SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR'S PHILOSOPHY OF INDIVIDUATION

THE PROBLEM OF *THE SECOND SEX*

LAURA HENGEHOLD

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Abbreviations

References are to English texts and translations. In some cases, corresponding pages to the original French edition are given after a / (slash) and publication data may be found in Works Cited.

AO	Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* (*L'Anti-Œdipe*)
BN	Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*
DR	Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* (*Différence et répétition*)
EA	Beauvoir, *The Ethics of Ambiguity* ('Pour une morale de l'ambiguïté')
FC	Beauvoir, *Force of Circumstance*
FM	Nzegwu, *Family Matters*
IC	Nancy, *The Inoperative Community*
IPC	Simondon, *L'Individuation Psychique et Collective*
LS	Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense* (*Logique du sens*)
MDD	Beauvoir, *Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter*
PC	Beauvoir, 'Pyrrhus and Cineas' ('Pyrrhus et Cineás')
PL	Beauvoir, *Prime of Life* (*La force de l'âge*)
SS	Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (*Le deuxième sexe,* 2 vols)
TE	Sartre, *Transcendence of the Ego*
TFW	Bergson, *Time and Free Will*
TP	Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* (*Mille plateaux*)
WIP	Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* (*Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?*)

Chapter 1

Introduction: Blocked Singularities

'One is not born, but rather becomes, woman' (SS 283/2:13). 'On ne naît pas femme, on le devient.' Simone de Beauvoir's statement puts becoming at the heart of her ontology. However, we tend to focus on what becoming a *woman* might mean, taking the meaning of *becoming* as self-evident. We are not born philosophers either, and just as womanhood may be something we never actually achieve, becoming a philosopher is not something that happens once and for all. A focus on becoming unsettles even our confidence as to what 'being born' might mean.

Concepts are points of passage for becoming. Concepts may name discrete entities such as pianos or musical notes. But pianos are occasions for notes to repeat themselves from one concert or chord to the next, while the memory and desire for music encourage the continual movement of people and instruments around the globe. Pianos also take time to be built and to be tuned so that they are more than mute pieces of furniture, and they break down if left unused or untended. Those becoming philosophers are the people who can't help but notice that just as notes blend into one another and objects gradually shift from one category to another, acting back on the other things they encounter, concepts themselves change colour and meaning depending on the light and on their environment. But unlike a piano, or even the concept of piano, which might belong to a particular technological era and vanish with it, philosophical concepts have an intemporal capacity to enter and slip out of any historical milieu.

Along with discrete bodies, buildings, words, or emotions, we grapple with the continual change, modulation, or interruption of

environments and media, even the media of our own physiology and language. Whether or not humankind is the measure of all things, one's choice of a measure is shaped by the *quality* of one's encounter with the given. Measures are selected from the flow of ongoing experiences and events, but the clock and the scale are so familiar that they make change seem as standardised and infrequent as the beings who undergo change. My body, always adding and losing cells, is a way station in the becoming of water or nutrients that might also irrigate a field or be frozen in a glacier. My kitchen is filled with plastic boxes that were once petroleum and could yet become part of a landfill on which housing is built. The molecules that make up plastic are currently organised to store portions of food; but, entering into combination with other dishes, their contents may unlock the movement of verbal significance over a meal.

Every noticeable phase of a thing's existence lasts for a certain duration and is conceptually 'cut' from a longer transformation, even if it is a very, very slow one.[1] And every experience holds its quality only for so long, whether or not we reflect on our state of mind or remain focused on the (more or less) stable phenomena around us. Words, gestures, feelings appear and evolve; so do the stacks of paper in my apartment, overlapping, criss-crossed, clipped, for which I am apparently a means of reproduction. The shifts between becomings and the *beings* with which they are identified in language and intention are fraught with indeterminacy. As Toril Moi has pointed out, none of us is ever a *woman* to the exclusion of other social or natural identities, capacities and aspirations;[2] none of us is ever just a philosopher, either.

Simone de Beauvoir is increasingly taken seriously as a philosopher. This is, in part, because her training in philosophy and her references to the history of philosophy were recognised by members of the profession in numerous countries. She could be situated with respect to similar thinkers at a certain historical moment. But one also wonders what kind of philosopher Beauvoir could have become *for us* if we had thought about the history of philosophy – including its contemporary practice – in a non-linear fashion whereby biography and works do not accompany one another chronologically, and influences do not always precede their effects. If history is a way of delimiting and connecting becomings, then it is hard to say exactly when concepts are born in the flow of significance and from whom. Maybe this is why Socrates identified himself merely as a midwife.

Debra Bergoffen, Eleanore Holveck, Sara Heinämaa and Anne Van Leeuwen read Beauvoir as a phenomenologist because this is the tradition from which she draws her named sources, the tradition in which her friends wrote philosophy, and the tradition of ideas to which her own contributions seem most similar.[3] Other scholars, such as Eva Lundgren-Gothlin, Jo-Ann Pilardi, and Nancy Bauer, read Beauvoir's phenomenology as peculiarly Hegelian, because of the nineteenth-century philosopher's presence in *The Second Sex* [1949], and because Beauvoir engaged in a more extensive dialogue with Hegel than did her colleagues.[4] But Toril Moi reads Beauvoir as an ordinary language philosopher, in accordance with an English philosophical tradition with which Beauvoir would have had no direct acquaintance. *The Second Sex*, according to Moi, clarifies meanings and exposes the irrational assumptions behind our use of everyday terms like 'woman' just as Gilbert Ryle or Ludwig Wittgenstein might have called for.[5]

One need not draw on a common philosophical heritage or library of names to explicate the concepts of a philosopher or philosophical school. This book reads Beauvoir's concepts according to the definition of philosophy laid down by Gilles Deleuze, even though he did not become famous until her career was almost finished. [6] Reading Beauvoir with Deleuze gives more weight to the ontology of 'becoming' announced in *The Second Sex*. It allows us to bring her text into relation with more events that cannot easily be traced to linear cause-effect relations, events that emerge only in retrospect, including events in the international history of feminist movements.[7] Moreover, this reading reveals another philosophical side to Beauvoir's corpus, one Margaret Simons identified with Bergson and Leibniz in Beauvoir's student writings, although I argue that it extends to texts, including novels, late in her career. Even as a text of existential phenomenology, *The Second Sex* simply makes more sense, relates to the rest of her work, and is able to do more when we understand philosophy the way Deleuze did, rather than the way Beauvoir's precursors or contemporaries did.

