

Couples Modernes. The Literary Couple in Central European Modernist Movements

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Članek je posvečen specifičnemu fenomenu v srednjeevropskem modernizmu: paru, ki ga sestavljata t. i. nova ženska in dekadent. S poudarkom na gibanjih *mlada Poljska* (Młoda Polska), *mlada Hrvaška* (Mlada Hrvatska) in *češka moderna* (Česká moderna) avtorica predstavi tri primere literarnih parov: Stanisław Przybyszewski in Dagny Juel, Vladimir Jelovšek in Zofka Kveder ter Stanislav K. Neumann in Kamilla Neumannová. Pregled dokazuje, da je navezovanje na pripadnika literarnega gibanja za žensko predstavljalo način za dostop do boemskega miljeja in, kar je še pomembneje, do strani vodilnih revij in posledično do literarne zgodovine.

The article reflects upon a specific phenomenon within Central European modernism: namely the couple composed of a New Woman and a Decadent. Focusing on *Młoda Polska*, *Mlada Hrvatska*, and *Česká Moderna*, the author presents three cases of literary couples: Stanisław Przybyszewski and Dagny Juel, Vladimir Jelovšek and Zofka Kveder, and Stanislav K. Neumann and Kamilla Neumannová. The findings prove that for a woman, to bond with a member of a literary movement was a way to gain access to the bohemian milieu and, more importantly, to the pages of the flagship magazines and, consequently, literary history.

Ključne besede: srednja Evropa, modernistično gibanje, nova ženska, dekadent

Key words: Central Europe, modernist movement, New Woman, Decadent

The title of this article refers to the acclaimed exhibition organized at the Centre Pompidou in 2018 that presented the artistic couple as a particularly modern phenomenon (Lavigne 2018). Indeed, not only in the field of visual arts but also in literature, the period around 1900 saw the appearance of couples who partnered both in life and in work. In Central European modernism, they were usually composed of a New Woman and a Decadent.

From the perspective of Western modernist studies, those two cultural icons of the *fin de siècle* could seem like rather strange bedfellows. It is true that,

during the 1890s, British public opinion, antagonistic both to literary decadence and New Woman fiction, regularly coupled the Decadent and the New Woman in denouncing the threat they represented to the established culture (Dowling 1979: 434–453). Nevertheless, their concerns and goals appeared to be radically different. The decadent movement was inherently misogynistic, and many of its members openly praised homosexuality. Decadent dandies, such as the protagonists of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), exalted the cultural femininity and even usurped it as part of their artistic performance. Still, as they defined themselves against everything natural, they openly rejected the biological women, represented in this reference novel as “hopelessly corporeal, physical and leadenly” (Ledger 1997: 108). On the other hand, New Women writers fought against this kind of gender stereotypes. It did not prevent them from engaging with Decadent tropes, themes, and styles (Showalter 1993: vii–xx; Parker 2020: 118–135). As the common perception of women was that they were more bound to nature than men and, therefore, less capable of cultural endeavors, they defied this notion by advocating for women to enjoy the same rights as men to study, work, and socialize. They also strived to be recognized as fully-fledged artists.

In the anglophone context, the Decadent and the New Woman have thus long been presented as opposites, not simply “antithetical figures (...), but as antagonistic principles intent on each other's destruction” (Dowling 1979: 435). The peculiar alliance, however, worked rather well in the Central European modernist movements, where we find several real-life couples composed of a decadent male author and an emancipated woman with professional ambitions of her own. The man's carefully studied image and position in the group of rebellious youth profited from forming an untraditional, often scandalous relationship, whose turmoils were a crucial inspiration for his art. For the woman, bonding with a member of a literary movement proved even more instrumental: it was a way to gain access to the bohemian milieu and, more importantly, to the pages of the flagship magazines and, consequently, literary history.

Focusing on *Młoda Polska*, *Mlada Hrvatska*, and *Česká Moderna*, three very different couples will be presented in detail in which both companions were part of a local modernist movement: Stanisław Przybyszewski (1868–1927) and Dagny Juel (1867–1901); Vladimír Jelovšek (1879–1931) and Zofka Kveder (1878–1926); and Stanislav K. Neumann (1875–1947) and Kamilla Neumannová (1874–1956). The goal is not to provide biographical sketches but to explore how the intimate relationship with important male authors impacted women's careers to offer some insight into the mechanisms operating in the Central European literary field around 1900.

The Polish, Croatian, and Czech modernist movements appeared at the end of the 19th century in the context of the multinational Habsburg Empire. Despite all their declared admiration for the French symbolists, their “hidden geography” (David-Fix 2000: 736) points towards the capital city of Vienna. Indeed, all three Slavic literary groups were inspired by and modeled on Jung

Wien, a circle of Austrian modernist authors who gathered at the Café Central around Hermann Bahr.

As convincingly demonstrated by Urte Helduser, although Viennese modernism is often described in terms of the feminization of culture, Young Vienna participated in the fin-de-siècle misogynistic backlash against women's emancipation and was openly averse to the feminist movement (Helduser 2005: 257–325). The revolted, autonomous female intellectual promoted by Austrian New Women writers such as Grete Meisel-Hess, Else Kontányi, or Elsa Asenijeff stood in contradiction to the Young Vienna's preferred female figures, *femme fatale* and *femme fragile*, both reduced to their sexuality and seen merely as an addition to a man. Consequently, none of those authors was admitted into the elite company (Anderson 1992: 246–248). The only female name that found its way to the Young Vienna's flagship magazine, *Die Zeit*, belongs to Marie Herzfeld, who had to content herself with the subsidiary role of a translator. Despite her achievements as the cultural transmitter of modern Scandinavian literature to Viennese modernism (Jiresch 2013: 245–268), she is not considered part of the Young Vienna group.

The Habsburg-Slavic modernist movements likewise entered literary history as exclusively male groups. If their flagship magazines had female collaborators, they were assigned less prestigious tasks and soon forgotten altogether (Magnone 2020: 195–206). Therefore, it is instructive to reflect on those rare cases when women found themselves in positions of power and agency.

