

Exploring the translation of feminist philosophy:  
Simone de Beauvoir's *Le Deuxième Sexe*

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## Abstract

The thesis explores the second English translation of Simone de Beauvoir's *Le Deuxième Sexe*, with the objective to contribute to bridging the gap between Gender Studies and Translation Studies. My contention is that foreignization, often presented in the literature as a more ethical approach to translation (see Venuti for instance), is not necessarily the most adequate translation strategy to render texts of feminist philosophy. Therefore, the main research question which the thesis investigates is the extent to which translation can help or otherwise impede on the reception of feminist philosophy.

The study is specifically based on the case study of Simone de Beauvoir's *Le Deuxième Sexe*, which was first translated into English in 1953, then retranslated in 2009. De Beauvoir's magnum opus is a model of feminist philosophy and widely influenced the field, so that having an accurate English translation of her work is critical. The case study analyses the translation of some key features of the text, such as core Existential terminology, along with gender-related terms, as well as the treatment of intertextuality in the latest English translation. It also describes the overall translators' project as presented through paratext, arguing that a domestication approach can be a beneficial approach to translate feminist philosophy.

Chapter One will present introductory background information on Simone de Beauvoir's work in *Le Deuxième Sexe*, namely the main ideas developed in the book, as well as an overview of the story of the first English translation, and its reception. Dealing with reception will lead us to question the notion of reception in Literary Studies and Translation Studies and the central role of the translator in Chapter Two, which will be narrowed down to faithfulness, a prevalent if somewhat contested notion in translation criticism, in Chapter Three. Chapter Four will examine the latest English translation, before sketching the frameworks of Contrastive Linguistics and Intertextuality in Chapter Five. Finally, Chapter Six will concentrate on the data analysis through a systematic comparison of relevant categories. This chapter findings will lead us to put forward comments and proposed strategies to deal with feminist and philosophical translation.

## INTRODUCTION

“I can hear the roar of women’s silence.” (Thomas Sankara)

The silencing and disparaging of women is a reality described and denounced by Simone de Beauvoir in her groundbreaking *Le Deuxième Sexe* (*The Second Sex*). In 1949, the author published a book analysing the condition of women in society, presenting a detailed study of the so-called weaker sex through the lenses of biology, history, psychology, sociology, literature, and philosophy. The book created a scandal due to its explicit, sometimes coarse, content, but it also contributed to raise an awareness that women were effectively treated as second-class citizens, and that inequality between the sexes did not inevitably stem from biological differences, but could result from socially constructed roles.

Following de Beauvoir’s opinion that the ‘lived experience’ is key, and inspired by her detailed narratives about women and their concrete situation (which she puts forth in *Le Deuxième Sexe*, but also through her numerous novels, essays, and most notably, autobiographies), I would like to begin this study by a personal anecdote which gave me a sense of de Beauvoir’s reception in today’s English-speaking sphere. Taking part in a reading group on *The Second Sex* at the University of Manchester in May 2014, I heard some fellow participants describe de Beauvoir as an aggressive author, and object that her text was difficult to grasp, which made me question the quality of the English translation, and also reflect on the impact the translation had on the reception of *The Second Sex*. Indeed, the book is a difficult read in French too, but the way the translation was rendered into English accentuates its complexity, and thus affects the way de Beauvoir is perceived.

Although de Beauvoir’s work has been, and still is, extensively studied (see for instance Nancy Bauer 2001, Ursula Tidd 2004, Debbie Evans 2009, Michèle Le Doeuff 2009, Ingrid Galster 2013), there is more research to be done about the translations of *Le Deuxième Sexe* into other languages. Previous critiques are still paramount and one can only be grateful that scholars such as Margaret Simons (1983) or Toril Moi (2002) revealed several issues present in the first English translation of *Le Deuxième Sexe*, such as abridgments and mistranslation of philosophical terms. However, Beauvoir scholars, and not Translation Studies scholars, unearthed those very translation issues, and, still, I contend that the translation of *Le Deuxième*

Sexe can be of interest to Translation Studies precisely as a translation and can help towards a critical reappraisal of a number of theorizations of translation.

The first English translation of *Le Deuxième Sexe* was published in 1953 in the United States and was carried out by a zoology professor, H.M. Parshley. The latter was specialised, neither in translation, nor in philosophy, which proved problematic, as we will see in a later discussion, and, furthermore, the publishing house (Knopf) who commissioned the translation, seemed to have mostly considered reducing the costs and increasing the prospective readership, as is shown by the numerous departures from the original. Indeed, the original French book was considerably abridged, and the many truncations gave the readers a 'simplified' (although in reality a rather confusing) version of de Beauvoir's treatise. These cuts were identified by scholars working on de Beauvoir in the 1980s onward, which finally exposed the distortion which the philosopher's work went through. Both the cuts and the mistranslation of philosophical terms and concepts were sound reasons for scholars to call for a new translation, which was eventually released in 2009. However, the two translators chosen for the task, Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier, were neither professional translators, nor specialised in philosophy, a situation which is highly reminiscent of the first English translation, and led to a similar result: Beauvoir scholars deplore the way de Beauvoir and her theory are depicted, but for other reasons. The latest version of *The Second Sex* is very literal, which means that the translators opted for a close rendering of the original French text—in terms of vocabulary, syntax, tense usage, for instance—with the aim to 'say what Simone de Beauvoir said as close to the way she said it' (Translators' Note, loc. 295). In more recent translation studies discussions, that translation approach adopted by the two translators is often described as 'foreignization', which means maintaining foreign elements from the original source text in the target text. The latter results in a translation which 'move[s] the reader toward the author' (Schleiermacher in Lefevere 1977: 78), and that strategy has been highly promoted in Translation Studies, its most famous proponent being the American scholar Lawrence Venuti, for whom foreignization 'challenges the dominant aesthetics' (Venuti 1995: 18-22) and, therefore, should prevail, as will be discussed in the present study.

The latest translation of *Le Deuxième Sexe* gives us an excellent opportunity to explore the specialised translation of feminist, and philosophical, texts, with the aim to contribute to existing critical discourse on translation, so as to develop and promote strategies to render feminist philosophy. There is, in itself, much at stake in translating de Beauvoir's book because,

by bringing awareness to the situation of women, it promotes concrete actions (*The Second Sex* inspired feminist activists and theorists, such as Betty Friedan and Kate Millett, as will be explained in Chapter One) in favour of equality between the sexes. I contend, however, that its profound philosophical content, pervasive to de Beauvoir's discussion of women, imparts Existentialism to the readers without them necessarily being aware of it. Just like Existentialist novels by Albert Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, *Le Deuxième Sexe* instills philosophical knowledge through literary considerations (for instance quotations from novels, letters, poems, etc.), which gives even more weight to the necessity of providing readers with an accessible and precise English translation.

My overall research project was triggered by a 2010 review by Toril Moi, published in the *London Review of Books*. Toril Moi harshly critiques the second and latest English translation of *Le Deuxième Sexe*. Throughout her report, the author condemns the translation for its extreme literalism and she lists what she argues to be 'three fundamental and pervasive problems' related to the selected terminology, the syntax, and tense usage. Her informative review is, however, produced without engaging with a Translation Studies perspective, which reveals a gap between disciplines which needs to be filled. Indeed, the question of translation is alluded to by Beauvoir scholars, but they do not tend to use translation theory frameworks. Nonetheless, their knowledge and thorough analysis of de Beauvoir's work and theories would make an association between Beauvoir Studies and Translation Studies particularly useful, as it would open Beauvoir specialists to the particular challenges of translation while helping to improve the translation of de Beauvoir's works.

Taking on Moi's comments from a translation studies perspective, I aim to show that *The Second Sex* is foreignized, and how that foreignization misrepresents de Beauvoir and her feminist philosophy. From that, I will contend that a foreignizing strategy is not best suited for philosophy (and feminist philosophy), which will itself lead to a discussion of possible approaches to further translation of feminist philosophy. Thus, my main corpus of investigation is the 2009 English translation of *Le Deuxième Sexe* (along with the French text), but the analysis will also focus on the translators' goals and the translation project, as well as the translation's reception, and, to some extent, the first English translation.

We will first need to introduce *Le Deuxième Sexe* in more detail, so as to characterise this magnum opus. I argue that it is indeed a feminist and philosophical treatise, so the thesis

will be framed by the discourse on the translation of philosophy (and especially, feminist philosophy), using *The Second Sex* as a case-study.

The objective is twofold: to analyze translation approaches to the translation of philosophy, and to help bridge the gap between Beauvoir Studies and Translation Studies. My overall hypothesis is that domestication, based on an interpretative approach, is to be preferred to a foreignizing strategy when translating philosophy, because domestication can, paradoxically, ensure more faithfulness than foreignization, and the latter is not appropriate for all genres. In addition, translators' political involvement (such as feminism) can be demonstrated by trying to reach the widest possible readership, which thus promotes the original book. Their feminist agenda can also be promoted by trying to improve the reception of the author and her book through a clear and readable translation.

Feminist translation strategies have mainly focused on a textual approach and tools used to tackle the translation from a linguistic point of view, such as achieving gender neutrality when it is not the case in the source text, or 'hijacking' the original so as to lend a feminist intention to the translation, and, in order to reach that political agenda, the translator assumes the right to alter phrases of the source text (Von Flotow 1991: 79). My contention is that a translator can follow a feminist blueprint through different methods, even by appearing self-effacing, rendering for instance a fluent translation which seems domesticated, which goes against the tide of Venuti's call for foreignization. I will argue that favouring a positive reception of de Beauvoir can itself be seen as a feminist strategy of translation: the translators of the first and second versions (Parshley, Borde and Malovany-Chevallier) all declared to empathise with de Beauvoir's text and finding her ideas fascinating. Seeing the translators as 'accomplices' of de Beauvoir, as partisans of her ideas and trying to promote them through the translation, justifies certain translation strategies and echoes the increasing awareness in research of the translator's agency.

The research project raises a number of questions which will be addressed in the thesis, notably, how can one define feminist philosophy? How does the existence of previous renderings have an impact on later translations? What particular challenges does philosophy present for Translation Studies? What is the role of the different agents involved in the translation process? And how can translation help, or, otherwise, impede the reception of philosophical ideas?

The thesis will start with an introduction to *Le Deuxième Sexe*, with the aim to locate de Beauvoir's book in its wider literary and philosophical context and to give an overview of the treatise's interdisciplinarity. In particular, a discussion of philosophy and literature will lead us to analyze *Le Deuxième Sexe*'s philosophical content, and to introduce feminist philosophy. A further section of Chapter One will deal with the first English translation, and, notably, its reception in the English-speaking sphere. The study of the translation's review in the United States, as well as the critiques and reviews it received will help us to reflect on the way translations are erroneously seen as originals. That question will lead us, in Chapter Two, to reflect upon the link between translation and reception, and on the need to interpret when translating. That aspect recalls the translator's agency, but also the need for constant translation and retranslation, in the quest for faithfulness. Faithfulness will be discussed in Chapter Three, where different translation approaches will be examined, introducing the notion of shifts, and exploring the differences between domestication and foreignization. Chapter Four will introduce the latest English translation of *Le Deuxième Sexe*, showing the translators' foreignising approach and analysing the reception which the translation received. It will also present the research method I will draw on to study Borde' and Malovany-Chevallier's translation, which will lead to a discussion of Contrastive Linguistics and Intertextuality in Chapter Five. Finally, in Chapter Six, a meticulous study of different translation approaches will underpin the analysis of the latest English translation of *Le Deuxième Sexe* through examples dealing with lexicology, syntax, and intertextuality. Those instances will illustrate my initial contention that a foreignizing blueprint can distort the source text and be, consequently, detrimental to its reception in the target culture.



## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO *LE DEUXIÈME SEXE* AND ITS FIRST ENGLISH TRANSLATION

### 1. *Le Deuxième Sexe*

#### 1.1. The historical and personal context

##### 1.1.1 De Beauvoir's time and the inception of *Le Deuxième Sexe*

*Le Deuxième Sexe* brings us back to France in the aftermath of WWII. It was written a few years after the Liberation and was published in 1949, at a time when French women had just been given the right to vote (1944), when 'contraception and abortion were not freely available to [them] (Tidd 2004: 67), and when married women had to obtain their husband's permission to go to work<sup>1</sup>. The historical and social context of the book is important insofar as France, although freed, had been humiliated by the war and the Occupation, which has an impact on the definition and significance of 'virility'<sup>2</sup> in the French post-war era. And yet, in spite of that feeling of humiliation, the French were celebrating the victory, and with it, the bravery of military troops, that is to say, men embodying the spirit of virility. Even if women could finally vote, and even though they had played a vital role during wartime, France remained a very patriarchal country. However, this supremacy was not directly obvious, as patriarchy is an insidious process, which is so embedded in the culture that it can go unnoticed. But not so for Simone de Beauvoir, who originally planned on writing a book about herself, and eventually endeavoured to write an extensive study on what it means to be a woman. She considered herself to be a privileged woman, completing degrees which were unavailable to most women at the time, and being free and independent in most aspects of her life. De Beauvoir studied philosophy and passed the prestigious *agrégation*, which meant that she was in a mostly male-dominated environment, and also felt accepted among French intellectuals.

According to Deirdre Bair's biography<sup>3</sup>, de Beauvoir was admitted to Sartre's circle, which was composed of ENS students<sup>4</sup> such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Paul Nizan, and was soon adopted and respected for her bright intelligence (Bair 1990:142-43). De Beauvoir, from her own account, admits that she was advantaged in being admitted to men's circles, while

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<sup>1</sup> That law was only changed in 1965 (Centre d'Information sur les Droits des Femmes et des Familles de l'Allier, available at: [http://www.egalite-allier.fr/article.php3?id\\_article=53](http://www.egalite-allier.fr/article.php3?id_article=53))

<sup>2</sup> Virility will be dealt with in more detail further in the thesis, as it is an important concept in de Beauvoir's work.

<sup>3</sup> which was written in close collaboration with Simone de Beauvoir.

<sup>4</sup> students from the renowned Ecole Normale Supérieure were exclusively male students at that time.



retaining the benefits of being a woman, so that she was not aware of the terrible discrepancy there is in the way men and women were seen and treated by society. We can, however, think about some incidents which happened during her childhood, and which could have made her aware of the injustice faced by women by virtue of being women. For instance, her sharp intelligence was praised in a misogynistic manner by her father, whom she loved and admired dearly as a young girl. Georges Bertrand de Beauvoir was often stating that his daughter had a 'man's brain' and intended this as the utmost compliment he could pay her (Bair ibid.137). However, when the family went bankrupt, the same Bertrand de Beauvoir scornfully told his two daughters that they would have to work, and it was considered a disgrace for women of their social class to do so (Bair ibid.57).

But this obligation became Simone de Beauvoir's chance for emancipation because, otherwise, her destiny would have been marriage and motherhood. De Beauvoir focused instead on her education, with the great success which ensued. She nevertheless needed to take a closer examination on what it concretely entails to be born a boy, or a girl. De Beauvoir suddenly realised that the world has been divided between men and women, and she became aware of the fact that equality between them had not been achieved. In *Force of Circumstance*, de Beauvoir explains that this epiphany led her to conduct some thorough research on the situation of women, and two years of reading and writing led to the publication of her magnum opus (Beauvoir 1963: 196).

### 1.1.2. How to situate de Beauvoir's work

*Le Deuxième Sexe* encompasses reflections on a variety of disciplines, from biology to psychology, to history, and literature. All of those fields of study are drawn upon to show the situation of women through different lenses, with a wide spectrum of investigation. That interdisciplinarity implies that classifying *Le Deuxième Sexe* is not straightforward, so that resorting to the Polysystem Theory is helpful in order to pinpoint de Beauvoir's treatise. The Polysystem Theory was put forward by Itamar Even-Zohar in the late 1970s, and posits that a given literary system consists of a centre and peripheries (Even-Zohar 1979). That theory can be applied to a wide range of purposes, showing for instance the hierarchy between national and international literature, between original and translated texts, or, as is of interest to our present study, the position of men and women's writing in a given literary system. Indeed, polysystems are useful to describe phenomena seen in a variety of contexts, be it political, artistic, or sociological, which opens up new vistas for literature: the latter is now analyzed in terms of how it was produced, promoted and perceived. The polysystem theory also shows that the classification of texts is not fixed, but, on the contrary, changing, and that the status of a given text can be different from one national polysystem to another, and shift across time. Even-Zohar, for instance, names cases where translated literature can have a very central position in a target literary polysystem, while the original literature does not necessarily occupy a central position in its national system, and is instead more peripheral (1990: 46-48). That example is, to some extent, what happened to *Le Deuxième Sexe*, whose success was rekindled in France after the English translation was well-received in the United States, and whose impact on feminism has been greater in the English-speaking sphere than in the French one.

De Beauvoir's treatise does not easily lend itself to classification, because it is literary and philosophical (as will be explained in a further discussion), but also an original French book whose English translation had a tremendous impact on feminism worldwide, and because its author was a woman writer operating in a misogynistic context (that of France after WWII, and particularly in the realm of philosophy). Locating *Le Deuxième Sexe* in the French literary canon, as well as the English translation in the English-speaking literary system is crucial to our research, all the more so as polysystems are dynamic structures, whose hierarchy is bound to change through time, as Even-Zohar explains, "at any given moment, more than one diachronic set is operating on the synchronic axis" (Even-Zohar 2005: 39). *Le Deuxième Sexe*, or more

precisely, *The Second Sex*, has been labelled the ‘feminist bible’<sup>5</sup>, and is established in the feminist canon, but de Beauvoir’s recognition as a philosopher (and, what is more, as an independent theorist in her own right, not merely Sartre’s disciple) is not completely achieved as of yet, as will be discussed in a later section.

## 1.2. An overview of *Le Deuxième Sexe*’s thesis

### 1.2.1. *Le Deuxième Sexe* as an interdisciplinary work

When writing *Le Deuxième Sexe*, de Beauvoir’s well-known diligence first led her to compulsively research and analyze human beings as biological beings. Starting from the general observation that women and men are biologically different<sup>6</sup>, and that the same distinction is to be seen in the animal kingdom, de Beauvoir aims to compare human beings and animals: she deals with a variety of species, but then focuses on mammals because of the greater similarities they share with human beings. She constantly moves from animals to human beings, and in so doing, uses phallogocentric vocabulary to describe animal reproduction, as when she, for instance, says that “by penetrating the egg the male realizes himself as activity. His domination is expressed by the coital position of almost all animals; the male is *on* the female” (*The Second Sex* loc. 930, emphasis in the original). Here de Beauvoir borrows a rather anthropomorphic language when she describes copulation, and she might do so in order to demystify roles of passivity and activity in coitus, perhaps ironically showing that values of superiority and inferiority are not inherent to the animal kingdom, but that they are, instead, arbitrarily superimposed onto human sexuality.

De Beauvoir also meticulously compares female and male physiologies of human beings, without forgetting any aspects of human lived experience: she deals with size, general morphology and muscular force amongst men and women, but also with their respective weight, the functions of their genitals, and their hormonal levels. The author centres her attention on specific events in women’s lives, such as menstruation, or childbirth. Procreation is, according to de Beauvoir, what enslaves animals to their species, but woman is the greatest slave of all. She is ‘the most deeply alienated of all the female mammals’ (*The Second Sex* loc. 1093)

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<sup>5</sup> as in Richard Gillman’s article for the *New York Times*, “The Man Behind the Feminist Bible” (May 22, 1988)

<sup>6</sup> “Males and females are two types of individuals who are differentiated within one species for the purposes of reproduction” (*The Second Sex* loc.651)

because she is aware of her condition and of the impairing burdens which restrain her freedom (such as difficult pregnancies and dangerous childbearing). De Beauvoir, however, moves from that statement about natural species to defining humans as historical beings: human beings are not only biological individuals, but they are part of a society and belonging to their time. That leads the author to conclude that a society does not equate to a species<sup>7</sup>, so biological differences are not enough to explain the inequality existing between men and women. The latter statement induces a brief incursion into psychology, which, although approached with caution by the author<sup>8</sup>, enables her to comment on the subjective dimension of human beings. For instance, human beings add values to everything, so that social prejudices get the upper hand over nature and biological data:

“a society is not a species: the species realizes itself as existence in a society; it transcends itself toward the world and the future; its customs cannot be deduced from biology; individuals are never left to their nature [...] physiology cannot ground values: rather, *biological data take on those values the existent confers on them*” (*The Second Sex*, Borde and Malovany-Chevallier, p.47, my emphasis).

Moreover, humans need to define themselves by internalising their lived situation, and de Beauvoir particularly insists on that point when she emphasizes the fact that the social and economic world determines women’s condition to a great extent. Women feel inferior and powerless in society because they are shaped by external conditions perpetuated in that society, and yet, knowing that state of affairs can lead to a more optimistic outlook: if conditions were different, then women would also feel differently, because their alleged inferiority does not stem from biological differences, but from the concrete lived situation imposed on them. Therefore, de Beauvoir attempts to list the particular conditions faced by women, in view of understanding when the division between the sexes appeared. That explains why the section on History is a notably detailed one, and aims to be as comprehensible as possible. It is a part comprising four chapters and scrutinizing women’s position in society through ancient times (for instance, in ancestral tribes, Ancient Greece, Roman times, as well as ancient Egypt or Babylon), but also the Middle Ages, the French Revolution, the 19th century, and early 20th

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<sup>7</sup> “Enfin une société n’est pas une espèce” (*LDS I:78*)

<sup>8</sup> “Ce n’est pas une entreprise facile que de discuter *la* psychanalyse. Comme toutes les religions — christianisme, marxisme — elle se montre, sur un fond de concepts rigides, d’une souplesse gênante.” (*LDS I:80*)

century. De Beauvoir tries to touch upon most eras and continents, but her analysis is still mostly focused on France. That compelling chapter leads to another fascinating part of *Le Deuxième Sexe*, entitled 'Mythes' (*Myths*), in which de Beauvoir uses examples from literature to convey her point. Literature is de Beauvoir's field of expertise and she explores some authors' work<sup>9</sup> in order to illustrate myths about femininity.

### 1.2.2. A key message

It can be argued that the variety of examples and disciplines dealt with gives de Beauvoir enough authority to defend her argument, namely that women have been considered as an Other, and consequently treated as second-class human beings. She intertwines a plurality of areas of knowledge, so as to reinforce her message and to make her readers aware of the injustice women face. Her book is indeed fascinating because it is encyclopedic and tackles all questions inherent to women's situation, with the knowledge and tools available to the author at the time. After thoroughly presenting her argument and denouncing myths about femininity, de Beauvoir can conclude her study on a more prescriptive note, inviting both men and women to aspire to more equality and solidarity. She justly reminds her readers that "the fact of being a human being is infinitely more important than all the singularities that distinguish human beings" (*The Second Sex* loc. 15279). The book then ends on her call to profoundly change the relationship between men and women, which lends a very optimistic perspective to *Le Deuxième Sexe*.

The author's first intention is to create awareness of a situation which is fixed in mindsets, and she wishes to make her readers understand that situation, which is why the book is so dense with examples and quotations, and consequently why it was so compelling for her readership: many speak of an epiphany<sup>10</sup>. De Beauvoir develops her arguments throughout the book, but I contend that the multiplicity (and diversity) of instances given is the main reason why so many readers felt rightly outraged to discover the injustice inflicted on women through centuries. The gist of de Beauvoir's appeal is for women to strive for independence and freedom, which, according to the author, can only be achieved by work and economic independence. Work is the main means of obtaining independence for women, which was not

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<sup>9</sup> such as Montherlant, D.H. Lawrence, Claudel, Breton and Stendhal.

<sup>10</sup> As French philosopher Elisabeth Badinter puts it, 'reading [*Le Deuxième Sexe*] was like growing wings' (quoted by Catherine Rodgers in Evans 1998: 61)

an obvious observation when de Beauvoir published her book because, in the then traditional French culture, being a housewife was still promoted, and when women were both wives and workers, their wages were considered as a mere complement to the main household's income. De Beauvoir urges women to have an occupation so as to be economically independent, even if they could instead be tempted by the seemingly easier option of getting married and rely on their husbands' financial support. Furthermore, she enjoins women to seek emotional independence too, and to take responsibility for their lives, which gives a powerful and hopeful resonance to *Le Deuxième Sexe*.

### 1.2.3. *Le Deuxième Sexe* as a philosophical treatise

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the familiar and broad concept behind philosophy is that it deals with theories teaching people how to behave and to view the world, it is an 'attitude which acts as a guiding principle for behaviour', but it is also 'the study of the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence, and the basis and limits of human understanding', and as the term 'study' entails, philosophy is also 'an academic discipline', which people can be trained for. And that was the case of de Beauvoir herself, as she passed the French *agrégation* in 1929 and consequently taught in high schools (Bair 1990:145). There is thus a distinction between the theoretical sphere and the applied sphere, but they can both overlap, and even need to, as Nancy Bauer explains: philosophy is an "activity marked by a certain subliming of the ordinary —by a certain transformation of everyday concerns into metaphysical ones" (Bauer, 2001: loc.555). In view of that quotation, we come to understand that philosophy can be defined as problematizing universal concerns using particular examples as case-studies. Sartre himself often used concrete instances in order to illustrate his theories, such as 'the Waiter', 'the Look', or 'the *Coquette*', which we will analyze in more detail in a later section. But philosophy is not just 'social science in disguise', as Bauer explains (Bauer 2001: loc.761), it does not consist in reporting examples and setting up rules from them: the phenomenological examples used by Sartre, for instance, are stepping stones to demonstrate further his own argument.

### 1.3. Towards a definition of philosophy: the creation of a system

#### 1.3.1. De Beauvoir's stance on philosophy

The logical reasoning inherent to philosophy goes beyond simple reporting, and makes it akin to mathematics. De Beauvoir (who, incidentally, studied both mathematics and philosophy)<sup>11</sup> regarded philosophers as able to create a system, and she claimed she was 'neither intelligent enough nor creative enough, nor possessing the sheer creative brilliance it takes to propound a thesis or construct a system.' (Bair, 1990:269) Many argued against her own judgment of herself, and the philosopher Michèle Le Doeuff even goes as far as saying that de Beauvoir transposes Existentialism "from the status of a system (necessarily returning back on itself) to that of a point of view oriented to a theoretical intent by being trained on a determinate and partial field of experience." (Le Doeuff, 1987:149) We will have further opportunity in this thesis to present the extent of de Beauvoir's contribution to philosophy, but, returning to defining philosophy, we can see that the elusive discipline brings together different fields (as Le Doeuff puts it, 'partial field[s] of experience'), which makes it even more challenging to pinpoint. De Beauvoir recognised herself that her definition of philosophy was 'slightly elevated' (Simons, 1979:11), but she reckoned nevertheless that only very few people had the genius to '*mener à bien ce délire concerté qu'est un système* ('to complete this deliberate delirium which is a system', my translation). William McBride explains in "Philosophy, Literature, and everyday life in *The Second Sex: the current Beauvoir revival*" (2003) that de Beauvoir might have been slightly ironic<sup>12</sup> in her definition of a great philosopher, and that she was quite critical towards them (she was known to be Sartre's harshest critic) and indeed the quoted extract continues wondering '[...] d'où leur vient *l'entêtement* qui donne à leurs aperçus la valeur de clés universelles.' ('from where do they get the *obstinacy* which gives the value of universal keys to their glimpses'; my translation and emphasis), in which the French word 'entêtement' carries, as McBride reminds us, negative undertones. According to him, de Beauvoir congratulates herself for not being obstinate like great philosophers (such as Husserl, Hegel, or Sartre), and she finds, so to speak, qualities in *not* being a philosopher, but merely, a 'disciple'.

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<sup>11</sup> see Bair 1990:91

<sup>12</sup> we need to always keep in mind de Beauvoir's sophisticated rhetorical strategies as a creative writer: she carefully chooses her words and tone to convey irony.

I would not necessarily agree with this claim and I contend that de Beauvoir would have probably liked to create a system, but was aware that the reason why women have never created great philosophical systems is because of their condition and their constrained situation.<sup>13</sup> I am, however, deeply sympathetic to his views of de Beauvoir as philosophically innovative, and, therefore, to his broader definition of philosophy. Philosophy should not only be about constructing conceptual systems, but about re-interpretation. To re-appropriate philosophical concepts is paramount, “the central characteristic of all great works of philosophy is a pattern of re-interpretation, a perennial reexamining of the basic assumptions.” (Cooksey, 2006:5) Doing philosophy can be about questioning what has been thought before, in a rather straightforward way, or more subtly by appropriating someone else's thought and taking it further, or adapting it to your own purpose, as did de Beauvoir. According to Nancy Bauer, appropriation for de Beauvoir means appropriating a 'philosophical *idiom*', which is a 'set of terms and concepts that open up a productive way to do one's own philosophical work.' Therefore, de Beauvoir using Existentialist terminology should not restrict her to the mere rank of disciple, but it should be acknowledged that her own use of the Existentialist framework is pioneering, which will be emphasized in the following section. Her use of Existentialism for her own purpose resonates with the fact that Translation Studies can also be described as a discipline of secondary discourse; as it springs from another text, it is created using a source text.

### 1.3.2. Descartes, Plato and de Beauvoir: the beginning of philosophical enquiry

De Beauvoir's approach when starting *Le Deuxième Sexe*'s project relates to a very classical method in philosophy, namely asking yourself a question and consequently throwing away all the misconceptions you had about that topic. Nancy Bauer compares the inception of Descartes' *Méditations* and of *The Second Sex*, in order to show that both de Beauvoir and Descartes reluctantly started their enterprise, because they both wanted to deal with a specific question: 'what is knowledge?' questions Descartes, and 'what is a woman?' asks de Beauvoir. But it is interesting to note that de Beauvoir recalls in her memoirs that she primarily wanted to talk about herself, and only later did she realise that she had to widen her investigations. Thus philosophy can emerge from very personal considerations, one's own life can lead to more

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<sup>13</sup>“This is why in the history of humanity there isn't a woman who has created a great religious or philosophical system [...] Well, woman, by reason of her *condition*, isn't in a position to do that.” (Francis and Gontier, *La Femme et la Création*, p.471, Nancy Bauer's translation, my emphasis)



universal questions. And Bauer further explains that ‘both Descartes and [...] Beauvoir recognize that the special circumstances of their lives have prepared them especially well for the investigations they are taking on.’ (Bauer, 2001:location 1343-1346) According to Stella Sandford, the study of the Introduction to *The Second Sex* reveals a link with another great philosopher: there is a parallel between de Beauvoir’s novel philosophical question “what is a woman?” and Plato’s questioning “what is justice?”, and again, just as was shown in relation to Descartes’s *Meditations*, all three authors were somehow unwilling to deal with their topic, but the fact that people were talking about those themes (be it justice, reason, or women) without knowing enough about them, urged them to interrogate those themes.<sup>14</sup>

### 1.3.3. De Beauvoir as a writer

However, Simone de Beauvoir claims that she wants to express herself through *literature*, she was adamant that her career was mainly that of a writer, and she explained in *The Prime of Life* that “[she] wanted to communicate the element of originality in [her] own experience. In order to do this successfully [she] knew it was literature toward which [she] must orientate [her]self.” (*The Prime of Life*, p.178)

De Beauvoir held specific views on the matter, and explains for instance that literature needs to be committed, which echoes the work of Theodor W. Adorno on art’s goal. According to Adorno, art has a function of agitating society, by bringing disruption to it, but in order to do so, art needs to be autonomous, to be independent from society. However, the link between art and society is that of a double bind because both influence each other: ‘art implies reality because it is a form of knowledge. Knowledge necessarily points to reality, which in turn necessarily points to society [...]’ (*Aesthetic Theory* 366). Due to that reciprocity between society and art, Adorno advocates using both ‘social content’ and ‘truth content’, so as to balance those two ends, therefore the ‘truth content’ (which refers to reality, to the information which the author wants to convey) cannot exceed the ‘social content’. Let us see what Simone de Beauvoir conceives of the role of art: she (as well as Jean-Paul Sartre, or Jorge Semprun, to name but a few) believes in a literature whose goal is to ‘unveil the world’<sup>15</sup>, but this disclosure has a rather pragmatic role, namely to change the reader’s perspective. As Sartre explains about *littérature engagée*,

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<sup>14</sup> Sandford, Stella. ‘The Philosophical Unconscious of *The Second Sex*’, as part of the University of Manchester’s CIDRAL Theory Intensive seminar on Beauvoir, 20 February 2014.

<sup>15</sup> “ une activité qui est exercée par des hommes, pour des hommes, *en vue de leur dévoiler le monde.*” Simone de Beauvoir in *Que peut la littérature?*.edited by Yves Buin. Paris: 10/18. 1965 (my emphasis)

‘on ne peut dévoiler qu’en projetant de changer’ (*we can only unveil if aiming to change*; my translation, Sartre 1948:73). His motive is political as well as literary and the journal he created with Simone de Beauvoir in 1945, *Les Temps Modernes*, was published with this *raison d’être*. De Beauvoir, although a prolific contributor to the journal and in line with its committed agenda, formulated her own demands when it came to literature.

1.4. Towards a definition of literature: *la littérature engagée*

#### 1.4.1. De Beauvoir’s views on literature

In a 1959 interview, she explained that what is required of a novel is ‘first a certain truth, which does not mean a realistic exactitude, but it needs to give me something very specific, which happened to certain people and, at the same time, which can be general enough to touch me.’<sup>16</sup> De Beauvoir applies this strategy to *Le Deuxième Sexe*, in which testimonies and personal account abound, so as to affect and move the readers<sup>17</sup>. From that we can understand that de Beauvoir sees literature as ‘revealing’, the reader needs to get something out of it, but also be affected, be touched by what is depicted. De Beauvoir’s above definition is oriented towards philosophy already because, if the topic or events described are to be ‘general enough to touch [us]’, then it will deal with the metaphysical and with human condition as a whole. Her approach is also reminiscent of phenomenology insofar as she goes from someone’s concrete experience (‘something very specific, which happened to certain people’) to a broader reality, ‘a certain truth’, as she puts it. We can note that George Sand, who is often cited by de Beauvoir in *Le Deuxième Sexe*, shares a common view of novels when she says that “we believe that the mission of art is a mission of feelings and love, that today’s novel should replace the parable and the apologue of older times. [The artist’s] goal should be to make us love the objects of his concern[...].” (George Sand, preface to *La Mare au Diable*, my translation) Here again we have the notion of moving the reader and that the author has a moral responsibility, a ‘mission’.

For de Beauvoir, readers should also change universe, that is to be engrossed and engage with another vision of the world, without, however, losing the sense of their own world.

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<sup>16</sup> “D’abord une certaine vérité, ce qui ne veut pas dire une exactitude réaliste mais il faut qu’il me communique quelque chose qui soit bien particulier, qui soit arrivé à certaines personnes et en même temps qui soit assez général pour me toucher.” Simone de Beauvoir, 1959, interview by Wilfrid Lemoyne for Radio-Canada; my translation

<sup>17</sup> which will be shown in the data analysis (Chapter 6)

As she explains, the 'miracle of literature' is that 'another truth becomes mine without stopping being other.'<sup>18</sup> Her requirement is demanding: de Beauvoir's conception of literature is again philosophical, and the way she sees literature is linked to the way she sees the world, namely that human beings are both interconnected and alone, that all human beings have their own project, while being situated within society and the world. Literature has the power of first revealing a truth, to then make us seize it, while all the time remaining ourselves. This challenging criterion for literary works is surely difficult to assess, but it leads, however, to an interesting other point which de Beauvoir makes about literature: the non-fiction principle. She believes that fiction is not a necessary condition for literature, which is a point of controversy, as some scholars find fiction to be a crucial component of literature. For instance, Christopher Butler says that 'fictionality seems to be quite the most obvious, and the most strongly defining characteristic of literature', even if he recognizes that it is not a 'sufficiently defining' feature (Butler, 1973:26). According to de Beauvoir, fictionality is avoidable, and autobiographies, or memoirs, are indeed a literary genre she worked on extensively. Thanks to historical and cultural shifts, however, fictionality is not considered a necessary defining feature of literature anymore, and some scholars go as far as saying that "fictionality as the determinant of literature is *unacceptable* especially to those involved in the study of preromantic and *contemporary* literature" (Markiewicz and Gabara 1972: 10; my emphasis). De Beauvoir even considers essays as possible pieces of literature (quoted in Buin 1965:84), and they are indeed now regarded as a large and established literary movement (Lopate 1997). We can deduce from those different characteristics of literature that the latter is an overall genre from which subcategories can be drawn: fiction and nonfiction, for example. De Beauvoir considers herself to be a literary author because she instills in her writings the ability to make someone share her experience, while remaining themselves, but she is not exclusively an author of fiction.

What is necessary, however, is a voice: 'there is no literature if there is no voice, no language carrying someone's trace' (in Buin 1965: 79, my translation). And the literary voice created by the author is particularly astute in *Le Deuxième Sexe*, as de Beauvoir includes a plurality of voices, or, as Lori Marso puts it, "*The Second Sex* stages a series of conversations

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<sup>18</sup> 'Et c'est ça le miracle de la littérature et qui la distingue de l'information: c'est qu'une vérité autre devient mienne sans cesser d'être autre. J'abdique mon "je" en faveur de celui qui parle; et pourtant je reste moi-même.' (Beauvoir in *Que peut la littérature?* edited by Yves Buin. Paris: 10/18. 1965, pp 82-83)

across multiple identities and perspectives” (Marso 2014:3). This form of writing is one of the strong points of *Le Deuxième Sexe*, and it can be said that:

“ultimately, the form of the text itself invites new conversations: it unfolds as a political appeal, producing a community beyond the text inviting readers to invent new subjectivities, new thinking, and indeed to create a different future” (ibid. pp.5-6, emphasis in original).

That latter aspect is especially crucial for feminism, and for prompting a ‘call to action’, which is one of the reasons why *Le Deuxième Sexe*’s ideas influenced later feminist activists and theorists (such as Betty Friedan, or Kate Millett, as we will see in section BII). As far as the notion of ‘voice’ is concerned, we can add that de Beauvoir’s authorial voice is itself plural: she does not speak in her own voice, but as an author, everything she writes is chosen for the effect it will produce on her readers, and I contend that her habit of writing conscientiously crafted novels made her particularly aware of the way the author’s voice is perceived by the readers. However, finding those voices is not straightforward, so that it is peculiarly challenging for the translator to render them accurately, as discussed when focusing on translation strategies (and, specifically, on feminist translation).

Other features of literary texts can be added to the requirement of having a voice, for instance, it can be said that literary works are mainly written, enjoy canonicity (Francis R. Jones in Baker and Saldanha 2011:152), and, according to Christopher Butler, have ‘an amount of “implied meaning” upon some “second level” (Butler 1973:17-29). This is typically expressed by non literal uses of language (especially metaphor and symbol) often involving a (paradigmatic) ‘deviance with respect to some norm.’ Let us first note that the criterion of canonicity is met by *Le Deuxième Sexe*, as well as a nonliteral use of language. As a matter of fact, using everyday terms with a philosophical meaning, suggests a ‘deviance with respect to some norm’. Here is a first link between philosophy and literature: both bestow implied meaning onto ordinary phrases, be it through a metaphor in a poem, or the French word *angoisse* (English *anguish*), which is used by Sartre and other Existentialists to express distress about the responsibility of choices<sup>19</sup>, but which then deviates from the most common definition it has, namely that of physical anxiety.

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<sup>19</sup> “L’existentialiste déclare volontiers que l’homme est angoisse. Cela signifie ceci : l’homme qui s’engage et qui se rend compte qu’il est non seulement celui qu’il choisit d’être, mais encore un législateur

#### 1.4.2. Differences and similarities between philosophy and literature

Literary style, albeit complex to pinpoint, tends to rely on language play and bring originality of form into writing. It is common for authors to coin phrases, such as William Shakespeare's "inauspicious"<sup>20</sup> or James Joyce's "monomyth"<sup>21</sup>. This can also be said of philosophy, which coins new phrases such as *l'être-pour-soi* (*being-for-itself*) or *l'être-en-soi* (*being-in-itself*), coined by Sartre, but stemming from Hegel's *Für-sich-sein*. Introducing new writing techniques is also a trait of literary works, such as the 'stream-of-consciousness' device (which depicts the 'interior monologue' of a character) or a novel written only in the second person, as did Michel Butor in *La Modification* (1957). The creativity of both philosophy and literature is thus a primary common trait, as is their ambiguity of meaning.

Literary works may often be ambiguous, which is particularly challenging for the readers, let alone for literary translators. This ambiguity can either be motivated, or not. Puns and phrases with equivocal meaning are a widespread literary device, used mainly for comical and ironical purposes. Such devices display intended ambiguity and play with polysemy, so that the reader should understand the puns, if that implied reader has the necessary knowledge—as intended by the author—in order to understand them (Iser 1978:19).

It is, yet again, a thorny task for the translator to render them, but the original text is meant to be understood by the author's target readers in the source language. There is, however, the possibility of accidental ambiguity, which happens when the text presents unclear sections, when the meaning is not obvious to the reader. Likewise, philosophy has regularly been accused of being 'obscure', of being difficult to grasp, and indeed the following philosophical quotation, despite being a very well-known one, can be cryptic: "l'enfer c'est les autres" (*hell is other people*). One can either understand the latter to mean that others are truly a burdensome pain which needs to be endured, or that each human being feels the agony of being looked at by the Other, namely I feel in hell because other people make me feel self-conscious. Sartre himself said that his sentence had been misunderstood:

'Mais « l'enfer c'est les autres » a été toujours mal compris. On a cru que je voulais dire

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choisissant en même temps que soi l'humanité entière, ne saurait échapper au sentiment de sa totale et profonde *responsabilité*." SARTRE, *L'Existentialisme est un humanisme*, 1946, pp. 27-28.

<sup>20</sup> OED, available at: <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/93207?redirectedFrom=inauspicious#eid>

<sup>21</sup> *ibid* <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/246140?redirectedFrom=monomyth#eid>

par là que nos rapports avec les autres étaient toujours empoisonnés, que c'était toujours des rapports infernaux. Or, c'est tout autre chose que je veux dire. Je veux dire que si les rapports avec autrui sont tordus, viciés, alors l'autre ne peut être que l'enfer. Pourquoi ? Parce que les autres sont, au fond, ce qu'il y a de plus important en nous-mêmes, pour notre propre connaissance de nous-mêmes. Quand nous pensons sur nous, quand nous essayons de nous connaître, au fond nous usons des connaissances que les autres ont déjà sur nous, nous nous jugeons avec les moyens que les autres ont, nous ont donné, de nous juger. Quoi que je dise sur moi, toujours le jugement d'autrui entre dedans. Quoi que je sente de moi, le jugement d'autrui entre dedans. Ce qui veut dire que, si mes rapports sont mauvais, je me mets dans la totale dépendance d'autrui et alors, en effet, je suis en enfer. [...]”<sup>22</sup>

He explains that the judgment of others makes us feel miserable and he thus advocates for better relationships between human beings, as the latter are interdependent. In this instance, the author was able to correct the misinterpretations relative to his writing, and he commented on them for the sake of clarity. But such an option is not always feasible, due to either a lack of cooperation on the author's part, or because he or she is anonymous, or not alive anymore. Misapprehension of a writer's text leads us to the question of language inadequacy, and to the discrepancy between language and understanding. The way in which a particular text will resonate with the reader, the impact it can have on the reader, is never guaranteed. De Beauvoir considered that “any speech, any expression is an appeal”<sup>23</sup>, but one can never be sure that the appeal has been heard, or will be answered. It can be argued that some non-literary and highly technical texts, such as a user manual for some electronic device, aim to reduce misunderstanding due to their descriptive and specific nature. Their content typically refers to concrete notions (such as wires, screws, or buttons to be pressed), as opposed to metaphysical concepts such as death or freedom.

If we now examine the thematic aspect of literary works, we soon discover that many novels tend to depart from everyday topics to eventually deal with metaphysical issues, with philosophical and existential questions. An ordinary event can open up to philosophical matters: when Marcel Proust's narrator eats a *madeleine*, which is in itself a trivial act, the incident is in

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<sup>22</sup> “L'enfer, c'est les autres”, interview available at:

[http://www.philo5.com/Les%20philosophes%20Textes/Sartre\\_L'EnferC'EstLesAutres.htm](http://www.philo5.com/Les%20philosophes%20Textes/Sartre_L'EnferC'EstLesAutres.htm)

<sup>23</sup> “ Toute parole, toute expression est appel.” Simone de Beauvoir. *Pyrrhus et Cinéas*.1944. p.107

fact a pretext for the author to tell us about memory, and our perception of life<sup>24</sup>. Therefore, works of literature can prompt philosophical reasoning thanks to their topic and how they look at the world and human beings, but sometimes, a mainly philosophical thesis is expressed in a literary work. The latter case is illustrated by Sartre's *La Nausée* (*Nausea*), which is a novel, and even more precisely, a philosophical novel.

We have now seen that the borders between philosophy and literature are not hermetic, which leads me to contend that *Le Deuxième Sexe* is both philosophical and literary, and the characteristics listed above also demonstrate that philosophy is to some extent literary, which prompts questions for Translation Studies. Indeed, literary translation is a specific component of the field, and will be used in my study of the translation of philosophy. Moreover, some approaches (among them Lawrence Venuti's argument) are thought to suit literary translation, but I will argue that they cannot necessarily benefit philosophical translation, as will be discussed in Chapter Five.

#### 1.4.3. Philosophical literature, or intertwining literary text with philosophy

"If you want to be a philosopher, write novels", Albert Camus famously said<sup>25</sup>. In this succinct injunction, he gives us the key to his conception of philosophy, and of literature, and provides us with a concise definition of philosophical literature, because narratives can be a mode of philosophical enquiry. Philosophical literature merges literary texts and philosophical ones, giving us texts which are philosophical in their subject matter, but which are endowed with characteristics of literature. One of those characteristics is, as Thomas Cooksey explains, that literature is evocative and touches the irrational in us, which helps to convey metaphysical truths (Cooksey, 2006: 5). It leads us to what de Beauvoir says about literature, namely that it needs to move us. According to her, and because it has this way of touching us, literature is more powerful than serious philosophical essays, so intertwining philosophy and literature is particularly compelling and makes it more accessible to readers. It is true that the philosophical system de Beauvoir believed in, namely Existentialism, is especially suited to be expressed through novels, if we accept that novels give us "something very specific, which happened to certain people and, at the same time, which can be general enough to touch me" (De Beauvoir,

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<sup>24</sup> According to Alain de Botton, the *madeleine* episode makes the narrator realize that 'it isn't his *life* which has been mediocre so much as the *image* of it he possessed in memory.' (Botton, 1997:142)

<sup>25</sup>"Si tu veux être philosophe, écris des romans." (Camus, 1936: 800)

1959, Radio-Canada interview).

Existentialism, stemming from phenomenology, is interested in using concrete examples so as to illustrate its theories. Although some writers such as Albert Camus or Jean-Paul Sartre refused to be labelled Existentialists, the former's *L'étranger* and the latter's *La Nausée* or *Huit Clos* are deeply philosophical works, and so is de Beauvoir's *L'Invitée*, her first novel. Philosophical literature forces us to see the fuzzy boundaries between philosophy and literature, so much that H.M. Parshley, the first translator of *Le Deuxième Sexe* into English, interestingly describes Existentialism as both a philosophical *and* literary movement. In his Translator's Note, Parshley aims to explain that *Le Deuxième Sexe* is not about philosophy, but on woman's condition, and he reflects upon the "fate of existentialism *as a philosophical and literary movement*."<sup>26</sup> I contend indeed that one has not influenced the other, but rather that they are enmeshed. The literary and the philosophical do not have to be separated: due to the ubiquitous nature of philosophy, most novels are philosophical, and philosophy, even when referring to pure logic, is more akin to literature than science because of the way it expresses itself, the manner in which it uses language, and the metaphysical themes it deals with.

## 1.5. Hierarchy in the literary field

### 1.5.1. Literature, philosophy, and women's writing

But even if philosophy is part of an overall literary field, we should not forget that there is a hierarchy within literature, so that each subcategory enjoys a different degree of prestige: classic masterpieces enjoy more prominence than children's literature, or crime fiction, for instance. Using again Itamar Even-Zohar's polysystem theory, which states that each literature of a given language is composed of a centre and peripheries, inducing a ranking depending on 'value', we can say that there are, nevertheless, connections between dominant central categories and peripheral ones. For example, Even-Zohar explains that literature for children 'is not considered a phenomenon *sui generis*, but is related to literature for adults; translated literature is not disconnected from "original" literature; mass literary productions (thrillers, sentimental novels, etc.) is not simply dismissed as "non-literature" in order to evade

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<sup>26</sup>*The Second Sex*. Translator's Note. p.xxxvii, my emphasis



discovering its mutual dependence with “individual” literature.’ (Even-Zohar, 1979: 292) Relationships within literature are therefore not fixed and there is a constant struggle for peripheral strata to move towards the centre. If we apply this notion to the relationship between philosophy and literature, we can envision philosophy as being a peripheral category, and yet closely bridged to the centre. Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, or Plato enjoy canonicity as philosophers and can be said to hold a central dominant position in the literary polysystem. Because philosophy can be produced in many forms and genres (be it through novels, essays, or plays for instance), its position is either central or peripheral in the polysystem, but it is still comprised at large within literature.

However, the classification between genres can be seen as elitist, and can lead to discrimination, for instance, on the basis of gender: Sartre’s *La Nausée* is depicted as a *philosophical* novel, whereas de Beauvoir’s *L’Invitée* is only called a novel, without reference to the author’s working on the notion of the Other, giving a crucially philosophical turn to the book<sup>27</sup>. This act of labelling also affects the distinction of ‘woman writer’, which marginalises women to a secondary status<sup>28</sup>. That distinction between men and women writers reveals the sexism inherent to literature, and the same comment can be made of philosophy, a traditionally male-dominated discipline, which brings us to the specific category of feminist philosophy. As Ann Gary and Marilyn Pearsall explain, “traditional philosophy —the philosophical canon— has been shaped by men who have taken their experiences, values, ideals, and views of the world as the standard for all human beings”, but as the women’s movement brought about discussions on the place of gender and on inequalities between women and men, a feminist approach was adopted to fields such as philosophy (Gary and Pearsall 1996: 1), which will be discussed after first introducing the philosophical content of *Le Deuxième Sexe*.

### 1.5.2. *Le Deuxième Sexe*’s philosophical content

In addition to the feminist message conveyed by the book, we can identify the omnipresent philosophical arguments embedded in the treatise: de Beauvoir’s contentions on women’s liberation are intertwined with her philosophical approach. Not only does the author

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<sup>27</sup> Simply typing ‘*La Nausée*’ or ‘*L’Invitée*’ on a search engine gives us insightful information: Sartre’s novel is directly labelled as ‘philosophical’, whereas de Beauvoir’s book is only called a novel.

<sup>28</sup> The British author Michèle Roberts gives us valuable insight when she reports that the divide between ‘writers’ and ‘women writers’ is very much current and that, although some say that ‘gender doesn’t matter’, female writers are still ‘wiped off the literary map’ (Roberts 2005:20), so that de Beauvoir’s own experience of being a ‘woman writer’, as well as her warnings in *Le Deuxième Sexe* (I:182), are probably as relevant today as they were in 1949.

use philosophical theory, such as the concept of the Other, or the notion of bad faith in Existentialism, but she also develops her own philosophical analysis in *Le Deuxième Sexe*. We will argue that her major contribution to feminism (such as denouncing the place women hold in society, the part they may play in keeping that inferior status, and the fact that being a woman is a social construct) relies on her philosophical argument. De Beauvoir is an advocate of Existentialism, she declares herself to be adopting “existentialist morality” in *Le Deuxième Sexe* (*Le Deuxième Sexe*: 33), and she embraces Existentialist concepts, such as the notion that ‘existence precedes essence.’<sup>29</sup> That phrase means that human beings do not have an immutable essence which defines them for life, but on the contrary, they are what they make themselves to be. The corollary of such a stand is that people are responsible for their own actions because they can choose their behaviour. Therefore, freedom is imperative and absolute: we cannot escape freedom because we are ultimately free to act. That non deterministic viewpoint defended by Existentialists has a number of ethical and political implications: we have to face our own decisions and consequent actions, without blaming others for imposing those choices upon us. Stating such a manifesto immediately after the French Occupation, which was a period when French citizens had to choose between Collaboration, Resistance, or opting not to choose either, had particular resonance. It was indeed a clear way of saying that everyone always has the possibility to choose, and that following governmental propaganda was no justification for perpetuating evil during the war. But people do try to justify themselves in bad faith, that is they prefer to wear blinkers and ignore their liability. Existentialists’ rejection of bad faith goes hand in hand with gaining more freedom, through authenticity.

Acting in bad faith is to blindly follow the common values dictated by society without questioning them, while authenticity, on the other hand, is acting according to one’s own values, without identifying with any groups or institutions, which is illustrated by the very fact that Existentialist philosophers rejected the ‘existentialist’ epithet, or at least, wanted to create their own definition of the term. Individual standards, however, should not be chosen incoherently, but they should be the result of serious reflection: the aim of authentic freedom is not to lead to any sort of chaos, nor for people to act arbitrarily and without morality. The point is not to choose the passive option of ‘following the herd’ instead of taking responsibility for one’s own choices either. It is thus important to raise awareness of this state of inauthenticity (as de

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<sup>29</sup> A sentence attributed to Jean-Paul Sartre in *L'existentialisme est un humanisme* (1946).

Beauvoir does in *Le Deuxième Sexe*, which acted as an epiphany for women reading it) and to urge people to act according to *their own concern*. Consequently, freedom (to choose, to act, to think, and so on) and authenticity are intertwined in existentialism, furthermore, freedom is at the core of that philosophy. In the French edition of *Le Deuxième Sexe*, the adjective 'authentique' appears 26 times, but one can also notice its opposite, the adjective 'inauthentique' (10 times), the adverb 'authentiquement' (14 times), and the nouns 'authenticité' (5 times) and 'inauthenticité' (5 times). The notion of authenticity is therefore recurring in de Beauvoir's book and is particularly present in the chapter on Myths (16 occurrences). It is not surprising to find that philosophical concept so crucial to the Myths section, because de Beauvoir wants to show that many cultural myths urge women to act inauthentically. Because women have limited concrete freedom, they could (more easily than men) be encouraged towards inauthenticity and to the lures of the unreal Feminine. Patriarchy confines women to a set of roles and constrains their freedom, therefore it takes more courage for them to act as free individuals, and the temptation to comply with what is expected is great, instead of living authentically. In *Le Deuxième Sexe*, de Beauvoir warns women against being put into categories such as 'the Narcissist', 'the Woman in Love' or 'the Mystic' and she asks them instead to be 'authentic', a task she probably seeks to illustrate in the book's final chapter on 'the Independent Woman'. In this last chapter, de Beauvoir urges her readers to be responsible for their actions<sup>30</sup>, and she gives many examples showing that women (even more than men) are told how to behave by society. Talking about romantic love, de Beauvoir explains, for instance, that society makes women think they need salvation through men, and women make the choice to believe this myth: "le monde l'encourage à croire en la possibilité d'un salut *donné*: elle choisit d'y croire." (*LDS II*: 607)<sup>31</sup> De Beauvoir's notion of inauthenticity is so crucial that it has been taken up in other works by feminists, such as Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch*. In that book Greer argues that "the altruism of women is merely the inauthenticity of the feminine person carried over into behavior" (1970: 152).

Existentialism, according to Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, encourages us to take hold of the world by acting, by transcending the present in order to achieve our project in the future. That inspiring notion is defended by de Beauvoir in her works too, and most of her

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<sup>30</sup> "Par son rapport avec le but qu'elle poursuit, avec l'argent et les droits qu'elle s'approprie, elle éprouve sa responsabilité." (*LDS II*: 587)

<sup>31</sup> "The world encourages her to believe in the possibility of a *given* salvation: she chooses to believe in it." (*TSS loc.15479*)

novels feature characters who have to face their responsibilities and to act upon their lives. The writer, who was dubbed the 'High Priestess of Existentialism' by American universities when she did a lecture tour in 1947 (Tidd 2009: 86), closely worked with Sartre from the start, when they were both preparing for the *agrégation* in 1929, and the philosophical system created by the latter is greatly indebted to de Beauvoir's critical participation. She recalls the first philosophical debates she engaged in with Sartre, when she became at the same time his most severe reviewer (Bair 1990: 567), and her own training in philosophy qualified her as an expert of that discipline, as well as her privileged collaboration with Sartre, Raymond Aron and Merleau-Ponty (notably in the journal *Les Temps Modernes*, created in 1945), so her understanding of Existentialism is thorough. It is so thorough that Kate and Edward Fullbrook attribute the framework of Existentialism to de Beauvoir, and not Sartre, arguing that the major landmark in the creation of his system follows his reading of de Beauvoir's draft for *L'Invitée* (*She Came to Stay*) in 1940<sup>32</sup>. The two scholars contend that the foundations of what would later become Sartre's Existentialism were present in *L'Invitée* (1943), that all elements were already accounted for in de Beauvoir's manuscript. However, as Sartre and de Beauvoir constantly worked together and debated about each other's work, their influence upon each other is difficult to pinpoint, but even if de Beauvoir was inspired by Sartre, we can still observe that her beliefs differ from his in numerous ways. Her deviations are at least twofold: she disagrees with the notion that people's freedom is total and absolute, and she aims to go beyond the Subject/Object struggle, acknowledging human ambiguity.

