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“The Past Is an Appeal”

Simone de Beauvoir Studies 1983–2014

Meryl Altman

DePauw University

maltman@depauw.edu

Abstract

As the International Simone de Beauvoir Society celebrates the relaunch of *Simone de Beauvoir Studies*, the author looks back with gratitude to longtime editor Yolanda Patterson and reviews what the journal's thirty-year history has to tell us about Beauvoir scholarship, past, present, and future. Topics discussed include the history of the Society; engagements with Beauvoir from the perspectives of literary criticism, philosophy, and the social sciences; and controversies over Beauvoir's character, her response to the Occupation, her relationship to Sartre, and her legacy for feminism.

Résumé

Au moment où l'*International Simone de Beauvoir Society* célèbre la reprise de la publication de la revue *Simone de Beauvoir Studies*, l'auteure revient avec gratitude sur le travail de la rédactrice en chef originale, Yolanda Patterson. Elle résume également la trentaine d'années d'histoire de la revue et indique ce que cette histoire peut nous apprendre sur les études beauvoiriennes passées, présentes et futures. L'auteure aborde des sujets variés parmi lesquels l'histoire de la Société; des prises de position sur l'œuvre de Beauvoir émises par la critique littéraire, mais aussi par la philosophie et les sciences sociales; des controverses entourant le personnage de Beauvoir; sa réaction face à l'Occupation; sa relation avec Sartre; et son legs au féminisme.

Keywords

Simone de Beauvoir – International Simone de Beauvoir Society – feminism – literary criticism – philosophy – history – biography – psychology – Yolanda Patterson

Formed spontaneously in 1981 after a lively session at the Modern Language Association (MLA) Annual Meeting in New York, the International Simone de Beauvoir Society grew under Yolanda Patterson's dedicated leadership to a full-blown interdisciplinary intellectual community, with large, far-flung membership.¹ Early conferences drew on Yolanda's networks around her home institution, California State University at Hayward (later renamed the California State University, East Bay). But from the start, presenters were an international group, and soon the group's annual gatherings were happening in places like Dublin, Paris, and Sardinia.² The Society's journal, appearing annually from 1983–2014, helped keep Beauvoir scholarship vibrant and alive over decades that saw her full recognition as a major twentieth-century philosopher, with growing acknowledgement of her lasting importance to feminist theory and activism worldwide.

But as Beauvoir often reminds us, time moves in one direction. At the Society's 2016 conference (University of Wisconsin, Superior), a group came together to make sure the work could continue after Yolanda's retirement. One result was the relaunch of *Simone de Beauvoir Studies* in the form you're now (at least figuratively) holding in your hands. So a backward glance seems only fitting. My first task is to express the deep gratitude of those currently shepherding the Society and its journal to Yolanda and the other women and men who made our work possible, and to pay tribute to their intellectual fortitude and collegial generosity. It also seems important to introduce this history to those who may not know it, and valuable to reflect on what has changed since the early 1980s, and on what perhaps has not.

To read through the back issues from start to finish, as I have now done, is to bear witness not just to the changes in how Beauvoir and her work have been received and understood, but to the history of feminism, inside and outside the academy, during the last thirty or forty years. What follows is one reader's general impression—to fully describe all the interesting work that appeared would be impossible—and the journal shouldn't stand in for Beauvoir studies more broadly: some milestone work is glimpsed only sideways, through footnotes and references, and other developments may have escaped entirely. Shifts I saw included increased interest in texts that had once seemed marginal (*The Coming of Age, America Day by Day*), and increased attention to Beauvoir's political

1 The title of this article is taken from Simone de Beauvoir, *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, trans. Bernard Frechtman, New York, Citadel Press, 1976 [1948], p. 95: "the past is an appeal; it is an appeal toward the future [...]."

2 See the Society's website for a complete list of past conferences: <https://beauvoir.weebly.com/past-conferences.html>.

commitments beyond her feminism and to the intersectional vision her writings demonstrate. One thing that didn't change was the sense of Beauvoir as not just someone to think about, but someone to *think with*—so that her work always remains fresh. Another constant was an overall intention to communicate and inform readers, an intention very much in Beauvoir's spirit (but not always evident in today's academic writing). I saw consistent, productive interchange between the literary scholarship that grounded the Society's beginnings and the philosophical inquiry that increasingly comes to the fore. A polyphony of voices attests to Yolanda's work in bringing together those who "met" Beauvoir through her activism, those who came to know her through her memoirs and novels, and those who approached her work first as a philosophical system, a set of ideas.

I kept finding discussions I wish I'd been part of, and articles I wanted to forward to friends who are working on related issues now. My impression is that the analyses contained here have not been cited by later scholars as often as they might or should have been—including, I am embarrassed to say, by me. So making this body of work more readily accessible to the scholarly community will be one value of the relaunch we're currently celebrating.³

Yolanda herself is a vivid presence in every issue of the journal, both through her engaging and personal editorial headnotes and through her own significant scholarship on many topics. Summing up the Society's first decade in 1991, the eminent scholar (and former MLA president) Germaine Brée wrote:

The Simone de Beauvoir Society is probably the most lively, far-reaching society dedicated to a literary figure active today—and there are many. What is astonishing is the broad international base of its membership and the diversity of their interests. I follow both newsletters and the series of Beauvoir *Studies* with keen interest. They show no sign of the parochialism and "inner-circle" mentality that make so many publications of that kind rather dull. Much praise for this is due to Yolanda Astarita Patterson who is largely responsible for the dynamism and quality of the society, its meetings and publications, and for the continuity in its high standards of scholarship.⁴

3 All back issues of *Simone de Beauvoir Studies* spanning volumes 1–29 (1983–2014) are for the first time available digitally at www.brill.com/sdbs.

4 Germaine Brée, "Germaine Brée Looks at the Expanding Field of Beauvoir Studies," *Simone de Beauvoir Studies*, vol. 8, 1991, 201–202, p. 201. Given the large number of references to articles in *Simone de Beauvoir Studies* (SdBS) in what follows, all citations will hereafter be listed in condensed format.

At the twenty-year mark, Secretary-Treasurer Liliane Lazar had this to say:

[S]i la Société a si bien réussi, c'est grâce à sa présidente, rédactrice, organisatrice, Yolanda Patterson. Grâce à son inépuisable énergie, son enthousiasme infaillible et son inspiration vivifiante, nous pouvons suivre dans les Bulletins et les *Simone de Beauvoir Studies* les recherches, les études, les publications sur l'œuvre et la pensée beauvoiriennes [...]. Je voudrais conclure en rendant hommage à Yolanda pour tout ce qu'elle a fait avec tant de modestie et toujours avec le sourire.⁵

And longtime Society member Barbara Klaw, writing in 2018, can speak for many in illustrating the enduring reasons for such gratitude.

I met Yolanda Patterson when I presented my first conference paper, "L'Invitée: A Sociolinguistic Approach to Speech Acts, Gender, and Power," at the January 1991 conference of the Simone de Beauvoir Society. I had just earned my doctorate from University of Pennsylvania a few months earlier in August 1990 and immediately started my first job as a tenure-track professor at Northern Kentucky University that same month. Despite my newness to the conference circuit, Yolanda welcomed me warmly and as though I had been in the Simone de Beauvoir Society since its inception. She had a knack for making everyone feel included and even special. She made sure that there were pictures taken and published of all presenters to accompany her summaries of the presentations of past conferences. She went out of her way to introduce each presenter to all the others at every conference. She included a personalized message on a sticky note with every newsletter that she mailed. [...] For years she worked tirelessly to support all of us working on Beauvoir's writing, and all related ideas and endeavors, and I cannot thank her enough.⁶

At a recent Society conference (Paris, October 2018), longtime French and Italian members of the Society, scholars and activists, approached me to express similarly warm and grateful sentiments. Indeed, for a number of years the Society may have been one of the few places where European and U.S. feminists were actually talking—though we may not always have understood one another. Yolanda's vision of the Society as truly international, and her com-

⁵ Lazar, *SdBS* 16, 1999–2000, 145–149, p. 149.

⁶ Barbara Klaw, personal communication to author, October 19, 2018.

mitment to encouraging younger (and older!) scholars and writers, including those whose career paths were nontraditional or who were based outside the academy, established a tradition of hospitality reminiscent of Beauvoir's own openness to the younger feminists who approached her in the 1970s, and of the internationalism Beauvoir promoted as an editor at *Les Temps modernes*. We can only hope to carry on this legacy of openness, including in new ways our new members may suggest to us.

Along with generosity and grace, a key theme is *persistence*. The word "single-handedly" is not quite apt: Yolanda was ably assisted, from the beginning, by the valiant and insightful Liliane Lazar, whose scholarly contributions are also visible throughout the journal's first three decades, and also by others whom I hesitate to list for fear of leaving someone out. But speaking as one who has picked up just a few of Yolanda's tasks, I stand in awe of her endurance.

There's a singular value to a Society that centers on the work of just one thinker and writer: the sheer pleasure of intellectual companionship with others who share one's intimate acquaintance with a set of texts, the relief of not having to start from the beginning or explain why one's project is worth doing, the sense of "reading together," which always gets to a deeper understanding than reading alone. In the early issues of *Simone de Beauvoir Studies*, that convivial delight is visible in the photographs Barbara mentions, some of speakers at podia earnestly straining to communicate, others in more relaxed group environments involving wine. Editorial notes and brief author biographies tell the story of intertwined professional and personal lives, a sustaining web.⁷ Later the same impression comes through in a more somber key, as memorial tributes acknowledge both those with long careers in Beauvoir studies, who had fulfilled their projects, and those who left suddenly, seemingly in mid-sentence.

Yolanda's own life-story emerges from these pages, as someone who did many things women of her generation were "not supposed to do." (One telling piece, which she wrote as the 2002 conference in Turin brought back childhood memories, is called "Una ragazza terribile."⁸) And while the Society, like Beauvoir herself, has always been absolutely committed to *mixité*, there also emerges a picture of the academy in those early years, of how tough navigating those spaces could be for women (still is), and of how supportive friendships between women built the possibility of good work and good life (still can).

7 As one small sign of this, I see I've been using first names to refer to those scholars I've actually met: it seems impossible, and maybe wrong, to do otherwise.

