

*Routledge Advances in Translation and Interpreting Studies*

**TRANSLATING SIMONE  
DE BEAUVOIR'S  
*THE SECOND SEX***

**TRANSNATIONAL FRAMING,  
INTERPRETATION, AND IMPACT**

Edited by  
Julia C. Bullock and Pauline Henry-Tierney



# Translating Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*

This collection offers insights into the transnational and translingual implications of Simone de Beauvoir's *Le Deuxième Sexe* [*The Second Sex*], a text that has served as foundational for feminisms worldwide since its publication in 1949.

Little scholarly attention has been devoted to how the original French-language source text made its way into languages other than English. This is a shocking omission, given that many (but by no means all) other translations were based on the 1953 English translation by Howard M. Parshley, which has been widely criticized by Beauvoir scholars for its omissions and careless attention to its philosophical implications. This volume seeks to fill this gap in scholarship with an innovative collection of essays that interrogate the ways that Beauvoir's essay has shifted in meaning and significance as it has traveled across the globe.

This volume brings together for the first time scholars from translation studies, literary studies, and philosophical studies, and over half of it is dedicated to non-Western European engagements with *Le Deuxième Sexe* (including chapters on the Chinese, Japanese, Arabic, Hungarian, and Polish translations). As such, this collection will be essential to any scholar of Beauvoir's philosophy and its contributions to feminist discourses.

**Julia C. Bullock** is Professor of Japanese Studies at Emory University, USA. She is the author of *The Other Women's Lib* (2010) and *Coeds Ruining the Nation* (2019); and co-editor of *Rethinking Japanese Feminisms* (2017) and *Translating Feminism* (2021). She is currently working on a book provisionally titled *Beauvoir in Japan*.

**Pauline Henry-Tierney** is Lecturer in French and Translation Studies at Newcastle University, UK. She is Managing Editor of the award-winning international journal, *Simone de Beauvoir Studies*. Her monograph *Translating Transgressive Texts: Gender, Sexuality and the Body in Contemporary Women's Writing in French* is forthcoming with Routledge.

## **Routledge Advances in Translation and Interpreting Studies**

### **Towards a Feminist Translator Studies**

Intersectional Activism in Translation and Publishing

*Helen Vassallo*

### **The Behavioral Economics of Translation**

*Douglas Robinson*

### **Online Collaborative Translation in China and Beyond**

Community, Practice, and Identity

*Chuan Yu*

### **Advances in Corpus Applications in Literary and Translation Studies**

*Edited by Riccardo Moratto and Defeng Li*

### **Institutional Translator Training**

*Edited by Tomáš Svoboda, Łucja Biel, Vilemini Sosoni*

### **Translation Competence**

Theory, Research and Practice

*Carla Quinci*

### **Intra- and Interlingual Translation in Flux**

*Višnja Jovanović*

### **Systematically Analysing Indirect Translations**

Putting the Concatenation Effect Hypothesis to the Test

*James Luke Hadley*

### **Translating Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex***

Transnational Framing, Interpretation, and Impact

*Edited by Julia C. Bullock and Pauline Henry-Tierney*

For more information about this series, please visit: [www.routledge.com/Routledge-Advances-in-Translation-and-Interpreting-Studies/book-series/RTS](http://www.routledge.com/Routledge-Advances-in-Translation-and-Interpreting-Studies/book-series/RTS)

# Translating Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*

Transnational Framing, Interpretation,  
and Impact

Edited by Julia C. Bullock and  
Pauline Henry-Tierney



Routledge  
Taylor & Francis Group

NEW YORK AND LONDON

First published 2023  
by Routledge  
605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158

and by Routledge  
4 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business*

© 2023 selection and editorial matter, Julia C. Bullock and Pauline Henry-Tierney;  
individual chapters, the contributors

The right of Julia C. Bullock and Pauline Henry-Tierney to be identified as the authors of  
the editorial material, and of the authors for their individual chapters, has been asserted in  
accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised  
in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or  
hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information  
storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

*Trademark notice:* Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks,  
and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

Names: Bullock, Julia C., editor. | Henry-Tierney, Pauline, editor.

Title: Translating Simone de Beauvoir's the second sex: transnational  
framing, interpretation, and impact / edited by Julia C. Bullock and  
Pauline Henry-Tierney.

Other titles: Deuxième sexe. English

Description: New York, NY: Routledge, 2023. |

Series: Routledge advances in translation and interpreting studies |

Originally entered under: Simone de Beauvoir. |

Includes bibliographical references and index. |

Identifiers: LCCN 2022053172 (print) | LCCN 2022053173 (ebook) |

ISBN 9781032426778 (hbk) | ISBN 9781032426785 (pbk) |

ISBN 9781003363767 (ebk)

Subjects: LCSH: Women.

Classification: LCC HQ1208 .B35213 2023 (print) |

LCC HQ1208 (ebook) | DDC 305.4--dc23/eng/20230110

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2022053172>

LC ebook record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2022053173>

ISBN: 9781032426778 (hbk)

ISBN: 9781032426785 (pbk)

ISBN: 9781003363767 (ebk)

DOI: 10.4324/9781003363767

Typeset in Sabon  
by Newgen Publishing UK

# Contents

<i>List of Contributors</i>	vii
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	ix
<i>A Note on Translation</i>	xi
<i>List of Illustrations</i>	xii
Introduction	1
JULIA C. BULLOCK AND PAULINE HENRY-TIERNEY	
PART I	
<b>Framing <i>Le Deuxième Sexe</i>: Contexts, Paratexts, and Practice</b>	15
1 The 1980s Chinese Translations of <i>The Second Sex</i> and Women's Situation in China: A Post-Translation Study Approach	17
ZHONGLI YU	
2 Paratextual Elements in Arabic Translations of Simone de Beauvoir's <i>Le Deuxième Sexe</i>	36
HALA G. SAMI	
3 The Process of Translating <i>Le Deuxième Sexe</i> into European Spanish: Challenges and Opportunities	58
MARÍA LUISA RODRÍGUEZ MUÑOZ	
PART II	
<b>(Mis)interpreting Beauvoir: Philosophical and Ideological Framing of the Text</b>	81
4 "Goulash Socialism" vs. Feminism? Beauvoir in Hungary	83
URSULA HURLEY AND SZILVIA NARAY-DAVEY	