According to de Beauvoir, sheer freedom can only be abstract because, in some circumstances, our freedom is actually constrained against our will, as the author shows with the example of women in a harem, who are physically confined within closed doors. Another point of divergence between Sartre's and de Beauvoir's philosophy is that they do not comprehend the relationship between Subject and Object in the same way. For Sartre, there is always a tension between oneself and the others, and the relations between human beings are rather hopeless and pessimistic: there is struggle, as each individual tries to remain a Subject while turning the others into Objects. Sartre deals with this in his analysis of 'the Look' and he explains that we are aware of our subjectivity (our being-for-itself, or *être-pour-soi*) until someone looks at us, thus making us feel the object of their gaze (a being-for-other, or *être-pour-autrui*)<sup>33</sup>. From this insightful observation, Sartre presumes that all interactions between

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<sup>32</sup> Kate and Edward Fullbrook quoted in Simons 1995: 15

<sup>33</sup> Those two phrases stem themselves from Hegel's 'für-sich-sein' and 'für-andere-sein'.

human beings are a potential threat, because we need others in order to know ourselves, their judgment affects us, which led Sartre to state that 'hell is other people', as mentioned earlier. His view of human interactions is generally less positive than de Beauvoir's, insofar as they are conflictual, and deeply male heterosexist, as the following example will show. Sartre, aiming to explain the notion of bad faith, tells us about a *coquette*, a woman on a romantic rendezvous, whose hand is grabbed by her companion:

“the young woman leaves her hand there, but she *does not notice herself* leaving it [...] the hand rests inert between the warm hands of her companion —neither consenting nor resisting— a thing [...] She has disarmed the actions of her companion by reducing them to being only what they are, that is, to existing in the mode of the in-itself [...] she realises herself as *not being* her own body, and she contemplates it as though from above as a passive object to which events can *happen*, but which can neither provoke them nor avoid them, because all its possibilities are outside of it.” (Sartre 2001: 215)

In that example, Sartre seems to only consider the encounter from a male perspective, ignoring the woman's personal reasons for acting thus, such as the fact that, at the time he made his observations, women were not as free to flirt in public as men were, and so, in other words, the concrete lived experience of a woman is not the same as that of a man, and, failing to acknowledge this state of things has consequences on his whole theory of the Subject and the Other. De Beauvoir, on the other hand, offers a different conclusion to the same subject/object analysis and insists on the ambiguity of the human condition. She sees the fact that we all try to be a subject objectifying the others as something which we should go beyond. Her aim is again to awaken her readers to a state of affairs, namely this ambiguous condition, so as to achieve equality between men and women, and thus, her recommendation is once more very encouraging<sup>34</sup>.

Indeed, de Beauvoir uses her own philosophical concepts in *Le Deuxième Sexe*, she is not merely Sartre's (or anyone else's) disciple, so that her book is an original piece of work, and a serious contribution to both feminism and philosophy. In order to show how de Beauvoir is weaving her study of women with Existentialism, let us first see how men have always been the

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<sup>34</sup> “au lieu de vivre l'ambiguïté de sa condition, chacun s'efforce d'en faire supporter par l'autre l'abjection et de s'en réserver l'honneur. Si cependant tous deux l'assumaient avec une lucide modestie, corrélative d'un authentique orgueil, ils se reconnaîtraient comme des semblables et vivraient en amitié le drame érotique.” (*LDS II*: 648)

norm, an active Subject setting the standards, while women were considered the Absolute Other. Women are useful to men insofar as they are similar enough to relate to them, but different enough to still be seen as an Other, someone who is not like them, and it confers women with the status of a mirror, giving men a flattering reflection of themselves. De Beauvoir describes woman as a “treasure, prey, game, and risk, muse, guide, judge, mediator, *mirror*, the woman is the Other in which the subject surpasses himself without being limited, who opposes him without negating him; *she is the Other who lets herself be annexed to him without ceasing to be the Other*” (*The Second Sex*, loc.4172, my emphasis). We can notice in this quotation the complexity and diversity of roles bestowed upon women, as well as the duality they embody. It is interesting to see how women seem to be the ideal companions of men: a fellow human being, and an object at the same time. Here de Beauvoir is drawing on Existentialist terminology, and also directly on Hegel and his master/slave dichotomy, but with a twist of her own. According to Debbie Evans, one of the main differences is that de Beauvoir calls woman ‘the Other’, but not necessarily a slave, she makes a distinction between being relative to man, being ‘inessential’, and being a slave (Evans 2009: 106). Another original contribution from de Beauvoir is her using the concept of bad faith to demonstrate why women do not revolt and rebel against the treatment they receive. We saw earlier that bad faith is following ‘the herd’ instead of using one’s free will, and de Beauvoir takes the complicity of some women with their situation as an example of bad faith. For her, women see it as an advantage to be in a subordinate position, because it prevents them from taking responsibility for their own life. Freedom can be terrifying, as it means having to face choices, but also taking risks when taking actions.

And that latter aspect is precisely what de Beauvoir advocates women to do: they need to act, especially in the work sphere, so as to go beyond immanence (that state they have been forced to be in) and live as men’s equals. De Beauvoir’s justification for achieving that goal stems from the following Hegelian concept: ‘to be is to have become’, which will be the ground for her most famous (and particularly astute) phrase, ‘on ne naît pas femme, on le devient’ (*LDS* II: 13)<sup>35</sup>. There is no typically feminine essence for de Beauvoir, because we are what we have been made to become through the sum of our actions, therefore, essence itself is a concept she rejects. Using those notions to describe women’s condition was groundbreaking at the time, and

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<sup>35</sup> “One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman” (*TSS* 1989: 267, trans. Parshley)

it inspired many forthcoming feminists of the second-wave (starting from the 1960s) in the USA and worldwide, and it was also a stepping stone for feminist philosophers.

### 1.6. Feminist philosophy

Feminist philosophy can be described as a category of philosophy, insofar as it is an area of the discipline, however, it is a controversial branch of philosophy, because some scholars are sceptical about it being philosophy at all (Stone, 2007: 4). Why indeed should philosophy be feminist? Maybe the lower number of women in that field can be a starting point: for instance, according to Susan Dodds and Eliza Goddard, 'women comprise about only a third of Ph.D. students' and '[they] make up only a quarter of full-time and fractional teaching and research positions in philosophy programs' in Australia (quoted in Hutchison and Jenkins, 2013: 144).

According to Nancy Bauer, feminist philosophy should be a way to revolutionize philosophy (whose history largely shows a neglect of the question of women), but also would help redefine what it means to be a sexed and thinking human being (Bauer 2001: loc.492), thus going beyond feminist activism and contributing to the whole of philosophy. For instance, the notion of being a sexed being, the concept of gender, is important, as Gary and Pearsall put it, in 'abstract metaphysical issues, such as free will and determinism' (Gary and Pearsall 1996: 2).

The feminist stance developed by feminist philosophy evolves in parallel to the changes in feminist theory, so that attaining a precise definition is troublesome. Moreover, philosophy aims to constantly question itself so as to advance current theories, which results in a lack of cohesion and the emergence of different points of view between philosophers. Ideally, there should be a mutual contribution of the two fields, so that philosophy would enhance the Women's Movement, while the latter could disturb philosophy at its ground, and challenge its androcentric inclination. The very relationship between philosophy and feminism is, however, seemingly contradictory because of the intrinsic sexist biases of philosophy, as shows, for instance, the influential 'adversary paradigm' analyzed by Janice Moulton. According to her, that paradigm relies on aggression, which she describes as a male trait, and is seen as the central and only valid paradigm to be used in philosophical thinking. Not only does she explain why relying on just one paradigm is faulty, but by showing that this pervasive philosophical model promotes masculine characteristics, she shows that women are excluded from philosophy

(Moulton in Gary and Pearsall, 1996: 11-23). Although I agree with Moulton that men have traditionally prevailed in philosophy, I would like to insist on the idea that aggression is *symbolically* a masculine trait in society, which means that it is the behaviour expected of men, but I believe this trend to be a social construct, which, in our case, is detrimental to philosophers (both men and women) who do not adopt an adversarial approach.

Another example of male supremacy within philosophy is shown by the way dualism in philosophy is subordinate to the division of roles between men and women, as explained by Susan Bordo: a patriarchal society assigns different duties to men and women, so that the latter are predominantly in charge of childcare and, by doing so, are associated to certain traits (care, emotions, materiality), whereas men are related to other characteristics, which is obvious in the philosophical discourse: reason is coded as male, for instance (Bordo, 1988: 624), and so are experiences which are supposed to be universal, but are instead typical of men's experiences, not women's, as shows Michèle Le Doeuff, quoting Sartre: 'the experience of the hole, when the child sees the reality, encompasses the ontological presentiment of sexual experience in general' (quoted in Le Doeuff 2007: 81). In this extract, it clearly appears that Sartre's contention only applies to men, and still he expresses it as though it was universal. Many male philosophers claim theories in which men are the point of reference, which is reinforced by the lack of women's voice in philosophy, or, as Moira Gatens puts it, their 'invisibility'. Gatens, drawing on Le Doeuff, explains that women philosophers who comment on classics of philosophy tend to avoid making their own interpretive work known, so that they only put forward the ideas of a 'Master', effacing themselves as much as possible (Gatens quoted in Pateman and Grosz 1986: 21).

When de Beauvoir refers to the works of Sartre in *Le Deuxième Sexe*, she gives the impression that she is indeed his disciple, despite the fact that her own theory reveals the limits of Sartre's Existentialism, and that her own contentions depart from Sartre's. She is thus making herself invisible as a philosopher, so that she explains her arguments on women referencing other philosophers and theorists, but hides the fact that she is pushing Existentialism in another direction, and thus philosophically contributes to it. In addition to the conflictual relation between feminism and the traditionally male dominance of philosophy, it is to be noted that philosophy aims to reach for abstract thinking, distancing itself from -isms and radical ideologies. However, as has been seen with the 'adversary paradigm' or the notion of 'dualism', that narrow-minded view of philosophy might be influenced by dominant male philosophers, who do not take into account broader types of philosophy, which will lead us to detail how feminist philosophy differs



from traditional philosophy and what it entails.

### 1.6.1. A broad definition

Just as there is a multiplicity of branches in feminism, and in philosophy too, there are differences in viewpoints as regards feminist philosophy. It can be said that feminist philosophical works are fundamentally philosophical works, that 'doing feminist philosophy is not really something different from doing philosophy' (Martha Nussbaum quoted in Bauer 2001: 664), but we can think about what a feminist approach consists of. Themes revolving around gender, sexuality, or birth are concepts which 'no other fields of philosophy address' (Stone, 2007: 2), which shows one of the many contributions of feminist philosophy to the discipline. In addition to concentrating on topics which have not been analyzed before, feminist philosophy also aims to question traditional philosophy and its androcentric tendencies, disputing concepts or methods which have been taken for granted (as showed by the example of the 'adversary paradigm'), so that feminist philosophy examines many topics related to metaphysical, political, religious, scientific, or linguistic issues<sup>36</sup>. Those themes are traditional fields of investigation in philosophy, which is a challenge for feminist philosophers, because they have often been themselves trained and educated by studying classic male authors. And although they aim to denounce sexist bias within philosophical thought, how can they recognize and raise awareness of that sexism?

### 1.6.2. Feminist philosophical methodologies

In order to meet those challenges, different methodologies have been adopted by feminist philosophers, such as the notion of 'pattern perception' fostered by Marilyn Frye and which corresponds to finding patterns of domination and discrimination by seeking 'what does not make sense' (Frye in Gary and Pearsall 1996: 40), which is reminiscent of the phenomenological method used by de Beauvoir to disclose myths (which are narratives used as a justification for women's subjection). Finding patterns of oppression (be it racism, or sexism, for instance) can lead to overcome that domination, so that this method follows a political agenda, a feminist political commitment, while following the tradition of phenomenology.

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<sup>36</sup> A glance at the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* informs us of different entries for feminist political philosophy, feminist philosophy of religion, feminist epistemology, or feminist aesthetics, among other areas.

Regarding methodology, it can be said that feminist philosophy is even more prone to be critical towards methodologies than nonfeminist philosophy because feminist philosophers are aware of the biases which kept women out of philosophy, so that they seek to avoid making the same mistake, and, instead, aim to be inclusive and varied. It seems logical that awareness of biases be central to feminist philosophers, as discrimination is a core concern of feminism, so that gender and racial prejudices, as well as exclusion, have to be taken into account in feminist methodologies. For instance, some feminist philosophers reject traditional methods (such as the adversary model we discussed above) on the ground that those approaches are male-centred and revolve around so-called masculine values, thus excluding women. Such feminist philosophers seek to reappropriate traditional methods by changing them into gender-aware practices, or finding new ways of dealing with the feminine. The latter is illustrated by Carol Gilligan's 'ethic of care', which, according to her, is an approach mostly taken by women. Gilligan explains that men and women, due to the different responsibilities and occupations they have been designated to take on, do not share the same moral values, and specifically, women tend to favour caring emotions in their moral choices. If maintaining relationships and promoting care is a priority for women, then traditional male-centred ethics need to be altered so as to enable a theory expressing female experience too (Gilligan 1982: 186). But, although a plurality of standpoints and an array of experiences are fruitful, there is a risk of clustering women philosophers into one side of ethics, instead of advancing current views on morality in philosophy. That is the reason why other feminist philosophers argue for a different methodology in which they advocate the use of traditional approaches, contending that long-established philosophical strategies are adequate tools for feminist philosophy, insofar as they are objective and rational.

Analytical feminism, for example, is a branch of feminist philosophy which looks for truth and objectivity, and is thought to be rigorous and normative. According to Ann Cudd, analytical feminism 'holds that many traditional philosophical notions are not only normatively compelling, but also in some ways empowering and liberating for women'. (Cudd 1996: 20), and the apparent clarity and precision of analytical philosophy would seem to provide feminist philosophers with a tool enabling them to evaluate their arguments more accurately. However, critics argued that male biases still pervade analytical philosophical thought, as is seen in language, for instance. According to Jennifer Mather Saul, analytical philosophers working on language need to invent new methodologies to deal with politically significant terms, such as 'woman', because of the difficulty in defining such terminology. Instead of accepting the

concepts of man and woman in a matter-of-fact way and taking for granted what they refer to, it is crucial to acknowledge the complexity of such terms and what they entail, which in turn challenges analytical philosophy to find new methodologies (Saul in Crasnow and Superson, 2012: 195). Language is itself permeated by biases, and notably affecting gender, to the extent that phallogocentrism is denounced by feminist philosophers, such as Luce Irigaray stating that 'there is no language but a male's language' (Irigaray 1977: 138). Therefore, claiming that one is conducting objective philosophical inquiry by virtue of basing research only on language strikes me as too simplistic (see Garry and Pearsal 1996: 8).

Despite the breadth of feminist philosophy, feminist philosophers agree on one criterion, which is the statement that women are oppressed, although the extent and nature of that oppression are yet another matter of debate among both feminists and feminist philosophers. One of de Beauvoir's contributions was to reveal that oppression in the first place, and to combine this revelation with her appropriation of philosophical theories, which will be the object of the following section.

### 1.6.3. *Le Deuxième Sexe* as a cornerstone of feminist philosophy

#### 1.6.3.1. *De Beauvoir and the use of Existentialism*

De Beauvoir's work is pioneering in many ways, because of the methodology she uses, but also regarding the theories she develops on women and on Existentialism. As was mentioned earlier, *Le Deuxième Sexe* is a reference work which is the first of a kind, namely a detailed, comprehensive account of women which comprises various disciplines. But the fact de Beauvoir opted for Existentialism as a framework to draw on is also groundbreaking, because Existentialist theory is not the most auspicious one to tackle the question of women. For instance, it can be said that Existentialism is dismissive of women, and, as Michèle Le Doeuff puts it, 'there is no place for a woman in such a system, and even less for a woman who produces philosophy' (Le Doeuff 2007: 165), and she goes on, explaining that, for Sartre, the feminine was disgusting, as when he declares that 'the obscenity of the feminine is that of every gaping thing' (quoted in Le Doeuff, *ibid.* 81). If Sartre's depiction of women's bodies is derogatory, it can be said that Existentialism as a whole is phallocentric, to the point where Jeffner Allen coins the phrase 'patriarchal existentialism' and explains that as this theory does not speak to women, the latter cannot identify with it (Allen in Allen and Young 1989: 72). This is why feminist philosophy needs to challenge this status quo by incorporating women's

experience in Existentialism, as did de Beauvoir in *Le Deuxième Sexe*, and the methodology she resorted to was to use phenomenology, which refers to the study of phenomena, and precisely relates to our experience and our perception of the world.

Using that approach locates de Beauvoir in the tradition of her male phenomenologist counterparts, but because her research topic deals with women, she is able to identify issues in traditional philosophical concepts, and to convincingly challenge them. As mentioned before, Sartre's arguments on 'The Look' are, for example, male-centred, and the Hegelian master/slave dialectic is inaccurate regarding the relation between men and women, because the latter are denied mutual recognition as subjects, being therefore cast as absolute Others. The path de Beauvoir follows is insightful: she first starts examining the position of women in society, realising that women have been seen as inferior to men and were mostly assigned to work in the home and to take care of childbearing, which could be described as being slaves to men, in a society dominated by the latter. That notion of oppression, and the unequal relationship between men and women led de Beauvoir to reflect upon Hegel's master/slave dialectic, in which she noticed that the mutual recognition both she and Hegel advocate is not realised for women, who are absolute Others in relation to men.

#### *1.6.3.2. How has her phenomenological method been used by successors?*

By following such logic throughout her book, de Beauvoir opened the way for feminist philosophers to use phenomenology in their analyzes. For instance, Iris Marion Young, in her influential essay *Throwing Like A Girl*, examines the way young girls are said to throw balls differently than boys of the same age, and explores other 'feminine' behaviours such as sitting, or walking to then discuss girls and boys' socialization (Young 2005: 32). Young draws substantially on de Beauvoir, but she regrets that the latter mostly focuses on obvious phenomena affecting women, such as menstruation or pregnancies, as opposed to studying the 'situatedness of the woman's actual bodily movement and orientation to its surroundings and its world.' (Young *ibid.*29) However, de Beauvoir's notion of feminine and masculine behaviours being socially constructed, as well as the existential phenomenology she uses, are at the core of Young's work, thus reaffirming de Beauvoir's feminist philosophical impact.

### 1.6.3.3. *Le Deuxième Sexe* as dealing with feminist topics at the level of the everyday, but also with philosophical depth

By using factual examples from women's everyday lives, de Beauvoir has grounds to develop her existential theory, which gives two dimensions to *Le Deuxième Sexe*: the everyday and the philosophical. De Beauvoir succeeds in merging philosophy with her subjective concern as a particular woman, and in doing so, gives us an innovative feminist philosophical work in which she intertwines the everyday and the metaphysical (Bauer 2001: 858). For example, she directly starts her book by asking the metaphysical question 'What is a woman?' and answers in the personal, stating that she is a woman herself (Bauer 2001: 870). That combination of concrete personal situations and of philosophical reflections is one of the strengths of *Le Deuxième Sexe* and it explains its success too, because readers can relate to the lived experiences described in the book.

However, the philosophical side should not be overlooked, as it gives a richer depth to de Beauvoir's message regarding equality between men and women, but also because it presents us with original philosophical thought. The entanglement of philosophical concepts and methods with feminist concerns would seem enough to describe *Le Deuxième Sexe* as a feminist philosophical work, but we can add that the author goes beyond her condition of being a woman, and what is more, a woman trained in philosophy. What is meant is that de Beauvoir herself grew up in a patriarchal environment, but her seemingly masculinist viewpoint (which we will mention when analysing the critiques *The Second Sex* received) might be ironic. De Beauvoir encourages women not to be afraid of using men's tools (such as language) so as to be heard and to give impetus to the women's movement, which illustrates a feminist philosophical strategy. De Beauvoir was accused of being a masculinist and her work is assumed to be particularly contradictory. However, we do not have to take this as a weakness, because the apparent contradictions are actually supporting de Beauvoir's case. For example, and as was seen before, the negative depiction she makes of female embodiment in her chapter on biological data should not be taken at face value, and de Beauvoir's grim account is emphasising her point, because she wants to show how social and cultural constraints put values on biology. For de Beauvoir to claim (speaking of the female ant) that 'the fertilized female [...] is imprisoned for twelve years laying eggs ceaselessly.' (*The Second Sex*, loc. 869) does not mean that the author is not aware of the anthropomorphism of her text, but that she might be using it as an aspect of her feminist philosophy.

I contend that de Beauvoir's demanding training and rigorous work gave her an awareness of the seemingly contradictory examples she uses. It was all the more a feat at her time, considering that she could not resort to the contemporary feminist theory which is available nowadays, and she was creating an idiom (of the difference between gender and biological sex for instance), which might make her sound self-contradictory. But once again, her derogatory description of women's bodies merely helps her make the argument that 'physiology cannot ground values: rather, biological data take on those values the existent confers on them.' (*The Second Sex*, loc. 1169)

According to Nancy Bauer, *Le Deuxième Sexe* is a particularly relevant instance of feminist philosophy, and, besides being profoundly feminist in its themes and its reach, the book aims to challenge philosophy 'to transform itself, internally and from the ground up' (Bauer 2001: loc.536). If this is the case, then the translators are faced with the challenge to convey both the feminist and the philosophical message presented by de Beauvoir, which was not achieved with *Le Deuxième Sexe*'s first English translation, as we will now show through the analysis of the reception of *The Second Sex* and the critiques it received after its 1953 publication.

## 2. From *Le Deuxième Sexe* to *The Second Sex*

### 2.1. The publishing of *The Second Sex* in the United States in 1953

If *Le Deuxième Sexe* was received differently in the United States than it had been in France, this is partly due to the different social, economic and political context of the two countries. Even before the book made its way to America, cultural circumstances were favourable to its acceptance because books related to women, as well as manuals on sexuality, were developing.<sup>37</sup> Women in the United States had a stronger tradition of feminism, starting for instance with the Seneca Falls convention of 1848, which demanded suffrage for women. The latter received the right to vote in 1920 in America, whereas it was only granted to French women over twenty-one years-old in 1944. American women had to join the workforce and were employed in factories during wartime, which was a determining factor in changing mentalities because it endowed women with the sense that their work mattered, so that being asked to return to their home and more traditional life as housewives was not always readily accepted. Also, the liberal and capitalist spirit of the time in the United States encouraged a pursuit of

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<sup>37</sup> such as Ferdinand Lundberg and Marynia Farnham's *Modern Woman: The Lost Sex* (1947), or Alfred Kinsey's *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (1948).

independence, on the one hand, and of consumerism, on the other hand, which encouraged women's labour (even for married women), so as to increase the household's income (and consequently changed their way of life).

In addition to the general enthusiasm towards women's issues, we have to consider the American admiration for French culture, and especially for the literary and philosophical trend surrounding Existentialism. The English language translation of *Le Deuxième Sexe* was very timely in the United States because American culture was then more open than ever to French intellectual influences and many expatriates longed to live the Parisian life of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, just like the famous French writers from the so-called Existentialist movement. As George Cotkin explains, "the allure of France, of things French in American culture, must not be underestimated as a continuing theme in accounts of the popularity of existentialism and of existential thinkers, and existential thinkers consciously played on this fascination" (Cotkin 1999: 327-340). That interest in French Existentialism, albeit as a mere cultural vogue, might explain why Knopf publishing house took the risk to export de Beauvoir's book to America. In Deirdre Bair's biography, we learn that Blanche Knopf discovered *Le Deuxième Sexe* on a trip to Paris, during which she witnessed the success following its publication in France, and was advised by colleagues at Gallimard to take a look at it. However, she misunderstood the book for a sort of women's version of the Kinsey report (published in 1948), and thus believed it to be 'a modern-day sex manual' (Bair 1990: 432).

Blanche Knopf, and her husband Alfred Knopf, did not speak French, which impaired their judgment of the book, but they were acquainted with H. M. Parshley, a zoology professor who could understand French. They asked him to read and analyze de Beauvoir's book because of his expertise in human sexuality (as *Le Deuxième Sexe* was supposed to be about that topic), and due to his command of the French language. Parshley soon recommended that the book be translated, and he eventually himself became the translator commissioned by the Knopfs. Nevertheless, the latter wanted to make sure the book would be accessible to the widest audience possible, that is for young people who would be interested in a Parisian Existentialist author, for readers who wanted to learn about sexuality, and generally for the average American reader, who might be deterred by its complexity and philosophical density.

If de Beauvoir's book had originally been mistaken for a sex manual, when the laborious translation actually started, nobody at Knopf could pretend not knowing that it was a

philosophical, and highly controversial, treatise. But the publishing house decided to play on the confusion its title created (namely the link between sex and sexuality), anticipating financial gains. From the commercial “blurb” to the preface, to the very pictures chosen to illustrate the cover (the nude statue of a woman), de Beauvoir’s book was presented as rather tantalising, and still very scientific and offering a momentous study. However, we can suggest that presenting *The Second Sex* as a book on women’s sexuality was detrimental to its future validity: it directed the reception of the book in Anglophone circles, and it was a ploy to increase sales. Moreover, by misleading the readers into buying a presumed analysis of women’s sexuality, the publishers deliberately tried to sell it as a women’s version of the first Kinsey report (1948), being sure to spark curiosity. But the two books could not be less similar to each other, which surely disappointed some of de Beauvoir’s readers, who had been promised a scientific treatise in the same vein as the Kinsey report. Besides introducing *The Second Sex* as a sex manual, Knopf also emphasized its scientific cachet. As Sheryl Englund declares, the promotion of the book, through its advertising material, emphasized the intellectual and scientific aspect of *Le Deuxième Sexe* (Englund 1994: 5), which was a particularly powerful incentive for the American science-enthusiastic audience. Incidentally, we can see in the “blurb” that the publishing house cunningly refers to Havelock Ellis’s *The Psychology of Sex* (1921) in the same line as Simone de Beauvoir, so as to make the two authors comparable to each other, and simultaneously feature de Beauvoir as a scientific scholar<sup>38</sup>. It can only lead to controversy and dismissal of the philosopher’s ideas, which are based on true philosophical tradition, but not on the conventions of scientific writing.

At the same time as fostering an alleged objective approach, the Knopfs and their team aimed to attenuate the philosophical scope of the book, because, as much as Existentialism appealed to their young readership, that philosophy is dense and complex to apprehend, so much so that they feared it could deter the readers. Quoting letters between Parshley and the publishers, Englund shows that the translator was not well-acquainted with Existentialism, which contributed to his circumventing philosophical issues. As he himself reports: “I now doubt whether it would be advisable for me to undertake any serious account of existentialism, or even a formal definition of terms; it is a touchy business to explain a controversial philosophy” (Parshley quoted in Englund 1994: 10). And the general consensus at the publishing company

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<sup>38</sup> the advertisement explains that *The Second Sex* is “a book that will take its place alongside of Havelock Ellis’s *The Psychology of Sex*” (quoted in Englund 1994: 14).



was the same: metaphysical concerns were not the inclination of most readers, nor could many of them understand Existentialist philosophy.

Therefore, the book was made to be more readable through any possible way, such as cuts and abridgment. The numerous omissions from *Le Deuxième Sexe* have been a much discussed subject among Beauvoir scholars, and this will be taken up again in further sections, but I find it useful to briefly mention them here. An abridged and, consequently, not complete version in the English language is bound to have an impact on the reception of de Beauvoir's magnum opus.

## 2.2. The reception of the 1953 publication in the United States

According to de Beauvoir herself, *The Second Sex* enjoyed a greater reception in America, and she was spared the inappropriate comments on her personal life she faced in France<sup>39</sup>. The criticisms formulated in the United States were not as hostile, which led de Beauvoir to state that: "*The Second Sex* appeared in America with a success unsoiled by any salacious comment...[E]very time it has been published in another country, I have been pleased to receive fresh proof that the scandal it aroused in France was the fault of my readers and not myself" (Beauvoir 1968: 298). Like the first American translator, H.M. Parshley, when first reviewing the book for the Knopfs, many readers were captivated by the author's subversive and radical arguments. Parshley was a major advocate of de Beauvoir's book, which was, according to him, "a profound and unique analysis of woman's nature and position [...] It should pay for itself, and in any case will be a credit to the publisher" (Parshley's letter to Alfred Knopf, Aug. 8, 1949; quoted in Bogic 2009). Thanks to the translator's enduring wish to see de Beauvoir's book published in the United States, the publishing house Knopf was finally willing to take on the project. Critics admired the originality of de Beauvoir's main theory, but, above all, two recurring praise can be observed: de Beauvoir's exceptional intelligence shining through the book, and the prophecy that her book would become a success for decades to come. De Beauvoir's gifted writing, her cogent arguments, documented with numerous examples, and the many references to philosophy, depict her as a particularly brilliant intellectual woman. For *Nation's* journalist Patrick Mullahy, *The Second Sex* "is in many ways a superb book, brilliantly

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<sup>39</sup> such as François Mauriac's infamous comment that "[de Beauvoir]'s vagina [had] no secrets for [him] any longer": "Désormais je sais tout sur le vagin de votre patronne." Beauvoir, *La Force des choses*, 1963: 205

written with a broad scope and keen psychological insight.” (Mullahy 1953). Sociologist Robert Bierstedt shared Mullahy’s opinion and declared that de Beauvoir is “an extraordinary—and an extraordinarily brilliant—woman. One is frequently astounded and steadily impressed by her erudition. She is also profound....She has a penchant for paradox” (Bierstedt 1954: 232). De Beauvoir’s compulsive analysis and gathering of information is one of *The Second Sex’s* strong assets, and her intelligence was undeniably sharp and penetrating. According to a 1953 review in *The New Yorker*, *The Second Sex* was not only ‘a work of scholarship’, but ‘a work of art’, thus emphasising the book’s accomplishment (quoted in Tarrant 2006: 184). De Beauvoir’s talent was held in high esteem by many reviewers, and, as mentioned above, many of them anticipated *The Second Sex’s* future success, as for instance, the anthropologist Ashley Montagu who declared in *The Saturday Review*, that *The Second Sex* was “a book that will be read long after most works which have been written on the subject will have been forgotten” (Montagu 1953). The lasting success of de Beauvoir’s book also meant financial profit, both for the author, and the publishing house, the latter ‘should have little trouble selling it a ten dollars a copy’, suggested a perceptive reviewer, Dwight MacDonald, journalist for *The Reporter* (MacDonald 1953: 40).

According to Deirdre Bair, besides the public reviews on *The Second Sex*, the reception of the book can be seen through the complimentary letters the author received from 1953 until her death in 1986. The biographer explained how “sacks of letters from American readers poured into Knopf’s offices and were duly sent on to Mrs. Bradley [Beauvoir’s agent in Paris], who had them all delivered to the Rue de la Bûcherie and a delighted Beauvoir” (Bair 1990: 439). The long correspondence between the author and her readers has not only pleased de Beauvoir but also showed how *The Second Sex* was received. Although some were meant to express discontentment with the book’s ideas, many of them display the genuine gratitude the readers felt towards the author because the groundbreaking book had an ‘epiphany’ aspect to it, and many women wrote to de Beauvoir to let her know how her book changed their lives. The private letters sent to de Beauvoir only give us a partial account of the book’s reception, as not everyone contacted the author to review the book, but it generally tends to show that the book had a deep influence on its readers. The strongest illustration of that impact can be attested through the works of later feminists, such as Kate Millett or Betty Friedan, whose ideas seem indebted to de Beauvoir. Betty Friedan concedes, for example, that *The Second Sex* “led (her) to whatever original analysis of women’s existence (she) (has) been able to contribute to the Women’s movement and to its unique politics” (Friedan 1975: 16). The influence of de Beauvoir

on Second Wave American feminists cannot be underestimated; authors such as Shulamith Firestone, Kate Millett, Roxanne Dunbar, or Katie Sarachild stated their debt to *The Second Sex*; Kate Millett for example declared that Beauvoir's critique of D.H. Lawrence is similar to the technique she uses in her *Sexual Politics* (1969).<sup>40</sup>

It is to be noted that some observant early reviewers noticed in 1953, that 'Mademoiselle is without a plan'<sup>41</sup>, and that the opus did not offer a guide to a feminist movement, which was crucial for women's condition to evolve. But, according to Michèle Le Doeuff, *The Second Sex* was 'the movement before the movement' (Le Doeuff 2007: 57), it inspired and prepared second-wave feminism and, interestingly enough, interest in *The Second Sex* was in turn rekindled after the publication of other landmarks of feminism, such as Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963). As de Beauvoir herself puts it, "at least [she] helped the women of [her] time and generation to become aware of themselves and their situation" (*Force of Circumstance*, 1978: 202).

But the book was not unanimously celebrated either, and, after the release of the first English translation, *The Second Sex* was criticised for the masculinist views it conveyed, as well as its lack of scientific rigour and objectivity. Reviewers argue that *The Second Sex* is no scientific treatise, and many feel that it is a sound ground to question the arguments given by de Beauvoir. That recurring criticism of the book partly stems from the promotion it received, which emphasized the scientific cachet of *The Second Sex* (Bogic 2009: 15). If we look at the section on 'biological data', which follows the introduction to the book, we can notice that de Beauvoir's treatment of the animal kingdom in a rather anthropomorphic manner leaves her readers sceptical because she tends to ascribe terms describing human behaviour to animals.<sup>42</sup> Those sorts of views seem excessive to readers with a more scientific background, especially as the book, as was mentioned before, was promoted as a scientific essay. As a philosopher, de Beauvoir follows the phenomenological method, which means that she goes from concrete examples to more serious philosophical reflection (one of her main areas being, for instance,

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<sup>40</sup> "I had a section on D.H. Lawrence which was, I now realize, painfully indebted to her analysis of Lawrence in *The Second Sex* (...) Now I realize that I was probably cheating all over the place, and owed a great deal to what she had said." Millett, Kate. 1989. *Daughters of de Beauvoir*. edited by Penny Forster and Imogen Sutton. The Women's Press. p.23

<sup>41</sup> as poet Phyllis McGinley declared to *The Saturday Review of Literature*.

<sup>42</sup> She refers for instance to the female wildcats as being 'inert', 'shrewd', 'stupid' and 'humiliated' under the male's embrace. (*The Second Sex*, loc.650)

relations between human beings), and that process is very noticeable in the 'biological data' part. In that section, the author goes from explaining the notion of 'division' between sexes in view of reproduction, to a bigger question about the inception of that division, as well as the concrete consequences it has had on human beings' lived experience.

In addition to her lack of scientific method, de Beauvoir has been accused of taking her life (and that of others) as a case-study, which might not abide by scientific objectivity, but is consistent with existential phenomenology. For instance, the following quotation by journalist Dwight MacDonald (who predicted a commercial success for *The Second Sex*, as we saw earlier) is rather telling: "If the author were writing as a novelist, a poet, or even as a philosopher, there would be nothing against her viewing reality from her own special angle. But she pretends to be writing as a scientific observer, and therefore a good deal of her book is dangerously misleading where it is not absurd" (MacDonald 1953: 40). It refers back to the deceptive advertising the book received in the Anglophone world, but also to the inadequate translation itself. Indeed, not translating, or simply deleting, philosophical passages helped to depict de Beauvoir as a scientific author, as opposed to a philosophical writer, which will be the subject of a further discussion.

In spite of the meticulous research that underpins the writing of the book, Beauvoir seems —according to her critics— to mainly rely on literature as evidence for her theories. The extensive use of literary examples (which, it can be argued, is one of the book's strong points) is for instance criticised by the British sociologist Mary Evans, who reproaches de Beauvoir for being too quick in condemning authors such as Montherlant, D.H. Lawrence, Claudel, or Breton, and only looking at the surface of their work.<sup>43</sup> Interestingly enough, however, Kate Millett will opt for the same strategy in her book *Sexual Politics* (1969), which is another pillar of feminism denouncing the politics of patriarchy. In that magnum opus, Millett analyzes the works of literary authors, such as Henry Miller and Norman Mailer, but also, D.H. Lawrence, just as de Beauvoir did two decades earlier.

Yet another frequent comment on de Beauvoir's work is that she is Sartre's ardent disciple, so that she does not develop her own concepts, but also, that she is a masculinist,

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<sup>43</sup> "[...]a great deal of the rest of the book uses literature as evidence about social attitudes. This method [...]as various critics have pointed out, raises problems not only about the selection of the texts chosen, but also the way in which they are read." Evans, Mary. Simone de Beauvoir. London: Sage, 1996: 55

emulating men and assuming a misogynist discourse on women's bodies. It is true that her account of women's biology is quite bleak: menstruation particularly alienates women, pregnancy is painful and dangerous, and a happy sexuality is a rarity for most women. Beauvoir's pessimistic generalization provides us with food for thought regarding the reason why the female is, as she put it, "the slave of the species" (de Beauvoir 2010: 730). As Mary Evans states, "de Beauvoir too rapidly assumes that male biology is some sort of norm, from which women deviate" (quoted in Mahon 1997) and her depiction of female genitalia is somewhat derogatory: "the feminine sex is mysterious even to the woman herself, concealed, troubled, mucous, moist; it bleeds every month, it is often soiled with secretions, it has a secret and hazardous life..." (Simons 1995: 144). It does not follow, however, that de Beauvoir reveres the masculine, she merely specifies the reasons why women's bodies are an obstacle limiting their freedom and their grasp on the world. She encourages women to endorse so-called 'masculine' qualities and to act on their lives, but because those qualities should firstly be considered as 'human' qualities, not gender-related features.

### 2.3. The link between the English translation and the reception of *Le Deuxième Sexe*

What is particularly interesting about those critiques is that they do not mention the fact that the book is a translation<sup>44</sup>. De Beauvoir's ideas and examples are commented upon without considering the possible mistranslations, condensing, or even the substantive deletions present in the English translation. Many reviewers judged de Beauvoir's style and turns of phrases from the English translation, even though the latter misrepresents the French author in many respects, as we will see below. The writer Elizabeth Hardwick, for instance, describes the experience of reading *The Second Sex* as "gasping, straining, remembering, trying to remember, pointing out, denying, agreeing with qualification, the reader collapses at last, still muttering, 'yes, but...' and 'where are we?'" (Hardwick 1953: 321)

In her particularly long and insightful review, she praises a lot of de Beauvoir's ideas, but is disappointed by the expression, and especially the pace, of the text. Furthermore, *The Second Sex* is not only said to be exhausting to read, but is also "not very carefully composed, or even, on the whole, particularly well-written", according, this time, to British scholar Terry Keefe (quoted in Bair 1990: 388).

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<sup>44</sup> The translator's invisibility is a common issue which has been much analyzed in Translation Studies (Venuti 1995)

It is, however, regrettable to see that the critics did not take into account the numerous cuts in the translation, which should be considered in order to assess de Beauvoir's work: we can indeed speculate that, with deletions, the English version would need to be organized differently, shorter paragraphs for instance, and summarising ideas. As a matter of fact, Parshley did paraphrase de Beauvoir, which results in some paragraphs being radically altered and deviating from what the French philosopher originally wrote, making the whole thesis less detailed and reliable. By way of example, let us consider a footnote added by de Beauvoir, in which she illustrates a point made on myths about woman's body and its so-called magical powers (*Le Deuxième Sexe* I: 121). The author goes on listing practices in places such as Uganda, Nicobar and the islands of Borneo, as well as India, whereas the 1953 English translation condenses all of those examples into scarcely three sentences:

“Such beliefs are still deep-rooted and are alive today in many Indian, Australian, and Polynesian tribes. In some a sterile woman is considered dangerous for the garden, in others it is thought that the harvest will be more abundant if it is gathered by a pregnant woman; in India naked women formerly pushed the plow around the field at night, and so on. These beliefs and customs have always taken on all the more importance because they harmonized with the practical interests of the community.” (*The Second Sex*, 1989: 68, translated by H.M. Parshley)

De Beauvoir's text, however, is as follows:

“De telles croyances sont encore vivaces aujourd'hui parmi de nombreuses tribus d'Indiens, d'Australiens, de Polynésiens; elles ont pris d'autant plus d'importance qu'elles s'harmonisaient avec les intérêts pratiques de la collectivité.” (*LDS* I: 121)

Moreover, the above statement is illustrated thanks to a footnote (which Parshley partially combines with the main text):

“Dans l'Ouganda, chez les Bhanta des Indes, une femme stérile est considérée comme dangereuse pour le jardin. A Nicobar, on pense que la récolte sera plus abondante si elle est faite par une femme enceinte. [...] Dans l'Inde antérieure, des femmes nues poussent de nuit la charrue autour du champ [...]” (*LDS* *ibid.*)

It does not come as a surprise that reviewers find the text “not particularly well-written”, and denounce the supposed abruptness shown by de Beauvoir. Indeed, de Beauvoir seems rather brusque in her writing, which is not the impression she gives to her French readers. Without going as far as Toril Moi’s statement that “Beauvoir’s French is lucid, powerful and elegantly phrased” (Moi 2010), I argue that the original French text is much less blunt than in Parshley’s version, partly because de Beauvoir’s sentences in French are particularly long, due to her predilection for semi-colons, and colons. Colons are often omitted by Parshley, which creates shorter (and more direct) sentences in the English text. If we consider, for example, the following sentence from the ‘Data of Biology’ section, we can notice the difference in rendering:

“Chez certains métazoaires la reproduction s’opère par schizogénèse, c’est-à-dire tronçonnement de l’individu dont l’origine est aussi asexuée, ou par blastogénèse, c’est-à-dire tronçonnement de l’individu produit lui-même par un phénomène sexuel: les phénomènes de bourgeonnement et de segmentation observés chez l’hydre d’eau douce, chez les Coelentérés, les Eponges, les Vers, les Tuniciers en sont des exemples bien connus.” (*Le Deuxième Sexe* I: 38)

“In many-celled animals or metazoans reproduction may take place asexually, either by schizogenesis—that is, by fission or cutting into two or more parts which become new individuals—or by blastogenesis—that is, by buds that separate and form new individuals. The phenomena of budding observed in the fresh-water hydra and other coelenterates, in sponges, worms, and tunicates, are well-known examples.” (*The Second Sex* 4)

The English translation is more concise, which might be in line with the formality of scientific writing, but gives a sense of harshness to de Beauvoir’s text, and thus changes her tone. Another, and even more compelling, example of the difference between de Beauvoir’s prose and the English translation can be found in the ‘History’ section, when de Beauvoir explains what it meant to be an heiress in the Middle Ages. Parshley’s rendering of that passage is so condensed that the original sentence is especially distorted, as shown by a close-reading of both French and English sentences:

“Une héritière, c’est une terre et un château: les prétendants se disputent cette proie et

la jeune fille n'a parfois que douze ans ou moins encore quand son père ou son seigneur la donnent en cadeau à quelque baron.” (*Le Deuxième Sexe* 1: 163)

“An heiress—that meant land and a castle. At twelve or less she might be given in marriage to some baron.” (*The Second Sex* 99)

The above abridgement is remarkably detrimental to de Beauvoir’s text: the translator depletes her cunningly crafted sentence, whose straightforward first clause —introducing a blunt reality— is followed by some more explanation, in order to make her readers realise the ruthless conditions of that era. The English sentence has lost all of the French passionate tone induced by de Beauvoir’s comparing the young girl to a mere prey (*une proie*), and the family’s complicity is equally omitted. We can also note that the author put emphasis on the extremely young age at which the heiress is given to marriage when she uses the French negation “ne...que” to state that the girl is *only* twelve, adding the adverb “encore” to further show that the heiress might be *even* younger than twelve years-old, but the laconic translation undermines that insistence.

The cutback affects both the content and the form because condensations do not render de Beauvoir’s original style of writing, but also because, if the original examples are deleted, then the author’s whole argument seems weaker, and she can indeed be accused of not presenting a solid study, and of relying on far-fetched conclusions. For instance, when references to ‘revolutionary feminism’ are at times erased, it is then particularly confusing for the readers to see this movement mentioned at other times in the translation, because it seems to come unexpectedly (Simons 1983: 562). Such cases of the negative impact of these cuts are not rare, and works by Beauvoir scholars Margaret Simons (1983), Toril Moi (2002) and Elizabeth Fallaize (1998) —among others— illustrate the misrepresentation of de Beauvoir’s treatise. For example, de Beauvoir’s repeated use of quotations and her habit of citing long paragraphs from novels or poems play a central role in her overall argumentation because it builds a stronger case and gathers different voices<sup>45</sup>, thus enhancing the diversity of voices heard in *Le Deuxième Sexe*. That concept of voices is a fundamental one in feminism, insofar as women have traditionally been deprived of voicing their ideas, opinions, or complaints, and that trope of preventing women from expressing themselves was used in Margaret Simons’s

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<sup>45</sup> We will examine the treatment of citations in more detail in the data analysis.



essay, which was entitled 'The Silencing of Simone de Beauvoir' (Simons 1983). Toril Moi notably illustrates the cuts in citations with a text by Virginia Woolf quoted at length in *Le Deuxième Sexe*, which has been completely removed in the English translation, thus burying the connection with Woolf, and depriving de Beauvoir's argument from an additional example by another woman writer, and, instead, giving the impression that de Beauvoir lists her own anecdotes in a somewhat authoritative manner (Moi 2002: 1010). Therefore, deleting important quotations has a huge impact on the way de Beauvoir and her treatise have been critiqued and received in the Anglophone world.

We can list at least three translation features which show why assessing the French author using the first English translation is detrimental to the readers' response towards *Le Deuxième Sexe*: firstly, and as already analyzed, the deletions are distorting de Beauvoir's argument, secondly, the mistranslation of French vocabulary (as for instance deceptive cognates) is misrepresenting the author, and so is, finally, the overlooking (or misunderstanding) of essential philosophical terms. Let us first see how the mistranslation of French terms (as for example words which seem alike in French and English) hinders how de Beauvoir's message is conveyed, sometimes rendering precisely the opposite of what was intended.

In her article on the necessity of a new translation<sup>46</sup>, Toril Moi explains that de Beauvoir's views on maternity, and the consequent common judgment about her as being against motherhood, stems from a translation issue (Moi 2002: 1024). Indeed the French adverb 'actuellement', meaning 'at present', has been translated by 'actually', a familiar false friend and, therefore, a basic mistranslation, which nevertheless completely distorts de Beauvoir's views.<sup>47</sup> In the French text, the author explains that it was, at the time she wrote her book, very difficult for women to undertake maternity in complete freedom, and she goes on to show that it was due to specific economic circumstances, which could hopefully be changed. That is why she continues by saying that "il faut ajouter que, *faute de* crèches, de jardins d'enfants convenablement organisés, il suffit d'un enfant pour paralyser entièrement l'activité de la femme." (*Le Deuxième Sexe* II: 618, my emphasis), implying that, with proper facilities and

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<sup>46</sup> which was finally released in 2009, and which will be the case-study of the present thesis.

<sup>47</sup> "Il y a une fonction féminine qu'il est *actuellement* presque impossible d'assumer en toute liberté, c'est la maternité" (*Le Deuxième Sexe* II: 618, my emphasis)

"There is one feminine function that it is *actually* almost impossible to perform in complete liberty. It is maternity." (*The Second Sex* 1989: 696, translated by Parshey, my emphasis)

concrete help for women, maternity would not be the burden it was when she conducted her study. However, Parshley does not translate the French 'faute de' as 'for lack of', and instead opts for 'in spite of', totally distorting de Beauvoir's meaning. The English translation thus reads: "it must be said in addition that *in spite of* convenient day nurseries and kindergartens, having a child is enough to paralyze a woman's activity entirely" (*The Second Sex* 1989: 696-97, translated by Parshley, my emphasis). De Beauvoir's point was that, without adequate *crèches*, women cannot pursue activities other than taking care of children, but the translation implies that children are always paralyzing women's activities, even when suitable nurseries are available, which is not what the author originally wrote, and which depicts de Beauvoir as particularly critical towards maternity.

If we move to the philosophical aspect of *Le Deuxième Sexe*, then we can notice that many Existentialist terms, such as 'réalité humaine' (the French translation of Heidegger's Dasein), and 'en-soi' ('in-itself', stemming from Hegel's 'An-sich', and used in Sartre's theory) have not been recognised and translated as philosophical phrases, however, it is to be noted that Existentialism, and especially Sartre's work, had only partially reached the Anglophone world at the time Parshley translated *Le Deuxième Sexe*. Sartre's *La Nausée* (1938) was translated into English in 1949, but his famous essay *L'Être et le Néant* (*Being and Nothingness*) was rendered into English as late as 1956 (three years after *The Second Sex*), which helps to explain that Existentialism was still rather new in the United States, and, therefore, Parshley had a considerable challenge to face. Nevertheless, the consequence is that most philosophical occurrences in *Le Deuxième Sexe* have been eclipsed from the English version. Margaret Simons was the first to discuss the mistranslation of philosophy<sup>48</sup>, and she gives us examples where the faulty translation not only fails to convey de Beauvoir's philosophical message, but also misrepresents the author. For instance, and going back to the concept of 'réalité humaine', Simons informs us that in the Existentialist tradition, human beings do not have quintessential 'nature' because they can transcend their concrete situation, and still, the translator rendered that concept of 'réalité humaine' as 'the real nature of man', which is in contradiction with the phrase used by de Beauvoir (Simons 1983: 563). Another specific philosophical term used by Existentialists is that of 'alienation', a notion borrowed from Hegel and which was, as Simons reminds us, 'important to both Marxism and existentialism' (Simons *ibid.*). Parshley translated that term as 'projection' or 'identification', and the irregular phrasing further

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<sup>48</sup>According to Toril Moi, who says that Margaret Simons 'opened the way' (Moi 2002: 1006).

conceals the Hegelian affiliation.

Ironically, some theorists drew on a mistranslated text when developing their own conceptualisation, but quoted what de Beauvoir allegedly said, either taking on what is said in *The Second Sex*, or criticising it and stating the opposite. Judith Butler belongs to the first category and her groundbreaking *Gender Trouble* (1990) draws on de Beauvoir's famous sentence: 'on ne naît pas femme, on le devient' (*one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman*), and expands it into her own concept of deconstructing gender, but de Beauvoir's influence on her work is disputed by other philosophers and Beauvoir specialists, such as Toril Moi. The latter argues that Butler's reference to 'instrumentality' when dealing with the body is not coming from de Beauvoir's text, but from Parshley's mistranslation of the following passage:

"Si le corps n'est pas une *chose*, il est une *situation*: c'est notre *prise sur le monde* et *l'esquisse* de nos projets" (*Le Deuxième Sexe* I: 75; emphasis in the text and mine)

which was rendered by Parshley as:

"if the body is not a *thing*, it is a *situation* [...] it is the *instrument of our grasp upon the world, a limiting factor* for our projects." (*The Second Sex* 34; emphasis in the text and mine)

We can notice the addition in English of the word 'instrument', which is not present in the source text: de Beauvoir only mentions our grasp of the world, and 'instrument' has been added, which leads Toril Moi to declare that Judith Butler is not quoting de Beauvoir, but Parshley, and she goes on to say that 'Parshley may think of the body as an instrument and as a limiting factor for some inner spirit, but Beauvoir does not' (Moi 2002: 1023). However, a point can be made against Moi's commenting on Butler's reading of de Beauvoir, namely that, if de Beauvoir talks about '*prise sur le monde*' (*grasp of the world*) on page 75, she says, two pages before, that the body is the instrument of our grasp upon the world, 'le corps étant l'*instrument* de notre prise sur le monde' (*Le Deuxième Sexe* I: 73; my emphasis), which was rendered by Parshley as 'the body being the *instrument* of our grasp upon the world' (*The Second Sex* 32; my emphasis). In this example, the over-translation<sup>49</sup> does not distort de Beauvoir's ideas, so it is not problematic, but it is worth mentioning that most theorists who were influenced by de Beauvoir's work got

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<sup>49</sup> which is 'an additional specification of meaning' (Dussart 2005: 107-119; my translation)

access to her theory through the English translation, (relying on it and using it as an original piece of work), despite its many issues.

Since Margaret Simons's major study on the abridgements (Simons 1983), the cuts and the mistranslations described earlier led Beauvoir scholars to urge publishers to commission another version. The issues raised seemed sufficient ground for a retranslation, and still Knopf did not wish to undertake a new translation, as the first version was selling steadily. Scholars engaged in a debate which lasted over two decades before a retranslation of de Beauvoir's pivotal work was finally on its way. Despite the well-founded reasons to ask for a new translation, we need to take into account the process of translating, and the necessary managing and negotiating which occurs between translating agents (be they translators, editors and publishers, for instance). We can indeed consider that creating a translation requires a production team consisting of people engaging in a variety of tasks, from selecting the texts to be translated, to translating, editing, publishing, and marketing the translation, and thus, the responsibility for the final product is split between all those agents (Milroy 1987: 46–7). Translators are given a translator's brief, which indicates what is expected of them, and which will consequently determine the translation project (Berman 1995). Their freedom of choice and the independence they might enjoy is, therefore, curbed, and the demands imposed on them by publishers can be a huge constraining factor in their work, a point we will consider in more depth in a further section. Therefore, we can argue that academics such as Margaret Simons, Toril Moi, or Deirdre Bair are perhaps too quick to condemn Parshley and the publishers, without acknowledging the reality of the challenges they faced, such as the cuts asked of Parshley, as well as the lack of cooperation from de Beauvoir (who usually did not reply to the translator's letters), or the novelty of Existentialist terminology at the time (Bogic 2009).

Taking a Translation Studies' perspective on the issue of *The Second Sex's* inadequacy, as opposed to approaching the problems solely from a Beauvoir Studies' point of view, would provide the two disciplines with additional insights, and bearing that in mind, we will delve into what Translation Studies' literature can tell us about reception and translation.



## CHAPTER 2: FROM RECEPTION TO RETRANSLATION

The reviews which the first English translation of *Le Deuxième Sexe* received call for a more thorough analysis of the impact of translation, while pointing to the link between reception and translation. The present chapter will deal with the translator's agency, the latter being central to the reception of the target text in the target culture. We will first examine how reception theory can help us determine the relationship between meaning, text, and author, before focusing on the role of the translator. Finally, we will analyze how the specific case of retranslation affects the translator's agency.

### 1. Reception theory

Reception theory analyzes the reader's response to a text. It boomed in the 1970s, when theorists such as Wolfgang Iser and Hans Robert Jauss developed the 'Constance school', and examined the 'act of reading'. Reception Theory is particularly used in literature so as to explore the link between texts and their readers, who are both caught in a double bind because they have an impact on each other, and we will see how they both affect and limit each other. The author's goal is to interest, touch, or disturb the reader, authors write for an audience, the first reader being themselves, and then an ideal reader for whom they are pitching their work, or in the words of Iser: 'like most writers, I initially address an audience of one—myself. However, like most writers I live in the hope that my own preoccupations will strike answering chords in others.' (Iser 2000: 314). The notion of the ideal reader encompasses different definitions, such as that of Wayne Booth's, giving full control to the author when he states that 'the author creates [...] an image of himself and another image of his reader; he makes his reader, as he makes his second self', adding that 'the most successful reading is one in which the created selves, author and reader, can find complete agreement.' (Booth 1983: 138) Iser has been inspired by Booth's ideas, whom he quotes himself, and his own notion of the 'implied reader' requires that the author creates an image of an ideal reader in his/her mind, designing the text so as to make the actual reader become this implied reader. Thus, in Iser's view, the reader is central to the creation of the text, giving it its life, or as he puts it, 'it is in the reader that the text comes to life' (Iser 1978: 19) With the image of an implied reader in mind, writers craftily arrange their text, use their words with care, so as to create specific effects on their readers, which is a view shared by Umberto Eco, who thinks that the reader is indirectly present in the writing of the text,

considering s/he is part of the strategies used by the writer : “author and reader as textual strategies” (Eco 1984: 10).

Therefore, and according to Samuel Weber, the reader is thus controlled by the text, and their role, although crucial, is restricted and subordinate to that of the author, “the relation of reader and text is thus by no means reciprocal or symmetrical” (Weber 1986: 186). For Jonathan Culler, the notion of the ‘ideal reader’ still differs from that of other theorists: it refers to an obvious ‘theoretical construct’, which can be described using the notion of acceptability, meaning that the text has to be logically ‘accepted’ by the reader (Culler 1980: 111). What is, however, key for reception theory is the context of writing, and the socio-cultural elements contained by and surrounding the text. This is true for literary criticism, as well as for translation, because understanding the language itself is only one component of understanding: the meaning of the text requires extra-linguistic knowledge, such as apprehending the historical context under which the text has been written, as well as literary norms and conventions. So the reader needs to be aware of all those norms and knowledge, but at the same time, they are in turn helping him/her to learn about himself/herself and to attain cultural transcendence. That is also true for Translation Studies, as the reception of the original has an influence on its translation(s). We will continue to explore the issue of meaning and of the tie between the text, the author and the readers, while considering the notion of fidelity (and that of faithfulness, which I use to express the same concept).