8 Patterson, *SdBS* 19, 2002–2003, pp. 18–23.

But as Germaine Brée hinted, there are risks involved in a single-figure professional society. There is the danger of becoming a fan club, almost a cult. There is a danger of hagiography (which would be embarrassing) and a danger of antiquarianism (which would be dull). I see three ways *Simone de Beauvoir Studies* has avoided those dangers.

First, by *including a variety of opinions*. One finds in these pages a vigorous defense of Beauvoir against a whole range of charges and attacks to which she was subjected, during her life and afterwards: correcting misperceptions, through evidence and careful close reading, is a big part of the overall project. But there is no gatekeeping. The journal includes pieces that agree with the criticisms of Beauvoir as insufficiently attentive to women's difference from men and to "the maternal"; pieces that see her as animated by jealousy or her own Oedipal conflicts; even a few that agree with Gilbert Joseph's charge that she failed to distinguish herself from the forces of collaboration during the Second World War.⁹

Second, by *continuing to explore the dialectics within Beauvoir's thinking*. I am thinking especially of her view of motherhood, sexuality, and "the body," which will not fit neatly into either the "essentialist" or the "social construction" box.¹⁰

And third, by *putting Beauvoir's work in dialogue* with as many other writers as possible, not just to situate her in historical and intellectual context, but also to open new windows on her work. The call for contributions to our upcoming special issue, "Beauvoir in Conversation" (*SdBS* 30.2), invited "engagement with those thinkers who were Beauvoir's interlocutors in life or on the page, as well as those conversations that are waiting to happen with thinkers whose ideas and writings speak to Beauvoir's." A very large percentage of what is in these back issues would fall under this rubric. And there are some surprises: along with Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Søren Kierkegaard, Violette Leduc and Nathalie Sarraute, Betty Friedan and Kim Chernin, Luce Irigaray and Judith Butler, we find Jack Kerouac; a seventeenth-century mystic nun; Rudi Gernreich, who invented the "no bra" bra and the monokini ... and some writers I'd never heard of.¹¹

To be sure, Beauvoir studies is a legacy project. But how do we understand a thinker's legacy? It must include those who disagree with her, those who

9 Gilbert Joseph, *Une si douce occupation... Simone de Beauvoir et Jean-Paul Sartre 1940–1944*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1991.

10 See for instance Sarah Fishwick, *SdBS* 16, 1999–2000, pp. 55–68.

11 Mark Dunphy, *SdBS* 19, 2002–2003, pp. 72–78; Eleanor Marsh, *SdBS* 26, 2009–2010, pp. 63–71; Dennis Gilbert, *SdBS* 4, 1987, pp. 67–88.

don't acknowledge her, those who continue to be irritated and animated by the tough questions she set in motion. (As she herself was often irritated into speech.)

One particular strength of a single-figure journal is that it creates an archive. In the journal's early days, Beauvoir is a living presence. Her 1984 note to Yolanda expresses warm support for the Society's work.¹² In the very first MLA session, "Le Féminisme de Simone de Beauvoir hier et aujourd'hui," "aujourd'hui" referred to what Beauvoir *herself* was thinking then. Issue three begins with press coverage of Beauvoir's funeral and many, many clippings of international public responses, from Jacques Chirac to Redstockings, alongside personal outpourings of grief and gratitude, both prose and poetry. Another vivid living presence in the early years is Hélène de Beauvoir, who learned of her sister's death while visiting Yolanda in connection with a California exhibit of her art.¹³ *SdBS* 3 includes reproductions from that exhibit, and *SdBS* 5 includes an interview and more of Hélène de Beauvoir's art.¹⁴

A new phase seems to me to begin with *SdBS* 12 (1995), which opens with Sylvie Le Bon de Beauvoir's beautiful introduction to a passage she transcribes from her adoptive mother's 1928 diary.¹⁵ There's also an interview with her, by Ursula Tidd, another piece where Tidd comments on their interchange, and an exchange of letters between Sylvie Le Bon de Beauvoir and the President of the Bibliothèque nationale, accompanying a gift to the library: many boxes of letters Simone de Beauvoir received from her readers between 1952 and 1986, which she hoped would form the basis of further scholarly inquiry.¹⁶ (She was right.)

Gathering testimony from those who knew Beauvoir well and lived through the same events remains an important aspect of the archive. *SdBS* 8 opens with a fascinating piece by Eva Spitz Blum, one of Beauvoir's students at the Lycée Molière (her father, a noted psychoanalyst, contradicted everything Beauvoir was teaching them).¹⁷ In *SdBS* 13, Myrna Bell Rochester and Mary Lawrence

12 See Liliane Lazar, *SdBS* 2, 1984, pp. 4–11; *SdBS* 16, 1999–2000, 145–149, p. 146.

13 See Patterson, *SdBS* 3, 1985–1986, pp. 59–64.

14 See also Patterson, *SdBS* 12, 1995, pp. 106–111. *SdBS* 9 includes some extracts from Simone de Beauvoir's letters to her sister, and *SdBS* 17, sadly, is dedicated to Hélène's memory.

15 Le Bon de Beauvoir, *SdBS* 12, 1995, pp. 5–7. I believe this would have been the first glimpse most scholars had of material that would not become publicly available until the release a decade later of Simone de Beauvoir, *Cahiers de jeunesse, 1926–1930*, ed. Sylvie Le Bon de Beauvoir, Paris, Gallimard, 2008.

16 Tidd, *SdBS* 12, 1995, pp. 10–16; *SdBS* 12, 1995, pp. 17–25.

17 Spitz Blum, *SdBS* 8, 1991, pp. 117–122.

Test interview Beauvoir's longtime friend, noted author Dominique Desanti: unlike many such interviews, this is a real conversation about writing, the Occupation, life, and everything in between.¹⁸ Desanti later contributes several memory pieces of her own: "Les Trois Visages du Castor," and the delightful "Nathalie Sorokine, la fille des mandarins," which gives a vivid portrait of the war period (Sorokine stole her typewriter!) and helps us unpick how *Les Mandarins* is (partly) anchored in fact.¹⁹ Linda Kay offers some personal background to Madeleine Gobeil's *Paris Review* interview with Beauvoir, and her films, in *SdBS* 22.²⁰

Archival work also includes analysis of manuscripts, and of material that, while published, is not widely known. The letters Sylvie Le Bon de Beauvoir deposited in the Bibliothèque nationale are one strand. Yolanda took the first look through them, reporting in *SdBS* 13; quite a while later Alice Caffarel-Cayron, studying her own mother's correspondence with Beauvoir, describes a sustaining relationship that led to the publication of Cayron's influential *Divorce in France* (1974).²¹ Caffarel-Cayron says there are fifty-five boxes of letters; Marine Rouch is among those currently continuing to research them.²² (Beauvoir herself said that the letters she received after publishing *The Second Sex* would be a book in themselves.²³)

Similarly, in 1992, Yolanda had a chance to look over the correspondence between Beauvoir's English translator H.M. Parshley and his editors at Knopf through a personal connection with his daughter, whom she met at a Smith College reunion. Yolanda's piece in *SdBS* 9 explains why Knopf might have chosen

18 Rochester and Test, *SdBS* 13, 1996, pp. 2–12. Rochester and Test became friends with Desanti in 1968 when she came to UCLA (where they were graduate students) to teach (among other things) a seminar on Beauvoir.

19 Desanti, *SdBS* 20, 2003–2004, pp. 32–38; *SdBS* 21, 2004–2005, pp. 1–12. Desanti also points us to Nathalie Sorokine's own writings in *Les Temps modernes*, which I can confirm are very interesting. Another addition to the archive: Sorokine's gay friend, whom Beauvoir calls "Willy" in *La Force des choses*, turns out to have been longtime Society member Oreste F. Pucciani, a distinguished scholar of existentialism and foreign-language teaching. A moving memorial tribute by the friend and former graduate student who inherited his papers, including some letters from Beauvoir and a memoir of their continuing relation, is rich with information and food for thought. Robert Richmond Ellis, *SdBS* 17, 2000–2001, pp. 156–161.

20 Kay, *SdBS* 22, 2005–2006, pp. 88–91.

21 Patterson, *SdBS* 13, 1996, pp. 89–102; Caffarel-Cayron, *SdBS* 29, 2013–2014, pp. 4–19.

22 See Chère Simone de Beauvoir (website), Marine Rouch, <https://lirecrire.hypotheses.org/category/au-fil-de-la-recherche>.

23 "Non, je ne me trompais pas en écrivant *Le Deuxième Sexe*, j'avais même encore plus raison que je ne le pensais. Avec des extraits de lettres reçues depuis ce livre, on aurait un document navrant." Simone de Beauvoir, *La Force des choses*, t. 2, Paris, Gallimard, coll. "Folio essais," 1963, p. 188.

Parshley, and how he unsuccessfully tried to defend the book against the editors' insistence on drastic cuts.²⁴ Anna Bogic reached very similar conclusions a decade later, by which time she could read the documents in the Smith College library.²⁵

There are other meaningful finds. Dennis Gilbert located a recording Beauvoir made in New York in the 1940s: she can be heard introducing and discussing scenes she'd chosen from *Les Mouches*, *Huis Clos*, and Camus's *Caligula*, which are read by professional actors.²⁶ Céline Léon uncovered press accounts of what Beauvoir did on U.S. college campuses, indicating what Beauvoir spoke about and how her talks were received; she shares texts not available elsewhere, and re-establishes the chronology of Beauvoir's trip.²⁷ Jo Bogaerts ("Beauvoir's Lecture on the Metaphysical Novel and Its Contemporary Critiques") found a *compte rendu* of the discussion immediately following Beauvoir's speech, which included Jean Wahl and Georges Blin and sheds new light on a much-discussed set of issues.²⁸ In "Working Behind the Scenes in the Vichy Nightmare: Simone Jollivet's *La Princess des Ursins*," Kenneth Krauss provides a deeper look at the woman Beauvoir calls "Camille."²⁹ Particularly valuable along these lines is Ingrid Galster's "Simone de Beauvoir and Radio-Vichy," which speaks to the charge that Beauvoir and Sartre "collaborated" with the Vichy government. Joseph and others had claimed information about the radio programs Beauvoir worked on could not be found (and proceeded to speculate about them), but Galster found and describes them: anodyne topics like "the origin of music hall" are, she says, consonant with Vichy's program of distracting the populace, but also in some ways work against Vichy values: she suggests we avoid simplistic judgments.³⁰

24 Patterson, *SdBS* 9, 1992, pp. 41–48.

25 Bogic, *SdBS* 26, 2009–2010, pp. 81–93. On translation issues see also Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevalier, *SdBS* 25, 2008–2009, pp. 5–12.