5	The Polish Translation of <i>Le Deuxième Sexe</i> in the Hands of the Censorship Office WERONIKA SZWEBS	105
6	The Controversial Arabic Translations of Simone de Beauvoir's <i>Le Deuxième Sexe</i> ISABELLE MEHAWEJ	120
7	<i>Le Deuxième Sexe</i> Censored under Francoism PILAR GODAYOL	135
<b>PART III</b>		
	<b>Impact: Beauvoir's Legacy for Philosophy and Feminisms Worldwide</b>	155
8	Erotic Love and Marriage in English Translations of Beauvoir's <i>Le Deuxième Sexe</i> ELLIE ANDERSON	157
9	Translating in "Bad Faith"? Articulations of Beauvoir's Existentialist Philosophy in the English Translations of <i>Le Deuxième Sexe</i> PAULINE HENRY-TIERNEY	171
10	Reclaiming Beauvoir: The Feminist (Re)translation of <i>Le Deuxième Sexe</i> in Japan JULIA C. BULLOCK	184
11	Translation and Untranslatability in <i>Le Deuxième Sexe</i> PENELOPE DEUTSCHER	197
	Epilogue: Translating Key Concepts in <i>Le Deuxième Sexe</i> : A Crosslinguistic Discussion EDITED BY JULIA C. BULLOCK AND PAULINE HENRY-TIERNEY	220
	<i>Index</i>	246



# Contributors

**Ellie Anderson** is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Pomona College, USA. She has previously published on Beauvoir's ethics and philosophy of erotic love in the *Continental Philosophy Review*, *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, and *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. She has also translated works by Jacques Derrida from French to English.

**Julia C. Bullock** is Professor of Japanese Studies at Emory University, USA. She is the author of *The Other Women's Lib* (2010) and *Coeds Ruining the Nation* (2019); and co-editor of *Rethinking Japanese Feminisms* (2017) and *Translating Feminism* (2021). She is currently working on a book provisionally titled *Beauvoir in Japan*.

**Penelope Deutscher** is Joan and Sarepta Harrison Professor in the Department of Philosophy at Northwestern University, USA. Her publications include *Yielding Gender* (1997), *A Politics of Impossible Difference: The Later Work of Luce Irigaray* (2002), *The Philosophy of Simone de Beauvoir* (2008), and *Foucault's Futures: A Critique of Reproductive Reason* (2017).

**Pilar Godayol** is Professor of Translation Studies at the University of Vic—Central University of Catalonia, Spain. She currently coordinates the Gender Studies Research Group GETLIHC. Her research interests include translation, feminism, and censorship. She is the author of over 100 publications, including *Tres escritoras censuradas* (2017) and *Feminismos y traducción (1965–1990)* (2021).

**Pauline Henry-Tierney** is Lecturer in French and Translation Studies at Newcastle University, UK. Her research interests lie in relation to the translation of transgressive women's writing in French and to the translation of Simone de Beauvoir's work. Her monograph *Translating Transgressive Texts* will be published by Routledge in 2023.

**Ursula Hurley** and **Szilvia Naray-Davey** are practice-based researchers working on feminist literary translation in the School of Arts, Media and Creative Technology at the University of Salford, UK. The research



presented in this chapter is a specific instance of a long-term collaboration, investigating women's histories in Eastern Europe.

**Isabelle Mehawej** is sworn translator before the Courts in Lebanon and PhD researcher in translation studies at ÉSIT-Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris 3, France. Her thesis is focused on the translation and reception of Beauvoirian feminism in the Arab world.

**María Luisa Rodríguez Muñoz** holds a PhD in Languages and Cultures from Universidad de Córdoba, Spain, where she has worked as a full-time scholar lecturing on legal and intercultural translation since 2010. Her research interests are intercultural translation, translation and gender, and translation of contemporary art.

**Hala G. Sami** is Associate Professor of English at Cairo University, Egypt. Her current research interests include cultural myths, gender and the public/private spheres, and women's agency and empowerment in socio-political contexts. She is currently conducting research on the translation of Simone de Beauvoir in the Arab world.

**Weronika Szwebs** is Assistant Professor at the Institute of Polish Philology, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poland. Her main research interests involve translation of theoretical discourses, translation and reception of Polish literature in the English-speaking countries, contemporary Polish literature, and literary theory. She translates literary, social, and cultural theory from English into Polish.

**Zhongli Yu** is Associate Professor in Translation Studies in the School of Education and English at the University of Nottingham Ningbo China, holding a PhD in Translation and Intercultural Studies (Manchester). Her research interests include gender/women/feminism in/and translation, museum narratives and translation, war interpreting/interpreters, translation education, and intercultural communication.

# Acknowledgments

This volume started with a conversation, which turned into an idea, which turned into a conference, and finally, after much collaboration, conviviality, and hard work, into the book you are reading now. We should therefore start by thanking the people who brought us together in the first place. To Maud Bracke, Penelope Morris, and Kristina Schultz: The Translating Feminism Network was indeed transformative in more ways than one, and continues to yield dividends that multiply exponentially over time. Many thanks for the friendships and scholarship that you nurtured by creating a forum for discussion of these issues. Thanks also to the incomparable Ursula Tidd, who encouraged us early on to work together and provided the creative spark that inspired this project.

