

Simone De Beauvoir's Political Thinking



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出版者:

出版时间:2006-5

装帧:

isbn:9780252073595

By exploring the life and work of the influential feminist thinker Simone de Beauvoir, this book shows how each of us lives within political and social structures that we can - and must - play a part in transforming. It argues that Beauvoir's careful examination of her own existence can also be understood as a dynamic method for political thinking. As the contributors illustrate, Beauvoir's political thinking proceeds from the bottom up, using examples from individual lives as the basis for understanding and transforming our collective existence. For example, she embraced her responsibility as a French citizen as making her complicit in the French war against Algeria. Here, she sees her role as an oppressor. In other contexts, she looks to the lives of individual women, including herself, to understand the dimensions of gender inequality. This volume's six tightly connected essays home in on the individual's relationship to community, and how one's freedom interacts with the freedom of other people. Here, Beauvoir is read as neither a liberal nor a communitarian. The authors focus on her call for individuals to realize their freedom while remaining consistent with ethical obligations to the community. Beauvoir's account of her own life and the lives of others is interpreted as a method to understand individuals in relations to others, and as within structures of personal, material, and political oppression. Beauvoir's political thinking makes it clear that we cannot avoid political action. To do nothing in the face

of oppression denies freedom to everyone, including oneself.

作者介绍:

目录:

[Simone De Beauvoir's Political Thinking 下载链接1](#)

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