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# A COMPANION TO SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR



*Edited by*  
LAURA HENGHOLD  
and NANCY BAUER

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# A Companion to Simone de Beauvoir

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# A Companion to Simone de Beauvoir

*Edited by*

Laura Hengehold and Nancy Bauer

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# Introduction

LAURA HENGEHOLD

In a 2006 essay, William McBride proposed that “Beauvoir must be put at the center of twentieth century philosophy, for *The Second Sex* is in a certain sense both more original than Sartre’s works and more evocative of the spirit of her age” (McBride 2006, 95).

These words from a noted American specialist in existentialism and continental political philosophy are all the more striking because at the time of her death in 1986, Beauvoir’s stature was nowhere near so secure – and as Margaret Simons recounts in her contribution to this volume, Beauvoir herself seemed determined to resist appropriation by philosophers. Even three years later after her death, at the end of the Cold War when many of the cultural changes of the 1970s seemed vulnerable to reversal, scholars in an academy dominated by French post-structuralism considered Beauvoir’s contribution to feminism outdated almost on arrival.

During the late 1970s and 1980s, Simone de Beauvoir’s ghost was an egalitarian among North Atlantic feminists who no longer wanted equality on men’s terms and suspected universalism for its suppression of difference. To this generation, structuralism and psychoanalysis seemed more “revolutionary” than existentialism although Beauvoir herself used them in writing *The Second Sex*. Meanwhile, the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing would not bring Western feminists into contact and conflict with similar activists from around the globe until 1995. During the preceding two decades, therefore, Beauvoir was read primarily as a novelist and chronicler of intellectual culture, particularly in France, and even in anglophone universities there was scarcely a recognized field of “feminist philosophy” for which *The Second Sex* could be canonical.

How the situation has changed. Since the publication of *The Second Sex* we have seen not only an explosion of scholarship in women and gender studies but also in feminist philosophy. As Stella Sandford explains in “Beauvoir’s Transdisciplinarity,” the decades

of Beauvoir's productivity overlapped with an equally long timespan of reception, during which disciplines were created and dominant knowledge formations were altered, sometimes transformed. Beauvoir's work has endured and flowered in the last two decades, thanks primarily to the lasting influence of *The Second Sex* on the distribution of scholarly discourses dealing with gender, sexuality, and even old age. For anglophone readers, this engagement and expansion have been greatly assisted by the eight-volume *Beauvoir Series* edited by Margaret Simons for University of Illinois Press. The *Beauvoir Series* translates and/or reissues Beauvoir's shorter essays on philosophical, political, and literary topics; her early working diaries; some of her journalism; a play and a screenplay. *The Blackwell Companion to Simone de Beauvoir* tries to do justice to that breadth by including contributions from established and junior scholars in multiple disciplines from over ten countries.

The keystone to our presentation is *The Second Sex*, which Michèle Le Dœuff described as a book that “[put] an end to loneliness, which teaches people to see,” and thereby “has greater and more immediate importance than all the manifestos in the world” (Le Dœuff 1989, 57). Indeed, Kyoo Lee notes in “Second Languageing *The Second Sex*,” Beauvoir's work topped the *Guardian's* 2015 list of “Ten Books That Changed the World.” The first volume of *The Second Sex* describes scientific and literary discourses, including outright myths, that have led women to be seen as radically Other to men in Western societies, if not globally. The second volume then describes the real lives, the lived experience or “*expérience vécue*” of women such as Beauvoir knew them, read about them in Western literature, or learned of them through anthropological texts about other cultures.

Beauvoir's text was shaped in part by her encounter, during a visit to the United States in 1947, with the ways that American racism positioned African Americans as Other, and by her reading of Gunnar Myrdal's influential report on American race relations, *An American Dilemma* (1944). Philosophically, her primary references are the German idealist philosopher G. W. F. Hegel, who was also important in the Marxist discourse of the time, and Claude Lévi-Strauss, whose most important work of structuralist anthropology she had the opportunity to read while researching her text. But Sartre and Merleau-Ponty are also found throughout the book, as well as Marx and Lacan. Despite philosophical, class, and cultural differences, women from many parts of the world were able to see their own situations reflected in *The Second Sex* and motivated to change them.