Most of the chapters that form this volume originated as presentations at the conference we sponsored in late October 2019, “*Le Deuxième Sexe* Seventy Years On: Reading Beauvoir around the World,” at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. This two-day event brought scholars from roughly a dozen countries together, some presenting via the magic of teleconferencing, to discuss how Beauvoir’s seminal text has been translated into languages worldwide. Thankfully we managed to squeeze this in a few months before a global pandemic sent us all into lockdown. This conference would not have been possible without generous financial and material support from the Emory Conference Center Subvention Fund, the Hightower Fund, and the following Emory College departments and programs: Russian and East Asian Languages and Cultures (REALC); Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies (WGSS); Philosophy; French and Italian; Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies (MESAS); and the Program in East Asian Studies (EAS).

We would also like to thank our contributors for their fabulous work and patience with our endless queries as this volume took shape. We are very grateful for all of the hard work put in by our Graduate Assistant, Yixuan Deng, for all her administrative support and especially for her work compiling the index. Thanks as well to Elysse Preposi, our editor at Routledge, for her support of this project, and to the staff at Routledge that made this book possible.

Julia would also like to thank Pauline for being the best co-editor, collaborator, and partner in crime anyone could wish for. I'm so glad we did this together. Finally, utmost thanks go, as always, to her husband Shane, whose love, forbearance, and good humor, in spite of her workaholic tendencies and obsession with arcane topics he no doubt finds deadly boring, mean more to her than he can possibly know and she could ever express.

Pauline would like to thank Julia for being the best co-editor too. It has been such a pleasure to work on this volume with you and I hope that this marks our first endeavor in a lifetime of collaboration and friendship. For her part, Pauline would like to dedicate her work on this volume in loving memory of her wonderful mum, Margaret Henry, who sadly passed away over the course of this project.

# A Note on Translation

A few words about the stylistic conventions of this volume: Beauvoir's work has appeared in translation in many languages, and in the discussions that follow we distinguish between the original French-language source text and its various translations linguistically by rendering the title as it appears in the version of the text under discussion. Thus, where the title appears in French (*Le Deuxième Sexe*), this refers to the original French source text. Where it appears in some other language, the author is referencing the translation into that particular language; *The Second Sex* indicates a translation of the book into English, *Daini no sei* a translation into Japanese, and so on. The one exception to this rule appears on the front cover of this volume, where the English title (*The Second Sex*) has been used in keeping with the publisher's house style. Where there have been multiple translations into the same language, please note references to the date of publication and/or translator's name(s) to distinguish competing versions of the text in that language.

# Illustrations

## Images

3.1	Draft terminological mapping by Martorell	60
3.2	Terminological options for gender	63

## Tables

3.1	Sexual orientation and gender vocabulary found in “La lesbienne”	61
3.2	Example of literal translation by Palant	65
3.3	Different translations of the verb “être” into Spanish	66
3.4	The reformulation with Spanish reflexive verbal forms	67
3.5	The translation of “être pour-soi” / “être en-soi”	69
3.6	The translation of the adjective “femelle”	73
3.7	The translation of the noun “femelle”	74
6.A.1	2008 and 2015 translations of Volume I	132
6.A.2	2008 and 2015 translations of Volume II	133

# Introduction

*Julia C. Bullock and Pauline Henry-Tierney*

Since it was first published in 1949, Simone de Beauvoir's seminal manifesto, *Le Deuxième Sexe* [*The Second Sex*], has had an enormous impact on feminist theory and activism worldwide. Its revelatory declaration that “on ne naît pas femme: on le devient” [one is not born, but becomes, (a) woman]<sup>1</sup> helped to inspire a wholesale interrogation of the often invisible norms and disciplinary mechanisms that cause women to prioritize conformity to societal expectations over their own desires or personal inclinations. The text was foundational to the rise of second-wave feminism across the globe in the 1960s, and to later innovations in feminist thought that resulted in explicit theoretical distinctions between biological sex and gender as a cultural construct.<sup>2</sup> Beauvoir's death in 1986 prompted additional scholarly attention to the legacy of her thought, which has produced new insights into the richness of her work as a form of feminist philosophy that is indebted not just to existentialism, but to a broad range of philosophical traditions (most especially phenomenology).<sup>3</sup> This in turn has allowed contemporary readers to find renewed relevance in her arguments about the role of patriarchal power structures in stifling women's capacity for self-actualization, and underscored for many readers that a number of the obstacles to women's liberation identified by Beauvoir remain challenges even today.

*Le Deuxième Sexe* has been translated twice into English, on both occasions with the title *The Second Sex*. The first translation, by a zoologist named Howard M. Parshley, was published in 1953, just four years after the mammoth work was initially published in French. This translation remained the definitive version of the text for many who could not read French, at least until the early 1980s, when the rise of women's studies as an academic discipline prompted additional scrutiny of the source text and led to criticism of the accuracy of Parshley's translation. In her pathbreaking study, Margaret A. Simons (1983) discovered that Parshley had omitted large portions of Beauvoir's original essay—particularly lengthy quotations and historical examples of prominent women—and made additional errors in rendering French grammatical constructions and rhetorical structures that misrepresented or contradicted Beauvoir's arguments. Subsequent studies (Moi 1994, 2002;

Fallaize 2002) corroborated Simons' findings, identifying further translation errors and inconsistencies in Parshley's translation and specifically his inability to recognize and effectively render the philosophical terminology Beauvoir employs. A second translation of the text into English in 2009, by Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier, sought to correct these errors and omissions.<sup>4</sup> However, this translation has also been criticized by Beauvoir scholars for excessive literalism and clumsy handling of sentence structures that give rise to additional opportunities for confusion as to Beauvoir's meaning.<sup>5</sup>

From a translation studies perspective, this history of the text's journey into English poses a particularly thorny problem because Parshley's 1953 translation, now widely understood to be problematic in some ways, functioned as a relay text for some translations into other languages.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, even when translations were made on the basis of the French source text, in some cases these translations emerged after many years had elapsed since publication of Beauvoir's essay in 1949, rendering the cultural and historical context that framed her arguments foreign even to her compatriots.<sup>7</sup> In other cases where translations were swiftly published, these were later found to be problematic in various ways, due to mistranslations or cultural framing that obscured the intent of Beauvoir's original work.

