

## *Why Nietzsche's Destiny is Great Politics*

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Hugo Drochon read History and Politics at the University of Dublin, Trinity College, and after a brief flirt with EU diplomacy (Erasmus year in Sciences Po, Strasbourg, MA College of Europe, stage at the European Commission), returned to his senses and studies completing a two-year MPhil in Political and Ethical Philosophy at the Sorbonne. He is now writing his PhD under Melissa Lane's supervision on Nietzsche's politics, of which this paper is a part.

He has a forthcoming article in *Nietzscheforschung* entitled '[Twilight and Transvaluation](#)' which is of direct interest to today's paper. The paper itself is slated for publication in the Spring 2010 issue of *The Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, comprising of papers presented at a Nietzsche conference Hugo organised in November 2008 in Cambridge: <http://www.crassh.cam.ac.uk/events/548/>, for which he will serve as guest editor. His post-doctoral research will lie in tracing Nietzsche's understanding of politics forward into the twentieth century, notably through Weber, Schmitt, Sorel, Heidegger, the Frankfurt School, Arendt and Strauss to name but a few, to see what fields of enquiry might appear outside of our rather stale contemporary political theory.

## **Paper abstract**

Two strands have appeared in Nietzsche interpretation in the Anglo-American world post World War II: one strand, starting with Walter Kaufmann who wanted to save Nietzsche from the philosopher's bestiary he had fallen into after his appropriation by the Nazis, flatly denies that Nietzsche has a political philosophy or politics; the other, trading on such a misunderstanding, that his philosophy might be propitious to a radicalised postmodern democracy. Through examining Nietzsche's notion of 'Great Politics', this paper aims to tackle head-on the claim that Nietzsche has no politics, and to present him fundamentally as a political philosopher by comparing his 'legislative mission' with that of Plato's as exemplified in *The Republic*, thus implicitly denying that Nietzsche can be construed as some type of signatory of the *American Declaration of Independence*.

## **Selected Bibliography**

The three great readings of Nietzsche post World War II are **Heidegger's** *Nietzsche* (New York, Harper & Row, 1979-1987), **Deleuze's** *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (London, Athlone Press, 1983) and **Kaufmann's** *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (Princeton, PUP, 1974).

A good introduction to the debates surrounding whether Nietzsche has a political philosophy or not can be found in the discussion between Dombowski and Brobjer of *Nietzsche-Studien* vol 30, 2001, and to whether Nietzsche can be useful for

democracy again the discussion between Dombowski and Schrift in *Nietzsche-Studien* vol 31, 2002 where Schrift compares Nietzsche to the framers of the American Constitution.

A slightly older, but no less pertinent, discussion between [Warren](#) and [Woolfolk](#), including Warren's [reply](#) in *Political Theory* and again the debate between [Abbey and Appel](#) and [Warren](#) prefigures much of the Nietzsche scholarship of the 80's and 90's. **Brian Leiter's** *Nietzsche on Morality* (London, Routledge, 2002) has recently restated the claim that Nietzsche 'has no political philosophy, in the conventional sense of a theory of the state and its legitimacy'.

For a more balanced account which wants to defend Nietzsche as a political thinker, along with asking the fundamental question of how to overcome the politics of *ressentiment* in an age of Hegelian subjectivity, see **Keith Ansell-Pearson's** *Nietzsche contra Rousseau* (Cambridge, CUP, 1991) and his *Introduction to Nietzsche as Political Thinker* (Cambridge, CUP, 1994).