**Part I. Re-reading *The Second Sex*.** The first essays in this section address the historical and disciplinary context of *The Second Sex*, both at the time of its publication and today. “Beauvoir's Transdisciplinarity” introduces many themes that will resonate throughout the *Companion* by noting that *The Second Sex* is philosophical but also challenged disciplinary philosophy so as to make space in the contemporary episteme for gender and sexuality studies of various kinds. To Stella Sandford, the scope of Beauvoir's work resembles nothing so much as the Frankfurt School's projected transformation of traditional theory into critical theory. From a discourse of philosophy defined by its worldlessness, Beauvoir drew attention to philosophy's implication in that world and to the oppressive aspects of that world.

Contributions by Sandra Reineke and the late Ingrid Galster offer a sense of the cultural and political climate in which Beauvoir's work was first read, particularly with respect to the constraining images of female sexuality, maternity, and lesbianism in French medicine and the public sphere. Galster, who extensively researched Beauvoir's wartime activities, shows how the misogynist reaction to *The Second Sex* played out following the logic of cultural conflicts from the Occupation years. Turning to North America, Kathryn Gines investigates Beauvoir's debt to African-American writers such as Richard Wright and perhaps indirectly, W. E. B. Dubois, as well as mid-twentieth-century scholars on race, such as Gunnar and Alva Myrdal. Gines introduces a textual, philosophical, and political problem that is taken up in several chapters later in the volume: the analogy between sexual and racial discrimination in Beauvoir's Introduction to *The Second Sex*. This analogy has posed theoretical as well as practical obstacles for black women, whose existence it seems to negate, but it has also shaped the canon formed around Beauvoir's own work, for even when white feminists acknowledge the limits of this analogy, their scholarly debates tend to ignore black women's own writing on Beauvoir.

In the final chapter of this section, Emily Grosholz addresses the vicissitudes of Beauvoir's text in English. The history of the translation is useful background for any other chapter in this volume. First appearing in serial form in *Les temps modernes*, the journal edited by Beauvoir, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, and others, the complete two-volume edition of *Le deuxième sexe* was released by Gallimard in 1949. It has since been translated into more than forty languages. Although many of these international translations were directly from French, others took the English version by H. M. Parshley as their guide. The defects of this translation by an accomplished and well-meaning scientist, in conflict with the commercial imperatives of the Knopf publishing house, were first exposed by Margaret Simons at a conference in 1979 and circulated by print in 1983 (Simons 1983, 559–64). In part, Beauvoir's relative invisibility as a thinker for several decades rather than as an activist or novelist can be blamed on Parshley's exclusion or omission of philosophically significant terms from his translation. Taken together, Reineke, Galster, Gines, and Grosholz show that the culture of reception, the language of reception, and the hierarchies and priorities of the academy are important factors in the history of *The Second Sex*.

This introductory section is followed by one focusing on "Central Themes" of Beauvoir's text. Chapters by Ruth Groenhout ("Beauvoir and the Biological Body") and Emily Parker ("Becoming Bodies") analyze Beauvoir's treatment of the body known by medicine and the body as "singularity." Groenhout engages with the work of Anne Fausto-Sterling, while Parker's chapter explores the metaphysical presuppositions of "postmodern" feminist theorists of human embodiment. Groenhout's and Parker's chapters are far-reaching because one cannot avoid reading Beauvoir's theory of embodiment, however it is understood, into her description of lived experiences such as girlhood, motherhood, and love.

In these chapters, Groenhout and Parker also introduce important – and multivalent – concepts that will reappear throughout the volume. For example, the *ambiguity* of experience rests on the contrast between *transcendence* and *immanence*, or the ability to go beyond what is given in experience and passive subjection to experience as framed and imposed by others. Ambiguity refers to the unfinished and ultimately undecidable

nature of human perception, interpretation, and action. Groenhout, Parker, and later contributors in the volume such as Michel Kail also distinguish between *naturalism*, particularly new approaches to naturalism, and the *biological determinism* with which naturalism has been conflated for many decades and which Beauvoir considered inimical to women's autonomy. Beauvoir's relationship to biology plays an important role in later chapters on maternity in *The Second Sex*, and the implications of biology and naturalism reappear in chapters by Lori Marso, Shannon Sullivan, and Alex Antonopoulos.