The text's complicated journey into other linguistic and cultural environments has compounded the challenge of understanding what readers of these languages gleaned from Beauvoir's philosophy, and carries potentially massive consequences for the development of feminist thought in those areas of the world. Yet to date these issues have been largely neglected, both within the field of translation studies and in scholarship on Beauvoir's thought by philosophers and specialists in feminist theory and gender studies.<sup>8</sup> This volume attempts to fill some of the gaps in our knowledge of how *Le Deuxième Sexe* has been rendered into languages worldwide, what impact (if any) the problematic English-language translations have had on the reception of the text, and how other local circumstances such as linguistic features of the target language or cultural and translation norms have affected readers' engagement with Beauvoir's philosophy. Indeed, we would argue that one cannot meaningfully chart the impact of the text on global feminisms without serious consideration of the pivotal role translation plays.

In compiling this volume, we were guided by the following objectives:

- (1) To explore specific challenges and opportunities presented by various target languages in translation of Beauvoir's philosophy.
- (2) To illuminate the way diverse cultural and historical conditions have made aspects of Beauvoir's thought more or less legible, depending on context.
- (3) To uncover and explicate global patterns in reception of Beauvoir's vision of liberation for women.



- (4) To investigate Beauvoir's role (or lack thereof) in setting an agenda and vocabulary for feminist thought and activism worldwide.
- (5) To examine shifts in appreciation (or criticism) of Beauvoir's work over time as new facets of her philosophy have come to light.

### Organization of this Volume

In weighing the transformative potential of translation as a method of information transfer, we must obviously consider aspects of the translation process itself—not merely the sum of individual translation choices by a specific agent of translation, but also the institutional factors governing publication and marketing of the text to readers. Publishers' practical and financial considerations weigh heavily in any assessment of how or whether a text is abridged, how readership is envisioned and how the text is promoted to readers to entice them to purchase the text, for example through paratextual materials (e.g. prefaces and footnoting to ease comprehension, in addition to physical features of the text such as cover design) as well as epitextual aspects of the text (advertising, reviews of the work, etc.). But we must also consider the world outside the text, which frames the way readers interpret its significance and relevance for their own lives, often in unconscious or non-obvious ways. Cultural and historical context of the target culture shapes the way texts are (mis- or re-)interpreted, meaning that some aspects of the text may remain incomprehensible to readers while others seem rich with meaning, whether or not that meaning was intended by the author or translator. The impact of censorship, whether imposed by external authorities such as government or religious agencies, or self-imposed by translators or publishers to evade book bans or public censure, looms large over the process of rendering any text in another language, but especially when it has the potential to transform cultural common sense about deeply cherished values such as gender norms. All of these factors have influenced the impact of Beauvoir's philosophical treatise on women and feminism as it has traveled around the globe, in some cases creating revolutionary change in the understanding of the significance of sex (or what we would today refer to as gender) in shaping the capacity of individuals to assert themselves against cultural and societal environments that seek to restrict their range of opportunities for agency. In other cases, the transformative potential of *Le Deuxième Sexe* has been blunted or effaced entirely, as intra- or extra-textual aspects of the translation process have contained or distorted the intent of the source text. Any understanding of the impact of Beauvoir's philosophy must therefore take all of the above into account.

Thus, the present volume is divided into three sections, each of which is devoted to examination of one aspect of the process of information transfer outlined above. Part I, titled "Framing Beauvoir," considers both the external socio-political contexts that frame the translated texts and their material paratexts, encompassing not only advertising strategies

per se, but also aspects of the translation process that influence how readers interpret her work, and the way target audiences are envisioned and interpellated by the translation itself. Part II, “(Mis)interpreting Beauvoir,” covers the way philosophical and ideological considerations of various target cultures have shaped the translation and reception of her text, for example through (self-)censorship, banning, or public censure, anticipated or actual. Finally, Part III attempts to gauge the role translation has played in establishing “Beauvoir’s Legacy for Philosophy and Feminisms Worldwide,” outlining the ways her landmark work has succeeded or failed to shape important conversations about women and gender that have taken place subsequent to its initial publication in 1949 in France.

### **Part I: Framing *Le Deuxième Sexe*: Contexts, Paratexts, and Practice**

In Part I, each of the three chapters, in their examinations of contexts, paratexts, and translatorial practice, respectively, probe the ways in which translation shapes the reader’s encounter with Beauvoir’s text. We begin with Zhongli Yu’s chapter, which considers the socio-political context of 1980s China in which three of the existing eight Chinese translations of Beauvoir’s text were published. Via the theoretical lens of Edwin Gentzler’s “post-translation studies” (2017), Yu’s chapter explores these three early translations with specific attention to why these versions of the text were retitled so as to foreground the term “woman” or “female,” as opposed to the “second sex” of Beauvoir’s original usage. She does so by examining what Gentzler (2017) terms the “pre-translation culture” and the “post-translation effects” of these texts against the historical situation of Chinese women in the 1980s. This decade was marked by China’s Reform and Opening Up policy, when Chinese society was hungry for intellectual sustenance from the West, and Chinese women were eager to reconnect with the lived realities of women’s situation, following the curtailment of intellectual thought and the effacement of gender differences during the Cultural Revolution. Yu finds that the translators’ titular interventions are in direct response to this pre-translation cultural context and reflect a collective desire to refocus on the specificities of women’s lived experience. Her study of the post-translation effects, namely the subsequent upsurge in academic interest in women’s studies, and the gynocentric genealogy that Beauvoir’s text inspired in Chinese women’s writing, further attests to the continued relevance of Beauvoirian thought.

