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The Meaning Of Freedom: And Other Difficult Dialogues (City Lights Open Media)



Synopsis

What is the meaning of freedom? Angela Y. Davis' life and work have been dedicated to examining this fundamental question and to ending all forms of oppression that deny people their political, cultural, and sexual freedom. In this collection of twelve searing, previously unpublished speeches, Davis confronts the interconnected issues of power, race, gender, class, incarceration, conservatism, and the ongoing need for social change in the United States. With her characteristic brilliance, historical insight, and penetrating analysis, Davis addresses examples of institutional injustice and explores the radical notion of freedom as a collective striving for real democracy - not something granted or guaranteed through laws, proclamations, or policies, but something that grows from a participatory social process that demands new ways of thinking and being. "The speeches gathered together here are timely and timeless," writes Robin D.G. Kelley in the foreword, "they embody Angela Davis' uniquely radical vision of the society we need to build, and the path to get there." "The Meaning of Freedom articulates a bold vision of the society we need to build and the path to get there. This is her only book of speeches." "Davis' arguments for justice are formidable. . . . The power of her historical insights and the sweetness of her dream cannot be denied." "The New York Times" "One of America's last truly fearless public intellectuals." "Cynthia McKinney, former US Congresswoman" "Angela Davis offers a cartography of engagement in oppositional social movements and unwavering commitment to justice." "Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Women's Studies, Hamilton College" "Angela Davis deserves credit, not just for the dignity and courage with which she has lived her life, but also for raising important critiques of a for-profit penitentiary system decades before those arguments gained purchase in the mainstream." "Thomas Chatterton Williams, SFGate" "Angela Davis's revolutionary spirit is still strong. Still with us, thank goodness!" "Virginian-Pilot" "Long before 'race/gender' became the obligatory injunction it is now, Angela Davis was developing an analytical framework that brought all of these factors into play. For readers who only see Angela Davis as a public icon . . . meet the real Angela Davis: perhaps the leading public intellectual of our era." "Robin D. G. Kelley author of *The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner*" "There was a time in America when to call a person an 'abolitionist' was the ultimate epithet. It evoked scorn in the North and outrage in the South. Yet they were the harbingers of things to come. They were on the right side of history. Prof. Angela Y. Davis stands in that proud, radical tradition." "Mumia Abu-Jamal, author of *Jailhouse Lawyers: Prisoners Defending Prisoners v. the U.S.A.*" "Behold the heart and mind of Angela Davis, open, relentless, and on time!" "June Jordan" "Political activist, scholar, and author Angela Davis confronts the interconnected issues of power, race, gender, class,

incarceration, conservatism, and the ongoing need for social change in the U.S. in her book, *The Meaning of Freedom: And Other Difficult Dialogues.*" #151;Travis Smiley RadioAngela Y. Davis is professor emerita at the University of California and author of eight books. She is a much sought after public speaker and an internationally known advocate for social justice. Robin D.G. Kelley is the author of numerous books and a professor at the University of Southern California.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Davis, a political progressive icon of the 1960s, tackles the concept and application of freedom in the context of the twenty-first century. She focuses on the growth of the prison industry nationally and internationally, reflecting on forces of capitalism that undercut human freedom. Challenging the reader to conceive of a world without prisons, Davis champions a concept of prison abolition. Hers is not a utopian perspective but one based on historical analysis of how prisons evolved as an alternative to punishment by death and as a continuation of post-slavery racial control. Davis examines the connection of poor education to low employment for American minorities, particularly blacks, making them easy targets for the prison stampede. She also explores the forces of capitalism in relation to developing nations, producing economic instability that leads to mass immigration and another population vulnerable to incarceration. This book is a collection of Davis's lectures from 1994 through 2009, interweaving themes of freedom and bias based on race, gender, and sexual orientation. Davis is at her best linking these perceptively separate

segments into a broader concept of freedom across all the lines that separate us. --Vernon Ford

"This document of contemporary thought by a major world-historical figure, Davis' first full-length book in almost a decade, makes it timelessly clear that while no freedom fight will ever be easy; 'We can't rely on simple categories'; every real triumph, however small and short-lived, will always be worth it." -- Todd Steven Burroughs, Ebony.com

"The 12 speeches delivered between 1994 and 2009, and collected here for the first time, provide as good an entry point as any into the radical life and ideas of the political activist and thinker Angela Davis." -- San Francisco Chronicle

"In this collection of 12 previously unpublished speeches, the longtime activist asks readers to imagine a social landscape devoid of institutional and cultural injustice. Freedom is a process of becoming, she asserts; it can't be fully realized without collective participation by a demanding society." -- Ms. Magazine

"Angela Y. Davis proves that it's still possible to find a new, refreshing way to discuss race, gender, class, and sexuality. In this heartfelt examination through previously unpublished speeches, Davis discusses these issues with simple language and challenges us to think about how feminism and racism relate to our everyday lives." -- Bust Magazine

