

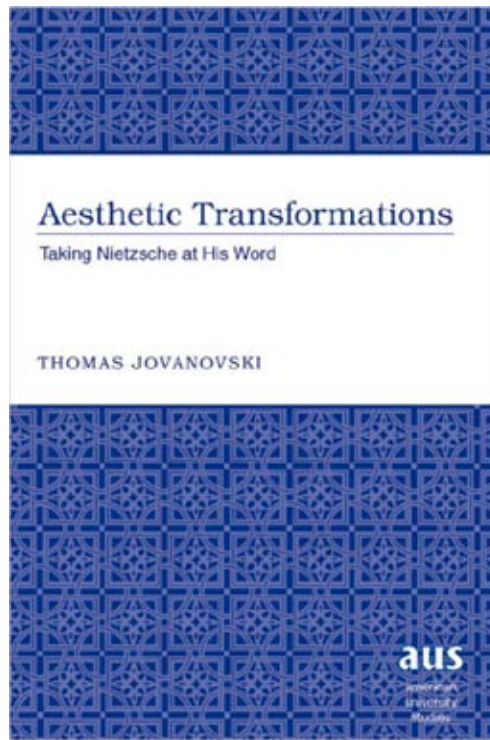
Book Review

Aesthetic Transformations: Taking Nietzsche at His Word

written by Thomas Jovanovski (New York: Peter Lang, 2008)

reviewed by Hugo Drochon (St. John's College, Cambridge)

Nearing the end of his productive life, Nietzsche calls in his unpublished notes for the founding of a “Party of life.”¹ Its role is to fight a “*Geisterkrieg*” against the “Party of peace” of the “last man” for the future breeding of mankind.² Having transformed Nietzsche into an icon of “Euro-American pop culture” (xiv), with its “entertainment first and entertainment last” mentality (19), and its penchant for “universal hyperdemocracy” (92), postmodernists, according to Thomas Jovanovski, have joined the ranks of these “last men.” Mounting a heavy-artillery attack against the “peripatetic literati” and their “cafeteria-style” approach to philosophy (99), Jovanovski’s polemical essay *Aesthetic Transformations: Taking Nietzsche at His Word*, marks him out as one of postmodernism’s most ferocious opponents. Railing against their “politically correct”—postmodernism’s “pathologically suspicious child” (69)—interpretation of Nietzsche, Jovanovski proposes instead to “bring the *Übermensch* to life” (Chapter 4), and against their deconstructive language games, Jovanovski announces his maxim: “Back to the written word!” (xvi).



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Jovanovski’s first and indeed main target is Walter Kaufmann, in particular his “Nietzsche’s Attitude Toward Socrates,” chapter 13 of *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*. Jovanovski singles out Kaufmann because “by carefully isolating and emphasizing terms and

1 See KSA 13, 25[1]

2 For a fuller explanation of *Geisterkrieg*, see my forthcoming “The time is coming when we will relearn politics” in *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, Issue 39 (Spring 2010).

passages of central importance to his own reading,” and thus “convincing an entire generation of Nietzsche students to adopt as their starting premise the pernicious idea that Nietzsche likely did not believe everything he committed to paper” (67), he opened the flood-gates to postmodern (mis)readings of Nietzsche. Is this a perfectly equitable judgment of Kaufmann? Whilst one might agree with Jovanovski that Kaufmann “*over-rehabilitates*” (67) Nietzsche in conceptualizing him as a dialectician who organizes all his thoughts around an engagement with Socrates, he does draw our attention to certain positive evaluations that Nietzsche has of Socrates.³ This Kaufmann does in a rather grounded and textual way, and is not guilty of the deconstructive language games which would become the hallmark of the postmodernism Jovanovski wishes to target.⁴

