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*Post-Postmodernism: or, The Cultural Logic of Just-in-Time
Capitalism* by Jeffrey T. Nealon (review)

Andrew Shipley

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by the vast disparities in wealth between rich and poor, as well as her later defense of Algerian anti-colonial militant Djamila Boupacha in *Le Monde* and her occasional writings on the Holocaust, the reality and image of contemporary Israel, and the poor state of workers' rights in the French "welfare state." In publicly defending Boupacha, who was raped by the French army during interrogation, and in calling for the prosecution of owners whose negligence cost the lives of women factory workers, one can see Beauvoir's feminist consciousness becoming more concrete. Compared to the earlier essays, one can also see her increasing willingness to invoke legislation and jurisprudence, rather than violence, in defense of the oppressed.

The volume concludes with a screenplay for a little-known television documentary on the condition of elderly persons in France, one of Beauvoir's few collaborative projects. Since the majority of the elderly and their caretakers are female, it foregrounds the relations of power between the state and women in various social situations. When industrial societies imagine and experience old age as something like what Orlando Patterson calls "social death," the social presence of the aged makes death itself more fearful. This socially framed view of death contrasts with Heidegger's notion of death as timeless and shapeless in its urgency, and may shed light on its romanticization by right-wing literary authors.

By integrating well-known and obscure texts in Beauvoir's political development, this book will be helpful to scholars in political philosophy, French intellectual history, and the history of feminist thought.

Laura Hengehold, *Case Western Reserve University*

Jeffrey T. Nealon. *Post-Postmodernism: or, The Cultural Logic of Just-in-Time Capitalism.* Stanford: Stanford UP, 2012. 248 pp.

The title of Jeffrey Nealon's latest book, *Post-Postmodernism: or, The Cultural Logic of Just-in-Time Capitalism*, is provocative but potentially misleading. The work is not concerned with the kind of intricate period claims or taxonomic cataloguing that marked Fredric Jameson's canonical *Postmodernism*, as one might expect, nor with positioning itself as a filial extension of the latter. Nonetheless, the title is suggestive. Much of the analysis does, in fact, traffic in a dialectical methodology that Nealon, recognizing the Jamesonian influence, calls "overcoding" (22). More significantly, the title indicates the extent to which this text is invested in both the legacy of the eighties and nineties "era of big theory" and the possibilities for theory as it attempts to leverage its apparently tenuous position in the post-postmodern present (182). The work comprises two sections: the first focuses on "culture and economics"; the second, "theory going forward." These two headings neatly correspond to the three senses in which *postmodernism* is generally used—a mode of

artistic practice, a period of capitalist development, and a placeholder for *theory*. That theory represents the half to culture's and economics' respective quarters is appropriate.

The first section begins with a repudiation of the "standard reading" of Jameson's "Postmodernism" essay as an essentially negative, moralizing polemic (6). Nealon emphasizes the essay's positive insistence on historicization as a prerequisite for meaningful engagement and, asserting this premise as axiomatic, doesn't devote much space to recapitulating Jameson's conception of the relationship between capitalism and cultural production. Instead, he offers an unobjectionable supplement: things have changed since the eighties. The convergence of cultural and economic imperatives has intensified, and former categories no longer have the same explanatory power. Las Vegas, which flourishes despite the fact that little is produced there besides subjective experience, provides an appropriate backdrop for Nealon's exposition of this heightened degree of conflation. Nealon evacuates much of the Marxist jargon characteristic of Jameson's work, in itself an indication of the ways in which the commingling of economic and cultural spheres has become increasingly difficult to parse. It is worth noting that much of the periodizing work undertaken in these early chapters proceeds by way of contrast and depends on a set of surprising benchmarks for the postmodern period, "say, Reagan's election in 1980 to the summer of 2000 or fall of 2001" (12). No doubt, Nealon's long-eighties thesis will come as an affront to some readers, but it makes sense when one recalls that occasionally *postmodernism* simply connotes *theory* and then notes that Nealon's postmodern parameters correspond to big theory's moment of prominence. The final two chapters of the first section amount to discrete treatments of classic rock as a post-postmodern commodity form and the corporatization of the university. By way of accretion, these chapters demonstrate the practical value of overcoding in coming to grips with neoliberalism and, given their relatively remote subject matter, constitute a kind of performative display of the rigors of intensification, which serves as both the object and approach of the study.

The second section starts with two brief, avowedly recuperative readings of Nietzsche and Adorno. Nealon's concern here is much the same as with Jameson in the opening chapter, that is, to move past standard, negative deployments and find positive functions for their work in the present. These treatments are generally persuasive and even enjoyable, if hardly the last word on either figure, and they serve nicely to inaugurate Nealon's call for a "hermeneutics of situation" (87), which accounts for much of the argumentative emphasis sustained throughout the second half of the book. The interpretive practices of the theory years come under heavy scrutiny, beginning with deconstruction. The first proper chapter concerns the Negrian critique of Derrida and is predicated on something of a straw man; Nealon positions himself against a reading of Hardt and Negri as engaging in a kind of disingenuous "theory MC-boasting" (115). The analysis mostly succeeds in corroborating the claims and justifications Hardt and Negri offer

explicitly in *Empire*, namely, that deconstruction has been outstripped by the mechanisms of capitalist development and is no longer an effective mode of response. Given the chapter's immediate proximity to the analyses of Nietzsche and Adorno, Nealon misses an opportunity to offer a more radical reappraisal of Derrida, who might have been cast as the last great representative of the hermeneutics of suspicion and, as such, a thinker to be treated with some caution. The difficulty that this chapter presents for a more decisive break with theory's past is not repeated in later ones where Nealon makes a compelling case against the paradigm of endless, open interpretation as a resistance strategy or research program for the present. There is, of course, a prescriptive aspect to this endeavor and a clear shift away from the relatively neutral tone that marks the first section. After taking measure of the historical grounds, Nealon turns to the question of response. Whereas the postmodern period fostered an "ethos" of fragmentation that helped establish reading as a "linchpin practice" (149), the post-postmodern ethos is intensification, and globalization is the dominant process (150). Reading the part to get a handle on the whole makes less and less sense as the whole becomes increasingly global. Consequently, Nealon suggests that interpretation should be de-emphasized as a mode of literary scholarship. New approaches should be explored, ones that can navigate or even circumvent the pitfalls of a lingering hermeneutics of suspicion. To this end, Nealon suggests a renewed focus on literature's "strong power of the false," by which new intensities are imagined or created, as a corrective to decades of work stressing its "weak" counterpart, by which ideologies are subverted and binaries undermined (160-63). Such critique has been undeniably useful but can't continue to serve the same purpose when the ground on which it works has shifted so drastically, and Nealon's meta-theoretical turn at book's end represents precisely the kind of work he advocates, an attempt to find a positive function for theory as the returns of interpretation continue to diminish.

Andrew Shipley, *University of Oklahoma*

Peg Zeglin Brand, ed. *Beauty Unlimited*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 2013. 427 pp.

Plato writes in the *Symposium* that Diotima, the woman from Mantinea who educates the young Socrates in the ways of love, tells the seeker after Beauty to use beautiful things like rising stairs; to ascend from admiring the beauty of a body to the beauty of all bodies, from the beauty of bodies to the beauty of customs, from customs to learning, and finally to Beauty itself. Lost in the contemplation of eternal, absolute, pure Beauty, the seeker will no longer measure Beauty by "polluted" human flesh or other earthly and erotic