The following contributions to "Central Themes" deal with particular topics or chapters from *The Second Sex*, including the moral difficulties and opportunities posed by the situation of "woman," such as narcissism and reciprocity. Emily Zakin situates Beauvoir's critique of female narcissism with respect to her appropriation of psychoanalysis, particularly the work of Jacques Lacan. Mary Beth Mader offers a comparison between Beauvoir's account of the "training" of female children and adolescents and the account of boys' education and discipline found in Michel Foucault's descriptions of modern European power-knowledge constructs. In their examination of childhood, both of these authors draw attention to Beauvoir's claim that sexual differentiation requires internalization of an "almost originary" relationship to others.

Three chapters by Alison Stone, Sara Cohen Shabot, and Nancy Bauer address Beauvoir's controversial treatment of maternity in *The Second Sex*. As Reineke explained, Beauvoir was writing at a time when contraception and abortion were difficult and dangerous for Frenchwomen, and at the height of the French government's postwar pro-natalism campaign. Beauvoir's insistence on the significance of reproductive autonomy and her critique of romantic myths surrounding motherhood have been read as being hostile to the female body.<sup>1</sup> Her belief, reiterated in later interviews, that women's primary social identity must come from political and economic activities distinct from maternity has been criticized as a response to a specifically Western European cultural predicament that does not necessarily hold elsewhere in the world. Stone reviews the interpretations and agrees that Beauvoir's view of maternity is generally negative. By contrast, Shabot engages in personal reflection on her own experiences of motherhood and finds Beauvoir helpful for thinking about the impact of medicalized and romanticized views of childbearing labor on women's experiences of their bodies as transcending the given. For Bauer, the question posed by Beauvoir is how motherhood plays into men's and women's respective tendencies to renounce autonomy. Here, the structuring analogy to which Bauer draws attention in *The Second Sex* is between the classic Western relationship of mother to child and the sexist relationship of man to woman, both being efforts to secure recognition from a consciousness that has little opportunity to refuse it.

Tove Pettersen's consideration of love in *The Second Sex*, whether romantic heterosexual and lesbian love or love between parents and children, carries forward Bauer's investigation of the humanizing promise and the temptation to evasion that come with love. Pettersen argues that Beauvoir distinguishes between authentic and inauthentic love, where reciprocity is the primary touchstone for authentic love relationships.

Just as several chapters in this *Companion* highlight the relationships between history and biology, others focus on the relationship of history to myth. Beauvoir's central claim in the first volume of *The Second Sex* is that neither the biology, psychology, nor



radical economic analysis of her time can explain women's status as Other to men, although myths supporting this status can be found in history and literature. As Eva Bahovec explains later in the volume, the universality of Beauvoir's philosophical claims emerges from her study of structural anthropology, and not just the post-Kantian tradition of European philosophy, particularly Hegel. At the time when *The Second Sex* was written, France ruled over a large colonial empire. The anthropological sources available to Beauvoir took the Otherness of non-European peoples for granted and mythified their customs in ways that would not become clear until the dawn of decolonization.

In the chapter titled "Why is Woman the Other?" Ivoirian philosopher Tanella Boni explores the scholarly and the emotional context through which Beauvoir encountered African women both as idea and reality. She asks how complicity with some forms of foreignness (for example, Beauvoir's love for the American Nelson Algren) increases the apparent distance of other forms, and how bodily differences reinforce that distance. Boni's contribution deepens the investigation of love as a context for complicity or justice found in Bauer and Pettersen. Like Kathryn Gines, moreover, Boni addresses Beauvoir's troubled analogy between the situation of women, primarily white women, in the Western societies with which she was familiar and the situation of black men and women in the United States, though not in metropolitan France.

**Part II. Beauvoir's Intellectual Engagements.** For many decades, Beauvoir claimed not only to have been relatively uninterested in philosophy, but to have been influenced by only one philosopher, her partner Jean-Paul Sartre. Only recently has the wealth of Beauvoir's interaction with other philosophers such as Husserl, Hegel, or Merleau-Ponty been explored, or used as the basis for new philosophical work, whether in phenomenology or feminism. Every chapter in this collection situates Beauvoir in the context of philosophical and non-philosophical authors with whom she was in dialogue, but the second main section of this *Companion* is devoted to careful consideration of Beauvoir's intellectual debts to particular thinkers.