26 Gilbert, *SdBS* 14, 1997, pp. 114–123.

27 Léon, *SdBS* 19, 2002–2003, pp. 87–101.

28 Bogaerts, *SdBS* 29, 2013–2014, pp. 20–32. Other items in the same category might be Barbara Klaw's analysis of chapters deleted from *L'Invitée* alongside *Quand prime le spirituel*, *SdBS* 12, 1995, pp. 126–138, and Terry Keefe's work on *Malentendu à Moscou*, which is an early draft of what became "L'Âge de discrétion," *SdBS* 11, 1994, pp. 30–41.

29 Krauss, *SdBS* 11, 1994, pp. 87–104.

30 Galster, *SdBS* 13, 1996, pp. 103–113. Early issues saw other vigorous rebuttals to Joseph's book, and to similar criticisms by others—see for instance Mary Lawrence Test, *SdBS* 10, 1993, pp. 285–288. But many points of view were included. Sylvie Rockmore accepts the Gilbert Joseph version entirely, *SdBS* 11, 1994, pp. 133–140, and in the next issue Dorothy Kaufmann expresses disappointment that Beauvoir, when compared with Edith Thomas—a heroine of the Resistance—did not engage in direct action. But Joseph's

Another shelf in what I'm calling the "archive" would hold articles about the critical reception of Beauvoir's works when they first appeared, such as Vivi-Anne Lennartsson's work on the reception of *La Force des choses* and Danièle Fleury's on *L'Invitée* and *Le Sang des autres*.³¹ The earliest example of "reception" work chronicles the storm over *Cérémonie des adieux*—in particular, the reaction to Beauvoir's unsentimental depiction of Sartre's failing health—but also participates in that storm in real time: the journal's first issue has a typically penetrating and sensitive reading by the eminent Maurice Nadeau, and *SdBS* 2 includes a thick sheaf of reviews from the Paris press.³² Later, a long article by Terry Keefe and Jean-Pierre Boulé on the interviews included in *Cérémonie des adieux* calls into question the charge that Beauvoir was coercive or dogmatic as an interviewer, though they are very careful to remain objective; then Keefe provides an unbelievably detailed index for the 400 pages of interview, so other scholars can follow up.³³ This sort of thing could only appear in *Simone de Beauvoir Studies*, really. The same is true for Maria Joao Frazao's "A Simone de Beauvoir Itinerary in Paris," which includes a map and excerpts from Beauvoir's memoirs keyed to significant locations in Beauvoir's life.³⁴

There is so much in these pages that I didn't know: that Sartre's play *Bariona* deals with abortion; that Knopf's lawyers insisted on deletions to the English version of Beauvoir's chapter on Montherlant, not just because some of the passages were steamy, but because they thought Montherlant might sue; that Iris Murdoch had lots to say about Beauvoir's novels; that Beauvoir wrote a script, or at least a treatment, called "Immortal Man," based on *All Men Are Mortal*, which she showed to producer George Stevens.³⁵ (Nothing came of this, which was probably just as well.)

purism, in condemning Beauvoir for signing a loyalty oath to keep her job, strikes Kaufmann as unreasonable: even Edith Thomas signed loyalty oaths. Kaufmann, *SdBS* 12, 1995, pp. 33–37. This remained a live issue, fed by the publication of Beauvoir's journals and letters. See Anne Marie Obajtek-Kirkwood, *SdBS* 14, 1997, pp. 102–113, and Liliane Lazar, *SdBS* 22, 2005–2006, pp. 16–24.

31 Lennartsson, *SdBS* 19, 2002–2003, pp. 157–165; *SdBS* 20, 2003–2004, pp. 89–106; Danièle Fleury, *SdBS* 23, 2006–2007, pp. 61–74.

32 Nadeau, *SdBS* 1, 1983, pp. 151–159; "Review Articles," *SdBS* 2, 1984, pp. 149–174.

33 Keefe and Boulé, *SdBS* 10, 1993, pp. 247–257; Keefe, *SdBS* 10, 1993, pp. 257–266.

34 Frazao, *SdBS* 10, 1993, pp. 202–218. Other articles treat Beauvoir's relation to place: Teresa Myintoo, *SdBS* 14, 1997, pp. 132–139 (Spain); Éliane Cliche, *SdBS* 19, 2002–2003, pp. 24–34 (Italy); Éliane Lecarme-Tabone, *SdBS* 20, 2003–2004, pp. 141–147 (the Limousin); Esther Redolfi, *SdBS* 28, 2011–2012, pp. 77–82 (Rome).

35 Joanne Megna-Wallace, *SdBS* 3, 1985, pp. 99–126; Patterson, *SdBS* 9, 1992, p. 45; Peter G. Christensen, *SdBS* 10, 1993, pp. 141–150; Sylvie Blum-Reid, *SdBS* 14, 1997, pp. 140–148. It's

The back issues also create an archive of personal response—"what Simone de Beauvoir meant to me"—which goes beyond those who knew her in the flesh, and continues long after the outpouring of grief when she died. In the spirit of Penny Forster and Imogene Sutton's book, *Daughters of de Beauvoir*, both "ordinary women" and some who are well-known, including biographers Deirdre Bair and Hazel Rowley, write in this vein: thinking about Beauvoir often leads the writer to tell her own life story.³⁶ I was particularly moved by Betty Halpern-Guedj's description of how Beauvoir's discussions of *angoisse* spoke to her both as a philosopher and as the child of Holocaust survivors; by novelist Annie Ernaux's beautiful account, "Le fil conducteur qui me lie à Beauvoir"; and by Catherine Naji's account of reading and rereading Beauvoir while living through the 1960s and 1970s as an Irish woman married to a Moroccan man, raising children in a rural area where she was and was not "other," remembering her own restrictive Catholic girlhood and her family's working-class past.³⁷ The title of Åsa Moberg's "Simone and I: A Role Model Beyond the Myth" applies to many pieces.³⁸ Taken together, these testimonies provide a portrait, or rather a landscape, of the complex and contradictory lives of women in the twentieth century, reminding us that Beauvoir's extraordinary impact happened (and still happens) one woman at a time.

Testimony often rejoins activism, as in Claudine Monteil's "Eyewitness Account" of the *Mouvement de libération des femmes* (MLF),³⁹ and the "Témoignage" of Yvette Roudy, who served as "Ministre des Droits des Femmes" in the first Mitterrand government: addressing the audience at the 2003 conference as "nous [...] féministes de combat," she recounts how *The Second Sex* inspired her, and how Beauvoir's practical support sustained her in that very public and challenging role.⁴⁰ A striking number of pieces report on the *actualités* for women on both sides of the Atlantic, and use Beauvoir's work as a springboard to ask "What Is To Be Done?". I was especially struck by Pascale Camirand's analysis of ethics and childbearing. After working to reform

worth remembering that several of the French writers Beauvoir eviscerated in the "Myths in Five Authors" section of *The Second Sex* were still alive and kicking when she wrote it.

36 Penny Forster and Imogene Sutton, *Daughters of de Beauvoir*, London, The Women's Press, 1989. Excerpts from the book are included in *SdBS* 7, 1990, pp. 57–60, and later Yolanda reviews the BBC documentary on which it was based in *SdBS* 11, 1994, pp. 57–63.

37 Halpern-Guedj, *SdBS* 15, 1998–1999, pp. 156–162; Ernaux, *SdBS* 17, 2000–2001, pp. 1–6; Naji, *SdBS* 28, 2011–2012, pp. 4–14. My understanding of Ernaux's work was deepened by Elizabeth Richardson Viti's sensitive analysis in *SdBS* 19, 2002–2003, pp. 49–56.

38 Moberg, *SdBS* 14, 1997, pp. 1–5.

39 Monteil, *SdBS* 14, 1997, pp. 6–12.

40 Roudy, *SdBS* 20, 2003–2004, pp. 23–31.

Canada's abortion laws, Camirand felt that activists "manquaient d'assises théoriques": she seeks, and finds, just such theoretical grounding in Beauvoir's work.⁴¹ Catherine Rodgers's 1996 analysis, based on interviews with thirteen prominent feminists of the post-Beauvoir generation (from both "difference" and "radical" tendencies), is a lucid summary full of good detail.⁴² Michèle Le Dœuff's "Pour une critique amicale et transatlantique du *Deuxième sexe*,"⁴³ and a two-part piece by Céline Léon, "Dialogues transatlantiques naguère et aujourd'hui," situate *The Second Sex* in the time of its writing and evaluate the (then) current French scene in its light.⁴⁴ Sandra Reineke reflects on academic women's studies in Europe and the U.S.; Triantafyllia Kadoglou and Katerina Sarri provide concrete information about "Women, Motherhood and Work"; Kadoglou applies Beauvoir's thought to the resurgence of nationalism in Europe.⁴⁵ These are not simply individual questions, and they are not purely theoretical.

As you can tell, the history of the Society (like the history of Beauvoir studies generally) is a history of controversy. Indeed, it was born in controversy. As Liliane Lazar explains:

Non, ce n'est pas en France que l'idée de créer la Société Simone de Beauvoir a été conçue, mais à New-York, au congrès de la Modern Language Association (MLA) en décembre 1981, à la session intitulée "Le Féminisme de Simone de Beauvoir hier et aujourd'hui." J'ai eu la chance d'assister à cette session qui fut suivie par un débat houleux. La première communication au titre fatidique "Rapport de force et guerre des sexes dans le féminisme de Simone de Beauvoir" a été présentée par Louise Beaudet, étudiante graduée à la City University of New York (CUNY). Puis Yolanda Astarita Patterson a analysé "The Dark Window: Woman, Family and Career in the Fictional World of Simone de Beauvoir."

