of conceptualizing, determining and applying values fits into the kind of genealogy Nietzsche carries out on morality. ‘

All evaluation’, he says, ‘is made from a definite perspective: that of the preservation of the individual, a community, a race, a state, a church, a faith, a culture (1968: 149).

Four axes of value subjectivity

For Nietzsche, value does not emerge from outside truth, being and valuation. Its movement is in complex ways coterminous with these fundamental preoccupations of modernity and the modern subject (Sleinin, 1994). Clearly the interdependency between security and subjectivity in the discourses of truth, being and value will differ in nature. However, in very general terms for Nietzsche, The search for truth, for being and for morality is a search for security.¹

In Nietzsche's reading of modernity, the subject of security is differentiated in at least four interlinked sub-positions: ontological, epistemological, aesthetic and axiological. *First*, the security of humans requires a steadfast reality, a world in which an indivisible essence is concentrated, an essence which opens and lets itself be known by human subjects, where insecurity derives not from appearances, but from real situations that may be concretely dealt with. *Second*, the modern security subject requires a stable, durable and above all knowable truth about this reality and a clear distinction between what is known and knowable, and what is unknown and unknowable. *Third*, the security of humans presupposes an appropriate bearing toward this world and knowledge about it, a clear system for orienting oneself in relation to the world and knowledge of it. *Fourth*, the play of surface and depth, appearance and reality, is the place of the frivolousness and danger of meaning. In Nietzsche's view this structure is both the anthropological necessity of humans and the illusionary veil that condemns them to ignorance and ineffectiveness.

In short, for Nietzsche, the thing in itself (the Kantian heritage), the absolute stability of the world and the rational instrumentality of knowledge about the world (the Cartesian tradition) and stable values of self-orientation (the mono-theological tradition) are all the main symptoms of a disease called *insecurity*. The general metaphysics of human responses to them have the function of producing—or to use the more contemporary jargon—constructing security.

Security as certainty

In Nietzsche's philosophy the concept of security is the key to an important consideration of the epistemological subject. This stems to a large degree from an ambivalence in the German term

¹ In view of the breadth of Nietzsche's thematization of the concept of security, it is notable that so few within the field of security theory or security studies have taken up the question. The oft-cited exception is Der Derian's 1995 essay 'The Value of Security' (Der Derian, 1995), which builds on Deleuze's remarkable Nietzsche and Philosophy (Deleuze, 1983). Apart from a few isolated voices, the notion has not taken up that thread in 1962 and the contribution of these readings and other adjacent analyses in the theory of security studies of (Burke, 2002; Dillon, 1992, 1996; Williams, 1998). In his essay Der Derian focuses mainly on the notion of security as a correlate of sovereignty in a comparative 'genealogy' starting from Hobbes.

'security' (*Sicherheit*). In line with the central conceptions of his time, Nietzsche most often-- though certainly not always--understands and uses the word 'security' to denote what we today would call 'certainty' and the term is translated in kind. 'Security', is thus often seen to refer to an *epistemological* property, a state of knowledge held above all doubt, perfect, true, factual, or objective.

At the same time, by necessity or chance, the concept of security in Nietzsche's work finds itself at historical conjuncture (Conze, 1984; Wæver, 2005). Nietzsche's work emerges approximately at the moment of a linguistic return from security as certainty to security as a moral or spiritual dimension, denoting a relation to danger danger, fear, awe, etc. This is the *historical* meaning of security at the close of the 19th century which English language translators have contributed to masking by consisting rendering *Sicherheit* (security) as 'certainty'. In general, this translation is superficially correct, but does not catch the crucial transition that I would like to argue is taking place in Nietzsche's work.

The evolution of the notion of certainty is a complex and intriguing story of its own. Common philosophical wisdom distinguishes a number of types of certainty. *Epistemological* certainty can be said to deal with the structure and character of given assertions. *Psychological* certainty refers to the strength of conviction about the truth of claims about reality, and is thus linked to epistemological certainty. Moral certainty also relates to the strength of conviction.