Stanisław Przybyszewski and Dagny Juel

Stanisław Przybyszewski was the most notorious representative of Central European decadence.¹ Born in Cujavia, Greater Poland, then part of Germany, he studied in Berlin and first wrote and published solely in German. His first work, the essay *Zur Psychologie des Individuums* [On the Psychology of the Individual] (1891), enthusiastically reviewed by *Freie Bühne*, already got him recognition in German modernist circles. Soon after, Przybyszewski, acclaimed by August Strindberg as *der geniale Pole*, “the genius Pole,” became the leader of the German-Scandinavian bohemian artistic group that gathered at the tavern *Zum Schwarzen Ferkel* and included, among others, Richard Dehmel, Theodor Wolff, Knut Hamsun, Ola Hansson, August Strindberg and Edvard Munch (Czarnocka 1996: 41–50; Matuszek 1996: 10–49). A significant part of Przybyszewski's international standing was built on the much-commented wild piano performances of Chopin that he gave at this venue. There, he also

¹ In a recent monograph on the phenomenon of decadence (Schoolfield 2003), Przybyszewski is the sole representative of Slavic literature, presented next to the major decadent figures of the West, such as Joris-Karl Huysmans, Gabriele D'Annunzio, August Strindberg, or Oscar Wilde.

met Dagny Juel, a Norwegian pianist with a reputation of *femme fatale* – once purportedly a lover of both Strindberg and Munch – whom he married in August 1893.²

A few months before the marriage, Przybyszewski's prose poem *Totenmesse* appeared. It starts, infamously, with the blasphemous sentence "Am Anfang war das Geschlecht," and exposes the author's metaphysics of sex that bears several similarities with Freud's theory of sexual difference (Dybel 2000: 47–131). It also presents a poetic portrait of his beloved. During the first years of their union, Przybyszewski authored as many as five decadent prose poems in German loosely based on his relationship with Dagny (one of them, *De Profundis*, is also dedicated to her: "My friend, my sister, my wife, Dagny"). He also offered a barely disguised version of their relationship in *Über Bord* [Overboard], the first volume of the novelistic trilogy *Homo Sapiens*, published in 1896.

In 1895, Przybyszewski became one of the co-founders and an occasional collaborator of the Berlin-based modernist magazine *Pan*. But even before that, his position was so strong that when Hermann Bahr started editing *Die Zeit* in 1894, he contacted Przybyszewski to invite him to publish on its pages (Przybyszewski 1937: 108). Two of Przybyszewski's articles were printed there, one on the Norwegian sculptor Gustav Vigeland and the other on the German modernist poet Alfred Momber, both appearing in 1896 (the letter text appeared in the same issue as Franz Servaes's memoirs *Jung Berlin. Zehn Jahre Literatur-Bewegung* [Jung Berlin: Ten Years of the Literary Movement], which included an extended characteristic of the Polish author). Around the same time, a young critic, Alfred Neumann, published a lengthy study on Przybyszewski in *Wiener Rundschau*.

Upon establishing the flagship Czech magazine *Moderní Revue* in 1895, Arnošt Procházka also turned to Przybyszewski. Between 1895 and 1898, *Moderní Revue* printed several translations of Przybyszewski's essays written in German, as well as enthusiastic reviews of his work, written by Procházka himself. As many as four of Przybyszewski's novels were included in the *Moderní Revue* book series. Przybyszewski exaggerates when he claims that there was no monthly magazine issue that would not include his work (Przybyszewski 1926: 270). It is true, however, that he was one of the magazine's most prolific authors (Kawalec 2007: 202–212). Above all, the Czech magazine was instrumental in constructing his fame in Central Europe as a leading representative and emissary of Western modernism (Kawalec 2007: 10; Hloušková 1971: 170–74).

In 1898, the Cracow-based magazine *Życie*, the press organ of the Polish modernist movement founded a year before and following the model of the Young Vienna outlet, *Die Zeit*, was struggling with persisting financial problems. The editors decided to hand over the reins to somebody so popular among

² On the myths about Dagny Juel, see Norseng, 1991, and Sawicka, 2006, especially pp. 147–211. I base my reconstruction of Dagny Juel's biography mostly on Aleksandra Sawicka's research (Sawicka 2006).

those interested in literary and artistic themes that their name would bring several new subscribers. The choice of Przybyszewski was the most logical.

Przybyszewski was not unfamiliar to the readers of *Życie*. In October 1897, the magazine printed his first Polish work, the poetic prose *Nad Morzem* [At the Seaside], accompanied by a photograph of the author and his wife. In March 1898, the publication of his *Epipsychidion*, previously printed in German in *Pan*, appeared with a reproduction of a portrait by Anna Costenoble and a pompous foreword in which the leading Polish modernist poet Kazimierz Przerwa-Tetmajer presented the author as a cosmopolitan genius of European fame and stated that “Young Poland should feel proud if this *genialer Pole* [genius Pole] started to write in Polish and thus allowed for his inclusion in its ranks” (Tetmajer 1898: 2).

At the time, Przybyszewski was facing serious financial and legal problems: his long-time lover Marta Foerder, with whom he maintained a second household in Berlin unbeknown to his legal wife, committed suicide after she found herself pregnant with their fourth child. Accused of complicity in Marta’s death, Przybyszewski spent several weeks in a Berlin prison and then got away to Norway, where he waited for the scandal to subside. He most gladly accepted the invitation to reinvent himself as the leader of the Polish modernist movement.

His arrival in Cracow in September 1898 in the company of Dagny Juel and their two small children, Zenon (1895) and Ivi (1897), was enthusiastically reported in *Życie*. A few issues later, the magazine announced the change in its editorship, declaring turning over the magazine to the “most outstanding modernist” and the “most talented representative of Young Poland” (Sewer-Maciejowski 1898: 497). The editors, like many members of the burgeoning Polish modernist movement, clearly expected that the notorious Bohemian would bring to the provincial and rather conservative Cracow “a new breeze” of the European trends.