In the second chapter, Hala G. Sami takes us to the Arab-speaking world, to explore how Beauvoir’s text has been framed in different socio-temporal moments by comparing three translations of *Le Deuxième Sexe* into Arabic—an earlier, greatly abridged translation (anonymous and undated) and two more complete translations published in 2015. Specifically, Sami is concerned with the paratextual framing of these

texts and how these extratextual elements have inflected the Arabic reader's encounter with Beauvoir. She considers both the peritexts—in this case, cover designs, titles, biographical notes, and translators' notes, for each volume, along with epitexts—including the way the book has been marketed and reviewed. Guided by Gérard Genette's call to locate the paratext's "illocutionary message" (1997, 1), Sami uncovers how the changing paratexts reflect the evolving interest, particularly on the translators' part, in making Beauvoir's text accessible to the Arab reader. Via her appraisal of the paratexts elaborated by individuals directly concerned with the marketing of the text (such as editors and publishers), Sami examines how these paratextual elements often thwart efforts to render Beauvoir's text accessible by incorrectly presenting it either as a guide to conjugal and familial life or as a work of fiction. Sami also paints a nuanced picture of the tensions between tradition and modernity in the Arab world, which temper these different paratextual frames.

The final chapter in Part I comes from María Luisa Rodríguez Muñoz, who explores the pivotal role that a translator plays in framing Beauvoir's text, in this case for the Spanish reader. Rodríguez's chapter adopts a traductological perspective to explore the elaboration of the first Castilian Spanish translation of *Le Deuxième Sexe*, published in 1998. Drawing upon an interview and conversations she held with the translator, Alicia Martorell, Rodríguez exposes the methodological approaches adopted by the translator and, in particular, studies the translator's own material practices (the elaboration of notes, taxonomies, parallel readings, and ontological mapping) used in her translation process. Rodríguez compares Martorell's translation with the previous Spanish translation by Pablo Palant, published in Argentina in 1954. She looks specifically at how different syntactical and verbal/modal renderings impact its articulation of Beauvoir's philosophical standpoint, as well as her conceptualizations of gendered being. Compared with Martorell's translation, Rodríguez attributes the deficiencies she detects in Palant's to the dominant translation norms of his time, his lack of access to secondary sources, and level of linguistic and philosophical competency. Her close study of their differing translatorial approaches is revelatory of the power translators hold in shaping readers' understanding of Beauvoir's seminal text.

## **Part II: (Mis)interpreting Beauvoir: Philosophical and Ideological Framing of the Text**

The authors of the four chapters in this part of the volume all consider how different cultural and historical factors have affected the legibility of the text in various global locales. They explore how dominant ideologies, religious doctrines, and political institutions influence the translation process and often manifest in different forms of censorship—be it the "external constraint on what we can publish or (re) write" or forms of self-censorship, namely "an individual ethical struggle between self

and context” (Santaemilia 2008, 221–222). We open Part II with a jointly authored chapter from Ursula Hurley and Szilvia Naray-Davey, who explore *Le Deuxième Sexe*’s translational journey to Hungary. The authors examine the mismatch between the lived experience of women in the socialist context of Hungary at the time the Hungarian translation was published in 1969 and the status of women in Beauvoir’s source cultural context. Under “Goulash Socialism,” feminism was derided as a precept of the Western bourgeoisie and therefore irrelevant to socialist concerns, which explains the relatively tepid interest in *Le Deuxième Sexe* in spite of the prevailing atmosphere of sexism that permeated Hungarian society at the time. Hurley and Naray-Davey expose how this political landscape shaped Beauvoir’s text, with various mistranslations, omissions, and cuts made in order to make the translation conform to the dominant socialist agenda. Furthermore, although Hurley and Naray-Davey find the grammatically genderless character of the Hungarian language to be an asset in translating *Le Deuxième Sexe*, they observe that the translators unfortunately opted to reassert the primacy of the heterosexual masculine subject position and omit passages that challenge this position, undercutting the egalitarian potential of grammatically genderless language and distorting Beauvoir’s philosophical intentions, particularly in passages that relate to reproduction, marriage, and homosexuality. The authors conclude that just as the prevalent cultural and political conditions in Hungary made aspects of Beauvoir’s thought less legible at the time the translation was published, so too does the current political climate dominated by right-wing Christian conservatism and repressive gender politics mean that a new translation of Beauvoir’s text is required to highlight her relevance for contemporary Hungarian readers.

The influential dynamics of socialism are also under scrutiny in the following chapter by Weronika Szwebs, who unearths the impact of the national Censorship Office’s intervention in the Polish translation of *Le Deuxième Sexe* in 1972 through her presentation of the text’s complex editorial history. Published in what was known at the time as the Polish People’s Republic (1947–1989), which was declaratively socialist and influenced and controlled by the USSR, this ideological context definitively shaped the translation of Beauvoir’s essay, both through censorship of passages critical of socialism or of the USSR, and through translation choices and paratextual materials that downplayed or undercut the feminist potential of the text. From her archival research, Szwebs is able to draw certain conclusions concerning the censors’ attitude towards three important aspects of *Le Deuxième Sexe*, namely, its favorable view of socialism, its feminist message, and the existentialist background of the text. As the author underlines, Beauvoir’s sympathetic view of socialism proved a key motivator in the publication of the Polish translation. Beauvoir’s excoriation of the status of women in contemporary France was congenial to Soviet-era censors, who interpreted this as criticism of

the very capitalist and bourgeois values that socialism sought to overcome. They were therefore able to find relevance in the text for Polish readers for its propaganda value, even as they presumed that many of the problems she outlined had been resolved by socialist institutions. Meanwhile her existentialism was simply accepted as a characteristic philosophical stance adopted by French intellectual socialist sympathizers.