The question of fidelity underpins much of the discourse of translation although the concept is seen as misleading and somewhat reductive in Translation Studies. Furthermore, we will observe that it is not that simple to determine to whom one needs to be faithful, as we will see in the following section that the meaning of the text itself can be difficult to grasp.<sup>50</sup>

### 1.1. The meaning of the text can be an elusive and changing matter

Meaning is not fixed and permanent, because of changes in interpretation, but also because identifying the meaning of a text is neither simple nor guaranteed. Moreover, meaning itself is fleeting because it is not a case of unveiling a content already present in the text, finding meaning is more about an active search for the links between the different elements of the text

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<sup>50</sup> The notion of faithfulness in Translation Studies will be explored in more detail in Chapter Three.

and how their association creates sense, because, as Derrida puts it, “pursuing meaning is [...] not a matter of revealing a content that is already “there”” (Derrida 1972a/1981: 26). If meaning is interpreted in a certain way at a certain period of time, it does not follow that the same text will be perceived in the same manner at a later time, and that phenomenon can be experienced by even one reader. Depending on the stage of their lives, readers are able to read the same text but with different eyes, so to speak, because a reader does not start reading a book from scratch, bare of all thoughts and influences, but is, in the words of Umberto Eco, “bound to enter into an interplay of stimulus [...] [and] to supply his own existential credentials, the sense conditioning which is peculiarly his own, a defined culture, a set of taste, personal inclinations and prejudice” (Eco 1979). So a young and naïve reader discovering the remarkable ‘*Le Rouge et le Noir*’ (1830) by Stendhal might feel sympathy for the main protagonist after a first reading, to re-read the novel at a later date and interpret his actions in a completely different (and perhaps more severe) light, and then to study the text in the course of a literature class and develop yet another understanding of the book<sup>51</sup>. Readers start a book with their own personal and current mindset, with different abilities to comprehend the text, and with different personal opinions and biases which will affect their understanding of the text. We agree with George Steiner that literature depends on ‘a never-ending, though very often unconscious, act of internal translation’ (Steiner 1998: 31), which implies that when we read, even in our own mother tongue, we need to constantly decipher and translate words into meaning, in which case we need to choose between different definitions and different interpretations, and, therefore, no two readings of the same text (even by the same reader) are the same.

Then, even taking one reader as an example, we can argue that meaning is not rigidly ingrained into a text, and that its understanding depends on a variety of factors, one being the readers themselves and how their own subjectivity influences their reading, and another, for instance, that the text belongs to its era, as shown by the references it features. Across periods, historical, social or political aspects, among others, are shifting. They can be well-known at the time when the original text was written, but not recall anything in later readers’ minds. In that case, the meaning is also volatile because it escapes ulterior readers. What should not elude them, however, are examples conveyed by the text, such as human experiences shared by the greatest number, which appeal to the readers by their virtue of being human, rather than

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<sup>51</sup>*Le Rouge et le Noir* (*The Red and the Black*) is a complex psychological novel about the life of Julien Sorel, an ambitious young man who will use his intelligence, and the women he befriends, in order to climb the social ladder.



historical and changing. Some references, however, are marked by their time and can seem out-of-date at other times, which is seen with particularly ancient authors such as Aristotle depicting women as 'defective' and 'lacking qualities' (quoted in *The Second Sex*, loc.379). Such statements can be interpreted differently depending on the readers themselves (their age, gender, cultural background, religion, etc.) and the era in which such words are spoken, so that no definite interpretations and critiques of the text take precedence over others. Moreover, there is never any guarantee for the reader that s/he understood the text as intended by the author, which might be due to failings on the part of the reader, but also from the author's own difficulties in expressing ideas. Umberto Eco points to that particular problem when he explains that:

[...] every act of reading is a difficult transaction between the competence of the reader (the reader's world knowledge) and the kind of competence that a given text postulates in order to be read in an economic way. (Eco 1990: 183)

The reader needs to be aware of cultural and lexical features available at the time of the author (for instance, the then most common meaning of a given word), and, in turn, the author has to recognise the existence of the 'Author on the Threshold', which is described by Eco as:

the threshold between the intention of a given human being and the linguistic intention displayed by a textual strategy. (Eco *ibid.* 185)

Some elements go beyond the author's control, as illustrated by Eco when he quotes a poem by Giacomo Leopardi in which some letters (which are, incidentally, the ones forming the name of his beloved one) are omnipresent. Eco shows that anagrams and pseudoanagrams of the name Silvia run through the poem, which might be an example of the 'Author on the Threshold'. (Eco *ibid.* 185-86). We will now explore the link between the author and her/his text in more detail.

## 1.2. The text and its author

The writing process does not ensure that the author's thoughts can be expressed with complete accuracy in the writing practice, because language is not an absolute and perfect tool, and the result is that entirely comprehending a text is in effect impossible, "nothing is ever comprehended, but rather designated and distorted" (Nietzsche, *Will to Power* p.301; 351). The

struggle to render thoughts with words might stem from the fact that “from the moment that there is meaning there are nothing but signs. *We think only in signs*” (Derrida 1997: 50; emphasis in original), a phrase helping us to understand that the parallel between words and signs is not a straightforward one<sup>52</sup>. Also, the writer intends to convey her or his message, always bearing in mind that the text is intended for a reader. By doing this, the author constructs the image of an ‘ideal reader’, but even with that image in mind, the mediation between her/his thoughts and language is not clear, especially when considering that “every single time something is done with a purpose in view, something fundamentally different and other occurs” (Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, p.351). We can argue that there is always a loss between the thought in the mind and its rendition in written words, due to the imperfection of language. On the other hand, a writer needs to write and rewrite her/his text so as to go to the limits of language, and to use and even stretch language according to her/his own intents, until s/he is pleased with the final draft, but the actual result upon the reader is never guaranteed. A reader who apprehends reading as a dialogue between the writer and herself/himself feels that s/he cannot be completely sure of grasping the intended meaning of the author: the hints allowing her/him to grasp the meaning are the text itself. Therefore, even with the best of will, the reader faces ambiguities, as well as the unsaid inherent to all texts, which will lead us to determine the extent to which a writer is in control of her/his text.

The text and its author do not have a symbiotic relationship: they are not one and the same thing. Drawing on the notion that the text goes beyond its author and has an independent life (which will lead me briefly to mention the case of anonymous texts), I contend that the text does not equate to its author, so that it seems ill-advised to judge the latter through her/his writings, which is a particularly relevant and fascinating question when looking at de Beauvoir’s work. Since Roland Barthes’ work on the ‘death of the author’, it has become customary to question the authority of the author and to doubt the total command s/he has over the text. We saw above that the writer, even if having an image of an ideal reader in mind, cannot be sure of the impact s/he will have on the readers, and the very notion of an ‘ideal’ reader stresses the fact that the text will not, in reality, be perceived by all readers in the same way. According to Barthes, the voice stemming from the text, which makes the reader question who is speaking (is it, for instance, the narrator, or the author?) is shattered by the act of writing because ‘writing is the destruction of every voice, of every point of origin’ (Barthes 1977), so that we cannot

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<sup>52</sup>The relationship between words and signs calls for a reference to Ferdinand de Saussure’s distinction between *sign*, *signified* and *signifier* (Saussure 2011: 67).

systematically link author and text as if they were one and the same. That issue has been particularly harsh and long-lasting for Simone de Beauvoir, because her work, relying heavily on biographies, memoirs, and novels partly inspired by her own life, was disparaged as representing her life, a criticism which Toril Moi associates with sexism. Indeed, the scholar argues that, by virtue of being a woman writer, de Beauvoir suffered even more than her male counterparts from having her work flatly reduced to her own personal life, so that 'her "non-personal" topics tend to be disparaged as mere displacements of the personal' (Moi 2008)<sup>53</sup>. I feel sympathetic towards Moi's views and can only notice that de Beauvoir's work is too often identified with her relationship with Sartre, whereas the contrary is not the case, which underlines the sexist bias of such judgement. In addition, I also agree with Barthes's claim that all authors and their texts are wrongly mutually associated to each other, and with his exhortation for readers to focus on the text itself, which would be less limiting and more beneficial to all writers, regardless of their gender.

If 'the author is dead' and we recognise the limit of her/his input to the texts, we can then let the text speak for itself, accepting at the same time that there is a plurality of possible interpretations. The text, once written, has an independent life from the author, and this is especially illustrated in the case of anonymous texts, which can even become canonical and play an important cultural role, without their author (and consequently without her/his personal background, gender, age, or any other factors used to discern people) being even known. Anonymous texts urge us to consider texts as independent productions and to appreciate the text for itself. However, we can reflect upon whether the authorial presence does not still exist for the reader, even if only imagined, and if the reader does not still consider that the author is confiding in her/him, as if the author was 'feeding' the text, and so, ultimately, that the author's spectre is overwhelming and ubiquitous. Here the distinction made by Barthes between author and writer is useful because it explains that 'the author performs a function, the writer an activity' (Barthes, 1972: 186), which means that the author is seen as a sort of almighty agent, trying (and failing) to establish her/his presence in language, whereas the writer aims 'to give evidence, to explain, to instruct' (Barthes, *ibid.*, 189). This educational role which the writer wants to play implies that s/he 'does not admit that his[/her] message is reflexive [...], and that we can read in it, diacritically anything else but what [s/]he means' (*ibid.* 189-90), s/he wants to

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<sup>53</sup> We discussed the notion of 'woman writer' in Chapter One.

use language to convey her/his message and have a concrete impact on the readers, a view which —as shown in Chapter One— is very similar to de Beauvoir’s own outlook on literature.

Once again using de Beauvoir as an example, we can mention the issue of judging the book and its author as if they were the same thing: I contend that it is irrelevant to judge people through their writings because authors do not equate their works. The literary persona displayed by the writer, that is her/his voice as the author of a book, is marked by time, and is restricted to the text itself, in other words, a writer advocating something with passion is not necessarily applying her/his theories in her/his own life, because a work of art (literature in our case) goes beyond its author, and beyond the fact its author is human. For instance, recent publications of de Beauvoir’s passionate letters to her lover Nelson Algren offended some of her readers, who saw an impostor in her for writing a powerful pamphlet against women’s subjection, while being herself under the spell of someone, and acting amorously. What it shows, however, is the contradiction of human nature, and the very ambiguity de Beauvoir exposes in her *Ethics of Ambiguity*, in which she reveals that this awareness starts at adolescence when a teenager “notices the contradictions among adults as well as their hesitations and weakness. Men stop appearing as if they were gods, and at the same time the adolescent discovers the human character of the reality about him” (Beauvoir 1986, trans. B. Frechtman). It is much more interesting for the readers, albeit more complex, that the author does not parallel the text, because it gives depth to the reading experience, and more strength to the text. In *Le Deuxième Sexe*, de Beauvoir’s well-crafted literary voice is interwoven with a variety of other voices<sup>54</sup>, such as testimonies of anonymous women, quotations from psychologists, from other writers, philosophers, extracts from novels, poems, etc., which give richness to her treatise, as we saw previously. The plurality of voices reinforces de Beauvoir’s point, and at the same time lends a kind of multi-authorship to her book, showing that the women’s question is ubiquitous and plural, so that the exclusive relationship between the writer and the text is disputed, and this is compounded with translation.

### 1.3. Interpreting form and content

The previous section highlighted the fact that meaning can be elusive, especially as the relationship between the text and its author is not straightforward and does not necessarily help the reader to grasp the meaning of the text. It can, thus, be argued that the text itself (i.e. its

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<sup>54</sup> also referred to as a *polyphony* (Bakhtin 1984: 18), as will be taken up in the Data Analysis section.

syntax, grammar, terminology, etc.) should guide the reader, drawing on the following notion that content and form blend together.

According to Lakshmi Holström, the text is ‘that marriage between form and content, style and subject’ (quoted in Bassnett and Bush 2006: 44), which indicates that the actual text (including its linguistic aspects) embraces the message conveyed by the book, so that style and meaning are joined together, hence the metaphor of marriage. We saw earlier that the text does not equate to its author, and still, the writer’s input is conveyed by the words, the structure, and the syntax. Samuel Weber argues that the translation of literary and philosophical texts is particular because, for those types of texts, ‘the transmission of meaning cannot be separated from the way that meaning is articulated or signified’ (Weber 2005: 65)<sup>55</sup>. The intertwining of language and meaning is illustrated in the following example from *Le Deuxième Sexe*:

‘C’est selon cette perspective qu’Engels dans *L’Origine de la Famille* retrace l’histoire de la femme: cette histoire dépendrait essentiellement de celle des techniques.’ (*Le Deuxième Sexe*: 1)

‘Engels retraces woman’s history from this point of view in *The Origin of the Family*, supposedly, that history principally depends on that of technology.’ (my translation, my emphasis)

Here, we can contend that de Beauvoir uses the conditional mode in French in order to express doubt, so that this mode reflects the idea conveyed by the author<sup>56</sup>. That instance would seemingly justify keeping close to the source text in terms of linguistic elements, as advocated by Gambier, when we retranslate texts. The latter speaks of ‘retour’ (*return*) and ‘rapprochement’ (*coming closer*) to the source-text (Gambier 1994), which reminds us of the illusion according to which the original text has some intrinsic fixed meaning, which, as we saw above, is not the case.

The translator is first of all a reader of the text, which also gives her/him the difficulties any reader is exposed to when discovering a text. One of the challenges faced by the translator is to read and understand the source text (assuming the translator’s command of the source

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<sup>55</sup> The specific case of the translation of philosophy will be analyzed in Chapter Three.

<sup>56</sup> As suggested by Toril Moi (Moi 2010). This example will be further explained in Chapter Five.

language is outstanding, and that s/he is specialised in her/his field), because her/his own interpretation will be required, but it is a task s/he will have to commit to, so as to try to convey the source text's message. Gayatri Spivak even describes translation as 'the most intimate act of reading', which will then lead the translator, to 'surrender to the text' and 'respond to the special call of the text' (Spivak 2009: 205). That gist of the text, although unfixed, can be pinpointed to some extent by the translator's close reading of the text, and with the help of other interpretations by scholars and specialists of the source culture, which supports moulding the target text according to a project. That notion of a project brings us to reflect on the impact of the translator in rendering a text so as to strengthen the original author's position in the target culture, a political involvement fostered by Lawrence Venuti, as we will see further in Chapter Three. Venuti himself admits that some of his translations have been influenced by his readings of interpretations of the source text, and that his project was to help disseminate the works of the foreign source author:

"my interpretive translation should be seen as a transformation of the poem, *grounded, it is true, on information about De Angelis's readings in literature, literary criticism, and philosophy, but aimed at circulating this body of writing in the English-language culture where it continues to be alien and marginal*" (Venuti 1995: 292; my emphasis)<sup>57</sup>.

The above quotation highlights the translator's subjectivity and points to her/his role as disseminator of the source text into the target text, which will lead us to analyse further the impact of the translator, aiming to outline her/his role and responsibility.

## **2. The role of the translator**

### **2.1. The translator as a mediating agent**

The translator's position is indeed central to the broader issue of faithfulness. Where do translators stand, what is their role, and status? Trying to leave aside the common stereotypes and metaphors describing the translator's task, we will nevertheless concede that translators are increasingly seen as mediating agents who attend to the source-text, its author, and the target readers all at the same time. We will first briefly introduce the notion of the translator's

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<sup>57</sup> We will see in a later section that I suggest that very same strategy for feminist philosophical texts, and in particular for *Le Deuxième Sexe*, but without resorting to Venuti's foreignizing blueprint.

invisibility, while adopting a different angle than that defended by Lawrence Venuti (which will be the object of a following discussion), to then examine the role of the translator from both ethical and more practical viewpoints. Defining that role will lead us to see the necessity for the translator to choose, and we will reflect on how her/his status as writer entails responsibility.

Arguing that the translator has been perceived, and even encouraged to be, invisible, as a silent copyist in the shadow of the author, we will turn to Venuti's work to explain that the translator needs to be visible, and that her/his work should to be recognised as a translation, as a creative work in its own right. We already saw earlier that, according to Venuti, in the realm of fluent translation, the latter seems to be stemming from the target culture, and not from a foreign culture, and, in order to create that deception, the translator needs to make her/his work as unnoticeable as possible (Venuti 1995: 5). Venuti further explains that there is a causal link between the requirement for fluency, the invisibility of the translator, and the visibility of the foreign writer, stating that "the more fluent the translation, the more invisible the translator, and, presumably, the more visible the writer or meaning of the foreign text" (Venuti 1995: 1-2). That state of affairs in translation is detrimental to the translator, whose role is not recognised, or as Venuti —defining what invisibility consists of— puts it, "the translator's invisibility is thus a weird self-annihilation, a way of conceiving and practicing translation that undoubtedly reinforces its marginal status in Anglo-American culture" (Venuti 1995: 8). Besides acknowledging Venuti's point, I would like to consider the implications of the translator's invisibility for the original writer, which will expose the necessity of disputing translators' invisibility, not only for the benefit of the translator, but for the author as well. My contention is that the source writer is depicted as the author of the book, which is not as straightforward in the case of translation<sup>58</sup>, because the target text has not been written by the original author, but was, rather, produced by the translator. And still, it is common practice to discuss a book (and its original author) without mentioning the translator, or even the fact that the book is a translation, and review it as if it was the original (a phenomenon I referred to when analysing the first critiques which *The Second Sex* received in the United States). Venuti adds that "in the regime of transparent discourse, where fluency routinely makes the translator invisible, even reviewers who praise the translator by name *are likely to reduce the translation to the foreign author*" (Venuti 1995: 268; my emphasis), which makes it clear how we are confronted with an amalgamation between source and target texts, completely negating the translator in that process.

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<sup>58</sup> we will leave aside the case of self-translation for obvious reasons.

We noted earlier that the author does not equate its text, and that the latter should be accepted as it is, bearing in mind its limits, notably the restriction of intentional input from the author. However, the situation is slightly different with translation, because the translator does not experience the same authorial status as the source writer in the first place, so, instead of stating that ‘the translator is dead’, mimicking Barthes’s contention that ‘the author is dead’, we want the translator to be born, to be acknowledged. It is crucial from the point of view of the source writer too, as illustrates the following comment by Simone de Beauvoir when she discovered the scope of the cuts and abridgements made to her magnum opus: “I was dismayed to learn the extent to which Mr Parshley misrepresented me” (quoted in Simons 1983: 564). Her disappointment reveals how an author relies on the translator, and it shows the impact which the latter has on the reception of the foreign author in the target culture: if scholars reading de Beauvoir in the original French had not pinpointed the many mistranslations and cuts in the first English translation, de Beauvoir would have been regarded as a fuzzy thinker, an essentialist and a masculinist, without any chance of rehabilitation. Our point is not to condemn the first translator, because we already stated that he was urged to alter the text according to the publishers’ wish, and also that he had wrongly been chosen for a task which required vast philosophical knowledge. However, we contend that the invisibility of the translator is a threat to the source writer and a hindrance to fidelity, insofar as a translation (which might not accurately convey the source text’s message) can be treated as the original text due to the translator’s invisibility, and, thus, incorrectly depict the foreign writer. Here we are pointing to the moral duty of the translator, which is one facet of their role, and we will first examine the ethical responsibility expected of translators.

## 2.2 Ethical concerns and the translator’s moral responsibility

Ethical considerations explore the relationship between author and translator, but also between cultures, which give a mediating role to the translator. The translator can be said to aim to bring the target reader toward the source culture, towards another country, another language, an Other. The notion of the Other is stressed by Berman in *L’Épreuve de l’étranger* (1984), when he explains that ‘the ethical act consists in recognising and receiving the Other as an Other’ (Berman 1984; my translation), and in his view, translation is that very humanistic notion of openness to what is different, which posits him in total opposition to the imperialistic notion of subjugating the foreign text into one’s own culture. That aim of acknowledging difference is absolutely crucial for Berman, who states that “[translation] is connecting, or is *nothing*” (Berman



1984: 16; my translation; emphasis in original). But despite the urgency of his tone, Berman does not ask us to see the ethical approach as a “categorical imperative”, because he believes instead in the reflexivity of the translator in trying to bring languages and cultures together (Berman *ibid.* p.19). The translator has indeed huge responsibility in her/his work because s/he has ethical aspirations to bring cultures together, but s/he also has obligations towards the original source writer, who entrusts her/him with her/his work. If it seems relevant to use terms such as ‘duty’, ‘commission’, or ‘task’<sup>59</sup> when talking about the translator’s work, it is because s/he has a moral liability to render the original text as correctly as possible, without distortions and omissions. Another reason to deal with ethics in translation is because the translator’s role is that of an accomplice: by helping disseminating a writer’s work, s/he shares a responsibility. When accepting to take on her/his job and to translate a text, s/he knows that s/he will be the mediator helping the foreign text to enter the target culture and reach the target audience, which means that her/his choice of texts to work on is a conscious choice. A literary translator working on polemical and political works is aware of their content, their message; s/he is a reader of the foreign text, before being a translator. Therefore, getting involved in the translation of controversial texts is not harmless, even if the professionalism required of her/him should come before her/his own opinions. According to Anthony Pym, the ‘professionalism of the translator requires detachment rather than commitment’ (Pym 2011: 37), which reinforces the idea according to which translators remain invisible, effacing themselves and their subjectivity from the text, so as to let the original writer express herself/himself. But not all translators feel detached from the works they translate, and literary translators in particular are often bound to the foreign author through a link of passion, of admiration, of respect, to the point of being in awe of the source text and its author.

That does not necessarily result in being more ‘faithful’ to the latter, but it shows us that total objectivity is probably not possible to attain by the translators. Judith Woodsworth instructs us that the translation of Edgar Poe’s work by Charles Baudelaire had a tremendous impact on the translator, and also that he chose to translate Poe because he felt similar to him in the first place, turning his translator’s task into an obsession, and aiming to encourage the most positive reception of Poe’s books in France (Woodsworth 1988: 123). Lawrence Venuti assents with that idea and even urges the translator to have a strong link to the foreign author, not merely to admire her/him, but ‘there should also be an identity between them’, which is a decidedly strong

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<sup>59</sup> as in Walter Benjamin’s *The Task of the Translator* (1923).

concept binding the translator to the author, to, presumably, bestow the utmost degree of faithfulness on the translation (Venuti 1995: 273). Venuti uses the Italian word 'simpatico' to illustrate the idea that the translator should be as one with the author, that s/he should truly understand the author.

Choosing texts to translate is thus a decisive matter, because the translator's subjectivity and identity are at stake: a translator with feminist sympathies translating the works of D.H. Lawrence might find conflict between her/his own beliefs and the ideological content which needs to be rendered, but her/his professional expertise demands fidelity nevertheless<sup>60</sup>. And Mona Baker even goes further when she asserts that there should be 'mutual respect' between translators and their clients, which implies not 'working with a client for whom you have no respect' (Baker 2008: 17). Other practical factors have an impact on the ability of the translator to be faithful to the source text, such as the publisher's constraints. For instance, the translator's brief guides the work of the translator, as much as it curbs her/his freedom, so that her/his own wish to remain faithful to the foreign author can be restrained, in order, for instance, to publish a shorter target text compared to the source text.

### 2.3. The translator's subjectivity

However, despite the constraints imposed on the translators, I want to stress that their role is that of an active translating agent, whose choices are conscious decisions. Venuti emphasizes the viewpoint that translators have choices when he states that "[...]the freelance literary translator always exercises a choice concerning the degree and direction of the violence at work in any translating" (Venuti 1995: 19). Bearing that in mind, we can see how the translator's responsibility is deepened, and how her/his activity upon the text is reflective, which itself implies that the translator's subjectivity is central to the translation process. By subjectivity, I include the personal input any translator inevitably confers on the translation, because 'translators intervene in their productions, whether they want to or not' (Pym 2011: 39), so that neutrality is only an ideal goal, especially as some argue that 'any translation is always, and inevitably, also a form of abuse, or transgression' (Arrojo 1995: 27). The terms used by Rosemary Arrojo show the violence caused to the source text, and also clearly implies the activity (in opposition to passivity) of the translator.

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<sup>60</sup> we mentioned in Chapter One that de Beauvoir analyzes sexism in Lawrence's work in *Le Deuxième Sexe*.

Subjectivity also leads to the notion of a *subject*, as a 'person considered as a conscious agent' (*OED*), and thus an individual independently thinking, and writing, or what we can call the translator-as-writer. The latter is involved in the translation as a creative scripiter who shapes the target text, as opposed to a mere scribe. Surely the source text does not originate from the translator, but her/his role involves rendering a creation which, in order to fit the standards of the target language and to do justice to the source writer's style, has to be inventive. Venuti uses the word 'transformation' to refer to his own translation of a poem by the Italian author De Angelis (Venuti 1995: 292), and indeed translators reconstruct the source text in the target language, creatively starting from scratch. Berman also puts together both the notion of being an active agent, and the idea of being conscious, of thinking, when he states that "[translators] *act as critics*" (Berman 1995). In that sentence, he asserts that translators exert their subjective minds in order to interpret the source text, and the reference to the *critic* reminds us of Samuel Weber, who says of the critic that s/he has to represent the author, s/he has to 'become the spokesman of another, an alter ego [...] But to speak with the voice of that other, one must first *know* how the other *would speak*.' (Weber 1986: 205; emphasis in original) That will prompt us to scrutinise how this need to carefully read and interpret the text, and the inevitable evolution of such readings and interpretations, leads to rewriting.

### 3. Retranslation

#### 3.1. The reasons behind retranslation

Retranslation is a common phenomenon in rewriting practices, and the need to retranslate former versions is motivated by various factors: for instance, because original texts go through new readings and new interpretations, which make their translations obsolete, and, even if great originals do not age as much, nor as quickly as their translations, they still become older and their reception can be altered depending on the criticism trends in use at a certain time or another. Burgeoning development of theories in fields such as sociology, psychology, and philosophy has an impact on how a text is read and perceived in a given cultural time, and the constant re-reading (and re-translating) of canonical religious texts is proof enough that interpretations are not fixed, and that a text has a history independently from its author. If we consider that a given text is changed by the corpus of critiques and interpretations around it (Berman 1995), then we can question to what extent a translator needs to be acquainted with all

the critical works produced about the original text. I contend that reading critiques around the text might help translators to understand the text more deeply, and perhaps to examine specific readings they would not have thought of by themselves, and which could benefit the way in which they will carry out the translation. I argue that, in the case of controversial political and philosophical texts, such background knowledge is essential, because, as Berman explains, “in general, translating requires enormous amounts of wide-ranging reading. An ignorant translator, who does not do this kind of reading, is a deficient translator. We use books to translate.”<sup>61</sup> Here Berman shows us the usefulness of taking into account the peripheral (still extremely compelling) documents surrounding the source text in order to provide as adequate a (re)translation as possible. According to Berman, retranslation aims to render ever-improving texts, and it can be said that his definition goes hand in hand with the necessity to re-interpret the source text in order to produce improved target texts.

### 3.2. Retranslation and interpretation

Interpretation is a central part of translation, especially when the source text presents ambiguity and complex ideas, therefore, translators have to make choices, which is even more challenging when working on a text which has previously been translated, as seen in the following quotation:

“It is important to note that criticism and translation are structurally related [...] When a translation is a re-translation, it is implicitly or explicitly *a critique of previous translations*, in two senses of the term: it “exposes” them in the photographic sense for what they are (*translations of a certain era, a certain state of the literature, or the language, or the culture*), but may also *reveal that these translations are deficient or outdated.*” (Berman *ibid.*, my emphasis)

Berman highlights the inadequacy of previous translations, as well as how they represent their own time and culture, and he emphasizes the active role of the translator (“they act as critics”, as mentioned previously). That stance can be taken one step further by urging translators to use retranslation with a political agenda, because retranslation can be seen as a tool to alter the reception of an author, and to correct ideological mistranslations. For example, flaws and

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<sup>61</sup> in *Critical Concepts* Vol. I, ed. Mona Baker, Routledge: London/New York, 2008. trans. Luise von Flotow

distortions can stem from exoticism, which may occur when a text from a minor culture is translated into a dominant culture. Exoticism typically displays stereotypical views about the source culture due to using wrong or excessive terms in the target language, or by doing cuts of non-stereotypical examples, while leaving (and amplifying) passages which reinforce clichés about the source culture<sup>62</sup>.

An instance of such exoticism can be seen in *The Arabian Nights* translated by Richard Burton in the nineteenth century, and analyzed by Tarek Shamma. The latter exposes many examples where the translator resorted to overtranslation, in order to depict a fantasised Orient, and to give an 'exotic' touch to the English translation, such as the presumed extreme sensuality and violence of Eastern culture (Shamma 2009: 64-65).

### 3.3. Retranslation and the translation of ideology

Lawrence Venuti is particularly known for investing translation with political and ethical concerns, and he especially dwells on the relationship between 'dominant' and 'minor' cultures in terms of translation, arguing that the exchange between cultures is unbalanced (Venuti 1995a: 20). For instance, texts written in prevalent languages (in particular hegemonic English) are more often translated into minor languages than the latter into English, which affects the reception of foreign books in the Anglophone sphere, and which is also telling about the way retranslation from and into minor languages can be scarce. We can still question to what extent that statement is relevant to the relationship between French and English, because *Le Deuxième Sexe* illustrates, for instance, that linguistic and cultural input does not necessarily emanate from English to other languages. In the case of foreign classics, but also depending on specific genres, the interest for foreign languages is increased, as is the case of French feminist theory or philosophy translated into other languages, among them English.

According to Venuti, promoting the translation of texts stemming from minor languages into major languages is a political commitment, and it follows that retranslating foreign texts into dominant cultures, so as to tackle ideological prejudices which might have been conveyed by previous translations, is also political. In the case of de Beauvoir's *Le Deuxième Sexe*, the philosophy was partly silenced, as we saw previously, due to the publisher's wish to minimise

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<sup>62</sup> See for instance Edward Said's work on Orientalism (Said 1978)

philosophical content, in order to broaden the readership. Furthermore, the numerous cuts called for the publication of a complete version, because, before the new English translation (2009), and as Margaret Simons puts it, “no English edition of *Le Deuxième Sexe* [...] contain[ed] everything [de Beauvoir] wrote” (Simons 1983: 559), so that one of the strong features of the latest translation is its completeness. Therefore, a retranslation can sometimes partially be a first translation (Gambier 1994), and that case is relatively common due to the possibility of finding missing parts of a text (all the more frequent for particularly old documents), or because cuts were imposed so as to make the translation shorter (as was the case of *The Second Sex*), or because the text encountered censorship and could be rehabilitated at a later date (Bogic 2009).

When a retranslation is partly a first translation, it represents the advantage of offering a complete version, which can be more accurate and thorough than previous versions, especially if the omitted sections of the source text were crucial missing items necessary to understand the whole text. However, it can have unforeseen repercussions on texts produced via the first translation, such as it happens with relay translations. Those types of translations are akin to retranslation (Idema 2003), although the peculiarity of using three languages instead of translating (and then retranslating) into the same target language, makes it distinct from retranslation (Gambier *ibid.*). In the case where a text used as the basis for a translation in yet another language is retranslated, we can question whether the relay version also needs to be retranslated accordingly. If the text used to render the relay translation has been altered and is consequently complete, should the same additions be made on the relay translation generated from it? That issue is not the focus of the present study, even if some of the forty<sup>63</sup> translations of *Le Deuxième Sexe* are relay translations, but mentioning that problem helps us to show the complexity of retranslation.

### 3.4. The ‘retranslation hypothesis’

Another reason to retranslate a text stems from the most common patterns of translating (and retranslating) a foreign book, namely that first translations follow a strategy of domestication, and subsequent translations follow an approach of foreignization, which will shortly be explained in more detail. Domestication, akin to fluency, suggests that we need to

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<sup>63</sup> as stated by Gallimard foreign rights director Anne-Solange Noble in response to Toril Moi’s article in the *London Review of Books* (2010)

focus on the target audience and to “move the author towards [the reader]” (Schleiermacher 1977: 74). The result aims to be fluent, which means it should read smoothly and flow as if emanating from the target culture. Foreignization, on the other hand, seeks to “move the reader towards the author” (Schleiermacher *ibid.*), it aims to make the reader aware of the cultural differences between the two languages, by, for instance, altering the syntax of the target language, so as to parallel the phrasing of the source language, but also by using foreign terms.

First translations tend to be domesticated because they introduce the source text into the target culture, so they are usually adjusted to the target language and audience. Indeed, they determine whether the source text will be accepted and welcomed in the receiving culture, and, if that goal is to be a central one, the favoured strategy has to be to enhance the readers’ experience, by making them feel as if they were reading a text stemming from their own culture. Once a literary text has been adopted into the target culture, once it is part of its literary polysystem, retranslations which are more source-text oriented can ensue. We will return to the domestication/foreignization dichotomy in more detail in a later argument, but it is necessary to mention those concepts because retranslation relies on them. It is to be noted, however, that the hypothesis according to which first translations tend to be domesticated, while retranslations are typically more foreignized, is being disputed (Koskinen and Paloposki 2003: 22), even though the present thesis’ case-study typifies that hypothesis, as the first English translation of *Le Deuxième Sexe* was domesticated, whereas the latest version is foreignized.

Moreover, it has become customary to state that translations age: according to the ‘retranslation hypothesis’, translations, unlike originals, age with time passing, which necessarily leads to retranslate texts (Berman 1990: 1–2). To explain why translations age, we can posit that translations are always ‘defective’ by virtue of being translations, which make them age in a more obvious way than the original text, thus causing a need for (constant) retranslation (Berman 1995). According to Berman, re-writings need to happen through different stages, so as to reach outstanding translations, and those different stages form what the French theorist calls the ‘road of experience’, which implies that a first translation is the least adequate rendering, followed by ever-improving translations, to finally produce a few ‘great translations’. (Berman *ibid.*) We can reflect upon how quickly translations become outdated, and the answer does not seem straightforward: Berman does not provide explicit guidance when he refers to the ‘road of experience’ needed to produce new and improved retranslations (Berman 1990: 4). Nor is Paul Bensimon much clearer when declaring that retranslation occurs ‘after a more or less

long time period' (Bensimon 1990: ix), so that I contend that translations' aging is not a relevant criterion for retranslation, all the less so as there are cases of quasi-simultaneous retranslations (Hanna 2006: 194), which illustrates the fact that time guidance are informative only, and do not constitute any definite or prescriptive rule for retranslation.

Besides the fact that translations can be 'defective', as Berman states, why can we say that (re)translations age? Doubtlessly, translations (and retranslations) are marked by their historical and social context, and they cannot avoid that cultural imprint, or as Bensimon explains, "all translations are historical, and so are all retranslations. Neither is separable from culture, ideology, literature, in a given society and at a given time in history" (Bensimon 1990: ix, my translation). It seems that this fading of translations partly occurs because the demands of the receiving culture change through time, and some scholars even draw a parallel between the changes of linguistic patterns and the dissemination of new translations, which means that the evolution of the target language calls for a renewal of translated texts (Du-Nour 1995: 327). The very evolution of a given language implies that any retranslation made at a certain time will bear witness to the era during which it was produced, and new stylistic rules will demand the making of new translations more in line with contemporary language. The major criterion underlying that phenomenon is readability, which means the ability for a text to be read with ease and fluency, even transparency, a notion harshly criticised by Lawrence Venuti because transparency conceals the fact that the translation is a translation, and not a primary source text (Gambier 1994: 414; Venuti 1995: 5). In order to be more accessible, translations are made to be fluent, and a fluent translation is, according to Venuti, 'immediately recognizable and intelligible, "familiarised," domesticated [...]' (Venuti 2008: 5). And still, Venuti himself recognises that translation also generally requires an 'inevitable domestication' (Venuti 1998b: 11), a contradiction which we will analyze in more detail in a later chapter. Seeking fluency, as described by Venuti, attests to the influence of prevailing translation strategies on the translator's task and status, but there is logic and consistency in favouring domestication (and consequently fluency) for the first translation of the source text. I argue, however, that retranslations should not necessarily adopt a foreignizing approach, because of the flaws of that strategy, which can ultimately lead to distorting the source text, and deter the readers from it, instead of 'moving them towards the author'. That hypothesis will be supported by my data analysis and, consequently, examined in a further discussion.



### 3.5. Retranslation and the publishing industry

Because of previous abridged translations, or the fact that first translations are defective, but also the reality that translations age, retranslating can be seen as a common phenomenon, which is likely to happen as the original text ages. That truth is not always taken into account by publishers,<sup>64</sup> except when the profitability of the new version is obvious to them, for instance, a retranslation which offers a complete version of the source-text (in the case where the first translation was abridged) can be sold at a higher price, thus increasing the profits of the publishing house. That concept relies on the fact that a bigger book will justify being sold at a more expensive price, and if that book is a literary classic, a canonical text which is always in demand, then the predicted profits can be high. Reasons to commission, or to refuse to commission, a new translation of a foreign text are often linked to pragmatic realities, such as the costs of producing retranslations. Some would argue that revision is a more economical process than writing a brand new translation, because the amount of alterations is normally not so high, so that producing a revised edition is a profitable compromise for publishers. However, and on the other end of the rewriting spectrum, adaptation can be chosen over retranslation, and, actually, the difference between revision, retranslation and adaptation is not particularly easy to make, or, as Liliane Rodriguez puts it, “not enough changes or rewriting, and ‘retranslation’ is only ‘revision’; too many changes and rewriting, and ‘retranslation’ becomes ‘adaptation’” (Rodriguez 1990: 65; my translation). The costs of publishing a new book can be a deterrent because of the many translating agents (that is, for instance, the translators, but also the editors, printers, or publishers) involved, as well as the expenses required for the material and the advertising campaign: many practical reasons carry weight in the decision to commission a new translation. In addition, launching a retranslation means taking a risk, as the book might not sell as well as expected, and the sales might not increase, which offers us an explanation as to why canonical texts are retranslated in priority, whereas less popular, less prominent books are not likely to encounter many (if any) rewritings.

On the other hand, publishing a new translation of a well-known text might create some news and attract new readers, especially if the retranslation targets a different audience, which can be the case in at least two instances: when a classic is rewritten and adapted for another

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<sup>64</sup> As shows, among other instances, the resistance deployed by Random House (formerly Knopf) not to commission a new translation of *Le Deuxième Sexe* for many decades, and this despite the cuts and flaws of the first translation.

readership (such as, for instance, for children), or when there is a distinct emphasis on an aspect of the source text which had been neglected before. The latter case applies to the latest English translation of *Le Deuxième Sexe*, whose philosophical significance has been put forward (not always successfully, as will be argued). Seeking to expand the readership is particularly timely when the source text's fame is rekindled, which was the case with J.R.R. Tolkien's acclaimed book, *The Hobbit* (1937), which has been opportunely retranslated in French in 2012<sup>65</sup>, when the commercial success of the film adaptations encouraged many people to read Tolkien's book. By introducing that retranslation, the publishers knew that they would not only appeal to Tolkien enthusiasts wanting to re-read their favoured book in a new rendering and with annotations, but also draw new readers who had been attracted by the popularity of the films.

### 3.6. Retranslation and genres

The philosophical nature of de Beauvoir's book has an impact on retranslation, because it belongs to a specific genre, which will lead us to think about how genres are differently affected by retranslation. To start with, we need to make a distinction between literary and non-literary works, to then see that there are subcategories for both. The literary/non-literary divide is very much present in retranslation because factual texts do not age in the same way as ideological or abstract ones: a technical report is less likely to require new wording, whereas a work of fiction, be it a novel or a play, might need either retranslation over time, or even adaptation in the case of a play. Some go as far as advising not to rewrite non-literary texts (Jianzhong 2003: 195), but can we thus argue that some types of texts are more in need of rewriting than others? I contend that political (and polemical) texts are particularly good candidates for retranslations, because, although they might deal with the social mores of a specific time, they can also express timeless theories which should reach new audiences, which means that the target text's language needs to adapt to current linguistic norms. For instance, in the case of an influential book such as Marx's *Capital*, core ideas, which may have resonance in the future, need to be clearly accessible, and still a book marred with flawed or outdated language might put off the readers. Therefore, not only the type of genre (e.g. novels, plays, poems, essays, or short-stories for example), but also the status of the text (namely its recognition) are to be taken into account in terms of retranslation patterns.

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<sup>65</sup> Tolkien, J.R.R. *Le Hobbit*. translated by Daniel Lauzon. Paris: Editions Christian Bourgois, 2012.

The issue of canonicity is as central as the genre of texts to be retranslated, which leads Siobhan Brownlie to state that “some argue that the texts are not treated equally when it comes to retranslation, namely that canonical works, and especially literary texts, are more retranslated than non-literary or little-known ones” (Brownlie 2006: 146). Canonical literary texts are by far the type of texts which are retranslated the most, and this can be accounted for by many factors: first, their belonging to the canon sets them apart and grants them a special status, secondly, being literary in nature implies that they are usually more ambiguous and open to interpretation, and, as we will see shortly, one needs to be cautious with canonical texts, as there are often a lot of constraints in the process of retranslation. The necessity of (re)translating canonical texts is best illustrated in the religious context, where the implications are both political and social. Sacred texts are used as a basis for social mores, and, often prescriptive in their injunctions, they can state the conditions under which people are to be married (adultery being considered a sin, and even a crime, in most monotheist religions, for instance), to live their lives, and to be redeemed after death. The mutual dependency between sacred texts and their social consequences is thus that it puts translators in a delicate, and sometimes risky, position. The greatness of the text is so revered that translators deviating from previous versions can face reprisal, such as English Bible translator William Tyndale, who was burned at the stake in 1536 for heresy. His execution shows that people are so used to the interpretations (and translations) in use at a certain time that they do not easily (if at all) welcome new readings and more modern renderings, which is a paradox worth mentioning: the task of a translator is to render a text as accurately as possible in a target language, but if the whole of a society is based on the previous interpretations of a sacred religious text, there is then too much interest for some people to accept a different retranslation.

Defining the literary canon is not straightforward because that notion evolves with time<sup>66</sup>, but we can generally notice a supremacy of white male authors, until great women writers gained a more central position in the Western literary polysystem. The very distinction between male and female writers is thorny and controversial (as shown in Chapter One), as is the prominence of books written in English in the global literary canon, which has been denounced by Lawrence Venuti. Among traditionally canonical texts, the difference between genres is still

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<sup>66</sup> Even-Zohar explains the process of canonicity as follows: “[...] it is the group which governs the Polysystem that ultimately determines the canonicity of a certain repertoire. Once canonicity has been determined, the said group either adheres to the properties canonized by it (which subsequently gives them control of the Polysystem) or, if necessary, alters the repertoire of canonized properties in order to maintain control.” (Even-Zohar 1990: 17)

an issue, and it seems that philosophy, far more than literature, restricts its canon to European male authors. The very comment made by Parshley in his translator's note is telling enough: he stated that 'Mlle de Beauvoir's book is on women, not philosophy' (Translator's Note), thus seemingly implying that philosophy and women are mutually exclusive. The bias against female philosophers is still a thorny issue, which we will be discussing further in relation to feminist translation strategies.

It is useful to locate de Beauvoir in the literary canon. As mentioned in Chapter One, and according to the Norton Anthology, de Beauvoir is now rehabilitated, not only for her contribution to Existentialism, but also for her own original philosophical ideas, therefore she is not only labelled as a writer (being mostly known for her novels, essays, biographies, and a play), and a feminist thinker, but also as a philosopher. So does it imply changes in the way de Beauvoir is perceived? *The Second Sex* is a cornerstone of feminism, appearing before second-wave feminism, and indeed influencing theorists and activists of the 1960s onwards, and is indisputably part of the feminist canon. De Beauvoir's belonging to the literary and philosophical canon is far less established, and still is a serious challenge for Beauvoir scholars wanting to reclaim her status as a recognized writer, and philosopher.

### 3.7. Retranslating the canon

The canon is a dynamic system, in which texts enter, stay, or are forgotten, so that criteria for introducing, or keeping, texts in the canon are re-assessed. While re-evaluating old texts, and reflecting on requirements for belonging to the canon, texts which are kept need to be retranslated, to be enhanced so as to be accessible by a contemporary readership. *The Second Sex* was admitted to enter the philosophical canon due to changes in attitudes and the achievements of the Women's Movement, but also thanks to close and meticulous readings of her book. However, this acceptance is restricted, and the writer is still mostly perceived as Sartre's follower in France, so further efforts are to be made in order to establish her position as a philosopher. The English retranslation plays a central role in the dissemination of the book as a philosophical treatise, and in the rehabilitation of de Beauvoir as a literary figure, besides her commitment to feminism. We already introduced *The Second Sex* as an interdisciplinary book, which gives it its weight, but which also brings challenges for translators. Therefore, our next discussion will lead us to reflect on specialised texts and their relation to translation.



### CHAPTER 3: THE ISSUE OF FAITHFULNESS IN TRANSLATION

Before exploring the question of faithfulness, let us stress that this very notion is controversial in Translation Studies, because the term does not cover the same definition for everyone, and some scholars even reject the concept of fidelity or advocate using other notions, which do not depend on fidelity (Snell-Hornby 1988/1995: 13-22). I am using Nida's definition that 'faithfulness is primarily a quality of the MESSAGE rather than of the FORM' (Nida 1969: 201, emphasis in original), and I agree with his definition stating that 'the receptor understands the same meaning in it, reacts to it emotionally in the same way, and comes to analogous decisions and actions as the original receptors' (Nida *ibid.*). My contention is that fidelity should not be about respecting the linguistic features of the source-text, but it should rather be a deliberate intention to represent an author, and/or a political stance, thus focusing on seeking equivalence in terms of the *message* and its consequent impact on the readers, or, in Nida's words, 'producing a similar response' is a necessary requirement of translation (Nida 2000: 134). This stance on equivalence calls for a brief discussion of the difference between equivalence and adequacy, which are both difficult notions to define. If complete sameness is unattainable, adequacy is, however, a useful concept when considering faithfulness. Maria Sánchez-Ortiz links adequacy with 'being sufficient' or 'satisfactory' (Sánchez-Ortiz in Salama-Carr 2000: 94), an adjective which serves to describe a target text which produces the same effect on the reader as the source text.

In aiming to reach that effect, the translator has to mediate, or, in the words of Umberto Eco, 'the translator is [a] negotiator' (Eco 2003: 6). One means to negotiate with the source text is to resort to shifts, the latter being, according to Shoshana Blum-Kulka, unavoidable: 'the process of translation necessarily entails shifts both in textual and discoursal relationships' (Blum-Kulka 1986: 18). To shift is to deviate, to vary, which, in the context of translation, refers to a change or a 'departure from formal correspondence', as John Catford puts it (Catford 1965: 73). A formal correspondent is a target-language linguistic item which performs the same role in the TL system as the source-language linguistic item performs in the SL system (e.g. the French noun *musique* would generally hold the same place in the French language system as the noun *music* does in the English language system). But formal correspondents are not systematically used because a specific context requires one to resort to textual equivalence, which is "any TL text or portion of text which is observed on a particular occasion [...] to be the equivalent of a given SL text or portion of text" (Catford 1965: 27). In translated texts, when textual equivalence

occurs, we can identify a shift, but to what extent is finding shifts useful to Translation Studies? Shifts offer a valuable framework to investigate translation theories, and, in that respect, they need to be seen as a move towards thinking in Translation Studies, or, in Gideon Toury's words:

“[...] the identification of shifts is part of the *discovery* procedures only, i.e., a step towards the formulation of *explanatory hypotheses*. The latter, in turn, necessitate the establishment of the overall CONCEPT OF TRANSLATION underlying whatever corpus one sets out to investigate [...]” (Toury 1995: 85, emphasis in original)

Therefore, identifying shifts is a way to develop and support new understandings of translation, which gives a compelling role to shifts, as opposed to merely uncovering translation mistakes. Using shifts is linked to the overall aim of reaching equivalence and being faithful to the source text, for, according to Anton Popovič, shifts happen “because [the translator] strives to reproduce [a work] as faithfully as possible” (Popovič 1970: 80). Here Popovič insists on the active effort of the translator, who deliberately aims to reach equivalence —an aspect we mentioned in Chapter Two— and trying to reach that equivalence can be seen as a political commitment to represent and disseminate an author's ideas. Following this is the notion of translating the message and being faithful to the sense, as opposed to a mere interlinear translation, or word-for-word rendering. If keeping close to the source text was synonymous with translating, then a good dictionary would be the only requirement to be able to translate.

The Interpretive Theory of Translation shares the same view with its focus on *sense* and reinforces the accepted notion that translation is not a mere linguistic transfer, but that, instead, the translation process is a ‘motivated behaviour within a particular context and responding to its own norms’ (Mason 2001: 73), here again stressing the active role of the translator. Giving more importance to sense than to a linguistic aspect reminds us of Saint Jerome advising translators not to translate *verbum e verbo sed sensum exprimere de sensu* (quoted in Eco 2003: 5), implying that the sense should be privileged instead of strictly focusing on the source language words, a position which allows literalism to be avoided. The latter is a word-for-word rendering which gives the false impression of being more faithful to the source text, due to keeping closer to the source text's own syntax, vocabulary or tense usage, for instance. However, a literal translation does not guarantee a faithful translation, because, as explains Marianne Lederer, “being faithful to the author's language does not mean being faithful to the author”, which she emphasizes by referring to Freud's translation:

“Freud was betrayed by the literal translation of his language which brought about a violation of the language of the translation. (Lederer 2014: 83)

What is true for Freud also applies to de Beauvoir, as will be shown in a later section on data analysis, so it seems that, instead of keeping too close to the source text, it is sometimes better to do the opposite: ‘Il faut parfois s’écarter du texte original pour lui rester fidèle’<sup>67</sup> (Landheer 2000: 221)

## 1. The Interpretive Theory of Translation and the translation of feminist philosophy

As mentioned in Chapter One, philosophical discourse is often seen as cryptic and it relies on the reader understanding a theoretical insight, which requires interpretation. Despite using technical and specific vocabulary, philosophy is only transferable from one language to another through interpretation, so that the ITT is particularly suited for the translation of philosophy.

### 1.1. Faithfulness to the source message is key to the ITT

Putting the emphasis on the message is a characteristic of the ITT, which is also particularly suited to the translation of feminist philosophy. Focusing on the ‘sense’ over a purely linguistic transfer is a position which is supported by philosophy too, as illustrates the following quotation by Jean-Paul Sartre: “sense is not contained by the words (of a text) since it is sense itself which allows each word’s meaning to be understood [...] sense is not the sum of the words, it is their organic whole” (Sartre 1985: 50-51, translated by Marianne Lederer). That very definition of sense relates to the main tenet of Existentialism, namely the rejection of ‘essence’, which, in the case at hand, implies that the words themselves do not have an essence which encloses meaning, but it is only the interconnection between words which creates sense. And indeed the ITT aims to better convey the message of the source text, zeroing in on the message and the end result, as explained by Marianne Lederer:

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<sup>67</sup> ‘It is sometimes necessary to deviate from the source text so as to stay faithful to it’ (my translation)



“*déverbaliser* un instant le passage compris afin de retrouver une capacité d’expression non teintée d’étranger est un *gage de réussite* de la *traduction-résultat*” (Lederer 1997: 17; my emphasis).

It seems clear, from the above quotation, that, in order to produce a successful target language translation, the translator needs to write a text which corresponds to target language norms, and which does not sound foreign. Moreover, Marianne Lederer also dwells on the necessity to ‘deverbalize’ in order to extract the ‘sense’, a meaning which goes beyond a purely linguistic plane, and, which, therefore, can be attained by deconstructing the sentence.

## 1.2. The ITT favours the reader’s experience and the reception of the target text

Focusing on the target reader is a principle which underpins the ITT, which gives priority to the target language, and to an ‘emphasis on clarity and intelligibility of the translation and its acceptability in the target culture in terms of writing conventions’ (Salama-Carr 2011: 146). The ITT urges the translator to render a translation which is ‘in accordance with the stylistics of the language in which it is written’, which implies that the translation be fluent in the target language. According to that school of thought, respecting the norms of the target language is essential, in order for the target reader to have a smoother access to the translation. That approach also indicates that the ITT is target text-oriented, thus focusing on the target readers’ understanding of the text, and that it complies with the definition of domestication. A domesticating strategy requires that the translation be made with the target reader in mind, using target language linguistic elements which will make her/him believe s/he is reading a text stemming from her/his own literary tradition, rather than a translation.

We can note that the ‘Interpretive Theory of Translation’ puts the emphasis on the verb ‘to interpret’, which recalls the necessity to translate internally when reading a source-text, as already stated in Chapter Two. Such interpretation is crucial for the translator, so as to choose the most adequate target-language elements to render the source-text’s meaning, and, through this conscious choice, the translator can have a decisive impact on the circulation of a foreign author’s work into a target culture, as illustrated by Lawrence Venuti’s translation of the Italian poet De Angelis (as mentioned in Chapter Two).

The translator's own political commitment can help to convey the author's message, and to relay the source-text's ideas, but I contend that such a bond with the author, and her/his ideas, is beneficial to the target readers too, because, in order to help disseminating the author's opinions (such as feminist philosophical ideas), the translator will need to make the target-text readable, so that the target reader engages with the translation. It is all the more compelling when translating ideological texts, such as philosophical texts, which are not always easy to grasp in one's own language, and which are prone to being interpreted and discussed.

## **2. Faithfulness and the translation of the philosophical discourse**

It can be argued that the translation of philosophy presents specific challenges, because of the very nature of philosophy, following the definition given in Chapter One. Philosophy has defining features which create challenges for the translator, such as an unusual usage of language (for example, subverting language by using already existing terms through semantic shifts), but also the creation of new terms (for instance, the appearance of new concepts can lead to original coinages). Moreover, philosophy is a universal discipline which heavily relies on borrowing foreign phrases, but, the said phrases carry different connotations and philosophical heritage, which implies that it is crucial to be cautious when translating earlier terms into a contemporary context: translators need to take into account the whole tradition behind such phrases (that is, their genealogy), so as to avoid neglecting connections with former philosophical doctrines. The following section will deal with those defining characteristics of philosophy, particularly its propensity to use language creatively, its long tradition of borrowing foreign terminology, and the overt link between philosophical terms and their temporality. That latter aspect refers to the fact that philosophy first needs to be 'translated' into one's own language, because, as George Steiner explains, "when we read or hear any language-statement from the past, be it Leviticus or last year's best-seller, we translate" (Steiner 1998: 28), which might explain why translating a philosophical text into another language is particularly challenging. In order to successfully do so, translators need to resort to shifts, a translation process which will be examined in a second section. Finally, and drawing from our analysis of shifts, we will reflect on the way Translation Studies deals with philosophy in terms of approaches and strategies.

## 2.1. Defining features of philosophy helps to identify possible translation challenges

### 2.1.1. Philosophy coins new phrases, and subverts everyday language

Philosophical language often develops its terminology from coining new phrases, or resorting to semantic shifts, and it can even be said that ‘one of the indispensable conditions for philosophy is a capacity for linguistic insecurity —for taking a certain distance from one’s customary everyday words’ (Rée 2001: 246). Jonathan Rée explains how philosophy and language are entwined, because, according to him, one cannot do philosophy without creating distance from the usual, and without analysing what is customary, so as to possibly question it. Therefore, some acts of linguistic subversion are closely linked to the philosophical theory developed by their author, it participates in the evolution of the theory at hand<sup>68</sup>. A famous example of that is given by Rée with Derrida’s concept of *différance*, for which the philosopher coins a new term, which contrasts with the French noun *différence*. When such a neologism is created, it is noticeable by any translator, even those who are not specialists in philosophy, because phrases such as *différance*, or *être-pour-soi*—although not straightforward to translate into another language— are clearly coined expressions. What is less obvious to identify, however, are everyday and even mundane phrases, whose primary meaning is altered, so as to refer to a philosophical concept. It can be said that philosophical terminology is a form of LSP (Language for Specific Purposes), insofar as it resorts to specialised terms, the latter being words which have acquired a protected status when used in special subject domains—in our case, philosophy (Pearson, 1998: 7).

Moreover, the specific context is crucial because the translation needs to account for the ‘illocutionary force’ (Searle 1969) of the source-text, so that the target-text conveys the same performative effect as that of the source-text. The illocutionary force refers to the notion of what people do when speaking, which can be, for instance, to inform, or to surprise and shock the addressee. For example, when Sartre writes that ‘hell is other people’<sup>69</sup>, the possible illocutionary functions of that statement are manifold: it was meant to instruct his readers *propos* his theory, but it could also be meant to startle them. Sartre’s famous sentence is made up of everyday terms, it does not use specifically philosophical expressions, and still, it carries Sartre’s Existentialism. According to Sándor Hervey, ‘to build a sentence is to take some

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<sup>68</sup> We will explore that notion further in a later part.