Approaching *The Second Sex* as an exercise in the creation of concepts also allows us to resolve some problems in Beauvoir's reception. Like versions of the phenomenological reading that focus on literature, this approach renders Beauvoir's reluctance to call herself a philosopher less controversial or mysterious. It lets us see a reciprocal experimental process at work in Beauvoir's thinking and the course of her unconventional personal relationships:

her bisexuality, her principled non-monogamy, and the support and acknowledgement she gave to other philosophers in her life. It elaborates the stakes involved in resisting historicism among philosophers, including feminist philosophers from different geographical regions whose historical relations of influence have not and may never settle into a single story. By focusing on *concepts* rather than on universals, finally, it allows us to tackle the critiques of Beauvoir's supposed universalism and the manifest universalism of some movements she influenced, critiques that have emerged internationally over the last thirty years, particularly from women in the African diaspora.

While some feminists have investigated Deleuze's notion of becoming-woman, this reading of Beauvoir helps us to think more clearly about future events in which women's thinking, like the thinking of others, *becomes philosophical*. My goal in this text is not to make Beauvoir a Deleuzian but, above all, to trace a problem or process of becoming that implicates both thinkers. Such a project subtly transforms Deleuze by forcing his concepts to respond to the exigencies of at least one woman's quest for creativity. In *Anti-Oedipus* [1972], Deleuze and Guattari discuss Nietzsche's identification with 'every name in history' insofar as he was a bundle of becomings rather than a given being (AO 21/28). What I want to understand is the process through which Beauvoir's own life and concepts were generated, differentiated from others, and participate in the *differentiating* and *becoming of concepts* that Deleuze identifies with philosophy 'itself', apart from any individual thinker.

Phenomenology

But first, what does it mean to read *The Second Sex* as a work of phenomenology? Phenomenology is a philosophical project developed by Edmund Husserl toward the end of the nineteenth century. Husserl aspired to a rigorous description of the conditions linking humans to their world and thereby making knowledge and action possible. The *meaning* or *significance* of any phenomenon, he argued, could only be accounted for in terms of a consciousness that was 'intentional', oriented *towards* or *about* something, and in terms of its relationship to a world whose givenness facilitated and resisted these intentions. Phenomenology focuses on the quality of experience as the result of typical, habitual encounters between

conscious beings and their perceptions, hopes, memories, objects of knowledge and everyday practices. The structure of experience, he believed, was the basis for eventual knowledge claims. As he reformulated the project over the course of his career, Husserl moved from describing this structure to justifying his conclusions compared to the claims of existing disciplines. Thus phenomenology, especially after its first phase, was also a struggle against the tendency towards naïve empiricism and unacknowledged intellectual prejudices in logic, mathematics, psychology and the human sciences.

Eleanore Holveck persuasively describes *The Second Sex* as a phenomenological text whose two volumes correspond respectively to the two *reductions* or shifts of intellectual perspective recommended by Husserl.[8] *Reduction* is the reflective act by which we set aside our everyday, inherited beliefs about the nature of the mind and the world, beliefs that often incorporate bits of metaphysical, scientific, and folk terminology and assumptions (which he calls the 'natural attitude'), and thereby attend more closely to the nature of the encounter *between* living experience and its objects or meanings.[9] Husserl's phenomenology requires us to render experience manageable by 'reducing' it to the relationship between consciousness and its world (this, he called the *phenomenological* and later the *transcendental* reduction). Until late in his career, he also believed we must further reduce the elements of that relationship to their most typical or ideal forms (a process called the *eidetic* reduction).

Like many of Husserl's works, *The Second Sex* begins by bracketing the natural sciences' understanding of some 'object' – in this case, 'woman' – and by challenging the natural attitude that leads both scientists and ordinary readers to accept the reality of entities as they are described by science.[10] For example, *The Second Sex* examines discourses like biology, psychology (psychoanalysis), and economics (historical materialism) that claim knowledge about women and claim to explain women's social inferiority. In *Volume One*: *Facts and Myths* (*Les Faits et les Myths*), Beauvoir shows that these disciplines are not rooted in the basic structure of human experiences of sensation, imagination and reason. Rather, these disciplines reflect the experiences in which *men* engage with their world, as well as some of men's unjustified biases. In other words, the tacit notion of masculinity is part of the 'natural attitude' prejudicing the sciences. Thus Holveck writes:

> One of the most important contributions of *The Second Sex* for feminists today is that it argues for all time that no scientific theory, in Husserl's broad sense of *Wissenschaft*, about what males and females 'are', can be used to justify treating men and women unequally. A scientific theory presupposes that rational, reflective human beings are trying to achieve universal knowledge.[11]

The phenomenological reduction focuses our attention on the relationship between consciousness and its world, rather than on preconceived metaphysical or empiricist beliefs about the contents of that world, much less everyday cultural or psychological prejudices. In doing so, it reveals that women's appearance as an empirical social and scientific phenomenon is strongly conditioned by the *meaning* or *sense* [*sens*, *Sinn*] of womanhood and sexual difference in Western societies. In Hegelian terms, this meaning posits woman as 'Other' to the very model of subjectivity considered foundational for human experience and knowledge. Beauvoir also discovered that such disciplines ignored the evidence of women's *own* experience and their *own* reflection on the structure, values, ideas and activities comprising that experience. This is what Beauvoir proceeds to describe in *Volume Two*: *Lived Experience* (*L'Expérience Vécue*). Beauvoir's hope, according to Holveck, is to re-ground the sciences in a structure of consciousness that is genuinely universal, rather than biased towards the masculine. This means including effects of sexual difference *among* the aspects of intersubjectivity that are necessary conditions for human experience and knowledge.

Sense and the event

Given Beauvoir's frequent philosophical exchanges with Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, this is a remarkably persuasive account of *The Second Sex*, and one that Holveck further reinforces by looking at specific aspects of Beauvoir's novels that could be interpreted as phenomenological thought experiments. I do not wish to discount the phenomenological approach to Beauvoir's thought. Indeed, I draw on phenomenological readings of Deleuze such as those by Joe Hughes and Len Lawlor that allow both historically linear and non-linear encounters with Beauvoir to be identified.[12] *Sense* and *repetition* enable Beauvoir's phenomenology to become something other than the description of lived

experience or the pursuit of a more impartial universal science. We might be able to experiment with alternatives if we could analyse the *meaning* of this absolute Other and the spans of time or the repetitive encounters and acts in which women seem to be frozen as the Other.

For Husserl, sense was the target of intentional consciousness in its relationship to the world. Husserl wanted to replace the classic opposition between subject and object with a bipolar relationship, stretched between ego and world or between the activity of *noesis* (intentionality) and its *noetic correlate* (the meaning at which intentionality aims; i.e. the tree or the tune being remembered). In works by Deleuze such as *Difference and Repetition* [1968] and *The Logic of Sense* [1969], sense is less an *individual meaning* than what makes it *possible* for a proposition to refer to speakers ('manifestation'), states of affairs ('denotation'), or other propositions ('signification') and for these propositions to then be true or false (LS 12–18/22–8).[13] Put differently, sense is what a proposition *expresses* (as a whole) rather than what it refers to. Sense allows us to understand *why* a speaker would mention something in the first place. In *Difference and Repetition*, sense *results* from the repetition of pre-personal habits that structure the experience of time, as well as from the breakdown of such structures. *The Logic of Sense* explores the conditions under which sense collapses, such as schizophrenia, and the logical paradoxes that sustain sense, such as those found in the fiction of Lewis Carroll.