La communication de Jacques Zéphir, le président de la session et professeur à CUNY, était basée sur son livre intitulé *Le Néo-Féminisme de Simone de Beauvoir*, où il montre que le féminisme beauvoirien est

41 Camirand, *SdBS* 9, 1992, pp. 31–40.

42 Rodgers, *SdBS* 13, 1996, pp. 78–88.

43 Le Dœuff, *SdBS* 19, 2002–2003, pp. 1–19.

44 Léon, *SdBS* 23, 2006–2007, pp. 40–54; *SdBS* 24, 2007–2008, pp. 12–31.

45 Reineke, *SdBS* 25, 2008–2009, pp. 63–80; Kadoglou and Sarri, *SdBS* 29, 2013–2014, pp. 33–45; Kadoglou, *SdBS* 29, 2013–2014, pp. 73–83. Similarly, Yolanda assessed women's situation by surveying her own reunion class at Smith, as Betty Friedan had once done. *SdBS* 25, 2008–2009, pp. 86–88.

une étude théorique plutôt qu'un travail de militant. Selon le Professeur Zéphir, *Le Deuxième Sexe* s'est trouvé converger avec les tendances du Mouvement de la Libération des Femmes: "*Le Deuxième Sexe* serait resté un cri de colère isolé sans les nouvelles féministes" [...]. Le dernier à prendre la parole était Konrad Bieber, Professeur à la State University of New York (SUNY), qui a parlé de Simone de Beauvoir comme "pionnière écoutée mais mal comprise." Ses remarques portèrent sur le fait que Simone de Beauvoir avait été assez indifférente aux problèmes sociaux et politiques, mais était devenue une féministe enthousiaste et passionnée grâce à la Ligue des Droits de la Femme. Il reconnut aussi que Beauvoir s'était montrée objective envers les hommes, refusant de les condamner en bloc sans égard de leur comportement individuel.

Irène Pagès, de l'Université de Guelph au Canada, ouvrit le débat après les communications en déclarant que le mot "féminisme" était dépassé et ne s'appliquait qu'à la lutte des femmes. Ses commentaires soulevèrent une vive controverse et une discussion enflammée s'ensuivit. Le débat aurait pu continuer pendant longtemps s'il n'avait été interrompu par la prochaine table ronde qui devait avoir lieu dans cette salle. Pour apaiser les esprits, Jacques Zéphir promit de réunir périodiquement tous ceux qui s'intéressaient à la pensée et l'œuvre de Simone de Beauvoir [...]. Ainsi naquit la Société. Sa première réunion avait provoqué une intense discussion, ce qui était conforme à la publication de cette œuvre qui trente ans auparavant avait soulevé des polémiques ardentes.⁴⁶

My reading certainly confirms that "polémiques ardentes" continued throughout the journal's first three decades, its pages open to those who attacked Beauvoir as well as those who saluted and defended her.⁴⁷ The first issue

46 Lazar, *SdBS* 16, 1999–2000, 145–149, p. 146. The journal's first two issues contain several articles by Jacques Zéphir, who then turned to other projects. Konrad Bieber remained a loyal participant and member of the Editorial Board until *SdBS* 22, which is dedicated to his memory.

47 And everything in between: for instance, the two pieces that open *SdBS* 20, which brought back vivid memories of the 2003 Paris conference plenary. The *nouveau philosophe* Bernard-Henri Lévy wanted to acknowledge Beauvoir's importance in the presence of those gathered to honor her, but was in the embarrassing position of having supported Pierre Victor in the war over Sartre's papers, plus the fact that he "did not know Beauvoir's works," as he confessed. Next came an important talk, "Beauvoir présente," by Julia Kristeva, who (here as elsewhere) finds Beauvoir's work of paramount significance and value, and champions it institutionally, while strongly disagreeing with almost everything Beauvoir believed and said. Lévy, *SdBS* 20, 2003–2004, pp. 1–10; Kristeva, *SdBS* 20, 2003–2004, pp. 11–22.

was largely devoted to questions of Beauvoir's supposed "misogyny," and I've already referred to a range of different approaches to what Beauvoir and Sartre did (or didn't do) during the Occupation. Of many other lively controversies chronicled, a few stand out. First, the question of Beauvoir's philosophical autonomy with respect to Sartre, and the particulars of their intellectual indebtednesses to one another. Second, what I'm tempted to call "the character issue," as a series of posthumous publications (letters, diaries, and biographies) complicated the picture of herself Beauvoir gave in her own autobiography, and left some, though not all, of the readers who'd identified with her and taken her life and theory as a guide feeling betrayed and angry. And third, the question of the continued relevance and value of Beauvoir's theoretical work in the face of a resurgent "feminism of difference" which presented itself as an improvement.

In some ways, the question of Beauvoir's autonomy from Sartre was settled in the Society from the start. Among the three "founders," Konrad Bieber was already on record that "she is an entirely independent thinker and an original writer, beholden to no one," and in the journal's second issue Jacques Zéphir proclaimed, "personne n'ose plus prétendre que c'est à Jean-Paul Sartre qu'elle doit sa réussite."⁴⁸ But the publication of Beauvoir's letters and diaries ignited controversy: had she overstated her indebtedness to Sartre, and understated his to her, and if so, why?⁴⁹ *SdBS* 12 through 15 include lively back-and-forth between on one side Peg Simons and Kate and Edward Fullbrook, and on the other Terry Keefe and Hazel Barnes, about the dating of texts and what constitutes a philosophical "idea."⁵⁰ A bit later Françoise d'Eaubonne speaks more calmly about "deux philosophies qui dialoguent sans se confondre, si tantôt l'une des deux oriente l'autre—et ce n'est pas forcément la sartrienne" and suggests that instead of poring over the chronology, "on aurait pu se poser la

48 Yolanda quotes from Bieber's 1979 Twayne Series book, probably the first serious study of Beauvoir's writing in the United States. "In Memoriam," Patterson, *SdBS* 22, 2005–2006, 100–102, p. 101; Zéphir, *SdBS* 2, 1984, 117–147, p. 143.

49 This connects to a debate about why Beauvoir did not claim to be a philosopher, which oddly finds no echoes in the pages of *Simone de Beauvoir Studies*, though it was raging elsewhere. See Michèle Le Dœuff, *Hipparchia's Choice: An Essay Concerning Women, Philosophy, etc.*, trans. Trista Selous, Oxford, Blackwell, 1991; Toril Moi, *Simone de Beauvoir: The Making of an Intellectual Woman*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1994; Nancy Bauer, *Simone de Beauvoir, Philosophy, & Feminism*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2001.

50 See Fullbrook and Fullbrook, *SdBS* 12, 1995, pp. 84–90; *SdBS* 13, 1996, pp. 13–24; *SdBS* 14, 1997, pp. 29–38; Keefe, *SdBS* 12, 1995, pp. 91–99; *SdBS* 13, 1996, pp. 151–164; Simons, *SdBS* 14, 1997, pp. 13–28; Barnes, *SdBS* 15, 1998–1999, pp. 40–47. See also Ursula Tidd, *SdBS* 12, 1995, pp. 10–16.

question d'une fraternité de sensibilités philosophiques qui allaient parfois jusqu'au jumelage, et dont tous deux ont porté témoignage devant une critique affligée de surdité."⁵¹

Actually the question of Beauvoir's philosophical originality had been (to my mind) settled rather earlier, in articles by Sonia Kruks in *SdBS* 5 (1988) and Debra Bergoffen in *SdBS* 7 and 8 (1989 and 1991), through close analysis of Beauvoir's philosophical texts rather than biographical clues and "keys."⁵² (Indeed Danièle Fleury shows that sensible readers understood Beauvoir as intellectually independent even at the time of *Pyrrhus and Cineas*.⁵³) Like Bergoffen and Kruks, many writing in the journal simply take for granted that Sartre and Beauvoir worked together: they illuminate the work of both as part of a broader existentialist and phenomenological project which also included Merleau-Ponty and Lévinas.⁵⁴ Some good work here is centered on Sartre, much as the Sartre Society now routinely features excellent papers about Beauvoir, Fanon, and others; and such collaborations as the 2014 "Diverse Lineages of Existentialism" conference in St. Louis have been extremely productive. Perhaps we could consider this settled and move on? *On en parle encore cependant*.⁵⁵

A separate issue is the disappointment, and in some cases rage, that greeted new information about Beauvoir's *life*, presented in Deirdre Bair's biography and in the letters to Sartre and to Algren.⁵⁶ There are a few different parts to this. Deirdre Bair's interpretation that the Beauvoir-Sartre relationship was less egalitarian than Beauvoir's memoirs had described, and less happy, left some readers feeling crushed and angry. Then the revelation of her triangular relationships with Sartre and young women was a storm in itself, especially after one of them, Bianca Lamblin, published her own account of the damage they had done her.⁵⁷ Meanwhile, some lesbians were angry with Beauvoir for not "coming out."

In *SdBS* 8, Hazel Barnes responds vigorously to these charges. Barnes notes that the publication of the letters "confirms recent claims of scholars that it was Beauvoir who took the first steps toward a more realistic view of individuals and social conditioning"; Barnes moves on to address Beauvoir's relationships

51 d'Eaubonne, *SdBS* 19, 2002–2003, pp. 14–17.

52 Kruks, *SdBS* 5, 1988, pp. 74–80; Bergoffen, *SdBS* 7, 1989, pp. 15–28; *SdBS* 8, 1991, pp. 163–174. See also Maria Teresa López Pardina, *SdBS* 11, 1994, pp. 5–12.