Przybyszewski took advantage of *Życie* mostly to publish Polish versions of his German works. He provided a platform for his Czech admirers, printing texts by Arnošt Procházka and Jiří Karasek, as well as by his friends from Berlin, such as Ola Hansson. He also translated and promoted drama pieces and poetry written by his wife.

It is worth recalling that earlier, Dagny Juel translated Przybyszewski’s work from German into Norwegian and promoted him in Scandinavian literary circles (Brodal 1996). Her rendition of *Unterwegs*, the second volume of his novel *Homo Sapiens*, appeared in Kristiania in 1895, even before the German original (the translation of the first volume, *Über Bord*, which appeared anonymously in Copenhagen in 1896, is usually also attributed to her; the translation of the third volume, *Im Malstron* [In the Malstron], remains in manuscript, as does her translation of Przybyszewski’s play *Das Grosse Glück* [The Great Happiness]).

Although it was Dagny who came up with the idea of the magazine’s title (Sawicka 2006: 263), she did not succeed in printing any of her original work

in *Pan*. The only exception was the translation of a short story by Sigbjorn Obstfelder from Norwegian in 1895. What is more, during her lifetime, Przybyszewska managed to publish in Norwegian only a short play, *Den Sterkere* [The Stronger One], and four lyrical pieces in prose that appeared in the journal *Samtiden* (in 1895 and 1900, respectively). None of her plays was ever performed in Norway. Thanks to Przybyszewski, however, a significant part of her work appeared in Polish and Czech.

In January 1899, *Życie* published three of her prose poems. They were followed by the dramas *Kiedy Słońce Zachodzi* [When the Sun Goes Down] and *Grzech* [Sin], published the same year, in the September and December issues, respectively. In April, *Życie* published a reproduction of two drawings by Stanisław Wyspiański, the magazine's artistic director, representing Dagny and her son. Stanisław Wyrzykowski, *Życie*'s owner and publisher at the time, recalled bitterly in his unpublished memoirs that: "Mrs. Dagny played the piano very well and wrote vague, yearning, yet very poor prose poetry. Unfortunately, it was necessary to publish it from time to time because both her husband and Wyspiański [...] insisted on it" (Sawicka 2006: 319). In January 1900, not long before the magazine folded, Przybyszewski managed to print in *Życie* yet one more of Dagny's poetic prose pieces.

At the same time, he also sent her work for publication in the Czech magazine *Moderní Revue*. As documented in his letters to Procházka, Przybyszewski made efforts to publish Dagny's three plays in Czech as early as 1897 (Przybyszewski 1937: 175). Initially, he wanted the magazine to print them as a single book in Norwegian with illustrations by the painter and one of the pillars of *Moderní Revue*, Karel Hlávaček. This did not happen. Two of the three dramas, however, appeared in *Moderní Revue* in Hugo Kosterka's translations, *Hřích* [Sin] in February 1899 and *Když Slunce Zapadá* [When the Sun Goes down] in May 1901. *Hřích* was also performed in October 1898 in Prague by Intimní Volné Jevišťě [Intimate Free Stage], the association of modern drama co-organized by Procházka. In March 1899, it appeared separately as the 24th volume of their prestigious book series "Knihovna *Moderní Revue*" [*Moderní Revue* Library].

Inspired by his Czech colleagues, Przybyszewski was playing with the idea of launching a similar collection of books, which he wanted to call "Biblioteka *Życia*" [*Życie* Library], with his wife's *Grzech* [Sin] as the first volume (the plan did not go into fruition). He only succeeded in publishing his wife's work in book form after her death. *Kiedy Słońce Zachodzi...* [When the Sun Goes Down...], which included all the pieces previously published in *Życie*, appeared in November 1901. He dedicated the book to their children. In the foreword, he praised their mother as his confidante, who understood his creativity better than he did himself. A few months later, in May 1902, another of her plays, *Krucze Gniazdo* [Raven's Nest], appeared in Warsaw and was put on stage in Cracow.

Dagny died tragically in 1901 in Tiflis in the hands of an admirer, Władysław Emeryk, who also took his own life soon after that. At that time, Przybyszewskis' marriage was already irreparably broken on account of his starting a

love affair in the summer of 1899 with the wife of a fellow modernist poet, Jan Kasprowicz (as well as, more discretely, with a painter Aniela Pająkówna, with whom he had an illegitimate daughter, Stanisława, who later also became a writer). Taking revenge, Dagny left Cracow with a young poet, Wincenty Brzozowski (his unambiguous sonnet *À Mme Dagny Przybyszewska* [To Mrs Dagny Przybyszewska] appeared in *Życie* in the first issue of 1900), leaving the children with her husband, and soon enough, Jadwiga Kasprowiczowa abandoned her marriage and came to live openly with Przybyszewski. They moved to Warsaw where, in 1901, the novel *Synowie Ziemi* [Sons of the Earth], a barely veiled version of Przybyszewski's affair with Kasprowiczowa, was printed in the magazine *Chimera*, next to Kasprowicz's poetry, causing a scandal (in the face of widespread outrage, the publication of the novel stopped only after three installments).

After Dagny's death, Przybyszewski married Jadwiga Kasprowiczowa and, under her influence, started to deny Dagny's impact on his life and work. He went as far as brutally attacking her memory in the deceitful pamphlet he published in 1912 in *Die Aktion*, in which he bluntly stated that she had no significance to him (Matuszek 2008: 138–139). In his two-volume autobiography, he mentions her only once (Przybyszewski 1926: 199).

Vladimir Jelovšek and Zofka Kveder

At the turn of the century, the Przybyszewski couple constituted a powerful model of a new type of romantic relationship, admired and envied by many. Among the Central European modernists, at least one other couple was directly inspired by their example: the Croatian decadent Vladimir Jelovšek and the Slovenian “new woman” Zofka Kveder.

