

ABSTRACT

Title of Document: CULTURAL AND SOCIAL BORDER
CROSSINGS: GERMANY AND RUSSIA IN
THE WRITINGS OF LOU ANDREAS-
SALOMÉ (1861-1937) AND ALINA
BRONSKY (1978-).

Regina Ianozi, Doctor of Philosophy 2015

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This study explores sociocultural discourses on Russia and Germany and examines the intercultural and gendered hybrid identity formation among Russian-German women in the texts of Lou Andreas-Salomé (1861-1937) *Fenitschka* (1898), *Russland mit Rainer* (1900), and *Rodinka* (1923) and in Alina Bronsky's novels (1978-) *Scherbenpark* (2008) and *Die schärfsten Gerichte der tatarischen Küche* (2010). The project employs an interdisciplinary approach in the analyses of texts by combining the methodologies of cultural and intercultural studies, German cultural studies, as well as feminist and gender studies. It further incorporates a historical overview of the major political events and economic relationships between Russia and Germany at the end of the nineteenth through the twentieth, and the beginning of the twenty first century. The study analyzes the influence that these events had on societal mainstream perceptions of the 'Other' during these periods. The discourse on

Soviet/Russian and German cultural encounters as well as the concept of 'Otherness' particularly from a Russian-German perspective were investigated. The texts reveal the rich German cultural presence in Russia throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the social position of minorities in Soviet Russia in late twentieth century and in post-reunification Germany. It also looks at the 'Woman Question' and gender issues in both nations and the deviation from societal gender norms among Russian-German women.

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By

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Dedication

To my Parents

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Over the past 7 years of my Graduate Studies at UMD I have received support and encouragement from my committee members, my friends, colleagues and my family to whom I am extremely grateful. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my dissertation advisor, Dr. Elke Frederiksen, for her excellent guidance, caring, patience, and inspiration both academically and personally. I am grateful for the academic support I received from the faculty members in the Department of Germanic Studies, especially from the Department Chair, Dr. Peter Beicken, and my committee members Dr. Gabriele Strauch, Dr. Julie Koser, and Dr. Rose-Marie Oster—each of them have provided excellent advice and continuously encouragement—and to Dr. Marsha Rozenblit, who was willing to serve on my defense committee on short notice. I would not have been able to pursue my Ph.D. studies without the financial support of the School of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures at UMD—the SLLC community has been an inviting, supportive and inspiring place to work and study. I would like to express my deepest gratitude especially to Anthony Ianozi for his continuous support throughout the last 15 years and to Inna Cassery for her friendship and support. Finally, I thank all my nine siblings and above all my parents, Alexander and Maria Haag, for directly inspiring me to write about the subject in this dissertation and encouraging me throughout my life to pursue my dreams.

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Introduction

Perhaps one of the most debated statements of Chancellor Angela Merkel's term in office was her proclamation of Germany's failure to create a functioning multicultural society. This statement was not meant to imply that immigrants were not welcomed in Germany; rather, she was emphasizing Germany's need to re-evaluate attitudes towards the integration of immigrants. She critiqued multiculturalism for its assertion that persons from different countries of origin could live within the borders of a single nation, in this case Germany, without forming a national identity, which they associated with Germany.¹ Examinations of discourses on multiculturalism and interculturality have also been considered by numerous German Studies scholars, studying the phenomena from a myriad of diverse perspectives such as Turkish-German² or Afro-German.³ Much of this scholarship has revealed that considerations of immigration, 'race' and ethnicity are most productive when interrogated in conjunction with questions of Gender and through Feminist Studies methodological approaches. This relationship was first most notably analyzed by Gayatri Spivak in her study *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (1988), which examined the

¹ In "Merkel erklärt Multikulti für gescheitert," 16 Oct. 2010. *Spiegel-Online*. 2010, <<http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/0,1518,723532,00.html>>. Angela Merkel stated during the *Deutschlandtag der Jungen Union*: "Der Ansatz für Multikulti ist gescheitert, absolut gescheitert!" [English translation: the approach to the multicultural society has absolutely failed.] All translation are made by me unless noted otherwise.

² Leslie Adelson's *The Turkish Turn in Contemporary German Literature: Toward a New Critical Grammar of Migration* (2005) as representative and influential for the Turkish-German perspective.

³ Tina Campt, *Other Germans: Black Germans and the Politics of Race, Gender, and Memory in the Third Reich*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2004), as being representative of the Afro-German perspective.

creation of knowledge of the ‘Other’⁴ within Western scholarship through an analysis of the Indian Sati practice of widow suicide. Questions of ‘Otherness’ and German national identity have also benefited from the integration of gender and Feminist Studies, resulting in landmark research calling into question hegemonic, patriarchal concepts of German identity.⁵

This study adds to these voices by examining questions of gender, immigration and German identity from a Russian-German perspective. Although other scholars have investigated Russian-German relations and identity,⁶ this research is distinctive in that it focuses on the nexus of gender and Russian-German identity, but because it traces the unique historical and cultural position of Russian immigrants within German society across a century of contentious German-Russian political

⁴ The philosopher Emmanuel Lévinas refers to the term ‘Other’ in Emmanuel Lévinas and Nidra Poller, *Humanism of the Other* (Urbana; Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003) and Edward Said in *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979) uses the term to identify as not of the same kind or as different.

⁵ An example from the Afro-German perspective is Katharine Oguntoye, May Opitz, and Dagmar Schultz, eds. *Farbe bekennen. Afro-deutsche Frauen auf den Spuren ihrer Geschichte*. Berlin: Orlanda Frauenverlag, 1986. For Turkish-German perspectives refer to Michael Hofmann, *Deutsch-türkische Literaturwissenschaft* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2013); Saniye Uysal-Ünalán, *Interkulturelle Begegnungsräume: neue Identitätskonstruktionen in der türkisch-deutschen Gegenwartsliteratur* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2013); Thorben Páthe, *Vom Gastarbeiter zum Kanaken: zur Frage der Identität in der deutschen Gegenwartsliteratur* (München: Iudicium, 2013).