As Karl Jaspers explains in his classical reading of Nietzsche, 'scientific certainty is not security in terms of what is important. Certainty is linked to methodological knowledge, in all its determinacy and relativity. The drive for security, on the other hand, seeks on the whole harmlessness. Not, however, says Nietzsche, against the scientific, methodological certainty, but against the whole desire for security. Certainty, says Nietzsche, is better than uncertainty and the open sea' (Jaspers, 1981: 177). In other words, certainty easily translates as a search for security, where danger and peril are cast as the stakes of the a struggle. Moreover, If there is a moral struggle, a moral drive in Nietzsche it corresponds to the search for philosophical security, security which for itself Nietzsche is dangerous indeed:

The will to truth that still seduces us into taking many risks, this famous truthfulness that all philosophers so far have talked about with veneration: what questions this will to truth has already laid before us! (2002)

Much of our reading of Nietzsche will pivot on this ambiguity. It is most often, though not exclusively, an epistemological one. Security understood as certainty of knowledge. And yet when it is values that are in question, the picture will change. Long before knowledge is in hand, in our books, journals, databases and registers, long before the material of the world out there is raised

to the status of knowledge, it becomes implicated in risk, in the kind of dangers we are willing to run in order to have hold it, control, regulate it.

Subjectivity and security

According to Nietzsche, the instrumentalisation of subjectivity in modernity results in a belief in the singularity or atomism of the subject. The subject is regarded not only as the author and intention of thought, but subjectivity is seen as a process whereby thought is a consequence or product of thinking and whereby thought is transparently exhausted in its thinking. Nietzsche's project is in one sense to announce the decline of this conception. However he announces it before his contemporaries have even fully understood it.

Among the many arguments, explanations and reconstructions that Nietzsche advances in his genealogy of the subject and the more or less scandalous discovery of its subversion, the most prominent assertion concerns the multiplicity or multivalence of the subject itself. In a nutshell, according to Nietzsche, the subject cannot be a singular author of thought or of predication since the subject is quite simply not singular. Thus in 1885 he observes

The assumption of one single subject is perhaps unnecessary; perhaps it is just as permissible to assume a multiplicity of subjects, whose interaction and struggle is the basis of our thought and consciousness in general?

My hypothesis: The subject as multiplicity (1968: 270).

The postulate of the multiple subject is partially built upon the observation of the multiplicity of perception, of the vast field of inputs to individual experience, impossible to generalize or universalize.

The fictitious world of subject, substance, 'reason' etc., is needed--: there is in us a power to order, simplify, falsify, artificially distinguish. 'Truth' is the will to be master over the multiplicity of sensations--to classify phenomena into definite categories (1968: 280).

Two essential elements of Nietzsche's philosophy will grow of this notion of multiplicity: a complex intersubjectivity inseparable from the constitution of the subject and the unique notion of corporality. The platonic-Christian tradition downplays the meaning and value of the body:

The danger of the direct questioning of the subject about the subject and of all self-reflection of the spirit lies in this, that it could be useful and important for one's activity to interpret oneself falsely. That is why we question the body and reject the evidence of the sharpened senses; we try, if you like, to see whether the inferior parts themselves cannot enter into communication with us (1968: 272).

Not only is the subject not self-originating, self-producing, autonomous, essentially an effect of action, it is inescapably intersubjective, both proactive and reactive relative to internal multiple voices and between subjects on a social plane.

This implies that the experience of the subject is not an endless, resistance-less flow of subjectivity, a kind of pure exteriorisation of the will. Subjectivity is an experience of the bumps and bruises of the heterogeneity of internal multiplicity on a psychic level and the antagonism in its most basic form on the external, social or anthropological level.

The logical-metaphysical postulates, the belief in substance, accident, attribute, etc., derive their convincing force from our habit of regarding all our deeds as consequences of our will--so that the ego, as substance, does not vanish in the multiplicity of change.

Theory of the subject

Nietzsche's critique of modernity is inseparable from his critique of the modern subject. Indeed, Nietzsche's critique of modern subjectivity has been so influential that it to rehearse often seems to produce only common places. Returning to Nietzsche reveals prototypes of the central ideas that we have come to associate with Foucault, Latour, Butler, Rancière and others.

In *Beyond Good and Evil*, (1886) Nietzsche also identifies a crossroads in the history of the notion of the subject. Modern philosophy since Descartes, he claims, has been out to 'assassinate' the traditional notion of the soul, most commonly linked with the Platonic and Christian traditions, attacking simultaneously the very structure of predication of which it forms the foundation:

People used to believe in 'the soul' as they believed in grammar and the grammatical subject: people said that 'I' was a condition and 'think' was a predicate and conditioned--thinking is an activity, and a subject must be thought of as its cause. Now, with admirable tenacity and cunning, people are wondering whether they can get out of this net--wondering whether the reverse might be true: that 'think' is the condition and 'I' is the conditioned (2002: 49).