Jelovšek was the leader of the so-called *Nadeški Pokret*, the youngest and the most radical of all groups belonging to Croatian modernism. The latter emerged from the pupil association Nada, established in 1895 in the male *gymnasium* of Zagreb's Upper Town, where a literary journal of the same name had already been published (Tomašegović 2022). After the sudden death of Nada's first leader in 1897, the magazine's editorship went to Jelovšek, a poet and former editor of another pupil magazine, *Osvit*, who had just started his medical studies in Prague. At this time, the biweekly was on its way to professionalization, passing from lithography to print and marking change with a new title, *Nova Nada*. Jelovšek's name would appear as the editor-in-chief for the next three years, to be replaced in the last volume by Andrija Miličinović.

During his stay in Prague, Jelovšek became involved with the Czech modernist movement, and thanks to *Moderní Revue*, he got interested in Przybyszewski, whom he would help promote in Croatia (Šabić 2008: 117–137). Under this influence, he became not only the first decadent Croatian poet but also the most consistent adherent of decadence in the Croatian young movement. He

also developed an idiosyncratic worldview where his wholehearted support for women's emancipation was combined with a metaphysics of sexual difference very similar to that developed by Przybyszewski in his *Totenmesse*.

Jelovšek's relationship with Zofka Kveder started in October 1897.

Raised in Inner Carniola in a poor family with a violent, alcoholic father, Kveder received a limited education; she first attended the village elementary school and then a school for girls in Ljubljana run by Catholic nuns.³ After she graduated at fifteen, she returned to her family home but could not stand the moral abuse. Only a year later, she ran away, determined to support herself through work. She started with various secretarial jobs. Eventually, she became the first Slovenian woman who made a living exclusively through writing. In 1900, after the failure of her brief attempt at studying at the University of Bern (unable to support herself in Switzerland, she only attended lectures for a few months), she decided to go to Prague to join Jelovšek, whom she knew at the time mainly from passionate correspondence and through sporadic in-person meetings. The couple lived in an informal relationship based on the principle of free love until they eventually married in 1903. Their first daughter, Vlada, was two years old at that time. The other two daughters, Marja and Mira, were born in 1907 and 1911, respectively. The couple divorced in 1912.

At the time when she met Jelovšek, Kveder was only starting her literary career. In 1898, her first articles and short stories were published in *Slovenka*, the first Slovenian feminist magazine recently established in Trieste (Mihurko Poniž 2017a). Simultaneously, three pieces by her – two short stories and a correspondence about the limits of the education for girls offered in Slovenia by the Ursulines – appeared in *Nova Nada* under the pseudonym “Zofija.”

The same year, Jelovšek published his first collection of poetry, *Simfonije* [Symphonies], dedicated “to Zofka.” Kveder's enthusiastic review of the book in *Slovenka* was her first attempt at literary criticism. She did not openly disclose her relationship with the author, but she quoted extensively from the letter he had sent her with the volume. In the last sentence, she added, tongue-in-cheek, that Jelovšek's poems were dedicated to “a witty Slovenian woman, a hard-working collaborator of this women's magazine” (Kveder 1898: 617–618). The book was followed two years later by *Simfonije II: Pêle-mêle* [Symphonies II: Pell-mell]. The author's beloved is portrayed in numerous prose poems as the sexually liberated Sonja, while the dedication reads “To my Sonja.”⁴

In turn, Kveder included a poetic dedication to Jelovšek in her first book, *Misterij Žene* [The Mystery of the Woman], that appeared at the same time.⁵

³ I base my account of Kveder's youth on Mihurko Poniž (2003: 153–163).

⁴ On the presentation of Kveder in Jelovšek's poetry, see Mihurko Poniž (2017b: 61–62).

⁵ At the beginning of her stay in Prague, Kveder also started writing a novel in Croatian titled *Milan Vrbić*. The main character, a Croatian decadent who found himself in the orbit of the influence of *Moderna Revue*, is clearly based on Jelovšek. The story remained unfinished and was never published (Jensterle-Doležal 2014: 66).

But while it was almost banal for a male author to present his female partner as his muse, the same gesture appeared scandalously shameless when done by a woman. There was not a single critic who did not comment on this fact.⁶

Already in the first review of Kveder's book, which appeared in *Slovenski Narod*, the anonymous critic, probably the editor Fran Govekar, excessively commented on the dedication, identifying the equivocal Vlad as Jelovšek (the puzzle was not difficult to solve, as *Misterij Žene* appeared with the same publishing house in Prague, on the same kind of paper and with drawings by the same author as Jelovšek's *Simfonije II*). Not only does the reviewer surmise Jelovšek's direct influence on Kveder's work, but he also presents it as a reciprocal gesture of admiration that should have stayed private: "*Misterij Žene* could have remained unpublished for the most part. If she wanted to thank the 'holy' (!!) 'artist' for two volumes of *Simfonije*, she would have been better off sending him – a manuscript" (Govekar 1900: 3). Exactly a month after the initial criticism by Govekar, Kveder was mocked once again in *Slovenski Narod*. In the feuilleton *Sobotno Pismo* [Saturday Letter], a certain Grigorovič took the example of her dedicating her work to Jelovšek as a pretext to meditate on the fact that although modern women desperately wanted to be emancipated and get rid of men, they seemed to be sexually dependent on them: "Our women are quite inconsistent in their fighting. ... Or do they follow the recipe of the man who hated wine so much that he destroyed it by drinking it incessantly?..." (Grigorovič 1900: 1). Even the critics who otherwise showed a lot of goodwill towards Kveder's book admitted they were having a hard time accepting that one prints one's intimate love letters and sells them to the public (Tominšek 1900: 240).