The influence of the nineteenth-century German idealist philosopher G. W. F. Hegel was first explored by Eva Lundgren-Gothlin in *Sex and Existence* in 1991 (Lundgren-Gothlin 1996). In "Beauvoir and Hegel," Kimberly Hutchings describes the trajectory of Beauvoir's engagements with Hegel, while Zeynep Direk ("Simone de Beauvoir's Relation to Hegel's Absolute") argues that *The Second Sex* proposes a very sophisticated internal critique of Hegel's assumption that Woman can remain an "absolute" other, as myths would suggest, without doing violence to his own conception of the Absolute. Rather than reading Beauvoir as anti-Hegelian, therefore, Direk sees her as an atheist participant in the largely Christian movement of philosophical personalism.

Jennifer McWeeny and William Wilkerson discuss Beauvoir's personal friendship and philosophical dialogue with Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Merleau-Ponty is best known for his proposal that subjectivity is thoroughly embodied and expresses its freedom in bodily ways. In "Beauvoir and Merleau-Ponty," McWeeny asks whether Beauvoir's notion of *ambiguity* was a precursor to Merleau-Ponty's characterization of the interface between the human body and its world as one flesh. For Wilkerson, the question is ethical rather

than metaphysical: why is freedom so often a matter of authenticity or inauthenticity for Beauvoir but rarely for Merleau-Ponty?

Sonia Kruks discusses Beauvoir's debt to Marx and the way different historical strains of Marxism are represented in her texts, often without clear markers. The fact that Beauvoir, like Sartre, is critical of historical determinism should not be thought to undermine Beauvoir's belief that only socialism will truly free women. Kruks shows how Marxist problems are highlighted in Beauvoir's late text on aging in modern societies, *La Vieillesse* (*Old Age*, translated in the United States as *The Coming of Age*). In the chapter titled "Beauvoir Between Structuralism and 'Aleatory Materialism,'" Eva Bahovec asks whether Beauvoir's appropriation of Lévi-Strauss and Lacan might have led her ideas about philosophy of history in the same direction as Althusser, a structuralist Marxist whose work is normally considered antithetical to "existentialism." In the process, as Zakin did with Lacan, Bahovec brings Beauvoir into dialogue with thinkers who were her historical contemporaries but who are usually assigned to a subsequent generation of French intellectual culture.

Each of these chapters also gives influence a different significance in the reading and writing of philosophy. Christine Daigle's chapter, "Unweaving the Threads of Influence," addresses three points of reciprocal influence in Beauvoir's philosophical relationship with Sartre – ontological commitments, methodological commitments, and literary commitments. But Daigle also asks, in a Nietzschean spirit, why influence matters to us.

**Part III. Beyond *The Second Sex*.** Part III of the *Companion* explores the remainder of Beauvoir's corpus. The topic of the first part is "Beauvoir's Ethics and Political Philosophy" apart from *The Second Sex*. The texts in question include the early essays from Beauvoir's so-called "moral period," such as the classically existentialist "Pyrrhus and Cineas" and *Pour une morale de l'ambiguïté* [*The Ethics of Ambiguity*], the essays from *Privilèges*, and other texts now collected in the volume *Political Writings* (Beauvoir 2012). The section begins with a highly accessible chapter on "Pyrrhus and Cineas" by Kristana Arp, which explains why this essay is better suited for introducing students to existentialism than Sartre's now-classic "Existentialism is a Humanism." Arp shows how Beauvoir's essay does, in fact, address the familiar question of whether life has meaning, what that might be, and what conditions make that meaning possible.