⁶ The latest studies focusing on the Russian-German identity and immigration include works by the following scholars: Lilli Gebhard, *Identitätskonstruktionen russlanddeutscher Mennoniten im Spiegel ihrer Literatur* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang GmbH, Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften, 2014); Michael C Hermann, Rainer Öhlschláger, *Hier die Russen, dort die Deutschen: über die Integrationsprobleme russlanddeutscher Jugendlicher 250 Jahre nach dem Einladungsmanifest von Katharina II.: Deutsch-Russisches Jahr der Bildung, Wissenschaft und Innovation 2011/12* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2013); Markus Kaiser, Michael Schönhuth, *Zuhause? fremd?: Migrations- und Beheimatungsstrategien zwischen Deutschland und Eurasien* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2015); Svetlana Kiel, *Wie deutsch sind Russlanddeutsche: eine empirische Studie zur ethnisch-kulturellen Identität in russlanddeutschen Aussiedlerfamilien* (Münster: Waxmann, 2009); Irina Klass, *Wo liegt unsere Heimat?: Eine visualisierte Migrationsgeschichte der Russlanddeutschen* (Osnabrück: fibre, 2009); Irina Liebenstein *Integrationsprobleme von Russlanddeutschen* (Hamburg: Diplomica Verlag, 2010); Birgit Menzel, Christine Engel, *Rückkehr in die Fremde?: Ethnische Remigration russlanddeutscher Spätaussiedler* (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2014); Dmitri Steiz, *Vertraute Fremdheit - fremde Heimat: Deutsche Sprache und soziale Integration russlanddeutscher Spätaussiedler in Geschichte und Gegenwart*. (Marburg: Tectum Verlag, 2011); Sabine Zinn-Thomas, *Fremde vor Ort: Selbstbild und regionale Identität in Integrationsprozessen. Eine Studie im Hunsrück* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2014).

relations. By analyzing aspects of gender and national identity formation presented in the works of two overlooked female authors, Lou Andreas-Salomé⁷ and Alina Bronsky, who were born within the borders of Russia and the Soviet Union in different centuries, this study challenges the traditional canon. Further, I am also able to examine Germany's intricate relationship with Russia from a different perspective and, thereby, demonstrate how historical events have shaped modern Germany's treatment of immigration. By analyzing the ways in which these two authors depict national and gender identity formation in fictional and autobiographical genres, this study reveals how hegemonic constructs of German identity, which were constructed within discourses of ethnicity and 'blood', are further complicated by discourses of cultural traditions and linguistic fluency. To account for these complications, an interdisciplinary theoretical approach, which synthesizes methodologies from Cultural and Gender Studies, among others, is implemented. Additionally, this research includes an introduction to the distinctive historical and political influence discourses of Russia and later of that the Soviet Union have had on constructs of German national identity.

In Germany, national identity is constructed within discourses of 'ethnicity' or 'blood' and tied to certain arbitrary markers of German language mastery, such as accent—which would categorize those persons who speak with an accent associated with a origin of birth outside the borders of Germany as 'Others'. These markers of national membership have proven to be a hindrance to the integration of non-Germans and/or ethnic-Germans lacking German language skills. One of the largest immigrant groups affected by such an integration process are Russian-speaking

⁷ I will refer to Lou Andreas-Salomé only by her maiden name 'Salomé' from this point forward.

immigrants, who began migrating to Germany following the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Although these immigrants were labeled as being ethnically German within Russia, because their ancestral lineage could be traced to emigration out of Germany, upon returning to Germany, these individuals found themselves labeled as non-German. This research shows these immigrants were denied their ethnic heritage as a consequence of twentieth century political relations between Germany and Russia/the Soviet Union and the resulting negative perception of Russia and the Russians in Germany. As such, individuals who either are unable to speak German or speak it fluently but with a Russian accent are considered 'Russian', and 'Other', despite their self-identification as German.⁸

For centuries, the linguistic aspect of German culture has largely influenced constructs of German national identity, discourses of which also constructed German literary texts as a form of 'Kulturgut'.⁹ The function of literature in Germany, specifically in the first part of the nineteenth century, was to define and re-define the notion of 'Germanness', which could not be defined in terms of political borders because Germany did not exist as a unified nation-state. Literature supported the creation of a German identity based on cultural and linguistic similarities. Although one could argue that such demarcations were integral for nineteenth-century German national identity formations, contemporary Germany is a part of the globalized society, in which cultural borders are neither prevalent nor monocultural.

⁸ For further information refer to the article by Barbara Pfetsch, "*In Russia we were Germans, and now we are Russians*": *Dilemmas of Identity Formation and Communication among German Russia Aussiedler* (Berlin: Science Center Berlin for Social Research gGmbH, 1999).

⁹ 'Kulturgut' is defined in German as a 'national treasure' or 'object of cultural value.'

As each nation is a part of a global society, the traditional definition of culture, which understands the majority culture as being hegemonic, must be challenged, and individual nation's social issues must be analyzed beyond its geopolitical borders, expanding research on gender and national identities to a global level. This study's interdisciplinary approach demonstrates, through the analysis of writings by German women of Russian cultural background, the complexity of 'Otherness', which must be understood as being the result of more than a one-sided exertion of a single, national, patriarchal power over a gendered or ethnic minority. This intricacy is the result of the interplay of a myriad of social and cultural mechanisms and discourses which seek to favor one, extremely limited category of individuals above all others. All individuals—women, men and transgendered people—must observe and re-evaluate their own actions and their direct or indirect participation in the exercise of oppression against 'Others'.

This research considers texts representative of those written by female authors with culturally hybrid identities, who focus on crossing cultural and political boundaries and therefore lend themselves to an intercultural study. In their fictional and autobiographical texts, writers Salomé and Bronsky illustrate women's perspectives on cultures and intercultural encounters, the perception of the 'self' and 'Other' and their struggles with integration into foreign societies. They also demonstrate different possibilities for successful acculturation between Germans and Russians. The texts selected for analysis include Lou Andreas-Salomé's novella *Fenitschka* (1898), the personal journal *Russland mit Rainer* (1900), and her novel

Rodinka (1923) and Alina Bronsky's novels *Scherbenpark* (2008) and *Die schärfsten Gerichte der tatarischen Küche* (2010).