Croatian critics were even less discreet regarding the relationship between Kveder and Jelovšek, going as far as to review both Jelovšek's and Kveder's books in one article (Jeny 1900: 28–30). Milan Begović's lengthy article for *Slovenka* dwells on the topic with gusto. He pretends that he is only doing so because to understand and evaluate Kveder's book, a reader needs to take into account the life choices of the author herself: "If we read this book and did not think of the author, it would appear to us full of desperate pessimism, full of hopelessness and sorrow – it would seem to us like the cry of womanhood, condemned to

⁶ Jelovšek's casting himself in the role of a Croatian Przybyszewski was noticed by several reviewers of his books (Jeny 1900; B. V. [Milan Marjanović] 1898). As for Kveder, Katja Mihurko Poniž suggests that she could have been under the strong impression of another *couple moderne* composed of a New Woman and a decadent man, that of Laura Marholm and Ola Hansson (Mihurko Poniž 2017b: 28–56). According to Mihurko Poniž, the epigraph to *Misterij Žene*, an excerpt from *Das Buch der Frauen* by Marholm, should be interpreted as part of the dedication to Jelovšek, another form of Kveder's expression of her love euphoria. The epigraph reads, "A woman has no destiny of her own; she cannot have one because she cannot exist alone. Neither can she become a destiny, except indirectly and through the man. The more womanly she is, and the more richly endowed, all the more surely will her destiny be shaped by the man who takes her to be his wife" (Marholm 1896: 25–26).

eternal suffering (...). But thinking about Zofka Kveder, that young apostle of the freedom of a woman's feelings and actions, the girl who fights against the judgments of society, who believes in her purity, in the purity of her Vlad, in a future where there will be no shame in loving whoever you want, where no bells would ring to the disgrace of an unmarried mother – then some sweet hope, some peace, embraces our heart” (de la Maraja [Milan Begović] 1900: 189). Throughout the review, Begović underlines the supposedly major upheaval caused in the young woman's soul by Jelovšek and alleges that by reading her book, one also gets to know and admire the Croatian poet. The critic goes as far as to quote from Jelovšek's manifest *Moj Credo* [My Credo], published in *Simfonije II*, to explain Kveder's intentions when writing the book (since in the paragraph in question, Jelovšek explains his support for the women's movement, quotes Ellen Key, and reveals his abhorrence of the double moral standards, it should be assumed that rather the opposite was true: it was most probably he who wrote those words under the influence of his lover). The conclusion of Begović's text, where he provides a lengthy quote from the last part of *Misterij Žene*, reads almost as if he joined in Kveder's declarations of love for Jelovšek.

In September 1900, the same year that *Simfonije II* and *Misterij Žene* appeared, the former editors of *Nova Nada* signed the manifest “Mlada Hrvatska,” directed against the main two groups of the Croatian *pokret mladih*, the politically involved Prague milieu centered around Stjepan Radić and the modernist bunch in Vienna led by Milivoj Dežman. “Mlada Hrvatska” is the only proclamation coming from the Croatian *mladi* that unhesitatingly endorses the women's cause: “Standing on the principle of freedom, we consider the female gender equal to the male gender, and we will work for the true emancipation of women so that social prejudices no longer prevent their spiritual development and personal self-determination” (Marjanović 1951: 198). It may also be a unique example of a young movement's manifesto signed by women, Vladimir Jelovšek's and Andrija Milčinić's partners, Zofka Kveder and Adela Milčinić.⁷

The manifesto was published in *Syjetlo*, a provincial non-partisan magazine edited in Karlovac by Dušan Lopašić, who, after the closing of *Nova Nada*, invited its former writers to share the editorial office, keeping for himself the local news and entrusting the rest of the paper to the young. Jumping at the opportunity, they radically extended the space devoted to literary criticism. Under the common title “Mladi Dolaze” [Young People are Coming], reviews of the newest works of the young generation started to appear regularly (the first

⁷ Like Jelovšek and Kveder, Andrija and Adela Milčinić were partners in life and work. Most notably, in 1903, they published a joint book, *Pod Branom*, a collection of eight short stories, four by each author, arranged alternately. However, contrary to her husband, Adela is usually denied inclusion in the rank of modernism by literary historians (Šicel 1978: 192–193) and is, at best, recognized as a companion of the Croatian modernist movement (Detoni Dujmić 1998: 197; Dujčić 2019: 46). For the most recent assessment of her writing, see Vulelija (2021).

installment praised Jelovšek's *Simfonije*) as well as reports on the advancement of the modernist movements in other Slavic countries, especially Poland and Bohemia. In *Svjetlo*, the young editors published fragments of their works in progress (the excerpts of both Jelovšek's *Simfonije II* and Kveder's *Misterij Žena* appeared here, on one occasion even side by side) as well as translations of their favorite foreign authors, such as Knut Hamsun, Oscar Wilde, and Stanisław Przybyszewski. Jelovšek took advantage of *Svjetlo* to publish those of his texts that were judged too radical to appear in more conservative outlets, such as his poem *Žena* [Woman] and the accompanying article on the need to redefine the relationship between the sexes, intended for but refused by *Slovenka*. A new column concerned with the emancipation of women, "K Ženskom Pitanju" [To the Women's Question], has also been introduced.

After the splitting of the initial *Mlada Hrvatska* group in April 1902, Zofka Kveder and Vladimir Jelovšek, together with Adela and Andrija Milčinović, founded their own Zagreb magazine, a literary monthly *Mlada Hrvatska*, of which only five issues were published. In three of them, one finds articles and short stories by Zofka Kveder. One of two issues in which she did not publish herself contains a laudatory analysis of her writings by Jurislav Janušić. Besides Kveder and Milčinović, no other female author got access to the *Mlada Hrvatska*'s pages.

Vladimir Jelovšek was highly impressed by Czech modernism and clearly aimed at transforming the Croatian youth movement in the Czech fashion. The failure of his repeated attempts at creating a Croatian equivalent of *Moderní revue* and his lack of recognition among his colleagues made him slowly abandon literature altogether. He never published the third part of *Simfonije: Seksuelni Akordi* [Symphonies: Sexual Chords], as he announced he would in *Simfonije II*. After finishing his studies in 1905, he moved with his family from Prague to Zagreb and devoted his life to his ophthalmology practice. The closing of *Mlada Hrvatska* also marks the end of Kveder's involvement in the Croatian modernist movement. In Zagreb, she focused on editing women's magazines. Between 1910 and 1917, she was responsible for the supplement *Frauenzeitung* to the German newspaper *Agramer Tagblatt* (Birk 2012: 339–353). In 1917, she founded the periodical of the Croatian women's movement, *Ženski Svijet* [Women's World], later titled *Jugoslavenska Žena* [Yugoslav Woman], which she edited until 1920 (Bahovec 2016: 302–333).

