

## SCHOPENHAUER'S POLITICS

Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860) lived through an era of great political turmoil, but previous assessments of his political thought have portrayed him as a pessimistic observer with no constructive solutions to offer. By assembling and contextualizing Schopenhauer's dispersed comments on political matters, this book reveals that he developed a distinct conception of politics. In opposition to rising ideological movements such as nationalism or socialism, Schopenhauer denied that politics can ever bring about universal emancipation or fraternal unity. Instead, he viewed politics as a tool for mitigating rather than resolving the conflicts of a fundamentally imperfect world. Jakob Norberg's fascinating book reconstructs Schopenhauer's political ideas and shows how they relate to the dominant debates and trends during the period in which he lived. This title is also available as Open Access on Cambridge Core.

JAKOB NORBERG is Professor of German Studies at Duke University. He is the author of *The Brothers Grimm and the Making of German Nationalism* (2022) and articles in the *Schopenhauer Yearbook* and *The Schopenhauerian Mind*.

This is a splendid book. Norberg brings Schopenhauer to life as an eclectic modern political thinker who was focused above all on deflating the grand ideologies of nationalism and socialism, and the lessening of cruelty in everyday life.

Joshua Foa Dienstag, University of Wisconsin, Madison

*Schopenhauer's Politics* is utterly essential reading for anyone interested in Schopenhauer's significance as a political thinker. It is the first book fully to do justice to the manifold political dimensions of Schopenhauer's life and thought, which have been overlooked by scholars for far too long. Norberg's trenchant analysis of Schopenhauer's politics is presented with the highest degree of insight, clarity, and originality.

David Bather-Woods, University of Warwick

MODERN EUROPEAN PHILOSOPHY

*General Editor*

Wayne Martin, *University of Essex*

*Advisory Board*

Sebastian Gardner, *University College, London*

Beatrice Han-Pile, *University of Essex*

Hans Sluga, *University of California, Berkeley*

Titles published in the series

Frederick A. Olafson: *Heidegger and the Ground of Ethics*

Günter Zöller: *Fichte's Transcendental Philosophy*

Warren Breckman: *Marx, the Young Hegelians, and the Origins of Radical Social Theory*

William Blattner: *Heidegger's Temporal Idealism*

Charles Griswold: *Adam Smith and the Virtues of Enlightenment*

Gary Gutting: *Pragmatic Liberalism and the Critique of Modernity*

Allen Wood: *Kant's Ethical Thought*

Karl Ameriks: *Kant and the Fate of Autonomy*

Alfredo Ferrarin: *Hegel and Aristotle*

Cristina Lafont: *Heidegger, Language, and World-Disclosure*

Nicholas Wolterstorff: *Thomas Reid and the Story of Epistemology*

Daniel Dahlstrom: *Heidegger's Concept of Truth*

Michelle Grier: *Kant's Doctrine of Transcendental Illusion*

Henry Allison: *Kant's Theory of Taste*

Allen Speight: *Hegel, Literature, and the Problem of Agency*

J. M. Bernstein: *Adorno*

Will Dudley: *Hegel, Nietzsche, and Philosophy*

Taylor Carman: *Heidegger's Analytic*

Douglas Moggach: *The Philosophy and Politics of Bruno Bauer*

Rüdiger Bubner: *The Innovations of Idealism*

Jon Stewart: *Kierkegaard's Relations to Hegel Reconsidered*

Michael Quante: *Hegel's Concept of Action*

Wolfgang Detel: *Foucault and Classical Antiquity*

Robert M. Wallace: *Hegel's Philosophy of Reality, Freedom, and God*

Johanna Oksala: *Foucault on Freedom*

Béatrice Longuenesse: *Kant on the Human Standpoint*

Wayne Martin: *Theories of Judgment*

Heinrich Meier: *Leo Strauss and the Theologico-Political Problem*

Otfried Höffe: *Kant's Cosmopolitan Theory of the Law and Peace*

Béatrice Longuenesse: *Hegel's Critique of Metaphysics*

Rachel Zuckert: *Kant on Beauty and Biology*

Andrew Bowie: *Music, Philosophy and Modernity*

- Paul Redding: *Analytic Philosophy and the Return of Hegelian Thought*  
Kristin Gjesdal: *Gadamer and the Legacy of German Idealism*  
Jean-Christophe Merle: *German Idealism and the Concept of Punishment*  
Sharon Krishek: *Kierkegaard on Faith and Love*  
Nicolas de Warren: *Husserl and the Promise of Time*  
Benjamin Rutter: *Hegel on the Modern Arts*  
Anne Margaret Baxley: *Kant's Theory of Virtue*  
David James: *Fichte's Social and Political Philosophy*  
Espen Hammer: *Philosophy and Temporality from Kant to Critical Theory*  
Robert Stern: *Understanding Moral Obligation*  
Brady Bowman: *Hegel and the Metaphysics of Absolute Negativity*  
Fabian Freyenhagen: *Adorno's Practical Philosophy*  
Jeanine Grenberg: *Kant's Defense of Common Moral Experience*  
Ludwig Siep: *Hegel's 'Phenomenology of Spirit'*  
Sacha Golob: *Heidegger on Concepts, Freedom and Normativity*  
James S. Pearson: *Nietzsche on Conflict, Struggle and War*  
Henry Somers-Hall: *Judgement and Sense in Modern French Philosophy: A New Reading  
of Six Thinkers*  
Timothy D. Mooney: *Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of Perception: On the Body Informed*

# SCHOPENHAUER'S POLITICS

JAKOB NORBERG

*Duke University*



**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS



CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom  
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA  
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia  
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India  
103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment,  
a department of the University of Cambridge.

We share the University's mission to contribute to society through the pursuit of  
education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781009491549](http://www.cambridge.org/9781009491549)

DOI: [10.1017/9781009491501](https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009491501)

© Jakob Norberg 2024

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions  
of relevant collective licensing agreements, with the exception of the Creative Commons version  
the link for which is provided below, no reproduction of any part may take place without  
the written permission of Cambridge University Press & Assessment.

An online version of this work is published at [doi.org/10.1017/9781009491501](https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009491501) under a Creative  
Commons Open Access license CC-BY-NC 4.0 which permits re-use, distribution and reproduction in  
any medium for non-commercial purposes providing appropriate credit to the original work is given  
and any changes made are indicated. To view a copy of this license visit [https://creativecommons.org/  
licenses/by-nc/4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0)

When citing this work, please include a reference to the DOI [10.1017/9781009491501](https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009491501)

First published 2024

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

*A Cataloging-in-Publication data record for this book is available from the Library of Congress*

ISBN 978-1-009-49154-9 Hardback

Cambridge University Press & Assessment has no responsibility for the persistence  
or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this  
publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will  
remain, accurate or appropriate.