Jovanovski extends in chapter 3 his critique of Kaufmann to Schacht and Nehamas, both of which he accuses of having made Nietzsche, like Kaufmann, “toothless” (67): the first for consciously disregarding Nietzsche’s “more socially disturbing pronouncements” (86), and the latter for turning him into a purely literary figure, fleeing the reality of the *Übermensch* he wanted to create (91-3). *En passant* Jovanovski takes a swipe at “feminist” readings of Nietzsche who want to portray Nietzsche “in an important sense establishing the foundations of a metafeminism” (70). At this point one might be inclined to formulate a first overall objection to Jovanovski, which has to do with both his style and manner. Rounding on Janet Lungstrum, whom he patronisingly chides for “attracting a modicum of attention to herself,” he describes her writing style as the “characteristically obfuscating argot of postmodernism” (70). Indeed Jovanovski will consistently belittle the authors he deals with, opening by stating he would have “thus scarcely glanced at any of their literature had its influence within the sphere of our current concern not been as pervasive as it is misleading” (xvii), following up with how their “self-indulgence renders their respective claims eminently forgettable” (71), their being on the verge of becoming “noisy and unruly as unattended children” (72), considers their claims a “nuisance” (78), perhaps a symptom of “socially shared autism” (83), such that we should expend “little ink on any more [their] claims” (76), concluding that perhaps he should simply “smugly dismiss Schacht’s treatise” (86). The arrogance is matched by Jovanovski’s trumpeting of his own work for its “textual correctness and superior dramatic quality vis-à-vis anything hitherto introduced into the Nietzsche scholarship” (103), and declaring that in contrast “to the existing scholarship,” his work is “worthy of being recognised as comprising a radical document” (132).

3 That through being ‘*absurdly rational*,’ Socrates saved his compatriots from the mass suicide their condition of pessimism would have brought them to, and that ultimately the ‘Socrates who makes music’ points towards the successful exit from decadent western civilisation, which Socrates himself was the first to understand.

4 Strikingly, Jovanovski makes nothing of the one moment in which Kaufmann most approaches the postmodern dystopia as he wishes to present it. In his discussion of friendship and disciples, Kaufmann claims that to be ‘a “Nietzschean,” ... whether “gentle” or “tough,” is in a sense a contradiction in terms: to be a Nietzschean, one must not be a Nietzschean’ (54). This arrestingly echoes the postmodernist mantra that Jovanovski ascribes to Foucault when Foucault explains that ‘I am simply Nietzschean and I try as well as I can, in a number of areas, to see with the help of Nietzsche’s texts-but also with anti-Nietzschean theses (which are all the same Nietzschean!)—what can be done in one area or another’ (75).

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Jovanovski admits in his afterword that “I have inclined to treat everyone who has shown any desire to change or rehabilitate any portion of [Nietzsche’s] recorded thought with an air of impatience and annoyance, if not quite derision” (131), and his analysis of Kaufmann, to return to whom we opened with, certainly bears such a mark. Indeed Jovanovski will begin his commentary of Kaufmann with the rather bombastic, and as yet unsupported, claim that “these and similarly dubious inferences compose the sandy and shifting basis of Kaufmann’s vantage” (37). Other examples include: “the first half of the preceding paraphrasis shows Kaufmann grasping for straws—and coming up empty-handed” (46), and “again, Kaufmann presents us with an interpretation of so little substance that a critical reader might be rather hard put to decide how, or whether, to address any of it” (62). Jovanovski will of course go on to address Kaufmann’s claim, but with this tone one might wonder whether his assertion that his “resistance to Kaufmann’s reading of Nietzsche’s Socrates is by no means intended [...] to discount his indispensable contribution to the scholarship” (67) rings a little hollow.

This tendency is exacerbated by Jovanovski’s over-florid grammatical style, making it difficult at times to follow his reasoning. While he describes postmodern scholarship as “a contest of who can best rephrase in the most incomprehensible language established misrepresentations of Nietzsche’s seminal ideas” (111), Jovanovski is not the picture of clarity, and indeed, ironically, at times himself rather *jargonnant*. For instance, one might be slightly bemused by the following sentence:

We must not attempt to expand the range and objective of Nietzsche’s chronically astringent treatment of Socrates’ moral and aesthetic principles in order to assimilate the notion that he looks upon Socrates’ reputed character and public intercourse as similarly disagreeable (33).

