MARLENE BICHET (Montbéliard)

Translating Feminist Philosophy:
A case-study with Simone de Beauvoir's *Le Deuxième Sexe*

Abstract

The relationship between languages and philosophy is so strong that French philosopher Barbara Cassin speaks of 'philosophising in languages' (Cassin 2010). This paper aims to show how translation can be a means to help disseminate philosophical ideas. It might even be called a political tool, when circulating feminist philosophical thoughts is concerned. The article uses the latest English translation of Simone de Beauvoir's Le deuxième sexe to address the pitfalls philosophy presents translators with. It also aims to defend the Interpretive Theory of Translation as a translation strategy particularly relevant to philosophy.
The novelty of the paper lies in the fact that the translation of feminist philosophy is largely under-analysed in the field of Translation Studies. Therefore, the article intend to bridge the gap between those disciplines, in order to enhance the reception of feminist philosophy.

Keywords: Interpretative Theory of Translation, Simone de Beauvoir, Feminist Philosophy, Reception, Retranslation

Introduction

The first English translation of *Le Deuxième Sexe* (1949) was published in 1953 in the United States and was done by a zoology professor, H.M. Parshley. Parshley was specialised, neither in translation, nor in philosophy, which proved problematic, and, furthermore, the publishing house who commissioned the translation seemed to have mostly considered lowering the costs and increasing the prospective readership, as is illustrated by the numerous departures from the original source text. Indeed, the French book was considerably abridged, and the many cuts gave the readers a 'simplified' (although in reality a rather confusing) version of de Beauvoir's *magnum opus*. 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 truncations and the mistranslation of philosophical terms gave reasons for scholars to call for a new translation, which was eventually published 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: many 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.

However, a close analysis of Beauvoir scholar Toril Moi's review of the latest English translation makes us question this translation strategy. In the *London Review of Books* (2010), Toril Moi condemns the new translation for its extreme literalism and she lists what she argues to be 'three fundamental and pervasive problems' related to the terminology, the syntax, and tense usage. Her thorough review is, however, produced without engaging with a Translation Studies perspective. Nonetheless, it is a useful basis for further research and the present paper aims to show that the latest English version of *The Second Sex* is indeed foreignized and that choosing this translation strategy leads to misrepresenting de Beauvoir and her feminist philosophy. I contend that foreignization is not relevant for (feminist) philosophy, which will help us uncover other strategies more suited to translate this specific genre. Besides a corpus (coming from the 2009 English translation of *Le Deuxième Sexe*) comparing the French source text and its English translation, I address the issues of the translators' goals and the translation project, as well as the translation's reception.

1. *Le Deuxième Sexe*'s philosophical content

De Beauvoir's ideas on women's liberation are intertwined with her philosophical approach, thus developing her own philosophical analysis. Although primarily known as a feminist essay, *Le Deuxième Sexe* relies on de Beauvoir's philosophical argument. She is an advocate of Existentialism and she tells her readers that she adopts "existentialist morality" (Beauvoir 1976, I, 33). She also embraces Existentialist concepts, such as the notion that 'existence precedes essence.' Indeed, she warns women against categories such as 'the Narcissist', 'the Woman in Love' or 'the Mystic', and she asks them to be 'authentic', a notion she particularly illustrates in the book's final chapter on 'the Independent Woman'. In this last chapter, de Beauvoir encourages her readers to be responsible for their actions. 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* (1970), in which Greer argues that "the altruism of women is merely the inauthenticity of the feminine person carried over into behavior" (Greer 1970, 152).

De Beauvoir's work is revolutionary due to the methodology she uses, but also thanks to the theories developed on women and on Existentialism. *Le Deuxième Sexe* is an original reference work, a detailed and comprehensive account of women through the lenses of various disciplines. Moreover, the fact that de Beauvoir chose Existentialism as a framework is also trailblazing because Existentialist theory is not the most favourable one to deal with the question of women. As a matter of fact, it can be said that Existentialism disregards women, or, 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). That interpretation is supported by Jeffner Allen, who coined the term 'patriarchal existentialism', explaining that, because this theory does not speak to women, the latter cannot identify with it (Allen and Young 1989, 72). Therefore, feminist philosophy has to question this status quo by incorporating women's experience in Existentialism, as *Le Deuxième Sexe* shows. For instance, de Beauvoir's methodology derives partly from phenomenology, which refers to the study of phenomena and relates to our experience and our perception of the world.