53 Fleury, *SdBS* 23, 2006–2007, pp. 61, 66.

54 See Jennifer McWeeny, *SdBS* 26, 2009–2010, pp. 5–17, and Kevin Gray, *SdBS* 23, 2006–2007, pp. 75–81.

55 See also Cameron Clayton, *SdBS* 25, 2008–2009, pp. 50–62.

56 Deirdre Bair, *Simone de Beauvoir: A Biography*, New York, Simon & Schuster, 1990.

57 Bianca Lamblin, *Mémoires d'une jeune fille dérangée*, Paris, Éditions Balland, 1993.

with women in the light of the lesbian chapter in *The Second Sex*.⁵⁸ "As a person," writes Barnes, "each [of the involvements] was [...] unique."⁵⁹ While troubled by the deception involved, she asks, "Do these posthumous publications so poison our picture of the person Beauvoir was that we can only strive to separate the writer from her work? My response is a firm no."⁶⁰ She observes that the publication of the letters put paid to the idea that Beauvoir "subjected herself to Sartre," a myth largely attributable to Deirdre Bair.⁶¹ But others were not so forgiving. Sylvie Rockmore describes Beauvoir as selfish and solipsistic, and she attributes the feminist ideas of *The Second Sex* to Sartre: after all, according to Nelson Algren Beauvoir was perfectly comfortable with male domination ...⁶² Psychologist Kathleen Riordan Speeth says Beauvoir "did betray herself and all women": "The life refutes the ideals, not the ideals the life [...]. She should have corrected her feminism."⁶³ Meanwhile, Åsa Moberg was *relieved* to learn that Beauvoir hadn't managed to live up to her feminist ideals, because Moberg hadn't managed to live up to them, either.⁶⁴

Along with pieces which describe these new revelations as giving the lie to "who we thought Simone de Beauvoir was"—and others responding to that charge—are many which document that posthumous *inédits* track pretty well with what we knew already, and others that are the source of new *aperçus*, and/or deepen and broaden the picture of what her work can bring.⁶⁵ Céline Léon, for instance, makes theory out of it: "if, in the instance of Beauvoir—as that of many others—the homosexual scenario fills interpretive lacunae no

58 Barnes, *SdBS* 8, 1991, 13–30, p. 15.

59 Barnes, *SdBS* 8, p. 19.

60 Barnes, *SdBS* 8, p. 25.

61 Barnes, *SdBS* 8, p. 25. Twenty-eight years later, this remains one of the best articles on Beauvoir's treatment of lesbianism.

62 Rockmore, *SdBS* 11, 1994, pp. 133–140.

63 Speeth, *SdBS* 8, 1991, pp. 57–60, pp. 57, 59. See also Christine Anne Evans, *SdBS* 12, 1995, pp. 26–32.

64 Moberg, *SdBS* 14, 1997, pp. 1–5.

65 On a somewhat brighter note, the publication of *Zaza: Correspondance et carnets d'Élisabeth Lacoïn, 1914–1929*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1991, and then of Beauvoir's own youthful journals, *Cahiers de jeunesse, 1926–1930*, helped confirm and document Beauvoir's description of her friend in *Mémoires d'une jeune fille rangée*, Paris, Gallimard, coll. "Folio", 2008 [1958]. See Guillemine Lacoste, *SdBS* 9, 1992, pp. 87–102 and Philippe Devaux, *SdBS* 29, 2013–2014, pp. 84–95. Liliane Lazar found a very close correspondence between Beauvoir's private journal and her published memoir, with one exception (the end of Beauvoir's relationship with her cousin is shifted to somewhat earlier in *Mémoires d'une jeune fille rangée* for dramatic effect). *SdBS* 27, 2010–2011, pp. 5–9. An interesting piece by Anne Strasser found similar confirmation of Beauvoir's account of her relationship with Claude Lanzmann in his own memoir. *SdBS* 27, 2010–2011, pp. 10–23.

better than the heterosexual one, it is because the answer lies elsewhere—in what Luce Irigaray has identified as the hom(m)osexual orientation of western patriarchal society.”⁶⁶ Many good essays speak of the need to get beyond moral evaluation. Personally, I’ve long felt ready to “move on” ... but then I came to a piece by Bianca Lamblin herself, “A Disgraceful Triangle,” explaining why she wrote her book (which was about to appear in English translation). She retells the story, which is indeed unbearable, and the wound reopens. “I have often wondered how those who admire Simone de Beauvoir for her feminism judge such behavior.”⁶⁷

All this raises a general question: what role should be played now in Beauvoir studies by biography, and in particular by our own investments in it? I don’t know. Many years ago Carolyn Heilbrun pointed out the weakness of many biographies of women writers (and artists)—that they concentrate on the personal and sexual life, as though that mattered more than the work.⁶⁸ Like Mary Ellman’s quip, in one of the earliest books of feminist literary criticism, that discussions of women’s writing too often boiled down to critical “measurement of bust and hips,” the description remains apt.⁶⁹ Are we solving the problem, or making it worse?⁷⁰ And yet Beauvoir’s biography is inseparable from her contribution to literature, to feminism, to the history of gender in the twentieth century, to twentieth-century history *tout court*.

Beauvoir opens herself up to responses of identification and “betrayal” by being a moral philosopher of the everyday—it’s really she, in a way, who invites critics into the bedroom, and provides the very *grilles de lecture* by which her own behavior is judged (and found wanting) on these issues, and on others. (Was she motivated by deep and bitter jealousy? Why wasn’t she more honest with her dying mother?)⁷¹ But this case is not unique: a glance into Woolf

66 Léon, *SdBS* 13, 1996, pp. 25–44. See also Eric Levéel, *SdBS* 22, 2005–2006, pp. 70–77.

67 Lamblin, *SdBS* 15, 1998–1999, pp. 145–155.

68 Carolyn Heilbrun, *Writing a Woman’s Life*, New York, W.W. Norton, 1988.

69 Mary Ellmann, *Thinking About Women*, New York, Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968.

70 I should note that while some take Bair’s interpretations as definitive, and respond to “Beauvoir” on that basis, others have dissented and/or offered corrections, beginning with Konrad Bieber’s review, *SdBS* 9, 1992, pp. 121–122. Bieber praised the book as a major achievement while noting “on a le droit de n’être pas d’accord.” Bair’s book appeared fully twenty-eight years ago, which makes it only normal that it would be revisited.

71 Barbara Klaw takes up the issue of jealousy, arguing that Beauvoir “created hypotheses and found quotes and statistics to back them partly in order to justify her own past actions and choices.” *SdBS* 16, 1999–2000, 20–32, p. 21. Klaw sees her as “an intensely divided person whose theories of life did not always coincide with her life experiences” (p. 21). For a different view see Eric Levéel, *SdBS* 20, 2003–2004, pp. 64–71, and Jean Pierre Boulé, *SdBS* 27, 2010–2011, pp. 24–31. On other aspects of the “character” issue, see Annie Jouan-Westlund, *SdBS* 21, 2005–2005, pp. 54–64, and Raymonde Coudert, *SdBS* 22, 2005–2006, pp. 1–15 (about adoption).

studies shows some bitter contentions between a Leonard faction, a Vanessa faction, a Virginia faction (but who was Virginia, really?). And while someone has observed that male writers are not asked to be "role models," there's a similar effect of "character" on literary reputation with Ernest Hemingway, Robert Lowell, Robert Frost, even Martin Heidegger. The question of whether it is possible, or desirable, to separate the value of a writer's work from their life is not going away. Or rather, the question of whether it is desirable isn't going away: possible, it clearly is not.

To my mind, the most useful essays about the posthumous publications are those that attend to complexities of genre, to the different *kinds* of truth even the sincerest writer will tell in a letter, a diary, an essay, an autobiography, a novel, rather than naïvely assuming that the most private writing is somehow more true, and using it as a key or a *démenti* of the others.⁷²

The third big controversy I found had to do with the split in feminism over the question of women's "difference." While Jacques Zéphir had used the word "néo-féminisme" to refer to Beauvoir's participation in the MLF resurgence of the 1970s, soon this term would refer to feminists in France who *rejected* Beauvoir's approach in favor of the celebration of "*féminité*," "the feminine," "*écriture féminine*," and so forth, and who denounced *The Second Sex* as outdated and "phallographic."⁷³ Meanwhile in the United States, Carol Gilligan's *In a Different Voice*, Nancy Chodorow's *The Reproduction of Mothering*, and Dorothy Din-

72 Some excellent pieces about Beauvoir's letters to Nelson Algren do this with particular insight and skill. See Élène Cliche, *SdBS* 16, 1999–2000, pp. 33–45, which discusses Beauvoir's "oscillations" in the intertwined writing of these letters and *The Second Sex*, with reference to Roland Barthes' *Fragments of a Lover's Discourse*: "L'équilibre égalitaire demeure toujours extrêmement précaire" (p. 39). Another piece by Cliche reminds us that the letters are "une expérimentation littéraire dans une autre langue et par conséquent dans un autre style," *SdBS* 17, 2000–2001, pp. 129–136, p. 129. Patricia Hannon situates the letters and also *Les Mandarins* as part of the French tradition of female epistolarity (alongside Héloïse and Abélard, "Letters of a Portuguese Nun," Rousseau's *Julie*), pointing out that the frontier between fact and fiction is itself a fiction. *SdBS* 19, 2002–2003, pp. 35–48. "Anne's America is an experiment in alterity, an unspoiled canvas where she imagines herself as the amoureuse of *The Second Sex*" (p. 43)—and where she leaves out the humor, and the lucidity, that come through in her real-life letters. Marianne Charrier-Vogel, writing about the correspondence with Sartre, replaces the naïve interpretive view of language as transparent with reference to the theories of A.J. Greimas about sincerity and authenticity. *SdBS* 21, 2004–2005, pp. 13–21. Anne Strasser describes the letters to Algren as a "laboratoire de l'autobiographie, au sens où elles représentent un détour par l'autre pour revenir à soi" (p. 25) and ends with a lovely long quote from Kafka: "Comment a pu naître l'idée que les lettres donneraient aux hommes le moyen de communiquer?" *SdBS* 23, 2006–2007, pp. 24–39, p. 37.

73 Léon, *SdBS* 23, 2006–2007, pp. 40–54; *SdBS* 24, 2007–2008, pp. 12–31.

nerstein's *The Mermaid and the Minotaur* seemed to have become obligatory citations in every feminist article that appeared. A very clear account of what was at stake was provided in 1987 by Irène Pagès, in what began as a mourning piece, and a vigorous response to the resurgence of "difference" was delivered by Hazel Barnes, both in the same issue and in a later "Personal Postscript," where she suggests the Greek myth of the hero/heroine Caenis as an alternative to the "earth mothers" often proposed as feminist models.⁷⁴ It would be hard to overstate the influence of "écriture féminine" in those years; many articles find Beauvoir's (quite different) theory of women's writing incomplete.