Stanislav K. Neumann and Kamilla Neumannová

Vladimir Jelovšek was not the only Central European modernist highly influenced by Przybyszewski. The Polish author's unconventional lifestyle, as well as his idiosyncratic views on sexuality also had a great impact on the Czech decadent poet Stanislav Kostka Neumann. Neumann's relationship with Kamilla nee Krémová took a different turn than the two previously discussed

love stories. Nevertheless, it did (as in the case of the other two couples) result in the female partner's involvement in the modernist movement.

Kamilla Krémová, born in a Prague blue-collar family of Italian roots, met Stanislav Kostka Neumann in his student days when he was taking part in the political activities of the radical socialist youth that ended with the so-called Omladina trial in 1894.⁸ His involvement cost him 14 months in prison. During his sentence in Pilsen, he started writing poetry. He also discovered the recently established *Moderní Revue*, with which he started to collaborate. As soon as he got out of prison in 1895, he published his first collection of verses, *Nemesis, Bonorum Custos...* and dedicated it to Kamilla.⁹ They married in January 1899. In 1900, the couple had a daughter, Kamila, and in 1902, a son, Stanislav.

Neumann, who lost his father at the age of five and was taken in with his mother by more affluent relatives, grew up in a villa in the village of Olšany (today part of the Žižkov district in Prague), which he eventually inherited after the death of one of his aunts. The house became the center of anarchist bohemia. Neumann surrounded himself with a group of young poets from the radical left, including Viktor Dyk, Karel Toman, František Gellner, Fráňa Šrámek, Jiří Mahen, and Josef Mach. Their press outlet was the magazine *Nový kult*, founded by Neumann in 1897. The villa was also regularly visited by many other literati, including the *Moderní Revue* core group, Arnošt Procházka, Jiří Karásek, Hugo Kosterka, and Karel Hlaváček (Karásek 1994: 156). There is no indication that Kamilla played any other role than that of a hostess. She published neither in *Nový kult* nor in the 1898 anthology *Almanach Secesse*, edited by Neumann, and the sole appearance of her name in *Moderní Revue* dates from a much later period (in 1908, she translated some prose poems by Johannes Schlaf). She did, however, perform in *Rytíř, Smrt a ďábel* [Knight, Death, and the Devil] by the German poet Rudolf Lothar, the first spectacle of Intimní Volné Jevišťe [[Intimate Free Stage] directed by Arnošt Procházka and staged on March 6, 1896 (Stanislav Neumann was one of the founding members of the group).

As early as November 1904, Neumann, a strong believer in the free love principle, abandoned his family and went to live in Vienna with his new companion, Božena Hodačová, leaving the villa in Žižkov to his wife. Before he left, he published a poem in *Moderní Revue* entitled *Apostrofa*, in which every stanza ends with the name of his new lover in the vocative case. He declares, among other things: “Netřeba doufat, netřeba snít, / je možno, možno, možno žít: / člověka pro ráj jsi stvořila znova, / Boženo Hodačová” [There is no need to hope, no need to dream, / it is possible, possible, possible to live: / you created man again for paradise, / Božena Hodačová] (Neumann 1904: 41). The press widely commented on the scandal. “The foreman of the Prague anarchists, St.

⁸ Since no biographical work on Neumannová exists, I owe my account to Stanislav Neumann's biographer (Kautman 1966).

⁹ Neumann devoted a lot of space to this period of his life in his memoirs, albeit without mentioning his wife, Cf. Neumann 1931.

K. Neumann, a follower of Parisian decadents in life and work, left his wife and children and went to Vienna with his lover B. Hodačová. One does not need to be an anarchist to carry out such mundane adventures,” wrote the reporter of *Národní Politika* (Kautman 1966: 75–76).

Kamilla was officially married to Neumann until 1914, when, to guarantee that his new family would be entitled to support in the event of his conscription, he finally divorced her to marry Hodačová¹⁰. Notwithstanding, they had lived separately since 1904, Kamilla supporting their two young children on her own. Although she had occasionally helped Neumann in his editorial activities, it was only when she found herself in need of providing for her household that she set out to make publishing her profession.

She thus became the first professional Czech female publisher. Between 1905 and 1931, Neumannová published several book series aimed at introducing Czech readers to modern literature, mainly by decadent, symbolist, and naturalistic authors.¹¹ Her greatest accomplishment was the series “*Knihy Dobrých Autorů*” [Books by Good Authors], KDA, which she started in January 1905, right after her husband’s departure. In a quarter of a century, she published 190 volumes of translations into Czech from French, English, American, Russian, Polish, Italian, Norwegian, Spanish, Finnish, Dutch, German, Portuguese, Ukrainian, and Flemish works of modern literature.

The series was intended as a collection available on a subscription basis. Until 1914, a volume of six press sheets was sent on the 25th of each month to all subscribers (for a slightly higher fee, the books were also sold in regular bookshops). From the 5th volume onwards, Arnošt Procházka joined Neumannová, editing and/or translating as many as 69 books in the collection.¹² Neumannová herself translated Gérard de Nerval and Georges Rodenbach. Other collaborators, translators, and illustrators also came from the circle of *Moderní Revue*.

From 1905, Neumannová complemented her world literature series by publishing a collection of original works by Czech authors affiliated with *Moderní Revue*, “*Čeští Autoři*” [Czech Authors]. Before 1919, twenty-five books appeared, including 12 volumes of collected writings by Jiří Karásek. In 1911, her publishing house started two more luxurious series: “*Umělecké Monografie*” [Artistic Monographs], with four albums published before WWI, and “*Knihy pro Bibliofily*” [Books for Bibliophiles], in which six illustrated books appeared before 1928.

The KDA series was published in one thousand copies and was very successful among the Czech intelligentsia. However, the beginning of the war caused a

¹⁰ In 1922, his marriage to Božena Hodačová also broke up. The disillusioned second wife wrote bitter memoirs of her time with Neumann that were published only in 1998 (Neumannová 1998).