With such a methodology, de Beauvoir led the way to feminist philosophers using phenomenology in their work. For example, in *Throwing Like A Girl*, Iris Marion Young explores the way young girls are said to throw balls differently than boys of the same age, and discusses other 'feminine' behaviours, such as sitting or walking, to then examine girls and boys' socialization (Young 2005, 32). Young draws heavily on de Beauvoir, but she wishes the latter had also studied 'situatedness of the woman's actual bodily movement and orientation to its surroundings and its world', instead of focusing on more obvious phenomena, such as menstruation or pregnancies (ibid., 29).

Yet, de Beauvoir's explanation of feminine and masculine behaviours being socially constructed, entwined with the existential phenomenology she uses, are at the foundation of Young's study, which emphasises de Beauvoir's feminist philosophical influence.

In addition, by using factual examples from women's everyday lives in *Le Deuxième Sexe*, de Beauvoir grants it two dimensions: the everyday and the philosophical. She successfully merges philosophy with her subjective concern as a woman, thus giving us an pioneering feminist philosophical work in which she intertwines the everyday and the metaphysical (Bauer 2001, 858). Indeed, she begins her book with the metaphysical question 'What is a woman?' and answers in the personal, arguing that she is a woman herself (Bauer 2001, 870). Combining factual personal situations and philosophical reflections is one of *Le Deuxième Sexe*'s strengths and it also explains its success, as readers can relate to the lived experiences outlined in the book.

According to Nancy Bauer, *Le Deuxième Sexe* is a keystone of feminist philosophy, aiming to defy philosophy 'to transform itself, internally and from the ground up' (Bauer 2001, 24). If such is the case, then translators are confronted with the issue of rendering both the feminist and the philosophical message at the core of de Beauvoir's book. We will first give a brief account of the translation of philosophy, to then pinpoint the possible approaches to translate feminist philosophy.

2. The translation of philosophy

2.1. Foreignization and the philosophical discourse

Although foreignization is often described as a legitimate translation strategy (see Venuti 1995), I contend that it is not the most satisfactory model to translate philosophy. For instance, foreignization often disrupts the target language's linguistic rules, which can undermine the translation of philosophical texts, as philosophy relies on subverting language. Therefore, a source text might be hard to grasp due to its inventive use of language, but its foreignized translation might be even more puzzling, if the target language's linguistic rules are being disturbed. As Jonathan Rée explains, "[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 2001, 252-53). Foreignizing philosophical translations would bestow an extra layer of foreignness, leading to possible misunderstanding.

Another translation approach to render philosophy could be the Interpretive Theory of Translation (ITT), as philosophy is often equivocal and depends on the reader's understanding and interpretation. Interpretation is at the heart of the ITT, which stems from interpreter training and argues that translating is an act of communication. The ITT zeroes in on sense. According to Marianne Lederer, "[sense] arises as a matter of course, especially in consecutive interpretation where sense is not only what interpreters understand and express but also the only thing to mark memory as the words themselves vanish [...] Sense is also the central issue in translation even though the circumstances of production and reception differ" (Lederer 2014,12). Therefore, translation follows this course of action: translators understand the sense of a foreign language utterance and deverbalize it before reformulating it in their own native expressions (Lederer 2010,174-177). Moreover, the ITT aims to reduce ambiguity and polysemy in translation, because it focuses on the given context of the source text, as well as the urgency of having extra-linguistic knowledge.

Focusing on 'sense' is also encouraged by philosophy, as we can see with 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 definition of sense describes a crucial principle of Existentialism, namely the refusal of 'essence.' That suggests that words do not have an essence which encloses meaning, but, rather, that only the relation between words creates sense.