In as far as the subject is understood as the seat of the soul, self-present and morally autonomous, with value, depth, memory and meaning, the Cartesian moment is a fundamentally anti-moral and anti-Christian moment. The pre-cartesian subject was one in which the 'I' was also the seat of the soul, origin of value in absolute terms, an instrument to capable of deploying value in the world, embedding acts with value that far transcend their own instrumentality.

The modern philosophical project of epistemological skepticism canonically associated with Descartes, becomes in its essence, according to Nietzsche, a project of a-moralism, a project in which the possible relationship between subjectivity and value is fundamentally changed. The modern project understands epistemology as soul-less as value-free, as superior to axiology, to rationalities of moral value. The value substrate of knowledge is occluded and undervalued. Modernity in Nietzsche's eyes understands knowledge in general and knowledge of Truth in particular as detached from spirituality and value or, at best, as having less value than what can be attributed to the pre-cartesian subject. This subject understands the 'I' as the foyer of the soul, as the reflection of value, meaningfulness, holiness i.e. morality, and seat of intention.

The new orientation that Nietzsche observes is a reversal of the Cartesian formula. Instead of the subject being the cause of 'the thought, thinking is now construed as the cause, and the subject is in some sense understood as the effect of thought. The subject and therefore the soul has now only apparent existence.

'Subject,' 'object,' 'attribute'--these distinctions are fabricated and are now imposed as a schematism upon all the apparent facts. The fundamental false observation is that I believe it is I who do something, suffer something, 'have' something, 'have' a quality (1968: 294).

In short, predication itself understood as a simple grammar of subject and predicate is understood as a false. In the mechanism of subjectivity, the subject is essentially generated together with the objects or attributes with which it is associated. Furthermore consciousness itself follows the same course. The post-Cartesian notion of transparency and clarity, distinct categories of truth and illusion, reality and appearance cannot, according to Nietzsche, be sustained in the light of this understanding of the modern subject. In a note from around 1887 he declares:

That which becomes conscious is involved in causal relations which are entirely withheld from us--the sequence of thoughts, feelings, ideas in consciousness does not signify that this sequence is a causal sequence; but apparently it is so, to the highest degree. Upon this *appearance* we have founded our whole id of spirit, reason, logic, etc. (--none of these exist: they are fictitious syntheses and unities), and projected these *into* things and *behind* things! (1968: 284)

Psychoanalyst *avant la lettre*, Nietzsche links the formation and mechanisms of consciousness together with the effects of the formation of the subject. He continues the same reasoning again in *Beyond Good and Evil*:

... a thought comes when 'it' wants, and not when 'I' want. It is therefore, a falsification of the facts to say that the subject 'I' is the condition of the predicate 'think.' It thinks: but to say the 'it' is just that famous old 'I--well that is just an assumption or opinion, to put it mildly, and by no means an 'immediate certainty.' In fact, there is already too much packed into the 'it thinks': even the 'it' contains an interpretation of the process, and does not belong to the process itself (2002: 17).

This use of the term 'it' (*es*) pre-supposes the Freudian use of the same term to denote the '*id*' almost 25 years later. Access to the 'it' that is the source or origin of thought or action is only possible through an interpretation of signs, of out manifestations and events.

Nietzsche's theory of value

An essential and immediately provocative starting point for Nietzsche's theory of value is that there is no primacy of one type of value over another. Nietzsche's theory of value is not normative, though it would lack adequate nuance to claim that it were on the contrary merely descriptive.

Nietzsche's theory of value distinguishes itself by two distinct characteristics. First, it is, of course, post-transcendental, post-Christian, or even atheist. It locates value not outside the individual subject, but within the individual, within individual experience, within subjectivity. There are no values without valuing or valuating beings. Secondly, and more importantly, it is far more (though not exclusively) interested in *valuation*, in the judgements and processes by means of which objects acquire value, distribute, exchange, and transform value.