The role of censorship and ideology is also taken up by Isabelle Mehawej in her analysis of the Arabic translations of Beauvoir's text. In spite of many extant translations of *Le Deuxième Sexe*, the text has been heavily redacted in deference to cultural norms. Mehawej argues that because feminism is a sensitive topic in Arab culture, which retains deep-seated patriarchal values and traditions, these versions of Beauvoir's magnum opus employ cuts, mistranslations, and euphemisms or sexist language that efface the feminist implications of her philosophy. This is particularly the case in the chapter on "The Lesbian," which Mehawej refers to as "The Forbidden Chapter" because of the controversial nature of its topic in Arab cultures, which subordinate female sexuality to male desires. Mehawej finds that out of concern for these sensitivities, large portions of the chapter have been cut in the various Arabic translations. Furthermore, there are many Arabic versions of the text in circulation, some of which are unacknowledged reprints of other versions with only minor modifications, creating additional confusion regarding the arguments of the source text. Mehawej therefore concludes that *Le Deuxième Sexe* was not translated into Arabic per se; rather, she considers these versions to be rewritten adaptations that conform to the norms of Arab culture.

In the final chapter in this section, Pilar Godayol presents an interesting example of how both political and religious ideologies have converged in the censorship and even outright ban of Beauvoir's work. Godayol documents the case of Spain under the dictatorship of Francisco Franco. Here access to Beauvoir's text was officially blocked by a long-standing ban of *Le Deuxième Sexe* because of its author's vocal opposition to the Francoist regime. Godayol investigates how deeply involved representatives of the Catholic Church were in the process of reviewing and censoring material to be translated. Many of the objections raised to the text as justification for banning it were thus in line with Church doctrine, particularly in relation to the Church's stance on women's reproductive health and female sexuality. As a result, permission to translate the text into peninsular Spanish was not obtained until after censorship laws were relaxed in 1966, meaning that it wasn't until 1968 that *Le Deuxième Sexe* appeared legally for the first time in Spain, in Catalan translation. The author finds that in spite of being banned by the Church and censored by the Francoist dictatorship, *Le Deuxième Sexe* was crucial for the sustenance of left-wing intellectuals opposed to the regime and a stimulus for the feminist discourses emerging in Spain in the 1960s.

### Part III: Impact: Beauvoir's Legacy for Philosophy and Feminisms Worldwide

Part III offers four chapters that seek to understand the role that translation has played in shaping the impact of *Le Deuxième Sexe* on subsequent generations of feminist theory and philosophical thought. We begin with Ellie Anderson's exploration of the way the two English translations of the text (1953 and 2009) have framed understanding of Beauvoir's views on love and marriage. Anderson discovers problems with both translations in this regard, noting that each struggles in some ways to convey the philosophical complexity of the text, while highlighting the difficulties posed by aspects of the French language itself and the rhythmic qualities specific to Beauvoir's style of writing that make the translator's job exceedingly difficult. Specifically, she notes that while the 2009 translation generally does a better job of preserving the philosophical significance and content of the text than Parshley's 1953 version, Borde and Malovany-Chevallier misread Beauvoir's critique of marriage, making intrinsic problems with the structure of marriage appear as if they are temporary or individual issues. While the 1953 translation more accurately conveys Beauvoir's condemnation of marriage in this respect, neither is able to capture the rhythmic quality of the source text, which evokes Beauvoir's philosophy of ambiguity and reciprocity on the level of linguistic structure. As a result, both translations have the effect of blunting the impact of her critique of marriage as an institution, rendering this aspect of her argument opaque for readers dependent on the English-language translations.

In a similar vein, Pauline Henry-Tierney explores how retractions are often no less encumbered by their own set of translation complexities than first translations. Henry-Tierney argues against translation theorist Antoine Berman's (1990) "retranslation hypothesis"—a theory predicated upon the notion of deficiency and the decay of initial translations, as well as the supposition of the teleological improvement of subsequent retractions. In this chapter she examines the rendering into English of Beauvoir's articulations of the existentialist concept of bad faith in relation to women in her chapters on the Woman Narcissist, the Woman in Love, and the Female Mystic. Comparing the 1953 translation and the 2009 retranslation, she observes that both translations have their strengths and weaknesses. While Parshley's translation does not fully capture the sophistication of Beauvoir's philosophical flair, he is attuned to the gendered social inequalities Beauvoir denounces. Similarly, while Borde and Malovany-Chevallier strive for philosophical accuracy, they do so at the expense of idiomaticity, producing an overly literal translation. Moving away from Berman's hypothesis, Henry-Tierney advocates for adopting a feminist translation ethics of generativity, a theoretical perspective that celebrates heterogeneity and foregrounds the importance of translation as a moment of dialogic encounter between translator and text. She contends that these moments serve as the point of reference

when considering the role translation plays in shaping Beauvoir's philosophical legacy.

Next we move to Japan, where *Le Deuxième Sexe* has also been translated twice—first in 1953, by a male translator, soon after its publication in French, and then again in 1997 by a committee of feminist scholars to correct perceived errors in the earlier translation. In her chapter, Julia C. Bullock suggests that temporal considerations may play as much of a role as linguistic problems in determining the extent of Beauvoir's influence on Japanese feminism. She notes that while readers of the initial Japanese translation in the 1950s and early 1960s found it compelling and inspirational, by the 1970s the same text provoked criticism and rejection not because the text itself had changed, but because the context surrounding it had shifted, specifically with regard to feminist discourse and objectives. The increasing perception of the text as “dated” then prompted a new translation that was conducted with this changed landscape in mind, and Bullock finds that it successfully prompted a new appreciation of Beauvoir's relevance for Japanese feminism at the turn of the last century. Bullock counters that while overall the second translation has had the salient effect of demonstrating Beauvoir's renewed relevance for Japanese women, thus heightening its impact on feminist discourse, the 1997 translators' explicitly activist desire to be “faithful” to the source text also led them to “clarify” points they found ambiguous in Beauvoir's writing, such as linguistic distinctions between gender and sex that her prose did not make. This has the potential to distort understanding of the source text and possibly overstate or create confusion about Beauvoir's actual contributions to feminist discourse.