There was something uncanny about reading these early issues, which coincided with my own time in graduate school. While Beauvoir's own literary criticism in *The Second Sex* fell under (and to a great extent invented) the category we then called "images of women," concerned with exposing the misogyny in male texts, this next phase shows the marks of the "recovery project" that was so central to second-wave feminist literary criticism: since the voices of women writers had been silenced or misrecognized, simply re-publishing and teaching them was a revolutionary act. ("Gynocritics" was another term for this.)⁷⁵ A very large number of the "conversation" pieces reflect that project, and the list of conversation partners is a long one.⁷⁶ Sometimes the aim is to re-place Beauvoir in historical context. A long careful article by Rochester and Test, based partly on interviews, looks at the question of committed writing through a multifaceted comparison with other women writers who lived through the Occupation.⁷⁷ Other pieces on Anna Seghers, Marguerite Yourcenar, Anaïs Nin, Mary McCarthy, and M.F.K. Fisher illuminate Beauvoir's work by contrasting it to women writers who made different choices.⁷⁸ Male writers,

74 Pagès, *SdBS* 4, 1987, pp. 49–66; Barnes, *SdBS* 4, 1987, pp. 5–34 and *SdBS* 10, 1993, pp. 195–201. See also Céline Léon, *SdBS* 12, 1995, pp. 139–153.

75 The question of "women's writing" is especially at the forefront of *SdBS* 10 (1993) whose theme is "Simone de Beauvoir and Women Writers throughout the Centuries."

76 There are also stand-alone readings of Beauvoir's fiction, though fewer than I might have expected. I particularly liked Muriel Olmeda-Saigne's "Les Mandarins ou le triomphe romanesque de l'écriture mélancolique," *SdBS* 22, 2005–2006, pp. 25–36. She integrates the affective and the world-historical, as the novel itself does, which leads to a discussion of the book's *structure* as "une remise en question de ce que la société considère comme normal" (p. 29). Other pieces analyze Beauvoir's fiction in the light of Sartre's writing, and one interesting piece on *The Age of Reason* looks in the opposite direction: Isabelle Greel-Feldbrügge, *SdBS* 17, 2000–2001, pp. 74–88.

77 Rochester and Test, *SdBS* 10, 1995, pp. 91–114.

78 Frauke Gries, *SdBS* 4, 1987, pp. 99–110; Peter G. Christensen, *SdBS* 4, 1987, pp. 111–132; Agnès-Laure Sauvebelle, *SdBS* 21, 2004–2005, pp. 35–42; Eugenia N. Zimmerman, *SdBS* 11, 1994,

too, are discussed as part of the historical context: Boris Vian, Albert Cohen, and Jack Kerouac, who is compared in Mark Dunphy's surprisingly convincing piece about *America Day by Day*.⁷⁹

Among conversations with younger writers, there are discussions of Beauvoir's direct and nurturing relationship with Violette Leduc, and of the mutual dislike between Beauvoir and Nathalie Sarraute.⁸⁰ We find some inheritors among feminists: Christiane Rochefort, Mexican feminist Rosario Castellanos, Maya Angelou, Nawal El-Saadawi;⁸¹ other references to the next generation illuminate through contrast, as in "Nancy Huston commente Simone de Beauvoir" by Marylea MacDonald—Huston's comments are not complimentary.⁸² Often articles simply draw a parallel between Beauvoir's lives and ideas (or ideals) and women writers who are in other respects rather remote: salonnières who wrote fairy tales, Hortense Allart (1801–1878), who wrote feminist essays and tracts, George Sand.⁸³ Matteo Tuveri provides "a Beauvoirian perspective" on the nineteenth-century Empress Elizabeth of Austria, whose "poetic diary" was discovered and published in 1951.⁸⁴ Åsa Moberg asks, "Why did Simone de Beauvoir Make No Mention of Florence Nightingale in *The Second Sex*?" and

pp. 111–114; Liza Potvin and Brenda Sully, *SdBS* 9, 1992, pp. 108–120. Sauvebelle's particularly thoughtful piece undertakes the comparison with Nin "pour mettre en exergue le point de vue existentialiste de l'écrivain-philosophe Simone de Beauvoir."

79 Nelly Timmons, *SdBS* 14, 1997, pp. 124–131; John Light, *SdBS* 10, 1993, pp. 27–274; Dunphy, *SdBS* 19, 2002–2003, pp. 72–78.

80 See Mireille Brioude, *SdBS* 13, 1996, pp. 114–125; Jorge Calderon, *SdBS* 17, 2000–2001, pp. 162–172; Françoise d'Eaubonne, *SdBS* 19, 2002–2003, pp. 126–128. Brioude studies the correspondence between Beauvoir and Leduc, and Leduc's manuscripts, as assiduously edited by Beauvoir, to correct views of the relationship she views as caricatures; she concludes that Beauvoir's letters and annotations "font preuve d'une très grande délicatesse," and quotes Isabelle de Courtivron: "There is a history to be written of women helping women to write" (p. 117). She follows up with a *compte rendu* of a dramatic reading of some of these letters on France Culture: many moving quotations confirm Brioude's analysis, *SdBS* 14, 1997, pp. 158–160. See also Elizabeth Locey, *SdBS* 17, 2000–2001, pp. 149–155.

81 Lynn Kettler Penrod, *SdBS* 4, 1987, pp. 159–175; Leticia Illiana Underwood, *SdBS* 10, 1993, pp. 165–174; Joanne Megna-Wallace, *SdBS* 6, 1989, pp. 49–56; Andrea Duranti, *SdBS* 23, 2006–2007, pp. 106–115; Teresa Lopez Pardina, *SdBS* 23, 2006–2007, pp. 116–124. Castellanos was a feminist activist and poet directly inspired by Beauvoir. Another direct inheritor turned out to be Gabriel García Márquez: this surprised me, but Tommie Lee Jackson documents that he read *La Vieillesse*, and compares it to *Love in a Time of Cholera*, *SdBS* 28, 2011–2012, pp. 23–33.

82 MacDonald, *SdBS* 17, 2000–2001, pp. 173–183.

83 Patricia Hannon, *SdBS* 10, 1993, pp. 37–44; Helynn Hansen, *SdBS* 19, 2002–2003, pp. 116–125; Annabelle M. Rea, *SdBS* 10, 1993, pp. 55–62.

84 Tuveri, *SdBS* 24, 2007–2008, 5–11, p. 5.

proceeds to make up for the omission.⁸⁵ Some articles say little about Beauvoir herself, but simply give (often fascinating) information about other women, as if taking for granted that the excitement of literary/historical rediscovery belongs under the umbrella of Beauvoirian feminism.

Reading through the early issues, which have a somewhat homemade feel, I recognize the font from my first daisy-wheel printer, and the kinetic energy of a new field in the making. I'll admit to some nostalgia for the time when feminist literary criticism was unabashedly concerned with the problems in women's lives, and how literature could help illuminate them, and when women's studies was a do-it-yourself project, often centered in (or staffed by refugees from) departments of literature. Questions of gender look more complicated now, and literary theory looks more sophisticated.

But theory is here, too. Early on, a subthread about autobiography uses (and critiques) such authorities as Philippe Lejeune and Estelle Jelinek, engaging the theories of A.J. Greimas, Émile Benveniste, Georges Gusdorf.⁸⁶ A bit later there's also some sensitive application of semiotics, deconstructive methodology, and psychoanalytic reading, especially from Èlène Cliche, whose work on the Algren letters I've already mentioned. "Reading Transference in the Autobiography of Simone de Beauvoir" shows us Beauvoir's libidinal investments in the pleasure of reading and writing; "Réflexions sur l'hédonisme beauvoirien" takes another step, linking "plaisir" and "bonheur" in Beauvoir, her "grand délire optimiste," to her understanding of embodied temporality.⁸⁷ Such work takes us deeper into Beauvoir's text, and renders her not less recognizable, but more so.

Mikhail Bahktin also appears in these pages, most helpfully in Raija Koski's article on *Les Belles Images*, and in an intriguing piece on *La Métaphysique du romanesque* by Liva Bodil Kalvik.⁸⁸ There is little trace of Julia Kristeva's claims in favor of what she calls the "revolution in poetic language" (and indeed, how could there be, since Beauvoir's realist fictional practices are entirely at odds with it?).⁸⁹ However, many writers invoke Kristeva's concept of "intertextual-

85 Moberg, *SdBS* 25, 2008–2009, 13–19, p. 13.

86 See Marilyn Yalom, *SdBS* 8, 1991, pp. 75–82; Tilde Sankovitch, *SdBS* 8, 1991, pp. 93–102; Eleonore Holveck, *SdBS* 8, 1991, pp. 103–110; Marylea MacDonald, *SdBS* 9, 1992, pp. 75–80; *SdBS* 10, 1993, pp. 237–240; Christina Angelfors, *SdBS* 15, 1998–1999, pp. 64–71.

87 Èlène Cliche, *SdBS* 20, 2003–2004, 107–116, p. 113. Cliche is quoting *La Force de l'âge*, t. 1, Paris, Gallimard, coll. "Folio", 1960, p. 252.

88 Koski, *SdBS* 9, 1992, pp. 55–60; Kalvik, *SdBS* 27, 2010–2011, pp. 38–50. Kalvik also brings in Kierkegaard, Aristotle, and Heidegger's idea of "horizon" to illuminate the structure of novel-as-adventure.

89 Liliane Lazar takes on the relationship directly in "When the *Samurai* Meet the *Man-*

ity," the idea that a text's effects on us arise from a weave of relationships with other texts, unconscious as well as conscious citations. For instance, the concept leads Triantafyllia Kadoglou to a productive reading of *Les Belles Images*.⁹⁰

There's also a wider influence of "intertextuality," including on contributors who might be surprised to hear me say so. The gradual replacement of "source study" and the unidirectional tracing of "influence" by the looser, more polyvocal understanding of "intertextuality" had liberating effects on everyone involved in literary study in those years: we were freed to simply see how texts spoke to, with, through other texts, setting aside the issue of conscious intention: the "conversation" model, in other words. But such deployment of "intertextuality" stops short before the abolition of intentionality (and the "death of the author") to which Kristeva's thought was tending: nearly all these pieces at least tacitly assume that Beauvoir knew what she was doing, and that the task of the critic (literary or otherwise) is to discover and disclose that, to mediate between the writer and the reader, if you will.