2.2. "Philosophizing in languages"

Besides resorting to polysemy, subverting language and creating coinages, philosophy is plurilingual, which can lead to translation problems when terminology crosses borders.

According to Barbara Cassin in her *Vocabulaire européen des philosophies: Dictionnaire des intraduisibles* (2004), we are "philosophizing in languages" (quoted in Apter 2012, 173) as languages (and by extension translation) and philosophy have always been closely intertwined. The philosopher and philologist aims to examine the "Untranslatables", philosophical concepts which need constant retranslation because they are ambiguous. Her suggestion reminds us of Marcel Govaert's claim that:

> [...] bien souvent l'intraduisible est ce qui n'a pas encore été traduit correctement" [... what is untranslatable is often enough what has not yet been correctly translated] (Govaert 1971, 39-62).

It would mean that untranslatability is not absolute, but translators must better their translations through trial and error. Even though I agree with that view and I argue that it pertains to the translation of philosophical texts, it is important to remember that philosophy is partial to the creation and usage of neologisms, which do not always have equivalents in a target text. In this regard, it is interesting to note how German terminology is translated into French, through 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'), but also how German terms can be used in French too. For example, Simone de Beauvoir refers to Mitsein in the *Le Deuxième Sexe*: "[...] elles prétendent participer au mitsein humain." (Beauvoir 1976, I, 34).

Interestingly, there are variations in terms of borrowing patterns between French and English, as the following chart shows:

German	French	English
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 can affect the translations between those two languages, presumably increasing the risk of missing a philosophical reference, which is the case with *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 obscuring the Heideggerian connection (Moi 2010). Such issues stem both from the multilingual aspect of philosophy, and from the superimposition of philosophical concepts 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.

According to Hans W.L. Freudenthal, '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). Philosophy particularly illustrates this assertion as philosophical terms bear witness to their time, which must be taken into account by translators, especially as language evolution and relation create deceptive cognates, also called *false friends*. It is indeed obvious that the long-lasting contact between French and English shaped those two languages, so that it is usual to find identical idioms in both languages, while their meanings are often far from similar. This issue is notably evident in the translation of French philosophy, as shows the French term 'actuellement', which should not be mistaken with the English adverb 'actually', as it generally means 'at present' in French, except in some cases where it has the philosophical meaning of 'in acts.' Deceptive cognates are pervasive in French and English, but, according to Jonathan Rée, they particularly disturb translators of philosophy, asserting that '[...] no one gets so much grief from those treacherous terms as the philosophical translator' (Rée 2001, 233). Indeed the frequency of false friends in both languages is another hindrance to the translation of philosophy.

Moreover, temporality is not used in the same way and to connote the same things between languages. For instance, the French conditional mood is often used to express doubt (a rather characteristic usage in French philosophy), which needs to be translated differently into English, with such phrases as 'supposedly', or 'according to' (Rée 2001, 228; Moi 2010). That seemingly incidental example shows how imperative it is to shift from the source text's linguistic norms, but it demands a profound knowledge of both linguistic rules of the target language and the philosopher's theory. A translator must perceive when style and content are interconnected, to then find the most relevant way to render the same meaning in the target text.

3. Translating feminist philosophy

Translating feminist philosophy entails rendering philosophical thoughts and terms, without neglecting the feminist stand, which is a case of highly specialised translation. However, the synthesis of philosophy and feminism has not been comprehensively studied in Translation Studies. Yet, one noteworthy exception is feminist Existentialism, a field of expertise prompted by de Beauvoir's treatment of Existentialism and phenomenology.

Thanks to its authority and consequence, *Le Deuxième Sexe* has been studied from various points of view, and, yet, despite this influence, the book was not (re)translated into English by translators specialised in philosophy. We can therefore wonder, as Sherry Simon does, who translates French feminist philosophers? Simon indicates that "there have been few translations by the theorists who have acted as cultural intermediaries: Alice Jardine, Toril Moi, Jane Gallop, Elizabeth Grosz, etc." (Simon 2003, 91). Following that assertion,

we can only recommend for the gap between feminist and philosophy theorists and Translation Studies to be bridged.