Further, this study evaluates whether or not Russian-German female authors reveal a corresponding perception of 'self' and 'Other'. *The writings of Andreas-Salomé* and Bronsky were chosen for this study, in part, based on their comparable cultural backgrounds and the intercultural genre presented in the selected texts. Also, these two female authors write from a different 'positionality' as the (male) Russian authors in Germany (such as Vladimir Nabokov, or German authors Rainer Maria Rilke among others) who wrote about Russia. Salomé and Bronsky share a strikingly similar experience of growing up intercultural either in Russia (*Salomé*) or the Soviet Union (Bronsky) and immigrating to Germany in their adolescent years. Both authors are members of a cultural minority in Russia/Soviet Union and also in Germany, belonging to neither one nor the other country; yet, at the same time they are 'home' in both nations equally. From this shared intercultural perspective, *Salomé* and Bronsky demonstrate the gender role deviations of Russian-German women. There is a lack of academic discussion on the comparison of Salomé's texts *Fenitschka*, *Russland mit Rainer*, and *Rodinka* with Bronsky's novels *Scherbenpark* and *Die schärfsten Gerichte der tatarischen Küche*. The challenge to a monocultural concept of 'Germanness' by these two authors is examined in this study through various discourses, such as social status and class, ethnicity, language, and the construction of intercultural and gendered identity.

I. Purpose and Significance of the Study

This qualitative study of Salomé's and Bronsky's works is new, as it serves to fill a void in academic knowledge concerning German constructs of Russia and 'Russianness', and also demonstrates that the inclusion of these neglected voices can deconstruct previously held stereotypes about Russians, offering new possibilities for Russian-German identities. These identities then serve to destabilize hegemonic constructs of 'Germanness', which are traditionally defined in terms of ethnicity and language fluency. The writings of the two authors are nearly a century apart, one filled with dynamic economic and political change in both Russia and Germany. During this period both nations experienced multiple regime changes and their political relations drastically altered from ally to foe, sometimes reverting back to allies again. Despite the difference that happened between their lifetimes, this study demonstrates that those female authors were both able to forge dual identities, each seeing themselves as simultaneously both Russian and German, in startlingly similar ways.

Although the political situations in which the authors wrote are dissimilar, and, therefore, they must employ very different tactics to engage with German and Russian cultures (Salomé follows a path of acculturation, and Bronsky experiences segregation), they develop similar views and evaluations of diverse cultures, which coincide with and are influenced by their interest in nationally specific constructs of gender. As such, this study's twofold focus on constructs of gender and dual identity formation gives new insight into Germany and Russia's long, contentious relationship. In order to conduct such an expansive and original study, this analysis

employs an interdisciplinary approach, as espoused by Cultural Studies practitioners, combining the methodologies of Cultural and Intercultural Studies as well as Gender and Feminist Studies.

The texts chosen for the following analysis challenge the traditional canon.¹⁰ This study examines texts by authors who have been excluded from traditional academic consideration and presents essential information about past and current cultural, social, and political discourses concerning Germany and Russia. This alternative consideration of the selected texts provides unique insights into their contributions to German literature and culture. Within this project, Lou Andreas-Salomé is recognized as a significant writer in her own right and not merely as the muse of male philosophers and writers, such as Friedrich Nietzsche, Rainer Maria Rilke, and Sigmund Freud. Alina Bronsky, who has been almost completely neglected by contemporary scholars, describes Russian/Soviet society from the 1970s into the twenty-first century, including imagery of the life many immigrants face once they enter Germany. Her works trace her protagonists' formation of intercultural

¹⁰ The traditional canon ('elite canon'), which is dominated by literature written primarily by male authors, such as Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Friedrich von Schiller, Franz Kafka, Thomas Mann, and *Günter* Grass, and female authors Christa Wolf and Ingeborg Bachmann, is commonly studied within German academic institutions. Traditionally, literature was considered part of 'high culture', and certain texts were selected as worthy of study. This process of selection excluded texts defined as non-literary, which were identified as mass culture. However, high and mass cultures have similar traits and those traits which categorized a text as 'mass culture' at one point in time may deem it as 'high culture' in a different era (Baldwin 8, 16). Cultural Studies, therefore, questions and criticizes the teaching of any traditional canon, which is comprised of selected texts previously assumed to be of higher literary value and widely taught at schools and universities. Critics of the traditional canon identify the canon as a form of sociopolitical power, for example Robert von Hallberg defines the term canon as the following: "canon is commonly seen as what other people, once powerful, have made and what should now be opened up, demystified, or eliminated altogether" in *Canons* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 1. Furthermore, literary and cultural debates in Germany were previously dictated by men, and those scholars with the education and the financial support needed to publish their research were predominantly men, resulting in literary scholars across Germany and abroad primarily conducting analyses on works by male authors. This has resulted in male-dominated discourses concerning German-Russian relations, creating constructs of Russia depicting Russian identity gendered as male and evaluations of Russian culture from Eurocentric perspectives reinforcing patriarchal constructs of a superior Western 'civilization' and 'Culture'.

German-Russian identities, which are able to redirect discourses of Russian immigration that otherwise would portray them as being completely foreign and incapable of integration into modern German society.

Questions guiding the interrogation of these texts include, how narratives of national belonging and women's roles differ between these two nations, and how the recognition of these culturally differentiated constructs of gender and nationality enable the authors to formulate, if only in fictional texts, intercultural German-Russian identities. By focusing on these female writers' representations of German and Russian cultures and their corresponding gender relations, this study is able to investigate German-Russian identity through the lens of interculturality for the first time. This represents an innovative contribution to the field of German Studies, and although Salomé's works have been analyzed from both Feminist and Gender Studies approaches, the methodologies of Intercultural Studies (which are the major foci within this study) have never been applied to examinations of her texts. By incorporating these theoretical approaches, this study broadens the textual analysis of each author's works, viewing them not as works of high culture closed off from the influences of the author's cultural upbringing, but revealing each author's own cultural and ethnic background.

These authors come from similar cultural backgrounds (both writers grew up in Russia and lived in Germany for an extensive period of time), yet different time periods; however, they both identify as German and rely on the German language for the creation of their works. Despite their self-identification as German, both are denied an unfettered sense of national belonging due to their origin of birth, within

the borders of Russia and the Soviet Union respectively. Their direct exposure to and influence from the Russian/Soviet cultures enables them to develop a unique ‘positionality’¹¹ and perspective towards Russia and Germany and the Russian and German people. Therefore, in addition to being considered as ‘German’ texts, the selected works exemplify features of ‘intercultural texts’.¹² This ‘positionality’ as well as the perspective manifests itself in multifaceted representations of German and Russian/Soviet cultures, allowing the authors to create portrayals of Russian culture which circumvent stereotypical images prevalent in German discourses on the subject.¹³ An understanding of the development of stereotypical representations as being constructed across discourses originates from German Cultural Studies,¹⁴ which is discussed more thoroughly in the first chapter. This field of study is crucial for enabling this project to recognize constructs of gender and ‘Germanness’ as being artificial, as opposed to biologically determined, and, thereby, to deconstruct notions of German identity and ‘Germanness’ and challenge concepts such as nation, language, ‘race’ and gender.

