

Abstract

This essay proceeds from Sara Heinämaa's *Toward a Phenomenology of Sexual Difference*, where Simone de Beauvoir's *Le Deuxième Sexe* is examined as a phenomenological piece of work. Heinämaa shows that Beauvoir is working in close connection to Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, and in this essay, I will show that this analysis can help us understand Beauvoir's portraits of female experience in the second part of the book, *L'expérience vécue*. Departing from Beauvoir's starting question "What is a woman?", I will show that this portrayed experience is a phenomenological method after Merleau-Ponty, where we examine particulars to be able to approach a generality understood as "a style". Understood in this way, Beauvoir's work is a statement about the nature of generality in the question of sex – as well as a radical inquiry about philosophical method.

Keywords: Heinämaa, Beauvoir, Merleau-Ponty, phenomenology, sex, generality, particulars