Deleuze's notion of habit owes much to the 'genetic' phenomenology with which Husserl replaced his earlier, 'static' focus on the objects of conscious intentional acts; a perspective that trickled into published works only towards the end of Husserl's life.[14] Genetic phenomenology responds to the question: how did a consciousness capable of sense emerge in the first place? Husserl realised this was an increasingly important question as he tackled the problems of *justifying* knowledge and explaining the *temporality* of consciousness itself, as well as fleeting objects of consciousness. He could not explain sense without the *passive synthesis* of the capacity to hold them in mind.[15]

But Deleuze also traces the study of sense to the ancient Stoics. Husserl links sense to *horizons*, which implies some kind of external limit (the back of the house which is hidden from us). But this spatial connotation is misleading, although for Deleuze, too, sense is a dimension of being. However, it is more like an invisible *surface* in the world of intentionality, with one side turned toward

things and one side touching language. Following the Stoics, Deleuze describes sense as an 'event': 'on the condition', he says, 'that the event is not confused with its spatio-temporal realization in a state of affairs' (LS 21–2/33–5).[16] Sense is an existentially orienting network of relations linking linguistic meaning (which Deleuze calls the level of effects) and states of affairs involving bodies (which he calls the level of causes). So while a proposition may describe an event in which physical causes lead to physical effects, the physical world also 'causes' events in language and language, in turn, allows us to separate the physical world into bodies that affect one another.

In *A Thousand Plateaus* [1980], Deleuze and Guattari describe the organisation of becomings into a world of stability and change as a process of *stratification*, and point to the flows of inorganic matter, living matter and signs as some of the most important flows from which phenomena emerge.[17] Only certain minerals form rock or metal ores under certain temperature conditions; only some texts are adopted into the canon of philosophy after having been the object of sufficient responses or commentaries; and citizens must pass through various anatomical, cultural and psychological filters to pass as 'women' among their peers. These stable tendencies are selected by a form of sense that is not just 'intentional' for consciousness but also produced 'unintentionally'. From a Deleuzian standpoint, the meaning of gender and the bodies, attitudes and behaviour necessary to identify gender in a given historical situation are *events*, and the event of their actualisation ties together innumerable bodily moments as an effect crowns its causes.[18] While Husserlian phenomenology begins with deliberate reflection, the act of a professional philosopher *setting aside* his professional and everyday habits (the *epoché*), Deleuzian philosophy begins with habit itself and with disorienting experiences of nonsense or shocks in which those habits prove unrecognisable.[19]

We can read *The Second Sex* as the result of deliberate curiosity about the biased conditions of current 'knowledge' about women or the masculinism of the social and natural sciences. But we can also read it as Beauvoir's response to the repeated failure to recognise *herself* and the freedom of her singularity in the habitual, historical imago men believe they encounter in women. 'If I want to define myself', Beauvoir writes, 'I first have to say, "I am a woman"; all other assertions will arise from this basic truth. A man never begins by positing himself as an individual of a certain sex . . .' (SS 5/1:13–14).

In other words, women's lives and thinking have no becoming apart from their sex, while men's are assumed to evolve 'in the middle' of multiple becomings. 'An autonomous freedom' like all others, women must struggle against being 'frozen' as objects for a consciousness other than their own and must struggle to 'transcend' and intend' only by identifying with an alien consciousness (SS 17/1:31).

The Second Sex, therefore, effects a 'destratification' from woman and from the plane on which she is defined as Other – for in its pages, Beauvoir finds herself floating between ontological tendencies, becoming apparently incompatible things at one time, but nonetheless swimming 'upstream' against the current that would assign her a certain fixed place. Beauvoir uses the nonsense running through these ontological strata to heat or shake up their remaining sediment and to disturb the seeming self-evidence of sexual and social categories. As Bauer puts it, she reveals 'the extent to which being a woman poses a *philosophical* problem – which is to say, a problem for and of philosophy'.[20]

According to *The Second Sex*, the inhibition and self-consciousness imposed on women's public activities and personal enjoyment through informal phenomena like street harassment; advertising reminders to reduce weight, enjoy motherhood more, or to buy better and better cleaning supplies; or, in some societies, formal surveillance by morality police are instances of provocative *nonsense* that arise again and again in apparently rational interactions with others who are proud to be 'modern'. In 1949, moreover, such disparities were far more entrenched in Western European and North American societies than they are today.

Men's efforts to control women's fertility even when they have no interest in supporting or caring for children, men's and women's disproportionate scepticism regarding the value of claims or proposals uttered in a female voice, and the deliberate imposition of archaic mores on women in societies fuelled by innovation and exchange constitute a kind of 'sexist sense'. This sense connects women's intentionality to possible objects and conditions the way women's speech and statements about them are judged true or false. The social and individual habits responsible for generating and reproducing womanhood as social 'Other' impose a representational screen, separating women from the singularity of their own freedom and generally putting it at the service of male becoming – even if women are affected to different degrees and not all men can take equal advantage of its

effects. These representations make it seem as if women's way of being is eternal and unchangeable, an irreversible product of *history* if not of *nature*. For many women, such experiences involve physical violence, but the impact of nonsense on the woman thinker is also violent, in the same way that, according to Fanon, 'for a man whose only weapon is reason there is nothing more neurotic than contact with unreason'.[21]

In fact, Anne Van Leeuwen brings the phenomenological reading of Simone de Beauvoir very close to Deleuze when she interprets *The Second Sex* in terms of the concept of 'ambiguity'.[22] Ambiguity refers to the indeterminacy or undecidability of a given phenomenon or action's meaning. In many contexts, this means ambiguity is a matter of uncertainty as to what phenomenon or action one is dealing with at all.

Like Holveck, Van Leeuwen reads *The Second Sex* as an inquiry into the 'sense' that determines men's relations to women. But she points out that Husserlian sense is always something doubly ambiguous, first because the world of *which it is the sense* is ambiguous (never given a priori), and second because that world is never 'fixed' or 'accomplished' – sense changes as humans engage with the world and with each other, and thereby the world also changes.[23] In Deleuzian terms, ambiguity means that a given encounter or situation is unique, as well as intrinsically multiple and caught in multiple processes of stratification. Not only is the scientific view of women 'true' only within the horizons of a sexist historical situation, Van Leeuwen suggests, but it can also be contested and revised as new situations emerge, providing new evidence and altering the identity and interests of the intentional subject.