Nietzsche's approach to values is ironic, deconstructive: He asks, *What value do values have?* In the preface to the *Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche explains:

We need a critique of moral values, the value of these values should itself, for once, be examined--and so we need to know about the conditions and circumstances under which the values grew up, developed and changed (morality as result, as symptom, as mask, as tartuffery, as sickness, as misunderstanding; but also morality as cause, remedy, stimulant, inhibition, poison) (1994: 7).

In Nietzsche's theory of value, values are neither objective, empirical nor universal or generalizable. There is in Nietzsche's system no natural or necessary attachment or link between subjective positions of an individual and the values they might enable or mobilize. Subjectivity or subjective responses do not produce values.

Value, for Nietzsche, is not cognitive, neither the object of thought nor the simple product of subjectivity. In general, it precedes thought, channels and orders it, but is not exhausted by it. It has effects, moral, esthetic and intellectual, yet is not an autonomous cause.

The primary correlate of value is power. It is a condition of perception, and of experience. More importantly, it is the condition of life. It is in this sense that the concept of value first communicates with a kind of fundamental security. Value as a condition of the preservation of life. Thus Nietzsche in a note from 1887:

The *valuation* 'I believe that this and that is so' as the essence of *'truth.'* In valuations are expressed conditions of preservation and growth. All our organs of knowledge and our senses are developed only with regard to conditions of preservation and [276] growth. Trust in reason and its categories, in dialectic, therefore the valuation of logic, proves only their usefulness for life, proved by experience--not that something is true (1968: 275-276).

Valuation is a relationship to meaning needed, in Nietzsche's optic, in order to preserve meaning. That the epistemological, aesthetic, religious value of a thing sets it apart as value, as valuable is at the same time its intrusion into existence, its marking or signaling, its position in the scope of experience. Value, in this sense, sets the thing apart, thereby enclosing it in its apartness, protecting and preserving it. This is the primordial security function of value in Nietzsche.

'We have senses', says Nietzsche,

for only a selection of perceptions--those with which we have to concern ourselves in order to preserve ourselves. Consciousness is present only to the extent that consciousness is useful. It cannot

be doubted that all sense perceptions are permeated with value judgments (useful and harmful--consequently, pleasant or unpleasant). Each individual color is also for us an expression of value (1968: 275).

In what we experience, the ability to exercise a kind phenomenological bracketing, enables the meaning or the meaningfulness of the experience. Simultaneously, in an equally phenomenological movement of insecurity it provides the framing for preserving the experience. It is the bound, the frame of the video screen that simultaneously excludes a world to include and image, protecting while threatening.

By the insecurity of the surface of things, the unsure or even fleeting meaning, we create meaning. Insecurity is the hermeneutical moment, the interpretative moment, the presence of the possibility that *this* understanding may not be the 'right' one. It is thus the risk of thinking at all, the risk of getting it wrong. Or worse, of getting it wrong and not knowing that we are getting it wrong.

This experience of the contingency of meaning, of the presence of misprision as danger, of hermeneutics as insecurity, happens only at the surface of things. The deeper we penetrate toward the stable and fixed, the more contingency is corralled, narrowed down, focused in, to necessity. Necessity, in Nietzsche's terms, is not only not meaningful, it is not life. It is however secure.

But its intelligibility, comprehensibility, practicability, and beauty begin to cease if we refine our senses; just as beauty ceases when we think about historical processes; the order of purpose is already an illusion. It suffices that the more superficially and coarsely it is conceived, the more valuable, definite, beautiful, and significant the world appears. The deeper one looks the more our valuations disappear--meaninglessness approaches (1968: 326).

The value of the world lies in interpretations, in the confrontation with meaning as contingency. Value lies in contingency, in choice, in facticity, in insecurity.

Meaning arises when action is uncoupled from intentionality:

From time immemorial we have ascribed the value of an action, a character, an existence, to the intention, the purpose for the sake of which one has acted or lived: this age-old idiosyncrasy finally takes a dangerous turn--provided, that is, that the absence of intention and purpose in events comes more and more to the forefront of consciousness (1968: 351).

The value subject of security

The modern subject is thus inseparable from a certain practice of valuation, from the ascription of value, from setting standards, from assigning gradations of sense or meaning. These ascriptions and assignments are performed by the subject and yet they both precede and exceed it. They precede it in the sense that subjectivity itself stems from value predicates that distinguish the 'spirituality' of the subject from its 'materiality'. The subjectivity of subject requires the

predication of its own value, from an other, external source. The valuation of the subject exceeds it in the sense that the value created or ascribed the phenomenon, grow from it, derive from it, extend its logic and core principles, or mutate from them.