The fundamental concept driving the examination of the selected texts is the notion of ‘reading against the grain’ by interpreting the texts ‘intercultural’.¹⁵

Through the application of this process of textual analysis, this investigation utilizes

¹¹ Kim England defines ‘positionality’ as the investigators’ viewpoint and reflection on his or her own position within the research context in “Getting Personal: Reflexivity, ‘Positionality’, and Feminist Research” *The Professional Geographer* 46.1 (1994): 80-89.

¹² A detailed explanation of the ‘intercultural text’ is provided in Chapter 1.

¹³ Since Russia was a part of the Soviet Union and all authors presented within this study traveled mainly to and from Russia, I will refer from this point forward to ‘Russian’ culture only, as it encompasses both regimes.

¹⁴ German Cultural Studies in the United States includes scholars such as Sara Lennox, Jeffrey Peck, Paul Michael Lützeler and Russell Berman.

¹⁵ The notion of ‘reading texts interculturally’ was presented by Chiallino and is explained in Chapter II.

the methodologies of Cultural Studies scholars such as Stuart Hall, German Cultural Studies scholars including Elaine Baldwin, Russell Berman, Irene Kacandes, Jeffrey Peck, Hinrich C. Seeba, and Arlene Teraoka, and partially the methodologies of linguistic anthropology scholars, including James Clifford, Alessandro Duranti, and Clifford Geertz. Also, the methodologies of Intercultural Studies scholars Immacolata Amodeo, John W. Berry, Aglaia Blioumi, and Carmine Chiellino, Social Anthropology scholar Pierre Bourdieu and (German) Feminist and Gender Studies scholars Inge Stephan, Sigrid Weigel, Chris Weedon, and Judith Butler¹⁶ are included.

Traditional Literary Studies involves closed textual readings, which eschew the investigation of the analyzed text in discursive relationships to other texts (understood broadly to include all cultural productions, such as films, novels, poetry and even social events); that is, the text is not understood as participating in larger discourses on subjects such as gender or ethnicity. This approach is not viable for this study, because it would neglect discourses crucial for understanding the formation of individual, minority and/or national, intercultural, and gendered identities. The application of interdisciplinary methodologies as stated above, on the other hand, allows for an investigation of those cultural influences, which led to the creation of each text and which, in turn, critiques the 'elite' canon by focusing on various aspects

¹⁶ Although Judith Butler is not a German Gender Studies scholar, her work was translated into German shortly after publication in English and has influenced German scholars in the field of Gender Studies.

of interculturality and de-centering a mono-cultural understanding of the German canon.¹⁷

This study is also aided by the examination of fictional literature in conjunction with autobiographical texts, which serves to more clearly elucidate the authors' various perceptions of Russian culture. This type of examination both illustrates the authors' intentions to discover and consider Russian culture within their works as well as to clarify their process of writing. The authorship of these texts represents not only an interrogation of Russian culture, but also an attempt on the part of the authors to explore their own processes of intercultural female identity formation as reflected in their fictional heroines, who do not directly reflect the authors' experiences, but exemplify an alternative reality.

This analysis of the fictional texts—particularly when examined alongside autobiographical texts—will reveal evidence of autobiographical features in each text without attempting to view the novels as one-for-one representations of the authors' actual life events. Recognizing that each author's illustrations are colored by the reflections of their present selves and include articulations of aspirations and experiences that could have been, this study demonstrates how the autobiographical nature of each text succeeds in presenting the readers with new possibilities of German-Russian identities, be they gendered, national, and/or international and intercultural.

In addition to identifying the 'positionality' of the authors of my analysis, I follow the tradition of Gender and Cultural Studies,¹⁸ which also acknowledge the

¹⁷ A detailed explanation of the development and approaches of Cultural Studies is provided in Chapter I. Among the most influential Cultural Studies scholars are Stuart Hall, Edward Said (Postcolonial Studies), Gayatri Spivak (Gender Studies) and Stephen Greenblatt (New Historicism).

possible influence of the ‘positionality’ of the researcher, that is, of myself. I approach the examination of these texts as a white German-Russian woman who has lived in and acculturated to three culturally, socially and politically diverse nations (the former Soviet Union in the 1980s, (West) Germany in the 1990s and the United States since the beginning of the twenty-first century).¹⁹ This experience has influenced my motivation for choosing this subject matter, and I also value them for aiding me in developing an ability to read and understand texts interculturally.

There is a shortage of academic discourse that addresses the uniqueness of the Russian-German experience and that an analysis of their experience can shed light on contemporary issues facing immigrants to Germany from all over the world. Those immigrants from Russia to Germany who were identified within Russia and the Soviet Union as German returned to their ancestral homeland to discover that German culture and society did not accommodate a German identity for individuals not raised within the national borders of Germany. Unlike other immigrants, such as those from Turkey, these German-Russian immigrants could not turn to the country of birth for a

¹⁸ *The scholar Sara Lennox has devoted much research to a person’s perspective as an important aspect in analyses of texts. See Sara Lennox “New Scholarly Perspectives” in Facing Fascism and Confronting the Past: German Women Writers from Weimar to the Present, edited by Elke P. Frederiksen, Martha Kaarsberg Wallach, (Albany: SUNY Press, 2000), 283-300.*

¹⁹ As a member of a German minority living in Kazakhstan during the Soviet Union in the 1970s and 1980s, I immigrated with my family to Germany in 1989. I was exposed to both Russian/Soviet and German cultures and politics after 1990. Growing up in the Soviet Union, I was faced with a society in which each individual was identified through his/her ethnicity. This country showed little tolerance towards Germans based on the historical events following World War II, which pitted West Germany and the Soviet Union as adversaries, an animosity which lasted into the late 1980s. I escaped Soviet discrimination against Germans by immigrating to Germany, a nation in which language is one of the most significant identifiers of cultural membership. Speaking German with a Russian accent, I found myself in the rather paradoxical position of developing identification with neither German nor Russian cultures, while simultaneously accepting both cultures. Considered ‘German’ in the Soviet Union and then ‘Russian’ in Germany, I discovered that there existed no geographical, psychological or cultural space in which I could develop an identity that fully integrated all of my cultural experiences. This struggle for self-identification led me to the realization that individuals with multiple cultural backgrounds are incapable of living solely ‘in-between’ two cultures, but occupy instead a ‘third space’, and ‘fused’ or ‘hybrid space’ in which they develop ‘intercultural identities’.