The early Husserl would have understood this sense as the (static) object of an intentional act, perhaps one absorbed unthinkingly by men and women into their 'natural attitude'.[24] Later Husserl would have regarded it as a dynamic, changing world of a dynamic, evolving consciousness. For Deleuze, however, sense is required to form a 'world' in the first place. Indeed, sense itself involves a reciprocal process of problematisation (the first form of ambiguity) and dramatisation (the second form of ambiguity), the undoing of old strata and the congealing of new ones, virtuality and actuality. These two levels would be an ambiguity *within* sense, although too much focus on their unity, Deleuze would argue, might dangerously collapse the dynamic process of sense-creation into a static transcendental, which is why he relentlessly asserts the *multiplicity* of all becomings and assemblages.

Historicity of the problem

It may seem anachronistic to read Beauvoir in light of Deleuze unless we are on the lookout for *anachronic* as opposed to *chronological* events; that is, events that challenge our notion of what counts as a meaningful or interesting chronology.[25] However, since both Beauvoir and Deleuze consciously responded to Husserl, one can also draw bridges between their becomings using ordinary narrative history.

Having read his *Logical Investigations* [1900–1] and other early writings focused on consciousness and its categories of intentional experience, Sartre went to Berlin in 1933/4 to study Husserl more carefully at the French Institute (PL 112). Several years later, after encountering phenomenology independently from Sartre, Merleau-Ponty visited the Husserl archives in Louvain and was granted posthumous access to some of the unpublished manuscripts in which Husserl had been reworking his earlier presentation of phenomenology to explain how such categories emerged historically and in the life of individual consciousness.[26]

Sartre's *Transcendence of the Ego* [1937] criticised aspects of Husserl's turn to transcendental philosophy found in the text *Ideas I* [1913].[27] Husserl, Sartre believed, had been wrong to 'double' the spontaneity of impersonal consciousness with a 'transcendental ego' when the only ego to be found in consciousness was, like everything else, an object *for* consciousness. But at the time Sartre visited Berlin, Husserl had already begun investigating the *genetic* processes through which such categories and structures entered the circuit between consciousness and its world, although little of this material appeared in published texts during his life. These investigations included analyses of phenomena such as temporality, embodiment and intersubjectivity. Consulting these unpublished manuscripts shortly after Husserl's death made it possible for Merleau-Ponty to consider his *Phenomenology of Perception* [1945] a work with essentially Husserlian commitments although it differed significantly from published Husserl texts, as well as from Sartre's reading of Husserl.[28]

Beauvoir followed Sartre's studies at a distance and read Husserl's *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time* [1928], as well as the *Cartesian Meditations* [1929], which Husserl recommended as an introduction to phenomenology, despite potential conflicts with his unpublished views on intersubjectivity.[29] She also consulted the relevant secondary scholarship

by Emmanuel Lévinas and Eugen Fink. All her philosophical texts, particularly *The Ethics of Ambiguity* [1947] and *The Second Sex*, contain distinctive terminology associated with phenomenology. Beauvoir's positive review of *The Phenomenology of Perception* shows that she was exposed to the intersubjective, bodily and historical phenomenology Merleau-Ponty attributed in that text to Husserl's *Ideas II* and the *Crisis of European Sciences*.[30] Sara Heinämaa argues that whether her knowledge was first or second hand, Beauvoir's understanding of embodiment owes a great deal to ideas found in Husserl manuscripts that were, in part because of the intervening war, only published several decades later.

On the other hand, it is not necessary for us to draw a detailed causal connection between Deleuze and Beauvoir via Husserl, Merleau-Ponty or Sartre. For even before she encountered any of these phenomenological thinkers, Beauvoir was fascinated as a student with two other philosophers of paramount interest to Deleuze: Bergson and Leibniz.[31] In *Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter* [1958], she reports enthusiastically 'recognize[ing] her own experience' in 'Bergson's theories about "the social ego and the personal ego"' (MDD 207).[32] In her diaries, as Margaret Simons discovered, Beauvoir associates Bergson and Leibniz with the problem of the Other, the problem that seems to have served as a leitmotif through her many years of literary and philosophical work.

In their biographical origin, Beauvoir's questions about Otherness are related to the relative value of qualitative experience, which she seems to associate with literature, and to the problem of 'indiscernibles' – namely, how two items identified by the same concept can be distinguished.[33] This latter problem derives from Leibniz, for whom every existing entity, if it is truly numerically distinct, ultimately has a slightly different, distinctive concept known only by God.[34] Kant, on the other hand, argued that *space* as general form of outer human intuition allowed items to be numerically distinct while thought under the same 'universal' concept. Kant allowed God to be removed from the picture; he also relieved epistemology of any need to consider 'inner differences' that elude our spatial perception and existing concepts.[35] Beauvoir wanted to preserve that singularity, which Bergson associated with *becoming* rather than being.[36]

As her work matured, Beauvoir clearly became more aware of the myriad ways in which institutions treat people as 'indiscernible'

beings under this or that 'universal' rather than singular becomings. Representation 'blocks' becoming by opposing beings to one another in a perceptual or conceptual matrix. People themselves often collude with their erasure and that of others. The notion of *oppression* from *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, for example, describes such a situation (EA 81–96/117–39). The denial of singularity is Beauvoir's reason for objecting to the utilitarianism of economic liberalism as well as Marxist-Leninism (EA 99–114/143–66). Towards the end of her life, Beauvoir studied the effacement of older people's singularity by social institutions and by their distance from an increasingly young population.[37] *The Second Sex* emerges from a similar concern, for the becoming of half of the human race seems subjugated to a system of representation that does violence to both sexes' capacity for sense and meaning.

Now, one might easily object that Beauvoir does not discuss Husserl, Leibniz or Bergson in *The Second Sex* (and rarely in her other published writings). In fact, when discussing the Other she often refers to G. W. F. Hegel, whom Deleuze accuses of taking representation as an image of thought to its most pernicious extreme.[38] Hegel does focus on movement and becoming, rather than on being, but he focuses only on the becomings of those beings that can be conceptually opposed to one another, which (Deleuze might argue) leaves much of reality outside the picture. For Hegel, what is most real is the particular insofar as it contains universal moments – in other words, the particular musical tone or train carriage, not just isolated, but in relation to every other musical tone, musical instrument and means of transport that could be envisioned, as well as the social and historical institutions that resulted in pianos, concert halls, train stations and containerisation.