Where, in all this, is philosophy? Purely philosophical inquiry did not appear in *Simone de Beauvoir Studies* until the second issue, which included a typically forthright analysis by Donald L. Hatcher, "Simone de Beauvoir and Why It's Immoral to Be a Housewife," and a longer piece by Christine Fauré comparing Beauvoir to Simone Weil.⁹¹ In general, philosophy was a bit slower to make its way into these pages than literary study, biography, and general feminist questions; this may reflect a time when literature departments were less inhospitable to feminism (and to Continental philosophers!) than were most philosophy departments. But philosophers were certainly working on Simone de Beauvoir during those years; echoes here include the two pieces by Bergoffen mentioned earlier, another by Helen Heise on *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, and an aphoristic essay by Dennis Rohatyn, "What Makes Sartre—and Beauvoir—Tick?" which I find rather wonderful but am utterly unable to summarize.⁹²

darins," *SdBS* 13, 1996, 66–77, p. 70, comparing their novels: "Beauvoir the feminist creates heroines that are vulnerable, sensitive, and dependent, while Kristeva, the advocate of 'femininity,' gives us heroines who are independent, strong, even slightly harsh." Several writers deploy Kristeva's *Soleil Noir* descriptively, in discussing melancholy and depression. Julia Kristeva, *Soleil Noir: Dépression et mélancolie*, Paris, Gallimard, coll. "Folio essais," 1989.

90 Kadoglou, *SdBS* 27, 2010–2011, pp. 51–60.

91 Hatcher, *SdBS* 2, 1984, pp. 73–98; Fauré *SdBS* 2, 1984, pp. 99–116. Three other Hatcher essays deal with Beauvoir's theory of self and her views on sex and love: *SdBS* 8, 1991, pp. 183–191; *SdBS* 13, 1996, pp. 56–65; *SdBS* 16, 1999–2000, pp. 46–54.

92 Heise, *SdBS* 8, 1991, pp. 175–182; Rohatyn, *SdBS* 8, 1991, pp. 153–162.

Another early article by Eleanor Holveck on Beauvoir's interpretation of death argues against reducing Beauvoir's philosophy to (her) psychology.⁹³ In 1997 Eva Lundgren-Gothlin takes another step, bringing Beauvoir into conversation with Seyla Benhabib and showing how Beauvoir's work sheds light on debates in moral philosophy around universalism and communitarianism.⁹⁴

After the turn of the century, there's rather more, especially about *The Ethics of Ambiguity*. Gail Weiss argues that Beauvoir "reworks the traditional transcendence/immanence distinction so that the interdependence between them can be revealed in a non-self-alienating and even non-other-alienating fashion."⁹⁵ Peg Zeglin Brand situates Beauvoir's discussions of aesthetics in the context of long-standing philosophical debates about art and morality, regretting that those debates have failed to take Beauvoir's view into account.⁹⁶ Marguerite La Caze moves us away from earlier, psychologizing work on Beauvoir's view of death to show her as *philosophically* solving two problems simultaneously: the obstacles to freedom and the fear of mortality.⁹⁷ Kristana Arp illuminates Beauvoir's ideas of "disclosure"—"a paradoxical operation in that one is always uprooting oneself from the world in which one remains rooted"—and ambiguity: "Ambiguity is usually considered a linguistic phenomenon: a word or phrase is ambiguous in that it can have more than one meaning. This sense of the word lingers in the background in Beauvoir's usage of it."⁹⁸

Tove Pettersen clearly demonstrates how Beauvoir's ethical thinking is continuous from the "moral period" through *The Second Sex* but also develops: Pettersen reminds us that there is more to Beauvoir's concept of the "ethical" than simply "choice."⁹⁹ In a second article, Pettersen brings Beauvoir's early work together with issues discussed by contemporary care ethicists; like them, Beauvoir critiques universalism, but she also underlines the limits and oppressiveness of devotion to others.¹⁰⁰ In "Origins of Otherness: Non-conceptual

93 Holveck, *SdBS* 6, 1987, pp. 69–79.

94 Lundgren-Gothlin, *SdBS* 14, 1997, pp. 39–46.

95 Gail Weiss, *SdBS* 18, 2001–2002, 9–21, p. 12.

96 Brand ends with a discussion of Judy Chicago's work as fulfilling Beauvoir's aims, *SdBS* 18, 2001–2002, pp. 31–48.

97 La Caze, *SdBS* 21, 2004–2005, pp. 142–154.

98 Arp, *SdBS* 25, 2008–2009, 38–49, pp. 39, 38. Annlaug Bjørnsnøs makes a similar argument in a piece on Beauvoir and "the post-modern Subject." *SdBS* 18, 2001–2002, pp. 22–30. Bjørnsnøs sees Beauvoir's concept of ambiguity as fluid and positive enough to accommodate new forms of selfhood, and notes that "[t]hrough an analysis of the notion of future, Beauvoir [...] attacks one of the myths of modernity: the possibility of progress through reason" (p. 23).

99 Pettersen, *SdBS* 24, 2007–2008, pp. 57–65.

100 Pettersen, *SdBS* 26, 2009–2010, pp. 18–27.

Ethical Encounters in Beauvoir and Levinas" Jennifer McWeeny convincingly argues that there is less divergence between the two accounts than might appear, in ways that enrich the reading of both. She points to "the formation of a coalitional ethical philosophy that begins in the experiences of the oppressed and that is capable of resisting multiple oppressions, including sexism, anti-Semitism, and many others."¹⁰¹ Both McWeeny and Pettersen strongly argue for the centrality of Beauvoir's ethics to her feminism (this note was struck earlier, by Bergoffen and others), a point that those of us who approach *The Second Sex* from other disciplinary directions should bear in mind.

A number of pieces wholly or partly about Judith Butler give an intriguing glimpse of how Butler's own views changed, from her early appreciation of Beauvoir to her charge, in the opening chapter of *Gender Trouble*, that *The Second Sex* was "phallogocentric" and needed to be replaced by the views she herself advanced in that book.¹⁰² Like Beauvoir's (non)dialogue with Irigaray, this rich vein should be mined further.

SdBS 26 and 27 also include more philosophical "conversations." Carolle Gagnon reads *L'Invitée* in the light of Kierkegaard and Foucault; Kierkegaard is also central to Magda Guadalupe dos Santos's investigation of Beauvoir's philosophy of memory. Christine Daigle finds Beauvoir's ethical position "closer to Nietzsche's than she admits"; Tegan Zimmerman analyses "Simone de Beauvoir's Dialogue with Plato."¹⁰³ As the philosophical knowledge base about Beauvoir builds, the pendulum almost seems to have swung away from literary study. But this binary is misleading: often the only indication of a writer's academic discipline is found in the "Notes on Contributors" section. Betty Halpern-Guedj turns out to be a *docteur ès lettres*; Rousseau scholar Margaret Ogrodnick, who teaches in a philosophy department, mobilizes some of the same literary "authorities" on autobiography mentioned above.¹⁰⁴ Tegan Zimmerman's field

¹⁰¹ McWeeny, *SdBS* 26, 2009–2010, 5–17, p. 5.

¹⁰² Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, New York, Routledge, 2007 [1990]. See Margaret Reeves, *SdBS* 10, 1993, pp. 159–164; Candace Collins, *SdBS* 14, 1997, pp. 72–82; Ursula Fabijancic, *SdBS* 15, 1998–1999, pp. 1–16. See also Lisa C. Knisely, "Oppression, Normative Violence, and Vulnerability: The Ambiguous Beauvoirian Legacy of Butler's Ethics," *philoSOPHIA*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2012, pp. 145–166; two chapters, Diana Coole, "Butler's Phenomenological Existentialism," pp. 11–27, and Moya Lloyd, "Towards a Cultural Politics of Vulnerability: Precarious Lives and Ungrievable Deaths," pp. 92–105, in *Judith Butler's Precarious Politics: Critical Encounters*, ed. Terrell Carver and Samuel A. Chambers, New York, Routledge, 2008; and Moya Lloyd, *Judith Butler: From Norms to Politics*, Cambridge, Polity, 2007.

¹⁰³ Gagnon, *SdBS* 26, 2009–2010, pp. 38–46; Guadalupe dos Santos, *SdBS* 26, 2009–2010, pp. 28–37; Daigle, *SdBS* 27, 2010–2011, pp. 61–71; Zimmerman, *SdBS* 27, 2010–2011, pp. 72–80.

¹⁰⁴ Ogrodnick, *SdBS* 21, 2004–2005, pp. 123–132.

is Comparative Literature (she's also a poet) but her piece opens, "the fact that Simone de Beauvoir defines herself as an author rather than as a philosopher has been used as an excuse for lack of serious scholarship on her philosophical works," and she proceeds to remedy that.¹⁰⁵ Annlaug Bjørnsnøs is another scholar productively working the boundary between disciplines. Her article on *La Vieillesse* powerfully argues for the urgency of that approach, reminding us that the interdisciplinary method was intrinsic to Beauvoir's worldview and her contribution.¹⁰⁶

We should be attentive also to the risk of marginalizing disciplines other than literature and philosophy. There is only one anthropological article, which seems odd given the traction Beauvoir's ideas had at the birth of feminist anthropology in the United States in the 1970s, with knock-on effects for "gender theory" we're still feeling today. Cécile Decousu reminds us of anthropology's importance, tracing the influence of Claude Lévi-Straus and Marcel Mauss on Beauvoir's work, but also pointing toward the vaster project (which included Merleau-Ponty and the later Sartre) of moving philosophy toward an anthropology "à la fois structurelle et historique."¹⁰⁷ Triantafyllia Kadoglou gives a full account of the 2010 Paris colloquium on "Simone de Beauvoir et la psychanalyse," which brought together some leading French and British psychoanalysts in an important revisionist *rapprochement*, drawing attention to influences in both directions and suggesting that future collaboration would be fruitful.¹⁰⁸ Kadoglou and a few others discuss Beauvoir's legacies to sociology and "human sciences."¹⁰⁹ The aptly titled "Spinning in her Grave: Simone de Beauvoir's Voice in Feminist Theology," by Carrie LeSeur, traces Beauvoir's paradoxical legacy to Mary Daly's early work.¹¹⁰ There are a few articles about teaching Simone de Beauvoir, though not as many as there might be.¹¹¹ There are only a few on film and visual culture, but these are very interesting. Sylvie Blum-

105 Zimmerman, *SdBS* 27, 2010–2011, p. 72.

106 Bjørnsnøs, *SdBS* 26, 2009–2010, pp. 47–62.

107 Decousu, *SdBS* 23, 2006–2007, pp. 82–90.

108 The proceedings are available as *Simone de Beauvoir et la psychanalyse*, ed. Pierre Bras and Michel Kail, special issue, *L'Homme et la Société*, vol. 179/180, 2010. Another strong article on psychoanalysis is Marie-Andrée Charbonneau, *SdBS* 21, 2004–2005, 43–53, p. 45; Charbonneau finds more indebtedness to the work of Helene Deutsch than Beauvoir indicates, but "si les constatations sont similaires, le but visé, lui, est différent."