Indeed, I would like to mention a perceptive chapter on the translation of feminist philosophers published as part of the *Routledge Handbook of Translation and Philosophy* (2018). In this Handbook, Carolyn Shread reinforces my argument when she claims that "[her] chapter sits like a bomb in a book all of whose named philosophers are men" (Shread 2018, Chapter 20). She then notes that "in this Handbook, quite typically, only one of the fourteen men is a feminist and the rest can be said to be in the service of, and subject to, patriarchy" (ibid.).

In spite of those impediments, the Handbook is a fascinating read bringing Philosophy and Translation Studies together, whilst bolstering the field of feminist philosophy within Translation Studies. In addition, Carolyn Shread argues that "translation studies [...] can help philosophy do its job better by allowing it to learn from and engage with places beyond its borders" (ibid.), which alludes to the mutual benefit of bridging the gap between disciplines.

In order to do so, we have to take into consideration the central role of the translator as agent and answer the equally cardinal question: who is translating?

In the case at hand in this paper, namely Simone de Beauvoir's *Le Deuxième Sexe* and its latest English translation, the two translators commissioned for the task had to do a retranslation, as de Beauvoir's essay was first translated into English in 1953. The fact it was a second translation might have heavily influenced the translators' approach, because the first English rendering received harsh critiques from Beauvoir scholars. Besides extensive cuts, first reported by Margaret Simons (1983), mistranslation of both general and specialised (i.e. philosophical) French terms also called for a new translation (see Moi 2002 for instance).

3.1. The retranslation hypothesis

First translations tend to be domesticated, as they introduce the source text into the target culture, so they are usually tailored to the target language and audience. Indeed, they determine whether the source text will be accepted in the receiving culture, and, if that goal is to be a central one, the translation strategy has to be to enhance the reader's experience. Once a literary text has been adopted into the target culture, once it is part of its literary canon, retranslations which are more source-text oriented can appear.

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 the retranslation of texts (Berman 1990, 1–2). To explain why translations age, we can presuppose 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). It is reminiscent of Barbara Cassin's concept of 'Untranslatable', which is also in constant need for retranslation, as, perhaps, philosophy requires even more retranslating than other genres, due to its use of language.

In the case of the specific example of retranslation we are dealing with in this paper, we can mention the 'translators-in-terror' syndrome, as Jonathan Rée calls it, namely that some translators working on canonical source texts, which have already been translated, use an undue literalism, in order to avoid potential mistranslation (Rée 2001, 233).

However, the resulting translations are often stilted and can lead to mistranslation, which can be illustrated with the latest English translation of *Le Deuxième Sexe*, as will be seen in our case-study.

3.2. The translator's central role

Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier were selected to produce the second translation, despite a lack of expertise in the field. Both of them 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 scant (Moi 2010). Why would an established publishing house such as Random House choose unseasoned translators to translate such a crucial book as *Le Deuxième Sexe*?

I deem it significant to quote some comments from an interview in which Anne-Solange Noble (Foreign Rights Director at the French publishing house Gallimard) gives her views on translation, speaking of *Le Deuxième Sexe*:

> It has been published in all countries. So, good, badly, from a faulty English translation, it does not matter!" (Linhart 2007)

The above viewpoint is later reinforced when she states 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. (Noble 2010)

Even though she adds to the stereotype of 'ivory tower' academics, Noble is probably right that not many readers who have or will encounter *The Second Sex* hold a university degree, but it does not follow that the translation of philosophical terminology should be disregarded. As a matter of fact, *The Second Sex* is being studied globally and academics crucially need an adequate English version, be it for their students or their own research.

Carolyn Shread, for instance, mentions the English translations of Simone de Beauvoir's *Le Deuxième Sexe* and the "questions that have been raised about the philosophical competency of Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier for the 2009 retranslation" (Shread 2018, Chapter 20).