But Beauvoir also read Hegel in combination and often in tension with Kierkegaard.[39] For Kierkegaard, what is most real is the deliberate effort to identify and appreciate whatever distinguishes this instant or encounter from every other, and to hold onto that singularity in faith despite the fact that, he believed, it can never be identified in concepts. For Deleuze, like Kierkegaard, the 'things' that stand out as most real are these *ways of repeating*.[40] Becomings are ways of repeating that gradually reveal singularity. Only as becomings, Beauvoir commented, could women be compared with men (SS 45–6/1:72). She is committed to Kierkegaard's ethical task of individuating, or discovering and creating distinction from others who might seem to fall under a common universal.

The published texts Beauvoir would have been able to read by Husserl in the 1930s downplayed intersubjectivity, when they did not give a downright solipsistic portrait of the phenomenological enterprise. Although Husserl did consider intersubjectivity a background condition for individual experience, as Merleau-Ponty discovered in Louvain, and some of Husserl's unpublished texts did grapple with the problem of human uniqueness, they are ambiguous and less well known even today.[41] Sartre seems not to have engaged with them at all. Since Beauvoir consistently rejected Hegel's pursuit of a timeless universal standpoint, it appears that what she took from Hegel was his robust discussion of intersubjective and historical aspects of human becoming and obstacles to becoming, including affects of desire and aggression that threaten to overturn the boundaries of selves in opposition. Thus I believe that Beauvoir recruited Hegel to pursue an interest in intersubjectivity that originated with Bergson and Leibniz and was whetted, but probably not solved, by her own engagement with Husserl's ideas.[42]

The next chapter rereads the Introduction to *The Second Sex* closely to assess the plausibility of considering Beauvoir's philosophy as an act of critique in Deleuze's sense. By this I mean it does not just analyse a phenomenon such as 'sexist sense' but explains its emergence.[43] In doing so, philosophy also emerges along its own 'line of flight' to pose problems and to create concepts. Deleuze understands philosophical concepts as forming and extending a plane of relations among themselves (an absolute plane of immanence, rather than immanence to consciousness) (WIP 35–6/38–9). This chapter examines Beauvoir's concepts, such as 'transcendence', in light of Deleuze's criteria for philosophical invention, including the reterritorialisation of ideas by other thinkers such as Bergson, Leibniz and Sartre and the construction of conceptual personae. The plane formed by such concepts, which Beauvoir loosely terms 'existentialist morality', might enable women to escape the system of representation that poses them as the social Other; the state of immanence within which they struggle to transcend.

The third chapter reads Volume 2 of *The Second Sex* as a description of the passive syntheses and habits that build up a truly problematic experience of the world for women. Nevertheless, the community in which women participate both willingly and inadvertently requires this sense of them. When Beauvoir tries to understand why women have not formed a revolutionary class against men as a group, her answer involves the claim that

'their opposition took shape within an original *Mitsein*'; a term from Heidegger that means literally 'being-with' (SS 9/1:19). For Beauvoir, the critique of representation would involve a critique of the *Mitsein* in coupled heterosexual life and in society at large. *Mitsein* would be an example of stratification in which select forms of human coexistence appear as unchanging natural forms. What could this *Mitsein* do if it were rethought as an assemblage along Deleuzian lines? Could its habits be recomposed around the value of reciprocity? This chapter also touches on the difficulty of identifying habits that are complicit with or resistant towards 'sexist sense' in the midst of a qualitative multiplicity fusing an indefinite number of social practices.

The fourth chapter situates Beauvoir's demand for freedom on behalf of women in *The Second Sex* with respect to the ethics of the 'appeal' from 'Pyrrhus and Cineas' [1944] and her formulation (in 'Pyrrhus and Cineas' and *The Ethics of Ambiguity*) of freedom as dependent in some ways on the freedom of all others. In this chapter, I want to understand how the plane of immanence defining Beauvoir's thought as singular seems to pass through and be defined through the free becoming of others. I ask how *The Second Sex* lets us critique or understand the genesis of *Mitsein* with an eye to creating new assemblages, particularly those involving reciprocity. This is not an idea one finds anywhere in Deleuze. However, we may find something similar in Bergson's last writings and in the concept of 'transindividuality' proposed by philosopher of technology Gilbert Simondon, who had an unmistakeable influence on Deleuze and Guattari.

If philosophy involves the formulation of problems in response to a shocking, compelling or nonsensical experience, even the experience of witnessing others' suffering, this does not mean that everyone, even everyone who suffers, will formulate the same problems. The fifth chapter suggests that there need be no *one* form of sexist sense, oppressing women everywhere on the globe, for it to be worthwhile to problematise *one* or *some* of those forms in a way that suggests how others might understand the singular problems confronting *them*. Deleuze and Guattari explicitly stated that they did not expect becoming-woman would have anything to do with feminism, for feminism is a movement on behalf of 'molar' women – fully constituted beings rather than 'molecular' multiplicities in the process of composition or decomposition (TP 275–6/337–9). Was a 'molar' women's movement the only way that Beauvoir's Idea could have been actualised? To what extent

does the Idea involve becomings for which 'becoming-woman' would not even be the first or most important name?

Any new system of representations produced as solutions to a philosophical problem has its own incongruities that may lead to the formulation of other problems. The sixth chapter will consider side effects and difficulties that this way of reading Beauvoir might force us to anticipate. For example, according to Deleuze, no becoming or thought can be conceived apart from a hierarchy of forces and interpretations. Such hierarchies are necessary for beings and their transformations or interactions to be noticeable in the first place. Is there a place for this fundamental *inequality* in Beauvoir's egalitarianism and her expectation that 'authentic' individuals and institutions, those fostering the freedom of all, will also be egalitarian? What becomes of the notion of *justice* in the thought of both Beauvoir and Deleuze? Finally, how does Beauvoir herself understand 'events', including the repetitions and processes leading to sexism, feminist social movement, or women's equality?

We usually think of events as neutral moments or changes in a series, which can only be recognised against a backdrop of continuity. As mentioned above, Deleuze suggests that the meaningful relationship between speakers, states of affairs, and other statements is also an *event* (LS 19/30–1). In fact, he then reverses the equation and asks whether the only real events might not be relationships of sense! Thus Deleuze identifies two series of time – the time of mute bodies and states of affairs, and the time of the events in which they are linked and become available for reflection and communication to others. The first time series (*Chronos*) is a kind of perpetual, thick present, a *duration*; while the second series (*Aion*) is the changing or becoming itself, facing both past and future. Both are perspectives on the *same* time: one with respect to irreversibility and the other with respect to reversibility; one with respect to the beings in an encounter and the other with respect to the encounter itself, in which elements dissolve.