sense of national identity, because they had been denied the ability to form such a sense of belonging due to their German ethnicity. This study will partially demonstrate how this cultural exclusion is vital for deconstructing current constructs of ‘Germanness’, which deny other minorities societal membership due to their lack of ‘German ethnicity’, a lineage which Russian-Germans, on the contrary, can demonstrate. Furthermore, by comparing and contrasting the intercultural identity²⁰ formations of a twenty-first century author to that of a late nineteenth / early twentieth-century author, it is possible to demonstrate how political events of the twentieth century have influenced the current treatment of immigrants in Germany. It is, to say the least, telling that Salomé was able to flourish through processes of acculturation, but Bronsky’s experiences in Germany are equated to segregation. Before turning to a more in-depth examination of this study’s methodologies and the novels themselves, an analysis of the political situations in which each author wrote, focusing on Russian-German political relations, is needed, as well as a brief overview of how this relationship changed so drastically during the intervening years.

II. German-Russian/Soviet Political and Cultural Relationships: A Sociocultural and Politically Historical Overview

“German-Russian/Soviet relations have often been extremely tense and militarized.”²¹

An excellent example of the intricacies inherent in examining the development of constructs of ‘Russianness’ in German culture and the continued

²⁰ Intercultural identity refers to the “change from sojourner with an ethnic identity to an assimilated individual with an intercultural identity is a process rich in complexity, with a myriad of influential forces pushing and pulling in multiple directions but ending in an individual, changed, in varying degrees, by the experience.” In Young Yun Kim. *Becoming Intercultural: An integrative theory of communication and cross-cultural adaptation* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2001).

²¹ Randall Newnham, *Deutsche Mark Diplomacy: Positive Economic Sanctions in German Russian Relations* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), 86.

domination of this discourse by patriarchal research is found in the work of Lev Kopelev. To understand the peculiar relationship between Germany and Russia, this leading scholar in the perception of Russia in German literature and Germany in Russian literature, conducted substantial research on Russian and German literary texts dating back to the ninth century. Part of his study on Russia in the works of German authors in the eighteenth century was published in 1987.²² The publication examines literary texts of the Enlightenment, which present a ‘Russlandbild’,²³ analyzing works by renowned male authors such as Johann Christoph Gottsched, Johann Gottfried von *Herder*, Christoph Martin Wieland, Friedrich Friedrich von *Schiller* and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, among others.²⁴ His final work on Russia and the Russians in German literature was published in 1999. Throughout this research he touches on topics such as Frederick the Great’s *Russlandbild* and includes works extending into the 1920s. Despite his extensive research, out of 29 essays dealing with the representation of Russia in German literature, there is a glaring omission regarding the work of female authors.²⁵ His work, however, has done much to define scholarship concerning the depictions of Russia and Germany.

In an interview that Lev Kopelev and Heinrich Böll conducted with East European expert and journalist Klaus Bednarz in 1981, his personal view of Russia’s

²² In Mechtild Keller, ed., *Russen und Russland aus deutscher Sicht. 18. Jahrhundert: Aufklärung* (München: Fink, 1987).

²³ Literal English translation is ‘Russian image.’ This term includes the overall perception of Russia, including the Russian culture, politics, geography, arts, etc..

²⁴ Karl H. Korn and Mechtild Keller, eds., *Russen und Russland aus deutscher Sicht, 19. / 20. Jahrhundert, von der Bismarckzeit bis zum ersten Weltkrieg, Band 4 19./20* (Frankfurt/Main: Report Verlag 1999), 339, 357, 433, 457, 481, 498, 516, 557, 564, 585.

²⁵ A dissertation titled “Studien zum Russlandsbild in der deutschen Prosaliteratur von Stalingrad bis zur neuen Ostpolitik der BRD (1943-1975)”, with the analyses of selected prose works about Russia and the Russians written by German writers between 1943 and 1975, supplemented Kopelev’s previous research and was published in 2005. The author of this dissertation, Guysel Muratovz, examines various Russian stereotypes in the works of German authors, and focuses predominantly on works written by male authors.

perception of Germany is revealed, and it attests to the complicated relationship between the two nations. When asked if he believes that Germans are perceived negatively within Russia, Kopelev answers that he believes that the intolerance against Germans within the Soviet territory was practically non-existent. Asked if he believed Russians were viewed negatively in Germany, Böll answers quite differently, stating that within German mainstream society he still feels a negative attitude towards the Russians. Kopelev answers to the interview question:

Ich glaube mit einer gewissen Sicherheit behaupten zu dürfen, dass Nachklänge von dem Krieg und von dem durch den Krieg erzeugten Hass so gut wie weg sind. Bei der Jugend keine Spur davon. Keine Spur. ... Und trotz einer bestimmten Propaganda, ..., wo Westdeutschland das 'revanchistische Westdeutschland' war, ..., was die NPD machte oder die deutsche 'National-Zeitung,' propagierte in der Sowjetunion als eine allgemeine Erscheinung von manchen Journalisten oder Propagandisten hingestellt wurde. Trotzdem, es gibt keinen Deutschenhass heute bei uns. (Böll, Kopelev 39-40)

However, when Böll is asked whether or not the perception about Russia has changed since World War II, his answer is ambivalent. He states:

Es ist schwer zu sagen. Wo ich das persönlich erlebe, sagen wir beim Tankwart oder wenn ich irgendwo einkaufen gehe und jemand weiß, ich war in der Sowjetunion oder so, ist die Reaktion positiv. Es herrscht aber auch gleichzeitig sehr viel Verdrängung. ... Ich habe eigentlich nie, weder bei Intellektuellen noch bei den Leuten, die man

so alltaglich kennenlernt, irgendwelchen Hass auf die Russen erlebt. Aber es existiert ja noch in den gedruckten Medien, hauptsachlich in bestimmten Zeitungen, in bestimmten politischen Kreisen, weil dieser Denkprozess niemals vollzogen wird. Dass Deutschland die Sowjetunion angegriffen hat, sogar bei Existenz eines Vertrags. (Ibid., 42-43)²⁶

Kopelev's answer may not have spoken to the daily reality of Soviet citizens of German heritage, but it does attest the tremendous, intrinsic difficulty in exposing each nation's perception of the 'Other'. It demonstrates that a scholar can spend decades researching the history of German-Russian perceptions, but without taking intercultural identities into consideration, such as the ethnic Germans in Russia, an accurate depiction of such perceptions is incomplete and too one-sided.