Like Bullock, Penelope Deutscher also grapples with the temporal chasm between the historical moment when *Le Deuxième Sexe* was published and contemporary feminist discourse, which has evolved significantly since the late 1940s when Beauvoir wrote her landmark essay. In the closing chapter to Part III, Deutscher explores various ways that interpretation of Beauvoir's text has been complicated by the problem of “untranslatability,” understood not as the impossibility of translation per se, but rather as an always unresolved process of resignification that highlights a productive tension between philosophical ideas and the language used to render them. Deutscher returns our attention to the conceptual landscape that shaped Beauvoir's own understanding of the world, and highlights ways that subsequent shifts in value systems may render some of her claims opaque or problematic in hindsight. For example, Beauvoir's frequent use of parallels between discrimination against Black Americans and the situation of women under patriarchy may strike many readers as deeply problematic today. Thus, while Beauvoir herself may have seen these two concepts as mutually “translatable,” it may be difficult for contemporary readers to follow or agree with her logic. Deutscher concludes that while Beauvoir herself seemed to lack awareness of the significance of translation in conceptual terms, her work nevertheless



provokes exploration of the ways that translation (like philosophy) can and ought to make us *more*, not less aware, of the complexity of the conceptual, experiential, and linguistic networks in which we are always embedded.

We close the volume with the Epilogue: Translating Key Concepts in *Le Deuxième Sexe*: A Crosslinguistic Discussion. Edited by Julia C. Bullock and Pauline Henry-Tierney, this epilogue captures a crosslinguistic discussion held on October 27, 2019 comprising approximately a dozen scholars from a diverse array of fields, ranging from translation studies to literature, philosophy, and gender and sexuality studies. Participants met to discuss how specific key concepts in *Le Deuxième Sexe* have been translated, spanning a range of languages and cultures, which ultimately extended from Europe (French, English, Polish) to Asia (Japanese) and the Middle East (Arabic). Each speaker was asked to comment on how four key terms in Beauvoirian existentialist and phenomenological philosophy (*situation* [situation], *devenir* [to become], *femme* [woman], and *sexe* [sex]) have been rendered into the languages in which they are expert. Conversation focused around specific passages determined in advance by the organizers. Participants were asked to comment on the particular linguistic or conceptual challenges of translating these terms, and whether the translation choices made in each case alter Beauvoir's philosophical claims. Because Beauvoir's text has, in some cases, appeared in multiple translations per language, the discussants were also able to make tentative conclusions about how translation norms have changed over time within each language, as well as how specific socio-cultural factors influenced translation choices. This epilogue draws together the significant conclusions that arose from these discussions, which fall into three broad categories: the linguistic structures that convey or obfuscate women's agency, the dominant translation norms for rendering philosophical terms, and the cultural connotations of words related to sex and reproduction. Discussions around these three principal themes informed our understanding of the transnational flows, both past and present, of Beauvoir's philosophy and influence on feminist genealogies of knowledge.

## Notes

- 1 For a discussion of the controversy surrounding translation of Beauvoir's "famous sentence," see Bonnie Mann (2017).
- 2 One of the most major proponents of reading Beauvoir as a socio-constructivist is Judith Butler, whose own theory of gender performativity finds its genesis in the ideas set out by Beauvoir in *Le Deuxième Sexe*. See Butler (1986, 1990) and Sara Heinämaa (1999).
- 3 See for example, Sara Heinämaa (1995); Debra B. Bergoffen (1997), and Eva Gothlin (2001), who all explore the centrality of phenomenology to Beauvoir's philosophical position.

- 4 In their Translators' note, Borde and Malovany-Chevallier (2009, xxi) explicitly reference the translation issues surrounding Parshley's version, and explain how their own translation rectifies such deficiencies. They state, "It is generally agreed that one of the most serious absences in the first translation was Simone de Beauvoir the philosopher ... We were keenly aware of the need to put the philosopher back in her text. To transpose her philosophical style and voice into English was the most crucial task we faced" (2009, xxiii).
- 5 One of the sharpest critiques came from Toril Moi (2010), who, in her review of the retranslation for the *London Review of Books*, states, "the obsessive literalism and countless errors make it no more reliable, and far less readable than Parshley." Similar criticism regarding the rendering of grammatical and syntactical structures, as well as the haphazard treatment of intertextuality, have been raised by Nancy Bauer (2017) and Marlène Bichet (2017).
- 6 For example, this was the case with the early Chinese translations of the text. See Zhongli Yu (2011, 2015, and this volume); Nicki Haiping Liu (2016). The same goes for the early Arabic translations. In some cases, such as the first Finnish translation, the relay translation was not Parshley's English translation, instead it was the Swedish translation, see Erika Ruonakoski (2017).
- 7 In some cases, the first translation of *Le Deuxième Sexe* into certain languages did not appear until well into the twenty-first century (such as the first translations into Slovenian, Albanian, and Galician). For a table charting these translation trajectories see Ayşenaz Postalcioglu (2016).
- 8 Of the scholarship on the translations of the text that does exist, it tends to appear in isolated pockets. The overwhelming majority so far has focused on the English translations, but individual scholarship into various aspects of the linguistic and/or paratextual translation, as well as the reception of the translated text, exist in relation to the text's transnational trajectory into Chinese, Japanese, Arabic, as well as various European languages (for a comprehensive overview of these works, see the Editor's Introduction in Chaperon and Rouch 2020). Efforts to map the transnational flows of Beauvoir's magnum opus and put scholars into dialogue with one another have only resulted in two collections thus far. Mann and Ferrari's (2017) volume focuses more specifically on the translation of Beauvoir's axiom and, beyond the discussion of the English translations, only engages with the text's translation into German, Serbo-Croatian, and Finnish. The second, the recent special issue of *Simone de Beauvoir Studies*, edited by Sylvie Chaperon and Marine Rouch (2020), emphasizes the reception of the text in different geographic locales, bringing together scholars looking at the examples of Mexico, Bolivia, Czechoslovakia, and Iran.

