



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

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For almost twenty years, feminist readings of Simone de Beauvoir's feminist classic *The Second Sex* have been dominated by dismissive interpretation of Beauvoir's philosophy as Sartrean and phallogentric. Beauvoir'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 Beauvoir's death in 1986 that this interpretive impasse would be broken. Feminist scholars reacted to news of Beauvoir's death in 1986 by initiating a reevaluation of her life's work, a task encouraged by Sylvie Le Bon de Beauvoir, her adopted daughter, who edited for posthumous publication many of Beauvoir's personal notebooks and letters to Sartre. Some of the most exciting new interpretations of Beauvoir'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 Beauvoir'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 Beauvoir: 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 Beauvoir's own experience of oppression and to deconstruct the philosophical movement that exploited her; analyzing the themes and structure of Beauvoir'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 Beauvoir's phallogentricism; locating her writings on decolonization as a historical antecedent of the postmodern philosophy of destruction. Of particular interest may be the scholarly reading of litt

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