<sup>69</sup> which was analyzed in Chapter One.

suitable (meaningful) linguistic unit and to endow it with an illocutionary function' (Hervey 1998: 14), so that we cannot avoid this illocutionary element, and neither can translators. When applied to the translation of philosophy, the illocutionary aspect of the source-text might be hidden, so translators need to be particularly specialised because recognising philosophical occurrences (which are significant philosophical aspects), and then translating them, while conveying the same communicative effect to the target readers, is not easy, and even less so when one has to deal with the multilingual facet of philosophy.

### 2.1.2. Philosophy is a multilingual discipline

Borrowing foreign concepts is a feature of philosophy and we will first see the supposed philosophical prestige of some languages, before analysing the intellectual stimulation stemming from a close contact between foreign theories.

#### 2.1.2.1. The hierarchy of languages

Although rather hackneyed, it still is a common view to state that the Greek and the German languages have a paramount influence in philosophy, as though some languages were more apt to induce logical thinking than others. Such clichés can be seen, for instance, in Martin Heidegger's *Introduction to Metaphysics*, in which he states that '[...] along with the German language, Greek (in regard to the possibilities of thinking) is at once the most powerful and the most spiritual of languages' (Heidegger 2014: 62). Here Heidegger imparts the idea that there is a hierarchy between languages in terms of their ability to support thinking. Although it is true that we think with words, and therefore with a linguistic and cultural framework, it should not be a pretext for elitism, nor for assuming that some languages are more philosophical than others. On the contrary, the ability to think in one's language is an advantage when we take the opportunity to learn other languages, therefore sharpening our own thinking. Barbara Cassin, editor of the *Vocabulaire européen des philosophies: Dictionnaire des intraduisibles* (2004), defends this point when she argues that 'a language is not just a means of communication, it bears a culture and a particular vision of the world. A language is not a different way of naming the same things, it is a different viewpoint on those things [...] Understanding this diversity contributes to protecting intellectual wealth.'<sup>70</sup> (Cassin 2014, my translation). Because foreign

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<sup>70</sup> 'Or la langue n'est pas seulement un moyen de communication, elle est porteuse d'une culture et d'une vision singulière du monde. Une langue n'est pas une façon différente de désigner les mêmes choses,

languages give us different perspectives and different ways of conceiving things, creating points of contact between languages is a great tool to expand thinking, thus being valuable to philosophical reasoning. Cassin even refers to ‘philosophizing in languages’ (quoted in Apter 2012: 173) because languages (and therefore translation) and philosophy have always been closely related, which we will analyze more deeply in a further section. In her *Vocabulaire*, the philosopher and philologist aims to explore the ‘Untranslatables’, those philosophical concepts which, despite what their name could imply, have been translated, and, more precisely, need constant retranslation because they are equivocal. This comment is reminiscent of Marcel Govaert’s contention that ‘[...] bien souvent l’intraduisible est ce qui n’a *pas encore* été traduit correctement’<sup>71</sup> (Govaert 1971: 39-62, emphasis in original), which implies that untranslatability is not a necessity, but, instead, that the translator needs to tenaciously attempt to find ever improving renderings. Ronald Landheer is even more severe when he states that:

“les traducteurs ne sont que trop portés en général à [...] invoquer le postulat de l’‘intraduisibilité’, toutes les fois qu’ils n’ont pas pris le temps ou la peine de chercher un énoncé équivalent dans le texte cible<sup>72</sup>” (Landheer 2000: 216)

I contend that the above comment can be applied to the translation of philosophy, although it should not preclude the fact that philosophical discourse is prone to the creation and use of neologisms. As Cassin explains, the Untranslatable is, ‘that which one never ceases (not) to translate. But it highlights the fact that their translation, into one language or another, causes a problem to the point of sometimes producing a neologism’ (Cassin, Introduction to *Vocabulaire européen des philosophies*, my translation).

Moving beyond the notion of neologism, because philosophical discourse is prone to coin new words in one given language, and because we are now also dealing with the relationship between languages, and with the need to borrow foreign terminology.

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c’est un point de vue différent sur ces choses [...] Appréhender cette diversité, c’est contribuer à préserver la richesse de la pensée.’ (“La diversité des langues enrichit la pensée”, *CNRS Le Journal*, available at: <https://lejournal.cnrs.fr/articles/la-diversite-des-langues-enrichit-la-pensee>)

<sup>71</sup> [...] what is untranslatable is often enough what has *not yet* been correctly translated. (my translation, emphasis in original)

<sup>72</sup> “Translators are usually too keen to invoke the ‘untranslatability’ hypothesis every time they have not taken the time, nor made the effort, to look for an equivalent in the target text.” (my translation)

### 2.1.2.2. Borrowing concepts and terms from other languages is emblematic of philosophy

Philosophy is profoundly multilingual and concepts cross borders, just as people do: Jean-Paul Sartre went to the French Institute in Berlin to learn about Edmund Husserl's theories, and he explained that 'in the end it was that which made [him] go to Germany, when [he] was told that Husserl [...] had a way of grasping the real just as it was' (quoted in Beauvoir 1983: 135-6). There, Sartre was introduced to phenomenology, which was to be a cornerstone of his own philosophy. In the early 1930s, Hegel and Heidegger became popular in France through lectures and translations of their work, which helped to circulate their ideas. De Beauvoir only really started reading Heidegger seriously from 1939, and his influence on such topics as 'individual responsibility' or 'inauthenticity' was considerable (Gothlin 2003: 46). But how can we circumvent language differences in order to draw from a foreign concept? Sartre and de Beauvoir either use translations of German terminology, be it literal translation (such as 'pour-soi' stemming from Hegel's 'für sich'), or coinages (for instance 'réalité humaine' for 'Dasein', the latter literally meaning 'being there'). However, at other times, German terms are directly introduced into French, such as when de Beauvoir refers to *Mitsein* in the *Le Deuxième Sexe*.<sup>73</sup> Interestingly, we notice variations in terms of borrowing patterns between French and English, with regard to German philosophical terminology:

<i>German</i>	<i>French</i>	<i>English</i>
Mitsein	Mitsein	being-with
Dasein	réalité humaine	Dasein

The fact that the above German terms are not assimilated and rendered in the same way in English and French has an impact on translations between those two languages, presumably increasing the risk of missing a philosophical reference, as can be seen in *Le Deuxième Sexe*. When de Beauvoir refers to 'réalité humaine', Heidegger's 'Dasein' has been translated into French, but it was then translated into English as 'human reality' by the first translator, H.M. Parshley, thus concealing the Heideggerian connection (Moi 2010). Such issues stem both from the multilingual aspect of philosophy, and from the superimposition of philosophical concepts

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<sup>73</sup> "[...] elles prétendent participer au *mitsein* humain." (LDD, I: 34)

through time: the appropriation of theories from influential established philosophers leads to increasing the risk of hiding the origin of certain terms, and thus the connotations they carry.

### 2.1.2.3. *Philosophy and temporality*

Philosophy typically illustrates Hans W.L. Freudenthal's statement: 'each word has been coined in a specific atmosphere, it has its own history; the metamorphoses of meaning throughout time often demonstrate this fact [dynamic, mutable nature of terms] with a distinctness baffling to linguists' (quoted in Rickard 2009: 15). Philosophical idioms very much bear witness to their time, and that historical situatedness is crucial to translators, all the more so as language evolution and contacts between languages create deceptive cognates, the so-called false friends. It is certainly evident that the long-lasting contact between French and English shaped those two languages, so that it is common to find identical idioms in both languages, still, their meanings are often far from similar, which further complicates the translator's work. False friends generally affect translations between French and English, but it is particularly obvious in the translation of French philosophy into English, with terms such as *actuellement*, or *assumer*, whose meanings and undertones are different in French and English. The former is not to be mistaken with the English adverb 'actually', for it generally means 'at present' in French, except in some cases where it has the philosophical meaning of 'in acts.'<sup>74</sup> We will see an instance of mistranslation of that term when analysing data from *The Second Sex*, focusing on the translation of 'immanence'.

As for the French verb *assumer*, it can sometimes be translated as 'to take on' rather than the usual English connotation of 'to suppose, to take for granted as the basis of argument or action' (*OED*). Jonathan Rée's hypothesis is that false friends between French and English particularly affect translators of philosophy, and he even states that '[...] no one gets so much grief from those treacherous terms as the philosophical translator' (Rée 2001: 233). Although this statement is purposefully extreme, I agree that the frequency of deceptive cognates adds yet another obstacle to the translation of philosophy, the latter being already known for its ambiguity. Moreover, Rée adds that such translation difficulties can lead to what he calls 'the translators-in-terror' syndrome, namely that some translators, who work on canonical source-

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<sup>74</sup> According to the CNRTL, available at: <http://www.cnrtl.fr/definition/actuellement>

texts (which have most likely been already translated<sup>75</sup>), opt for an undue literalism, so as to avoid potential mistranslation (Rée *ibid.*, Newmark 1988: 136-37). But such renderings are often stilted and can also lead to mistranslation, which is an issue we will reflect on when analysing the new English translation of *Le Deuxième Sexe* in a later chapter.

## 2.2. What translation strategies can be used to render philosophy?

Drawing from Rée's above assumptions, I would like to consider what possible translation strategies can be implemented to render French philosophical texts into English. One of those strategies could be seen as a way to avoid translating, such as when the translator borrows foreign terms (for instance *Dasein*, as mentioned above), while possibly using footnotes to explain them. Another approach is to offer a word-for-word rendering, as criticised by Jonathan Rée, but still, close literal rendering is problematic because it leads to being deceived by false friends, but also to produce confusing translations, or mistranslations. As for borrowing foreign philosophical terms in the target-language, that strategy seems to accept the presumed untranslatability of philosophy and to, therefore, avoid any attempt at translating. Moreover, that approach is not always desirable, nor possible, so that the translator sometimes has to depart from the source-text, which is when shifts occur.

### 2.2.1. Shifts and philosophy

That latter aspect leads us to the translation of philosophy, and we will now see why shifts are necessary to render philosophical texts. As was suggested above, as well as in Chapter One, philosophical theories are directly supported by language, so that ideas cannot be separated from linguistic elements, such as the word order, tense usages, or lexicology. For example, James Rickard compares philosophy to poetry, and gives us an instance where someone's style reflects their philosophy, through Nietzsche's thought:

An extremely important aspect of [*The Genealogy of Morals*] is the separation between the terms *das Böseste* and *das Schlechte*. For Nietzsche, the separation between these words [...] is immensely important to the entire discussion of the "slave" and "nobility," and the very antithesis drawn between these opposite concepts hinge around

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<sup>75</sup> As analyzed in Chapter Two through a discussion of retranslation and the canon.



understanding a clear division between the two. [...] mistranslating *das Böseste* greatly damages Nietzsche's entire project [...]. (Rickard 2009: 16)

Language creativity, for instance, when language-specific terms are coined, makes any translation into the target-language challenging. And because there are often no formal correspondents available in the target-language, translators of philosophy have to use shifts and to resort to different approaches, such as inventing new words, altering the syntax, or using different tenses than the ones used in the source-text. For example, the French conditional mood is often used to convey doubt (a rather characteristic usage in French philosophy), which needs to be rendered differently in English, with such phrases as 'supposedly', or 'according to' (Rée 2001: 228; Moi 2010). That seemingly trivial example shows how crucial it is to shift from the source-text's linguistic norms, but that requires a thorough knowledge of both linguistic norms of the target language and the philosopher's theory. The translator needs to recognise when style and content are linked together, to then find the most adequate way to render the same meaning in the target text. From this, we can postulate that foreignization is not the most appropriate approach to translating philosophy, because, as Jonathan Rée puts it, '[philosophy's] special ways of thinking, reading, writing, and translating cannot be foreignized, for the simple reason that they were never "naturalized" in the first place' (Rée *ibid.* 252-53).

### 2.2.2. The foreignization of philosophy

Indeed, we argued that philosophy has always been a multilingual discipline, which means that no further foreignization is required, and I contend that the translator's role entails helping the dissemination of the author's philosophy, by making the translation readable and accessible, which can only be possible if they do not complicate the source-text. Stemming from that idea, we can offer a compromise to try to avoid misunderstanding, rather than trying to offer a total equivalence, as explained by Andrew Chesterman, who states that the goal of translation is to 'produce understanding', which requires 'the minimization of misunderstanding' (Chesterman 1997: 184). Misunderstanding is a particular threat to the translation of philosophy, due to all the pitfalls we mentioned above. Drawing on Leppihalme's concept of 'culture bumps', the latter being traits preventing effective cross-cultural communication (quoted in Chesterman 1997: 185), I would like to refer to *philosophy bumps* to describe those traps specific to the philosophical discourse, and which prevent philosophical occurrences from being noticed, and intelligibly rendered. When those bumps are left unaltered, then it is harder (or even impossible)

for the target readers to understand the translation, so it is advisable to advocate domestication in order to facilitate understanding. Bearing this in mind, I argue that shifts can be seen as part of a translation strategy to translate feminist philosophy and ultimately help convey de Beauvoir's feminist and philosophical message.

### **3. Feminist translation as a way to be faithful to a political agenda**

The strategies used by the feminist translation studies approach were briefly introduced in Chapter One and will now be elaborated further. I will start trying to define feminist translation by introducing its goals and its practical applications, which will let us see the diversity it covers, to then observe the issues at hand and possible critiques made at feminist translation studies, before finally analysing how that approach strives to aim for faithfulness to an ideological and political agenda.

Feminist translation emerged in the late 1980s in Canada, more particularly in the context of bilingual Quebec. I will go back to the Canadian school, but it is important to first note that this branch of Translation Studies is relatively recent, and that it closely followed the growth of feminist texts and an expansion of women's writings (Simon 2004: loc.118-21). It is, however, to be noticed that, just as there is not one and only definition of feminism, but rather a plurality of feminisms, feminist translation encompasses different realities. For instance, we can claim that its goals are, at least, twofold, which can be summed up by the question: are we translating feminist texts, or translating in a feminist-conscious way? Feminist translation refers to both the translation of feminist texts, and to a feminist procedure for translating texts. The first case implies putting forward feminist texts, and texts by women, which had not been translated or widely circulated, be they feminist essays, or novels, plays, poems written by women. According to Luise von Flotow, feminist translation stems from innovative writing practice by Canadian women writers in the 1980s (von Flotow 1991: 74), so that the term first refers to translating texts by women writers, who were using language in a subversive way, extensively playing with words, for instance. Those kinds of texts represent a challenge for the translator, because of the originality of the puns and wordplays, as well as the political element, which need to find an equivalent in the target language, so as to convey the subversive effect of the original. Translating those texts thus invited translators to be creative themselves and devise new strategies to reconstruct and render the text. Those strategies are linked to another type of feminist translation, which produces innovative procedures to translate texts, and I will define it now: feminist translation can refer to the political agenda of feminist translators, who

consciously aim at attaining their feminist goals through translation. In that case, it does not matter that the source text is itself a feminist work, or written by a female or a male writer, but what is key is the way the translator handles the text and alters things which do not satisfy his or her feminist convictions. That idea brings us back to what we mentioned in Chapter Two concerning the relationship between the translator and the original author, namely that there needs to be respect between those two agents (Baker 2008), so there is a conflict when a feminist translator has to translate a text whose language does not make use of the available options to tackle a language's sexism, or if the content of the source text is offensive to the translator's feminist views. When the two latter cases occur, then the feminist translator can choose to manipulate the text so as to remedy the sexist issues s/he perceives in the source text, such as the use of the universal masculine instead of gender neutral options. We will discuss in a further section about the critiques made of feminist translation that ethical problems arise when a feminist translator alters the misogynist content of the source text, so as to curb the sexist impact it can have. Sherry Simon, for instance, encourages translators to modify texts in order to fulfil their feminist agenda, because 'they can use language as cultural intervention, as part of an effort to alter expressions of domination' (Simon 2004: loc 324).

I will now discuss the different tendencies in feminist translation, which will lead us to reflect on the translation procedures which could enable feminist translators to achieve both their feminist goals and fidelity to the source text.

### 3.1. Different approaches in feminist translation

Although feminist translation is relatively recent, at least as a defined practice, different perspectives and points of focus have emerged, but the feminist approach to translation tends mainly to be circumscribed by Canadian works from scholars such as Barbara Godard, Luise Von Flotow, and Sherry Simon, for instance. The cultural spirit of the time (i.e. the late 1980s) was favourable to the development of feminist translation, as feminist theory was thriving, and inventive feminist literary writings written in French-speaking Canada were flourishing. In addition to that cultural context, it is to be noted that the Canadian background is itself particularly useful to the expansion of feminist translation, because languages' power relationships are especially at stake in Canada, due to its bilingualism. The defense of the French language in Quebec is a crucial political measure, and that specific protection for Canadian French can be seen in translation too: true bilingualism implies wholly knowing the two languages at hand, instead of incorporating one into the other (such as introducing

Gallicisms in English, or Anglicisms in French). On the other hand, the constant contact between English and French has enabled Quebec to be acquainted with American feminist theory to a much wider extent than France, and we can suspect that its proximity to the U.S.A. might have influenced the development of feminist theory and writing in Canada, with another perspective than French feminism developed in France through works by Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva, or Hélène Cixous. The latter, however, have also been introduced to English-speaking Canada (and other Anglophone countries) through translations, which shows the mutual link between feminist writing and feminist translation.

### 3.1.1. Strategies

In terms of strategies implemented, von Flotow lists three major procedures to 'womanhandle' the text, namely the notion of supplementing, the use of prefaces and footnotes, and 'hijacking'. The first and the third strategies call for a conscious manipulation of the text, whereas the second one invites the translator to make her/his voice heard in person, and seems (at a first glance) less intrusive, as it is part of the paratext (the latter will be explored in more detail in a later chapter). Drawing on Walter Benjamin's *The Task of the Translator* (1923), von Flotow explains that supplementing enables the translator to 'compensate for the differences between languages' (von Flotow 1991: 75), and, in order to do this, the translator seeks equivalents and modifies the translation in order to give an effect in the target text which should parallel that of the source text. Supplementing is therefore not exclusive to feminist translation, as over-translation<sup>76</sup> has always been used, but feminist translators deliberately over-translate the source text, either to give a similar effect in the target text, or to give an even more subversive force to the translation. An example of supplementing is provided by Luise von Flotow, who quotes an extract from Louky Bersianik's *L'Euguélonne* and compares it to Howard Scott's English translation:

Le ou la coupable doit être punie.

The guilty one must be punished, whether she is a man or a woman. (von Flotow 1991: 75)

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<sup>76</sup> which is, as mentioned in Chapter One, 'an additional specification of meaning' (Dussart 2005: 107-119; my translation)

The above English version aims to render the same effect as that of the French source text, which is to emphasize the fact that ‘it is the woman who is punished for aborting’, as an extra -e (indicating the feminine) has been added to the past participle *puni* (von Flotow *ibid.*) The translation succeeds in conveying the same impact by adding a further part to the sentence (*whether she is a man or a woman*).

Prefacing and footnoting are more obvious devices to describe, as they can refer to the translator explaining her/his methods of translation, the translation project s/he has —that is the blueprint which will guide the translation— in a translator’s note. In that preface, the translator uses an ‘I’ which grants her/him authority and which sets the tone of the translation. A preface is a straightforward way for the translator to communicate with the readers in her/his own name, and to justify the way the translation has been rendered, but it is also a didactic move which can provide the readers with further information on the source text or the original author.<sup>77</sup> Indeed the translator can choose that space to add references, explanations and comments on and around the source text, which is also an efficient way to convey her/his own ideological opinions, for instance her/his feminist beliefs. If, according to von Flotow, prefaces by feminist translators have become ‘routine’ (von Flotow 1991: 76), footnotes are not used with the same freedom, due to publishing constraints, and translators are often limited in the amount of annotations they can add, but when they have the possibility to include footnotes, then they can directly justify a translation decision as it appears in the text, explain their own reading of the source text, or can direct the readers to extra information and quotations.

Let us finally define the strategy of ‘hijacking’, which consists of amending the source text so that phrasing which is considered sexist is altered. It can even amount to greater manipulation when passages are ridiculed, as the following example from feminist translator Susanne Jill Levine illustrates, who aims to revise and question a text by Cuban author Guillermo Cabrera Infante, so as to curb its misogyny. In the Spanish version, Infante writes that ‘no one man can rape a woman’, which has been rendered (and mocked) by Levine: ‘no wee man can rape a woman’, which exposes the ridicule of the original assertion (Levine 1991: 83). Of course, such practice is interventionist, which has been denounced by scholars such as Rosemary Arrojo (1994), as will be explained in a later part. Feminist translation takes us beyond reflections on the patriarchal nature of language and the actual strategies used by

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<sup>77</sup> the Translators’ Note to the latest version of *The Second Sex* will be studied in a later section.

feminist translators in order to contest the ingrained sexism of language, but it also enables us to reflect on feminist theories applied to translation as a discipline. If feminist theories have triggered feminist translation practice, they have also provided translation scholars with a framework to test and challenge Translation Studies, enabling them, for instance, to denounce its sexist biases and misogynist metaphors.

### 3.1.2. *Les belles infidèles*, or denouncing sexist tropes in Translation Studies

Lori Chamberlain brought to light a number of metaphors for translation which play on prejudices about women, and on the difference of judgement between productive and reproductive work. According to her, productive (male) work is thought to be superior to reproductive (female) work, which is seen in many areas of society, as in, for example, the way maternity and child-rearing are tasks for which women do not get enough recognition. But Chamberlain also points out that the origin of this inequality comes from ‘the struggle for authority’, and the constant need for the reassurance of paternity: men have always imposed strict fidelity on women because legitimacy over progeny was granted through paternity, not maternity (Chamberlain 1988: 456). There has always been, however, the possibility of deceit, and cultural stereotypes have claimed that beautiful women are more likely to be unfaithful, which is an age-old claim: has not the Greek goddess of beauty and love, Aphrodite, deceived her husband Hephaestus, which resulted in her (and her lover’s) public humiliation?<sup>78</sup>

And the same prejudice is applied to translation, namely a translation is either faithful to the original, or beautiful (and consequently unfaithful to the source text), which has been summed up in a seventeenth-century adage: *les belles infidèles* (Mounin 1955). Like women, translations are prepossessing, or faithful, but also passive (only ‘reproducing’, as opposed to creating), and consequently hold a secondary place.

The visible/invisible dichotomy can also be applied to metaphors about women and translation, so that the (typically male) author is visible, while the translator (the passive female) is unseen and aims to conceal herself, or himself. And as I am speaking of ‘concealing oneself’, let us now briefly mention the metaphor of clothing, also used to refer to the process of translation, insofar as translations can be seen as ‘ill-fitting clothing’ (Chamberlain *ibid.* 455). In addition, another metaphor —related this time to the notion of authority and paternity which I

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<sup>78</sup> Homer. *Odyssey*.8: 266-369

already referred to— can be noted, that of property. According to Simon, the trope of property aims to depict a relationship in which ‘the author is the landlord, the translator simply a tenant’, which is consistent with the parallel metaphor of women being dominated and owned by men, so that this analogy can be applied to both women and translators (Simon 2004: loc. 333).

Besides particular feminist strategies used in translation, there is another means to bring gender-related issues to the fore in Translation Studies, specifically to reveal little-known (or overlooked) women translators whose work, due to their writers being women, is even less recognised than that of male translators, because, according to Jean Delisle ‘more than men translators, women translators belong to the kingdom of shadow’, even if translating has always been a widespread activity among women (Delisle 2002: 9, my translation). As Delisle further explains, their invisibility could, however, be deliberate, as anonymity can be necessary to defend one’s life, which is all the more imperative when rendering polemical texts (Delisle 2002: 6). But generally speaking, women had to remain invisible by virtue of being women, on the one hand, and translators, on the other. That is why scholars such as Jean Delisle, Luise von Flotow, or Michael Cronin, to name but a few, aimed to bring to light women translators who helped introduce the works of, for instance, Flaubert and Leibniz into their own culture (Delisle *ibid.*). Translation was the only way for women to be able to pursue a literary activity, because they were seen as minor scribes of someone else’s ideas. Women have long been restricted (or prohibited) from writing books in their own rights, and some had to use a male pen name to publish their work, as shown in the cases of British writer George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans), or French novelist George Sand (Aurore Dupin), and anonymity was also an option for women authors. The secondary status of women writers and women translators thus go hand in hand, although each was restrained and identified in different ways, because translation, as we saw, is too readily considered as an inferior activity. The will to make women’s works recognised is reminiscent of *Le Deuxième Sexe*, through, notably, its plurality of voices, a notion we mentioned in Chapter One. In that chapter, I briefly showed that de Beauvoir entwines many interlocutors so as to reinforce her arguments, but, it is interesting to discuss the issue of voice in relation to feminism, and to Translation Studies. Giving attention to women’s voices is central to feminism, because reclaiming women authors is a necessary step towards greater equality. That ambition is very present in *Le Deuxième Sexe* because de Beauvoir quotes at length extracts from women’s letters or diaries, thus disseminating their opinions and thoughts. But the same intention can be found in Translation Studies, because feminist translation’s objective is in line with Women’s Studies, namely aiming to make women writers heard.

### 3.2. The plurality of *feminisms* is also present in Translation Studies

#### 3.2.1. The translator's subjectivity

In addition to acknowledging translators' work, we need to recognise their gender and the role it has in their writing practice, which refers back to the cruciality of the translator's subjectivity in her/his work. Luise von Flotow reminds us of the importance of 'identity politics' in Translation Studies, a concept which aptly links to de Beauvoir's own methodology and usage of the personal and the autobiographical in her works. Indeed, identity politics acknowledges "the academic's personal interests" (von Flotow 1998: 9), as well as her/his cultural, social, or political background. A translator's feminist affiliation is, for example, a characteristic which might influence her/his work, her/his 'positionality'. On the one hand, the very act of translating requires the translator to position herself/himself regarding languages and cultures, and, on the other hand, there is a parallel between positioning oneself and 'translating' oneself, which means that the notion of position and place is doubly at the heart of translation: translation enables us to position ourselves, and any translator is positioned one way or another. As von Flotow puts it, "in translation, the translator's "positionality" is undeniable. The translator writes from a specific moment, from within a specific culture and usually sub-culture, and often in dialogue with the social and political culture of the moment. Inevitably, there is an ideological slant on the texts." (Von Flotow 2000: 18) That shows how present and compelling the translator's subjectivity is. Using that subjectivity in the creative act of translation, the translator's input can be extensive, which seems justified by Berman, who provocatively claims that "translators have *all the rights* as long as their game is played up front" (Berman 1995: 93). That quotation, despite seeming extreme, highlights a very interesting point: a translator has not only the right, but the duty, to explain and justify her/his practice and choices. In other words, if a feminist translator wishes to alter the source text so as to suppress its sexism, it is possible on the condition that the alteration is made apparent to the readers.

However, what about fidelity, and the moral responsibility of the translator? As far as both Berman and von Flotow point out, as long as the translator states her/his intentions straight away, then alterations justified by the translator's positionality are accepted. Also, the strategy of prefacing and footnoting, which we saw earlier, helps to make the translator more visible, and



consequently serves her/him to explain her/his political position towards the source text and the translation.

### 3.2.2. Differences of viewpoint and representation

Feminist translation is often linked to postcolonial studies<sup>79</sup>, and one scholar particularly exemplifies this close relationship between feminism and postcolonialism: Gayatri Spivak, whose argument on the limitations of the Canadian School strategies is most useful to feminist translation. I would like to emphasize that input, so as to further those translation strategies, and reflect on the possibility for better-adapted procedures in feminist translation. Spivak is not only interested in the visibility of women, but of women from minorities and in the relationship between Western and Eastern women. One of the reasons why feminism is plural is that feminists do not position themselves in the same way depending on their own background, their age, or their race, and, as Nicole Jouve Ward puts it: “the ‘I’ who has written this book is white: privileged, yes, middle class, yes; and everything it has to say is limited and coloured by unconscious western European assumptions” (quoted in von Flotow 1998: 9), so that the differences in positionality might be an impediment to finding a consensus regarding feminist translation strategies. According to Spivak, the representation of third world women through translation remains exoticized and distorted, and that does not stem from the translators’ (un)conscious stereotypes, nor from any wish to undermine the original work, but is instead a result of the chosen translation strategies (Spivak 1992: 180). Fluency, or, as she puts it, ‘translatese’ (which corresponds to the prevailing language used in English-speaking translations), conceals the style and foreign presence of the original author, and for Spivak, by trying to make a foreign book more approachable to the target audience, translators risk to misrepresent the diversities between individuals from different cultures. For the theorist, there is an irony in the fact that, despite trying to promote literature by foreign women writers, translators resorting to ‘translatese’ contribute to reinforce clichés about the source culture, and impair the original author’s work. My contention is, however, that the feminist endeavour to specifically select and promote texts written by third world women so as to enrich the Western target audience, is a feminist translation strategy, which requires an ethical and political move from the translator. And by using a standard English rendering, the translators are more likely to draw the attention of potential readers, with the (hopeful) result of raising their awareness (and interest) of the writings of female writers in foreign countries. I agree with Spivak that it is crucial to make

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<sup>79</sup> to the point where classes or seminars on both topics are sometimes taught together.

literature from minorities widely known, and without exoticizing them, so that the target audience can appreciate the richness of this literature. Furthermore, Spivak is concerned with the issue of secondariness, which puts some cultures at risk of being perceived and treated as secondary, as 'minor' in comparison to 'major', which means that third world literature is inferior compared to dominant Western texts. This notion of secondariness echoes works by Lori Chamberlain and Sherry Simon, who both argue that women, like translation<sup>80</sup>, have been put into a secondary position. Talking about writers Nicole Brossard and Christine Brooke-Rose, Simon explains that it is possible to 'smudge the distinction between *original and secondary forms of writing*, troubling (but not yet toppling) the entire edifice of conceptual complicities which *maintain the power of author over translator, creation over reproduction, male over female*" (Simon 1996: 165, my emphasis). Here translation and women are seen through the lens of power structures, and the same binary opposition between 'major' and 'minor' is applied by Spivak when she talks about the way literature by third world women is rendered into dominant languages: "the literature of a woman in Palestine begins to resemble, in the feel of its prose, something by a man in Taiwan", thus mocking and denouncing the way 'translatese' depicts women (Spivak 1992: 180). Spivak also insists on the importance of language as a way to understand one's identity (and positionality), when saying that 'language may be one of many elements that allow us to make sense of things, of ourselves [...]' (Spivak 1992: 177).

Another prominent postcolonial scholar, Homi Bhabha, furthers this claim by stating that the displacement of migrants, and the cultural diversity they are faced with, help to explain why translating cultural differences is so challenging (Bhabha 1994: 8; 224). We can see a parallel between migrants' displacement and the dislocation which women (and women translators) experience when dealing with patriarchal language, which is summed up by Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood's statement that "I am a translation because I am a woman" (quoted in Capperdoni 2007: 253).

But can we not venture that there is a limit which cannot be crossed regarding how much one can move a reader towards the culture(s) of the Other? Although I agree that overcoming the translator's anonymity and making her/his position known are necessary, I contend that too much foreignness presented to the readers can either deter them from reading, or hinder their understanding of the source text. I claim that the most adequate strategies to communicate the

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<sup>80</sup> Translation is also seen as 'second' in relation to the source text (see, for example, Berman 1995: 42).

translator's stance are not to 'hijack' or supplement the text, but to extensively use prefaces and footnotes. I argue that bringing the foreignness and the message of the source text to the readers can be achieved while providing them with an accessible rendering, which in turn is a way to attract and retain the target readers.

### 3.3. Critical reading of feminist translation

Other theorists working on feminist translation have judged it necessary to redefine translation procedures, critiquing scholars such as Luise von Flotow on different grounds, which we will see in the following section. José Santaemilia and Françoise Massardier-Kenney, for instance, worked on revising the main three feminist translation strategies advocated by the Canadian School, arguing that some of its arguments are too excessive, and rejecting the 'innovative' aspect of those procedures.

#### 3.3.1. Feminist translation's originality

Massardier-Kenney claims that 'feminist translation [...] adapts existing translation strategies rather than inventing new ones' (Massardier-Kenney 1997: 55). The theorist refers to the three strategies of supplementing, prefacing/footnoting, and 'hijacking', and she explains that the former has been described as compensation, that prefacing and notes already existed and were used for other intents than feminist ones, and she finds the concept of 'hijacking' particularly contentious and detrimental to showing 'what making the feminine visible in language means' (quoted in Leonardi 2007: 57). If I agree that those practices were already available to translators before the emergence of feminist translation, I still believe that the specifically feminist approach and usage they induced are both original and fruitful to Translation Studies. In addition, Massardier-Kenney herself rebrands the strategy of prefacing and footnoting as *commentary*, while borrowing Venuti's concept of resistancy<sup>81</sup> (Venuti 1995/2002) in the context of feminist translation, although resistancy involves creatively rendering experimental source texts, which reminds us of the practice advocated by von Flotow as regards Canadian feminist writers of the 1980s (von Flotow 1991). I do, however, share Massardier-Kenney's views regarding prefaces, or *commentary*, namely that they represent a remarkable opportunity for the translator to make her/his work

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<sup>81</sup> *Resistancy* refers to challenging the target culture by resorting to foreignized translation, and thus 'resist' English-language hegemony (Venuti 2002).

acknowledged, to provide her/his personal stance towards the source text, as well as on translation practice, but also, it 'reminds the reader that translating is an activity which creates authority for the writer translated' (Massardier-Kenney 1997: 60). The translator's activity results in her/his responsibility towards the source author, as discussed in Chapter Two, in which we exposed the role and liability of the translator, and her/his power over how the original author is represented.

### 3.3.2. Feminist translation as an elitist approach

Other problems emerge from the strategies promoted by Canadian theorists such as von Flotow or Simon. Some scholars (for instance Robyn Gillam) accuse them of being reserved to an elite of readers who have enough knowledge of both the source and target languages to appreciate the complex play on words encouraged by feminist translation. According to Gillam, the very choice of the source texts being rendered is questionable, because they are experimental novels by Quebec authors, such as Nicole Brossard, whose radical use of language implies inventive translation, if one wants to render the same linguistic effects which the author created. However, Gillam contends that the resulting translations are 'elitist' because not everyone can apprehend the intricate rendering (Gillam 1995). She proceeds to state that feminist translations, as advocated by the Canadian School, are reserved to an educated elite composed of bilingual readers, whose command of both French and English enable them to praise the gift of both original author and translator. The issue of bilingualism is, however, not incidental considering the linguistic history of Canada, and Quebec in particular, because language is very much a political matter there (von Flotow 1998: 6). Gillam seems more concerned about the reaction of the Anglophone audience, who only perceives the translation as 'an intellectual game where there exists nothing but words and their meanings' (Gillam 1995: 11). Leaving aside the fact that one can indeed consider that words, their meaning and their polysemy are at the core of translation, we can note that the bottom line problem mentioned by Gillam seems to be the frequent mistranslation required by feminist translation. In order to invent wordplays which aim to match the pervasive inventions of the source text, the translator needs to distance herself/himself from the original text, and the result is often very different, as shows the following example from Barbara Godard's translation of Nicole Brossard's, *These Our Mothers*: the French noun 'défaite' (meaning defeat) has been rendered as both 'defeat' and 'de facto', because of the play on sounds in French *défaite/de fait* (de facto). The result might be rather confusing for the target readers, and for some theorists, resulting to such alterations of

the original is even a form of violence, as we will now see with the critiques voiced by Rosemary Arrojo.

### 3.3.3. Feminist translation and sexist biases

For Arrojo, feminist strategies, and especially that of ‘hijacking’, are hypocritical insofar as they are doing the exact same thing which they accuse patriarchal language of doing, namely being violent. The theorist argues that the feminist answer to the ingrained violence of male language and sexist texts is equally as brutal, because ‘womanhandling’ the text can be seen as an act of “castration” (Arrojo 1994: 154). There is thus a parallel between the sexist content of such a novel as Guillermo Cabrera Infante’s *Tres Tristes Tigres* (which we mentioned earlier), which is offensive to women, and the ‘revenge’ imposed by feminist translators who twist the author’s words. According to Arrojo, we can even attack feminist translators for applying a double standard to translation: linguistic violence towards women is unacceptable, whereas feminist reclaiming of language, and consequent subversion is accepted, and even supported (Arrojo *ibid.* 157). In addition to being hypocritical regarding the double standard between men’s and women’s violence towards texts, Arrojo points out that feminist intervention is simply a ‘betrayal’ of the source text, so that feminist strategies consist of deceiving the original text and its author, while claiming to regain faithfulness. Commenting on Infante’s translation by Suzanne Jill Levine, Arrojo explains that the translator ‘seems to be convinced that she can actually be “faithful” in her betrayal as she supposedly “undermines” her sexist “original” with, among other things, “the book’s own corrosive mechanism of alliteration”’ (Arrojo *ibid.* 152), whereas revising the source text and remaining faithful at the same time seem to be highly contradictory. Arrojo’s condemnation of feminist strategies goes as far as questioning the translator’s ethics, when she claims that ‘one needs a bizarre sense of ethics in order to be able to claim “faithfulness” to a text one consciously decides to “hijack” or to “castrate”’ (Arrojo *ibid.* 159), and I partly agree with her that distortion through ‘hijacking’ the text is indeed violent, and that it also misrepresents the author by distorting her/his message.

However, feminist translators insist on presenting their positionality and do not hide their feminist bias, which challenges the issue (and Arrojo’s critique) of fidelity: can feminist translators justify being faithful to their political agenda, or should they refrain from altering the text? My contention is that, when the misrepresentation of the author is known by the reader (when the translator communicates her/his strategies and practice, for instance), then feminist

intervention is relevant, although too much intervention without the original author's blessing might result in too big a difference between the original and the translation. Moreover, the issue of creativity is also crucial to reinforce the target text's reception in the target culture. Creativity in terms of subversion is actually the *raison d'être* of feminist strategies, so that the translation reflects a practice aiming to unsettle, to educate, and to improve things, but it can also be misunderstood, or divert the readers from the text. The first translation of *Le Deuxième Sexe* was, for instance, 'hijacked' (but not for feminist reasons), which resulted in a significant distortion of de Beauvoir's message, and a misrepresentation of the author.

Feminist translation, and the strategies it implements, are crucial to this research project for many respects, such as the fact that the book at hand is a cornerstone of feminism, but also because the new translators are women, who aim to render the work of a woman writer, and philosopher. We will examine Borde and Malovany-Chevallier's translation project and investigate how they relate to de Beauvoir, to feminism and to translation practice in a later discussion, aiming to map feminist translation strategies onto the translation of feminist philosophy. For instance, the ethical concern is central to my argument, and I support a political and ethical engagement from the translator, but I believe that it can be achieved through the rendering of an accessible translation, thus keeping the target reader in mind, an approach encouraged by the Interpretive Theory of Translation, as shown earlier.

Although other scholars, such as Lawrence Venuti, champion the translator's visibility and the importance of conveying a political agenda, a consensus on the most adequate approach to translate philosophy still has to be reached. Venuti's urging for foreignization is, for instance, problematic, as will now be shown.

#### **4. Conflicting approaches with Lawrence Venuti's foreignization**

##### 4.1. Venuti's foreignizing approach

Lawrence Venuti's argument stems from the heritage of thinkers such as Friedrich Schleiermacher, Walter Benjamin, or Antoine Berman, who defend a moral and philosophical approach to translation. Venuti, for instance, directly quotes Berman and reports how the French theorist developed a 'translation ethics' (Venuti 1991).

And for Schleiermacher, there is a way to reveal the foreignness of the text: “the more closely the translation follows the turns taken by the original, the more foreign it will seem to the reader.” (Lefevere 1977: 78) Venuti’s contribution to Translation Studies can be said to take on that challenge, as he advocates for an ethical attitude towards translation, drawing on Schleiermacher’s exhortation to bring foreignness into the translation, and to ‘move the reader toward the author’ (Lefevere *ibid.*). Drawing on Schleiermacher’s binary model<sup>82</sup>, Lawrence Venuti urges the translator to resort to ‘foreignization’ (Venuti 1995). According to him, most translations are ‘domesticated’, which means they are target text-oriented: not only in the semantic choice or cultural references, but by really seeking to make the readers feel there is no gap between their own culture and that of the source text. Due to that effort of domestication, the target readers feel that they are reading the original source text because a domesticated text is a fluent and smooth read which has been adapted to the linguistic norms of the target language. As an example of such fluent translation, Venuti quotes translator Dudley Fitts, a specialist of ancient Greek poetry and drama, who states in the preface to *One Hundred Poems from the Palatine Anthology* (1938) that he chose to render the Greek ‘Zeus’ by the English ‘God’ (Fitts 1956: xvii–xviii). By doing so, the translator took liberties with the original text and offered his own interpretation of the text, with the aim to make the readers appreciate it as if it was stemming from their own culture, so that they would relate to it and not feel estranged from it. Fitts explains that “[he] [has] simply tried to restate in [his] own idiom what the Greek verses have meant to [him].” He thus read the original, understood it according to his own interpretation, and rendered it in English, a process very much akin to that advocated by the Interpretive Theory of Translation.

Venuti, on the other hand, encourages the translator to ‘foreignize’ the text, that is to introduce unfamiliar elements in the translation (be it syntactic characteristics, or lexical items, for instance) so that the reader experiences the foreignness of the text. To illustrate this concept, Venuti uses a translation of the Argentine author Julio Cortázar by the American translator Paul Blackburn. In *End of the Game* (1967), Blackburn develops a heterogeneous discourse which contributes to make the translation sound foreign, and to affirm its belonging to another culture. It is the ideal goal of foreignization: showing the readers that they are not reading an original, but, on the contrary, emphasising the fact that the text is a translation. And still, seemingly contradictorily, Venuti quotes the example of *End of the Game* as both an

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<sup>82</sup> According to Schleiermacher, a translator can either ‘move the reader toward the writer’ or ‘the writer toward the reader’ (Lefevere 1977: 74).

instance of foreignization *and* fluency. He explains that Blackburn's text is 'fluent' due to its use of 'linear syntax, univocal meaning, current standard usage', but at the same time, he asserts that Blackburn was using foreignizing strategies, such as the use of 'colloquialism', or 'nonstandard punctuation and orthography', and that, thanks to those practices, the translation could not be taken to be the original, but on the contrary, showed clear signs of foreignness and 'challenged fluency' (Venuti 2008: 231-232). The above contradiction proves how problematic it is to concretely define domestication and foreignization because the criteria are rather abstract, which is a point of critique further developed by Maria Tymoczko, as we will see in this section.

#### 4.1.1. Against the hegemony of the English language

For Venuti, foreignizing follows a clear political stance, namely resisting the hegemony of the English language. In Venuti's views, the dominance of an English-speaking culture, as well as its norms of fluency in translation, harms minority cultures because the latter are made to fit into the dominant culture. However, the prevalence of seeking fluency in translation is not the prerogative of the Anglophone world, that approach can be seen in a variety of cultures, and we can be skeptical of its existence being the import of English hegemony, while we can also contend that using foreignization in some contexts is detrimental to minor cultures: if, for instance, foreign terms are introduced into minor languages through translation, then the minor language's own identity can be threatened (Cronin 2010: 250). That argument brings us to the issue of English hegemony, which is one of Venuti's concerns.

Translations from minority languages into English are tailored so as to seem to come from the receiving culture. In order to dispute the English language hegemony, Venuti exhorts translators to use innovative strategies and techniques, and to resort to anachronisms or slang, so as to foreignize their translations. And because he advocates for a political involvement in translation, he argues that the very choice of texts to be translated is a matter of politics. Certain minority texts are marginalised in the target culture through a domesticated translation, whereas a foreignizing translation can help to establish foreign texts in the target literature. Both choosing texts from minority languages and tackling the use of a domesticated English in translation are intended to curb Anglophone supremacy. This is reminiscent of the refusal which some scholars, such as French philosopher Barbara Cassin, show towards 'Globish' (i.e. global English). The latter is a kind of basic English used worldwide in view of communicating between cultures, but, which, according to Cassin, is quite limited when exchanging ideas. The



philosopher defends the plurality of languages, reminding us that “a national language is not a dialect to only speak at home, it is the language which enables subtlety and accuracy” (interview of Barbara Cassin, 2013, my translation). Keeping a plurality of languages and making connections between them is therefore imperative, and that connection is obtainable through translation. On the other hand, it is useful to note that Venuti’s study on the hegemony of English seems to imply that most foreign texts translated into English are domesticated, which is nevertheless not as simple: the case-study I am focussing on is a French text rendered into English, which tells us that exporting English texts into foreign cultures is not the only tendency, as the opposite move can be made, and in addition to this, we will see that the latest version of *The Second Sex* is foreignized, as is supported by Venuti, which does not, however, undermine English hegemony, but rather helps to reinforce prejudices against the French philosopher and her magnum opus.

#### 4.1.2. *The role and visibility of the translator*

Furthermore, legally speaking, the translator is partially considered as an author, but the translation is mostly seen as an adaptation, rather than an original piece of work in its own right. Venuti thus reminds us that in the United Kingdom and the United States, the translator is ‘subordinated to the author’ and needs the author’s approval for publication (Venuti 2008: 8). And finally, translators’ lack of recognition, and subsequent invisibility, is further shown with their usual absence from advertising, reviews, and other general paratexts going with the publication of a translated piece of work. Venuti points out that, when a reviewer does mention that the text is a translation, the focus is most of the time on the style, rather than the accuracy of the translation, or relevant information about the translator (where the book is situated in the translator’s career, for instance). I can, however, disagree with that last point because the new version of *Le Deuxième Sexe* puts forward its two translators. The Vintage paperback edition specifies on its front cover that the book is a new, and complete, translation, and it also names the translators Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier. On the back cover, another mention to the translation (and the supposed approbation it receives) is made. In addition to that, the two translators have actively taken part in the promotion of the book (for instance through conferences and interviews) and the fact that their book is a translation was actually a main feature of the blurb. The reviews have also been focused on the translation, with Beauvoir scholars judging on the quality of the new version. It can be said that the first translation and subsequent retranslations are not viewed and treated in the same way: retranslation draws

attention to the translator insofar as the latter deliberately changes the first version. As Venuti explains, “retranslations typically highlight the translator’s intentionality because they are designed to make an appreciable difference” (Venuti 2003: 29). The theorist, therefore, himself acknowledges some limitation to his views on translator’s invisibility: trying to be ‘invisible’ or self-effacing in the translation (that is not showing the translator’s voice in the text) is one thing, but the invisibility of translators in the publishing sphere is yet another.

#### 4.1.3. Voicing the Other

Through resistancy, and the consequent implementation of foreignizing techniques, Venuti aims to make marginalised voices heard. This issue of ‘voices’ is a complex one and Venuti states that the translator should convey the text’s own voice, and neither the translator’s voice, nor the author’s voice (the latter becoming, in Venuti’s views, authoritative). Venuti indeed explains that “transparency is an illusionistic effect: it depends on the translator’s work with language, but it hides this work, even the very presence of language, *by suggesting that the author can be seen in the translation, that in it the author speaks in his or her own voice.*” (Venuti 2008: 249; my emphasis)

To sum up, Venuti points to the fact that the most important voice is the Other’s: when we look more deeply into Venuti’s notion of foreignization, we can link it to the philosophical concept of the Other. And there is here a clear connection to the book used for my case-study, namely *Le Deuxième Sexe* by Simone de Beauvoir. In her philosophical treatise, de Beauvoir’s main philosophical and theoretical framework happens to be about the question of the Other, and more particularly using that notion to analyze the situation of women in society and to explain how women have been perceived as the absolute Other by patriarchal societies. Both de Beauvoir and Venuti are interested “in exploring how the Other can retain its otherness while caught up in the gaze of a (more powerful) observing subject” (Moira Inghilleri and Carol Maier, 2009: 101). Venuti reckons that the dominant subject (for instance the English-speaking culture) tends to subjugate the Other (as, for example, minority peripheral cultures) to its own norms, therefore eliminating the Other’s foreignness, whereas de Beauvoir’s argument is slightly different. She also tackles the power struggles between the Subject and the Other, but she acknowledges that there is ambiguity and that Subject and Other are interdependent. Indeed, self-consciousness is only obtained through our relation to others, and, therefore, we need them (Tidd 2004: loc.490).

## 4.2. Foreignization and readability

Closeness to the original source-text raises issues of readability, because a translator cannot only transpose one word for another, translation requires translators to create a text which will be understandable in the target language. Venuti seems to advocate conveying a sense of foreignness into the translation, by keeping close to the foreign phrases or structure if need be, as shows his praise of Richard Pevear' and Larissa Volokhonsky's translation of Dostoevsky's novel *The Brothers Karamazov*. Venuti explains that the two translators maintain the specific style of the Russian original<sup>83</sup> and concludes that, even if the result may disconcert readers used to more domesticated versions, Pevear and Volokhonsky's translation conveys the intrinsic style used by the original author, and which has been defined as 'multivocal' by theorist Mikhail Bakhtin (Venuti 2012: 105). It is worth mentioning though, that the translation quoted by Venuti is far from being unanimously acclaimed: as reviewer Janet Malcolm comments in the *London Review of Books* a propos the translation of a specific sentence, "[Pevear] is wrong to say that his own awkward 'the women washed what had been he' is the solution to the problem that this phrase presents for translators. Constance Garnett and Louise and Aylmer Maude solve it with 'the women washed what had been the prince.'"<sup>84</sup> In the example cited, keeping close to the Russian text does not necessarily help the reader to capture a sense of the original text: in my opinion, the unusual syntax in English confuses the reader and disturbs his/her immersion in the story by disrupting the reading flow, instead of making him/her appreciate the text's foreignness. To some extent, keeping close to the source text syntax can prevent the readers from understanding the sentence altogether, by providing a translation which does not only feel odd or foreign (as advocated by Venuti), but also incorrect.

The danger of such practice is literalism, a concept briefly defined in the introduction to Chapter Three, which implies keeping close to the source text, to the point of preserving the foreign syntax. That strategy is advocated by Walter Benjamin (whom Venuti draws on) when he states that 'true translation [...] is accomplished above all by literalness in the rendition of syntax and it is this that reveals the word, not the sentence, to be the primary element of the translator' (Benjamin1923: 261). It is clear for the theorist that the only way to reach an accurate

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<sup>83</sup> Richard Pevear himself claims that: "Other translators smooth it out. We don't." Interview in Remnick, David. "The Translation Wars". *The New Yorker* (November 7, 2005)

<sup>84</sup> *London Review of Books* 30, 10 (22 May 2008): 11-13.

translation is by keeping the literal wording of the source text.

As was said above, Venuti was influenced by Benjamin and Schleiermacher, who both encourage resorting to literalism, but the American scholar objects to being associated with that trend, as for him, his concept of foreignization is more than sheer literalism. What Venuti does promote however is to use Philip Lewis's notion of 'abusive fidelity' in translation. We saw previously that fidelity (or faithfulness) has often been put forward as the ideal goal of translation, although the very definition of fidelity depends on translation trends and political stances, which makes it difficult to pinpoint what faithfulness really is. However, if we start from the idea that fidelity directs the translator's work, we can mention transgressive translation strategies which advocate to be 'abusive' when seeking to change the relationship between texts and writers, to assert the authorial presence of the translator, and, to seek a translation which 'values experimentation, tampers with usage, seeks to match the polyvalencies or plurivocities or expressive stresses of the original by producing its own.' (Lewis 1985: 41). This stance, which Venuti follows, is in agreement with what we said in Chapters Two and Three about the need for the translator to be visible in his/her own right, and to acknowledge the necessary interpretation required from translation. However, we do not see why this interpretative position taken by Venuti could not be compatible with domestication, that is with rendering a fluent text which provides the target readers with high readability. Further comments can be made about Venuti's call for foreignization, and a number of scholars, such as Maria Tymoczko (2000), Anthony Pym (2010), or Tarek Shamma (2009), have raised a number of issues with his argument.

#### 4.2.1. Maria Tymoczko and the problem of definition

According to Maria Tymoczko, the foreignizing-domesticating dichotomy is too vague and lacks clear definition. She argues that Venuti generally lacks explicit definitions for the terms he is using, and that he justifies using them according to the purpose he grants them, rather than characteristics they have. This tendency makes Tymoczko say that we have definitions by "disjuncts of various properties rather than partial overlaps" (Tymoczko 2000: 36). If we take the concept of 'foreignization' as an example, we can note that it both covers the conscious effort of making a translation sound foreign through translating strategies, and choosing marginal source texts to translate, therefore, conceiving a specific definition is problematic.

Another issue raised by Tymoczko, and which is partly linked to the former, is that Venuti exploits the plurality of terms he is using because it 'allows him to shift ground and alter the basis of his argument as it suits him'. This rather harsh comment is supported by the following explanation: Venuti 'has essentially abandoned his former terms', which shows that he recognized 'the weaknesses of the earlier terminology and his inability to defend it or even to deploy it in useful theoretical ways'. I will, however, argue that we can also see a fruitful evolution in Venuti's work and that between the publication of *The Translator's Invisibility* (1995), to that of *Translation Changes Everything: Theory and Practice* (2012), his views have indeed slightly shifted. For instance, using 'minoritizing' instead of 'foreignizing' is in accordance with the evolution of Venuti's political agenda: his focus being translating texts from minor languages.

I would like to mention a final issue pointed out by Tymoczko, namely the difficulty in assessing whether a translation is foreignizing or domesticating. From the various examples given by Venuti, we can question what degree of resistance is required for a translation to be foreignized, or as Tymoczko asks, 'how much resistance must there be in a translation for it to count as a resistant translation?' and Venuti does not give a clear answer. For Tymoczko, cultural sovereignty is not exclusively attained through one type of translating strategy (such as fluency), but it is seen directly in the cultural loss of the translation. Therefore, all translation strategies can potentially be used for domination, which invalidates Venuti's argument.

#### 4.2.2. Pym and the visible translator-theorist

Anthony Pym's argument lies in the fact that Venuti is both a theorist of Translation Studies, and a practising translator, whose own example contradicts his theory. In his review of Venuti's *Translator's Invisibility*, Pym reproaches Venuti for his omnipresence in the field of Translation Studies, and for what it implies. For Pym, Venuti is himself too visible and too much authority is bestowed on him and on his prescriptive theory. And still, that theory is a kind of ivory tower one, according to Pym, who ironically states that, thanks to Venuti, 'inadequate readers like [himself] can now refer to the translator's explanations. It is all there, in the big book, in the theory. In fact, if we did not have the theory we would have to rely on the translations themselves, thus foolishly falling into what Venuti identifies as the "anti-intellectual assertion of aesthetic value as self-evident"' (Pym 2010: 6) Here Pym exposes what he finds to

be elitism on Venuti's part, and he also critiques the prominence of Venuti's theory, as well as the interpretations of the source texts he worked on, and the way he consequently translated them. It is an interesting point because Venuti does seem uncompromising in his call for foreignization and resistance, and goes quite far in the way he translates texts. Furthermore, Pym rightly points out the contradiction between theory and practice, which is all the more obvious with Venuti as his theory is intransigent and relies on dichotomies (such as foreignization and domestication), which are difficult to define. Venuti himself, in the second edition of *The Translator's Invisibility*, justifies using these terms as 'ethical attitudes' as opposed to a 'neat binary opposition', in direct response to critics such as Pym or Tymoczko (Venuti 2008: 19, emphasis in the text). I argue that it still remains abstract and hard to pinpoint, because judging a translation through ethical standards can be rather subjective.

#### 4.2.3. Tarek Shamma and foreignization as exoticism

And indeed foreignization —albeit possibly chosen for ethical reasons— can be counter-productive and might lead to reinforcing prejudices, instead of only rendering a shade/hint of foreignness. As Tarek Shamma argues in *Translation and the Manipulation of Difference* (2009), a seemingly foreignized text is sometimes a pretext to emphasize hackneyed views of the target culture, and he illustrates his point with English translations of the *Arabian Nights*. As a particular foreignising strategy, Shamma includes slavish following of the syntax of the source text, which is very similar to the translation technique used by Borde and Malovany-Chevallier in *The Second Sex*. Shamma carries on his analysis of the *Arabian Nights* so as to show that typically exotic and fantasised visions of the East (such as excessive sensuality and extreme violence) are stressed through the foreignized translation, be it through the vocabulary chosen, or the addition of details which are not present in the original (Shamma 2009: 64-65).

#### 4.3. Investigating the agency of the translators of de Beauvoir

The present thesis relates to Venuti's work in many ways, especially his concern with ethics and the role of the translator, but also the invisibility of the latter, which will lead us to a parallel between translator's invisibility and women's invisibility.