(This ambivalent position of the subject, somehow between being both the source of value ascriptions and the result of them corresponds to a certain ambivalence in the very concept of 'quality'. The term refers to both the property of a thing, the distinctive characteristic that makes it identifiable relative to something else, and to the standard or excellence of a thing measured against other things of a similar kind. The attribution of properties, which we would commonly think of as 'objective' or 'factual', indeed the performance of predication itself, is in this sense a valuation, an ascription, assignation or determination of value.)

Subjectivity as it is understood in our time consists in a triple movement of seeking value, affirming value, and organising a defence against the loss of value. These three movements make up subjectivity as a movement of insecurity. The value dimension of subjectivity, is the enactment of the experience of potential loss, the experience of potential of the fragility, of frailty, weakness, exposure. It is the experience of *passivity*, of living in the world, and its potentially valuable properties as subject to threat, to compromise, or to corruption.

The subject is thus a subject of valuation, and as such it is an enactment of the boundaries of what has value, what is valuable. For this reason the discourse of ethics cannot be 'ethical', cannot belong to the order of ethics.

The subject is not simply 'ethical', but is a kind of hub of values, a processor. The possibility of normativity--the possibility of normative judgement--cannot itself be subject to anything other than pure facticity. The value core, if we can talk of such thing, does not, cannot belong to the subject. It has to be outside, yet attached, essential, and baroque.

The critique of the exteriority of values, the critique of ethics understood as the search for the transcendental origin of values is a recurring, even obsessional theme in Nietzsche's work on the modern subject. It is an impossible quest, this impossible but necessary exteriority of values.

We argue above that if something called ethics can be asserted--understood as a structured moral code of values, guidelines for determining right and wrong, standards of action, etc. then it follows that the foundation of such an ethics cannot be regulated, in a circular fashion, by those very same principles. Values are by their nature self-transcendent. Or to speak like Nietzsche, morals are 'extra-moral'. Says Nietzsche:

We do not consider the falsity of a judgment as itself an objection to a judgment' (2002: 7).

Thus one of the building blocks of Nietzsche's 'revaluation of all values' is his deconstruction of the oppositional character of traditional value metaphysics. Values are conventionally conceived in a reference system relative to their diametral others. Nietzsche, however, lets values play out on two levels, as both truth and valuation.

Human subjectivity has been up until his day understood as the creation of values external to humans, justified or explained by reference to a cultural genealogy of forgetting, of habit and of utility, corresponding more or less to the position of English moral psychology at the time of Nietzsche. Thus the error of conceptualizing moral values as transcendental, the 'good' as external and normative, has been carried forward on its own. In Nietzsche's eyes, construing values in this way does not serve us well, since their coherence depends on something extra-human, something that transcends and thus diminishes humans.

This again turns us back to the unusual meaning of nihilism in Nietzsche's work. It is not in any sense an evacuation of existing values, loss of faith in their transcendental force. Rather it is the name for the structural process by which values self-destruct, self-decay, revert and recede according to their own premisses. Nihilism does not refer to the values, it refers to the experience of life that would permit an unproblematic evocation of them:

Radical nihilism is the conviction of an absolute untenability of existence when it comes to the highest values one recognizes; plus the realization that we lack the least right to posit a beyond or an in-itself of things that might be 'divine' or morality incarnate (1968: §3).

The basis of this realisation concerns neither the status of values themselves, nor the humans who would possess them, but the nature of subjectivity itself:

The feeling of valuelessness was reached with the realization that the overall character of existence may not be interpreted by means of the concept of 'aim,' the concept of 'unity,' or the concept of 'truth.' [...] all these values are, psychologically considered, the results of certain perspectives of utility, designed to maintain and increase human constructs of domination--and they have been falsely projected into the essence of things (1968: 12).

Conclusion

The human sense of value is inseparable from the security of humans, and this security is, in turn, inseparable from a classically understood human search for truth. '

In valuations', says Nietzsche, we express 'conditions of preservation and growth. All our organs of knowledge and our senses are developed only with regard to conditions of preservation and growth. Trust in reason and its categories, in dialectic, therefore the valuation of logic, proves only their usefulness for life, proved by experience--not that something is true (1968: 275-6).