According to the Stoics, we have no control over bodies and their states of affairs; we do not even have adequate knowledge of them – what we can control, however, is the *events* through which we connect them. And since events often affect our bodies unpleasantly, the best we can do is to conceive of a second event in which we would be the *cause* of that unhappy event, changing it from one we suffer passively to one we actively embrace and bring about. The body

> wills now not exactly what occurs, but something *in* that which occurs, something yet to come which would be consistent with what occurs, in accordance with the laws of an obscure, humorous conformity: the Event. It is in this sense that the *Amor fati* is one with the struggle of free men. (LS 149/175)

Deleuze calls this will 'counter-actualisation' (*contre-effectuation*). It does not just resignify that 'first' unpleasant event but re-enacts it, repeats it (in French, the word *répétition* also means 'rehearsal') so as to alter its sense, and 'retrospectively' brings about a better event, better because free. Causes of an identified event do not necessarily exhaust themselves in their effects but coexist with those effects, as parents coexist with and continue to affect the children whom they have shaped, sometimes in ways they find problematic and deeply moving. At this point, the effect becomes a cause, or parents and children become both causes *and* effects in cumulative ways. They rewrite their own narratives, at the same time that they are affected by their larger social environment and act back on it. For in fact there *is* no event except insofar as multiple, differing repetitions have built up a context in which actors, meanings and states of affairs relate to each other.

In *Prime of Life*, Beauvoir claims that during World War II, 'history burst over me' or collapsed and tore her away from the comforting comprehensiveness of studying Hegel; 'I dissolved into fragments' (L'Histoire fondit sur moi, j'éclatai') (PL 295/381). We can also choose to think of lives, no less than history, as non-linear, marked by normal stretches and significant turning points (DR 188–9/244–5). A philosophy cannot be read entirely apart from a life – or an author's other acts of creativity – not to find which comes first, or to reduce later events to earlier ones, but to see later events as co-contributors to earlier ones, which only 'come into their own' from a standpoint that might even be impersonal, outside that life.

Of what event is *The Second Sex* a part, if not a history of progress in the actualisation of freedom? In other words, in what process or 'becoming' do the concepts of this book mark a distinctive turn, differentiation or deviation? To what trauma might it correspond as a counter-actualisation?[44] *The Second Sex* has generally been read as a moment in the history of feminism – an enduring moment, to be sure, one that only burst over women's heads some ten to twenty years after its publication, a moment that constantly changes, moreover, due to repeated re-evaluations

and reinterpretations. Some feminist scholars have reclaimed *The Second Sex* as a moment in the history of phenomenological philosophy, perhaps the emergence of a thread in the qualitative multiplicity of that movement allowing sexual difference to become an enduring source of questions and claims. But Beauvoir's text also marks a turn in the history of liberal theories and institutions, a transformation in the meaning of equality and liberty as essential elements of 'modern' attitudes towards government and power, in which Hegel himself plays a significant but perhaps not eternal role. And what other histories have we not even noticed emerging or bursting over us?

According to Beauvoir, 'There is no other justification for present existence than its expansion toward an indefinitely open future' (SS 16/1:31). Thinking about history neither as a tale of modern progress nor as a repetition of the (same) past makes it conceivable to participate in an open history of philosophy, and to participate in history on the side of philosophy's becoming, without having to take a break from either feminism, as Janet Halley suggests, or philosophy, as Gayle Salamon mused more recently.[45] At the same time, it acknowledges that the risks of such breaks are inevitable. Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche suggests that there would be an 'active' and a 'reactive' way to take such breaks, which would mean that abandoning the morality of a particular discursive practice might not require us to abandon ethics, preference, or selectivity altogether. We need not be 'women' or even, perhaps, self-consciously feminist to pursue planes populated with concepts that liberate women, nor need we identify with the 'West' to defend the frightening creativity associated with differentiations of sex and desire.

My reading of Beauvoir is motivated by the stubbornness of singularity. My gamble that Beauvoir's ideas can be freer through Deleuze responds to her own stubborn advocacy for the singularity of others, insofar as they, too, resist being easily representable and recognisable. For these reasons, I have tried to select only those ideas from the vast phylum of Deleuze's writings, alone and with Guattari, that enable me to push Beauvoir in this direction, or release her, as the case may be, while freeing the reader from the task of absorbing a vast terminology. Beauvoir, on the other hand, wrote at the crossroads of many ambiguous ideas, texts and schools of phenomenological thought whose respective legacies are still being worked out today. I have tried to give a coherent portrait of the phenomenology to which she and Deleuze responded, and

identify sites for further research as well as point readers towards the criticism of those with more expertise on specific debates. Finally, I have only engaged in a limited way with Deleuzean feminists, although I would not be unhappy if this book made Deleuze more user-friendly to new feminist readers. If Deleuze and Guattari are correct that desiring-machines only work by breaking down, including the desiring-machines of philosophical thought, I hope someone can find positivity in my omissions.

One dies, one thinks, but the Deleuzian Other is the one for whom the possibilities I can only imagine are a part of reality. The conclusion, accordingly, asks how Beauvoir's concept of the Other, no less than Deleuze's, changes our notion of the future imagined by feminists.

Notes

1. See Lorraine, *Deleuze and Guattari's Immanent Ethics*, 33–8.
2. Moi, *What is a Woman?*, 204–6. A shortened version of Moi's book with the same pagination has been published under the title *Sex, Gender, and the Body.*
3. Bergoffen, *The Philosophy of Simone de Beauvoir: Gendered Phenomenologies, Erotic Generosities*; Holveck, *Simone de Beauvoir's Philosophy of Lived Experience*; Heinämaa, *Toward a Phenomenology of Sexual Difference*; Van Leeuwen, 'Beauvoir, Irigaray, and the Possibility of Feminist Phenomenology'.
4. Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (SS)/*Le deuxième sexe*; Lundgren-Gothlin, *Sex and Existence*; Pilardi, *Simone de Beauvoir Writing the Self*; and Bauer, *Simone de Beauvoir, Philosophy, and Feminism*, as well as chapter 3 of Hutchings, *Hegel and Feminist Philosophy.* Beauvoir read Hegel while Sartre was a prisoner of war and her diary and letters contain reading reports. See Beauvoir, *Wartime Diary*, 304–14, 319–25.
5. While Bauer reads Beauvoir primarily in light of Hegel, her own commitments to the ordinary language tradition are evident in *Simone de Beauvoir, Philosophy, and Feminism.*
6. This possibility is raised by Michèle Le Dœuff in *Hipparchia's Choice* when she points to the understanding of cross-disciplinary fertilisation found in Bergson and Deleuze as a model for philosophical work (168–9). Linnell Secomb experiments with a similar reading in 'Beauvoir's Minoritarian Philosophy', but does not focus on specific Beauvoirian texts.
7. Here I follow Spinoza's principle in *Ethics* Book 4, Proposition 38: 'that which so disposes the human body that it can be affected in

more ways, or which renders it capable of affecting external bodies in more ways, is advantageous to man, and proportionately more advantageous as the body is thereby rendered more capable of being affected in more ways and of affecting other bodies in more ways' (Spinoza, *Ethics*, 177).