The very notion of invisibility is, as Anthony Pym explains, applicable to minorities in general, be it to denounce discrimination towards 'homosexuals, women, foreignness of all kinds' (Pym 2010: 8), and there are many connections between translation, women, and invisibility. As we mentioned

before, women translators have been invisible through centuries, and that invisibility, stemming from their being women and translators, reminds us of the sexist metaphors generally ascribed to translation, namely the trope that men dominate women in the same way as the original text overshadows its translation. There is a similarity between the secondary position of translators in relation to the source text, and the subaltern position of women in society. The latter were mostly excluded from scientific endeavour, from gaining knowledge, and translation was their only access to writing activity. Women could not produce words of their own, as can be seen when talking about dictionaries and about 'women's invisibility as language producers' (Kramarac and Treichler 1985), implying that language itself, and the way it is conserved, regulated and developed was kept away from women. That same form of exclusion was still maintained when women became more and more recognised as writers: their works would still not enter the literary canon, so that women's invisibility prevails.

Venuti's work on invisibility and on the treatment of minorities in translation shows obvious correlation with my research, as his views on minor languages and central/peripheral positions are reminiscent of the secondary status of women in society and in literature (as exposed by de Beauvoir's *Le Deuxième Sexe*). If I am sympathetic to Venuti's outlook on matters of inequalities and lack of decent status of both women and translators, I am, however, arguing that his way of tackling those issues is too perplexing and abstract. Venuti's appeal to foreignization is, as we saw with the various critiques raised by translation theorists, disputable, and I contend that it can lead to obscuring the target text, and even distorting it.

The second English translation of de Beauvoir's *Le Deuxième Sexe*, translated by Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier, is an example of foreignization, but is also useful to analyze for its translators' visibility and agency. Indeed, and as will be shown in the following chapter, Borde and Malovany-Chevallier aim to let de Beauvoir speak and to keep close to the original text in pursuit of faithfulness.

However, keeping too close to *Le Deuxième Sexe*'s French syntax borders on literalism, so that the goal to "say what Simone de Beauvoir said as close to the way she said it"<sup>85</sup> actually impairs the representation of the French author, due to distortions and mistranslation.

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<sup>85</sup> as stated in the Translators' Note of the latest translation.

My own contention is that foreignizing the translation of dense philosophical texts leads to confusing and disengaging the readers. This will be analyzed through a thorough study of the latest *The Second Sex*, and thanks to close readings of the translation. This analysis will allow me to identify what translation strategies can be appropriate for feminist philosophy.





## CHAPTER 4: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF *LE DEUXIÈME SEXE*'S SECOND TRANSLATION

Drawing on Venuti's theories, Borde and Malovany-Chevallier's new translation can be described as foreignized because it prioritises the original text and its author, thus keeping close to the French source text. Before showing the extent of the translation's foreignization, I will present its context, as well as the overall translation project and provide background information about the two translators, to finally discuss its reception.

### 1. Borde and Malovany-Chevallier's translation

#### 1.1. The story behind the new *Second Sex*

We saw in Chapter One that the first English translation of de Beauvoir's influential work was heavily criticised and was not adequate as regards the translation of philosophy, besides not rendering the source text in its entirety. Consequently, protest followed and a new translation was unsuccessfully requested, resulting in a strife between Beauvoir scholars and the publishing house Knopf, for whom the sales of *The Second Sex* were constant and high, therefore not requiring a retranslation to be commissioned. We will now discuss the long process leading to the new translation of *Le Deuxième Sexe*, comparing reports from the different agents involved in that work, such as Beauvoir specialists, the trio of Anne-Solange Noble (Foreign Rights Director at the French publishing house Gallimard), Borde and Malovany-Chevallier, and the publishing house owning *The Second Sex*'s copyrights.

The crucial work of Margaret Simons, who reported the extent of the cuts that *Le Deuxième Sexe* went through (between 10 to 15% of the original text), was mentioned in Chapter One. Simons, as well as Toril Moi and Elizabeth Fallaize, located which passages were cut, or condensed, and gave precise analyzes of the omissions (Moi 2002, Fallaize 2002). Besides the cuts, mistranslation of both general and specialised (i.e. philosophical) French terms also called for a new translation, but the actual project only started in 2005, and through the impulse of Anne-Solange Noble (*Le Monde*, November 26, 2009). Indeed, due to legal restrictions, such as copyright, Beauvoir specialists could only offer their analysis and urge the publishing house to take the necessary measures to commission a retranslation, therefore, it is not surprising to see that Noble played a key role in having a new translation done. But before analysing the role played by Noble, I find it important to mention an article by Sarah Glazer published in *The New York Times* in 2004, which seems to have had a decisive influence on

making the issues of the first translation known to a wider audience, and outside of academic circles. In “Lost in Translation”, Sarah Glazer puts to the fore the cuts and mistranslation which called for a retranslation, but it is hard to estimate the actual impact that her essay had on the final decision to do a new translation. Interviews and statements from the different agents involved show that the two translators, Borde and Malovany-Chevallier, suggested themselves as suitable translators for the job after attending a conference celebrating the 50th anniversary of the French publication of *Le Deuxième Sexe* in 1999 (Bauer 2011), a telling example of translators’ agency in initiating retranslation. Borde and Malovany-Chevallier were so outraged at the inaccuracies of the only English translation that they contacted Anne-Solange Noble, allegedly a former student of Malovany-Chevallier’s<sup>86</sup>, and expressed their interest in translating de Beauvoir’s book. Noble battled to convince Knopf to have it commissioned, but had to turn to the British partner of Knopf, Jonathan Cape<sup>87</sup>, to finally be heard. Ellah Allfrey, a former Senior Editor at Cape, showed enthusiasm for a new rendering, and, finally, the costs of the project were shared between Cape, Knopf, and the French Ministry of Culture (*Le Monde* *ibid.*).

## 1.2. The translators’ background

We have seen that Borde and Malovany-Chevallier seemed extremely enthusiastic about the retranslation, suggesting themselves as translators, but it is to be discussed whether they were indeed the right people for the task: what was their background? Both American translators had a career as English teachers in Paris and co-authored cookery books and grammar books, but their experience of translation (and what is more, of translating feminist philosophy) is rather limited (Moi 2010). So it seems that the new translators are neither experienced nor specialised translators, and we can only question why an influential publishing house such as Random House would choose unseasoned translators to render such a critical book as *Le Deuxième Sexe*? I find it significant to quote some comments from an interview in which Anne-Solange Noble gives her views on translation, speaking of *Le Deuxième Sexe*:

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<sup>86</sup> Nancy Bauer and Toril Moi both report in 2010 that Anne-Solange Noble was a former student of the translators’. Their teacher/student relationship is, however, contested by Noble, even though an interview with Borde and Malovany-Chevallier published by Sarah Glazer in 2007 states that she was Malovany-Chevallier’s student.

<sup>87</sup> Both Knopf and Jonathan Cape are owned by Random House.

“It has been published in all countries. So, good, badly, from a faulty English translation, it does not matter!” (*Simone de Beauvoir: on ne naît pas femme...*, France 5, 2007, directed by Virginie Linhart; my translation)

It seems that Noble’s priority is for the book to be published, and to keep selling, even though the rendering is not rigorous. She restates this viewpoint —and somehow reinforces the stereotype of ‘ivory tower’ academics— by saying that:

“For sure, academic conferences and roundtables can be organised for decades to come to debate the subtleties of translating philosophical terms, but since few of the millions of readers (since 1949) of Beauvoir’s essay are philosophers or even university graduates, these debates will remain limited to restricted circles.” (letter in response to Toril Moi’s review, 2010)

I presume that there is some truth in the above comment, as, indeed, many readers who have or will encounter *The Second Sex* do not hold a university degree, but is that a reason to disregard the translation of philosophical terms? And if we do focus on the scholars who need to use *The Second Sex* for their own research on gender and/or philosophy, then the implications of them quoting a flawed version of de Beauvoir’s text are not negligible. Noble’s viewpoints on translation, as well as her possible link with Borde and Malovany-Chevallier, and the fact that the latter approached her for the task, can explain why those particular translators have been chosen, but what also matters is the translation project behind the rendering, and what methods and strategies Borde and Malovany-Chevallier opted for, which we will now examine.

### 1.3. Borde and Malovany-Chevallier’s translation approach

#### 1.3.1. The ‘blurb’ and marketing the translation

Borde and Malovany-Chevallier’s translation project (in the sense of Berman 1995) is to bring back de Beauvoir the philosopher and to reclaim the philosophical bearing of *Le Deuxième Sexe*, and indeed, in the paratext around *The Second Sex*, the pair insists on that crucial restoration (Translators’ Note loc.275-288). Other devices contribute to reinforce the philosophical aspect of the book, as is seen on the back cover of the Vintage 2010 edition, for

the book is labelled as 'Philosophy/Women's Studies', but also because of the following comment by *The Irish Times*:

"probably the most important and influential philosophical treatise of the twentieth century"

Furthermore, the images on the cover aim to draw the reader's attention by depicting objects which are thought to be typically feminine, as well as symbols of female oppression, namely a corset (Vintage 2010), and a hairpin (Vintage Classics 2015), which stresses the feminist impact of the book, along with comments on the back cover about the *Second Sex's* thesis, thus acknowledging the prestigious position which the book enjoys in Women's Studies. In addition to *The Second Sex's* feminist and philosophical cachet, the 'blurb' around the book emphasizes the fact that this version is the 'complete translation', and declares that the translation successfully brings de Beauvoir's voice to the reader. In order to attest to the latter, allographic documents are meant to give authority to the translation (Genette 1997: 263), which can be seen with Judith Thurman's preface, or with praise by Margaret Simons, in which she claims that the new edition is "so true to the original that we can hear [Beauvoir's] voice in the text"<sup>88</sup>. The reader is therefore told that Borde and Malovany-Chevallier's translation is 'faithful' to *Le Deuxième Sexe* and, indeed, one of the strong concerns expressed by the two translators was to stay close to the source-text. They aim to give the readers the same text as that which de Beauvoir wrote, and they do mean the exact same text, because they keep de Beauvoir's syntax and punctuation, asserting that style and meaning are enmeshed. Although I agree with that latter point, namely that style and arguments go hand in hand (as was discussed in Chapter Three), I strongly disagree with the implications it has as regards Borde and Malovany-Chevallier's translation method, because a set of norms in one language cannot just be directly transposed in another language, or else translation would not be rewriting, but merely a linguistic transposition.

### 1.3.2. Borde and Malovany-Chevallier's interviews and 'Translators' note

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<sup>88</sup> The notion of 'voice' was discussed in the previous chapters. Margaret Simons's above comment seems to imply that the author's voice can be found in the text, however, *Le Deuxième Sexe* is particularly complex in that regard, because de Beauvoir craftily incorporates many voices in her treatise. Moreover, I will argue against Simons's remark, using data to illustrate specific flaws in the second translation, which prevent conveying the author's voice.

The translators' opinion on translation's basic principles is that the translator needs to "translate without simplifying, *nor interpreting, and refrain from any subjective interference between the author and her/his readers*" (Borde and Malovany-Chevallier 2011: 273, my translation, my emphasis), which contradicts their insistence on the necessity for the translator to choose, and thus to interpret:

Translation necessarily demands to choose a word rather than another, that choice is the translator's: it is necessarily subjective (ibid.275, my translation).

Indeed, if a translator has to opt for one word over another, a subjective *interpretation* will have to be made, which precludes Borde and Malovany-Chevallier's above definition of translation.

The translators' wish to negate their subjectivity is reminiscent of what Venuti says about the translator's invisibility (discussed in Chapter Three), because they want to withdraw themselves, to be 'neutral' (ibid. 276), and they insist on the notion of 'voice', saying that they aim to bring de Beauvoir's voice to the reader (Translators' Note loc.229, 236, 280). We saw with our analysis of feminist translation strategies that one of the crucial goals of feminist translators is to give women their voice back, to make women authors heard, which is exactly the core of Borde and Malovany-Chevallier's translation project, and is in concordance with their personal political agenda as feminists<sup>89</sup>. Their intention not to interfere with de Beauvoir's voice goes beyond sheer respect, it could even signal being in awe:

Translating words stated by someone else, from a language to another, implies a very intimate — or even *intimidating* relationship. [...] We have truly "lived" a symbiotic and privileged relationship with Simone de Beauvoir during four years, forcing ourselves to regularly ask ourselves what our role was, because we could not claim ownership of the subject: we had to make sure that we did not jeopardise the author's integrity (Borde and Malovany-Chevallier 2011: 275, my translation, my emphasis).

Here we can see that Venuti's *simpatico* has been turned into reverence, and Borde and Malovany-Chevallier's statement can partly explain their choice of translation methods, namely foreignization and literalism, because their fear to distort de Beauvoir's original text leads them

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<sup>89</sup> Borde and Malovany-Chevallier see themselves as committed and politically active feminists. (Glazer 2007)

to translate word-for-word<sup>90</sup>, as will be seen through examples in a further section. They even explain that they kept the original paragraph style and syntax, being inspired by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (Translators' Note, loc.312), whose translation of *The Brothers Karamazov* was mentioned in Chapter Three as an example of heavy-handed foreignization. That latter translation also aims to keep the original text's syntax and style, and to purposefully unsettle the readers so as to take them to the original language and culture. However, I contend that using such a strategy for a philosophical treatise is particularly damaging, as it, ironically enough, needlessly complicates the reading and obscures the philosophical elements.

Borde and Malovany-Chevallier's foreignization strategy manifests itself when they explain that they "made the decision to keep close to Beauvoir's tense usage, most noticeably regarding the French use of the present tense for the historical past" (ibid. loc.248), or when they claim that they satisfactorily represent de Beauvoir's very style:

"The long and dense paragraphs that were changed in the 1953 translation to conform to more traditional styles of punctuation—or even eliminated—have now been translated as she wrote them [...]" (ibid. loc.236)

The analysis of newspapers articles and scholarly reviews commenting on the 2009 translation provides information on the readers' opinions.

#### 1.4. The reception of the new translation

A particularly notorious and influential review was that of Toril Moi, which was published in the *London Review of Books* in February 2010. In this article, Moi shares the results from a very precise analysis she made, comparing the French and the new English version in terms of linguistic elements, and as regards the philosophical content of *Le Deuxième Sexe*. As was mentioned in Chapter One, Moi closely studied the first English translation and valuably informed readers of its translation inaccuracies and cuts, but she did not criticise the translation's style, nor Parshley's command of the English language. However, she goes on to list the stylistic infelicities found in Borde and Malovany-Chevallier's text and she shows how basic mistakes are made, and, more disturbingly, on a regular basis. She also denounces the

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<sup>90</sup> which is reminiscent of what Jonathan Rée calls 'the translators-in-terror' syndrome, as was discussed in Chapter Three.

word-for-word aspect of the translation, and indicates that the core issues of that translation deal with terminology (notably terms for gender or philosophy), tenses, and syntax. Whilst she might sound harshly critical, Toril Moi provides us with detailed findings about the new translation, which will be a basis for my own study, as will be explained in Section B of the present chapter.

But for some other reviewers, and perhaps because Moi sounds particularly severe in her article, Borde and Malovany-Chevallier's rendering needs to be defended. After giving his readers some general notions about translation and retranslation, Carlin Romano, writing for *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, criticises Moi's review without, however, giving his own supported analysis of the text. He seems to insist on deepening the schism between scholars and non-specialists (which reminds us of Anne-Solange Noble's condescending comments on academics) by quoting Noble who states that Moi's review is 'vengeful'. However, he does not seem to appreciate (nor does Noble) the importance of having a precise translation for academics drawing on de Beauvoir's works, and teaching her texts to their students. Therefore, he merely reports that Borde and Malovany-Chevallier have been teaching in Paris for over forty years, failing to inform his readers on their actual experience or expertise in philosophy, while he gratuitously denounces the fact that Toril Moi is a Norwegian scholar<sup>91</sup>, implying that she is less qualified to judge the translation, although she is a renowned Beauvoir scholar and well versed in the French language. It so happens, however, that Toril Moi is not the only one to criticise and be disappointed with the new translation, and many reviewers, either academics or otherwise, have expressed their dissatisfaction. Nancy Bauer, for one, also deplores the literalism of the new translation and points to the many recurring mistakes:

"The problem is that we find numerous slightly off (or more than slightly off) sentences on every page of the book" (Bauer 2011)

Here Bauer emphasizes the pervasiveness of the mistakes, acknowledging that errors are a normal feature of translations, but not when they are too frequent and deal with very basic target language terms, which is reminiscent of a critique towards Helen Lowe-Porter's English

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<sup>91</sup> "Leaving aside the oddity of a Norwegian academic from North Carolina upbraiding two lifelong Parisians on the proprieties of French usage, the fray threatens to become one of those academic firestorms with no winners." (Romano, Carlin. *The Chronicle*. June 20, 2010)



translations of Thomas Mann's novels, in which Timothy Buck reports her numerous mishandlings of the text and her many misunderstandings of the source text. Indeed, it seems to be the same problem, namely that a faulty translation has been accepted as the only one existing, and is commercially successful (quoted in Hermans 1999: 1-3). However, Buck criticises Helen Lowe-Porter's translations with sound arguments, however harsh his review might seem, just as Moi's review was found merciless. Lawrence Venuti defended Helen Lowe-Porter by saying "[Academics] correct errors and imprecisions in conformity with scholarly standards and interpretations, excluding other possible readings of the foreign text and other possible audiences" (Venuti 1998: 33), although the issue at hand goes beyond interpretation, but rather deals with insufficient grasp of the source language (Hermans *ibid.*).

In addition to the above comments, Bauer particularly insists on the philosophical issues of Borde and Malovany-Chevallier's book, and even considers that the translators' footnotes<sup>92</sup> are misleading, sometimes complicating the references they mean to explain:

"*Mitsein* can be translated as 'being with'. The French term *réalité humaine* (human reality) has been problematically used to translate Heidegger's *Dasein*." (Borde and Malovany-Chevallier *loc.*402)

Commenting on the above quotation, Nancy Bauer explains that Borde and Malovany-Chevallier fail to clearly show that *Mitsein* also relates to Heidegger's theory, and, therefore, using the adverb 'problematically' is confusing, because *réalité humaine* is merely the set French equivalent for *Dasein*<sup>93</sup>, so the shift between German and French is not problematic (Bauer *ibid.*).

Other reviewers lament the target language literalness and the numerous mistakes, such as Emily Anne Parker, who explains in *Philosophy Now* that Borde and Malovany-Chevallier's background is questionable in different ways: not only do they lack solid experience as translators, but also, they would have to thoroughly study the whole of de Beauvoir's *oeuvre* so as to grasp her views, as *Le Deuxième Sexe* is part of a continuum in her philosophical evolution. That specialised knowledge would then enable translators to interpret the source text so as to best render it into English, so she sums her point up saying that Borde and Malovany-

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<sup>92</sup>The use of footnotes in relation to conveying intertextuality will be examined in Chapter Five.

<sup>93</sup> as mentioned in Chapter Three.

Chevallier's *The Second Sex* 'is most problematically not a translation of Beauvoir' (Parker 2011).

The new English translation has also been criticised outside of academic circles, as shown in a review by Francine du Plessix-Gray for *The New York Times*, in which she informs her readers that the style rendered is very disappointing, and that Borde and Malovany-Chevallier's use of the English language is faulty, saying that "throughout, there are truly inexcusable passages in which the translators even lack a proper sense of English syntax" (Du Plessix-Gray 2010). We again notice that the pervasiveness of the errors is a main problem, because the reviewer claims that there are not just a few mistakes, but that they are recurrent in the whole translation. Francine du Plessix-Gray also condemns the ineptitude of the style, regretting that "it doesn't begin to flow as nicely as Parshley's", a comment similar to the ones made by Toril Moi.

We can infer from the above remarks that the main issues found in Borde and Malovany-Chevallier's text are needless literalism (which consequently impedes the target text's style), recurring translation mistakes (dealing with general terms, but also specialised topics, such as gender and philosophy), and all reviewers explain that those issues stem from the translators' choice of translation strategy, but also from their deficient background in feminist philosophy and Beauvoir studies. However, it is to be noted that one positive comment emerges from both Borde and Malovany-Chevallier's admirers and detractors alike, namely that this new rendering is complete. It is indeed an unabridged version, which thus restores some of the examples, quotations, and explanations central to de Beauvoir's thesis, which is a significant improvement on Parshley's version, and, therefore, very useful to a new readership discovering de Beauvoir's text, as well as readers rereading it, but, it does not curb the problems mentioned above<sup>94</sup>.

The target text is very much foreignized, introducing foreign terms stemming from French, and copying the French original syntax, in view of favouring the author, and bringing the readers towards de Beauvoir, thus following the approach advocated by Venuti. Instances of this foreignization will be examined through a close comparison of the source text and the target text, in order to assess the impact that the foreignizing strategy adopted by Borde and

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<sup>94</sup> It can be said, however, that the problem lies in the first translation, whose heavy deletions deviated from the norm, as it is normal to render the source text in its entirety.

Malovany-Chevallier has on de Beauvoir's feminist philosophy. But prior to this analysis, I will present my research approach, including methodological considerations and the framework which will be used to analyze the data.

## 2. Thesis's research approach

### 2.1. Interdisciplinarity

Interdisciplinarity underpins my research, and, to begin with, in de Beauvoir's groundbreaking treatise. An interdisciplinary perspective allows me to draw from different disciplines, thus enriching my own work while helping to consolidate bridges between different fields. The first chapters of this thesis showed use of literary theory (for instance reception theory and the polysystem theory), as well as a discussion of philosophy—quite specifically Existentialism and feminist philosophy— but also feminism, and in particular de Beauvoir's influential views on the inequality between men and women. Chapter One showed that *Le Deuxième Sexe* intertwines many areas of research and the question is thus to decide how to deal with those different aspects of interdisciplinarity. It is evident that gathering knowledge around the topics at hand is a crucial first step to take, which then makes it possible to identify connections between areas of research, so as to expand on a theory, using two or more fields of expertise. An example of that is the Polysystem theory, which was introduced in Chapter One, and which stems from literary theory, before being used for Translation Studies's purposes. In spite of its inclusiveness, interdisciplinarity involves a degree of specialisation too, as shows the enmeshment of Translation Studies with other disciplines: the case study presented here requires being familiar with literary translation, such as the translation of philosophy and feminist translation, but also linguistics, and specifically Contrastive Linguistics.

### 2.2. Methodology

As mentioned in the introduction to the thesis, my methodology has been designed around Toril Moi's insightful review of the second English translation of *Le Deuxième Sexe*, which was a starting point to explore the issue of translating feminist philosophy. My research project aims to analyze the latest English translation from a Translation Studies point of view, which implies adopting an interdisciplinary approach.

Moreover, my analysis relies on some theoretical framework, such as Contrastive Linguistics, which will be examined in more detail in Chapter Five. Those references enabled to choose relevant categories, to then collect and analyze data from Borde and Malovany-Chevallier's *The Second Sex*. A pilot study was needed so as to test the chosen categories, as will now be explained.

### 2.3. Pilot Study

The pilot study is thus needed so as to test my methodology, including the soundness of the categories used, before applying it to a wider scope of data. It involves examining terms for gender and philosophy, but also aspects of syntax and use of tenses, so as to analyze the effects produced in English. As stated above, I used Toril Moi's critiques as a basis for my own study, aiming to look more deeply at the recurring problems she mentions, namely:

‘a mishandling of key terms for gender and sexuality, an inconsistent use of tenses, and the mangling of syntax, sentence structure and punctuation’ (Moi 2010)

In order to analyze those categories, which are translation-driven, listed by Moi, it is necessary to carefully compare the French and the English through close-readings and back-translations: a close comparison between texts prompts engagement with issues about the way meaning is produced and understood, and how meaning can be transferred from one set of linguistic norms to another.

The categories to be examined deal with syntax, notably with word order and the use of connectors, leading to analyze differences in terms of punctuation. Thereafter, tenses are a compelling category to study, with particular focus on the conditional mode, the French historic, and the active and passive voices in French and English. Moreover, lexicology is a core element to study because terms for gender (such as the crucial, but equally difficult to translate, *femme*) and philosophy are omnipresent in *The Second Sex* and they need to be rendered accurately to convey de Beauvoir's views. Finally, intertextuality –in particular citations– needs to be analyzed as well, due to the plurality of voices in *The Second Sex*, as mentioned in Chapter One.

In addition, the cuts of the first translation were also studied, insofar as I analyzed the way in which missing parts were rendered in the second translation, with particular focus on the

treatment of citations, because many quotations from women were missing from Parshley's translation (Simons 1983). I also carefully studied the Introduction to *Le Deuxième Sexe*, because it is a section which sums up de Beauvoir's whole thesis, and, being the first part encountered by the readers, it frames the reader's encounter with de Beauvoir, kindling their interest, or, otherwise, suspending their reading, thus, it is important to analyze how this compelling part has been translated. The pilot study led to a more thorough analysis of data collected from *Le Deuxième Sexe* and its latest English translation and, in order to study those examples, it was sometimes necessary to resort to back-translation to illustrate the undue literalism present in the latest English translation.

The pilot study was crucial in justifying the use of the above categories while discovering interesting examples to be part of the data to be analyzed more thoroughly (as will be shown in Chapter Six). The study reinforces Contrastive Linguistics' insights through examples, while also drawing on Contrastive Linguistics, which will now be analyzed in more detail in the following section.



## CHAPTER 5: CONTRASTIVE LINGUISTICS AND INTERTEXTUALITY

The following section will analyze Contrastive Linguistics, with the aim to show how it can benefit Translation Studies. The main aspects to be analyzed will be syntax, tenses, and lexicology, with a focus on some of the main disparities between French and English, as well as some notions which are particularly relevant to a study of *Le Deuxième Sexe* (such as the concept of 'femme').

Contemporary Translation Studies does not seem to be focused on contrastive linguistics (also called contrastive analysis), and even appears to have moved away from it, or, as Jeremy Munday puts it, 'contrastive analysis has fallen by the wayside' (Munday 2008: 13). However, Contrastive Linguistics—which offers a possible framework for a comparative study of language similarities and differences—is useful and necessary to reflect on translation theory<sup>95</sup>. Roman Jakobson foresaw that 'any comparison of two languages implies an examination of their mutual translatability; widespread practice of interlingual communication, particularly translating activities, must be kept under constant scrutiny by linguistic science' (Jakobson 1959: 234). So the mutual link between translation and linguistics is especially obvious through the specific area of Contrastive Linguistics, and it can be said that both fields use the same methods too. They rely, for example, more than ever on corpora so as to verify and support their speculations on languages, instead of depending on intuition (Granger 2003: 18), because corpora enable us to exemplify and test hypotheses on a large scale. However, a disclaimer needs to be made because new technologies are not sophisticated enough to discern specific uses and connotations between languages, such as some distinct tense usage, as H  l  ne Chuquet shows in her analysis of the translation of the French *imparfait* (Chuquet in Granger 2003: 23)<sup>96</sup>. For instance, it is to be noted that the present tense in French includes different aspects, such as the present historic, so that the context is needed to be able to recognise those tense usages, and using technology can only be limited in my analysis of *The Second Sex*. Thus, and albeit being very useful, corpora are not the only means to explore Contrastive Linguistics, but any meticulous study of linguistic phenomena requires using a number of tools (such as specialised grammar books, dictionaries, and other term banks, such

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<sup>95</sup> I am, however, aware of one of Contrastive Linguistics's limitations, namely its predominant focus on language and linguistics features, which can be a restriction as regards Translation Studies.

<sup>96</sup> That is the reason why I do not use linguistic software such as Multiconcord, WordSmith Tools, or AntConc for my study, but, instead, manually look for examples among collected examples, and work on specifically defined sections of *LDS*, so as to avoid missing terms.

as the *British National Corpus*), which led to developing a specially designed literature, because Contrastive Linguistics is interested in analysing specific languages in comparison to one another. Therefore, it is profitable to establish particular references, such as the pioneering *Stylistique comparée du français et de l'anglais* (1958), written by Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet. That book, although critiqued for its partiality<sup>97</sup> (Granger 2003: 18; Pym 2014), is a precious tool to be aware of the main areas of contrast between English and French, and its taxonomy of translation shifts aims to provide a 'guide to translation' (Vinay and Darbelnet 1995: 5).

Another study of the kind is illustrated by H  l  ne Chuquet and Michel Paillard, who analyze in their *Approche Linguistique des Probl  mes de Traduction Anglais-Fran  ais* (1989) the English and French languages in view of translation practice and theory, while listing key grammatical categories and comparing them between English and French, so that their book deals both with a contrastive study of the languages at hand, and with Translation Studies. Jacqueline Guillemin-Flescher's *Syntaxe compar  e du fran  ais et de l'anglais: probl  mes de traduction* (1981) also offers such a comparative analysis, with a focus on syntax and on translation problems to be overcome. Another example of a scholar working on the comparison of French and English can be found with Michel Ballard's work<sup>98</sup>, which, for instance, explores the translation of proper names (Ballard 2001). It is to be noted that the references before-mentioned, although presenting studies of both French and English, are written in French and aimed at a French-speaking readership, but the following publications are noted works which also classify specific translation issues between French and English, with an English-language orientation. In his *Equivalences: translation difficulties and devices: French-English, English-French* (1983), Eric Astington gives an introduction to the main differences between French and English, which are potential traps when translating from and into French. Two other leading studies worth mentioning are Nigel Armstrong's *Translation, Linguistics, Culture: a French-English Handbook* (2005), and Ian Higgins' and S  ndor Hervey's *Thinking French translation: a course in translation method: French to English* (1992), which deal with translation, both as a way to learn French, and to study translation phenomena. Armstrong's book particularly insists

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<sup>97</sup> The two linguists being, for example, accused of relying on their intuition instead of large corpora, and, according to Anthony Pym, they are too quick in judging linguistic occurrences as translations (they give the example of road signs in the USA and in Canada, arguing too hastily that the Canadian ones are poor translations of the American ones), which shows how languages' supremacy and correctness are ranked.

<sup>98</sup> Although Michel Ballard is a Translation Studies theorist, I am here interested in the Contrastive Linguistics perspective he takes, and the very fact that he weaves Translation Studies and Contrastive Linguistics together.



on the fact that it is done with an English native-speaker competence and aimed at readers who study French, and that aspect is particularly pertinent to the present study of *The Second Sex*, which relates to a French source-text and whose translators are native speakers of English. Moreover, my analysis of the translation will be based on the categories discussed by the scholars listed above, and will rely on Contrastive Linguistics because the latter helps us to identify suitable and relevant categories to observe translation shifts.<sup>99</sup> For instance, Vinay's and Darbelnet's book (mentioned above) is referred to as belonging to the 'translation shift approach', because the authors focus on shifts and variations which occur between French and English (Snell-Hornby 2006: 160). That approach, adopted as part of my methodology, will lead us to study syntax, tenses and lexicology, focusing on some of the main areas of contrast between French and English.

## 1. Syntax

The present analysis is concerned with some grammatical aspects to take into account when translating from French into English. For the purpose of my study I will take the prevailing definition of grammar as being constituted of syntax and morphology. The former being the study of sentence structure, while the latter is the study of word forms. The *OED* defines syntax as 'the order and arrangement of words', and morphology refers to word formation (which is lexical morphology) and to conjugation or declension (which is inflectional morphology)<sup>100</sup>.

That distinction is useful for this study because it enables the analysis to proceed from macro to micro elements, that is sentence structures will be studied first, then the focus will be on phenomena within sentences. Therefore, the following section will first look at syntactical elements, before moving to morphological ones. It is to be noted, however, that the borders between syntax and morphology are permeable, so that some elements can be part of both, which is the case of connectors<sup>101</sup>.

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<sup>99</sup> As defined and discussed in Chapter Three.

<sup>100</sup> Morphology is 'the formation of words from morphemes' (Mereu 1999: 2; Armstrong 2005: 111).

<sup>101</sup> Connectors will be defined and explored in more detail in a later section.

## 1.1. Preliminary definition

The *OED* states that syntax is:

the set of rules and principles in a language according to which words, phrases, and clauses are arranged to create well-formed sentences; (also) the analysis or study of such principles; the branch of grammar concerned with this.

The above definition is quite broad, but gives us the indication that syntax is primarily concerned with sentence structure, a point reinforced by Contrastive Linguistics theorists, such as Nigel Armstrong, who defines syntax as ‘the formation of sentences from words’ (Armstrong 2005: 111). Syntax thus encompasses word order, but also the tools which enable such arranging and ordering of words, for instance punctuation and connectors. Punctuation is indeed used to ‘mark the syntactical connections between different items in a sentence or a clause’ (*CNRTL*, my translation), and can even sometimes be identified as fulfilling the role of a connector (see Vinay and Darbelnet 1995: 236). The analysis of punctuation is especially relevant to the study of *The Second Sex* because the translation of de Beauvoir’s semicolons has been a matter of dispute between the translators and their reviewers, which we will discuss in more detail in a further section on the data analysis. As for connectors, I will draw on James Grieve’s work which focuses on French connectors, and gives examples of how a number of French writers and philosophers use connectors in their own work, which is particularly relevant to my own analysis. According to Grieve, connectors are ‘aids to persuasion and to making points’ and they ‘link meanings together and relate them to each other; they help to articulate a point of view by distributing emphases’ (Grieve 1996: xii). That definition is purposefully general because connectors are not made of one type of words, but, rather, they ‘bring together quite different word classes’ (Vinay and Darbelnet 1995: 236). The difficulty in describing them reflects the fact that those connecting structures are themselves at the junction between grammar and lexis: ‘connectors belong wholly neither to the grammarian nor to the lexicographer’ (Grieve *ibid.* xiii). What is key, however, is that connectors carry out a role, that of joining sentences and clauses together, which is done by respecting language-specific rules, but which also depends on authors’ personal preferences (Grieve *ibid.* xv). Indeed, some authors will favour the use, or not,

of specific connectors, as shows the example of the French philosopher Alain, who aimed to keep the French conjunction '*mais*' ('but') to a minimum in his work (Alain 1970: 1111, quoted in Grieve *ibid.* xiv-xv). It is interesting to note from that comment that departures from a given language's grammatical norms can happen, so as to pursue stylistic goals, and that is not without consequences for translation. The next section will analyze some main syntactical differences between French and English, and examine possible translation strategies to best deal with them.

## 1.2. Syntax and translation

### 1.2.1. Word order

A conspicuous difference between French and English is their word order, which shows discrepancies in the way words are set together. For example, while E.C. Armstrong speaks of 'English's immovable adjective position' (Armstrong 1908: 154), the position of French adjectives differs according to a set of rules, and depending on the context. French adjectives can be moved to achieve specific stylistic effects, or to show a certain emphasis, as the following example shows:

Il y a aussi ces U.L.M. assourdissantes qui polluent nos soirées.

Il y a aussi ces assourdissantes U.L.M. qui polluent nos soirées. (example taken from Hervey and Higgins 2004: 110)

Hervey and Higgins explain that the first sentence, with the adjective coming after the noun, focuses on the microlights' noise, whereas the second sentence puts the emphasis on the microlights themselves. In English, however, the adjective comes before the noun, so other devices need to be found in order to convey similar connotative effects in the English target language:

There are also those deafening microlights which spoil our evenings.

There are also those noisy microlights which spoil our evenings. (my translation)

My above translation itself illustrates the point made by Hervey and Higgins, and the need for shifts between French and English, because we can notice a shift from syntax to lexis between

the French sentences and their English renderings. Indeed, the French uses syntax (i.e. a difference in adjectival position) to show a difference in connotation, which does not have an equivalent in English (due to its 'immovable adjective position'). Therefore, I resorted to a shift to convey the same nuance as in French, consequently using two different English adjectives in my translation.

Similarly, adverbs are not necessarily placed in the same sentence position in French and English, nor used with the same frequency, as Hervey and Higgins state:

English-speakers are so ready to use adverbs that one adverb is often qualified with another placed next to it, something which is rare in French. (Hervey and Higgins *ibid.*225)

We can infer from the above statement that English generally tends to resort to adverbs, more frequently so than French, especially as, according to Eric Astington, in order to 'avoid "heavy" adverbs ending in -ment, phrases are used in French' (Astington 1983: 10-13). In addition, the position of adverbs within the sentence differs between the two languages, as usually stated in grammar books:

Adverbs which modify the verb phrase [...] and adverbs which modify the sentence may have several possible locations. (Hawkins and Towell 2010: 132)

They can be placed, for instance, between the verb and its complement, while the opposite occurs in English:

On ramène *parfois* des souvenirs: We *sometimes* bring back souvenirs (example from Hawkins and Towell *ibid.*)

Syntax is, according to Vinay and Darbelnet, 'very important because it is quite easy to distort the flow of an argument by a wrong segmentation into paragraphs' (Vinay and Darbelnet 1995: 244), and failing to account for the flow and the structure of the source text's sentences may lead to distortion of the meaning, as do syntactical ambiguities and *false friends*, which we will now analyze.

We mentioned 'English's immovable adjective position' (Armstrong 1908: 154), and the fact that French is more flexible in that respect, with a resulting change in meaning (for instance, depending on the *pre* or *post* position of the adjective, its meaning differs).<sup>102</sup> The consequences for translation are at least twofold: on the one hand, and as mentioned earlier, the translator needs to convey the meaning or connotation of the French source text into English, without simply swapping the adjectival position in the target text. On the other hand, the translator should also ensure s/he does not change the meaning of the source text, and thus needs to be aware of polysemy stemming from syntax (i.e. a change in adjectival position leading to a different meaning). The very same comment can be made of adverbial position, because adverbial double meaning may happen depending on adverbs' position in the sentence. For instance, the French adverb *aussi* can mean *also; too* when placed after the verb (Elle écrit aussi: She also writes), but Morris Salkoff warns us that:

when it 'introduces an inverted sentence, its translation changes:

*Aussi* la solution est-elle de réduire les frais -> *Therefore*, the solution is to reduce the expenses (Salkoff 1999: 35, my emphasis)

Mistranslation is also bound to happen when the translator opts for an 'interlinear translation', which is, according to Sándor Hervey and Ian Higgins:

a style of translation in which the TT provides a literal rendering for each successive meaningful unit of the ST (including affixes) and arranges these units in the order of their occurrence in the ST, regardless of the conventional grammatical order of units in the TL. (Hervey and Higgins, 2004: 271)

Keeping too close to the source text not only results in a target text which does not respect the target language grammatical norms, but can also prompt mistranslation, as was seen with instances of adjectival and adverbial positions in French and English.

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<sup>102</sup> As the following example from Vinay and Darbelnet shows:

une amie ancienne: an old friend

une ancienne amie: a previous friend (Vinay and Darbelnet 1995: 65)

### 1.2.2. Connectors

If we consider claims made by contrastivist theorists (such as Jacqueline Guillemin-Flescher, Michel Ballard, or Claude Demanuelli), we can see that the *imbrication* (interlocking) of clauses, which is said to be common in French, is relatively scarce in English. According to Claude Demanuelli:

En règle générale l'anglais fait preuve d'une certaine réticence face à l'imbrication du français, dont le but est de structurer la phrase dans l'espace, en même temps que de différer l'introduction de la chute, donc de ménager une forme de suspens<sup>103</sup>

(Demanuelli in Ballard 1995: 133)

We can infer from that quotation that *imbrication* is a usual feature of French syntax, a point reinforced by Jacqueline Guillemin-Flescher:

En français, l'énoncé est sans cesse interrompu par des reprises, marquées par des procès secondaires imbriqués dans un schéma de subordination.<sup>104</sup> (quoted in Ballard 1995: 263)

Here the theorist insists on the importance of subordination in French, and her comment is reminiscent of de Beauvoir's prose in *Le Deuxième Sexe*, which is full of long sentences which are all interlocked with one another. Here is an example from the very beginning of de Beauvoir's treatise:

On ne sait plus bien s'il existe encore des femmes, s'il en existera toujours, s'il faut ou non le souhaiter, quelle place elles occupent en ce monde, quelle place elles devraient y occuper. (*Le Deuxième Sexe* I: 13)

It is hard to know any longer if women still exist, if they will always exist, if there should be women at all, what place they hold in this world, what place they should hold. (*The*

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<sup>103</sup> 'As a rule, the English language is somehow reluctant towards French *imbrication*, the goal of which is to structure the sentence in space, while postponing the introduction of the outcome, and, in so doing, keeping a form of suspense.' (my translation)

<sup>104</sup> 'In French, the sentence is constantly interrupted by repeats, which are marked by secondary processes, themselves intertwined in a subordination pattern.' (my translation)

*Second Sex*, p.3)

That quotation exemplifies Guillemin-Flescher's above comment, as well as her further point that '[...] des juxtapositions apparaissent sans cesse en français'<sup>105</sup> (quoted in Ballard, *ibid.* 225), because it is apparent that the French clauses seem to be simply set side by side. The example from de Beauvoir's work is reminiscent of our previous comments on connectors, as it illustrates both a way of linking sentences which might be typical of the French language, and a possible preference of the author in terms of style and manner of reflecting her thoughts.

#### 1.2.2.1. *Conjunctions*

Conjunctions, as their name implies, are connecting words, but similar ones are not used in the same way in French and English because of rules inherent to each language. For instance, and according to James Grieve, English rarely begins a sentence with a conjunction, whereas it is often the case in French (Grieve 1996: 337). Grieve gives the example of the French conjunction 'mais' ('but'), which is placed in initial position in French when used between 'separate propositions, sentences and even paragraphs', and, still, can also appear in the middle of a sentence when linking two ideas, and is, in this case, 'usually preceded by a comma' (Grieve 1996 *ibid.*).

If the position of conjunctions is not the same in the two languages, then it is evident that translation shifts<sup>106</sup> will have to occur. A similar comment can be made about frequency of use, with the example of French avoiding the use of two consecutive 'et' ('and'), as can be seen with Vinay' and Darbelnet's following insight on the translation of style and syntax:

"Even if a translator tried to imitate Hemingway's style, it is doubtful whether French could cope with two 'and' in sequence." (Vinay and Darbelnet 1995: 242)

In the above statement, the two authors imply that respecting target text norms should outweigh rendering the source text's style, which is a stance I am supporting against foreignization.

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<sup>105</sup> '[...] juxtapositions constantly occur in French.' (my translation)

<sup>106</sup> as defined and discussed in Chapter Three.

Conjunctions do not require to be marked by the same punctuation in the two languages either, as explains Claude Demanuelli when informing us that ‘et’ does not carry the same meaning in French, depending on its use, or otherwise, of a comma. The author explains that:

[Le français] distingue “et” sans virgule, reliant deux idées connexes de “et” avec virgule reliant deux propositions n’ayant pas le même sujet. [...] L’anglais, au contraire, emploie systématiquement la virgule devant “and”. (Demanuelli in Ballard 1995: 128-9)

French distinguishes between “et” without a comma, which links two related ideas together, and “et” with a comma, which links together two clauses which do not have the same subject. [...] English, on the contrary, always adds a comma before “and”. (my translation)

That punctuation distinction in French can help to understand the meaning of a whole sentence, especially if the topic at hand is ambiguous, and not straightforward to follow, so the presence or absence of a comma in French is not insignificant. We will now discuss some differences in terms of punctuation between French and English, with a particular focus on semicolons, whose propensity in *Le Deuxième Sexe* is particularly noticeable.

#### 1.2.2.2. Punctuation: the case of the semicolon

Semicolons can seem old-fashioned in English, and, according to Angela Petit, they are ‘an oddity’ and ‘they are useful and increase readability, but for the most part they are not essential to creating meaning’ (Petit 2003: 68). Petit argues that the semicolon is more a matter of style than a purely grammatical rule to follow, and, quoting Richard Lanham, she explains further that semicolons are rhetorical devices which express the intent of the writer and her/his will to ‘take the position of the reader’ (Lanham quoted in Petit *ibid.* 69). Nonetheless, besides this rhetorical aspect, semicolons cannot be a matter of style only, because they need to be used appropriately and comply with grammatical uses, as the following slogan shows, reported in *The New York Times*, ‘Please put it in a trash can; that’s good news for everyone.’, which has been praised by linguists for its proper use of a semicolon:

Louis Menand, an English professor at Harvard and a staff writer at *The New Yorker*, pronounced the subway poster’s use of the semicolon to be “impeccable.”



Lynne Truss, author of *Eats, Shoots & Leaves: The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation*, called it a “lovely example” of proper punctuation.

Geoffrey Nunberg, a professor of linguistics at the University of California, Berkeley, praised the “burgeoning of punctuational literacy in unlikely places.” (*The New York Times*, February 18, 2008)<sup>107</sup>

The above instance illustrates the present disuse of the semicolon in English, and it is interesting to compare it with French. Semicolon usage in French also seems to be limited, as Jacques Dürrenmatt explains when he states that:

C'est bien la désaffection de la période puis de la phrase longue qui semble le facteur principal de la raréfaction du point-virgule. T.W. Adorno, en s'appuyant sur le philosophe Haecker, constate, en 1956, que « plus personne n'est capable d'écrire une période » et attribue la peur de la longueur au « marché » qui répond à la demande d'un « client qui refuse de faire des efforts et auquel d'abord les rédacteurs, puis les écrivains se sont adaptés afin de gagner leur vie, jusqu'à ce que, parvenus au terme de leur propre adaptation, ils aient inventé des idéologies comme celle de la lucidité, de la dureté objective, de la précision et de la concision ». (Dürrenmatt 2011: 49)<sup>108</sup>

According to the above explanation, the semicolon is not required anymore because of literary and stylistic evolution, so that, in both French and English, that punctuation mark is found archaic. We need, however, to take into account the fact that individual writers can choose to use the semicolon for specific reasons, such as ‘autoriser toutes les « discontinuités phrastiques » à l'intérieur du cadre, par ailleurs, typographiquement traditionnel de la phrase'<sup>109</sup> (Reggiani, 2009: 393-394 ; Piat, 2009: 216-217, quoted in Dürrenmatt *ibid.*46 ). Jacques Dürrenmatt

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<sup>107</sup> Roberts, Sam. 2008. “Celebrating the Semicolon in a Most Unlikely Location”. *The New York Times*, February 18, 2008

<sup>108</sup> The loss of interest for periodic sentences, then for long sentences, seems to be the main factor for the semicolon's scarcity. T.W. Adorno, drawing from Haecker the philosopher, observed in 1956 that “nobody is able to write a periodic sentence anymore” and attributed the fear of length to the “market” which meets the needs of “a client refusing to make efforts and whom the editors, then the writers adapted to in order to make a living, until, reaching the end of their own adaptation, they invented ideologies such as perspicuity, objective severity, precision and brevity” (my translation).

<sup>109</sup> To allow all “phrasal discontinuities” within the otherwise typographically traditional framework of the sentence. (my translation)

explains that de Beauvoir is known to use the semicolon for such purposes (Dürrenmatt *ibid.*), which might illustrate her thought process, and typifies the speed of her writing (as was discussed in Chapter One). Dürrenmatt adds that other French authors, such as Sartre and Péguy, extensively used semicolons too (Dürrenmatt *ibid.*), but we can contend that it makes its usage typical of a specific French literary period, which does not necessarily imply that there is an equivalent in English-speaking literary works of the same era. Therefore, we can argue that keeping semicolons in the English rendering of *Le Deuxième Sexe* might further obscure the text, making it strange and archaic for the target readers.

### 1.2.3. Shifts are necessary to the translation of syntax

And if keeping semicolons in English could be detrimental to the reception of the new translation, then translators might have to resort to shifts and to find creative ways to render the source text and its meaning, thus accepting that form alone cannot automatically be transposed from one language to another.

The translator will often have to alter the word order between the two languages, or to switch grammatical categories, such as, for example, swapping source language adjectives with target language noun phrases (Armstrong 2005: 162). Vinay and Darbelnet give the following example of a transposition from one word class to another: 'Il a failli tomber: He almost fell' (Vinay and Darbelnet 1995: 94), where the French verb 'faillir' conveys the same sense as the English adverb 'almost'. Morris Salkoff also gives an instance which reinforces the notion that translating sense, as opposed to solely rendering grammatical and syntactical items, is key. When considering the translation of prepositions, Salkoff deplors that the question mainly revolves around 'how to translate the preposition', whereas 'it is not the preposition that can be translated, but only an entire expression containing the preposition' (Salkoff 1999: 10). That view is in accordance with the ITT and its focus on translating sense (as was already discussed in Chapter Three), and is, therefore, an approach which helps to convey the source text's message.

Let us see another example of the necessity of shifts to retain the source text's message, with the case of punctuation as a connotative marker. According to Claude Demanuelli, the French comma has such a role, when it is used to separate different elements of the sentence, with the aim to emphasize them:

[...] la rigidité de [l'anglais] en matière d'agencement et son corollaire (*sic*) plus ou moins immédiat, la difficulté, voire l'impossibilité, à laquelle il se trouve confronté de faire jouer à la virgule un rôle connotatif sauf à vouloir "violier" la langue (*They had, that night, drunk a lot*, apparaît nettement plus controuvé que l'énoncé considéré comme équivalent en français). (Demanuelli in Ballard 1995: 131)<sup>110</sup>

The instance given (*They had, that night, drunk a lot*) shows the clumsiness resulting in keeping the source text's word order, which is an issue which can also be found in the second English translation of *Le Deuxième Sexe*, as will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Six.

## 2. The treatment of tenses in translation

In a textbook focusing on the different levels of equivalence in translation, Mona Baker states that, "although the main use of the grammatical categories of tense and aspect is to indicate time and aspectual relations, they do not necessarily perform the same function in all languages" (Baker, 1992: 100). And indeed, French and English tenses' use is very contextual so that there is a flexibility in usage and a choice of tenses, depending on the aspect one wants to give to a sentence. Whilst direct transposition can be possible between both languages (e.g. Anne is tall/ Anne est grande), at other times there is a departure between tenses, and equivalents need to be chosen, because, as Georges Garnier puts it, 'under a big apparent and superficial similarity, English and French are completely different as regards their mental representation of time' (Garnier in Ballard 1995: 32-33, my translation). We will first dwell on those differences between French and English, before analysing the impact such discrepancies have with regard to translation. The study will focus on specific French usages and tense aspects for which equivalents are more difficult to find in English, so as to consider possible ways of rendering them in English.

### 2.1. General comments on tense differences between French and English

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<sup>110</sup> [...] English's lack of flexibility in terms of sentence structure and its more or less immediate corollary, its difficulty, or its inability even, to give a connotative role to the comma, unless one accepts to 'violate' language (*They had, that night, drunk a lot* seems much more disputed than the phrase which is considered to be its French equivalent). (my translation)

### 2.1.1. Grammatical tenses

We first need to differentiate between the notion of time and grammatical tenses, the latter being characterised by verbal forms which do not necessarily correspond from one language to another. Sometimes, for instance, a verbal form in one language corresponds to two distinct forms in the other, as is illustrated by the French *passé composé*, which can be rendered by the present perfect or the preterite in English (Chuquet and Paillard 1989: 75). But it is interesting to note that scholars are not in total agreement regarding tenses, as some argue that English and French both have a general future tense and also an immediate future tense. (Vinay and Darbelnet 1995: 131), whereas others do not consider the future as a legitimate tense in English: Hélène Chuquet and Michel Paillard explain that “there are two tenses in English: the present tense and the past tense, whereas there are three tenses in French: the present, the past, and the future” (Chuquet and Paillard 1989: 76, my translation). There is some consensus, however, that tenses ‘do not necessarily perform the same functions’ (Vinay and Darbelnet *ibid.*), which leads us to contemplate the notion of aspects.

### 2.1.2. Aspects

The grammatical aspect refers to the subjective way an utterance is perceived by the person uttering it, so that it can be seen in its globality, as it happens, or as a completed action (Chuquet and Paillard *ibid.* 77). That aspectual element is, therefore, highly context-bound, and it is crucial to discern aspects to render a precise translation, but the problem resides in the fact that French and English do not resort to aspects in the same way. In a similar situation, the two languages often choose to consider the process through a different angle, as the following example shows:

English: They've run out of petrol. ⇒ process (present perfect)

French: Ils sont en panne d'essence ⇒ resulting state (present) (Chuquet and Paillard 1989: 80)

In the above example, the situation is perceived as a result in French, whereas the situation is seen in its globality in English.

Devices, such as the use of specific verbs (e.g. state verbs), adverbs, auxiliaries or modes, are necessary to convey different aspects, the latter being either intellectual ('duration, start, frequency'), or affective, according to Vinay' and Darbelnet's *Comparative Stylistics of French and English* (Vinay and Darbelnet 1995: 73). However, the very same verb can be used in a state or process construction depending on the context, as is shown in the following examples with the state verb *to be*:

John is stupid (state)

John is being stupid (process) (example from Chuquet and Paillard 1989: 78)

Therefore, hints alone (such as the occurrence of a state verb) are not enough to recognise aspects, and the translator has to be particularly careful when dealing with tenses.

We will now analyze the issues of tense differences between French and English in relation to translation, focusing on some common pitfalls which are present in *Le Deuxième Sexe*, so as to advise on translation strategies which are the most adequate to render tenses.

## 2.2. Implications of tense differences for translation

### 2.2.1. The need to find equivalents

As was shown in the previous section, tenses are different in French and English, and aspects are not conveyed in the same way in both languages, so it seems evident that translators need to resort to shifts (as defined in Chapter Three) in order to find satisfactory equivalents. When it comes to translating French tenses into English, be it grammatical tenses, voices (notably active and passive), or modes (in particular the French subjunctive), the translator may face a number of difficulties, and the frequency of markers is one of them, as H elene Chuquet and Michel Paillard explain:

the frequency of markers is not the same in the two languages, and some adverbs in particular are used differently and cause translations issues. (Chuquet and Paillard 1989: 103)

Adverbs are thus an element which requires meticulous attention from the translators, as shown earlier in this chapter, due to syntactical differences between French and English.

Another common difficulty is that the French present tense can be translated into English in many different ways (seven different ways, according to Vinay and Darbelnet), and the two linguists argue that the most problematic correspondence is that between French present and English present perfect continuous, as the following example illustrates:

J'écris depuis...: I have been writing... (Vinay and Darbelnet 1995: 132)

In the above instance, such equivalent is used in a specific context, namely when an action, which started in the past, is still relevant in the present.

Those issues affecting translators have to be dealt with using different strategies: for instance, translators have to determine whether the sentence at hand involves purely grammatical constraints (which force them to opt for one target text element or another), or if a subjective choice is to be made. If grammatical constraints weigh on the source text, the translator might have to respect target language norms, for instance, temporal markers such as *depuis* will determine what tense to use, bearing in mind that, in English, that same marker can be translated differently whether it refers to a start (*since*), or a duration (*for*) (Chuquet and Paillard 1989: 82). Moreover, the same markers do not demand the same tense in the two languages, which is a further grammatical requirement which needs to be taken into account, as the following examples show:

Le 11 novembre 1918, l'Armistice est signé.

The Armistice was signed on November 11th 1918.

and

J'ai vu un bon film hier soir.

I saw a good film last night. (Chuquet and Paillard 1989: 79)

In the above sentences, the temporal phrases *le 11 novembre 1918/on November 11th 1918* and *hier soir/last night* do not induce resorting to the same tenses, as the past perfect is needed in English, whereas the French language can use either the *passé composé (ai vu)* or the historic present (*est signé*), which will be studied in more details in a later part.

We saw that grammatical constraints can affect the translation into the target text, especially through temporal markers (adverbs, temporal expressions, etc.), but there are situations when the translator needs to go beyond purely grammatical considerations and choose the best way to render emotional effects conveyed by the source text.

### 2.2.2. Conciliating grammatical constraints and subjective choices

This is shown by the following extract, taken from Hervey' and Higgins's *Thinking French Translation*, in which we are told of the tragic destiny of a schoolteacher in the French resistance. The authors explain that the contrast between past historic and perfect gives its crucial effect to the text, which cannot be rendered through literal translation:

“Arrêtée avec un convoi d'enfants qu'elle accompagnait en Suisse, elle fut emprisonnée à Annemasse. Refusant l'offre d'être libérée sans les enfants, elle continua de leur prodiguer ses soins en prison.

Quelques jours après la Libération, on retrouva son corps dans un charnier. Elle a été fusillée le 8 juillet 1944 à l'âge de 23 ans.

Elle fut une militante exemplaire [...]” (Audisio 1945: 57)

The abrupt use of a perfect tense amid the past historic puts the emphasis on her brutal death at a young age, and contrasting those two tenses helps to intensify the emotion felt by the author (and her/his readers) while reducing the temporal distance. Hervey and Higgins note that ‘the English verb system does not in itself permit the expressive power which this ST derives from switching between tenses’, which implies that compensation of another kind (lexical, for instance) will have to be found (Hervey and Higgins 2004: 45). The above example illustrates how crucial the translator's subjectivity is, and having to resort to compensation shows the impact which a chosen translation strategy has on the translation of tenses.