As the opening sentence to chapter 2, this is rather bewildering. Having reread it a number of times, the reader might feel obliged to push on without being certain to have understood precisely what the author was attempting to communicate. In fact the apparent stylistic similarities between Jovanovski and the targets of his criticism often give the impression that Jovanovski is engaged in an internal critique of postmodernism, perhaps betrayed by his concluding remark about “even the most postmodernist-minded among us” (138). Indeed his insistence on the “written word” shares the methodological concern with postmodernists about language, and Jovanovski is keen to stress from the very beginning that for him “Nietzsche is primarily a proto-postmodernist” (xiii). This claim, which closes the opening paragraph of the preface, is left unsubstantiated. Jovanovski would later make a similar claim with regards to Nietzsche’s ‘existentialism,’ and while one might deduce that what is meant is that many of Nietzsche’s thoughts anticipate postmodern and existential themes, the reader might speculate whether such use of shorthand would be out of place in a cafeteria setting.

Thus the move away from postmodernism does not seem to be a radical break, but more an

esoteric reorientation of how the themes should be worked out within the paradigm. For instance his critique of Kaufmann might lead one to believe that the focal point of Nietzsche's thought is to be found elsewhere. Not quite, because for Jovanovski Nietzsche's aim is precisely to overturn "Socratic scientific optimism" (xxxvii), such that we would find it difficult to imagine Socrates not having some role. At this point I was left quite perplexed as to what Jovanovski thought he had achieved in his triumphant "subversion" (67) of Kaufmann. Is subversion, without reconstruction, a positive goal in itself? Of course Jovanovski's claim to originality stems from the fact that he takes Nietzsche's programme for the breeding of the *Übermensch* seriously, indeed literally, and the reader approaches his fourth and final chapter "Bringing the *Übermensch* to Life" with a degree of expectation, if not impatience. At first we are treated to the same tirade against post-modernism, though this reaches a new pitch when Jovanovski condemns contemporary America as what he will later call the "dictatorship of the last man" (122). The reader at this point might start to fear that Jovanovski only knows how to attack. Apart from a brief discussion of the role of the body as a means to the production of the *Übermensch* (101-2), and a second false start (110-3), Jovanovski finally gives us some positive content on page 113.⁵ There he begins to explain how through the reform of marriage and education one might engage in the 'praxis of selective breeding.' An interesting discussion, reminiscent of Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue*, ensues as to whether *Übermenschlich* communities would be able to survive in a world of increasingly assertive last men. Jovanovski concludes that they would not, but sees another version of events in Nietzsche's writings, most specifically in his late *Nachlaß*, that the increasing equalising tendencies of the modern world will necessarily lead to a counter-movement from which will emerge a new synthesising aristocracy, justifying such a movement.

These passages make for illuminating and stimulating reading, where Jovanovski asks the right questions, most notably what relationship these reflexions on the increasing levelling of mankind might entertain with the thought of Marx. He is thus successful in "rectifying [the] oversight" of Nietzsche's breeding programme which undeniably appears more detailed than previously thought, and furthermore in "identifying a new territory which Nietzsche students might wish to explore" (109). There is one aspect which the reader might question, however, which is his reliance on material collected in Kaufmann's translation of the 1907 edition of *The Will to Power*. Jovanovski gives three justifications for doing so: firstly that there is a strong continuity between Nietzsche's unpublished and published thoughts on the matter, such that the notes can be appraised "as something of a supplement or a commentary on the latter"; secondly, more provocatively, "whether for better or worse, these Notes *are* a part of the philosophical realm, and since by now hundreds of writers have cited and analysed them, we could no more convincingly dismiss their contents than we could ignore the message of a loud if 'inadvertent' provocative remark"; and thirdly reiterating the Heideggerian view that "just as alcohol-affected thoughts are less socially and morally inhibited, so it is that privately expressed (or spleen-venting) thoughts