109 Diane Beeson, *SdBS* 16, 1999–2000, pp. 69–79; Laurence Ellena and Ludovic Gaussot, *SdBS* 17, 2000–2001, pp. 20–30.

110 LeSeur, *SdBS* 16, 1999–2000, pp. 80–86. Another article that could be filed under "religious studies" is Eleanor Marsh, *SdBS* 26, 2009–2010, pp. 63–71.

111 The most interesting is Elizabeth Richardson Viti, *SdBS* 23, 2006–2007, pp. 125–131.

Reid's overview, "Simone de Beauvoir and Visual Pleasure" includes analysis of Beauvoir on Bardot; other perspectives on Bardot are provided by Catherine Rodgers and Tom Kemper.¹¹² Jean-Pierre Boulé brings together feminist, existentialist, and post-colonial film theory with a Beauvoirian reading of Claire Denis' *Chocolat*.¹¹³

Historians are regrettably under-represented: Sylvie Chaperon tallies the rather depressing inattention to Beauvoir in the field of French intellectual history, and reminds Beauvoir scholars to attend to what Beauvoir did (intellectually and politically) beyond feminism, calling for investigation that would be "pluridisciplinaire."¹¹⁴ Apart from Peter Christensen's useful contextualisations of Beauvoir's historical fictions, the only other historian seems to be the eminent Mary Louise Roberts, whose 1991 "Simone de Beauvoir: Coming of Age in the Twenties" helpfully reads Beauvoir's academic and family trajectory in light of broad economic developments and ideologies about female education.¹¹⁵ Noting that Beauvoir "resisted history even as she pioneered it," Roberts also brings to bear Joan Scott's insights in "The Evidence of Experience" to ask how female and feminist subjects are formed, another issue that deserves deeper consideration.¹¹⁶

To return to an earlier point: increased attention to Beauvoir's politics beyond feminism, and especially to race and other intersections in her work, are a noteworthy trend. Rochester and Test start the discussion in "The Politics of Violence and the Violence of Politics in the Works of Simone de Beauvoir": "[T]en years on from the death of Simone de Beauvoir [...] [s]he is beginning to be perceived solely as a social reformer," but "[s]he was not interested in working from within [...]. If we are made uneasy by Beauvoir's revolutionary stance we must nonetheless face it and continue our study without misrepresenting her."¹¹⁷ Sandrine Dauphin details Beauvoir's concrete engagements with actually existing revolutions in Cuba and China, and how those involvements shifted as facts on the ground changed; hers is one of the few articles anywhere to give Beauvoir's *The Long March* the attention it deserves.¹¹⁸

112 Blum-Reid, *SdBS* 14, 1997, pp. 140–148; Rodgers, *SdBS* 17, 2000–2001, pp. 137–148; Kemper, *SdBS* 19, 2002–2003, pp. 102–115.

113 Boulé, *SdBS* 29, 2013–2014, pp. 56–65.

114 Chaperon, *SdBS* 20, 2003–2004, pp. 39–53.

115 Christensen, *SdBS* 19, 2002–2003, pp. 143–154; *SdBS* 4, 1987, pp. 111–132; *SdBS* 21, 2004–2005, pp. 93–102. Roberts, *SdBS* 8, 1991, 83–89, p. 83.

116 Joan W. Scott, "The Evidence of Experience," *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 17, no. 4, 1991, pp. 773–797.

117 Rochester and Test, *SdBS* 13, 1996, 184–201, pp. 184, 195.

118 Dauphin, *SdBS* 20, 2003–2004, pp. 117–126.

Another piece by Sandrine Dauphin argues that Beauvoir deserves the mantle of engaged intellectual, which French historians have denied her: her theory and praxis (especially in memoir) speak to the question of “the universal” in the particular, claiming the universal for feminists without arrogating the right to incarnate it herself.¹¹⁹ Simona Barello puts Beauvoir in conversation with Antonio Gramsci, showing that under very (very) different life conditions, the two thinkers reached similar views about the relevance and method of engagement “dans le terrain de l’écriture.”¹²⁰ Two articles deal with the Algerian war: Friederike Landau discusses the continuing relevance of Beauvoir’s work as a “public intellectual,” and Patricia Quierzy-Roussoukh takes up the question of “l’indifférence moral,” drawing on Luc Boltanski’s *Distant Suffering*, and on Hannah Arendt.¹²¹

Race comes into focus with divergent readings of what Beauvoir learned on her trips to the United States. Céline Léon argues that the influence of Richard Wright and Gunnar Myrdal on both *America Day by Day* and *The Second Sex* has been overstated, arguing that we should instead read those works in dialogue with Sartre’s writings on Blacks and Jews.¹²² Joy Simmons starts from a different angle, exploring whiteness in *America Day by Day*. Simmons notes that “Beauvoir seeks to understand the driving force behind white oppression of blacks in the United States,” but “although Beauvoir tries to distance herself from the oppressiveness at the heart of American whiteness throughout her memoir by invoking her French identity, at times she too operates toward black Americans from a position of white privilege and ethnocentrism,” in ways Simmons characterizes as “ethical solipsism.” She does not disagree with Beauvoir’s analysis of racism, rooted in *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, but focuses our attention on moments of “insensitivity” in Beauvoir’s narrative, which she analyses through Shannon Sullivan’s book, *Revealing Whiteness: The Unconscious Habits of Racial Privilege*.¹²³

A less U.S.-centered view is provided by Simona Barello, who puts Beauvoir in parallel with Léopold Sédar Senghor and Aimé Césaire, in their uptake of Hegel, and the language they use to describe the situated experience of

119 Dauphin, *SdBS* 17, 2000–2001, pp. 64–73.

120 Barello, *SdBS* 21, 2004–2005, 133–141, p. 135.

121 Landau, *SdBS* 29, 2013–2014, pp. 46–55; Quierzy-Roussoukh, *SdBS* 22, 2005–2006, pp. 78–87.

122 Léon, *SdBS* 20, 2003–2004, pp. 54–63.

123 Simmons, *SdBS* 24, 2007–2008, 66–75, pp. 66, 71, 70. See also Shannon Sullivan, *Revealing Whiteness: The Unconscious Habits of Racial Privilege*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2006.

being Black (and being white).¹²⁴ We return to the question of international political commitments with Denis Charbit, "Les raisons d'une fidélité: Simone de Beauvoir, Israël et les Juifs."¹²⁵ Especially interesting is Andrea Duranti's "Becoming 'Woman' in the Arab World," which puts Beauvoir in conversation with Fatima Mernissi, Assia Djebar, Shirin Ebadi, El-Saadawi, and others, ending with a discussion of Marziyeh Meshkini's film, *The Day I Became a Woman* (2000).¹²⁶ More work along these lines, and much other interesting material, can be found in the *Proceedings of the 18th Conference of the Simone de Beauvoir Society*, which Duranti and Matteo Tuveri co-edited. This collection, which appeared in 2017, should be read as a strong sample of the kinds of work in Beauvoir scholarship that was taking place during the journal's five-year hiatus between *SdBS* 29 (2013–2014) and *SdBS* 30.1 (2019), which you are reading now.¹²⁷

I don't really recommend reading through all the back issues at one go, like I just did: it felt a bit like studying for my Ph.D. oral examinations. On the other hand, there was something to recommend the bygone habit of opening a journal when it arrived and looking at *everything* in it, not just the pieces that obviously bore directly on what one had already identified as one's interests (and which could thus contribute to one's "productivity"). As *The Ethics of Ambiguity* reminds us, my project is always connected to the projects of others. (And, as Susan Buck-Morss puts it, "Disciplinary boundaries allow counterevidence to belong to someone else's story."¹²⁸) There's always more to know.

In her "Editor's Note" to *SdBS* 15 (1998–1999), Yolanda provides a *compte rendu* of the Paris conference to celebrate the *Cinquantenaire du Deuxième sexe*, making sure we know how many Society members participated. She quotes Christine Delphy—"Oui, le féminisme français existe"—and Anne Zelensky—"Il faut sortir Simone de sa naphthaline," as well as Awa Thiam, who rose from the audience (I was there, and remember this) to tell how Sartre and Beauvoir had supported her political activism in Senegal. Yolanda sums up: "Everyone who attended the January events in Paris rejoiced in seeing the

124 Barello, *SdBS* 15, 1998–1999, pp. 126–135.

125 Charbit, *SdBS* 17, 2000–2001, pp. 48–63.

126 Duranti, *SdBS* 23, 2006–2007, pp. 106–115.

127 Andrea Duranti and Matteo Tuveri, eds., *Proceedings of the 18th Conference of the Simone de Beauvoir Society: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow*, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017.

128 Susan Buck-Morss, *Hegel, Haiti, and Universal History*, Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009, p. 22.

extent to which she and her works are being discussed seriously and passionately [...]. *Simone de Beauvoir Studies* is dedicated to continuing to provide a forum for the expression of a great variety of reactions and opinions for many years to come." If we can do that as well between these elegant covers as Yolanda did, starting with the daisy-wheel printer, we should be content.