## References

- Bauer, Nancy. 2017. "Simone de Beauvoir: *The Second Sex*, Review of the New Translation," in Bonnie Mann and Martina Ferrari (eds.), "*On ne naît pas femme: on le devient*": *The Life of a Sentence*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 115–125.
- Beauvoir, Simone de. [1949] 1976. *Le Deuxième Sexe*, vol. I: *Les Faits et les mythes*; vol. II: *L'Expérience vécue*. Paris: Gallimard.

12 *Julia C. Bullock and Pauline Henry-Tierney*

- Beauvoir, Simone de. 1953. *The Second Sex*. Translated by H. M. Parshley. New York: Knopf.
- Beauvoir, Simone de. 2009. *The Second Sex*. Translated by Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier. London: Jonathan Cape.
- Bergoffen, Debra B. 1997. *The Philosophy of Simone de Beauvoir: Gendered Phenomenologies, Erotic Generosities*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Berman, Antoine. 1990. "La Retraduction comme espace de traduction." *Palimpsestes*, 13(4), 1–7.
- Bichet, Marlène. 2017. "The Treatment of Intertextuality in Translation Studies: A Case Study with the 2009 English Translation of Simone de Beauvoir's *Le Deuxième Sexe*." *New Voices in Translation Studies*, 17, 1–30.
- Borde, Constance and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier. 2009. "Translators' Note," in Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*. London: Jonathan Cape, xxi–xxv.
- Butler, Judith. 1986. "Sex and Gender in Simone de Beauvoir's *Second Sex*." *Yale French Studies*, 72, 35–49.
- Butler, Judith. 1990. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge.
- Chaperon, Sylvie and Marine Rouch (eds.). 2020. "Reading and Translating *The Second Sex* Globally / Traduire et lire *Le Deuxième Sexe* à l'échelle globale." *Simone de Beauvoir Studies*, 31(2), 173–363.
- Fallaize, Elizabeth. 2002. "The Housewife's Destiny: Translating Simone de Beauvoir's 'The Married Woman'," in Christine Delphy and Sylvie Chaperon (eds.), *Cinquanteenaire du Deuxième Sexe*. Paris: Syllepse, 468–474.
- Genette, Gérard. 1997. *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*. Translated by Jane E. Lewin. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gentzler, Edwin. 2017. *Translation and Rewriting in the Age of Post-Translation Studies*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Gothlin, Eva. 2001. "Simone de Beauvoir's Existential Phenomenology and Philosophy of History in *Le deuxième sexe*," in Wendy O'Brien and Lester Embree (eds.), *The Existential Phenomenology of Simone de Beauvoir*. Contributions to Phenomenology (43). Springer: Dordrecht, 41–51.
- Heinämaa, Sara. 1995. *Toward a Phenomenology of Sexual Difference: Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Beauvoir*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Heinämaa, Sara. 1999. "Simone de Beauvoir's Phenomenology of Sexual Difference." *Hypatia*, 14(4), 114–132.
- Liu, Haiping (Nicki). 2016. "Manipulating Simone De Beauvoir: A Study of Chinese Translations of *The Second Sex*," in Luise von Flotow and Farzaneh Farahazad (eds.), *Translating Women: Different Voices and New Horizons*. New York and Abington: Routledge, 174–186.
- Mann, Bonnie and Martina Ferrari (eds.). 2017. "*On ne naît pas femme: on le devient*": *The Life of a Sentence*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mann, Bonnie. 2017. "Introduction," in Bonnie Mann and Martina Ferrari (eds.), "*On ne naît pas femme: on le devient*": *The Life of a Sentence*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1–5.
- Moi, Toril. 1994. *Simone De Beauvoir: The Making of an Intellectual Woman*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Moi, Toril. 2002. "While We Wait: The English Translation of *The Second Sex*." *Signs*, 27(4), 1005–1035.
- Moi, Toril. 2010. "The Adulteress Wife." *London Review of Books*, 32(3), 3–6.

- Postalcioglu, Ayşenaz. 2016. "Simone de Beauvoir in Turkey: (Her)Story of a Translational Journey." PhD diss., Universitat Rovira i Virgili.
- Ruonakoski, Erka. 2017. "Retranslating *The Second Sex* into Finnish: Choices, Practices, and Ideas," in Bonnie Mann and Martina Ferrari (eds.), "*On ne naît pas femme: on le devient*": *The Life of a Sentence*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 332–354.
- Santaemilia, José. 2008. "The Translation of Sex-Related Language: The Danger(s) of Self-Censorship(s)." *TTR*, 21(2), 221–252.
- Simons, Margaret A. 1983. "The Silencing of Simone de Beauvoir: Guess What's Missing from *The Second Sex*." *Women's Studies International Forum*, 6(5), 559–564.
- Yu, Zhongli. 2011. "Gender in Translating Lesbianism in *The Second Sex*," in José Santaemilia and Luise von Flotow (eds.), *Women and Translation: Geographies, Voices and Identities*. *MonTI*, 3, 421–445.
- Yu, Zhongli. 2015. *Translating Feminism in China: Gender, Sexuality, and Censorship*. London and New York: Routledge.



**Taylor & Francis**

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>