### 2.2.3. The impact of chosen translation strategies

The translation approach chosen by the translator is also pivotal in determining the choice of a structure in lieu of another, as can be seen with the following example dealing with verbal adjectives and participles:

'botté et coiffé d'une casquette' : 'wearing boots and a cap' (Chuquet and Paillard 1989: 102)

Here the strategy is that of transposition<sup>111</sup>, which aims to find a common equivalent in the target language, instead of sticking to the source text structure. When a translator's strategy is oriented toward the target reader (that is favouring domestication), s/he will be more prone to finding a target language equivalent, as opposed to translating literally.

A word-for-word translation would also often fail to convey the source text's nuances, such as the stress on a specific word:

only a miracle saved the world : le monde n'a été sauvé que par *miracle* (Vinay and Darbelnet 1995: 140)

In Vinay' and Darbelnet's above example, using the passive in the French translation helps to place emphasis on the word *miracle*, the latter being thus positioned at the end of the sentence. A change in the voices (using the passive instead of the source text's active voice) efficiently helps to render the focus of the source text's message. It is reminiscent of de Beauvoir's conclusion to *Le Deuxième Sexe*, when she purposefully ends her book on the French word *fraternité*, insisting on the need for men and women to recognise one another as equal. Interestingly enough, Toril Moi pointed out in her *London Review of Books*' article that Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier did not respect this emphasis, finishing their translation on the adverb *unequivocally* instead (Moi 2010), but that critique was then taken into account by the two translators, because later editions were amended, so that the final sentence is more in line with de Beauvoir's views:

"C'est au sein du monde donné qu'il appartient à l'homme de faire triompher le règne de la liberté; pour remporter cette suprême victoire, il est entre autres nécessaire que par-delà leurs différenciations naturelles hommes et femmes affirment sans équivoque leur fraternité." (*LDS*, II: 652)

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<sup>111</sup> as defined by Vinay and Darbelnet: 'transposition consists of replacing one class of words by another without changing the meaning of the message' (Vinay and Darbelnet 1995: 94)



“Within the given world, it is up to man to make the reign of freedom triumph; to carry off this supreme victory, men and women must, among other things and beyond their natural differentiations, unequivocally affirm their brotherhood.” (Borde and Malovany-Chevallier loc. 15336)

The above sentence shows how translators need to consider both the norms of the target language and the bottom line message conveyed by the source author. However, identifying the tone of the source text is particularly difficult, which is obvious when dealing with the translation of tenses. Indeed, we will now analyze three main common tense-related pitfalls for translators rendering French texts, namely the use of the conditional to convey doubt and uncertainty, the high frequency of the historic present, and the differences between English and French in the use of voices (which we already briefly mentioned above).

### **3. Common pitfalls for English translators rendering French texts**

#### 3.1. Using the French conditional mode to convey doubt and uncertainty

##### 3.1.1. A specific usage in French

The conditional can be used differently in English and in French, and the latter resorts to that mode to convey doubt or uncertainty about an event, as we saw in Chapter Five, when explaining that this specific use was particularly common in French philosophical discourse, which means that it is a potential difficulty for translators of *Le Deuxième Sexe*. Nigel Armstrong warns translators of a possible “decoding problem”, if “the translator is not aware of the possibility in French of using the conditional tense in a so-called ‘epistemic’ sense”, referring to a lack of certainty expressed by the source text’s writer (Armstrong 2005: 55). Therefore, the main issue is to notice when the conditional appears in the source text, and to check its specific usage, because the ‘translation of the conditional may depend on the degree of uncertainty, or on the source text writer’s wish to be cautious [...]’ (Armstrong *ibid.* 56). Then, once that pitfall is avoided, the translator can opt for different English equivalents to render the same tone in the target text, such as the phrases ‘according to’, or ‘supposedly’, as mentioned in Chapter Five (Rée 2001: 228).

Speaking of the latest English translation of *Le Deuxième Sexe*, Toril Moi critiques the two translators for not recognising when de Beauvoir uses the French conditional to show her caution, and even her scepticism:

“They [...] often overlook her frequent recourse to the conditional to indicate scepticism. When the translators write, ‘Engels retraces woman’s history from this point of view in *The Origin of the Family*; this family history depends principally on the history of technology,’ they ignore the more sceptical view that Beauvoir takes in her original sentence: ‘C’est selon cette perspective qu’Engels dans *L’Origine de la Famille* retrace l’histoire de la femme: cette histoire dépendrait essentiellement de celle des techniques.’ To convey this, something like ‘according to him’ or ‘supposedly’ is needed in the sentence.” (Moi 2010)

The verb ‘*dépendrait*’ in the conditional mode implies that de Beauvoir distances herself from Engel’s views, whereas the English translation suggests that the French author adheres to those ideas. Interestingly enough, the edition of the English translation quoted in Moi’s review has consequently been altered, so that subsequent versions are now:

“Engels retraces woman’s history from this point of view in *The Origin of the Family*; to him, this history depends essentially on the history of technology.” (TSS loc.1464)

In the above quotation, not only is there an indication that de Beauvoir is paraphrasing Engels without necessarily sharing his opinions, but also, *family history*, which was an inexplicable mistranslation, has been replaced with *history*. Those helpful alterations show that both a specialised knowledge of de Beauvoir’s whole thesis, as well as an awareness of the many usages of the French conditional, are essential to translators.

3. 2. The historic present is particularly common in French

### 3.2.1. Main differences between French and English

The historic present, which refers to using the present tense when narrating events which happened in the past, is commonly used in French, which contrasts with English. Nigel Armstrong, for instance, contends that:

“[...] the historic present in English is confined to colloquial oral narrative [...] or highly literary written registers” (Armstrong 2005: 57-58).

The French language, in comparison, often resorts to that tense, which does not carry such specific connotations (‘colloquial oral narrative or highly literary written registers’) as in English, but is, instead, a common way to narrate the past, when the English would favour using a past tense. Nigel Armstrong puts forward another divergence, still linked to the use of the historic present, when pointing out that:

“An analogous difference is the use in French of the future where the conditional is required in English:

‘Il **faudra** attendre plus d’un siècle pour que les idéaux révolutionnaires d’une prise en charge par l’Etat de la question sociale **trouvent** des débuts d’application concrète’.

‘More than a century **would have** to pass before the revolutionary ideal of the responsibility of the State for social welfare **began** to find concrete expression’.

Note that the historic present is used here alongside the future.

Clearly, close attention to context is needed to identify this usage, which is not uncommon.” (Armstrong 2005: 58)

In the above quotation, we can see that the English translation departs from the French tenses, and that equivalences between English (conditional/preterite) and French (future/historic present) have to be used.

Those departures between languages lead us to analyze the implications such tense differences have for translation, because the above instance illustrated the necessity to find equivalences. This necessity is reinforced by Stephen Brewer and Terry McWilliams, who, speaking of the English translation of Sartre’s *Situations, V*, were also confronted with the French historic present. This sheds some light on their translation method: “as this device is rare in English and therefore not easily understood, we rejected it as potentially confusing” (Brewer and McWilliams, 2000: 124-25). That remark supports Nigel Armstrong’s comments above, and it seems indeed that keeping the same tense instead of shifting to the usage of the target language is detrimental to target readers’ experience (and understanding) of the source text. In addition, using the historic present in the English target text can lend a pedantic aspect to *The*

*Second Sex* because, as was said before, that tense in English is more common for ‘highly literary written registers’ (Armstrong 2005: 57-58), while de Beauvoir’s use of that tense complies with French linguistic norms, and is not a mark of elitism.

### 3. 3. The treatment of active and passive voices

#### 3.3.1. Differences in voices between French and English

The active and the passive voices are not used in the same instances, nor with the same frequency in French and English, the latter resorting far more to the passive than the French, so much so that it could be perceived as a particular feature of the language:

“The frequency of the English passive is part of the nature of the language.” (Vinay and Darbelnet 1995: 140)

Such differences in voices’ frequency can come from a difference in verbal structures in French and English, for instance, some verbs in English require a direct object in the accusative, where the French favours a dative. It is the case of the verb ‘to tell’/ ‘raconter’, which is followed by an accusative in English (He told *his friend*) while the French requires a dative (Il a raconté à ses amis). Keeping the English verb ‘to tell’ as an example, we can highlight another point of difference between the French and English uses of the passive voice: let us consider the English clause ‘*I was told*’ and analyze the most obvious French translation of it, namely, ‘*on m’a dit*’. The French phrase requires the use of the impersonal pronoun *on*, instead of a passive turn such as \**J’ai été dit*, which would be wrong and does not exist in French. Another reason for having less passive in French than in English is the propensity of the French language to use reflexive verbs, such as *s’appeler* (to be called). Therefore, the English sentence ‘*he was called*’ cannot be translated literally (\**il était appelé*), but a translator would resort to the reflexive verb before mentioned and write: ‘*il s’appelait*’. Indeed, those disparities have an impact on translation, especially when translating French reflexive verbs, as Vinay and Darbelnet report in their *Comparative Stylistics of French and English*:

“[...] many French pronominal verbs have to be translated by active or passive verb forms in English.” (Vinay and Darbelnet 1995: 139)

E.E. Milligan mentions another rule regarding the shift from the French active to the English passive voices, more specifically in relation to the use of the French pronoun *on*: “any average second year student knows that the French generic *on* must become a personal pronoun in English or, better, be rendered by a passive voice [...]” (Milligan, 1957: 69)

After studying main areas of contrast in terms of grammar, let us now explore traits in lexicology which have an impact on translation.

#### 4. The treatment of lexicology in translation

Lexicology, studying the signification and application of words (Merriam-Webster), prompts specific issues for translation, with particular pitfalls for languages such as French and English, which have heavily influenced each other.

##### 4.1. The translation of *femme* in *Le Deuxième Sexe*: a contrastive analysis

In her magnum opus, de Beauvoir uses the word *femme* in a variety of contexts, because of its polysemy<sup>112</sup>, and because it covers different realities. She depicts *femme*'s plurality of meanings in the introduction to *Le Deuxième Sexe*, when she starts answering the question ‘what is a woman?’ by invoking biology and describes women as the female half of humanity, with specific biological characteristics. Pointing out that it is not enough to define women, she explains that society decides what place women are to take and sets the rules which women need to abide by, a process which is historical, as opposed to a fixed essence determining women. Therefore, de Beauvoir imparts that “when [she] uses the words ‘woman’ or ‘feminine’ [she] obviously does not refer to any archetype, nor any unalterable essence; “in the present state of education and traditions” is implied by most of [her] statements” (*Le Deuxième Sexe* II: Introduction, my translation). This example is taken from the introduction to the second volume, in which the author discloses all of the stages which a girl goes through when being trained to be a woman, thus showing how the concept of femininity is socially constructed. So, on her own account, de Beauvoir uses the word *femme* to refer to women as seen through the lens of education and social mores, but also to the biological woman, for which she uses the term *femelle* too, as in the following instance, which sums up the main ways de Beauvoir makes use of the word *femme*:

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<sup>112</sup> For instance, *femme* can be used to mean *wife*.

‘Si sa fonction de femelle ne suffit pas à définir la femme, si nous refusons aussi de l’expliquer par “l’éternel féminin” et si cependant nous admettons que, fût-ce à titre provisoire, il y a des femmes sur terre, nous avons donc à nous poser la question: qu’est-ce qu’une femme?’ (*Le Deuxième Sexe* I: 15-16)

‘If her function as female is not enough to define woman, if we also refuse to explain her through the “eternal feminine”, but if we temporarily admit that there are women on the earth, we then have to ask ourselves: what is a woman?’ (my translation)

In this quotation, de Beauvoir mentions women as female human beings, women as socially constructed, and the notion of the ‘eternal feminine’, which is itself entwined with the concept of the Absolute Other (as defined in Chapters One and Three). Therefore, the term *femme* (*woman*) and its connotations are complex, not only in French, but in de Beauvoir’s text in particular, and, because she pioneered the concept of a socially constructed woman, rendering her terms correctly into English is crucial. From a translation perspective, the difficulty is twofold: on the one hand, the different connotations and meanings covered by the term ‘femme’ in *Le Deuxième Sexe* have to be taken into consideration, and on the other, the linguistic norms in the English target language also need to be complied with. In order to analyze the latter aspect, a comparative study of both French and English will be applied to the words *femme* and *woman*, focusing, for example, on the main differences in the use of determiners, but also highlighting the ways in which *femme* and *woman* can be used with adjectival values in the two languages, albeit differently.

#### 4.1.1. Using *femme* with or without determiners

The French and the English languages differ in the norms governing determiners’ usage, and, according to Vinay and Darbelnet, ‘in comparison to French, English uses the definite article less often’ (Vinay and Darbelnet 1995: 114). H  l  ne Chuquet and Michel Paillard explain that the French articles ‘le/la/les’, used to refer to a class (for examples plants), are more common in French than the use of ‘the’ in English to designate a class, such usage being reserved to scientific texts (e.g. *the dog is a mammal*) (Chuquet and Paillard 1989: 49). Usually, the English language does not use the article ‘the’ to refer to the class, as shown in the following sentence: ‘*la femme dans l’Alg  rie du XX  me si  cle*’ is translated into ‘women in 20th century

Algeria', where the article is unnecessary. (ibid., my emphasis) That latter instance is particularly relevant to our case-study, showing that de Beauvoir's use of 'la femme' is not to be automatically translated as 'the woman' in English. Chuquet and Paillard detail various cases for which articles' usage differs between French and English, such as the unambiguous reference to a class, the *fléchage* (signage) indicated by the context, the apposition, the case of partitive articles, and the ambiguity between signage and reference to the class.

#### 4.1.1.1. Reference to a general notion, contextualisation and the plural form

When there is no ambiguity about the reference to a general notion, there is no article in English, whereas the French substantive follows an article, as in:

'Mais *le* conceptualisme a perdu du terrain' (*Le Deuxième Sexe* I: 14, my emphasis)

'But conceptualism has lost ground' (*The Second Sex*, loc.344)

The English article *the* and the French *le/la/les* are both used when something or someone is signaled through the context, as the following example shows:

'Les renseignements que fournissent les ethnographes sur les formes primitives de la société humaine sont terriblement contradictoires, et d'autant plus qu'ils sont mieux informés et moins systématiques. Il est singulièrement difficile de se faire une idée de la situation de *la* femme dans *la* période qui précéda celle de l'agriculture.' (*Le Deuxième Sexe* I: 111, my emphasis)

'Ethnologists give extremely contradictory information about primitive forms of human society, even more so when they are well-informed and less systematic. It is especially difficult to formulate an idea about woman's situation in *the* preagricultural period.' (*The Second Sex*, trans. BMC, p.71, my emphasis)

Here the context makes it clear that the author refers to a specific period of time, namely the one preceding agriculture. But sometimes, it is not obvious whether the French *les* refers to a signage or a reference to the class, which means that identifying clues is a necessary step in

order to decide what translation is more satisfactory (Chuquet and Paillard 1989: 52). Chuquet and Paillard give the example of *les Américains*, which can either refer to the class and be translated into *Americans*, or to a signaled group among a larger system, and then be translated into *the Americans* (if, for instance, we describe a group of people from different nationalities and explain that *the Americans* make up for a third of that group). From this, we can infer that when de Beauvoir uses '*les femmes*' to allude to the notion or the class, the translation should generally be *women* without any article, whereas when she emphasizes the contrast between two categories within a larger system (such as men and women among the overall system of human beings), the use of *the* in English is expected, which will be shown through examples from Borde and Malovany-Chevallier's translation in a further section.

#### 4.1.1.2. *The case of apposition*

The case of apposition is also worth mentioning because the way appositions are constructed in French and in English is different. In French, a noun can be put in a position of apposition, in which it appears without any article, but the English translation adheres to a distinct construction:

'En particulier la soeur aînée est souvent associée aux tâches maternelles [...] elle est alors précocement intégrée à l'univers du sérieux [...] mais l'heureuse gratuité, l'insouciance enfantine lui sont refusées; *femme* avant l'âge, elle connaît trop tôt les limites que cette spécification impose à l'être humain.' (*LDS II*: 36, my emphasis)

'In particular, the older sister often participates in maternal chores [...] she is then prematurely integrated into the universe of the serious [...] but she is deprived of the happy gratuitousness, the carefree childhood; *a woman* before her time, she understands too soon what limits this specificity imposes on a human being.' (*TSS* loc.6126-6133, my emphasis)

The above example illustrates the shift from French to English structures, and the discrepancy in terms of articles' use, which is, yet again, crucial to the translation of the French *femme* because of the social, philosophical and political scope of that notion.



## 4.2. *Femme* and its adjectival use

Let us now consider the ways in which *femme* and *woman* take an adjectival value in their respective languages, and how this is reflected in translation.

### 4.2.1. Adjectival value in French

In the following extract, the noun *femme* has the value of an adjective, and could be replaced by a synonymous adjective, such as *féminine* (*feminine*):

[...] cette blouse noire qu'elle finissait par trouver trop garçonnière, pas assez *femme*  
(Zola, 1893: 30, my emphasis)

Here the noun *femme* could also be replaced by a completely different adjective, perhaps, in the context, *jolie* (*beautiful*), or *courte* (*short*), which also attests to the adjectival function of *femme*. Using *femme* as an adjective grants it certain connotations, and, in French, there is the subtle difference between its use as an adjective or an attribute, as will be seen below. According to the CNRTL, the undertones conveyed by *femme* used as an adjective refer to specific physical charms and gestures associated with women, but also to female sexuality, as well as a supposed female intuition, and, finally, to “différents aspects de l'image psychologique stéréotypée de la femme”<sup>113</sup>, which is a quite unclear notion, and the very point of de Beauvoir's study.

Stereotypes about women (dealing with the way women are supposed to look, to act, and even to think) are somehow covered by the very word *femme*, and are rooted so deeply in societies that they seem natural and inherent to cultures, which in turns means that they are not straightforward to describe, and to translate. The cultural aspect of the above connotations need to be transcribed to the target language, with certainly some degree of loss, but still with possible equivalents. Examples from both the French original text and its new English translation will explore those equivalents, but first, some remarks need to be made about the use of *femme* in a position of attribute, which means used with a verb such as *être* (to be), or other state verbs (for example to become, to stay, or to seem). *Femme* used as an attribute

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<sup>113</sup>different aspects of the psychological and stereotypical images associated with women (CNRTL, my translation)

carries the same connotations as the ones listed above, with the addition of physical weakness (reminiscent of the expression 'weaker sex'), but also emotional delicacy, and utmost sensitivity, and the stereotype of women's loquacity, which the CNRTL also links to curiosity. In all of the cases where *femme* is used as an adjective or an attribute, there is no need for a determiner in French.

#### 4.2.2. Adjective creation in English

As far as the English language is concerned, *woman* can also be used as an adjective, but in a different way than French, due to the way adjective creation differs in the two languages, English being more open to neologisms than French. For instance, there is the possibility in English of combining *woman* with another term, giving the compound an overall adjectival value, as in the expressions *woman-built*, or *woman-centred*, whose French translations would need a prepositional structure (such as 'construit *par des femmes*'). Furthermore, English syntax requires adjectives to be placed before the nouns they modify. Although well-known, that word order rule can still remain a pitfall, especially when many modifiers are put together before a noun, in which case it is imperative to determine the relationship between those modifiers. Grammar books aimed at French students give the example of *fine leather boots*, which refer to boots made of *fine leather*, and where 'fine' modifies 'leather' (Annie Sussel and Sophie Mc Keown 2013: 60). In the case of *woman*, the *OED* gives the examples of such expressions as 'a two-woman brigade' and 'three-woman USA boardsailing team', where 'two-woman' and 'three-woman' are used as adjectives. This case, although not uncommon, is restricted to the use of a modifying number, but there is another way to use the English noun *woman* with an adjectival value, namely through noun adjuncts. The latter are a compound of two nouns, the first modifying the second, as show the terms *woman doctor*, *woman friend*, or *womandriner*, which, although listed in the *OED*, are not as frequent because another adjective already exists to state the same thing: female.

#### 4.2.3. Female and feminine

In English there is thus the possibility to use both *woman* as a noun adjunct and the adjective *female* to describe someone belonging to womankind, which is not the case in French. Due to the common Latin roots of French and English words referring to *femme/woman*, it can be confusing to deal with such adjectives as the French *féminin* and the English *feminine*, or the

French noun *femelle* and the English *female*, because the meanings and connotations of such terms have evolved differently in both languages: the French *féminin* seems more neutral than the English *feminine* and is a common adjective to describe anything belonging to women, or women themselves (as in *le sexe féminin* or *la gent féminine*). The English adjective *feminine*, however, carries connotations of the social aspects of being a woman, such as ‘qualities, behaviour, or appearance considered as typical of the female sex’, according to the *OED*, or to ‘the kind that characterizes or may be expected from or is associated with women’, as defined by H.W. Fowler’s *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage* (Fowler 2009: 175).

#### 4.2.4. Conventions and usage

In the case of the English adjective and noun *female*, it was first used to refer to females of animal species, as is the case of *femelle* in contemporary French, to then come to apply to women in general. The French *femelle* has not evolved to be used to designate female human beings, and only relates to animals, which can lead to translation issues. The English phrases *woman doctor* and *female doctor*, for instance, can be translated into French as *femme médecin*, but neither \**médecin féminin*, nor \**médecin femelle* would work. *Femme* in French refers to different realities, when the English can resort to the adverb *womanly*<sup>114</sup> or the adjectives *female* and *feminine* depending on specific contexts. For instance, Fowler’s dictionary distinguishes between *female* and *feminine* in the following way:

“when the information wanted is the answer to the question *Of (or for) which sex?*, use *female*, provided that the context sufficiently indicates the limitation to humankind ; when the question is *Of what sort?*, use *feminine*” (Fowler *ibid.*)

Examples of the translation of ‘*femme*’ in the latest English translation of *Le Deuxième Sexe* will be analyzed in Chapter Six.

### 4.3. The notion of virility in *Le Deuxième Sexe*

#### 4.3.1. General comments

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<sup>114</sup> which means ‘in a womanly manner; like a woman’, according to the *OED*.

Virility is an ambiguous concept, which stems from the Latin term *vir*, meaning 'man'. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, it is not only associated with manhood, but with a powerful and vigorous masculinity. Virility is indeed linked to a 'period of life during which a person of the male sex is in full vigour'<sup>115</sup> (*OED*), and it is assuredly also deeply connected to men's capacity for sexual intercourse. The link between men's vitality and sexual intercourse can be explained as follows: physical strength is required to achieve coitus. Not only because it is a physical action, but because of the role men play in it, namely the leading role. De Beauvoir states for instance that "le coït ne saurait se produire sans le consentement mâle [...]"<sup>116</sup> (de Beauvoir, 1976: 148-49) That sentence is quite revealing of the core role men take in intercourse: men not only lead, but their action is essential to the completion of intercourse, whereas, according to de Beauvoir, women are taken and even subjugated (*Le Deuxième Sexe* II: 150). The notion of 'taking' is actually also rooted in the concept of virility, because it can be said that men are the ones taking and making others submissive, and not only in the realm of sexuality, as wars can also be analyzed in the same light and often result in having a conqueror on one side, and the conquered on the other. Returning to sexual intercourse, not only is physical strength required to perform coitus, but the latter is itself seen as a virile impulse. For instance, de Beauvoir quotes the sexologist Marañón, reporting that some consider sexuality to be governed by men: "la libido est, peut-on dire, une force de sens viril."<sup>117</sup> (de Beauvoir, 1976: 82)

Here using the English adjective *virile* (which has a strong connotation of male sexual potency) to translate the French *viril* actually emphasizes the point de Beauvoir is making, because she is giving different examples which all converge to show how women are excluded from sexual intercourse (and sexual pleasure). And when translating the above passage which quotes Marañón in *Le Deuxième Sexe*, the translators may have deliberately chosen the adjective *virile* so as to give connotations linked to machismo to the sentence, and thus influence the readers. The whole concept of libido being *virile* tends to ridicule the quotation (and hence its author) and perhaps to give a stronger critical reading of it than the neutral French *viril* was doing. If such was the case, the translators would give us a feminist translation actively crafting the target text so as to give it a feminist twist, as was seen in Chapter Three. The translation process at stake here would then be what Luise von Flotow calls supplementing

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<sup>115</sup> It can be observed that the above definition is influenced by biological imperatives, but also by social construct, the latter being an important argument in *Le Deuxième Sexe*.

<sup>116</sup> "coitus cannot take place without male consent." (*The Second Sex*, 2009: 385)

<sup>117</sup> "the libido is, one might say, a force of virile significance." (*ibid.* 50)

(Von Flotow, 1997: 3). And in that case, we would have an example of overtranslation<sup>118</sup>, which means that the translators attributed a stronger meaning to the French adjective *viril* than it had in its original context and language. Supplementing is one way of taking part in a political translation, a translation for which the translator does not try to be invisible, as Lawrence Venuti phrases it, but on the contrary, conveys their own political views and ideological stances through the translation, as was already mentioned in Chapter Three.

#### 4.3.2. Differences between the French *viril* and the English *virile*

We have argued that to choose to render the French adjective *viril* by the English *virile*, so as to convey undertones akin to machismo, would be a feminist translation strategy. And if we can speculate such hypotheses as that, it is because *virility* is often associated with sexual vigour and libido in English. The English noun *virility* also comprises connotations similar to the French noun *virilité*, such as a specific period in men's life when they are at the height of their physical strength and sexual capacity, as well as a euphemism for the sexual organs. However, the French noun also encompasses physical traits belonging to men, and it refers greatly to appearance. Let us look at the following example: “ensemble des attributs, des caractères physiques de l'homme adulte”<sup>119</sup> (CNRTL). That definition does not merely relate to sexual organs, but to all physical features supposedly pertaining to men, such as a beard or developed muscles. We can simplify the definition discrepancies by saying that in English, *virility* is predominantly used to refer to power and sexuality, whereas the French *virilité* also covers physical and intellectual traits, so the latter can be used to refer to women who possess such allegedly masculine intellectual or emotional features. It can even be used in French to show a particular reference to masculine physical attributes in women: “Apparence masculine chez une femme”<sup>120</sup> (CNRTL). In contrast, the Oxford English Dictionary only refers to vigour, be it sexual or physical: it relates indeed to “the period of life during which a person of the male sex is in full vigour; mature or fully developed manhood or masculine force”, or “masculine vigour; masculinity of sex”, as well as “the power of procreation; capacity for sexual intercourse” and “manly strength and vigour of action or thought; energy or force of a virile character.”<sup>121</sup> These definitions indicate power and sexuality, but not masculine traits (such as physical characteristics), or qualities associated with men (such as bravery and independence).

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<sup>118</sup> as defined by Vinay and Darbelnet (Vinay and Darbelnet 1995: 16)

<sup>119</sup> ‘All of the attributes and physical features of the male adult’ (my translation)

<sup>120</sup> ‘Masculine appearance in a woman’ (my translation)

<sup>121</sup> OED, available at: <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/223804?redirectedFrom=virility#eid>

If the English *virile* and the French *viril* have contrasting connotations, then a translator cannot indiscriminately use one for the other and the context is key. Again, an interpretative approach, such as one advocated by the ITT, can help to avoid mistranslation (or odd rendering, such as ‘the virile brunette’<sup>122</sup>, *The Second Sex*, p.347). When translating the French adjective *viril*, translators should refrain from always choosing *virile*, especially when speaking of women and how “*virile*” they behave, look, and so on.

#### 4.3.2.1 *The notion of authenticity*

The centrality of the concept of authenticity in Existentialist philosophy, and how de Beauvoir makes original use of that notion and focusses on its specificity in relation to women’s situation was addressed in Chapter One. It has been shown that authenticity is a recurring topic in *Le Deuxième Sexe*, making it all the more compelling to translate *authenticité* accurately into English. That term being both an everyday and a philosophical phrase, it brings particular pitfalls for translators, as was seen in Chapter Three, when discussing the translation of philosophy. Examples of the translation of ‘authenticité’ in Borde’ and Malovany-Chevallier’s new English translation will be examined in Chapter Six.

#### 4.3.2.2. *The notion of immanence*

In order to define the concept of immanence, we will first need to contrast it with its opposite, namely transcendence. According to de Beauvoir, transcendence represents our hold on the world, and is part of what makes us human, because it enables us to go beyond our animal condition and to live, as opposed to merely survive (*Pyrrhus et Cinéas* 121). For de Beauvoir, human beings need to surpass themselves through their projects and actions, be they political, social or professional, and immanence is thus the opposite of transcendence, for it is a state in which one cannot move, nor improve her/his life, but instead only maintains herself/himself.

##### 4.3.2.2.1. *Women are more prone to live in immanence than men due to their biology*

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<sup>122</sup> an example we will examine in a further section.

De Beauvoir's thesis strongly argues that women are more grounded in Nature because of the biological constraints they experience: hormonal cycles, menstruation, underdeveloped muscles, all contribute to lessen women's 'grasp on the world' (*The Second Sex* loc.1135). But, the most significant burden women have to endure is maternity because it enslaves them to the species<sup>123</sup> and considerably curtails their freedom (de Beauvoir refers to 'the servitude of maternity', *TSS* loc.918). Contingencies of place and time need, however, to be taken into account: de Beauvoir's particularly bleak depiction of maternity was relevant to the specific time when her book was published<sup>124</sup>, so she tries to show that, not only does their body doom women to immanence, but, more crucially, society does not offer women any other choice besides marriage and motherhood.

#### 4.3.2.2.2. *Society promotes women's immanence*

By being urged to maintain a household, women are confined to immanence because they cannot undertake more purposeful activities, and create meaningful projects for themselves. De Beauvoir illustrates at length what tedious, and repetitive tasks women are expected to do at home, so as to show how mindless such daily activities can be and that, 'done every day, this work becomes monotonous and mechanical' (*TSS* loc.9719). Moreover, women are asked to maintain the present: for instance, we can state that dust is a tangible reminder of time passing, so that keeping everything clean and tidy gives a homemaker the illusion to perpetuate the present, which, for de Beauvoir, is exhausting and mind-numbing because women's housework is a 'meticulous and disordered task, with neither stops nor limits', so that, talking about daily chores, de Beauvoir concludes that 'most of the time, they are accomplished in boredom' (*TSS* loc.9742 and 9720). Women cannot project themselves into the future if their only horizons are to preserve their present home, and to perpetuate the species.

There is an interesting parallel in *Le Deuxième Sexe* between the concept of immanence and that of homemaking, because one of the many connotations of the term immanence is interiority<sup>125</sup>, and women are indeed kept in the interior, in the private sphere, blending their home with their own sense of self: for instance, de Beauvoir explains how housewives take care of arranging their home 'searching for [their] individual perfection' (*TSS* loc. 9737), thus showing

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<sup>123</sup> 'The female is the prey of the species' (*TSS* loc.918)

<sup>124</sup> As was mentioned in Chapter One

<sup>125</sup> Immanence: présence par mode d'intériorité. *CNRTL*

how women's sense of identity is closely linked to their home. Indeed, she goes further and states that the housewife 'alienates herself in things' (TSS loc. 9756), so that she becomes one with her home. Another noteworthy parallel between immanence and interiority appears when de Beauvoir claims that 'the female womb is the symbol of immanence', this time showing how women's interiority has been entwined with immanence as regards biology. Then society (excessively drawing on biology) doomed women to immanence too, and, in addition to this, de Beauvoir frames the issue in a philosophical context, in order to explain the situation she denounces.

#### *4.3.2.2.3 De Beauvoir's condemnation of women's immanence is grounded in her philosophical theory*

We saw in Chapter One that de Beauvoir draws on Hegel's master/slave dialectic, and, according to that concept, one cannot have knowledge about themselves without being recognised as a consciousness by an Other (Tidd 2004: 15). So there is initially a struggle between two subjects who both try to reduce each other to an object, and to stay a subject themselves, but, because a perpetual state of conflict cannot last, one becomes master, whereas the other is turned into a slave. According to de Beauvoir, the only way out of this situation is through mutual recognition, which means accepting to be a free consciousness who needs the others to assert her/his subjectivity, while acknowledging others' subjectivity too (Bauer in Simons 2006: 69). Indeed, our consciousness needs to be recognised by someone else, and that Other acts as a mirror, which reveals us to ourselves. De Beauvoir uses that notion to explain the asymmetrical relationship between men and women, the latter acting as a mirror for men to receive a positive view of themselves, because men can feel different from immanent women who appear to be enslaved by the species<sup>126</sup>. By doing so, men have a philosophical ground to keep women in immanence, namely to assert their own subjectivity thanks to women as Absolute Other, without having to encounter other men.

#### *4.3.2.2.4 Immanence's meanings and connotations in French and English*

So de Beauvoir's use of *immanence* is mostly philosophical, but it is noteworthy to analyze the polysemy of the term, and its other connotations. In French, and according to such

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<sup>126</sup> as seen in Chapter One.



dictionaries as *Larousse* and the CNRTL, immanence has both philosophical and theological connotations: it refers to something within, namely the presence of God (CNRTL)<sup>127</sup>, and it also indisputably relates to philosophy, with subtle variations of meaning depending on philosophers (*Larousse*)<sup>128</sup>. The same applies in English, and the *OED* states that immanence is either theological or philosophical, with the particularity of having two possible terms, namely *immanence* and *immanency*, which means that the translators have to choose between the two options, which will be discussed shortly, when looking at examples from the data.

Regarding the nuances which *immanence* has in English, I find it interesting to quote the comment on 'immanent' provided by H.W. Fowler's *Dictionary of Modern English Usage*:

"The word is something of a stumbling-block [...] The OED's note on the use of *immanent* may be useful to those who, not reading philosophical & religious books, find it an enigma when it makes one of its occasional appearances in the newspaper [...]"  
(Fowler 2009: 258)

Fowler's statement further shows that immanence is a specialised concept which, therefore, not every reader will be familiar with. Indeed, the term *immanence* is rather limited to philosophy and theology in both French and English, still we can speculate that its connotations are not exactly the same in the two languages, because, in English, Latin terms tend to be seen as more specialised and somewhat elitist, whereas Latin heritage does not have the same connotation in French, a Romance language itself. Despite this discrepancy in terms of connotations, it seems that the translators will have to use the English terms *immanence* and *immanent* in their rendering because they deal with specialised and set philosophical terminology. We, therefore, expect a literal rendering from Borde and Malovany-Chevallier's translation, because, on the one hand, it is their preferred translation strategy, but also, on the other hand, because of the philosophical nature of *immanence*, which calls for technical and specialised vocabulary in English. The existence of two possible terms in English still complicates the situation for there is a choice to make, but we can predict that Borde and

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<sup>127</sup> CNRTL, available at: <http://www.cnrtl.fr/definition/immanent>

<sup>128</sup> *Larousse*, available at:

<http://www.larousse.fr/dictionnaires/francais/immanence/41665?q=immanence#41571>

Malovany-Chevallier will opt for the version which is closer to the French original, namely *immanence*, and not *immanency*.

Let us now explore another notion which cannot be avoided in de Beauvoir's work, and which is a fascinating (albeit challenging) concept when it comes to translation, namely intertextuality.

## 5. The treatment of intertextuality in translation

Chapter Three emphasized the risk of estranging the target reader when translating philosophy, with the implication that equivalent terms need to be found. The actual difficulty in rendering philosophical terminology cannot be underestimated given that we are dealing with de Beauvoir's core theory, and translating her philosophy adequately and clearly amounts to translating her very voice and ideas. The importance of voice has been mentioned throughout the present thesis (see Chapters One, Two, Three, and this chapter) and will be at the core of the following section. The analysis started with macro elements at syntactical level, namely sentence structure, which also depicts de Beauvoir's voice (illustrating her stream of consciousness, for instance), to progressing to focus on more concrete manifestations of her thinking, examining some of the key terms she uses and what connotations and meanings she gives to them.

In order to get close to her voice in *Le Deuxième Sexe* it is important to study citations, direct or indirect, because de Beauvoir, besides giving the reader an insight into her own beliefs<sup>129</sup>, often quotes other people's theories and opinions, using those quotations to emphasize her argument. She cites a variety of sources (including philosophers, psychologists, authors, sociologists, to name but a few) and of texts, from scientific reports to literary extracts and personal diaries, so as to broaden the scope of her study. I already pointed to the fact that this plurality of voices is one of *Le Deuxième Sexe's* strengths<sup>130</sup>, and, even more than a strength, it contributed to see lived experience as knowledge. As already explained, phenomenology is concerned with experiences and phenomena, the latter helping philosophical enquiry which ultimately can contribute to knowledge, and de Beauvoir disturbed the notion of

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<sup>129</sup> De Beauvoir often uses the neutral pronoun 'nous' (we) to indicate the points she wants to make, while associating her readers with her account.

<sup>130</sup> see Chapter One

what constitutes knowledge by reporting on women's testimonies and experiences. That plurality of voices is also a challenge for the translators.

### 5.1. The importance of citations in *Le Deuxième Sexe*

As was explained above, the plurality of voices in *Le Deuxième Sexe* is such that it is useful to engage with Bakhtin's *polyphony* (Bakhtin 1984: 18), both when examining the French source text, and, all the more so, when analysing its translations.

Indeed, citations bring about interesting discussions when it comes to translation issues, and to the possible strategies adopted by translators, as will be seen later. With regard to my analysis of *The Second Sex*, I would like to turn to Toril Moi's comprehensive review of Borde and Malovany-Chevallier's English translation, in which she critiques the treatment of citations made by the two translators. The following are some of the flaws emphasized by Moi:

The treatment of quotations is baffling. The headnote of the bibliography claims to list books 'we consulted to translate Simone de Beauvoir's French quotes'. This is only partly true. It seems to me that they have used the originals for fiction in English (Virginia Woolf, Katherine Mansfield etc), and to a certain extent published translations for French fiction (Colette but not always Balzac), and for medical literature (Stekel's *Frigidity in Woman* is quoted correctly), and sometimes, but not always, for philosophy. Some quotations from Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* are taken from published translations, but, as we have seen, Borde and Malovany-Chevallier have translated quotations from *Philosophy of Nature* themselves, although they list A.V. Miller's translation in their bibliography of 'consulted' works. In the chapter on biology a sentence from Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* loses all meaning, since Borde and Malovany-Chevallier drop a vital 'not', which Colin Smith's translation (not used, but still listed in the bibliography) preserves. (Moi 2010)

As with syntax, Moi reproaches Borde and Malovany-Chevallier for their lack of consistency, which is a crucial point in translation: indeed, common translation practice assumes that a translator stays consistent in her/his uses of recurrent terms throughout the translation<sup>131</sup>. And

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<sup>131</sup> See, for example, Moi's review on the first English translation, and her comments on Parshley's inconsistency of terms (Moi 2002).

the same goes for quotations, especially when those quotations are central to the author's argument, and if they are recurrent in her/his work.

Although the translators took into account some of Moi's comments, and consequently edited their translation, let us still look at the following problem raised by Moi:

[...] a sentence from Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* loses all meaning, since Borde and Malovany-Chevallier drop a vital 'not', which Colin Smith's translation (not used, but still listed in the bibliography) preserves.

The above remark makes us deliberate whether translators ought to make their own translation of citations and references found in the source text, or whether they need to use existing translations. Drawing on Moi's example, I argue that using previous translations can be a way to highlight theoretical references (such as when de Beauvoir refers to Hegel, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, or other philosophers), with the corollary that opting for one's own translation can potentially mask the connection presented by the source text.

In order to analyze the issue of citations, it is first necessary to study the underlying concept of intertextuality, which encompasses, among other things, quotations. A preliminary discussion of intertextuality will lead me to explore the way Translation Studies deals with citations, and what are the norms in practice.

## 5.2. A brief definition of intertextuality

Prior to examining the way Translation scholars address the issue of citations, it is significant to bring the concept of intertextuality to the fore, because it is particularly pressing when one studies quotations and citations in a fundamental treatise such as *Le Deuxième Sexe*. Intertextuality refers to the connections between texts, and to the very existence of texts within a given text. The references of a text call for a different level of reading, because the reader is presented with different narratives, thus not only hearing the author's voice, but that of other texts. In the words of Rama Kundu, 'no literary text can be studied in isolation; instead texts are connected with an endless repertoire of other texts and in endless ways' (Kundu 2008: 1). Julia Kristeva, who coined the term 'intertextualité' (*intertextuality*) in the late 1960s, goes as far as claiming that no 'original' text exists: 'any text is the absorption and transformation of another' (Kristeva 1980: 66). Michael Riffaterre, for his part, states that the intertext is 'one or more texts

which the reader must know in order to understand a work of literature in terms of its overall significance' (Riffaterre 1990: 56), implying that the reader must possess sufficient knowledge to fully comprehend a text, which reminds us of the necessity for the reader (and translator-as-reader) to be able to detect the presence of those hypotexts<sup>132</sup>.

One view of intertextuality would be that of rewriting: texts are not only connected to one another, but every new text calls for previous texts, so that instead of creating something from zero, a writer always rewrites anew (Kundu *ibid.* 4). There is here an interesting link to Translation Studies, because translation is often articulated and viewed as an act of rewriting<sup>133</sup>, which means that there are not only echoes between texts within a given source text, but also parallels between source and target texts. Consequently, the plurality of voices is intensified, because writer, authors (stemming from references to other texts within the text), and translator are all present at different levels, and their voices blend with one another, thus giving the text (and the translation) more depth. Sudha Shastri explains why this intertextuality is so compelling, showing how a multiplicity of hypotexts gives a different experience to the reader:

When the text is uni-generic (as most texts are), the reader stands every chance of losing himself to the text. However, two genres, when placed next to each other, or within each other, create a fissure in the spatial configuration of the larger text. [...] *A host of smaller texts such as the letter, the footnote, and the epigraph, when embedded in a larger genre or juxtaposed alongside it, also work to a similar result. These smaller texts become highly effective devices in carving intertextual identity.* (Shastri 2001: 101, my emphasis)

The above quotation is reminiscent of the devices which de Beauvoir uses when she purposefully includes a number of texts within her treatise, therefore drawing the reader's attention. Besides drawing the readers' attention, intertextuality is used for a variety of reasons, as will now be seen.

### 5.2.1. Intertextuality's different guises

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<sup>132</sup> For more detail on how a given hypertext incorporates and transforms previous hypotexts, see Genette 1997, and particularly his discussion of James Joyce's *Ulysses*.

<sup>133</sup> as was discussed in Chapter Two.

The functions of intertextuality vary depending on the author's wish to 'quote', 'draw on', 'differentiate oneself from', 'parody', or even 'subvert' previous texts (Baxandall 1985: 58-9), which offers a rather broad gamut of purposes. In *Le Deuxième Sexe*, de Beauvoir seems to be using all of the above listed possibilities, as she repeatedly resorts to citations to justify and reinforce her argument. For example, she uses direct quotations, such as testimonies, to show women's resentment towards their dreary destiny, which is a politically subversive practice, legitimising women's lived experience as knowledge. She also cites derogatory comments made about women, often with the aim of ridiculing their author, as the following example illustrates where de Beauvoir cites Claude Mauriac:

*Nous écoutons sur un ton (sic!) d'indifférence polie...la plus brillante d'entre elles, sachant bien que son esprit reflète de façon plus ou moins éclatante des idées qui viennent de nous. (LDS I: 28)*<sup>134</sup>

Following which de Beauvoir comments that:

Ce ne sont évidemment pas les idées de M. C. Mauriac en personne que son interlocutrice reflète, étant donné qu'on ne lui en connaît aucune [...] (LDS *ibid.*)<sup>135</sup>

The above examples from *Le Deuxième Sexe* both point to the use of citations to reinforce de Beauvoir's feminist argument, thus showing that intertextuality can be a powerful tool in enhancing an author's commitment, which is to feminist philosophy in the present case. Let us turn to the link between intertextuality and gender: the notion of plurality of voices recalls the cruciality for women's voices to be heard amid patriarchal discourse.

### 5.2.2. Intertextuality and women's voice

Bakhtin's concept of 'double-voice' and *polyphony* highlights the division between the monologic and the dialogic, a concept which has been appropriated by feminist literary theorists, such as Patricia S. Yaeger. According to her, patriarchy is characterised by its monologism, by

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<sup>134</sup> We listen in a tone (*sic!*) of polite indifference...to the brightest of them, well aware that her wits reflect, in a more or less gifted way, ideas which come from *us*. (my translation)

<sup>135</sup> Needless to say, it is not Mr C. Mauriac's own ideas that his female interlocutor reflects, as he is known not to have any [...] (my translation)

its exclusion of women's alternative discourse (Yaeger 1984: 957). In the patriarchal discourse, women are being 'othered', a point resolutely shown by de Beauvoir, as was discussed in Chapter One when referring to woman as the 'absolute Other'. As mentioned before, de Beauvoir shows how myths around femininity have been created by men, with the aim to shape women's destiny and identity, and language is one of the tools used in creating those myths: the dominant discourse estranges women and forces them to feel their otherness. An awareness of the situation, however, leads to an emancipation, notably by subverting language. Subversion was examined in Chapter Three with the instance of a feminist translator 'hijacking' a text and altering language, so as to ridicule the source text's misogyny (Levine 1991: 83). In this example, the voice of a woman (translator) eclipses that of a man (author), thus aiming to both challenge the dominant patriarchal discourse, and to let the translator's voice be heard.

The relationship between language and women is also concerned with intertextuality because, just as de Beauvoir's strategy consists in building her hypertext from many hypotexts (in the forms of testimonies and works by women), feminist works build on hypotexts created and recreated by other feminists, as Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood explains when defining the feminist intertext as a:

communicating and resonating collective text scripted in the feminine by feminists rereading and rewriting what other feminists have written and spoken. It is composed of the women's voices and words constantly present in our own voices and words [...] (de Lotbinière-Harwood 1991: 126)

The above definition clearly states the centrality of women's voice, as well as the importance of a sense of solidarity and connection between women, which Barbara Godard even calls an 'identity' and 'a vision of sororal harmony' (Godard 1995: 78).

I also contend that intertextuality in a feminist context is akin to the ITT and its insistence on background knowledge (as seen in Chapter Three) because the feminist intertext described by de Lotbinière-Harwood implies that a feminist translator needs to know about other feminist texts, or, as Michaela Wolf puts it:

the feminist intertext would consist of all feminist texts read by the translator —fiction, theory, criticism, translations— which can be considered a sort of memory bank of

words, meanings and references that constitute the background for feminist translation strategies. (Wolf, 2000: 138)

Intertextuality is decidedly at the core of translation practice and is crucial to a feminist approach to translation, which means that being aware of intertextuality, and building a knowledge of hypotexts present in a hypertext is key. That reinforces my claim that the ITT's concern for background knowledge is essential to the translation of feminist philosophy. The next section will further examine how translators can deal with intertextuality.

### 5.2.3. Intertextuality and Translation Studies

Intertextuality can be used for a variety of reasons, and takes many forms, such as direct or indirect quotations, but also simply through references to previous texts, which undoubtedly leads to some 'piège à traducteurs' (*trap for translators*) (Genette 1982: 295-6) when intertextuality has to be conveyed in translation. As implied before, identifying intertextuality is challenging enough, but rendering it is not always possible, because the multiple levels of reading require the target reader to know about references which are expected from the source reader, and which may be too foreign for her/him, or beyond her/his knowledge. Delphine Chartier gives us the example of French translations of Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*, a novel which subtly refers to Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. The author retells the story of the first Mrs Rochester, and, in so doing, denounces imperialism and patriarchy, so that the subversive aspect of her book has to be unpacked (Chartier 2006: 170). The French translators, however, seem to find it difficult to convey those allusions, even more so as the hints present in *Wide Sargasso Sea* are subtle, such as the use of two recurring adjectives: *infamous* and *lunatic*. The French translation falls flat when it renders the latter as 'la démente', and the former as 'infâme' or 'abjecte' (Chartier *ibid.* 177). The translation strategy which has been chosen here is that of the *calque* (i.e. 'infamous' is literally rendered as 'infâme', thus staying close to the original text), which buries the connection to Brontë's novel. Another approach is that of adaptation, a strategy which acknowledges the impossibility of conveying the same references as the source text, while still trying to recreate adequately the same effect on the reader. An example of such adaptation can be seen in Claude Demanuelli's translation of Margaret Atwood's "Gertrude talks back". Atwood's short story alludes to *Hamlet*, but has a derisive and playful tone, which mildly mocks the famous tragedy. That very aspect needs to be rendered by the translator, and Demanuelli chooses to give a subversive tone to her translation through the use of over-



punctuation and capitalization, as well as by emphasising the recurrent theme of food. But, instead of copying the source text's multiple wordplays around 'pork', she adapts her translation, using different puns and paronyms<sup>136</sup>, so as still to include the topic of food within her text (Chartier *ibid.* 175-76). In Chartier's above examples, it appears that choosing adaptation and allowing the target text to shift from the source text results in more adequate translations than when one opts for *calque* and stays too close to the source text. Drawing from those instances, I contend that conveying the message (and the source text's intertextuality) should be favoured over keeping close to the source text's linguistic or syntactical elements, or, in the words of Susan Bassnett:

the closer the translation [comes] to trying to recreate *linguistic* and *formal* structures of the original, the further removed it [becomes] in terms of function (Bassnett 2014: 101, emphasis in original).

According to Emily Salines, translators can adopt different strategies to render intertextuality, so that no prescriptive rule prevails, still, and echoing Bassnett's above remark, she shows examples where 'adventurous translations' permit the rendering of intertextuality more efficiently. Drawing on English translations of Charles Baudelaire's poems 'Le Guignon' and 'Le Flambeau vivant', Salines explains that it is possible to "restore [his] sources", namely English hypotexts he integrates into his own work, thus "[making] the intertextuality of the poem more blatant than in the French texts" (Salines in Salama-Carr 2000: 196-7). Another central point to mention is the use of paratext in order to highlight and signal intertextuality to the reader. I discussed paratext in chapter Four when analysing the way in which the new English *Second Sex* has been publicised, and also to show how the translators' presence is marked. It can be added that paying attention to footnotes, prefaces or description on a book's cover is also beneficial to pinpoint the references to other texts within the translation. For instance, the usage of footnotes in the new English translation of *Le Deuxième Sexe* will be examined in the following chapter.

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<sup>136</sup> which are 'plays on words that are similar in appearance or sound' (*OED*).



## CHAPTER 6: DATA ANALYSIS

### 1. The treatment of syntax in *The Second Sex*

*The Second Sex* is a translation which seeks to stay close to de Beauvoir's text, so much so that Borde and Malovany-Chevallier opted for some syntactical renderings which strictly follow the French source text. The previous chapter noted that syntax is a complex element to translate, and that shifts are at times necessary to render a similar effect in the target text as in the source text. We will now examine some examples from *The Second Sex*, bearing in mind their repercussion in the target language, in order to reflect on the most apt translation strategies.

The following excerpt is taken from the Justifications section, entitled 'La narcissiste ('The Narcissist'):

'Ce n'est pas elle-même, c'est la Beauté que Cécile Sorel défendait quand elle brisa le verre de la caricature de Bib.' (*Le Deuxième Sexe* II: 529)

'It is not she herself, it is Beauty that Cécile Sorel defended when she broke the glass covering Bib's caricature of her.' (*The Second Sex* loc. 13609)

The above quotation hints at references which are not easy to notice for most readers. As Borde and Malovany-Chevallier explain, 'the reference might have been as obscure in 1949 as it is today' (Translators' Note), and it is true that Bib is not the best known of de Beauvoir's references. Therefore, we can argue that the French sentence is not especially straightforward for readers, due to the cultural elements which are not obvious. In addition, de Beauvoir also illustrates a philosophical point in the above quotation, as she gives an instance of immanence's consequences for women, namely that, deprived of concrete expression through action in the world, some women turn to their home and to themselves, to the point of venerating them (*Le Deuxième Sexe* II: 528). The author even explains that women are encouraged to do this because of the 'myth of the eternal feminine', and, because they long to embody this myth, they reinforce its domination in return (*Le Deuxième Sexe* *ibid.*).

A comparison of the French and English sentences, shows that the English translation follows the word order of the French, with, however, some shifts and explications: Borde and Malovany-Chevallier's version explains that the glass is covering a caricature, and specifies that the latter portrays Cécile Sorel, which somehow compensates for the 'obscure' reference mentioned above. I contend that such a clarification is welcome as it helps to make the text easier for the target readers. Nonetheless, one linguistic unit seems quite heavy-handed and gives the text a confusing twist, due to an unnecessary repetition: 'it is not she herself'. The English pronoun *herself* already carries the connotation of the French *elle-même*, so Borde and Malovany-Chevallier's phrase is redundant and creates an infelicitous effect, which is not even the result of a literal translation, because the French source text does not repeat 'elle' twice. The translators seemed to have aimed to emphasize the fact that Cécile Sorel is not defending herself, but Beauty instead, and they tried to do so by using a repetition of pronouns. However, the result flaws the target text grammatical norms, so that the English translation seems inaccurate, whereas the French sentence is precise and flowing. That difference of style might influence the judgment formed on de Beauvoir by source and target readers: reading the English translation can lead to the impression that the French author did not possess a polished writing style and that can, in turn, be detrimental to their reception of her arguments.

Our next example is taken from the last section of *Le Deuxième Sexe*, entitled 'Vers la libération' ('Toward Liberation'), and it focuses on the necessity of work for women to be free, but only in certain circumstances which enable work to be liberating:

[...] le travail aujourd'hui n'est pas la liberté. C'est seulement dans un monde socialiste que la femme en accédant à l'un s'assurerait l'autre. (*Le Deuxième Sexe* II: 588)

[...] work today is not freedom. Only in a socialist world would the woman who has one be sure of the other. (*The Second Sex* loc.14462)

The French quotation exemplifies de Beauvoir's style and sense of eloquence, clear and concise, yet explaining in two short sentences that work can free women, but not as it exists in France at the time of the author, and with the implication that de Beauvoir advocates a socialist model. We can notice the clever parallel between the two sentences, as the notions of work and freedom are referred to twice, but without unnecessary repetitions. Nonetheless, the English translation, while trying to reach the same effect, has to opt for a different strategy in order to

find an equivalent, because of grammatical differences between French and English. When writing 'the woman who has one', Borde and Malovany-Chevallier imply the phrase 'the woman who has one work', which is not accurate in English because the noun 'work' is considered to be a mass noun.<sup>137</sup> The difficulty at hand is that, in French, 'travail' can both refer to work in a general sense, and to a job, using the articles 'le' ('the') and 'un' ('a') depending on the context and French grammatical norms. English, on the other hand, requires the use of different determiners, so that the present example should either use another phrase (such as 'some'), or another noun (such as 'position'). The way in which 's'assurer' is translated is also problematic because 'being sure of' is not exactly the same as 'securing something': de Beauvoir is not talking here of an intellectual certainty regarding freedom, but of women concretely gaining and enjoying freedom, and, therefore, we can argue that the English sentence does not convey the same sense as the source text, and is both confusing and not expressing de Beauvoir's point as clearly as it is in *Le Deuxième Sexe*.

The next instance taken from *The Second Sex* also depicts women's freedom, and can be found in the same section of the book:

Ce sont elles qu'on met en cause quand on s'interroge sur les possibilités de la femme et sur son avenir. (*Le Deuxième Sexe* II: 590)

They are the ones who are at issue when the question of women's possibilities and their future is raised. (*The Second Sex* loc. 14488)

The above English sentence first appropriately resorts to shifts in order to find the right equivalent in the target text:

Ce sont elles : They are the ones

However, we notice an impersonal pronoun in French, which calls for a passive in English, thus producing a different word order in French and in English. The problem is that, in French, de Beauvoir simply refers to women's possibilities and women's future, and repeating the

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<sup>137</sup> A thing to be done; what a person or thing has to do; a task to be carried out; a function to be served. Also (in later use chiefly) as a mass noun.' (*OED*, available at: <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/230216?rskey=hJqxfX&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid>)

preposition 'sur' reinforces her point and ensures clarity. In contrast, Borde and Malovany-Chevallier's sentence is ambiguous because we have two plural nouns and two marks of possession (a genitive form, and a possessive adjective), which can be potentially confusing for the readers. Moreover, the sentence does not have such an explicit tone in English, whereas it has in French, thanks to the repetition of preposition and the parallel of 's'interroger sur', which gives a certain flow to the sentence.

The above examples enabled us to illustrate the fact that syntax, although it can rarely be transferred from one language to the other, is paramount in conveying tone and meaning, so that translators need to be particularly careful to find equivalents in the target language while respecting target language norms.

Finally, a comment has to be made on punctuation, and more specifically semicolons, which are omnipresent in *The Second Sex*, and which are considered essential by the two translators:

We also stayed close to Beauvoir's complicated syntax and punctuation as well as to certain usages of language that to us felt a bit awkward at first. One of the difficulties was her extensive use of the semicolon, a punctuation mark that has suffered setbacks over the past decades in English and French and has somewhat fallen into disuse.