¹¹ For the whole bibliography of the works she edited see Zach 1976.

¹² Aleš Zach suggests that Procházka was deeply in love with Neumannová after her performance in the play he directed in 1896 (Zach 1995: 232).

financial crisis from which the publishing house never recovered (the fact that the selection of works offered in the series no longer suited the tastes of the young generation of readers provided an additional blow). In 1921, Neumannová ended the subscription system, and the following year, she was forced to stop the publication of the series for two years. Although she managed to obtain a bookseller's concession, she could not put it to use due to lack of funds. At this point she tried selling the publishing house, but was unsuccessful. Although the company existed formally until 1939, she stopped publishing in 1931.

Just a year before the end of the KDA, in 1930, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the founding of the series, Neumannová reflected on the adventure in *Národní Listy*. She very openly declared in the first sentence, "The idea of publishing KDA arose almost immediately after the event that happened to me on November 8, 1904. There was no time for long deliberations because I had to take care of myself, my two little children, and my mother-in-law" (Neumannová 1930: 3)¹³. She recalled that the series started with an impulse: her husband, who was already in Vienna with Hodačová, asked her to go see the publisher to whom he entrusted the manuscript of his translation of *Lettres de Malaisie* [Letters from Malaysia] by Paul Adam. While carrying out his wish, she learned that the publisher withdrew from accepting the book for print. She thus decided to publish it herself. *Listy z Malajska* appeared in January 1905 as the first book in the series. As a token of gratitude, she advertised Neumann's magazines, *Nový Kult* and later *Anarchistická Revue*, on the back covers of the books she published. Neumann also put advertising inserts informing about the series in his publications.

In her recollections as well as in several interviews she gave in 1930, Neumannová underlined the support she had obtained from the circle of authors associated with *Moderní Revue* and *Nový Kult*. She spoke especially fondly of Arnošt Procházka. She called him her closest friend, going as far as to say that his death had been the most terrible thing that happened in her life. She also mentioned the precious help provided by anarchist poets such as Viktor Dyk, who had gladly babysat her children when she worked in her publishing house, as well as other members of the modernist circles, who had gone far and beyond to secure the first subscribers for her editorial series, and even the printing house that had accepted to work with her despite Neumann's unpaid bills. She admits sometimes having the impression that subscribers signed for KDA because they felt sorry for her. This public sympathy lasted for many years, as proven by the generous food parcels she received during WWI from her subscribers in the countryside.

Kamilla Neumannová may have entered Prague's artistic circles due to her marriage to one of the leading figures of the Czech modernist movement. Nevertheless, she herself succeeded in securing a place of her own. Because of

¹³ Neumannová also repeated her story in several interviews, see for example: Vavřík 1929–1930; Kubka 1930.

her, Olšanská vila remained the center of meetings of the Czech literati even after the departure of Stanislav K. Neumann and the subsequent folding of *Nový Kult*. What is more, while Neumann distanced himself more and more from *Moderní Revue*, his first wife became one of the magazine's essential collaborators. Indeed, in the scholarship devoted to *Moderní Revue* and Czech modernism in general, KDA is considered one of the *Moderní Revue* editorial projects, the only one that survived beyond WWI (Zach 1995). Unfortunately, the role of Kamilla Neumannová has been marginalized in favor of Procházka, who is more often than not presented as the series' moving spirit.

Neumannová herself had a clear sense of her achievements. In a 1930 interview, she expressed her conviction that KDA, which had brought to the Czech readers books by authors such as Przybyszewski, Verhaeren, Adam, Wilde, Hamsun, Gide, or London, had a tremendous impact on Czech literature (Vavřík 1929–1930: 75–76). Without a doubt, she would benefit to be included in the group that Jayne E. Marek, in her research on the American “little” magazines called “women editing modernism”: the female editors who, although they played the role of catalysts of literary modernism and, in their times, were recognized as powerful and influential arbiters of modern aesthetic views, have been omitted from the standard presentations of the period, in which their role of cultural mediators is routinely marginalized or attributed to a male collaborator (Marek 1995: 1–12).

Conclusion

The three women presented in this text were certainly not the only ones who owed their admission to the pages of a local flagship magazine to their close relations to important masculine figures of the movement. In Poland, besides Juel, one could also quote Kazimiera Zawistowska, a talented poet who only managed to print a few verses in modernist magazines during her lifetime. The great majority of her poems appeared posthumously, after her presumed suicide because of unrequited love for one of the members of *Życie*'s editorial board, a decadent poet Stanisław Wyrzykowski. It was not without efforts from Wyrzykowski, who became very vocal about their affair after Zawistowska's death and used her work as publicity for himself (Baranowska 1981: 41–68). In Czech modernism, something similar happened with Luiza Ziková, introduced into the modernist circle by a decadent writer, Karel Kamínek (Topor 2005). The way *Moderní Revue* commemorated Ziková's premature death in 1896, not long after the magazine published her book of short stories dedicated to Kamínek, makes one think about Zawistowska's posthumous reception in Poland. What seems to have been celebrated was not as much Ziková's life and work as Kamínek's grief over his losing his soulmate.

As for Croatia, in addition to Zofka Kveder and Adela Milčinović, we could recall Ženka Frangeš and Gjena Vojnović. They both succeeded in publishing

their pieces in the movement's most prestigious magazine, *Život*, ephemerally edited in Vienna at the beginning of the 20th century (Flaker 1977: 37–41). The first was married to the renowned artist Robert Frangeš (the photos of his sculptures figure in almost every issue of the magazine); the other was a younger sister of the well-known playwright and a frequent collaborator of the magazine, Ivo Vojnović.