5 Out of, it should be noted, a 139 page book.

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are more reflective of one's actual philosophical attitude than those formulated *ad usum delphini*" (109). While the first and last claims might be justifiable,⁶ the second assertion sits rather uncomfortably with Jovanovski's dictum to take Nietzsche literally at his word: since Montinari's discrediting of the editions compiled by his sister and Peter Gast,⁷ we emphatically know that *The Will to Power* as a book is *not* Nietzsche's word.⁸

It is in reality rather puzzling that Jovanovski desires to defend his use of material compiled in *The Will to Power* on the de facto claim that these notes have been so "cited and analyzed" that they are, for "better or worse," part of the "philosophical realm." Jovanovski here seems to be straying dangerously close to committing what he accuses postmodernism of doing. I take his main claim to be that postmodernist thinkers have extracted Nietzsche's thoughts from their original context, and through "deconstruction" (xiii), have made them say the exact opposite of what they were meant to say: thus the "return to the written word" to cut through such unfounded extrapolations. But the notes that make up *The Will to Power* are those that have been the most taken out of their original context, and indeed interpreted in such a way that they became, through Bäumler's edition, the philosophical basis for the Nazi regime. Moreover postmodernism is also part of the "philosophical realm," though, one might imagine, for the "worse" in Jovanovski's case. But surely the thought here was to get away from this realm to return to Nietzsche himself?

Most ironical is the fact that Jovanovski relies on an edition of *The Will to Power* edited by Kaufmann, someone whose scholarship he explicitly criticises. Though Kaufmann had rejected *The Will to Power* as a "book" in his *Nietzsche*, he takes "full responsibility" for the edition, explaining that the text must be approached as a thematically arranged collection of notes, and that his desire to publish *The Will to Power* stemmed from the fact that he wanted to make the "late work available first of all" and that *The Will to Power* "should be made accessible, too, for those who cannot read these notes in the original German."⁹ While this might show up Kaufmann at his most spurious, he does specify that the passages of *The Will to Power* were arbitrarily chosen, and indeed out of their context. Jovanovski is aware of Kaufmann's "context-irrelevant" fashioning of the *Nachlaß*, but proposes that they can be "synthesized" (122). As he does not explicitly indicate how this is to be done, we might presume that it is Jovanovski who will synthesize them

6 There are indeed strong links between Nietzsche's discussion of democracy being a "school for tyrants" in *BGE* and the "rise of the justifying nobility" of the late *Nachlaß*. For the importance of the late notes, see below.

7 See the commentary volume 14 of the *KSA*: „Nietzsches Nachlaß 1885-1888 und der sogenannte "Wille zur Macht" (383-400).“ While Kaufmann did consult the archives to try to ensure the notes were as truthful as possible, and did work on the dating, too many discrepancies remain for the work to have scholarly value.

8 Jovanovski is aware of Magnus' argument of *The Will to Power* as a "nonbook," stating that such a view did not inspire in him "the least uncertainty about appealing to any of its notes" in his creation of his focus on breeding the *Übermensch*, and continues by providing the arguments for the use of it as outlined above.

9 See "Editor's Introduction" to *The Will to Power* (Vintage Books: New York, 1968).

himself in the presentation he makes of them for the purposes of his argumentation. But why should such a grouping be better “context-relevant” than Kaufmann’s? Indeed in doing so one might accuse Jovanovski of precisely what he accuses Kaufmann of doing, that is to say “isolating and emphasising terms and passages” which are of “central importance to his own reading.”

I do not hereby mean to suggest that one should disregard Nietzsche’s late *Nachlaß*, nor indeed that Jovanovski’s emphasis on them is incorrect, quite to the contrary. But it must be recognised that Colli and Montinari’s publication of the *KGW* and *KSA*, and especially the project of the translation of the latter into English by Stanford University Press, have not only further discredited *The Will to Power* as a ‘book,’¹⁰ but also made Kaufmann’s own reasoning for *The Will to Power* obsolete. If one is serious in taking “Nietzsche at his word” on his late notes, if this is possible at all, the only truly scholarly way to do so, failing access to the archives themselves, is to use both the critical editions of the *KSA* and especially the facsimile editions of Nietzsche’s late notebooks under the *KGW*.¹¹ It is only through these editions that the notes can be placed back in their original context. Finally if Jovanovski is truly committed to Nietzsche’s word, he must first acknowledge the fact that Nietzsche’s word is in *German*, rather than relying on the translations.