From the time of Kopelev's interview in 1981 through the end of the Cold War, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, perceptions have only become more complicated due to the 'Cold War' and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union. These societal and cultural changes allowed for the resurrection of an extraordinary relationship between the East and the West and created a more amicable but ambiguous bond between Germany and Russia. Yet, this political ambiguity is not unique to the twentieth century. From Czar Peter the Great's interest in expanding Russia's economy through trade with European countries at the end of the seventeenth century, through German-born Catherine the Great's (1729-1796) 34-year regime in Russia, to Chancellor Merkel's tense and ambivalent policies of

²⁶ Quotes are copied in its original version, including spelling and grammar errors.

‘Ostpolitik’ towards Putin’s Russia,²⁷ economic and military factors have long influenced the nature and the outcome of the German-Russian political relationship.

Nonetheless, the two nations maintained a generally amicable political, economic, and cultural exchange in the 300 years following Catherine the Great’s appeal to the Germans,²⁸ and during her reign Immanuel Kant’s idea of Enlightenment was imported to Russia, and Schiller’s works prompted many influential conversations among the nobility.²⁹ It was not until the rise of the Bolshevik party in the 1920s and the subsequent removal of the vestiges of the Russian-German royal family, that all traces of an alliance were annihilated.³⁰ Furthermore, during and after World War II, the perception of each side drastically changed from ally to enemy, as both countries sought to expand their territories militarily—Stalin aimed to spread his communist ideology in the West, and Hitler sought more ‘Lebensraum’³¹ in the East.³² The end of World War II further complicated German-Russian relations, as East Germany was allied with the Soviet

²⁷ Judy Depsey, “Merkel: Reach out to Russians!” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 13 Dec. 2012 <<http://carnegieendowment.org/2012/05/31/merkel-reach-out-to-russians/b0ua>>.

²⁸In Sigrid Kumpf-Korfes, *Bismarcks ‘Draht nach Russland’: Zum Problem der Sozial-Ökonomischen Hintergründe der Russisch-Deutschen Entfremdung im Zeitraum von 1878 bis 1891* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1968) and in K. O. von Aretin and W. Konze, *Deutschland und Russland im Zeitalter des Kapitalismus, 1867-1914* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1977). In both books, the German and Russian economic relationship is investigated. The authors note that the relationship between Germany and Russia was based merely on economic motivation; however, this relationship was later disrupted.

²⁹ In Robert K. Massie, *Catherine the Great: Portrait of a Woman* (New York: Random House, 2011).

³⁰ For more information see Klaus Hildebrand’s *Das Deutsche Reich und die Sowjetunion im internationalen System: 1918-1932: Legitimität oder Revolution?* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1977). Hildebrand’s work describes the Russian-German relationship between the end of WWI and Hitler’s rise to power. The main focus lies on German-Russian foreign policy. Also, a similar argument is made in Bernard Newman, *The Captured Archives: The Story of the Nazi-Soviet Documents* (London: Latimer House, 1948).

³¹ The literal English translation is ‘living space’, which was a basic principle of Nazi’s foreign policy to expand geographically and ideologically into the East.

³² In Gerd Koenen’s *Der Russland-Komplex* (München: C. H. Beck Verlag, 2005). Koenen’s German study on the German perception of Russia in the first part’ of the twentieth century depicts a complex picture of the Russian/German relationship. The author examines and dismantles the continuous and one-sided view of Russians in Germany and illustrates how the German perception of Russians was in constant change.

Union, which in turn distrusted West Germany. Today, a quarter of a century after borders reopened to the East, the German and Russian political and economic relationship remains in an ambivalent state,³³ although some political historians believe that “[w]e could now define [at the end of the twentieth century] the ... state of German-Russian relations as normal” (Schloegel 1).

Politics and economics were not the sole factors influencing German-Russian relations and their attitude towards each other. German and Russian societies had symbiotic relations, which were common in many areas, including artistic, philosophical and scientific exchanges nurturing a mutual respect between citizens. Although they may have encumbered cultural encounters, even historical events such as World War I and World War II could not erase these exchanges entirely.³⁴

The exportation of German culture into Russian territories was proliferated through hundreds of thousands of Germans immigrating to Russia, beginning in the seventeenth century at the request of Catherine the Great. Germans immigrated to Russia for several reasons, including religious freedom and aspirations for economic success. Estimates range from 23,000 to 29,000 people who emigrated from Germany to Russia between 1764 and 1767,³⁵ as a direct result of the suffering caused by the Seven-Years War (1756 and 1763). Although some Germans remained in Russia for only a short period of time, others maintained a permanent residency and developed a kinship with their new homestead. Most of the émigrés settled and formed German

³³ In Celeste Wallander’s *Mortal Friends, Best Enemies: German-Russian Cooperation after the Cold War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999). Celeste Wallander explores German-Russian relations since the end of the Cold War and investigates whether or not the institutions matter in the world of politics. She identifies that both states merely use their powers to pursue their interests.

³⁴ Translated from the original German quotation in Koenen’s *Der Russland-Komplex* 13.

³⁵ Alfred Eisfeld, “Die Entwicklung in Russland und in der Sowjetunion”, (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung 267, 2000), 5.

colonies in the western part of Russia, particularly near St. Petersburg and the Volga region, where they continued to practice German cultural traditions and rely on the German language as their primary language. Recognized for its cultural and social life, St. Petersburg became not only the capital of Russia but also a center for the arts and sciences. The influence of the German immigrants on the culture of this Russian metropolis is best demonstrated by the success of the German Theater, which became the center of the Western-European sciences and arts in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

From the late nineteenth century to the beginning of the twenty-first century, major political, economic and cultural shifts occurred in both German and Russian nations, altering their political alignment and relationship with one another, perhaps the most detrimental being the two world wars and the Cold War. Although the pendulum between these nations has swung numerous times between ‘mortal friends’ and ‘best enemies’,³⁶ it is beyond the scope of this study to examine every nuance of these nations’ sociopolitical development; rather, this analysis relies on the study of the dynamic between the texts examined here and certain key historical events, which have most influenced these countries’ perception of one another. Acknowledging that the production of texts is influenced by the culture in which they are created, a familiarity with certain historical events is essential to determining if these works deviate from the image of the mainstream societal perceptions of the ‘Other’. Therefore, this introduction also includes a brief historical review of the state of German-Russian affairs during the eras in which the texts were created, focusing on

³⁶ Wallander discusses this relationship between Russians and Germans in *Mortal Friends, Best Enemies: German-Russian Cooperation after the Cold War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999).

how international policies and exchanges influenced Germans' and Russians' perception of each other. Starting with the Wilhelmine Era, this research broadly traces these international encounters in the second part of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, this project is limited solely to events which permanently altered German-Russian relations.