8. Holveck, *Philosophy of Lived Experience*, 21–3, 111–23.
9. For example, on the reduction, see Husserl, *Ideas I*, §31–2 and *Cartesian Meditations*, 19–21; on the natural attitude, see Husserl, *Ideas I*, §27. For a general discussion, see Welton, *The Other Husserl*, 87–93.
10. Holveck, *Philosophy of Lived Experience*, 112–14.
11. Holveck, *Philosophy of Lived Experience*, 115.
12. Hughes, *Difference and Repetition: A Reader's Guide*; Lawlor, *Thinking Through French Philosophy.*
13. Welton, *The Other Husserl*, 22, 86, 89–90. In Husserl's early work, and most of what was published during his lifetime (such as *Ideas I*), the constitution of sense is the work of the 'consciousness' pole of the field relating consciousness, world and others. In work published later, including *Ideas II*, the constitution of sense is a reciprocal process involving multiple poles, even if Husserl believed it could only be *analysed* from the standpoint of reflective consciousness. See Zahavi, 'Merleau-Ponty on Husserl', 13–15; Husserl, *Ideas I*, §55; *Cartesian Meditations*, 44–6. Len Lawlor, drawing connections between Husserl and Deleuze via Merleau-Ponty, points out that sense is always *singular* even when it is the sense of an essence or a universal expressing many particulars (Lawlor, 'The End of Phenomenology', 19–20).
14. See Hughes, *Deleuze's Difference and Repetition*, 6–10. Husserl's transition from static to genetic phenomenology occurred between 1913 (*Ideas I*) and 1921 ('On Static and Genetic Phenomenological Method'). *Logical Investigations* and *Ideas I* are 'static' in the sense that they describe the constitution of relatively unchanging rather than open-ended and evolving structures or meanings. The distinction is mentioned in *Cartesian Meditations*, 135–6. See Zahavi, *Husserl's Phenomenology*, 94; Welton, *The Other Husserl*, 93. Merleau-Ponty mentions 'genetic phenomenology' on the first page of *Phenomenology of Perception* in connection with Eugen Fink's writings on Husserl's *Cartesian Meditations*, and states that phenomenology can be a phenomenology of origins, not just 'true and immutable natures' (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, vii, xviii). Husserl's perspectives on intersubjectivity, individuation and the role of embodiment in establishing intersubjectivity evolved between 1907 (*Thing and Space*), the *Cartesian Meditations* (1929), the lectures on intersubjectivity which were developed over more than a decade starting in the 1920s, and *Ideas II* (last revised in 1928, but not published until many years after his death).

15. In its simplest form, passive synthesis involves the 'association' of ideas or perceptions – at a more complex level, the cumulative effect of perception and experience on further perception and experience. The relationship between genesis and both types of synthesis is discussed in Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, 75–81. See Welton, *The Other Husserl*, 202–4; Zahavi, 'Merleau-Ponty on Husserl', 21–3.
16. The event in which an incorporeal sense shapes our vision is perhaps exemplified by an ambiguous 'gestalt' such as the duck/rabbit figure (particularly in a context that lends itself to one interpretation rather than another). If the figure moves – hops or waddles – and disrupts the sense of our perception, that too is an event. 'Performatives' like 'I do' or 'I swear!' or official actions like government devaluation of currency may function as incorporeals inasmuch as they change the material combinations into which the affected bodies can enter (Adkins, *Deleuze and Guattari's A Thousand Plateaus*, 77–8).
17. See chapter 3 of *A Thousand Plateaus*, '10,000 B.C.: The Geology of Morals', for a detailed exploration of stratification. Along with the concept of phylum, discussed in chapter 12, '1227: Treatise on Nomadology' (esp. 406–11/506–12), *stratification* enables Deleuze and Guattari to focus their ontology on becoming and on the *process* by which stable entities appear rather than on *substances* defined by 'form' and 'matter'. Strata, they write, 'consist of giving form to matters, of imprisoning intensities or locking singularities into systems of resonance and redundancy, of producing upon the body of the earth molecules large and small and organizing them into molar aggregates' (TP 40/54). Here, 'molecules' are relatively ephemeral encounters or events of combination, while 'molar' aggregates tend to have the longevity and consistency of 'being'.
18. Merleau-Ponty, for whom the intentional act *constitutes* its object by pulling together awareness, perception and bits of the environment or ongoing discourse along a line of tension or fold so that bodies can reveal and distinguish themselves in the first place, might also understand sense as an event. See Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 77–9.
19. This is why *nonsense* is both phenomenally and methodologically crucial; as Lawlor explains, it has both generative and dissociative effects. Lawlor, 'The End of Phenomenology', 20–1; Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, 84.
20. Bauer, *Simone de Beauvoir, Philosophy, and Feminism*, 1.
21. Fanon, *Black Skin White Masks*, 118.
22. Van Leeuwen, 'Possibility of Feminist Phenomenology'.
23. Van Leeuwen, 'Possibility of Feminist Phenomenology', 478. Drawing parallels with Merleau-Ponty, Gail Weiss notes that Gestalt psychology also focuses on the ambiguity of perceptual objects and

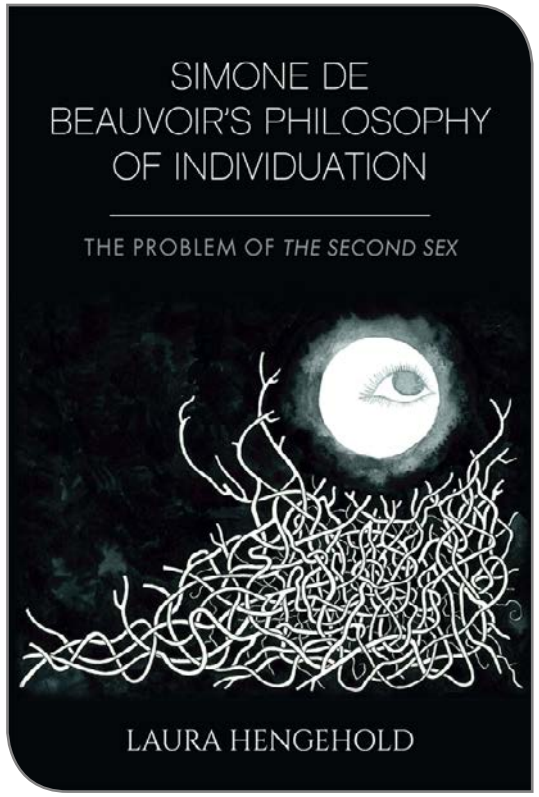
optical illusions. Several scholars including Weiss see 'ambiguity' informing Beauvoir's discussion of the body and sexuality in *The Second Sex*, but for Van Leeuwen ambiguity is found at the level of forms of knowledge (Weiss, 'Beauvoir and Merleau-Ponty', and Bergoffen, *Gendered Phenomenologies*).