Subsequent chapters in this section focus loosely on human conflict in a political, economic, or sexual context. Laura Hengehold reads *The Ethics of Ambiguity* with an eye to the role of separation and aggression in human existence and in sexual imagination, showing how these fundamental ethical concerns remain at the center of "anti-social" trends in queer theory. Lori Marso explores the implications of Beauvoir's refusal to rule out violence as a political tool. How does Beauvoir's awareness of the ever-present potential for conflict inform her understanding of freedom and oppression? Debra Bergoffen asks how Beauvoir's ideas about myths posing women as "the sex" are actualized in rape and in the related social degradation of sex workers. In these chapters, Beauvoir's public refusal to support the pardon of condemned Collaborationist writer Robert Brassilach and her advocacy on behalf of the Algerian militant Djamila Boupacha play a central role. In various ways, they tease out a Beauvoirian ethical perspective on the phenomenon of shame as well as violence.

In the final chapter of this section, Patricia Hill Collins investigates the concept of freedom found in all of Beauvoir's texts. While most of the chapters read Beauvoir as a phenomenologist, "Simone de Beauvoir, Women's Oppression and Existential Freedom" interrogates the political implications and theoretical obstacles that arise when Beauvoir philosophizes using universals and analogies like the analogy between race and gender. Like Sandford, Collins is concerned with the definitions of disciplinarity thrown into play by *The Second Sex* and with the problems of "methodological narcissism" that limit their ability to produce effective knowledge for all women. Beyond critiques of any specific analogy Beauvoir might have used, this chapter focuses on problems posed by analogy as philosophical method.

For most of her life, and by her own stated preference, Beauvoir identified with her role as a literary author and published seven major works of fiction, ranging from short story cycles to novellas, including the award-winning *Les Mandarins*. Yet all of her literary output was philosophically informed, and her notion of "committed literature" differs from Sartre's in important respects. The second section of Part III in this *Companion*, titled "Beauvoir and the Art of Philosophical Fiction," introduces readers to the range of issues found in Beauvoir's novels, lectures and essays on literature, as well as Beauvoir's introductions to the literary works of others. Meryl Altman leads off with "Beauvoir as Literary Writer." This chapter explores not only Beauvoir's criteria for literary excellence but asks how Beauvoir, among other feminists, has understood what makes writing political. Why, she asks, we do not read *The Second Sex* for its literary qualities as well as its theoretical insights? Altman, like Sandra Reineke, spends time on Beauvoir's early play "Les bouches inutiles" ("The Useless Mouths") and shows how this play prefigures many of the concerns about women's contingent social status in *The Second Sex*.

Anne van Leeuwen ("Simone de Beauvoir and the Dialectic of Desire") offers a reading of Beauvoir's first well-received novel, *L'Invitée* (*She Came to Stay*) in which Beauvoir's reworking of Hegel is considered from a structuralist psychoanalytic perspective. Van Leeuwen's reading of the novel, it should be noted, steps back from the emphasis on recognition in Beauvoir's ethics found in earlier chapters on love. In "The Failure of Female Identity in Simone de Beauvoir's Fiction," Shannon Mussett investigates the portrayals of feminine psychology in Beauvoir's novels, particularly *L'Invitée*, *Tous les hommes sont mortels* (*All Men are Mortal*), and *La femme rompue* (*The Woman Destroyed*). Beauvoir was famously criticized for not presenting "positive" female characters or for failing to encourage empathy with female characters that she believed were in the grip of sexist illusions or ethical errors. In different ways, Van Leeuwen's and Mussett's chapters are fruitful when read along with Zakin's earlier chapter on narcissism and Beauvoir's debt to Lacan. Mussett's treatment of *The Woman Destroyed* also complements Bauer's discussion of motherhood as destiny. Finally, Sally Scholz uses *Les Mandarins* to illustrate Beauvoir's understanding of the "metaphysical novel" found in the early essay, "Literature and Metaphysics."

Although Beauvoir was a trenchant critic of the myths enclosing women in the role of Other, including literary myths, she also invented myths about her own life and the relative place held by philosophy and literature, as well as Jean-Paul Sartre and other male and female lovers through the years. Beauvoir was a keen observer and chronicler

of her own life, her time, and the world around her. She published six volumes of memoirs, including accounts of her last days with her mother and with Sartre, two works of travel writing, and eventually, a significant body of personal letters. These are the subject of the final section of Part III, “Beauvoir’s Scope.”