4. Retranslating *The Second Sex*

Leaving aside that problematic issue, let us examine the translators' approach when dealing with *Le Deuxième Sexe*. Borde and Malovany-Chevallier's translation project (in

the sense of Berman 1995) is to reclaim de Beauvoir the philosopher and the philosophical bearing of *Le Deuxième Sexe*, a point on which they insist in the paratext around *The Second Sex* (Translators' Note loc.275-288). They declare that the translation successfully brings de Beauvoir's voice to the reader. In order to attest to this assertion, 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".

The reader is thus told that Borde' and Malovany-Chevallier's translation is 'faithful' to *Le Deuxième Sexe* and, indeed, one of the main concerns expressed by the two translators is to stay close to the source text. They aim to give the readers the same text as the one de Beauvoir wrote, even keeping de Beauvoir's syntax and punctuation, as they contend that style and meaning are enmeshed.

Although I agree that style and arguments go hand in hand, I strongly disagree with the implications it has concerning Borde' and Malovany-Chevallier's translation method, because a set of norms in one language cannot merely be transposed in another language, or else translation would not be rewriting, but a simple linguistic transposition.

Moreover, Borde and Malovany-Chevallier aim to negate their subjectivity and they fear to interfere with de Beauvoir's voice to the point of 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)

In the above example, Venuti's *simpatico* (Venuti 1991) has been turned into reverence, and Borde' and Malovany-Chevallier's contention can, in part, explain their choice of translation methods, namely foreignization, because they fear to distort de Beauvoir's original text. And yet, using such a translation strategy for a philosophical treatise is particularly harmful, as it needlessly complicates the reading and obscures the philosophical insights.

4.1. The reception of the latest The Second Sex

A particularly significant review by Toril Moi was published in the *London Review of Books* in February 2010. In this article, Moi shares the results from a very detailed analysis she made comparing the French and the new English version in terms of linguistic elements and philosophical content. Moi lists the stylistic infelicities found in the new translation and she shows how basic mistakes are made, on a regular basis. She denounces the literalism of the translation and, in so doing, she shows that the core problems deal with terminology (in particular terms for gender and philosophy), tenses, and syntax. Although

she is rather critical, Toril Moi offers us a fruitful stepping stone for further research on translation strategies.

Other reviewers include Nancy Bauer, who denounces 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). She emphasises the philosophical mistranslations and mistakes, explaining that the translators' footnotes obscure the references they are supposed to clarify, as shows the following footnote:

> 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 translator's footnote in Beauvoir 2010, 7)

For Nancy Bauer, Borde and Malovany-Chevallier fail to clearly demonstrate that Mitsein also relates to Heidegger's theory, and, therefore, using the adverb 'problematically' is confusing, because *réalité humaine* is merely the French equivalent for Dasein, so the shift between German and French is not problemtic (Bauer ibid.).

In addition, the latest English translation has also been reviewed outside of academia, as illustrated by Francine du Plessix-Gray writing for *The New York Times*, in which she warns her readers that the style is very disappointing, and that the translators' use of English is faulty, commenting that "throughout, there are truly inexcusable passages in which the translators even lack a proper sense of English syntax" (Du Plessix-Gray 2010).

The present paper cannot give examples of all the translation issues presented above, but the following section will dwell upon the rendering of two key concepts in de Beauvoir's work, namely *immanence* and *authenticité*, through a contrastive analysis of the French original text and the English version by Borde and Malovany-Chevallier.

4.2. The translation of immanence

The concept of *immanence* illustrates the fact that resorting to equivalents is sometimes not only possible, but rather imperative. In order to comprehend the notion of *immanence* in *Le Deuxième Sexe*, it is useful to remind ourselves that de Beauvoir asserts that women are particularly grounded in nature due to biological constraints such as hormonal cycles and menstruation, which all lead to reduce women's "grasp of the world" (Beauvoir 2010, 46). Yet the most compelling hindrance women have to face is maternity, as it enslaves them to the species and curtails their freedom (de Beauvoir even invokes "the servitude of maternity," ibid., 35). Due to the time of publication of her book, de Beauvoir also insists on showing that women's bodies are not alone in dooming women to immanence, society does too, as women's destiny could only be marriage and motherhood.