Jovanovski thus would have been well served by consulting the critical editions, and not merely to palliate the feeling that he simply read *The Will to Power* and, realizing that many of its passages did not square with postmodernist interpretations, used it as a Trojan war-horse against them (xiv). Of course we might never know exactly what Nietzsche’s final word on what was to be done with his late *Nachlaß* might have been, but we certainly can get a better sense of his intentions from his notes. A good place to start would have been Nietzsche’s plan for “The Will to Power” of 1888,¹² which he refers to in a letter to Peter Gast of the 13th February 1888 as his “first draft.” There Nietzsche organizes 300 out of 372 of his notes into four chapter headings. While Nietzsche would abandon this plan, these chapter headings would be used for the 1907 edition of *The Will to Power*, though the content would not follow his indications, being instead chosen arbitrarily from the notes.¹³ What Jovanovski might have noticed from this plan is that many of the passages he quotes in support of his view of “synthesizing aristocracy” are linked to the theme of “Great politics.” This might have helped him resolve his difficulty over the eternal return of the last man (132-3), and perhaps have given him a slightly different take on the breeding of the *Übermensch*. If the last man is to return eternally, then he will never be entirely eradicated, but what Nietzsche really wants is to re-establish the balance between the last men and the exceptions in favour of the latter. For Nietzsche all higher and more mixed cultures try to negotiate between

10 See again „Nietzsches Nachlaß 1885-1888 und der sogenannte “Wille zur Macht” (383-400).”

11 These latter are still in the process of being produced.

12 *KSA* 13, 12[1-2]

13 For more on this see my “Twilight and Transvaluation: Nietzsche’s *Hauptwerk* and the *Götzen-Dämmerung*” in *Nietzscheforschung*, Vol. 16 (2009): 175-182.

master and slave morality,¹⁴ thus the importance for the new nobility to be “not merely a master race whose sole task is to rule, but a race with its own *sphere of life*” (my italics, 123-4), so as to pursue its own artistic ends and the breeding of the *Übermensch*. The theme of “Great politics,” whose principle it is to found a “Party of life” to breed a new type of humanity,¹⁵ might further have lead Jovanovski closer to being able to talk about a Nietzschean politics, something he seems keen to do (29-30). Indeed his suggestion that Nietzsche “is concerned with politics on a grand scale” (134), seems rather reminiscent of what Nietzsche meant with his “Great politics,”¹⁶ though, as we have just seen, it was not Nietzsche’s intention to “put and end to history as a friction between the different classes” (134).

Beyond these points, Jovanovski’s insistence on reading Nietzsche literally does reach its limits. This comes to the fore in his discussion about how Nietzsche was rather serious when he was referring to the “whip” in the infamous *Zarathustra* passage “On Little Old and Young Woman,” which he uses as a means to disparaging “metafeminist” readings of Nietzsche. But here Jovanovski is perfectly aware that Nietzsche is speaking metaphorically, describing a conversation between Nietzsche and his sister about certain woman needing to have “that symbolic whip over them,” to keep their passions in check (79-80). Thus such a “whip” appears to be more symbolic than real, which suggests that a correct interpretation of Nietzsche has to be found somewhere between taking him literally at every word, and allowing oneself the flight-of-fancies certain postmodern writers allow themselves. Jovanovski’s book is a serious call to bring us back as close to the former as possible.



As someone who is, in Jovanovski’s terms, “sympathetic [...] of the social side of Nietzsche’s philosophy” (63),¹⁷ I was positively predisposed to his attempt to take the breeding of the *Übermensch* seriously. Indeed the merit of Jovanovski’s work is not only to bring this issue to the attention of the scholarly community, but also to engage in a reflexion on it, in terms of the two paths Nietzsche seems to suggest could lead to the emergence of an *Übermenschlich* society, and their respective difficulties. I found especially stimulating Jovanovski’s suggestion of the possible discussion Nietzsche could have with Marx with regards to the former’s advocating the “levelling of mankind”: a route of investigation, as Weber also realised, that still remains one of the most promising today.