III. Wilhelmine Germany and the Tsarist Russian Relationship around 1900

During the nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth century, the German-Russian political relationship shifted from positive to negative to ambivalent. Beginning in 1850, German political and economic relations with Russia were generally positive and mutually beneficial. However, the relationship changed in the favor of Germans during the second half of the nineteenth century and specifically during the Crimean War (1853–1856). Although officially neutral in the war, some German states, such as Prussia, began to use its superior economy to grant loans to Russia, indebting the Russians to the German states (Newnham 86). In the second half of the nineteenth century, German and Russian diplomacy was strengthened through the 1881 *Dreikaiserbund*³⁷ between Germany, Russia and Austria-Hungary designed to stop the rivalry over spheres of influence in the Balkans. Not only were the German Emperor Wilhelm II and Czar Nicholas II political allies, but they also shared a common German ancestor.³⁸ Although Bismarck hoped the new alliance would bolster economic ties between the German and Russian (middle class) and

³⁷ Translated into English: The Three Emperors League, which was an alliance between Czar Alexander II of Russia, Emperor Franz Joseph I of Austria-Hungary, and Emperor Wilhelm I of Germany.

³⁸ Both emperors, German Emperor Wilhelm II and Czar Nicholas II, were first cousins. In Michale Duffy's, "Who's Who - Tsar Nicholas II," August 22, 2009 <<http://www.firstworldwar.com/bio/nicholasii.htm>>.

remind the Russians of the importance of their alliance with Germany, Bismarck's policies had the opposite effect. In retaliation for Russia restricting the sale of land to foreigners in Russian Poland, Bismarck issued the *Lombardverbot*, in November 1887. The *Lombardverbot* placed restrictions on Russian securities, resulting in a dramatic decrease in their value. Virtually all areas of Russian society were outraged at Bismarck's economic pressure, to include the nationalists, industrialists, and agricultural interests (Ibid., 66).

At the turn of the twentieth century and throughout the latter part of the Wilhelmine period, German-Russian political and economic relations continued to weaken. Despite strong German-Russian trade, the negative economic policies towards Russia continued, forcing Russia into an increased reliance upon France for investment capital for industrial development and to alleviate Russia's large government debt (Newnham 89). Bismarck was influenced by the advice of Emperor Wilhelm I to avoid conflict at any cost with Russia and always maintain close relations with the Russian Emperor (Fraenkel 34-62). Heeding this advice, Bismarck entered into the *Rückversicherungsvertrag*, which also known as the reinsurance treaty, in June 1887 that guaranteed Russia would retain neutrality in the event of a war between Germany and another European nation (Ibid., 34). However, Bismarck's successor was reluctant to maintain the treaty.

Although at the beginning of the twentieth century, German and Russian relations appeared to improve, the start of World War I was particularly devastating to the German and Russian relationship. World War I fighting between Germany and Russia began in August, 1914 and resulted in 6.7 million Russians killed or wounded.

Although the two nations were enemies during World War I, at the end of April 1918, Germany and Russia tried to formally reestablish a diplomatic relationship by signing the peace Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. However, it was merely what Wheeler-Bennett categorized as a “fictional kind relationship” (Wheeler-Bennett 311, 329). The Soviet representatives protested against German expansion into Finnish, Ukrainian and Crimean regions. The Germans rallied against the Bolsheviks’ spread of propaganda among the German prisoners of war, who were still held in Russia (Carr 73). Although the official German-Russian relationship seemed to improve politically, mistrust among the people of both nations was still present.³⁹

The perception of World War I was different in both countries as well. While the Russians quickly forgot the atrocities of World War I in the midst of their civil war, the Germans bore the consequences of the Treaty of Versailles, which led to resentment toward those countries that created the peace treaty (Schloegel 8). World War I fighting between Russia and Germany ended with the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, which was devastating for Russia. Russia was forced to recognize the independent states of Ukraine, Finland, and Georgia, give control of Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia to Germany, and give Kars, Ardahan and Batam to Turkey. In total, Russia lost over one million square miles, a third of its population and much of its industry and natural resources. However, in accordance with Article 116 of the Treaty of Versailles, Germany had to renounce the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk and was forced to pay reparations to Russia, significantly changing German-Russian relations for several years following (Fraenkel 36).

³⁹ Hans W. Gatzke, “Zu den deutsch-russischen Beziehungen im Sommer 1918,” in *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 3.1 (1955): 67-98.

In the years immediately following the end of WWI, Germany's policies towards Russia focused on establishing a political balance of power, and Russia recognized the necessity of a positive relationship with the Western capitalistic world, and these pragmatic needs resulted in a brief period of sought-after diplomatic peace (Hildebrand 42). However, German politics jeopardized German-Russian diplomacy with the signing of the Treaty of Berlin in 1926.⁴⁰ Russians understood the League of Nations as an anti-Russian conspiracy (Fraenkel 38, 39). At this point, all German-Russian diplomatic relations slowly declined until it reached its nadir with Hitler's rise to power and the beginning of World War I.

IV. Russian-German Cultural Encounters before, during and after World War I

A dramatic rise in cultural encounters between Germans and Russians occurred in the years leading up to World War I. German merchants traded in Russia, and their entrepreneurs flourished throughout the land. Russian scientists, students, artists, and poets studied and worked in Germany before WWI, but this rich cultural life and the close relations were devastated by World War I (Schloegel 3).⁴¹ In particular, Berlin was a center of "intense encounters between Germans and Russians" between 1921 and 1924, and "the 'Weimar culture' would have been unimaginable without the

⁴⁰ The Treaty of Berlin was based on maintaining a nonaggressive and neutral position between Germany and the Soviet Union. See in Andrew Crozier, "The Failed Peace," in *The Causes of the Second World War* (Blackwell Publishers: Oxford, 1997), 67.