(Translators' Note)

Borde and Malovany-Chevallier state that semicolons are crucial to de Beauvoir's reasoning, asserting that 'a whole idea is developed within the semicolons; there's a flow', still, they acknowledge that this punctuation mark is outdated (Glazer 2007). Although I do agree with the translators that de Beauvoir's use of the semicolons is a characteristic feature of her writing style, as well as a way to structure her text in accordance with her argumentation, I do not share their view regarding the need to keep that device in the English target text. Indeed, I contend that there is a double barrier between the two languages: a temporal and a cultural gap because French readers discovering de Beauvoir's treatise nowadays will not see the author's pervasive use of the semicolon as such a marked feature as it is in English, where semicolons are a rarity. Moreover, and as mentioned above, French is more prone to accept juxtaposition of sentences, whereas English requires clearer connections between clauses (Guillemin-Flescher 1981, Moi 2010). Let us consider the following sentence taken from the last chapter of *The Second Sex*:

The curse on the woman vassal is that she is not allowed to do anything; so she stubbornly pursues the impossible quest for being through narcissism, love, or religion; when she is productive and active, she regains her transcendence; she affirms herself concretely as subject in her projects; she senses her responsibility relative to the goals she pursues and to the money and rights she appropriates. (*The Second Sex* loc.14456)

La malédiction qui pèse sur la femme vassale, c'est qu'il ne lui est permis de rien faire: alors, elle s'entête dans l'impossible poursuite de l'être à travers le narcissisme, l'amour, la religion; productrice, active, elle reconquiert sa transcendence; dans ses projets elle s'affirme concrètement comme sujet; par son rapport avec le but qu'elle poursuit, avec l'argent et les droits qu'elle s'approprie, elle éprouve sa responsabilité (*Le Deuxième Sexe* II: 587)

The English quotation above constitutes one sentence made of five clauses, all separated by semicolons. The presence of the semicolons is very obvious, and can distract the readers from the message by making them question why this dated punctuation mark has been used. Also, the overall effect is that of a disjointed and rambling text, which can disorient the readers, and fails clearly to present the argument put forward by de Beauvoir.

The examples analyzed in this section reinforce my contention that keeping close to the source text's syntax conflicts with the target language's syntactical norms, and, in turn, can distort the reception and the understanding of the argument defended in the source text. I argue that the form interferes with the content, so that a target text with a faulty syntax can hinder the impact of de Beauvoir's message.

After analysing syntax, I would like to explore morphology, and specifically, French and English tenses, so as to study how differences in terms of tenses also affect translation, and what strategies can be used in order to render French tenses appropriately into English.

## **2. The treatment of tenses in translation**

### 2.1. The translation of the conditional in *The Second Sex*

In order to illustrate this point, we will now examine some examples taken from the latest *The Second Sex*. In her Introduction to *Le Deuxième Sexe*, de Beauvoir tries to uncover what the word '*femme*' encompasses:

'C'est ce qu'affirment vigoureusement les partisans de la philosophie des lumières, du rationalisme, du nominalisme: les femmes *seraient* seulement parmi les êtres humains ceux qu'on désigne arbitrairement par le mot "femme".' (*Le Deuxième Sexe* I: 14, my emphasis)

'It is what advocates of Enlightenment philosophy, rationalism, or nominalism vigorously assert: women *are*, among human beings, merely those who are arbitrarily designated by the word "woman".' (*The Second Sex* loc.347, my emphasis)

What is important to take into account, is that the author then shows her scepticism towards such ways of looking at the differentiation between men and women, claiming that:

'[...] le nominalisme est une doctrine un peu courte; et les antiféministes ont beau jeu de montrer que les femmes ne *sont* pas des hommes.' (*LDSI*: 15, emphasis in original)

'[...] nominalism is a doctrine that falls a bit short; and it is easy for antifeminists to show that women *are* not men.' (*TSS* *ibid.*, emphasis in original)

Therefore, the use of the conditional in the first quotation clearly expresses de Beauvoir's disbelief, and her distancing herself from the views she reports. In contrast, the English translation uses the indicative, thus curtailing de Beauvoir's irony. However, the context of the sentence makes it clear that de Beauvoir is quoting other people's views, as she refers to specific supporters (who abide by Enlightenment, rationalism and nominalism). However, a possible translation could have been 'women are supposedly', so as to emphasize the author's doubt.

Let us now see an instance when the translators recognized the conditional in the source text, and attempted to transpose that mode into the English translation:



“Stekel a mieux vu qu’il y a là une réaction originale; mais il en rend compte d’une manière superficielle: la femme *aurait* peur de la défloration, de la pénétration, de la grossesse, de la douleur, et cette peur *freinerait* son désir; cette explication est trop rationnelle.” (*LDS I:94*, my emphasis)

“Stekel rightly saw this as an original reaction; but he accounts for it only superficially: the woman *would fear* defloration, penetration, pregnancy, and pain, and this fear *would stifle* her desire; this explanation is too rational.” (*TSS loc. 1385*, my emphasis)

In the extract above, it is interesting to note that Borde and Malovany-Chevallier use the conditional in English, as it is also used in French. However, there is no parallel in tone between the two sentences, because de Beauvoir uses the French conditional to indicate that she is quoting Stekel, and that she is not in agreement with his interpretation, whereas the English rendering fails to convey that aspect by merely adding the auxiliary ‘*would*’. A different strategy needs to be found to have an equivalent turn in English, which might imply a transposition, using phrases such as ‘said to be’, or yet again resorting to such adverbs as ‘allegedly’ or ‘supposedly’.

Finally, let us analyze an instance when the translators transposed the conditional into English, while simultaneously slightly altering the text, so as to obtain a satisfactory equivalent in the target text. In the following excerpt, de Beauvoir critiques the importance of biology in determining the power relationships between men and women:

“L’équilibre des forces productrices et des forces reproductrices se réalise différemment aux divers moments économiques de l’histoire humaine et ils conditionnent le rapport du mâle et de la femelle aux enfants et par suite entre eux. Mais nous sortons alors du domaine de la biologie: à sa seule lumière *on ne saurait* poser la primauté d’un des sexes quant au rôle qu’il joue pour perpétuer l’espèce.” (*LDS I: 78*, my emphasis)

“The balance of productive and reproductive forces is different depending on the different economic moments of human history, and they condition the relation of the male and the female to children and later among them. But we are going beyond the field of biology: in purely biological terms, *it would not be possible* to posit the primacy of

one sex concerning the role it plays in perpetuating the species.” (TSS loc.1165, my emphasis)

In the French text, the conditional mode shows de Beauvoir’s disagreement with regard to the point she presents, namely she stresses the priority to take into account social and economic factors, as opposed to biological ones alone. The translators adequately recognized and rendered that aspect, not only using a conditional, but also changing the verbs (‘savoir/to know’ in French becomes ‘to be possible’ in English), and shifting the French impersonal turn (we notice the use of the pronoun ‘on’), to a passive in English. This example of domestication is efficient in rendering the overall tone of the French sentence.

However, we can comment further on their translation: firstly, we can note that the English rendering has been made explicit, by repeating the term ‘biology’, in an effort to simplify the French source text phrase ‘à sa seule lumière’. That is particularly surprising because Borde and Malovany-Chevallier specifically state in their Translators’ Note that they “have translated *Le Deuxième Sexe* as it was written, unabridged and *unsimplified*, maintaining Beauvoir’s philosophical message” (my emphasis), so that we would not expect such alterations. Secondly, the syntax of the last English sentence, on the contrary, closely follows that of the French source text, which is problematic because, as a result, the English target text is unnecessarily heavy-handed. It consequently undermines de Beauvoir’s style, and, by making the sentence harder to decipher, it may impede the understanding.

The above analysis of the translation of the French conditional into English shows that domesticating tenses is more likely to convey the nuances imparted by the source text author. We will now study the specific case of the French historic present.

## 2.2. The translation of the French historic present in *The Second Sex*’s history chapter

In *Le Deuxième Sexe*, de Beauvoir devotes a whole chapter to History, in which she relates the evolution of women’s condition and oppression throughout the ages. In French, the author can easily use the historic present to recount the past, but keeping the present in the English translation would appear odd. In their English translation, Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier opted for an extremely close rendering of the French tenses, which means that when de Beauvoir uses the present, the translators use it in English too. When de Beauvoir

chooses the *passé composé*, the translators opt for the present perfect, regardless of the correspondence in tenses and aspects between French and English. Let us examine some instances from *The Second Sex*, where staying close to the French tenses can disconcert the readers:

French: [...] désormais la mère *est ravalée* au rang de nourrice, de servante et la souveraineté du père *est exaltée*[...] (de Beauvoir, 1976: 134, my emphasis)

English: [...] from that time on, the mother *is lowered* to the rank of wet nurse or servant, and the father's sovereignty *is exalted* [...] (Borde, Malovany-Chevallier, 2010: 87, my emphasis)

Here de Beauvoir is referring to Ancient Greece (she goes on to quote Aeschylus immediately after the sentence above), and it is thus rather clear that she is talking about the past. The use of the present in English therefore jars somehow, all the more so as the expression 'from that time on' would imply being followed by the present perfect continuous. Similarly, the following example comes across as odd:

French: elle *sera* jusqu'à nos jours soumise à la volonté des hommes (de Beauvoir, 1976: 137, my emphasis)

English: until our times she *will be subordinated* to men's will. (Borde, Malovany-Chevallier, 2010: 89, my emphasis)

As de Beauvoir uses the present with a past value throughout the History chapter, she can also use the simple future (*sera*), whose translation requires a specific form in English, using *would* in that case (as was seen earlier when introducing the historic present in French and English, see Armstrong 2005: 58). The result in the present English translation feels shaky, even though the goal of the two translators was to render de Beauvoir's voice. Giving a tinge of foreignness might well work when the text is not so ambiguous, but, with *Le Deuxième Sexe*, one needs constant focus to comprehend de Beauvoir's point, and being distracted by the English language impedes that comprehension. The most disturbing situation happens when there is a mixture of close rendering (that is keeping the same tenses as the original French ones) and of shifts, where the translators use more usual tenses in English. This lack of consistency is even

more baffling for the reader, and detrimental to the way de Beauvoir is perceived as a thinker. Indeed, it makes her sound like a fuzzy thinker who does not know what correct tense to use:

French: A Babylone les lois d'Hammourabi *reconnaissent* certains droits à la femme: elle *reçoit* une part de l'héritage paternel et quand elle se *marie* son père lui *constitue* une dot. (de Beauvoir, 1976: 142, my emphasis)

English: In Babylon, Hammurabi's Code *recognized* certain rights of woman: she *receives* a share of the paternal inheritance, and when she *marries*, her father *provides* her with a dowry. (Borde, Malovany-Chevallier, 2010: 93, my emphasis)

In the above instance, the translators first distance themselves from the original and use a past tense (the preterit) when de Beauvoir writes in the present. However, they then translate the rest of the sentence imitating closely de Beauvoir's own sentence, therefore using the present in English. The result is surprising, which can actually draw the reader's attention, but it can also give a sense of faultiness to the sentence.

### 2.3. The translation of grammatical voices in *The Second Sex*

Voices in *Le Deuxième Sexe* are crucial because, as was mentioned in Chapter One, de Beauvoir imparts a plurality of voices to her treatise, the latter encompasses a multitude of voices, from her own, to numerous quotations, and that strategy has to be reproduced in the English translation. Let us first look at an excerpt which presents the concept of the Other:

French: Pour le natif d'un pays, les habitants des pays qui ne sont pas le sien *apparaissent* comme des 'étrangers'; (*Le Deuxième Sexe*, p. 18, my emphasis)

English: For the native of a country, inhabitants of other countries *are viewed* as 'foreigners'; (*The Second Sex*, pp.6-7, my emphasis)

In the example above, the French verb *apparaître* is conjugated in the active voice, without recourse to the auxiliary verb *être* (to be), while the English sentence uses the passive voice. This shift from active to passive is an illustration of how a translation can be domesticated in order to suit the target audience. We might, however, note that it seems contradictory to the

claims Borde and Malovany-Chevallier make in their translators' note, namely that they "made the decision to keep close to Beauvoir's tense usage [...]" (*The Second Sex*, Translators' Note), but I contend that their actual shifting is beneficial to the readers, because the English translation is flowing and idiomatic, thus offering the readers a smooth read.

Another noteworthy change needs to be explained, however: the translators dismissed the French phrase '*sien*' when de Beauvoir refers to countries which are not one's own, they are therefore changing the reference point of the sentence. There is a slight difference when talking about 'other countries' and 'countries which are not one's own': the latter relates to a sense of belonging to a country, which reinforces the point the author is making about the concept of the Other (here using the 'native versus strangers' dichotomy). The English translation, however, seems to moderate de Beauvoir's sentence and its reference to the Other. The above example of a native considering countries which are not his or her own is a philosophical case in *Le Deuxième Sexe*: it aims to illustrate both Existentialism and the concept of the Other as applied to the 'women/men' dichotomy because de Beauvoir draws a parallel between the Other (as represented by people not belonging to one's own clan, nation, group) and women as being the Other for men. That parallel is a groundbreaking revelation which gives philosophical grounds to denounce patriarchy, and is therefore a central argument in the treatise, as was mentioned in Chapter One.

We can finally note that keeping part of the French sentence structure, while, still, substituting the active voice for the passive voice gives an odd tone to the English version. If the sentence requires the passive voice, then the agent doing the action is better placed at the end of the sentence, whereas '*for the native*', being put at the beginning —and thus following the French syntax— does not go naturally with '*are viewed*'. To make the sentence conform to English norms, Borde and Malovany-Chevallier could have reversed the word order as follows: "Inhabitants of other countries are viewed as 'foreigners' *by the native of a country*." I argue that resorting to a shift between the French active voice and the English passive is satisfactory in the example at hand, but the whole context needs to be considered.

Differences in the use of voices can be acceptable in some circumstances, when, for instance, the variation only affects style, but the gist of the sentence is kept from the source text to the target text. We will now analyze that point with two further examples from *The Second Sex*:

French: *On ne sait plus bien s'il existe encore des femmes, s'il en existera toujours, s'il faut ou non le souhaiter, quelle place elles occupent en ce monde, quelle place elles devraient y occuper.* (*Le Deuxième Sexe*, I: 13, my emphasis)

English: *It is hard to know any longer if women still exist, if they will always exist, if there should be women at all, what place they hold in this world, what place they should hold.* (*The Second Sex*, p.3, my emphasis)

In this excerpt, avoiding staying too close to the French and opting for an equivalent in English does seem more usual to the target readers. There are, however, other issues in the above quotation, which require further analysis. In the first clause, for instance, Borde and Malovany-Chevallier render the French adverb 'plus' using the English 'any longer', but by doing so, they focus on one aspect of the French word 'plus', which is not the one de Beauvoir emphasizes. 'Plus' is another way of saying 'pas' (another adverb used in negation) and in that specific instance, de Beauvoir uses it to highlight the topic of her sentence, namely confusion about the existence and situation of women. Using 'plus bien' gives the idea that one really does not know if there are women, whereas translating it by 'any longer' only flags the temporal aspect of the sentence.

An additional point to analyze in the sentence is the omission of the French verb *souhaiter*. De Beauvoir wonders if one should wish for the existence of women, but by ignoring the verb 'to wish', Borde and Malovany-Chevallier alter the meaning of the sentence: 'if there *should* be women at all' (my emphasis) implies an idea of necessity, almost going a step further than what the author advocates. Indeed, the translators' sentence seems to be more radical than the original French one, and therefore gives an additional feminist stance to the sentence. The English sentence conveys the solemnity of de Beauvoir's text, because the translators managed to keep the repetition of 'si' (*if*), 'quelle place' (*what place*), and it goes further, as we can notice that the modal verb 'should' is repeated as well, which emphasizes the moral aspect of the existence (or nonexistence) of femininity.

There is, still, a more troublesome omission in the above translation example: the French pronoun 'y', replacing the noun 'world' is missing in the English sentence, while the reader crucially needs to be reminded of it. It is all the more important as de Beauvoir's argument in *Le Deuxième Sexe* is to urge women to leave the home and play an active part in the outside world, especially through the workplace. The pronoun 'y' backs up that idea according to which

women need to reach out to the world, to transcend their condition, and concretely act in society.

Let us now analyze another instance where the French impersonal pronoun *on* has been rendered in English using the passive voice:

French: Et elle n'est rien d'autre que ce que l'homme en décide; ainsi on l'appelle "le sexe", voulant dire par là qu'*elle apparaît essentiellement au mâle* comme un être sexué: pour lui, elle est sexe, donc elle l'est absolument. (*Le Deuxième Sexe*, I:17, my emphasis)

English: And she is nothing other than what man decides; she is thus called "the sex", meaning that *the male sees her essentially* as a sexed being; for him she is sex, so she is it in the absolute. (*The Second Sex*, p.6, my emphasis)

Here we can notice a shift in viewpoint and a subject change. 'Elle apparaît essentiellement au mâle[...]' ('*she essentially appears to the male*') becomes 'the male sees her essentially[...]', which states the same thing, but from a different point of view. In that instance, privileging the point of view of man is in accordance with the gist of the French sentence, because de Beauvoir insists on how insignificant women are, and how their destiny is in men's hands. It could thus be argued that the English translation effectively conveys de Beauvoir's point merely by a change of syntax. Changing the syntax in order to comply with the usual English phrasing (that is using the passive instead of keeping close to the French sentence and writing, for instance, 'we call her') is an instance of domestication, which here helps to convey the philosophy behind de Beauvoir's text.

Let us now have a look at the difference between *on l'appelle* (an instance of the reflexive verbs we mentioned above) and *she is called*, in the same above excerpt. Using the passive in English is a usual way of rendering French reflexive verbs, instead of using impersonal phrases such as '*one calls her*', which I discussed in the introduction to this section. Nonetheless, there is a slight subtlety between the two versions (*on l'appelle*: she is called), because the French, by using an impersonal tone, shows how pervasive the problem is, namely how this '*on*', which represents society as a whole, perceives women as a distinct category, so that any woman will be regarded as the Other, as de Beauvoir explains a little further. In terms

of translation strategies, however, resorting to an impersonal tone in English could give a pedantic aspect to the sentence (e.g. 'one calls her' would appear quite stilted), which is not present in the French source text. Therefore, using the passive in English is an efficient choice from the translators, because their translation reads more naturally, but also, the passive helps to convey the methodical approach of the French source text, therefore, that particular use of an equivalent in the translation is a satisfactory instance of domestication, which, as I contend, helps to render de Beauvoir's sentence more clearly and, therefore, makes the translation easier to access to for English-speaking readers.

We will now examine another example where there is a change of viewpoint, so as to determine whether that alteration affects the source text's message:

French: *La querelle du féminisme a fait couler assez d'encre, à présent elle est à peu près close: n'en parlons plus. On en parle encore cependant. Et il ne semble pas que les volumineuses sottises débitées pendant ce dernier siècle aient beaucoup éclairé le problème.* (*Le Deuxième Sexe*, I: 13; my emphasis)

English: *Enough ink has flowed over the quarrel about feminism; it is now almost over: let's not talk about it anymore. Yet it is still being talked about. And the volumes of idiocies churned out over this past century do not seem to have clarified the problem.* (*The Second Sex*, p.3; my emphasis)

The French begins with a reference to the quarrel brought about by feminism, whereas the English sentence starts with another point of reference, namely the ink used to debate and argue over feminism. In the French original, the reader is almost given the impression that the quarrel is proactive and it gives strength to the point de Beauvoir is making because she wants to show how unproductive quarreling is. She precisely tells us so when she says 'si la "question des femmes" est si oiseuse c'est que l'arrogance masculine en a fait une "querelle"; quand on se querelle, on ne raisonne plus bien'<sup>138</sup> (*LDS*, I: 31), and the syntax she chooses (as, for example, starting her sentence with 'la querelle') is reinforcing her argument.

But, interestingly enough, de Beauvoir is highlighting a literary quarrel in this extract and she will

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<sup>138</sup> 'If the "question of women" is so trivial, it is because masculine arrogance turned it into a "quarrel"; when people quarrel, they no longer reason well.' (*The Second Sex* loc.559)



go on listing the back-and-forth pamphlets and books written either in favour or against feminism. A focal point on 'ink' therefore emphasizes the literary aspect of the dispute and provides an adequate translation. And, in order to give the English-speaking reader a satisfactory translation, Borde and Malovany-Chevallier opted for a particularly domesticated rendering: we can notice a complete alteration of verbs (*faire* becomes *flow*) and subjects (*la querelle* is changed for *ink*). The point of reference is not the same in the French and the English sentences, and yet, the translation works. It shows that domestication of linguistic norms and adhering to the common syntax norms of the English target language can be an efficient way of conveying the gist of the original French text, rather than resorting to foreignization.

However, at other times, using the passive to translate French reflexive verbs can also potentially impair the meaning. Reflexive verbs insert an object pronoun between the subject and the verb, implying the action is done by the subject to themselves (*je me lève* - *I get [myself] up*). We already stated that they illustrate one of the many pitfalls a translator needs to be aware of when translating from French to English, and we explained that the passive voice is often used to translate them into English, as the following example shows:

French: Il est clair qu'aucune femme ne peut prétendre sans mauvaise foi *se situer* par-delà son sexe. (*Le Deuxième Sexe*, I: 15; my emphasis)

English: Clearly, no woman can claim without bad faith *to be situated* beyond her sex. (*The Second Sex*, p.4; my emphasis)

In the above excerpt the French verb *se situer* implies responsibility and action. De Beauvoir explains that no woman can situate *herself* beyond being a woman, or if they do, they do so in bad faith. There is thus the indication of women's self-situating, of their own project, which seems logical because in Existentialism, our *situation* (i.e. our place in the world) is changeable, we have an influence over it. For Existentialists, a situation is not fixed because human beings do not have an essence. It is an instance when a grammatical point joins a semantic one: the reflexive in French corroborates the philosophical meaning attached to *se situer*, which is the personal responsibility each human being has for their situation in the world. But the English rendering does not convey that connotation, because, by stating that women *are situated*, the translation takes away the idea that women can have an input on their situation, it curtails de

Beauvoir's argument.

In the same manner, the following example shows that translating reflexive verbs which denote de Beauvoir's philosophy is particularly thorny:

French: Elle se *détermine* et se *différencie* par rapport à l'homme et non celui-ci par rapport à elle; elle est l'inessentiel en face de l'essentiel. Il est le Sujet, il est l'Absolu: elle est l'Autre. (*Le Deuxième Sexe*, I: 17, my emphasis)

English: She *is determined* and *differentiated* in relation to man, while he is not in relation to her; she is the inessential in front of the essential. He is the Subject; he is the Absolute. She is the Other. (*The Second Sex*, p.6, my emphasis)

Here again the difference between a reflexive verb in French and a passive turn in English gives a contrasting impression for the readers: in French, the sentence conveys a sense of conflict between man and woman, in which women act towards their being different from men, and it is what de Beauvoir explains, namely that by trying to embody the Other, they are actively urged to be and behave differently from men. As de Beauvoir quotes in *Le Deuxième Sexe*, women are "half-accomplices"<sup>139</sup>, because they abide by patriarchal values, they agree to differentiate *themselves*. The English translation also imparts the idea that there is a huge disparity between men and women, but it gives the impression that women are made out of clay, that they are shaped by men for their purpose. De Beauvoir insists here on the insignificance of women in a man's world, as well as on the part they play in their own subjection, and it is unfortunate that those connotations cannot be rendered as subtly in the English translation.

The above examples enabled me to show that differences in terms of verbal structures entail more than purely grammatical concerns, because de Beauvoir's philosophy is conveyed through her language (including the syntax she uses, or her verb choices). The instances which I analyzed illustrate the need to use domestication, so as to give the reader a smoother read, while bearing in mind the source text's intrinsic philosophy, and finding equivalents to render it in the target text.

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<sup>139</sup> "A moitié victimes, à moitié complices, comme tout le monde." J.P. Sartre, epigraph before Volume 2 of *Le Deuxième Sexe*

The translation of lexicology will now be analyzed, with a focus on critical terms for gender and philosophy, as their adequate rendering is central to the reception of *The Second Sex*.

### 3. The treatment of lexicology in *The Second Sex*

#### 3.1. The translation of *femme* in the latest *The Second Sex*

##### 3.1.1. *Devenir femme*: a brief note on state verbs

French state verbs such as *naître* or *devenir* do not require any article when used with a noun, as in the phrases *naître roi* (*to be born a king*), and *devenir juge* (*to become a judge*). In English, however, the article ‘a’ is imperative, except in the plural form (e.g. *they became judges*), and the rule is thus to ensure that the verb *to become* is followed by a noun with an article, or by an adjective. That grammatical difference is crucial for the translation of the French phrase *devenir femme*, whose literal English rendering, *to become woman*, has been used by Borde and Malovany-Chevallier.

A search in the British National Corpus for the phrase ‘to become woman’ reports no solution<sup>140</sup>, which tends to show that this expression is uncommon, so that Borde and Malovany-Chevallier’s translation might seem odd to readers. That same conclusion is true for other state verbs, so that the *BNC* informs us that \*to feel woman, \*to be woman, or \*to stay woman are extremely rare<sup>141</sup>.

##### 3.1.2. The example of ‘on ne naît pas femme, on le devient’

If we look at what is probably the most quoted sentence in *Le Deuxième Sexe* (and de Beauvoir’s most influential statement), ‘on ne naît pas femme: on le devient’ (*Le Deuxième Sexe* II: 13), the latest English translation might seem peculiar: ‘one is not born, but rather becomes, woman’ (Translators’ Note), which slightly deviates from the previous translation choice made by H.M. Parshley, ‘one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman’. We notice the removal of the article *a* in the new translation, a change which is not unproblematic, as the following section will aim to show. To begin with, taking into account the divergence of

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<sup>140</sup> Search results available at: <http://bnc.bl.uk/saraWeb.php?qy=to+become+woman&mysubmit=Go>

<sup>141</sup> The *BNC* gives the only example: “It’s supposed to be woman phoning from”  
(<http://bnc.bl.uk/saraWeb.php?qy=to+be+woman&mysubmit=Go>)

grammatical rules in French and English is necessary, but has not been considered by the translators because in French, *devenir femme* does not require an article, whereas, as was explained above, a literal translation *to become woman* is not used in English. However, and despite grammar being a convincing justification, it is not the only reason why the new translation jars de Beauvoir's sentence: according to Beauvoir specialist Toril Moi, the loss of the indeterminate article "makes Beauvoir sound as if she were committed to a theory of women's difference" (Moi 2010). The scholar explains that a girl becomes a woman among other women, as opposed to incarnate the 'eternal feminine', or some illusory essence of womanhood, and using *woman* without an article precisely refers to that essentialist notion which de Beauvoir aims to oppose, so that a seemingly minor shift can have an impact on the reception of de Beauvoir's theory.

And still, in their Translators' Note, Borde and Malovany-Chevallier show their understanding that *femme* can refer to the idea of femininity as constructed by society, but they state that such use is conveyed in English by the term *woman* without an article: "Woman" in English used alone without an article captures woman as an institution, a concept, femininity as determined and defined by society, culture, history'. (Translators' Note, loc.254)<sup>142</sup> However, and in light of the contrastive analysis shown above, I contend that such a shortcut is misleading because the use of *woman* as representing the socially-determined woman is not only a matter of articles' usage, but also of context, and its connotations are not evident to grasp. The concepts of *femme* as the 'eternal feminine', a social construct, or a biological being can be rendered by *the woman*, *woman*, *women*, depending on the context at hand, and the (possibly different) syntax structures required in the two languages. For instance, Borde and Malovany-Chevallier assert that the definition of *woman* as a social construct ('determined and defined by society, culture, history') and the essence of femininity ('an institution, a concept, femininity') are one and the same thing, which is not quite the case, although those concepts are entwined with each other, because for de Beauvoir, Woman as an essence is a myth, the pretext which dictates the actual social conditioning girls go through, so that the ideal of an 'eternal feminine' will determine the concrete norms and injunctions which girls, and then women, follow to abide by society's rules. It is true that *woman* used without an article (and also capitalized, according to the *OED*), can indicate women seen collectively, as well as in reference to the supposedly intrinsic qualities belonging to women, as shows Shakespeare's famous line: 'Frailtie, thy name

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<sup>142</sup> This confirms the importance of translation paratexts, as stressed in the analysis of the Translators' Note.

is Woman' (*OED*)<sup>143</sup>. However, Borde and Malovany-Chevallier seem to dismiss the fact that, in contemporary use, *woman* in that sense can be preceded by the article *the*: 'The woman in all mothers, a woman not reduced to the preservation and care of others, must be conceived if women are to assert their particularity.' (Elizabeth Grosz's *Sexual Subversions*, 1989, quoted in the *OED*), and, thus, translating *la femme*—as relating to the 'eternal feminine'— into English as *woman* overlooks linguistic usages and evolution. Moreover, when Borde and Malovany-Chevallier say that 'Beauvoir occasionally—but rarely—uses *femme* without an article to signify woman as determined by society [...]', and consequently quote 'on ne naît pas femme' to illustrate their point, they overlook the fact that de Beauvoir is merely using *femme* without an article in French because she follows a linguistic norm, namely the way French state verbs are used. The example of such a translation shows that an abusive foreignization is detrimental to rendering the core philosophy expressed by de Beauvoir. Therefore, the translation 'one [...] becomes woman' is not adequate because of the variations between French and English language norms, and due to the anti-essentialist message in de Beauvoir's original sentence. The new translation of that compelling statement sounds ungrammatical in English, because it does not follow the usual pattern implied by the verb *to become*, so it might puzzle the reader, whereas Parshley's version is pertinent and conveys a specific flow, which gives the same effect as the French original statement. In French, de Beauvoir resorts to the repetition of the pronoun 'on', thus giving a parallel aspect to her sentence, and by separating the two clauses with a comma, she lays emphasis on the second part of the sentence ('on le devient'). The same effect is rendered by Parshley's translation because of the added conjunction 'but' which stresses the opposition between being born and becoming. Moreover, putting 'a woman' at the end of the sentence enables the translator to highlight de Beauvoir's then innovative concept of femininity as a social construct.

Furthermore, that sentence is seen as a notorious feminist motto, and its fame is such that the very idea of changing it seems problematic. Certainly, *The Second Sex* has a founding position in the feminist canon, and the very sentence 'one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman' has itself generated influential ideas in Gender Studies, Judith Butler, for one, greatly develops her own argument from de Beauvoir's epochal statement. However, from a Translation Studies perspective, the need for retranslation implies a diversion from past translations, because re-readings and new interpretations involve new renderings, as was shown in Chapter

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<sup>143</sup> The latter example relates to the alleged idea according to which women are fickle and weak, with the implication that all women share specific character traits.

Two. However, Borde and Malovany-Chevallier's new version unnecessarily provides the reader with a rather ungrammatical and essentialist sentence. It seems even more puzzling that Borde and Malovany-Chevallier chose to divert from Parshley's translation when we consider their translation strategy for another sentence in *Le Deuxième Sexe*: 'A vrai dire, on ne naît pas génie: on le devient.' (*Le Deuxième Sexe* p.226-227) In this instance, we can notice the same syntax structure as 'on ne naît pas femme: on le devient', even the same punctuation, and, yet again, in French there is no need to add an article after the verb *naître*. Borde and Malovany-Chevallier's translation is perplexing because it respects English norms: 'If truth be told, one is not born, but becomes, a genius' (*The Second Sex*, loc. 3185, my emphasis), which makes us reflect upon about the translators' consistency in terms of their translation approach.

### 3.1.3. How to translate the plurality of meanings?

And, indeed, there are other instances which reveal some contradictions between what Borde and Malovany-Chevallier state in their Translators' Note, and the way they translated *la femme* in English. Here are three such examples which will be analyzed in view of understanding the translators' approach:

- a. 'A propos d'un ouvrage, d'ailleurs fort agaçant, intitulé *Modern Woman: a lost sex*, Dorothy Parker a écrit: "Je ne peux être juste pour les livres qui traitent de la femme en tant que femme".' (*LDS* I: 14, my emphasis)  
'Referring to a book —a very irritating one at that—*Modern Woman: a lost sex*, Dorothy Parker wrote: "I cannot be fair about books that treat women as women"' (*TSS* loc. 350, my emphasis)
- b. 'Nous venons de voir que dans la horde primitive, *le sort de la femme* est très dur. (*LDS* I: 118, my emphasis)  
'We have just seen that *women's fate* is very harsh in primitive hordes' (*TSS* loc 1668, my emphasis)
- c. 'Il est difficile [...] de démêler quelle était sa situation concrète; ce qui est sûr c'est qu'aujourd'hui les exigences de la repopulation ont amené une politique familiale différente: la famille apparaît comme la cellule sociale élémentaire et la femme est à la fois travailleuse et ménagère.' (*LDS* I: 221, my emphasis)

Here the author uses the possessive adjective *sa* to avoid repetitions, but she employs the phrase *la femme* in the sentence before. Let us see how it has been translated by Borde and Malovany-Chevallier:

[...] it is difficult to discern what *woman's* concrete situation really was; what is sure is that today the demands of repopulation have given rise to a different family policy: the family has become the elementary social cell, and woman is both worker and housekeeper.' (TSS, loc.3102, my emphasis)

The first two instances resort to a plural to signify *la femme*, the latter still being used to refer to different realities in French. In example *a*, de Beauvoir mentions women as a social concept, as an arbitrary denomination, so that we expect Borde and Malovany-Chevallier to translate it as *woman*, following their note, which makes it surprising to find *women*. They explain that *la femme* can be translated as *women*, depending on the context, but it is not clear to see why this particular context requires the plural, when we compare sentences *b* and *c*. In sentence *c*, 'woman's situation' refers to the actual condition faced by women, which means how women really live, in opposition to the feminine ideal, which, by definition, does not exist. In the extract, de Beauvoir depicts women's condition in Russia in the 1940s and is talking about real women who, in the case at hand, were granted more help in return for having children, and not to women as a concept, so here using *women* would be a more natural choice in English, both to respect the meaning expressed by de Beauvoir and due to grammar restrictions, as was done in sentence *b*, in which *women's fate* is a successful example of domestication.

### 3.2. The translation of virility

#### 3.2.1. Virilité's meanings in *Le Deuxième Sexe*

The major connotations virility has in *Le Deuxième Sexe* are threefold: men's situation in society, masculine qualities, and men's sexual potency. De Beauvoir uses the same word, *virilité*, to talk about these three concepts, as the co-text of each occurrence reveals to us. For example, when the English translation reads as follows: "but simply because aggressiveness and the taste for possession are looked on as virile attributes" (p.431), *virile* could be replaced with 'masculine', in order to show that those attributes pertain to men. If we consider that *virile* and 'masculine' are equivalent, we could then leave the adjective chosen by the translators (namely *virile*) instead of altering it to 'masculine'. However, I contend that there would be an

alteration in meaning, as *virility* in English does not hold the same connotations as the French *virilité*, all the less so as there have been diachronic changes between the noun *virilité* used by de Beauvoir, and its current use in the French language. If the translators “didn’t want to modernize the language [de] Beauvoir used and had access to in 1949” (Translators’ Note), they still had to take into account the disparity between English and French, and the evolution of words, except if some footnotes or other indications could signal those linguistic and cultural differences to the contemporary reader.

Another usage of *virilité* in *Le Deuxième Sexe* deals with men’s privileged situation in society, which means their position of power and their concrete advantages in the world. The following example will illustrate that definition of *virilité*:

“Les femmes ne se posant pas comme Sujet n’ont pas créé le *mythe viril* dans lequel se refléteraient leurs projets; elles n’ont ni religion ni poésie qui leur appartiennent en propre: c’est encore à travers les rêves des hommes qu’elles rêvent.” (*Le Deuxième Sexe*, I: 243, my emphasis)

“Not positing themselves as Subject, women have not created the *virile myth* that would reflect their projects; they have neither religion nor poetry that belongs to them alone: they still dream through men’s dreams.” (*The Second Sex*, p.162, my emphasis)

This shows how the myth of virility has concrete outcomes because culture (as for instance religion and the arts) has been shaped by men, which helps silence women and lessen their power in society (*Le Deuxième Sexe*, I:244). Regarding the context needed to understand *virilité*, we can remind ourselves of the date when the book was published (1949), at a time when the French noun *virilité* (as de Beauvoir uses it) had different connotations to what it refers to in present-time French. France had just been liberated from the German occupation and felt victorious after the humiliation and hardships of the war. Virility was not ridiculed or depreciated, but, on the contrary, glorified. This is especially important as de Beauvoir’s book questions virility and its myths, just as it also demystifies femininity. The author wants her readers to understand how their society urges them to embody the notions of masculinity and femininity and how this demand weighs on both men and women, although women’s lot is even more alienating. Let us see how *Le Deuxième Sexe* portrays virility as a social creation which gives men privileges.



Expressions about virility collocate with the notion of men's privilege in society, they refer to being a man socially and what it entails:

“et c'est alors en tant qu'il incarne tous les *privilèges* de la virilité qu'elle souhaite s'approprier l'organe mâle.” (*Le Deuxième Sexe* II: 634, my emphasis)

“and it is only to the extent that the penis embodies all the *privileges* of virility that she wishes to appropriate the male organ for herself.” (*The Second Sex*, 2009: 769, my emphasis)

The quotation above shows that women do not literally want to have male genitalia, but that they envy the role men play in society and the benefits granted to them. By being male, men have a special and privileged status in society, both in the abstract and in terms of concrete power. The world is theirs and they are aware of this state of affairs, as de Beauvoir quotes from Poulain de la Barre:

“Il estime que les hommes étant les plus forts ont partout favorisé leur sexe et que les femmes acceptent par coutume cette dépendance.” (*Le Deuxième Sexe* I: 186)

“He thinks that since men are stronger, they favor their sex and women accept this dependence out of custom.” (*The Second Sex*, 2009: 123)

Men's privileges in society count as one definition of virility, and that is an overwhelming one in *Le Deuxième Sexe*. It is, however, difficult to differentiate references about the advantages of men in society and what belongs to masculinity, because those two concepts are quite enmeshed, as is the case in the following quotation:

“Elle est mise dans l'alternative ou bien de maintenir son autonomie, de se *viriliser*—ce qui sur le fond d'un complexe d'infériorité provoque une tension qui risque d'entraîner des névroses; ou bien de trouver dans la soumission amoureuse un heureux accomplissement d'elle-même, solution qui lui est facilitée par l'amour qu'elle portait au père souverain.” (*Le Deuxième Sexe*, I: 87, my emphasis)

“she [...] is faced with the alternative of either maintaining her autonomy, *becoming virilized*—which, with an underlying inferiority complex, provokes a tension that risks bringing on neuroses— or else finding happy self-fulfillment in amorous submission, a solution facilitated by the love she felt for her sovereign father.” (*The Second Sex*, p.54, my emphasis)

In that excerpt, ‘becoming virilized’ relates to acting like a man, as in staying autonomous and independent. Autonomy is here both a masculine trait, and a manifestation of the privileges enjoyed by men in society at the same time. Interestingly, de Beauvoir uses the French ‘se viriliser’ (de Beauvoir, 1976:87), a reflexive verb implying the resolute act of behaving like men, whereas the English translation suggests more passivity: becoming virilized, like becoming old, does not necessarily require that one takes an active part in the process. De Beauvoir’s use of ‘se viriliser’ is in accordance with the philosophy of Existentialism she defends throughout her book: namely a philosophy in which human beings are in charge of their life and need to act, as opposed to being compliant. Translating ‘se viriliser’ is thus here not only a matter of linguistic accuracy, but about conveying de Beauvoir’s philosophical argument. Perhaps a possible way of translating this into English would have been to use the phrase ‘making herself masculine’, or to ‘masculinize herself’, the very expression used by Borde and Malovany-Chevallier on the previous page:

“Ou bien elle cherche à *se masculiniser*, ou bien avec des armes féminines elle engage la lutte contre l’homme.” (*LDS I*: 86, my emphasis)

“She either tries to *masculinize herself* or uses her feminine wiles to go into battle against man.” (*TSS loc.1282*, my emphasis)

Here de Beauvoir used the expression ‘se masculiniser’ which, according to the context of both occurrences, tells us that she finds both ‘se masculiniser’ and ‘se viriliser’ to be synonyms (in contrast to the English language, in which the differences between ‘masculine’ and ‘virile’ are more marked). Nonetheless, it is interesting to note that, in that case, the translators chose to use an English phrase, which imparts the sense of action present in de Beauvoir’s philosophy, and in her use of a French reflexive verb. Namely, Borde and Malovany-Chevallier write to ‘masculinize herself’, and we can thus question why they next render ‘se viriliser’ as ‘becoming

virilized'? The subtle difference between those two renderings illustrates a shift in meaning, and in terms of philosophical implications, as was explained above.

Due to the mingling of what relates to men and men's social privilege, we will consider that talking about the masculine is assuming the correlate advantages men have in society. Let us now analyze the use of *virile* for 'masculine', which means 'having a character befitting or regarded as appropriate to the male sex' (*OED*).

### 3.2.2. *Virile and masculine*

The adjective *virile* can have for synonyms 'manly' or 'masculine', and this usage is the most common one in the latest translation of *The Second Sex*. In the following sentence, both *virile* and 'masculine' are used to avoid repeating the same adjective twice:

"some women manifest virile characteristics: too many secretions from the adrenal glands give them masculine characteristics." (*The Second Sex*, 2009: 39)<sup>144</sup>

One can note from the above quotation that *virile* and 'masculine' are interchangeable in that context. It quite simply refers to what belongs to men, but it does not imply some mythical strength or sexual power, so that using *virile* in contemporary English seems odd. The adjective acquired connotations almost akin to machismo and its use can only startle the readers. It is telling that most examples used in the *OED* are not contemporary (the most recent being 1893), except to refer to 'the virile member'. According to the Cambridge Dictionary<sup>145</sup>, *virile* is specifically associated with sexual strength and energy, and the 'ability for copulation' is also stressed by Merriam-Webster<sup>146</sup>. That connotation consequently means that using *virile* to describe a woman is at best odd, and can even be perceived as demeaning.

Let us for example consider the expression "the virile brunette" (*The Second Sex*, 2009: 347). There is something almost comical in that expression and it is not what de Beauvoir meant to convey. The author wrote :

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<sup>144</sup> "Certaines femmes présentent des signes de virilisme: un excès de sécrétions élaborées par les glandes surrénales leur donne des caractères masculins." (*LDS I*: 66)

<sup>145</sup> available at: [http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/virile\\_1](http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/virile_1)

<sup>146</sup> available at: <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/virile>

“c’est l’héroïne blonde et sotte qui l’emporte sur *la brune au caractère viril*” (de Beauvoir, II: 98, my emphasis)

Here de Beauvoir considers characters in novels and compares the stereotype of the passive and dull blonde with the fierce and active dark-haired girl. In the original French, the author even uses the noun ‘caractère’, which can both refer to someone’s temper and a feature in somebody. The philosopher clearly alludes to a woman who acts like a man, who displays masculine characteristics in her behaviour, but using *virile* implies that the woman in question is aggressive and the whole expression ‘virile brunette’ appears derogatory and odd. The use of that adjective is indeed excessive, as it pertains too much to specific male characteristics (in particular sexual vigour), which do not need to be applied to women, and all the less in the above context. If the heroine described by de Beauvoir is in any way ‘masculine’, it regards her behaviour and acts, her independence, or her courage, but not her appearance or her sexuality. The association of *virile* with ‘brunette’ is all the more baffling as ‘brunette’ also imparts its own connotations, for example the way it is often said in an affectionate tone, or the collocation of attraction and allure. Hence the impression left on the reader is startling, and striking, whereas de Beauvoir’s sentence sounds natural in the French text, and conveys a crucial example supporting her thesis.

### 3.2.3. Virility and sexual potency

As was stated earlier, a peculiar definition of ‘virility’ is also linked to the notion of being sexually potent, with the ‘capacity for sexual intercourse’ (*OED*). Being *virile* can thus be associated with being able physically to have intercourse, but also, subsequently, with procreation. Although women have an obvious part in the latter, virility points to the fact that men are active and strong in that generative process, and that sexual power is a metaphor for the concrete power men hold in society, something denounced by de Beauvoir, who does not think that biological facts should have values (*LDS I: 78*). Not only does de Beauvoir show the correspondence between sexual vigour and social power, she also often describes biological facts. For example, she explains at length the physical differences between men and women, their difference in genitalia, and the passive and active roles each plays in sexual intercourse:

“[...] mais le rut a chez la femelle un caractère passif; elle est prête à recevoir le mâle, elle l’attend.” (*LDS I: 59*)

“[...] but heat in the female is rather passive; she is ready to receive the male, she waits for him.” (*The Second Sex*, 2009: 35)

Let us briefly comment on the above quotation, because de Beauvoir’s use of the French word ‘rut’ brings about an interesting translation issue. Indeed, the author chooses a French term which is not usually used for females, and which refers to animals<sup>147</sup>. Therefore, I contend that de Beauvoir deliberately opts for a term which is strong and might startle her readers, thus getting their attention. In contrast, the English rendering offers an inane translation, because of two main problems: first, the vocabulary is too neutral in English, and secondly, the syntax is problematic. The most adequate English equivalent for the French ‘rut’ would be ‘rut’, ‘rutting’ or ‘mating’, which all carry a connotation of bestiality. If the translators wanted to avoid such terms, then they could have chosen the phrase ‘in heat’<sup>148</sup>, which describes a state, as is the case in French, as opposed to the translators’ rendering: ‘heat in the female’. The English sentence closely follows the French one, and we can notice that the word order is the same:

mais	le	rut	chez	la	femelle
but	heat	in	the	female	

which falls flat because it does not convey the subversive aspect de Beauvoir’s sentence carries.

In *Le Deuxième Sexe*, de Beauvoir also quotes other philosophers on sexual differences, when for instance saying that “Hegel thought the two sexes must be different: one is active and the other passive [...]” (*The Second Sex*, 2009: 25)<sup>149</sup>. And she describes some fundamental biological differences, such as the difference between men and women urinating: “This is the most striking sexual difference for the little girl. To urinate she has to squat down, remove some clothes, and above all hide, a shameful and uncomfortable servitude.” (*The Second Sex*, 2009: 288)<sup>150</sup>

When the author refers to virility in the sense of men’s sexual vigour, it is not something which can be applied to women: the latter can have characteristics which are described as ‘masculine’

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<sup>147</sup> entry in the *CNRTL*, available at: <http://cnrtl.fr/definition/rut>

<sup>148</sup> as described in the *OED*, available at:

<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/85144?rskey=FGxRNx&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid>

<sup>149</sup> “Hegel estime que les deux sexes doivent être différents: l’un sera actif, l’autre passif [...]” (*LDS I*: 44)

<sup>150</sup> “Cette différence est pour la fillette la différenciation sexuelle la plus frappante. Pour uriner, elle doit s’accroupir, se dénuder et partant se cacher: c’est une servitude honteuse et inconfortable.” (*LDS II*: 21)

(as for instance strength, domination, vitality, etc.), but describing their sexuality as *virile* would be confounding and antinomic, as is the following example:

“[...] mais vers l’âge de cinq ans, elle découvre la différence anatomique des sexes et elle réagit à l’absence de pénis par un complexe de castration: elle s’imagine avoir été mutilée et en souffre; elle doit alors renoncer à ses *prétentions viriles* [...]” (*Le Deuxième Sexe* I: 83, my emphasis)

“[...] but around the age of five, she discovers the anatomical difference between the sexes, and she reacts to the absence of a penis by a castration complex: she imagines having been mutilated, and suffers from it; she must therefore renounce *her virile pretensions* [...]” (*The Second Sex*, 2009: 51, my emphasis)

Although there is a direct reference to the penis, which would suggest that using ‘virile’ is acceptable in English, de Beauvoir is here reporting Freud’s theory, which she will, however, critique, notably on the notion that girls feel mutilated without a penis. De Beauvoir stresses the importance of the penis as symbolical, not biological, and she is, therefore, sceptical regarding Freud’s views (*Le Deuxième Sexe* I: 84). Thus, I contend that using ‘virile’ is inadequate because this adjective is not suitable to describe women.

Moreover, there is an instance when the two translators change the French ‘virile’ for the English ‘masculine’, which is puzzling for it is not in line with their translation strategy throughout *The Second Sex*, and because it reinforces their inappropriate occurrences of *virile*:

‘Elle réagit par une “*protestation virile*”, ou bien elle cherche à se masculiniser, ou bien avec des armes féminines elle engage la lutte contre l’homme.’ (LDS I: 86, my emphasis)

‘She reacts by a “*masculine protest*”, she either tries to masculinize herself or uses her feminine wiles to go into battle against man.’ (TSS loc.1282, my emphasis)

The above shift between ‘virile’ and ‘masculine’ is perplexing: that example is a good instance of domestication, namely Borde and Malovany-Chevallier chose an adjective which can be said to be the equivalent of the French source text term in the context, so as to make their English

translation comply with the lexical norms of the target text. Nonetheless, their use of *masculine* and *virile* is inconsistent, which has repercussions for the rendering of de Beauvoir's philosophy, as we saw above.

### 3.3. The translation of authenticity

#### 3.3.1. Differentiating common and philosophical usages

The main issue with *authenticité* is that it refers to different concepts, and that polysemy has to be taken into account: it often relates to the field of law, for instance the veracity of an object, the reliability of an official document, or the legitimacy of an authorship.<sup>151</sup> It also refers to someone's genuine values and feelings, and to truth, according to the French *Larousse's* definition: 'sincérité des sentiments, vérité d'un témoignage'<sup>152</sup> (*sincerity of feelings, truth of a testimony*). Those latter aspects are linked to the usage de Beauvoir makes of *authenticité* in *Le Deuxième Sexe*, but she often grants it a philosophical meaning, as seen in Chapter One. The English equivalent, *authenticity*, shares the same connotations as its French correspondent, as its synonyms are *genuineness* or *veracity* (*OED*), however, it is interesting to note that a direct reference is made to its philosophical, and especially Existentialist, meaning:

A mode of existence arising from self-awareness, critical reflection on one's goals and values, and responsibility for one's own actions; the condition of being true to oneself.

1953 H. M. PARSHLEY tr. S. de Beauvoir *Second Sex* 675 Want of authenticity does not pay: each blames the other for the unhappiness he or she has incurred in yielding to the temptations of the easy way. (*OED*)<sup>153</sup>

As can be seen from the above quotation, *The Second Sex* is even cited in the *OED*, acknowledging *authenticity* as a core philosophical concept in Existentialism, and when translated as such, the English *authenticity*, and its cognates *authentic*, or *authentically*, are chosen instead of such synonyms as *genuine* or *true*, which do not carry the same philosophical

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<sup>151</sup> The CNRTL states that *authenticité* can be the 'certitude attachée à l'auteur d'un texte, d'une œuvre' (*certainty about the author of a text, a work*), or the 'certitude attachée au lieu, à l'époque, à la fabrication de quelque chose' (*certainty about a place, a time, the making of something*), available at: <http://www.cnrtl.fr/definition/authenticit%C3%A9>

<sup>152</sup> *Larousse*, available at:

<http://www.larousse.fr/dictionnaires/francais/authenticit%C3%A9/6558?q=authenticit%C3%A9#6535>

<sup>153</sup> Available at: <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/13325?redirectedFrom=authenticity#eid>

implications. Therefore, how can the translators know whether *authenticité* conveys a philosophical connotation, or not, when they translate *Le Deuxième Sexe*? The context of specific passages, as well as a broad knowledge of de Beauvoir's philosophy, is key, but I also contend that some hints can be found through terms collocating with *authenticité*.

### 3.3.2. Collocations<sup>154</sup> and philosophical terminology

Philosophical usages are frequently made explicit because de Beauvoir links them to freedom and moral, for authenticity deals with avoiding bad faith, therefore, we can expect to find terms relating to liberty and myths around occurrences of authenticity in *Le Deuxième Sexe*.<sup>155</sup> After listing the most common phrases collocating with authenticity, it appears that they were mostly about freedom, truth and engagement, or about myths, escape, and bad faith. The most common term is indeed *liberté* (freedom), but the idea of myths is also present with terms such as *illusion*, *imposture*, *mirage*, *mystification* or *cliché*. De Beauvoir, while developing and presenting her thesis, thus creates collocations around the concept of *authenticité*, and using those collocations reinforces the message she aims to convey: she repeats her argument in order to convince her readers, and by linking authenticity to its correlate (truth, freedom) or its opposite (bad faith, myths), the author helps us to understand what is implied by authenticity, thus making that philosophical concept more accessible. The collocations mentioned above should be clues helping Borde and Malovany-Chevallier in their rendering of *authenticité*, because the philosophical implication of *authenticité* is reinforced by the presence of those collocating terms, thus making the philosophical occurrences more noticeable, and I will now show how Borde and Malovany-Chevallier translated *authenticité* in *The Second Sex*.

### 3.3.3. Translating specialised philosophical phrases

We showed before that when *authenticité* carries a philosophical meaning, there seems to be an established equivalent to render it in English, *authenticity*, as shows the translations of major Existentialist pieces of work —such Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*— in which the terms 'authenticity', 'authentic', 'authentically', and their correlate 'inauthenticity', 'inauthentic' and 'inauthentically', are set phrases.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> or 'the tendency of words to co-occur regularly', according to Nigel Armstrong's definition (Armstrong 2005: 97).

<sup>155</sup> "[...]il préfère une illusion d'autonomie à l'authentique liberté qui s'engage dans le monde." (de Beauvoir p.324)

<sup>156</sup> "At this moment I reveal myself to myself in authenticity, and I raise others along with myself toward the authentic." (Sartre 2012: 246)



Therefore, it can be expected that Borde and Malovany-Chevallier will use the above listed terms in their translation, and indeed it seems that the translators opted for formal correspondence (Catford 1965), that is, they used a linguistic unit in the target language (*authentic*) which has the same linguistic purpose as the unit in the source language (*authentique*). Moreover, Borde and Malovany-Chevallier were particularly keen to reclaim de Beauvoir as a philosopher, because the first translation has been highly criticised for undermining the philosophy developed within *Le Deuxième Sexe* (Simons 1983, Moi 2002). The translators have thus been especially careful to stay consistent in their use of ‘authentic’, so that every time de Beauvoir uses ‘authentique’, they translate the adjective as ‘authentic’, and the same can be said of ‘authentiquement’/ ‘authentically’, ‘authenticité’/ ‘authenticity’, ‘inauthentique’/ ‘inauthentic’, ‘inauthentiquement’/ ‘inauthentically’ and ‘inauthenticité’/ ‘inauthenticity’. It can be said that using the word *authentic* (and its cognates) flags philosophical occurrences in *The Second Sex*, effectively helping the readers to identify the philosophical references de Beauvoir is putting forward. However, opting for foreignized words (i.e. the English *authentic* instead of *genuine*, thus staying close to the French *authentique*) can also at times lead to “excessive” literalism and mistranslation, as will now be seen through examples from *The Second Sex*.

### 3.3.4. The issues brought about by foreignization and “excessive” literalism

#### 3.3.4.1. Issues resulting from a foreignized syntax

Keeping close to the French syntax can be confusing (and misleading) when translating adverbs, because French and English do not place adverbs in the same position as regards the verb they modify. There are issues with the adverb *authentically* which is sometimes not placed near its verb, giving another meaning to the whole sentence:

‘Car elle ne **choisit** pas [...] de refuser authentiquement son destin.’ (*Le Deuxième Sexe* II: 123; my emphasis)

‘Because, [...] she does not choose authentically to **reject** her destiny.’ (*The Second Sex* loc.7507; my emphasis)

In the above quotation, de Beauvoir is stating that a girl’s rejection of her fate is done in bad

faith, and the author insists on the act of refusal, rather than the girl's choice, contrary to Borde and Malovany-Chevallier's rendering.

Another instance of the unfortunate positioning of adverbs can be seen in the following sentence:

'De toute façon, adultère, amitiés, vie mondaine ne constituent dans la vie conjugale que des divertissements; ils peuvent aider à en supporter les contraintes mais ne les brisent pas. Ce ne sont là que de fausses évasions qui ne **permettent** aucunement à la femme de reprendre authentiquement en mainsa destinée.' (LDS II: 423; my emphasis)

'In any case, adultery, friendships, and social life are but diversions within married life; they can help its constraints to be endured, but they do not break them. They are only artificial escapes that in no way authentically allow the woman to **take** her destiny into her own hands.' (Borde and Malovany-Chevallier loc.12110; my emphasis)

Here the adverb 'authentically' in the translation modifies the verb 'to allow', whereas in French it goes with the verb 'to take back' ('reprendre'), implying that women have no means to reclaim their fate in good faith. It is not the ability to do so which is authentic, but them actually taking back their destiny.