I do, however, very much regret the manner in which Jovanovski tackles his opponents, and his continual slights against contemporary western civilisation’s “last men” mentality. The

14 BGE, 260

15 KSA 13, 25[1]

16 That is to say the “problem” of “what type of human should be *bred*” over the “petty” nationalistic and democratic politics of his day (GS, 377; BGE, 208).

17 Again see my forthcoming “*The time is coming when we will relearn politics.*”

tone is not simply at times frankly unbearable, but furthermore inappropriate for a scholarly work.¹⁸ Jovanovski clearly wants to make a point about his contemporary society, as can be seen from his discussion of overpopulation in “Afterword” (135). While this is a refreshing change from postmodern attempts *à la* Hatab to apply Nietzsche’s thought in the service of a radicalized post-metaphysical democracy,¹⁹ Jovanovski unfortunately has little more to offer beyond simply reiterating Nietzsche’s claim about the rise of a synthesizing nobility.²⁰ This inability to develop Nietzsche’s ideas is also true of his scholarship: *Jovanovski has so little positive content to offer*. More importantly, as we shall see, what he does offer he had already published almost twenty years before. This explains why Jovanovski spend more than three quarters of his book attacking other authors, and any reader of Nietzsche would have difficulty in not identifying this approach with a certain *ressentiment*.²¹

Not only can Jovanovski’s vitriol against postmodernism sometimes appear like an internal discussion, it furthermore feels somewhat outdated. When one looks at the publication dates of Jovanovski’s articles, which make up the bulk of the material, apart from one publication in 2001, the other three are from 1989, 1990 and 1991. While the article of 2001, seven years before the book’s publication, admittedly does deal with “Postmodernism’s Self-Nullifying Reading of Nietzsche,” it is a shame that this article won out in terms of the tenor of the book. On further inspection, the articles do not contain the unnecessary aggressiveness which was to become the hallmark of the essay, and this would have been a salutary grace. Indeed one might wonder how much more has been gained by bringing Jovanovski’s four articles together under one cover. From what he indicates,²² only the “Introduction” and the “Afterword” are new material. While the “Introduction” does make the good point that *The Birth of Tragedy* can be considered Nietzsche’s philosophical blueprint, in that “the book comprises practically all of [his] ideas in their

18 *Aesthetic Transformations* is published in the ‘American University Studies’ series of Peter Lang. Conversely, if Jovanovski meant this to reach a more popular audience to warn against the dangers of postmodernism, then the medium is inappropriate.

19 See Lawrence Hatab, *A Nietzschean Defence of Democracy: An Experiment in Postmodern Politics* (Chicago: Open Court, 1995).

20 In other places Jovanovski will posit the “*Übermensch* as a viable ontological alternative to the current system of political correctness” (99), or again “the *Übermensch* constitutes possibly the most inspiring idea in the history of intellectual thought” (110), without ever going beyond the idea of the rise of the new nobility as a means to the *Übermensch* other than saying that it is becoming more and more propitious, something Nietzsche had clearly indicated as the continuous deepening of the crisis of nihilism. See, for example, *KSA* 13, 11[411].

21 “*ressentiment*: ... it needs, physiologically speaking, external stimuli in order to act at all,—its action is basically a reaction” (*GM*, I, 10).

22 See xxiii: “Division 3 of Chapter One may be found in *Dialogue: Canadian Philosophical Review*, Vol. 29, No. 3” (“A Synthetic Formulation of Nietzsche’s Aesthetic Model,” 1990—my additional information). Most of the main body of Chapter Two is included in *Nietzsche-Studien*, 20 (‘Critique of Walter Kaufmann’s “Nietzsche’s Attitude Toward Socrates,”’ 1991), while parts of the Preface and Chapter Three are contained in *Inquiry*, Vol. 44, No. 4 (“Postmodernism’s Self-Nullifying Reading of Nietzsche,” 2001). Lastly, much of Chapter Four may also be read in *Man and World*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (“Toward the Animation of Nietzsche’s *Übermensch*,” March 1989). *Aesthetic Transformations* comprises of a Preface, Introduction, 4 Chapters and an Afterword.