In the following quotation, for example, de Beauvoir demonstrates that women wish for transcendence, thus trying to resist the restraints of their situation:

> Le même mouvement qui, dans les hordes primitives, soumet la femme à la supréma-tie masculine, se traduit en chaque nouvelle initiée par un refus de son sort: en elle, la transcendance condamne l'absurdité de l'*immanence*. " (Beauvoir 1976, 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 con-demns the absurdity of *immanence*." (Beauvoir 2010, 309; my emphasis)

The above example shows that Borde and Malovany-Chevallier translated the French *immanence* using the English equivalent, merely and judiciously shifting from the French syntax by not using a definite article before *immanence* (nor before *transcendence* either), as they are general concepts. We are thus given an appropriate combination of for-eignization and domestication, as a specific term similar to the French one has been used, while diverting from French linguistic norms and respecting English grammatical order.

Yet, the example helps identify other problems, in particular as regards the first clause. Its syntax meticulously follows the French source text, which shows that the chosen translation approach is a *calque* (Vinay and Darbelnet 1995, 32). The resulting translation comes across as laborious and stilted for English readers. In addition, the translation of the French noun *initiée* is particularly baffling because Borde and Malovany-Chevallier use the English noun *arrival* to translate it, and even add inverted commas around it, thus implying that they fail to find a better phrase. But *arrival* does not render the French *initiée*, so the reader might rightly wonder what de Beauvoir means. In French, the author clearly explains that manhood and womanhood are similar to castes, explaining that girls remain among themselves, distancing themselves from boys ("elles font bande à part," Beauvoir 1976, II, 49), but that they actually would like to belong to the privileged group, that of men ("Elle voudrait appartenir à la caste privilégiée," ibid.). Members of those two castes become true insiders ("initiés"), notably through their education. Using *arrival* to translate *initié(e)* is therefore incoherent and confusing, and it distorts de Beauvoir's smooth prose.

Another example of literal syntax can be found in the following quotation, with the same inconsistency 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. (Beauvoir 1976, II, 447-48)

> In "amorous adventures," properly speaking, no road opens onto transcendence. Here again, ennui accompanies the confinement of woman in immanence. (Beauvoir 2010, 699)

Using the English word *ennui* prompts remarks on the (non)equivalence between source language and target language. As a matter of fact, *ennui* stems from French and has long been naturalized in English, yet, using it instead of a synonym, such as *boredom*, de-notes a deliberate choice, because using Gallicisms such as *ennui* can be seen as elitist

(Renouf 2004, 528). Therefore, Borde and Malovany-Chevallier are inadvertently aging the original, as they seem to overlook the fact that the two words do not share the same connotations in French and English: *ennui* is a usual and neutral term in French, whereas it can have a different undertones in English, so that resorting to this term might give some readers the impression that the author is haughty. This translation choice is even more disconcerting when we notice that the French *galanterie* is rendered by *amorous adventures*, and not using the closer English term *gallantry*.

Lastly, while collecting data on *immanence*, an interesting instance of a deceptive cognate was found, namely the French adverb *actuellement*. De Beauvoir shows how women, while being the 'Other' for men, have rendered men dependent on them, even though they are also dependent on men. This mutual dependence illustrates Hegel's master-slave dialectic and de Beauvoir wants to demonstrate that it has been a reality for women:

> [...] la réciprocité du rapport maître-esclave existait *actuellement* pour elle [...] (Beauvoir 1976, I, 133)

> [...] the reciprocity of the master-slave relationship existed *in the present* for her [...] (Beauvoir 2010*, 86)

The translators cautiously rendered "actuellement" by "in the present", because the French adverb often means "currently," but, in this specific example, the philosophical meaning of "actuellement" (as used by de Beauvoir here) is close to the English "actually" and means "in acts."

4.3. The translation of authenticité

Authenticité's polysemy is a great challenge to translators. In *Le Deuxième Sexe*, de Beauvoir generally gives it a philosophical meaning. The English equivalent, *authenticity*, shares the same connotations as the French, being a synonym of genuineness or veracity; it is noteworthy that the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*) makes a direct reference to its philosophical, and especially Existentialist, meaning: "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 Online, 2019, Entry 13325).

