



Feminist Interpretations of Simone de Beauvoir (Re-Reading the Canon)

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For almost twenty years, feminist readings of Simone de Beauvois's feminist classic *The Second Sex* have been dominated by dismissive interpretation of Beauvois's philosophy as Sartrean and phallogocentric. Beauvois's angry refusal to acknowledge either her philosophical originality or her lesbian relationships led to an interpretive impasse on two issues: her relationship to existentialism and her relationship to feminism. It was not until Beauvois's death in 1986 that this interpretive impasse would be broken. Feminist scholars reacted to news of Beauvois's death in 1986 by initiating a reevaluation of her life's work, a task encouraged by Sylvie Le Bon de Beauvois, her adopted daughter, who edited for posthumous publication many of Beauvois's personal notebooks and letters to Sartre. Some of the most exciting new interpretations of Beauvois's philosophy that have resulted are brought together here for the first time; many of them, indeed, were written expressly for this first volume of essays on Beauvois's philosophy written since her death.

From phenomenology and literary criticism to analytic philosophy and postmodern deconstruction, this collection presents a unique variety of methodological approaches to reading Beauvois: placing her within the phenomenological tradition and identifying the Husserlean influence on her work; using the posthumously published letters and notebooks to shed light on Beauvois's own experience of oppression and to deconstruct the philosophical movement that exploited her; analyzing the themes and structure of Beauvois's novel *The Mandarins* to study her philosophy of the erotic; examining the structure of her argument about women's biology and sexual difference to challenge the criticism of Beauvois's phallogocentrism; locating her writings on decolonization as a historical antecedent of the postmodern philosophy of destruction. Of particular interest may be the scholarly reading of little-known texts, such as Beauvois's essay on the Marquis de Sade, or her essay "Literature and Metaphysics," in the context of her better-known texts, such as *Ethics of Ambiguity*, to trace Beauvois's philosophical development and challenge the view that Beauvois was either Sartrean or phallogocentric.

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