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embryonic form” (xli), the more interesting thoughts on the eternal return of the last man and the reflexions on overpopulation of the “Afterword” were already present in his “Toward the Animation of Nietzsche’s *Übermensch*.” Nor does it appear that Jovanovski considerably reworked his articles: I was struck by the fact that while Jovanovski indicates that his abbreviation of *The Gay Science* will be ‘GS,’ in his chapter on Kaufmann it is systematically given as ‘FW,’ *Nietzsche-Studien*’s format—the format of the original published article—which seems to suggest that Jovanovski did not even take the time to reformat, let alone rework, his article for publication as a book. Here both Jovanovski and his editor have some serious questions to answer, not least how the book adds to the already existing—and indeed Jovanovski’s—scholarship.

I, for one, remain rather unconvinced that it does. To my mind Jovanovski’s main contribution to the literature—his analysis of how Nietzsche believes the *Übermensch* might successfully come about—is much better made, and certainly without the bile which accompanies it in the book version, in the article of 1989. The rest of the book just appears to be a long, and irritating, preface to this point, to which it adds nothing substantially new. Thus the book appears to be the mere strapping of four articles together, without either reworking or adding substantially to them. Is this a good basis for a book? I should think not. While of course most authors might publish versions of their chapters in article format before publication of their book, the latter is supposed to provide something extra which the articles can not. Not only does Jovanovski fail to add any substantive new material or insight, his tone in *Aesthetic Transformations* might have done him a great disservice by detracting from what he had achieved in his “Animation of Nietzsche’s *Übermensch*.”

If Jovanovski could claim in 1989 that his discussion of the breeding of the *Übermensch* was “the first [...] in the vast Nietzsche scholarship,”²³ it is uncertain he can still claim such a distinction two decades later. In the meantime other voices will have raised themselves to challenge the postmodern reading of Nietzsche and interrogated Nietzsche’s politics of breeding, including Dombowsky²⁴ and Appel,²⁵ to name but two.²⁶ An engagement with this literature might have preserved Jovanovski from sometimes appearing to be breaking down barriers which no longer exist, and might have shown him a more positive road to follow rather than his continuous diatribes against postmodernism and its supposed relatives. While his advocating the breeding of the *Übermensch* might lead Jovanovski to believe he is a candidate for the “Party of life,” the fact that he drowns such a call in his *ressentiment* against contemporary western academia and society rather marks him out as no better than the opposing “Party of peace.” Moreover I

23 Thomas Jovanovski, “Toward the animation of Nietzsche’s *Übermensch*,” *Man and World*, Vol. 22 (1989): 92. I am presuming by ‘scholarship’ he means post-WWII scholarship, previous to that many people were very interested in breeding the *Übermensch*.

24 See his discussion with Alan Schrift in *Nietzsche-Studien*, Vol. 31 (2002): 278-297.

25 Fredrick Appel, *Nietzsche Contra Democracy* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1999).

26 See further Ken Gemes, “Post-Modernism’s Use and Abuse of Nietzsche,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 52, (2001): 337-360, where Gemes wants to argue that “Postmodernists are nearer Nietzsche’s idea of the Last Man than his idea of the Overman” (abstract).

remain rather sceptical that such a call, whatever its value, saves the book, rather than the article, as a whole. Perhaps Jovanovski's *Aesthetic Transformations*, to attempt a positive gloss to this conclusion, might best serve us as a landmark: where not to go back (postmodernism's fanciful interpretations of Nietzsche), where to look forward (Nietzsche's concrete plans for the breeding of the *Übermensch* and more broadly the discussion this might entertain with Marx's thought), and finally the tone *not* to adopt when approaching academic scholarship.

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