The Two Lives of the Polish Translation of *Le deuxième sexe*

**Abstract:** The above title refers to the fact that the single Polish translation of *Le deuxième sexe* had two editions, each of them published under completely different political, cultural, and social circumstances. In 1972 the book came out in the socialist Polish People’s Republic, one of the so-called “Soviet bloc” countries. In 2003 it was re-edited in the Republic of Poland – an independent democratic state still undergoing difficult processes of transformation started in 1989. Our paper will describe and compare these two stages in the history of the Polish reception of de Beauvoir’s treatise via translation. We are going to characterize the special position of the translations of J.P. Sartre and S. de Beauvoir in socialist Poland, taking into account the political and cultural background of the 1950s to 1970s, and putting emphasis on the reception of *Le deuxième sexe* in the context of changing moral norms in the socialist society of the 1970s. Afterwards, we are going to describe the role of *Le deuxième sexe* in the process of absorbing Western feminism in Poland after 1989. We will refer to the biographies of the two Polish translators of *Le deuxième sexe*, Gabriela Mycielska (1902-1991) and Maria Leśniewska (1916-1990), who represented roughly the same formation of emancipating European women as Simone de Beauvoir, so as to compare the processes of shaping modern female identity in Poland and France in the first half of the twentieth century. We will also point at the most significant solutions adopted in the Polish translation and describe the role of the preface authored by Konstanty Grzybowski (philosopher and lawyer) included in the first edition.

**Bios:** Ewa Kraskowska is professor ordinarius at the Faculty of Polish and Classical Philology, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland. Head of the Department of the 20th Century Literature, Literary Theory, and the Art of Translation. One of the pioneers of the Polish feminist criticism after 1989. Her major academic works (books and articles in Polish) concern such topics as: history of women’s writing; literary translation theory; bilingualism and creative writing. Weronika Szwebs is a PhD candidate at the Faculty of Polish and Classical Philology, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland. She works on a thesis concerning the translation of theoretical discourses in the Polish humanities at the turn of the 20th and 21st century. Her research interests revolve around translation studies, 20th century Polish literature and literary theory. She also translates literary and cultural theory from English into Polish.