#### 3.3.4.2. Choice of foreign words and difference in connotations

Another recurring problem is that Borde and Malovany-Chevallier's foreignization strategy often implies using terms which seem similar to the French ones, even though the connotations between French and English words differ. In such cases, the readers risk to be confused and to find it difficult to decipher the text, which is overall detrimental to the reception of de Beauvoir. It is the case with *authenticité*, as the following example shows:

"If, however, both assumed it with *lucid modesty*, as the correlate of authentic pride, they would recognize each other as peers and live the erotic drama in harmony." (Borde and Malovany-Chevallier p.779; my emphasis)

The phrase 'lucid modesty' is a calque of the French 'lucide modestie', but it distorts de Beauvoir's sentence. Indeed, the author wants to make us understand that ambiguity is inherent

to human life, and that it is thus better to accept it plainly, instead of escaping in bad faith. However, if the French ‘*lucide modestie*’ does not startle her French-speaking readership, the English expression ‘*lucid modesty*’ is peculiar and does not sound natural. ‘*Lucide*’ in the French original would be more naturally rendered in English as ‘*realistic*’ in the context at hand. The lack of clarity of that sentence, paired with the unnatural association of *lucid* and *modesty*, makes the reader think that de Beauvoir is confusing (or herself confused) in her argumentation.

### 3.3.4.3. *Overtranslation*<sup>157</sup>: translating “ordinary”<sup>158</sup> words as philosophical terms

Although it is relevant to use set phrases consistently to render specific philosophical concepts, automatically rendering the French *authentique* as *authentic* can lead to finding philosophical occurrences where there is none, which is as faulty as not recognising them. There are two cases in the investigated corpus where *authentic* is used in English when it does not appear in the French original, which would be harmless if the philosophical implication attached to *authentic* was not so crucial to de Beauvoir’s argument. As Toril Moi claimed in her review, “Parshley mistook philosophical terms for ordinary words: Borde and Malovany-Chevallier treat ordinary words as if they were philosophical terms.”<sup>159</sup> And I have indeed noticed an instance where the French adjective ‘*véritables*’, which means ‘true’, is translated as ‘*authentic*’:

“quiconque a de *véritables* projets connaît une finitude qui est le gage de son pouvoir concret.” (De Beauvoir 1949, my emphasis)

The English translation goes “whoever has *authentic* projects knows a finitude that is the gauge of one’s concrete power.” (Borde and Malovany-Chevallier 2010, my emphasis)

The same shift appears in the example below:

“[...] son coeur bat, elle connaît la douleur de l’absence, les affres de la présence, le dépit, l’espoir, la rancune, l’enthousiasme, mais à *blanc*.” (LDS 113; my emphasis)

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<sup>157</sup>as defined in Vinay’ and Darbelnet’s *Comparative Stylistics of French and English* (1995:16)

<sup>158</sup> for a discussion of the difference between everyday and specialised words, see Chapter Three on the translation of philosophy.

<sup>159</sup> Moi, Toril. “The Adulteress Wife”. *London Review of Books* 32, 4 (February 11, 2010): 3-6

“[...] her heart beats, she feels the pain of absence, the pangs of presence, vexation, hope, bitterness, enthusiasm, but *not authentically*.” (TSS 360; my emphasis)

The French expression ‘à blanc’ here means ‘without consequences’, and it does not seem as if de Beauvoir wanted to give a philosophical turn to the point she was making, because the context indicates that *authentically* is too strong a term, but also, because de Beauvoir uses her philosophical vocabulary with precision in *Le Deuxième Sexe*, so she would have opted for *authentically* herself. Therefore, we can question why the translators decided to render ‘à blanc’ as ‘not authentically’, instead perhaps of something more neutral, such as ‘without consequences’ or ‘with no effect’.

To some extent, seeing philosophical occurrences which do not occur in the French text can be seen as the type of strategy that would be explained with reference to skopos theory (Reiss and Vermeer 1984), if we contend that there was a concerted goal to rehabilitate de Beauvoir as a philosopher. In skopos theory, the target text is prioritised, according to what the initiator of the translation wants to convey. In the case of *The Second Sex*, and in response to the criticisms about how invisible de Beauvoir’s philosophy was in the first English translation, restoring philosophical references might have been stressed. I already mentioned that Borde and Malovany-Chevallier wanted to insist on de Beauvoir as a philosopher:

“much work has been done on reclaiming, valorizing, and expanding upon her role as philosopher since the 1953 publication [...]”

“one of the most serious absences in the first translation was Simone de Beauvoir the philosopher.”<sup>160</sup>

Although this aim is laudable, the above examples can be seen as misconstruing de Beauvoir’s text, and, furthermore, the translators have added something to the source text (they added a philosophical bearing where there was none), which goes beyond the degree of translator’s freedom that even the Interpretive Theory of Translation, with its emphasis on translatorial creation, would reject. According to Marianne Lederer, who draws on Jean Delisle’s definition of a free translation, “interpretive translation is not what is commonly called a ‘free’ translation,

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<sup>160</sup>*The Second Sex*. 2010. Translators’ Note

characterised by ‘a large number of omissions and additions and by an extensive restructuring of ideas’” (Lederer 2014: 229), so the ITT expressly states that adding something to the source text is problematic and should be avoided.

Therefore, what can be drawn from my analysis, regarding the translation of feminist philosophy? It seems that an automatic formal correspondence can be detrimental to rendering philosophy, and that foreignization, the strategy advocated by Lawrence Venuti, imparts awkward phrasing to the translation, even leading to mistranslation (as was seen with *Lucid modesty*). As a result, I contend that domestication and the focus on a translation respecting the norms of the target language, as promoted by the ITT, should be preferred for ease of understanding, and to make the target text clearer to follow (in my examples, I showed that a target language syntax which respects too much that of the original can produce mistranslation).

The next example to be analyzed —on the translation of *immanence* into English— will show that using equivalents is, nonetheless, possible and even compulsory in some cases, which does not, however, necessarily imply resorting to foreignization.

### 3.3.5. The translation of immanence in *The Second Sex*

Let us analyze some examples from Borde and Malovany-Chevallier’s translation, such as the following quotation, in which de Beauvoir explains that women yearn for transcendence and, therefore, rebel against the constraints of their situation (for instance their restrictive clothes, or being chained to the home):

‘Le même mouvement qui, dans les hordes primitives, soumet la femme à la suprématie masculine, se traduit en chaque nouvelle initiée par un refus de son sort: en elle, la transcendance condamne l’absurdité de l’*immanence*.’ (*LDS* II: 49; my emphasis)

‘The same movement that in primitive hordes subjects woman to male supremacy is manifested in each new “arrival” by a refusal of her lot: in her, transcendence condemns the absurdity of *immanence*.’ (*TSS* loc.6316; my emphasis)

Regarding the translation of the French noun *immanence*, Borde and Malovany-Chevallier rendered it by the English equivalent *immanence*, thus departing from the French syntax by not using a definite article before *immanence* (nor before *transcendence* either), because they are general concepts<sup>161</sup>. The above quotation is a fruitful combination of foreignization as a literal linguistic approach (because it uses a specialised term close to the French original: *immanence*), and of domestication (because it discards French linguistic norms in terms of articles, and conforms with English grammatical standards).

However, the extract also helps unpack other issues, especially in relation to the first clause, whose literalism is perplexing and can hinder the reader's experience of the text. Indeed, the syntax closely follows the French original, which shows that the chosen translation approach is a *calque*, borrowing Vinay' and Darbelnet's glossary (Vinay and Darbelnet 1995: 32). The result comes across as tedious and unnatural for the reader. Moreover, the translation of the French noun *initiée* is particularly puzzling because Borde and Malovany-Chevallier use the English noun *arrival* to render it, and even add inverted commas around it, implying that they are at a loss for a better phrase. However, *arrival* does not connote the same as in French<sup>162</sup>, so the reader is left questioning what de Beauvoir is suggesting. In French, however, de Beauvoir clearly explains that manhood and womanhood are akin to castes, explaining that girls remain among themselves, distancing themselves from boys ('elles font bande à part', *LDS* II:49), but that they actually would like to belong to the privileged group, that of men ('Elle voudrait appartenir à la caste privilégiée', *LDS* *ibid.*). Members of those two castes become true insiders, notably through their education, and using *arrival* to render *initié(e)* is incoherent and confusing, while also distorting de Beauvoir's smooth prose.

Other examples reinforce this feeling of heavy-handedness in the translation, such as in the following quotation:

"L'aquarelle, la musique, la lecture ont tout juste le même rôle; la femme désœuvrée n'essaie pas en s'y adonnant d'élargir sa prise sur le monde, mais seulement de se

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<sup>161</sup> The analysis of that same rule was seen earlier with the translation of *femme*.

<sup>162</sup> As shows its definition in the *OED*, available at:

<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/11044?redirectedFrom=arrival#eid>

désennuyer; *une activité qui n'ouvre pas l'avenir retombe dans la vanité de l'immanence.*" (LDS II: 471; my emphasis)

which has been translated into English as follows:

"Water-colors, music, or reading have the very same role; the unoccupied woman does not try to extend her grasp on the world in giving herself over to such activities, but only to relieve boredom; *an activity that does not open up the future slides into the vanity of immanence.*" (TSS loc. 12823; my emphasis)

Here de Beauvoir explains that some women aim to overcome boredom through activities such as crochet-work, but it merely prevents them from being bored, while not actually enabling them to reach transcendence. The extract I emphasized in the above English translation is extremely literal, and follows the French structure from beginning to end, which makes it more foreignized. On the contrary, the beginning of the English sentence complies with English linguistic standards by, for instance, placing 'to extend her grasp on the world' before 'in giving herself over', which is the opposite of the French syntax. Moreover, the French pronoun 'y' has been replaced by a noun phrase in English ('such activities'), because such a shift is imperative to produce a grammatically accurate target-language translation. The above example further illustrates a blend of foreignization and domestication, and I contend, from its analysis, that resorting to domestication makes de Beauvoir's text more accessible, whereas foreignising it adds to the difficulty of such a philosophical passage. There are indeed two levels of foreignization: from a translation point of view, but also a possible lack of familiarity with the philosophical language.

Another example of literal syntax can be found in the following quotation, with the same sense of shakiness in English:

'Dans la "galanterie" proprement dite, aucun chemin ne s'ouvre à la transcendance. Ici encore l'ennui accompagne le confinement de la femme dans l'immanence.' (LDS II: 447-48)

'In "amorous adventures", properly speaking, no road opens onto transcendence. Here again, ennui accompanies the confinement of woman in immanence.' (TSS loc.12475)

Using the English word *ennui* brings about some comments on the (non)equivalence between source language and target language terms. Indeed, *ennui* stems from the French and has long been naturalized in English<sup>163</sup>, yet using it instead of a synonym such as *boredom* is not innocent, because using Gallicisms such as *ennui* can be seen as elitist and pompous (Renouf 2004: 528). Therefore, although Borde and Malovany-Chevallier claim that ‘the job of the translator is [...] to find the true voice of the original work, as it was written for its time and with its original intent’ (Translators’ Note, my emphasis), they are instead inadvertently aging the original. Indeed, when they use *ennui* so as to keep close to de Beauvoir’s text, they seem to overlook the fact that the two words do not share the same undertones in French and English: *ennui* is a generic and neutral term in French, whereas, as was seen above, it can have a different connotation in English, so that not wanting to ‘modernize the language Beauvoir used’ (ibid.) can actually give the impression to younger readers that they are reading an archaic book, or that the author is extremely haughty. The same can be said of the verb *accompany* and the noun *confinement*, which are again very literal (the French being *accompagner* and *confinement*) possibly resulting in aging the text, which is even more puzzling when we notice that the French *galanterie* is, however, made explicit and rendered by *amorous adventures*, and not the closer English term *gallantry*. The latter refers to “amorous intercourse or intrigue”, according to the *OED*<sup>164</sup>, and could thus be used in the above translation, in order to respect the translators’ wish to stay close to de Beauvoir’s expression. Besides the issue of choosing vocabulary to best translate the French source text, the syntax has also to be taken into account, and the above quotation shows a very literal rendering and the clause ‘*ennui accompanies the confinement of woman in immanence*’ reproduces the French sentence, making the translation somewhat heavy. In that example, the translation of *immanence* is not itself faulty, but the overall rendering is not clear for the readers, due to the sentence’s literalism in terms of terminology and syntax, which thus obscures its philosophical significance.

Finally, a further note can be made about the translation of philosophical terms. As mentioned in Chapter Three when discussing the translation of philosophy, the French adverb *actuellement* is a false friend and can be difficult to translate, and, while collecting data on immanence, the following example arose:

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<sup>163</sup> according to the *OED*, available at:

<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/62506?rskey=9y9vkz&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid>

<sup>164</sup> available at: <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/76249#eid3405007>



[...] la réciprocité du rapport maître-esclave existait *actuellement* pour elle [...] (LDSI 133)

[...] the reciprocity of the master-slave relationship existed *in the present* for her [...](TSS 86)

Borde and Malovany-Chevallier cautiously translated 'actuellement' by 'in the present' because the French adverb often means 'currently', but in that particular instance, the philosophical meaning of 'actuellement' (as used by de Beauvoir here) is close to the English 'actually' and means 'in acts'.

The present analysis of the French concept *immanence* shows that the translators consistently rendered it as *immanence* in English, never using *immanency*, which is a valid option because the latter seems less common<sup>165</sup> and, *immanence* being only used with a theological and philosophical meaning in English, it then is a specialised term, which needs to be used to convey its philosophical aspect. The analysis illustrates the point that there can be set phrases of philosophical equivalents between two languages. Furthermore, those equivalents in the target language can be foreign words which have been assimilated into the target language as philosophical terminology (as is illustrated by the English word *immanence*), so that resorting to them is on a par with the strategy of domestication advocated in the thesis.

Let us now explore the translation of intertextuality through the treatment of citations in *The Second Sex*.

#### 4. The treatment of citations in *The Second Sex*

After explaining why studying the translation of intertextuality in *The Second Sex* is particularly relevant, and discussing the relationship between intertextuality and translation<sup>166</sup>, we will now examine the way in which intertextuality has been rendered in the new English translation of *The Second Sex*. The chosen examples have been selected due to being emblematic instances based on different categories, such as passages from French to English,

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<sup>165</sup> There was indeed no entry found in the *British National Corpus* for *immanency*:

<http://bnc.bl.uk/saraWeb.php?qy=immanency&mysubmit=Go>

<sup>166</sup> See Chapter Five

as well as the treatment of sources which come from English, or from other languages. The multitude of texts present in *Le Deuxième Sexe* through citations and quotations present the translators with many a challenge, all the more so due to their multilingual aspect. De Beauvoir quotes sources written in her French mother tongue, but also German philosophical writings, as well as English texts, to name but two foreign languages. There is, therefore, a possible dilemma for the translators, because they can either opt to translate the French text into English themselves, or rely on previous translations of the cited texts. Let us first consider the problem of non-English texts used in *Le Deuxième Sexe*, i.e. French sources, or sources from languages other than English which have been translated into French (such as German philosophical texts which de Beauvoir quotes). Those citations can be rendered by Borde and Malovany-Chevallier themselves, or the two translators could use existing English translations, which, I argue, is the most satisfactory option, because it enables readers to make connections between the sources and de Beauvoir's treatise more easily and it can even prevent concealing those links. Then, it is important to see how Borde and Malovany-Chevallier treat extracts from French texts (such as quotations from Lévi-Strauss, Sartre and Stendhal) and see if they translate them directly, or use previous translations. By analysing these two approaches, I will determine whether their strategy is consistent, or if they interchange one with the other. Finally, this analysis will also lead me to see how Borde and Malovany-Chevallier signal and explain some of de Beauvoir's obscure or specialised references and quotations, through their preface, as well as in footnotes.

We will start with exploring how Borde and Malovany-Chevallier deal with the foreign hypotexts which are present in *Le Deuxième Sexe* and appear in French. If they directly translate the citation quoted by de Beauvoir into English, they risk a relay translation, which occurs when a text in one language is used as the intermediary between the source text and the target text (which is rendered in yet another language), as was seen in Chapter Two. It means, in our case, that a foreign text is rendered into French, and the latter is translated into English, thus adding an extra layer. The significant risk of relay translation is the possibility of distorting further the source text. Moreover, and as mentioned earlier, resorting to relay translation can conceal the references of the source text, so that the English-speaking target reader might be deprived of the source text's insight. In the case of *The Second Sex*, because de Beauvoir's use of intertextuality is essential to her feminist and philosophical argument, such loss could have a significant impact. Our analysis will examine the way German texts quoted by de Beauvoir are treated by Borde and Malovany-Chevallier, because de Beauvoir draws extensively on German

philosophy. Hence, the need to examine the translation of some quotations from Goethe, Hegel, and Nietzsche.

#### 4.1. The treatment of quotations stemming from German in *The Second Sex*

The following excerpt is a direct quotation from Goethe's *Faust, Part Two* and it is used by de Beauvoir to illustrate the myth of 'Mother Nature':

Gloire à la mer! Gloire à ses flots environnés de feu sacré! Gloire à l'onde! Gloire au feu!  
Gloire à l'étrange aventure! (LDS I: 246)

Borde and Malovany-Chevallier's translation is as follows:

Glory to the sea! Glory to its waves encircled by sacred fire! Glory to the wave! Glory to  
the fire! Glory to the strange adventure! (TSS loc. 3409)

It is clear that their translation is a literal rendering of de Beauvoir's quotation, for the English lexicon used closely follows that of the French text, and the structure is similar. Therefore, we have here an example of a relay translation, where Goethe's text goes first through a translation into French (quoted by de Beauvoir), to then be retranslated into English, and not directly from German into English. The result provides the reader with a clumsy and obscure verse ('Glory to its waves encircled by sacred fire'), and readers accustomed to Goethe's work can feel disconcerted by the diluted rendering thus given by Borde and Malovany-Chevallier. The translators' choice is surprising because existing English versions of Goethe's *Faust* are easily accessible, such as the following, and acclaimed<sup>167</sup>, one:

Hail to the sea, the shifting tide,  
By sacred fire beautified!  
Hail to the waves, hail to the flame,  
Hail, this event without a name! (Goethe 1994: 123)

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<sup>167</sup> For instance, *The Independent* declared it to be 'scrupulous and well-informed, backed up by scholarly clarification of the text's difficult history ... one of the most spirited efforts to capture the great poetic drama'.

The extract above aims to recreate a similar effect on the target reader as that impinged on the source reader, notably by focusing on the poetic aspect of *Faust*. We can see in the ‘Selected Sources’ section of Borde and Malovany-Chevallier’s translation that they did not consult (or, at least, did not indicate consulting) previous English translations of Goethe’s texts, which makes us think about their approach towards other influential authors quoted by de Beauvoir.

De Beauvoir draws extensively on Hegel throughout her treatise, and, as the Hegelian framework is a tool helping her to articulate her own philosophical thesis, translating her quotations from and references to Hegel’s work is crucial. This implies staying consistent when referring to his terminology, and avoiding misrepresentation of his thought: we already emphasized in Chapters One and Three how challenging philosophical texts can be, and the implications of translating philosophy, which leads me to contend that using renowned existing English translations of Hegel’s work is more adequate than opting for relay translation (i.e. translating de Beauvoir’s French quotation into English).

Let us illustrate the issue of relay translation with a quotation from *The Second Sex* in which de Beauvoir says that she cites Hegel directly:

L’autre [conscience] est la conscience dépendante pour laquelle la réalité essentielle est la vie animale, c’est-à-dire l’être donné par une entité autre. (*LDS* I: 116)

The other [consciousness] is the dependent consciousness for which essential reality is animal life, that is, life given by another entity. (*TSS* loc.1652)

We can see from the above extract that Borde and Malovany-Chevallier are translating the French source text very closely —keeping the same lexicon and sentence structure— and we can infer that they may consequently depart from the German original text, with the resulting risk of burying the connection to Hegel. However, it seems that de Beauvoir is not actually quoting Hegel, but Alexandre Kojève’s study on Hegel instead:

L’autre est la Conscience dépendante, pour laquelle la réalité-essentielle est la vie-animale, c’est-à-dire l’être-donné pour une entité-autre. Celle-là est le *Maître*, celle-ci — l’*Esclave*. (Kojève 1947: 22)

The other is dependent Consciousness, for which the essential-reality is animal-life, i.e., given-being for an other-entity. The former is the *Master*, the latter — the *Slave*. (Kojève 1980: 16)

In the above example, and because Borde and Malovany-Chevallier do not identify the quotation from Kojève, they translate his terminology literally from the French, while still stating that the citation comes from Hegel (as de Beauvoir introduces it), so they do not use the prevailing English terms used to refer to Hegelian concepts, which might conceal connections between the two philosophers. That instance is compelling because it reminds us of the limits of the translator's role and loyalty towards the author<sup>168</sup>, and, here, Borde and Malovany-Chevallier are confronted with the difficulty of a source text's intertextuality, as well as incorrect citations, approximate references, and paraphrasing, which are obstacles they have to deal with as best as possible. Awareness of de Beauvoir's influences and readings, through studying her works, but also biographies and scholarly commentaries on her, is important to enable to better identify her sources, and, thus, to find suitable existing English translations of those sources, unlike the above example.

However, Borde and Malovany-Chevallier also consulted and used existing English translations, as shown by the following quotation from Hegel's *The Philosophy of Nature*:

The genus is therefore present in the individual as a straining against the inadequacy of its single actuality, as the urge to obtain its self-feeling in the other of its genus, to integrate itself through union with it and through this mediation to close the genus with itself and bring it into existence —*copulation*. (TSS loc.688)

The above translation comes from J.N. Findlay and A.V. Miler's translation, which is listed in Borde and Malovany-Chevallier's selected sources, and it is particularly noteworthy because Toril Moi commented on it, before Borde and Malovany-Chevallier's translation was edited, in the following terms:

At one point, Beauvoir discusses Hegel's analysis of sex. In the new translation, a brief quotation from *The Philosophy of Nature* ends with the puzzling claim: 'This is mates

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<sup>168</sup> as discussed in Chapter Two.

coupling.' *Mates coupling*? What does Hegel mean? It turns out that in Beauvoir's French version, Hegel says, 'C'est l'accouplement'; A.V. Miller's translation of *The Philosophy of Nature* uses the obvious term, 'copulation'. (Moi 2010)

The translators modified their translation and resorted to the very English translation advised by Moi, still, they did not consistently implement that strategy, as our previous example showed. The three examples above show different treatments of quotations, but, they all indicate Borde and Malovany-Chevallier's tendency to directly translate quotations, as they appear in French, instead of returning to previous English translations. Moreover, the instances of Hegel's citations illustrate the need for specialised knowledge (as advocated by the ITT, and as discussed earlier in this thesis), which includes a knowledge of existing English translations of the hypotexts to which de Beauvoir refers, so as to avoid unfortunate mistranslation such as *mates coupling*.

Let us now analyze the following extract where de Beauvoir quotes Nietzsche:

La matière inorganique est le sein maternel. Etre délivré de la vie, c'est redevenir vrai, c'est se parachever. Celui qui comprendrait cela considérerait comme une fête de retourner à la poussière insensible. (*LDS I: 250*)

Inorganic matter is the mother's breast. Being delivered from life means becoming real again, completing oneself. Anyone who understands that would consider returning to unfeeling dust as a holiday. (*TSS loc. 3463*)

Before commenting on the above passage, it is worth mentioning a study by Spyros Papapetros (2012: 146) which reveals that de Beauvoir's words probably stem from Charles Andler's notorious biography of Nietzsche (1920), which was also requoted by Georges Bataille (1937). As Papapetros points out, the German *Mutterschoß* is commonly translated in English as (*mother's*) *womb*, but, when looking at a German-French dictionary, it appears that the same German word is translated as *sein maternel* (*maternal breast*) in French. Therefore, there is a departure between the German term and its English and French translations, which can lead to possible misunderstandings in the extract quoted above. Indeed, Borde and Malovany-

Chevallier are again directly translating de Beauvoir's quotation, thus concealing the connection to Nietzsche and lowering his presence in the text: using 'mother's breast' instead of 'womb' contributes to mask Nietzsche's presence.

Moreover, there are two distortions in the last sentence which can lead to confusion: choosing 'a holiday' to render the French 'une fête' is problematic because it distorts Nietzsche's words<sup>169</sup>, when the English term *celebration* could be used here better to convey the connotation of *Fest* (*fête*) in the context. The same comment can be made about the English adjective 'unfeeling' which seems weak to convey the idea of death.

The English rendering of the above quotation is clumsy and buries the connection to Nietzsche, which curtails de Beauvoir's argument, and the distortion of *Mutterschoß* recalls our earlier analysis of the translation of philosophical terminology<sup>170</sup>, namely that an awareness of language differences as regards borrowed terms is compelling.

#### 4.2. The treatment of French quotations in *The Second Sex*

After analysing the treatment of German texts quoted by de Beauvoir, and how those quotations are sometimes translated from German to French and then to English, we will now examine how French quotations are dealt with in *The Second Sex*. I will first consider some excerpts from Claude Lévi-Strauss's works, and then examine examples from Sartre's, as well as Stendhal's works. Those three authors are worth mentioning because they have three different fields of expertise (namely anthropology, philosophy and literature) which are also areas in which de Beauvoir specialised. In addition, they all have a particular significance for her: she draws on Sartre's and Lévi-Strauss's theories and she praises Stendhal for what she considers his honest and authentic depiction of women.

##### 4.2.1. Quotes from Lévi-Strauss

Claude Lévi-Strauss was a renowned anthropologist and contemporary of de Beauvoir, who had the opportunity to read *Les structures élémentaires de la parenté* (adapted from his thesis) before its publication in 1949. His anthropological study of social mores and rules, in particular in relation to marriage and family, is momentous in de Beauvoir's treatise and it

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<sup>169</sup> 'Es ist ein *Fest*, aus dieser Welt in die 'tote Welt' überzugehen' (quoted in Papapetros 2012: 342, emphasis in original)

<sup>170</sup> see Chapter Three

helped her to increase her knowledge while honing her own reflection. She directly quotes extracts in *Le Deuxième Sexe*, as the following examples show:

“L’autorité publique ou simplement sociale appartient toujours aux hommes” affirme Lévi-Strauss au terme de son étude sur les sociétés primitives. (*LDS I*: 124)

“Political authority, or simply social authority, always belongs to men,” Lévi-Strauss affirms at the end of his study of primitive societies. (*TSS loc.1745*)

And :

“Le lien de réciprocité qui fonde le mariage n’est pas établi entre des hommes et des femmes, mais entre des hommes au moyen de femmes qui en sont seulement la principale occasion”, dit Lévi-Strauss. (*LSD I*: 125)

“The relationship of reciprocity which is the basis of marriage is not established between men and women, but between men by means of women, who are merely the occasion of this relationship,” said Lévi-Strauss. (*TSS loc.1754*)

In both cases, Borde and Malovany-Chevallier use J. Harle Bell, R. Needham and J.R. von Sturmer’s translation (1969: 177 and 116), thus indicating the link between de Beauvoir and her contemporary scholar, and thus developing the continuum between Lévi-Strauss’s study and de Beauvoir’s. However, and despite the good usage of preceding English versions of *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, there is an interesting contrast between the way Borde and Malovany-Chevallier introduce Lévi-Strauss’s statement in the first and the second sentence: they first use the present tense, and then the past tense (‘affirms’, ‘said’). In the French source text, de Beauvoir uses the present tense (‘affirme’), but there is then a linguistic ambiguity because the verb form *dit* is used for both the present and the preterite in French, which might explain why the two translators decided to shift from one tense to another. However, and because de Beauvoir uses the present tense one page before, one can assume that she is still using the present to report Lévi-Strauss’s words, and therefore Borde and Malovany-Chevallier’s rendering feels ungainly and inconsistent. Such unawareness of the French language and divergence in tense usage (which is an issue we analyzed earlier in this chapter) imparts an impression of sloppiness, which is not de Beauvoir’s, but can still be perceived in such a way by the target reader.



#### 4.2.2. Quotes from Sartre

Chapter One reminded us of the fact that de Beauvoir, although developing her own philosophical theory, draws on the Existentialist framework (*LDS I*: 33) and on Sartre's work too. Therefore, one would expect to find references to Sartre's work in *Le Deuxième Sexe*, but, most of the time, de Beauvoir paraphrases and uses Sartre's ideas without directly quoting his words. This can be explained by the strong link between the two philosophers, and their habit of sharing their ideas with each other, so that de Beauvoir does not directly quote Sartre, still, she does point the reader to some particular works by him. Let us see an example of a direct quotation from *L'Être et le Néant* (1943):

Le masochisme comme le sadisme est assumption de culpabilité. Je suis coupable, en effet, du seul fait que je suis objet. (*LDS II*: 185)

Masochism, like sadism, is the assumption of guilt. I am guilty due to the very fact that I am an object. (*TSS loc. 8414*)

The English rendering is taken from Hazel Barnes's translation (Sartre 1956: 378), and Barnes's version is listed in Borde and Malovany-Chevallier's *Selected Sources*, so the translators have, in this instance, relied on earlier English versions. However, they have not invariably done so, as the following example shows:

A moitié victimes, à moitié complices, comme tout le monde. (*LDS*, epigraph before Tome 2)

Half victim, half accomplice, like everyone. (*TSS loc. 5792*)

Here, Borde and Malovany-Chevallier directly translate de Beauvoir's quotation, although the existing English translation of *Dirty Hands* differs slightly: 'Half victim, half accomplice, like everyone *else*'. There is a risk in using a literal translation because the citation is oft-quoted, such as Sartre's 'L'enfer c'est les autres' (which I discussed in Chapter One), or de Beauvoir's 'On ne naît pas femme, on le devient' (whose English translation I discussed earlier in this chapter). Indeed, those sentences are influential and widely known, so that unjustified alterations can distort the source text's message (which is the case of Borde and Malovany-

Chevallier's rendering of 'On ne naît pas femme, on le devient'), or bury intertextual connections in the text (as is the case with 'Half victim, half accomplice, like everyone').

#### 4.2.3. Quotes from Stendhal

De Beauvoir cites Stendhal throughout her treatise, and she dedicates a specific section of her chapter on Myths to the French novelist, in which she quotes his autobiography (*Vie de Henri Brulard*, 1890), as well as his essays (*De l'amour*, 1822) and novels, so that the distinction between fiction and reality, between Stendhal's narrators and his own voice, is blurred. That approach is very interesting, and, again, in line with de Beauvoir's philosophical method of drawing on life and people's situation, while gathering a multiplicity of voices. The difficulty, however, lies in the fact that the author does not indicate when she cites a particular text, so that an extract from *Lucien Leuwen* (1834) will come next to an excerpt from *Le Rouge et le Noir* (1830), without it being signalled to the reader, which is problematic when one wishes to go back to the original French texts. As previously mentioned, the translators can either opt to directly translate de Beauvoir's text, or, they can go back to existing English translations of Stendhal's texts, which is more challenging, because they would need first to determine where the passages quoted by de Beauvoir come from, to then find the relevant English versions of Stendhal's texts. However, that approach could bring more consistency and connections for readers who are familiar with Stendhal's works in English.

Let us analyze the first quotation which de Beauvoir makes at the beginning of her section on Stendhal:

[...] ce qu'il voulait le plus ardemment c'est "une charmante femme; nous nous adorerons, elle connaîtra mon âme" (*LDS I*: 376)

Here de Beauvoir is shortening the following extract from *Vie de Henri Brulard*:

« J'étais constamment profondément ému. Que dois-je donc aimer si Paris ne me plaît pas ? Je me répondais : "une charmante femme versera à dix pas de moi, je la relèverai et nous nous adorerons, elle connaîtra mon âme[...]" Mais cette réponse, étant du plus grand sérieux, je me la faisais deux ou trois fois le jour, et surtout à la tombée de la nuit

qui souvent pour moi est encore un moment d'émotion tendre... » (*Vie de Henri Brulard*, p. 271)

And Borde and Malovany-Chevallier's English translation is as follows:

[...] what he wanted the most ardently was a "charming wife; we will adore each other, she will know my soul." (*TSS* loc.5276)

The example above shows a literal translation which keeps the punctuation (i.e. semicolon) of the French source text, as well as a lexical choice mimicking the original (using the verb *adore*). However, that approach is acceptable here because the literary style of the French original text makes it adequate to render a slightly more literal and dated target text, so that Borde' and Malovany-Chevallier's choice is not faulty. We can, however, question whether the translators should have looked for the full French quotation, or whether they are only required to translate what de Beauvoir wrote. My contention is that it can be more helpful to go back to the original French and, perhaps, find existing English translations, so as to maintain the connections between de Beauvoir's treatise and the works she is drawing on (for instance, Stendhal's works), so that readers who wish to study (or who have studied) the works she is referring to can relate to the whole intellectual tradition her work is grounded in.

Let us now study another quotation, also taken from *Vie de Henri Brulard*, which draws our attention because it presents the translators with a few challenges:

Je cours la chance d'être lu en 1900 par les âmes que j'aime, les Mme Roland, les Mélanie Guilbert...(LDS I: 376-7)

I might be lucky enough to be read in 1900 by the souls I love, the Mme Rolands, the Mélanie Guilberts...(TSS loc.5284)

The French phrase 'courir la chance' is highly idiomatic, so a literal rendering could be particularly confusing, but Borde and Malovany-Chevallier opted for the more natural 'be lucky enough' in English, thus adequately conveying the wish (and the theme of luck) evoked by the narrator. The above English translation is an unexpected mixture of domestication and foreignization because, as was just explained, the first idiomatic phrase has been domesticated

into an English equivalent, still, the word order then follows the French syntax and we are given a literal translation (d'être lu en 1900 par les âmes que j'aime -> to be read in 1900 by the souls I love), while the last part of the sentence offers an interesting combination of French elements (Mme, the accent on Mélanie), and of English ones, namely adding an extra -s to the surnames quoted (Rolands, Guilberts). Thus, the English translation satisfactorily renders the French source text, and has a sense of foreignness (which can be noticeable enough to remind the readers that the quotation comes from French), while still being domesticated enough to remain accessible.

A last quotation from Stendhal's works is worth analysing, because de Beauvoir uses it to illustrate her views on 'existence precedes essence', namely that women's concrete situation prevented them from becoming geniuses:

Tous les génies qui naissent *femmes* sont perdus pour le bonheur du public. (LDS I: 228, emphasis in original)

All the geniuses who are born *women* are lost for the public good. (TSS loc. 3185, emphasis in original)

The above extract is taken from the essay *De l'Amour* (1822), whose English translation is as follows: [...] all geniuses who are born women are lost to the public good. (*On Love* 1916: 238)

We notice that the difference between the two English versions lies in the use of 'for' or 'to' to translate the French 'pour'. 'Lost to' is, however, more common in English, making the translation more fluent and idiomatic, whereas Borde and Malovany-Chevallier opted for a more foreignized and literal choice, which is consistent with their translation strategy, albeit less fluent.

#### 4.3. The treatment of English source texts in *The Second Sex*

When the source reference quoted by de Beauvoir comes from English, it could be expected to see the translators directly citing the English text, instead of translating the French into English, thus running the risk of burying the references for the English target reader. Let us see the instance of an English charm quoted by de Beauvoir:

Salut, Terre, mère des hommes, sois fertile dans l'embrassement du Dieu et remplis-toi de fruits à l'usage de l'homme. (*LDS I: 121*)

Hail, Earth, mother of all men, may you be fertile in the arms of God and filled with fruits for the use of man. (*TSS loc.1924*)

Borde and Malovany-Chevallier keep close to the French sentence, maintaining a similar lexicon (*fertile, fruits*) and the structure closely follows that of the French. However, it is easy to find the source reference mentioned by de Beauvoir, which was part of a spell used to increase soil's abundance:

All hail, Earth, mother of men!  
Be fruitful in God's embracing arm,  
Filled with food for the needs of men. (*Grendon 1909: 177*)

The version above is one of the variants of that charm, as the following other versions show:

Hail, Earth, mother of all;  
Be abundant in God's embrace,  
Filled with food for our folk's need. (*Anglo-Saxon Metrical Charms listed by New Northvegr Center<sup>171</sup>*)

Hail to thee, Earth, mother of men,  
Be fruitful in God's embrace,  
Filled with food for the use of men. (*Hood 1998<sup>172</sup>*)

When comparing Borde and Malovany-Chevallier's version to the ones above, it is apparent that they translate de Beauvoir's words instead of going back to original English source texts, as I suspected due to their use of *fruits* and *fertile*, but also because they render 'à l'usage de l'homme' as 'for the use of man', thus imitating the French sentence, as opposed to using the more expected plural form in English, which recalls my analysis of the translation of *femme*.

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<sup>171</sup> available at: <http://www.northvegr.org/misc%20primary%20sources/anglo-saxon%20metrical%20charms/001.html>

<sup>172</sup> online article from *CLIO, History Journal*, available at:  
[https://cliojournal.wikispaces.com/Pagan+Gods+of+the+Anglo-Saxons#cite\\_ref-13](https://cliojournal.wikispaces.com/Pagan+Gods+of+the+Anglo-Saxons#cite_ref-13)

De Beauvoir does not explicitly present her sources in the above example, and she merely states that she is quoting 'un vieux charme anglo-saxon' (an old Anglo-Saxon charm), so that it can be difficult to identify the source text. However, and as shown by the English versions I cited, Borde and Malovany-Chevallier could have endeavoured to find more precise sources, as opposed to translating de Beauvoir's words themselves. I already explained that Borde and Malovany-Chevallier do not consistently resort to previous translations, and we can see with the above instance that they do not always use English source texts either. Let us now study another example where de Beauvoir cites an English text, with an excerpt from Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* quoted in *The Second Sex*:

Thus restless I my wretched way must make  
And on the ground, which is my mother's gate,  
I knock with my staff early, aye, and late  
And cry: O my dear mother, let me in! (TSS loc.3467)

This is the same version found in *The Canterbury Tales* (Chaucer 2009: 159-60), so here we can notice that Borde and Malovany-Chevallier return to the original source, thus more accurately presenting the intertextuality of de Beauvoir's work to the English-speaking target reader.

Let us analyze some other English texts, focusing on quotations written by women whose voice de Beauvoir wants her readers to hear. Indeed, as mentioned in Chapter One, and earlier in this chapter, Margaret Simons reveals that much of the deletions of the first English translation affected references to and quotations by women, so that Borde and Malovany-Chevallier's uncovering and reclaiming them is central to the book's strength. The following quotation by the Duchess of Newcastle is used to illustrate the consternation some women feel about their destiny:

Les femmes vivent comme des blattes ou des chouettes, elles meurent comme des vers. (Duchess of Newcastle quoted in *LDS I*: 183)

Women live like cockroaches or owls, they die like worms. (TSS loc.2578)

It is, however, interesting to note that the quotation above is a literal translation of de Beauvoir's words, rather than the original text. The actual words by Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, can be found in Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929), an essay which greatly inspired de Beauvoir:

Women live like Bats or Owls, labour like Beasts, and die like Worms. (Cavendish quoted in Woolf 2014: 62)

We can notice from the above citation that de Beauvoir did not quote it in full, and it is likely that she partially took it from *A Room of One's Own*, so we can question what strategy Borde and Malovany-Chevallier should have opted for in their translation, especially as there is another interesting point to mention, namely that de Beauvoir's version is a mistranslation of Margaret Cavendish's poem:

Women live like *Bats* or Owls, labour like Beasts, and die like Worms. (Cavendish quoted in Woolf 2014: 62, my emphasis)

Les femmes vivent comme des *blattes* ou des chouettes, elles meurent comme des vers. (Duchess of Newcastle quoted in *LDS I*: 183, my emphasis)

The English noun *bat* has been rendered as *blatte* (cockroach), and, although there is a similar sound effect to the two nouns, their meaning differs greatly. In all likelihood, de Beauvoir read the poem in Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, as indicated before, and she did so in English, as the essay was published in 1929 and was only translated into French in 1951. Although de Beauvoir read and spoke English, it is reasonable to think that she might have mistranslated the original English text, or that she quoted it from memory, consequently making a mistake and also shortening the original text. If Borde and Malovany-Chevallier had turned to the original poem, they would have noticed the error and, by reproducing the original English text, they would have emphasized the *Second Sex's* intertextuality, thus making connections between feminist works (Cavendish — Woolf — de Beauvoir) more obvious. Considering that Cavendish's statement is a well-known example of feminist thinking (see for instance Russ 1983: 107), I contend that quoting the English source is more pertinent than directly translating de Beauvoir's French quotation, which is an approach sometimes followed by Borde and Malovany-Chevallier, as shown by our next example:

Hélas! une femme qui prend la plume  
Est considérée comme une créature si présomptueuse  
Qu'elle n'a aucun moyen de racheter son crime! (*LDS I*: 183)

Alas! a woman that attempts  
the pen,  
Such an intruder on the rights  
of men,  
Such a presumptuous creature  
is esteemed,  
The fault by no virtue can be  
redeemed. (*TSS loc.2571*)

We can note that the English translation is longer than the French quotation, and that it maintains the poem's rhymes. Borde and Malovany-Chevallier are quoting the original poem here, which is why de Beauvoir's French text and the above English translation diverge. And it is interesting to add that Borde and Malovany-Chevallier not only use the original English text, but they also include a footnote to explain that de Beauvoir shortened and paraphrased the original (*TSS loc.2668*), while also correcting her misspelling. Indeed, in the French *Le Deuxième Sexe*, de Beauvoir misspelled the author's name, writing Winhilsea instead of Winchilsea, which has been amended by the two translators.

The example above presents a good use of specialised knowledge, as well as the translators' dedication to return to the English source text. The consequence of such loyalty is to make the connections between de Beauvoir's text and the hypotexts she quotes (in this case, Winchilsea's poem) more obvious, thus highlighting *Le Deuxième Sexe's* intertextuality. Moreover, by adding a note to explain how the original quotation has been altered by de Beauvoir, Borde and Malovany-Chevallier ascertain their presence, so that their own voice as translators can be heard too, which reminds the reader that s/he is studying a translated text. That is reminiscent of Barbara Godard's views on transparency, namely that the translator needs to be present, to be visible in the translation (Godard in Bassnett and Lefevere 1990: 90-91), which is also a stance defended by Lawrence Venuti (as seen in Chapter Three). Although this perspective is certainly favourable to the translator, it has to be noted that her/his presence



should actually be indicated to the target reader, so that Borde and Malovany-Chevallier's correction of de Beauvoir's misspelling is problematic. I contend that the two translators should have made such alteration known, using, for instance, the common expression *sic*, so as to signal their amendment, and, hence, their intervention as translators.

Adding those explanatory notes is, however, very helpful to the reader, because it can clarify obscure references, or correct wrong information provided by de Beauvoir, as the above example showed. We will now examine how the paratext (and notably footnotes) can be used to signal the source text's intertextuality, using examples from *The Second Sex* where Borde and Malovany-Chevallier feel compelled to interrupt the reading with supplementary notes. The following extract refers to a certain Mme de Ciray:

Chez une femme, Mme de Ciray, on voit poindre timidement un féminisme économique.  
(LDS I: 187)

Economic feminism timidly makes its appearance through a woman, Mme de Ciray.  
(TSS loc.2640)

But Borde and Malovany-Chevallier claim that she cannot be identified, which leads them to think that de Beauvoir mistook her name, or misspelled it<sup>173</sup>. We can be surprised about this additional piece of information, which seems to verify that de Beauvoir's report is accurate, whereas, and as seen earlier, the two translators do not always locate and quote English translations or original source texts of momentous hypotexts (as illustrated by my analysis of Goethe's, Nietzsche's, or Cavendish's work).

When it comes to footnotes used to explain obscure intertextuality (i.e. arcane hypotexts), Borde and Malovany-Chevallier seem to be particularly wary towards Latin phrases, so that they often translate them into English when de Beauvoir left them in Latin, and they even correct them. Let us see two such examples:

Uxor non est proprie socia sed speratur fore (LDS I: 170; TSS loc.2396)

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<sup>173</sup> "Emilie du Châtelet and Voltaire lived and worked in the Château de Cirey from 1734 to 1749, giving rise to some speculation about the possibility of a misspelling or an erroneous transcription from the original manuscript of the name Ciray. But there is no conclusive evidence of this." (Translators' Note loc.2672)

The wife is not exactly a partner, but it is hoped she will become one (Translators' Note loc.2654)

The above instance is actually a legal adage<sup>174</sup>, which de Beauvoir did not find necessary to translate, whereas Borde and Malovany-Chevallier added a note to render it in English. They even give some more indications about the following phrase:

*"Post coitum homo animal triste"* (TSS loc.3759)

stating that it was

most likely: *Post coitum omne animal triste* ("All animals are sad after sex") (Translators' Note loc.4425)

The example above asserts the translators' presence and voice, as they indicate a mistake present in the source text, thus interfering with de Beauvoir's voice. Moreover, the approach Borde and Malovany-Chevallier chose for the two excerpts is target reader oriented and domesticates the text (by providing an English translation), rather than leaving the readers with a foreign expression. The latter presents us with an example of third language, which happens when there is a deliberate usage of a foreign language in the source text, Latin in the present case. The translator has to choose whether to translate the third language into the target language, or not, depending on the effect that third language produces on the source text. If the source readers are not supposed to understand the foreign language, then it can be left as it is in the target text, but when the source readers are expected to understand the foreign language, then the latter can be translated into the target text. Borde and Malovany-Chevallier opted for that choice because they presumed their readership would not be familiar with Latin. Indeed, French and Anglo-Saxon cultures do not relate to Latin, nor to specific Latin expressions, in the same way, so that a common expression in one language will not be used in the other. Therefore, Borde and Malovany-Chevallier made the target text more explicit than the source text, which is an example of domestication. Although not in line with their intention not to interfere with the source text, I contend that this strategy is efficient because it reminds the reader that s/he is reading a translation, while facilitating the understanding and reception of de Beauvoir's text.

As stated at the beginning of this section, Toril Moi's review highlighted a few issues dealing with the treatment of citations in *The Second Sex*. The analysis of examples confirmed

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<sup>174</sup> see 'Etude sur l'adage "Uxor non est proprie socia sed speratur fore"' by Albert Chéron (Paris 1901)

that Borde and Malovany-Chevallier are not always consistent in their use of sources, either translating hypotexts themselves, or using existing English translations. When the translators switch from one approach to the other with works by the same author (as was the case in our examples of quotations by Hegel), it can be a source of confusion for the reader, and can even distort the hypotext, or conceal connections between de Beauvoir's argument and the hypotexts she uses. My analysis also shows that Borde and Malovany-Chevallier considered some of Moi's remarks, thus resorting to previous English translations, which supports my contention that more interdisciplinarity between Translation Studies and Beauvoir specialists is fundamental. It also illustrates the obvious necessity for a translator to gather enough background knowledge (as was explained in Chapter Three when introducing the ITT). The examples studied above also show the difficulty for the translator to calibrate her/his presence and anonymity (or invisibility, Venuti 1995) in the translation, as shows Borde and Malovany-Chevallier's claim not to 'jeopardise the author's integrity' (Borde and Malovany-Chevallier 2011: 275, my translation), while giving explanatory notes correcting some of de Beauvoir's quotations. This inconsistency of approach confirms that the translator's total objectivity is illusory, so that her/his presence should be acknowledged, as advocated by Venuti.

The examples from the data analysis show that foreignization can lead to distortion, and mistranslation. We saw that the foreignization of syntax (i.e. keeping close to that of the source text) leads to confusion and shaky sentences, which disrupts the flow of the source text's argument. Keeping close to the source text's tenses can produce the same effect, thus disconcerting the readers and rendering their reading experience more demanding, which reinforces the impression that *Le Deuxième Sexe* is inaccessible. Foreignising the lexical elements of the source text is also problematic, all the more so as English and French, due to their linguistic history, share a great number of deceptive cognates (as the example of 'viril' aptly showed). Moreover, staying close to the source text also has repercussions on intertextuality, because following the source text may contribute to concealing *Le Deuxième Sexe*'s intertextuality, thus weakening de Beauvoir's argument and rich connections to other disciplines. Finally, the data analysis revealed another pertinent issue, that of consistency. By being inconsistent in their approach, Borde and Malovany-Chevallier increase the confusion produced by their translation, which is, in turn, harmful to the reception of de Beauvoir's work. In addition, there is a possible cumulative effect of the translators' choices as the frequency of 'slippages' can render the translation somehow stilted, and risk distorting the original meaning.



## CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

The argument progressively developed in the thesis shows that feminist philosophy requires a specific translation approach due to its particular features. The nature of literary texts, in addition to the enmeshment of style and argument, makes a mere transfer from one language to another impossible and risks distorting the source text. Therefore, a foreignizing approach is not the most adequate to render feminist philosophy. Moreover, a focus on the target reader is crucial when dealing with philosophical texts, as the latter present the reader with specific challenges and use a discourse prone to interpretation and misunderstanding. Although the target text should not be simplified, there should be no further difficulty for the target reader, so that they are offered a fluent read, where deciphering the target language is no extra trap. Indeed, an awkward and foreignized target text could be difficult to grasp, as the study of the latest English translation of *Le Deuxième Sexe* showed. Furthermore, texts dealing with feminist philosophy can be highly polemical, so that the translator's agency is particularly critical and, as their responsibility is paramount, it might be tempting to opt for a close translation, retaining the source text's syntax and terminology, instead of domesticating the target text. However, that strategy runs the risk of distorting the source text because different linguistic norms between the source and target languages need to be taken into consideration. In addition, foreignizing the target text does not necessarily ensure that the target reader will enter the source culture, as the exact opposite may happen, if the target text seems too foreign, or if it carries stereotypes about the source culture. All of the above reasons reinforce my contention that foreignization is not adequate to render texts of feminist philosophy, whereas a more domesticating strategy can help the reception of the source text in the target culture.

Chapter One helped us explain the inception of *Le Deuxième Sexe* in France, relating de Beauvoir's study to its socio-historical context. Going through the genesis of her book made it clear that its interdisciplinarity is both one of its greatest strengths, and a specific challenge when trying to locate *Le Deuxième Sexe* in the literary system. Indeed, locating de Beauvoir's magnum opus is crucial because its label as philosophical work is at stake, so that reclaiming its author as a philosopher was a priority for the latest translators. Discussing the many disciplines enmeshed in *Le Deuxième Sexe* led us to examine the definition of philosophy, and its many similarities to literature. The philosophical content of de Beauvoir's essay was then explored, before discussing how her book cleverly blends philosophy with a study of women's situation, which triggered a discussion of the link between feminism and philosophy. The second part of

Chapter One set about to explain the story behind the first English translation, and to analyze its reception in the United States, bearing in mind the fact that *The Second Sex* being a translation had an impact on its reception in the target culture. That link between translation and reception was then taken up in more detail in Chapter Two, which led us to a reflection on meaning and the need to interpret texts. We showed that this interpretation depends on different agents, and the case of translation brings yet another mediation through languages, which made us study the role of the translator and the responsibility which translation entails. The need for interpretation also implies that retranslation is an expected occurrence, especially for literary and canonical texts, due to a number of factors such as an evolution in language, or cultural and social mores. And with interpretation and changes comes the issue of faithfulness, as it can be argued that one of the main concerns of translation is precisely to render a source text into a target text as faithfully as possible. Therefore, Chapter Three focused on the notion of faithfulness and on translation approaches which help maintain a degree of fidelity to the source text. In particular, resorting to equivalents through shifts is unavoidable for certain categories of texts, such as literary genres and controversial texts. As *Le Deuxième Sexe* is a treatise of feminist philosophy, exploring disciplines spanning from science, to sociology, to psychology, or literature, finding equivalents is a necessary translation strategy. The latter is more akin to a domesticated approach than to a foreignizing one, as advocated by Lawrence Venuti, who rejects fluency and the tendency to present the target readers with a translation which does not seem to stem from a foreign language. Resorting to his blueprint can, however, result in “exoticism” in the translation, which conveys stereotypes about the target culture (Shamma 2009). Bearing Venuti’s stance in mind, Chapter Four examined the latest English translation of *Le Deuxième Sexe*, showing the translators’ approach and focusing on the way the translation was received. The Translators’ Note, along with promotional articles and interviews, were analyzed to reach the conclusion that *The Second Sex* is a foreignized rendering, and it could be anticipated that the two translators’ deference for the original source text, instead of ensuring fidelity, would be in effect responsible for a stilted version, illustrating the ‘translator-in-terror’ syndrome (Rée 2001). The translation’s reception showed a general discontent from Beauvoir scholars, the latter being disappointed with the treatment of philosophy, as well as the overall linguistic issues present in the translation. My analysis of Borde’ and Malovany-Chevallier’s translation was indeed based on reviews, with the aim to link the exposed issues to a translation viewpoint, leading to Chapter Five, which examined Contrastive Linguistics and Intertextuality. Contrastive Linguistics is a prevailing tool for Translation Studies, as it provides translation with insightful analysis of linguistic differences between languages. Studying the main areas of

contrast between English and French reveals specific challenges for translation, such as syntax, tenses, or the treatment of lexical items. We specifically examined main differences in word order and connectors, but also the specificities of the French conditional, historic present, and discrepancies in active and passive voices in French and English. The treatment of terms for gender (such as *femme* or *viril*) and philosophy (such as *immanence* and *authenticité*) was also central to the study, because linguistic norms (e.g. the different usage of articles with nouns) need to be taken into account in translation, as they have an impact on the message conveyed. Intertextuality also presents translation with challenges, because references to national literature and culture need to be rendered in the target text, which increases the risk to obscure, or even bury, connections between texts. Chapter Six aimed to study those issues in more detail, using examples from *The Second Sex* to illustrate my contention that foreignization is not satisfactory for the translation of feminist and philosophical texts.

The Data Analysis showed that foreignization through keeping close to the source text's syntax can lead to confusion and disorient the target reader, as, for example, the overuse of semicolons in *The Second Sex* illustrated. Maintaining foreign terminology is also problematic, as deceptive cognates between French and English are numerous, therefore, aiming to make the target text foreign by keeping French terms can distort the meaning, as was seen with the example of the French adjective 'viril'. Specialised philosophical vocabulary is equally troublesome for translation, because philosophical occurrences need to be recognised, which has not always been the case in the latest English translation. In addition, philosophical references present in *Le Deuxième Sexe* are not constantly identified either (as the example of *Mutterschoss* showed), and keeping too close to the French text when rendering citations can bury the connections to other philosophical works.

Borde' and Malovany-Chevallier's general approach aims to be faithful to the source text by staying close to it and reducing their influence, still, at other times, their presence is more obvious, notably through explanatory footnotes where the translators give more detail than what appears in the French original. They also correct de Beauvoir's occasional misspelling and, sometimes, they give longer quotations than the ones cited in the source text. It results in an inconsistency of approaches, which disorients the reader, as the multiplicity of voices seems blurred. Indeed, the English translation aims to 'find the true voice of the original work' (Translators' Note), but foreignizing the target text diverts the reader from de Beauvoir, while the translators' presence is, at times, too zealous. Moreover, the plurality of voices in *Le Deuxième*

Sexe is diminished in the translation, which curtails de Beauvoir's argument. The end result is a translation which appears unsteady and perplexing, and which presents the readers with a difficult rendering, thus not helping the promotion of de Beauvoir's book. In the case of a feminist philosophical treatise such as *Le Deuxième Sexe*, making the target text accessible is particularly critical, especially when one recalls that *The Second Sex* is studied as a central component of Gender Studies and Women's Writing in countries such as Canada, the United States, or the United Kingdom.

I contend that working towards a favourable reception of de Beauvoir's essay in the English-speaking sphere is a feminist stance, and focusing on the author's reception, and the promotion of her arguments through the translation, is acting towards faithfulness. A feminist translation agenda is not merely interested in 'altering' the source text so as to challenge phallogocentrism, but can also aim to enhance the readers' experience, while disseminating the author's theories, and asserting her position in the feminist philosophical canon. Considering the variety of feminisms, and how de Beauvoir has sometimes been misrepresented as a masculinist, or as a foe to motherhood (as mentioned in Chapter One), the impact of English translations of *Le Deuxième Sexe* should not be underestimated. Therefore, my work shows the limits of a foreignising strategy and defends the use of domestication to translate feminist philosophy.

Moreover, the thesis contributes to further feminist translation by highlighting the fact that women philosophers tend to suffer from discrimination, as evidenced, for instance, by the time needed to initiate an English retranslation of *Le Deuxième Sexe*, as well as the choice of translators asked to undertake this major task.

Also, as feminist philosophy entwines philosophy with feminist motives, specific challenges need to be examined, which means that current prevailing translation strategies (such as foreignization) are not necessarily adequate. It seems, then, that more work needs to be carried out, and more interdisciplinarity is also needed to improve the translation of feminist philosophy. The thesis signals how Translation Studies and Gender Studies could benefit from each other: the latter currently relies on inadequate renderings of *The Second Sex*, while feminist translation needs a specialised knowledge of major feminist theories.



Thus, my study calls for more research on feminist translation, and the translation of feminist philosophy, with the aim to bring disciplines together. Moreover, bridging the gap between Gender Studies and Translation Studies is a timely necessity, as feminism is becoming increasingly plural, and transnational. The relevance of *Le Deuxième Sexe* nowadays is further proof that such research needs to be further developed.

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