24. Zahavi, *Husserl's Phenomenology*, 94.
25. See Lundy, *History and Becoming*; Browne, *Feminism, Time, and Nonlinear History.*
26. Heinämaa, *Phenomenology of Sexual Difference*, 36–7; Zahavi, 'Merleau-Ponty on Husserl', Van Breda, 'Merleau-Ponty and the Husserl Archives'.
27. His critique aims primarily at section 57 of *Ideas I:* 'There is no I on the unreflected level', and therefore one need not and should not assume the existence of any such thing as a 'transcendental' ego. Sartre, *Transcendence of the Ego* (TE), 48.
28. Zahavi, 'Merleau-Ponty on Husserl'.
29. Beauvoir, *Prime of Life*, 162; Heinämaa, 'Body as Instrument', 72; Heinämaa, *Phenomenology of Sexual Difference*, 53–6. Sartre learned about phenomenology in 1932, from Raymond Aron and Lévinas's book on *Ideas I*, but Simons thinks that Beauvoir may have learned about Husserl from Jean Baruzi even before 1926 (Simons, 'Beauvoir's Early Philosophy', 198–200). However, Beauvoir's understanding of phenomenology, and probably Husserl, was influenced by discussions with Merleau-Ponty, who seems to have rejected the 'Kantian', 'Cartesian', or otherwise 'egological' reading of transcendental phenomenology to which Sartre subscribed and many contemporary readers of Husserl still subscribe. See Heinämaa, *Phenomenology of Sexual Difference*, xx n. 10; Zahavi, 'Merleau-Ponty on Husserl', 4–7.
30. Beauvoir, 'Review of *The Phenomenology of Perception*'. Husserl's *Ideas II* and *Crisis of the European Sciences* were not published until after his death.
31. Deleuze's dialogue with Bergson and Leibniz lasts through his entire career. Many of the ideas from *Difference and Repetition* appear in 'Bergson's Conception of Difference' (first published in 1956); *Bergsonism* [1966] revisits the subject, and *The Fold: Leibniz* [1988] represents a lifetime of reflection on Leibniz's philosophy in the context of the history of forms of art.
32. See also Beauvoir, *Diary of a Philosophy Student*, 58–61; Simons, 'Beauvoir's Early Philosophy', 195–6; Simons, 'Bergson's Influence on Beauvoir's Philosophical Methodology'; and Simons, 'Beauvoir and Bergson'; as well as Meryl Altman's introduction to 'Notes for a Novel', 338–41. Beauvoir's retrospective comments can be found in *Prime of Life* (PL 86) and in Simons, Benjamin and Beauvoir, 'Simone de Beauvoir: An Interview'.

33. Beauvoir, *Diary of a Philosophy Student*, 279.
34. Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics*, 13–14.
35. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B327–30; Leibniz, *Monadology*, §8–16 (252–4).
36. Although they are often opposed, Husserl and Bergson were both interested in the irreducibly qualitative nature of temporal experience and particularly the temporality of bodily experience, which provisionally 'measures' other phenomena and allows them to be arranged in memory. See Winkler, 'Husserl and Bergson'; and Björk, 'Simone de Beauvoir and Life'.
37. Beauvoir, *The Coming of Age* [*La Vieillesse*, 1970]; published in the UK as *Old Age*.
38. Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy* [1962], 8–10, 156–9; *Difference and Repetition*, 133–6/174–8.
39. After an indifferent encounter in 1930, Beauvoir read Kierkegaard seriously ten years later, around the same time that she first read Hegel in earnest (PL 44, 364–73). In her 'Introduction' to *Wartime Diary*, Margaret Simons also cross-references Beauvoir's letters to Sartre from 20–1 March 1940 when Beauvoir began reading *Fear and Trembling* and her letters from 9 January 1941, which discuss both Hegel and Kierkegaard. See Beauvoir, *Wartime Diary*, 28, 270, 304–14, 319–25; Beauvoir, *Letters to Sartre*, 366–7; Heinämaa, 'The Background of Simone de Beauvoir's Metaphysical Novel'; and Green and Green, 'A Founding Feminist's Appreciation of Kierkegaard'.
40. Kierkegaard's theory of repetition is a source for *Difference and Repetition* and, according to Beauvoir's *Force of Circumstance*, an inspiration for *The Mandarins* (FC 270). Beauvoir, who had not yet read Kierkegaard in 1927, wrote in her diary: 'we must try to determine which one [choice] repeats our changing self the most often'; but '"most often" is not always' (*Diary of a Philosophy Student*, 246).
41. In the *Cartesian Meditations*, Husserl writes: 'A priori, my ego, given to me apodictically . . . can be a world-experiencing ego only by being in communion with others like himself . . . Conversely, I cannot conceive a plurality of monads otherwise than as explicitly or implicitly in communion' (139). He also explicitly disavows the charge of solipsism. But because this follows his reduction of consciousness to a 'sphere of ownness' and because, like Descartes, he presented the reduction as bracketing the *existence* of others (as elements of the phenomenal world known in the natural attitude), it is difficult for the reader to reinsert the conclusions of that reduction in the Fifth Meditation's broader discussion of embodied transindividuality. See Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, 120–4, 139. On the complex ambiguity of *Cartesian Meditations*, which can scarcely be explored here but which is decisive for many readings of his whole

philosophy, see Welton, *The Other Husserl*, 111–13; Zahavi, *Husserl's Phenomenology*, 122.

42. In *Cartesian Meditations*, as in the earlier essay 'On Static and Genetic Phenomenological Method' (1921), Husserl himself presents the problem of intersubjectivity and knowledge of the Other as a person in Leibnizian terms, speaking of them as 'monads'.
43. On critique as involving an account of genesis, see Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 86–94, and Hughes, *Deleuze's Difference and Repetition*, 1–3. Here the object of Beauvoir's critique is what I am calling 'sexist sense'; however, 'the problem of woman has always been a problem of men' (SS 148/1:216), so the critique of man's problem is also a first step toward the resolution of a problem by and for women.
44. See Lorraine, *Deleuze and Guattari's Immanent Ethics*, particularly chapter 5.
45. Halley, *Split Decisions*; Salamon, 'Musings'; also, Butler, *Undoing Gender*, particularly chapter 11, 'Can the Other of Philosophy Speak?'



Simone de Beauvoir's Philosophy of Individuation

The Problem of *The Second Sex*

by Laura Hengehold, Case Western Reserve University

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