The pathos of this seemingly impossible disposition of security is arguably present in the very dramatic force of Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883-85) which dramatises the voyage of discovering the particular type of blindness which Nietzsche sees as the product of the search for

security. This search, he suggests there, is a disingenuous search, one based on the pretext that a search for truth and knowledge about reality and the scope of authentic values can only, by necessity arrive at failure. That is, the logic of the search is already kernel of the answer.

Zarathustra's journey toward a reinvention of humanity begins by the destruction of the 'table of values' which provide the security not only in the sense of emotional well being, but also in the sense of the stability of correspondence between word, thing and truth (2006: 14). The desire for things is coupled with the desire for knowledge based on the conviction that the truth of the thing is in the thing and the truth of the world is in the world. Those who come to Zarathustra for reassurance find only a reproach for their complicity in the lack of values inherent in values. The search for security presupposes values, puts them forward, defends them, only to discover that they are projections and that these projection become the threat itself.

Nietzsche's contribution to understanding security and insecurity in our time revolves around his systematic assertion that the modern quest for truth, authenticity and moral value is a search for security.

The security discourse draws its force from the ethos of certainty, authenticity and values. Security is not assured and insecurity does not arise through the *certain*, the *real* and the *right*. Insecurity in all its forms is generated through a sense of disruption or weakening of these three discourses.

As a consequence, the modern discourse of security, the concepts, logics and value premises and argumentative paradigms available to anyone who seeks to conceptualize security today unavoidably touch upon three primary meta-threats: the threat to the certainty of knowledge, the threat to the stability of authentic reality relative to appearances, and the threat to the coherence of values.

Thinking security today, and mobilising, social, moral, economic and political forces in its name inevitably draw upon the available pathways and discourse surrounding the four meta-discourses evoked here. Thinking security today must start by addressing what would seem to take the form of a disruption of the default spheres of these axes of experience. Yet working through the terms of such a disruption assumes that they were ever stable. Nietzsche's work bears witness to the sense that this assumption is not only dubious, but life-affirmingly dubious. Thus we are not talking about a fall from the True, the Real, the Right and the Beautiful. If we were, so Nietzsche, life would have little to live for. What is observable however is a set a double movement clinging to them through a *return* itself inspired and driven by the a sense of irrevocable *loss* of security reference.

From a certain point of view this argument may be less audacious than at first sight. It is, to be sure, inspired by a certain kind of analytical posture advanced some time ago in the field of discourse theory, by pioneer thinkers like Foucault (1971, 1973), Bourdieu (1990, 1991, 1998), Lyotard (1984) or Laclau & Mouffe (1985). And yet the historical rise of the discourse of security underscores the continued relevance of these approaches.

Our readings suggest that the subject becomes the subject of security in the moment an object is discerned and its value as object is claimed, asserted or projected. Object valuation, the act of assigning reference to the transcendent source of value, is always a gesture directed toward the peril of insecurity apparently implicit, imbedded in the very experience of subjectivity itself.

The subject position of value judgments is always occulted from the source or origin of value. This occultness is the guarantee for the meaningfulness and, well, value, in absolute terms, of the value. The value misfit between value subject and value object, the impossibility of the subject completely accounting the value of an object is the guarantee of meaning in Nietzsche's eyes.

'No experience of another person', says Nietzsche in *Human all too Human*, 'however close he is to us, can be so complete that we would have a logical right to evaluate him *in toto*' (1996: 28). The impossibility of objective value assessments applies to the subject as well, to self-knowledge. And yet humans are driven to this need for value assessment, for valuation. This ambivalence inherent in value subjectivity, the necessary occultness of the origin and the blind-spot in the subject's gaze upon the world is a necessity. The value ambivalence, the contentiousness or antagonism of values lies at the core, if one might speak of a core, of the human subject. In *Human, all too Human*, Nietzsche reminds us:

'Among the things that can reduce a thinker to despair is the knowledge that the illogical is a necessity for mankind and that much good proceeds from the illogical. It is implanted so firmly in the passions, in language, in art, in religion, and in general in everything that lends value to life, that one cannot pull it out of these fair things without mortally injuring them.' (1996: 28).

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