The Second Sex is cited in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, which further acknowledges authenticity as a core philosophical concept in Existentialism. When *authenticité* is taken as a philosophical concept and translated as the English *authenticity*, its cognates authentic or authentically would be the logical choice rather than synonyms such as genuine or true, which do not carry the same philosophical implications. The pressing question is how do translators know whether or not *authenticité* conveys a philosophical connotation when they are translating *Le Deuxième Sexe*? The context of specific sections, as well as a broad knowledge of de Beauvoir's philosophy are essential.

The following example will not only deal with *authenticité*, but also with the problem of syntax and adverbs. The latter are not placed in the same way in French and English sentences, therefore, keeping close to the French syntax in translation can be problematic. The quotation below illustrates that difficulty with the adverb authentically:

> Car elle ne **choisit** pas [...] de *refuser authentiquement* son destin. (Beauvoir 1976, II, 123; my emphasis)

> Because, [...] she does not *choose authentically* to **reject** her destiny." (Beauvoir, 2010, 367; my emphasis)

In the above French quotation, de Beauvoir is stating that a girl's rejection of her fate is done in bad faith. Yet, the English translation emphasises the girl's choice, as the adverb authentically alters the verb to choose: the girl does not "choose authentically." The subtleties of the French source text are thus distorted.

In addition, there are other instances where authentic is used in English when it does not appear in the French source text. This would be innocuous if the philosophical implications relating to authenticity were not so central to de Beauvoir's argument. As Toril Moi claims in her review, "Parshley mistook philosophical terms for ordinary words: Borde and Malovany-Chevallier treat ordinary words as if they were philosophical terms" (Moi 2010). Let us examine such an example:

> [...] 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*." (Beauvoir 1976, I, 113; my emphasis)

> [...] her heart beats, she feels the pain of absence, the pangs of presence, vexation, hope, bitterness, enthusiasm, but *not authentically*." (Beauvoir 2010, 360; my emphasis)

The French expression "à blanc" here means "without consequences," and it does not seem that de Beauvoir wanted to give a philosophical turn to the point she was making. The context indicates that authentically is too strong a term. But more importantly, de Beauvoir uses her philosophical vocabulary with precision throughout *Le Deuxième Sexe*, so she would have opted for authentically had she wanted it. Therefore, we can wonder why the translators decided to render "à blanc" as "not authentically," instead of something more neutral, such as "without consequences" or "with no effect."

What conclusions can be drawn from this analysis as regards the translation of feminist philosophy? It appears that a translation which aims for formal correspondence can be detrimental to rendering philosophy, and that foreignization confers clumsy phrasing to translation, even leading to mistranslation. As a result, my contention is that domestication and a translation which respects the norms of the target language, as promoted by the ITT, should be preferred for better understanding and reception.

Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated how specialised philosophical terminology can be problematic for translation, as philosophical occurrences need to be recognised as such. In their translation of *Le Deuxième Sexe*, Borde' and Malovany-Chevallier's general approach tries to be faithful to the source text by staying close to it and lessening the influence of the translators. Yet, their presence is sometimes made more obvious, which leads to an inconsistency of approaches and bemuses the reader. As they remain too close to the source text, the translators depart from the sense of de Beauvoir's text, which stresses the relevance of using the ITT to translate feminist philosophy.

The end result is a translation which seems inconsistent and confusing, and which presents the readers with a difficult read, thus curtailing the promotion of de Beauvoir's book. I argue that aiming towards a favourable reception of de Beauvoir's essay and promoting her arguments through translation is a feminist stance. A feminist translation agenda is not only interested in revising a source text to challenge phallogocentrism; it also intends to improve the reader's 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 hostile to motherhood, the impact of English translations of *Le Deuxième Sexe* cannot be underestimated.

Dr. Marlène Bichet, Université de Franche-Comté, UFR STGI, Montbéliard,
marlene.bichet[at]univ-fcomte.fr

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