First, Margaret Simons tells the story of her various efforts to confront Beauvoir for minimizing the role of philosophy in her personal myth and the way this has affected our understanding of the history of existentialism. Next, in “Witnessing Self, Witnessing Other,” Ursula Tidd describes the different narrative strategies by which Beauvoir synthesized a “self,” an “era,” or a “life” for readers in each of her historical genres. Tidd’s account presents war as a gendered experience, and explores World War II and the Algerian War as key moments when Beauvoir’s understanding of the relationship between gender and social situation changed. In doing so, Tidd shows how the existential-phenomenological understanding of *historicity* as an aspect of human situation also applies to the female body as situation.

Michel Kail’s contribution (“Women and Philosophy of History”) tackles the role of history in Beauvoir’s work head on. Readers, Kail argues, assumed Beauvoir had no distinctive philosophy of history because of Sartre’s well-known contributions to this domain in *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, particularly the introduction published as *Search for a Method*. Kail, a former editor to *Les temps modernes*, shows how Beauvoir’s understanding of history is bound up with the *natural* dimension of human existence as well as the autobiographical dimension, and therefore cannot be reduced to a determinism. In this, his chapter complements Eva Bahovec’s on Beauvoir and structuralism.

Earlier in the volume, Sonia Kruks situated Beauvoir’s comments on Marxism with respect to the Cold War and justifications of right-wing thought in France. In “The Post-War World According to Beauvoir,” William McBride looks at Beauvoir’s full-length travel reports on her trips to the United States and China, *America Day by Day* and *The Long March*, during a time of political tension among the United States, the Soviet Union, and China. He reveals how the politics of translation concealed Beauvoir’s concerns about American racism from anglophone readers and how differently the Americans and the Chinese, who have since emerged as contemporary rivals, seemed to envision their future at the moment when Beauvoir encountered them.

In 1973, Simone de Beauvoir published one of the first significant gerontological studies of Western societies. As with *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir was inventing a new interdisciplinary field with political and existential significance around a familiar but disparaged population. The phenomenon of aging demonstrates that historicity is part of the individual human condition. In *Old Age (The Coming of Age)*, Beauvoir argued that the elderly *become* Other rather than, like women, being presumed Other from the start. However, while men can avoid the situation of being female, no human can avoid the situation of aging. In the chapter titled “Afterlives,” Penelope Deutscher plays with the multiple meanings of alterity, uniting themes from all Beauvoir’s writings on memory, time, historicity, and selfhood. She reads *Old Age* with an eye to the concept of *intersectionality* made prominent by African-American feminist theorists and asks how categories of experience like race or age tend to expand or limit one another’s scope in

the course of doing actual social science. This chapter adds Beauvoir's comparison between Other-as-woman and Other-as-elderly to the volume's ongoing discussion of analogical thinking, leading Deutscher to ask how analogies can be expanded or contracted to do justice to overlapping and complex forms of oppression.

**Part IV. Beauvoir and Contemporary Feminism.** Together with Gines and Collins, Deutscher's treatment of intersectionality situates Beauvoir's less known but equally provocative text on aging in the context of contemporary feminist concerns. Today, Beauvoir is read by scholars and the ordinary public in countries with their own movements and historical conflicts over kinship, gender, and community. How does the anti-naturalist concept of "becoming" woman translate from one historical context to another? In what ways does Beauvoir remain "*actuel*" or relevant to contemporary feminism, both in Europe and around the world?

On the one hand, Beauvoir's texts encounter biological and bioethical issues posed by scientific and technological advances, as well as the feminist philosophy of science that has emerged since her death. As Emily Anne Parker already hinted in an earlier chapter, biology and new materialism have become important counterparts to phenomenology in enabling us to make sense of Beauvoir's claims. Non-reductive forms of materialism do not seem to entail the determinism or teleological (and covertly religious) ideas about nature that proved so damaging to women's freedom in masculinist societies. How might these discourses change, for example, our reading of girlhood in *The Second Sex*? Moreover, what might Beauvoir's chapter look like if it were rewritten to include girls of many races and nationalities?