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"As always, Davis is particularly concerned with the prison-industrial complex, yet her thoughts on marriage equality, immigration and globalization are just as thought-provoking." -- San Jose Mercury News

"Angela Davis has devoted her career to this fundamental question of freedom, and its seemingly inherent other, oppression. The need for social change in America is great, but constantly thwarted by institutional injustice. Davis is calling for real democracy, which comes not from any law or proclamation, but by participatory social process." -- Alexis Coe, SF Weekly

"Davis is careful to bring current, pressing, and local issues into each of her speeches. The same undergirding of what the Combahee River Collective called 'interlocking' oppressions organizes not only her speeches but also her responses to audience members included in the book, providing some of the richest moments in the collection." -- Alexis Pauline Gumbs, Make/Shift Magazine

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Excellent and timely!!!

Interesting book.

I love Angela Davis and this book confirms my affections. I needed a book to review for a college course on racism and sexism in America. Her work is for the progressive person looking for inspiration on a conceptual and obtainable future. A future where classism is chipped at, oppression is seen in all its forms and we are not slaves to capitalism.

This collection of writings by Angela Davis show not only how critical a thinker she is, but also how

much hope she still has that we can create a new reality. Though she has every reason to be jaded by our justice system, she is not. Instead, what emerges from the pages of this book is a sincere desire and meaningful action for moving our country towards full humanity.

A voice of reason from the early 60's and still going strong. Is anyone listening? When you hear the words, "Freedom & Democracy", better walk the other way...!

Very Good read. Am still working through it but I am glad to have it. have not finished it yet

Angela Davis' book "The Meaning of Freedom" is a collection of speeches/jeremiads that span the last twenty years of her career as a leftwing civil rights activist. The book is compelling, intellectually provocative, and emphatically charged insofar as social injustice is concerned. Davis is fearless when it comes to raising the issue of civil rights for all people of different races, ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations, and let's not forget felons. Davis believes the American dream should be a reality that everyone should have access to. Unfortunately, they don't. In most States, the LGBT community still doesn't have the legal right to marriage. Also, felons are relegated to second class status for the rest of their lives, permanently losing the right to vote, all the while, legally being denied work and not being able to apply for social programs in order to get back on their feet. The Clinton Crime Bill is a prime example of this apartheid behavior toward felons in the United States. As a matter of fact "racism plays a major role in determining who is subject to state punishment and who is not!" The reasons why are staggering as Davis points out during the 2000 election in Florida. Overall, 950,000 former felons reside there and if they were given the right to vote, it's plain to see that Al Gore would have been elected president of the United States. The real objective insofar as eradicating the civil rights of the incarcerated is to maintain a form of hegemonic despotism in the auspices of a pseudo-democracy, which the Ultra-Right would control. "The Meaning of Freedom" as a whole is a relevant book to read considering the Supreme Court ruled that section V of the Voting Rights Act is unconstitutional, which is now leading to the disenfranchisement of minority voters across the country. North Carolina is leading the charges into this reactionary recidivism, a form of constitutional malfeasance. The Trayvon Martin case is another prime example of apartheid in the U.S. with the Stand Your Ground Laws that are being promoted throughout the country and the fact that George Zimmerman was allowed to get away with murder has created a disquieting situation and has set American race relations back nearly sixty years. Davis' main argument is that the system is stacked in favor of the Neoliberals in power and it is up to the American people to find

common ground in order to fix this insalubrious situation that has metastasized into an unconstitutional draconian quagmire that can't remain upright for long. Sooner or later our system of governance will discombobulate if we don't recognize the rights of all people around the world, and that this country needs socialistic programs in place in order to allow its people a chance to achieve the American dream. Davis also points out, "In today's era of Global capitalism, resistance to racism can only be effective if it is anchored in global communities of struggle. Our challenge today is to build secure bridges that link anti-racist movements, prison abolitionist campaigns, and immigrant rights movements." Believe me when I tell you, you won't agree with everything she says in this series of speeches. Angela Davis is as far left as it gets and many of her ideas seem pragmatic at first glance. Whether or not her ideas are viable is left up to the reader. As for me, I believe most of her ideas are the only solution to today's problems and concerns. Other books that correlate to this one are as follows: Howard Zinn: "Passionate Declarations" Douglas S. Massey and Nancy Denton: "American Apartheid" Al Gore: "The Assault on Reason" Michelle Alexander: "The New Jim Crow" Chris Hedges: "Empire of Illusion" Tavis Smiley and various authors: "The Covenant with Black America" Marc Ian Barasch: "The Compassionate Life"

In these troubled and frightening times, it is so nourishing to turn to great activists and thinkers like Angela Davis, to be reminded that struggle is both possible and necessary. This book is a guide not just to working toward a better world, but to the even more challenging obstacle of imagining that world in the first place.

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