The position that Juel, Kveder, and Neumannová achieved was certainly the most impressive, not least because of their partners' reputation. Thanks to her husband's status as the leader of the Young Poland literary movement and the editor of its flagship magazine *Życie*, Dagny Juel had her works published in Polish many decades before they were discovered in her native Norway. Moreover, as Przybyszewski was considered one of the most valued collaborators of *Moderní Revue*, she also became the only female author from all the Central European modernist movements to have her writings translated into another Slavic language. Zofka Kveder's romantic involvement with Vladimir Jelovšek allowed her to take part in the activities of the Croatian modernist group that evolved from the Zagreb magazine *Nova Nada*. She thus became one of the two women to sign the manifest *Mlada Hrvatska* and later one of the founders and main collaborators of an ephemeral Zagreb literary monthly of the same name. And, although Kamilla Neumannová's collaboration with the Czech modernists started only after her relationship with the decadent poet Stanislav K. Neumann ended, she would not have been able to secure herself a career as the first female Czech professional publisher if her husband had not introduced her to the circle around *Moderní Revue* beforehand.

The successes of these three New Women should not be considered a counterargument to the prevailing bias against female authors in modernist literary circles. Quite the opposite: nothing illustrates women's subordinated position better than the fact that their only way to gain a foothold in a modernist movement was through marrying its leader.

Furthermore, romantic relationships with writers of confirmed stature led to their not being recognized as artists in their own right.

This is especially true in the case of Dagny Juel, whose inclusion in the history of Polish literary modernism is further complicated by the fact that she did not write in Polish. While scholars have pointed out that her husband's translation of her works is more of an artistic adaptation of the original text (Brodal 1996: 198), to this day, no effort has been made to retranslate her writings that remain in their difficultly accessible first and only editions. Juel is, thus, routinely reduced to her legend as a muse and a *femme fatale*.

The tendency to delimit national literary histories through linguistic borders also impacted the reception of Zofka Kveder. Today, she is celebrated as the most important Slovenian female author, canonized – as the first and to date the only woman writer – by the edition of her opus in eight volumes in a prestigious series “Zbrana Dela Slovenskih Pesnikov in Pisateljev” [Collected Works of Slovenian Poets and Writers] (Bernik 2005: 445–446). Nevertheless, her role

as a co-founder of the Croatian modernist movement is often marginalized or simply forgotten. Slovenian and Croatian scholars rarely mention her participation in the magazines *Nada* and *Mlada Hrvatska*. While the former tend to focus on Kveder's Slovenian writings, the latter are more interested in the part of her life after she divorced Jelovšek and, soon after, married a politician, Juraj Demetrović, a fervent proponent of unitarist Yugoslavism. During this time, she wrote the Croatian epistolary novel *Hanka* (1917), almost unanimously praised as her most significant literary achievement¹⁴.

As for Neumannová, the lack of any scholarly work devoted to her speaks for itself. Not only has her biography been eclipsed by that of her husband, but her achievements have also mostly been invisibilized. Unlike Juel and Kveder, who were both writers like their partners, Neumannová devoted herself to the type of essential, albeit thankless, labor that is often entrusted to women. Especially in peripheral literary fields, the efforts to make the outstanding works of Western literature available to the local audience and thus create a context for the national variations of European modernism cannot be overestimated. However, in modernist discourse, focused as it was on novelty and originality, tasks like translation and editing were placed far below authorship. This hierarchy critically impacted modernist scholarship. Although Neumannová's name can be found in the indexes of most works devoted to Czech modernism, it is usually only because of the bibliographical references that mention her publishing house. Not even the recent collective monograph of Czech modernism, *Dějiny Nové Moderny* (Papoušek 2010), goes beyond that to reflect on her role.

Despite the differences among these three cases, analyzing them together helps us identify a regional pattern. In the infamously misogynistic and anti-feminist milieu of the Central European modernist movements, a romantic relationship with a leading figure proved to be the most reliable way for a woman to be admitted to the ostensibly all-male clubs. At the same time, it resulted in neglecting their artistic efforts and, later, in the tendency to marginalize their achievements. Of all the women presented in the article, only Kveder seems to have finally taken her rightful place as a Central European modernist.¹⁵ Characteristically, this is at least partially related to the fact that she was also the one who had, in her native Slovenia, an independent literary career, not influenced in any way by either of her husbands.

¹⁴ On how Kveder became a “site of discourse” where crucial political and cultural contests are enacted, see Vittorelli (2007: 19–65).

¹⁵ This can largely be credited to the tireless efforts of Katja Mihurko Poniž. See, among others, Mihurko Poniž (2003: 22–34; 2013: 81–83; 2016: 37–64).

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COUPLES MODERNES – LITERARNI PAR V SREDNJEEVROPSKIH MODERNISTIČNIH GIBANJIH

Naslov članka se nanaša na odmevno razstavo v pariškem centru Pompidou leta 2018, ki je umetniški par predstavila kot sodobni fenomen. Dejansko pa se ne le na področju upodabljajoče umetnosti, ampak tudi v literaturi v obdobju okoli leta 1900 pojavljajo pari, ki so bili partnerji tako zasebno kot poslovno. V srednjeevropskem modernizmu sta tak par običajno sestavljala t. i. nova ženska in dekadent. Skrbno preštudirana podoba in položaj moškega v skupini uporniške mladine sta imela koristi od oblikovanja netradicionalnega, pogosto škandaloznega odnosa, katerega nemiri so bili ključni navdih za njegovo umetnost. Toda povezovanje ženske s članom literarnega gibanja se je izkazalo za še pomembnejše: to je bil način za dostop do boemskega miljeja in do strani vodilnih revij ter posledično do literarne zgodovine. Z osredotočanjem na gibanja *mlada Poljska* (Młoda Polska), *mlada Hrvaška* (Mlada Hrvatska) in *češka moderna* (Česká moderna) avtorica podrobneje predstavi tri zelo različne primere parov, pri katerih sta bila oba spremljevalca del določenega gibanja: 1) Stanisław Przybyszewski in Dagny Juel, 2) Stanislav K. Neumann in Kamilla Neumannová ter 3) Vladimir Jelovšek in Zofka Kveder. V članku je raziskano, kako je intimno razmerje vplivalo na kariero žensk (pozitivno ali negativno, kot del zavestne strategije ali ne) in kateri mehanizmi so okoli leta 1900 delovali na srednjeevropskem literarnem polju.