Although biological explanations for racism have been proven nonsensical, as Shannon Sullivan shows, racism and discrimination do have biological effects on those who are racially differentiated. Rather than critiquing Beauvoir's racism, "Race After Beauvoir" puts the theoretical resources of Beauvoir's chapter on "Biology" together with feminist science studies in the service of anti-racism. In "Who is the Subject of *The Second Sex*?" A. Alex Antonopoulos re-reads the same chapter of *The Second Sex* by way of Simone de Beauvoir's very early essay on the French biologist Claude Bernard. Antonopoulos points out that in French philosophy of science, the word *expérience* has the double meaning of "experience" (i.e., *expérience vécue*) and "experimentation." Playing on the difference between the external understanding of the body as shaped by genetics and the internal understanding of the body as shaped by endocrinology, Antonopoulos argues that the felt "error" of transmasculine experience resists both the scientific and political normalizing of the body in the history of biology.

On the other hand, Beauvoir's texts encounter contemporary forms of transnational feminism and the legacy of France's colonial presence in Algeria. Since they were first published, the Cold War has ended and formerly colonized countries have become independent. As Joan Scott points out, the status of women was even used as a litmus test for selecting new countries to join the European Union (Scott 2003). Women's rights and LGBT rights are often promoted as a sign of moral progress and sometimes used by wealthy nations to justify or deny international intervention or aid. Simone de Beauvoir's name was associated with atheism and rebellion against traditional French

Catholicism, however blunted it may have been by republican *laïcité*; today, atheism is accepted in Europe and European conflicts over religion center on Islam rather than Catholicism.

Although North African immigrants have been arriving in France since the nineteenth century, their current social situation is shaped by the politically controversial return of “white” French colonists (*pièdes noirs*) to the French metropole after the Algerian War and the influx of refugees from Algeria’s civil war in the 1990s. In “Misunderstanding in Paris,” Karen Vintges situates Beauvoir with respect to the larger European context of discomfort with Islam and non-European immigration. Popular opposition to these phenomena now threatens the European Union and the traditions of civil liberties that Western Europe has long taken for granted. Beauvoir’s ideas, to Vintges’ alarm, have been recruited by thinkers on the center right to feed arguments for why feminism is incompatible with religious tolerance and a pluralistic immigration policy.

As Patricia Hill Collins noted earlier in her chapter, it is interesting to see which of Beauvoir’s claims about sexism remain valid in the highly religious environment of French immigrants from North Africa, an environment in which mainstream racism toward young black and Arab men is a constant preoccupation for their lovers, sisters, and mothers. In “Beauvoir’s Legacy to the *Quartiers*,” Diane Perpich investigates the relevance of *The Second Sex* for French women’s rights activists of immigrant descent. By discussing the trajectories and struggles of specific activists against the backdrop of feminism’s changing self-conception in France, as well as in Quebec, Perpich shows where Beauvoir’s analysis of women’s oppression and even her style of self-narration remain alive for marginalized French women, although often in the form of a tacit cultural reference.

Kyoo Lee’s “philopoetic” intervention, “Second Languageing *The Second Sex*,” returns to the question of translation. Lee asks how Beauvoir’s ideas resonate and change when they migrate outside the sphere of European languages and intellectual influence. Specifically, she queries, “how does the self-renewing, textured temporality of “*On ne naît pas femme: on le devient*” translate – transfer and transform – itself into other “natural,” “major” “Continental” languages?” such as “Arabic, Chinese, Hindi, Swahili ... Afrikaans, Japanese, Korean, Persian, Turkish, etc.” Lee examines the philosophical resonances carried by the words for “being born” and its subject, the “one,” in Korean and Chinese. She suggests that we have no reason to believe the “second” sex is necessarily bound to the “first” metaphysics of European thought. Indeed, this concluding chapter points us towards those linguistic and philosophical communities (for example, Latin America, most of Africa, the Indian subcontinent, and the Arab world) that were not represented in the final version of this *Companion*, and from which scholars will surely put together their own collections in coming decades.

When citing *The Second Sex*, all authors in this volume have used the 2009 English edition translated by Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier. However, it may be useful for readers to know that the British edition (published in 2009 and 2013 by Jonathan Cape) and the U.S. edition (published in 2009, 2010, and 2011 by Knopf and Vintage) have different introductions (by Sheila Rowbotham in the British case and by Judith Thurman in the American case). This means that the page numbers for citations to the English translation of *The Second Sex* may vary from chapter to chapter,