⁴¹ Schloegel cites Dittmar Dahlmann, who argues the same point in "Before the Great War: German Entrepreneurs in Russia –Russian Scholas in Germany. Two types of Russian-German Relations in the Decades before the First Wold War," in *Russian-German Special Relations in the Twentieth Century. A Closed Chapter?* edited by Karl Schloegel (Oxford/New York: Berg Publishers, 2006), 11-30, and in *Deutsche in St. Petersburg und Moskau vom 18. Jahrhundert bis zum Ausbruch des Ersten Weltkrieges* (Lüneburg: Verl. Nordostdt. Kulturwerk, 1994).

direct and indirect impact of this ‘Russian Berlin’” (Ibid.).⁴² The city became a favorite destination of anti-Bolshevik Russian émigrés, while housing the revolutionary Soviet Russians’ base of operations for Western Europe (Ibid.). At the beginning of 1920s, Berlin was also a hub for opposition groups and the center for pro-communist and pro-Soviet protests,⁴³ and it was the place where anti-Bolsheviks and the underground right-wing terrorists collided.

A ‘German Moscow’ also flourished, particularly in the 1930s. However, doctors, engineers, scientists, communists and anti-fascist Germans were among the émigrés who fled to Moscow after 1933 in order to escape Nazi Germany.⁴⁴ Many of them would find themselves later disillusioned with the Soviet Union, however, because 70% of these émigrés fell victim to Stalin’s regime and repression which happened in 1938 (Schloegel 4).⁴⁵ The exiled émigrés were forcibly deported to labor camps in Siberia along with tens of thousands of ethnic Germans,⁴⁶ whose families had resided in Russia for centuries.

Moreover, the societal and political attitude towards the Germans and their culture changed after World War I, making life for the Germans in Russia arduous. Previous privileges were revoked for the Germans residing in the Soviet Union and they were forced to relinquish their property to the government. Many ethnic

⁴² Schloegel focuses on the ‘chronotop’ (a concept and term coined by Mikhail Bakhtin) of German-Russian relations and particularly on the ‘Russian Berlin’ in early 1920s.

⁴³ Communist International (*Comintern*) was founded in 1919.

⁴⁴ Clara Zetkin was one of the German writers and Marxist theorists who went into Exile during the Nazi era.

⁴⁵ Schloegel cites Carola Tischler describing the experience of war and *exile* in “*German Emigrants in Soviet Exile: A Drama in Five Acts*,” in *Russian-German Special Relations in the Twentieth Century. A Closed Chapter?*, edited by Karl Schloegel (Oxford/New York: Berg Publishers, 2006), 77-98.

⁴⁶ Within mainstream German society, ethnic Germans who immigrated to Germany from the former Soviet Union Republics after 1989 are considered Russian-Germans, despite the fact that the majority of these Germans never lived in Russia, but speak the Soviet Union’s official language, which was Russian.

Germans pleaded to re-immigrate to Germany, although this request was denied by the German government. Germans in the Soviet Union often became victims of anti-German raids, and several regions heavily populated by Germans suffered a dearth of food that led to a German population decrease of over 30% between World War I and 1925 (Eisfeld 7). The anti-German attitude in the Soviet Union lasted for over 70 years, and German émigrés and Russian-Germans suffered dearly under the USSR's oppression until the collapse of the Soviet Union and German unification.

V. Nazi Germany, Stalin's Soviet Union and the End of any Hope for Peace

The initiation of Hitler's foreign politics based on 'Lebensraum' marked the end of any hope for the establishment of peaceful relations between these two nations, and the staggering development of German phobia about Russians within German society (Koenen 7, 8). Although Hitler's rise to power is associated with the growing fears of Communism among Germans,⁴⁷ some historical texts provide documentation of the present showing tendencies already evident in the nineteenth century. As Koenen argues, the National Socialist propaganda surrounding the 'Russian Threat' undeniably fostered a negative perception of the Russians after World War I (Ibid., 8).

Hitler's intentions to expand the 'Lebensraum' and Stalin's growing fear of a Western, capitalist invasion of the USSR cultivated mutual fear but also admiration between the two countries. Interestingly, despite the international animosity, Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia exercised almost identical internal policies, including

⁴⁷ More information on Hitler's use of propaganda against Communism and how it fuelled the fear about Russians among the German population can be found in Joseph W Bendersky, *A history of Nazi Germany*, (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1985), 103.

the increase of armed forces, population expansion, development of new military equipment and the proliferation of state-established ideologies, either National Socialism in Germany or Communism in USSR.⁴⁸ Despite both leaders' determination to expand politically, geographically and culturally, Germany and the Soviet Union were able to maintain a diplomatic relationship until 1935.

Tensions mounted in the 1930s, because both countries' growing economies were seen as a threat to the other nation. Germany's National Socialist policy of expanding to the East—Hitler “looked to the east as a field of German expansion”—was of no small consequence for this deteriorating relationship (Fraenkel 54-55). The Soviet leaders observed Germany's growing industry and characterized the German government as anti-Soviet and conservative which posed a threat to the Soviet government and society (Beyray 63, 64). Both countries proliferated propaganda aimed at vilifying the other nation in order to gain popular support for the oncoming war. During a speech at the Congress of the Communist Party on January 25, 1934, Stalin stated that in Germany Hitler maintained anti-Soviet forces. Only a few days later, on January 30, 1934, Hitler spoke to the Reichstag and asserted that Germany had no intention to overpower the Soviet Union and intended to maintain friendly relations. Such reassurances did little to ameliorate the negative perception of Germans among the Soviets, however, and by 1936, the Russians “were ready for war” against Germany as “Russia looked for a new constellation” (Fraenkel 60, 61).⁴⁹ However, both sides continued diplomatic posturing, and the distrust between

⁴⁸ For more information see Michael Geyer and Sheila Fitzpatrick *Beyond Totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism compared* (New York, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

⁴⁹ Fraenkel cites the Soviet military and political leader Kliment Voroshilov, September 16, 1936.

Russians and Germans became obvious on September 1, 1939, when Germany invaded Poland.

Bringing back to mind Böll's comments concerning the perception of Russians by Germans in the late twentieth century, the consequences of these events become imperative for this study. Even after the end of the war, the perception Russians and Germans held of each other never truly returned to one of respect and trust. The damage done in the minds of the people was irreparable. This is in no small part due to the appalling racist policies of the Nazi regime in which Russians were considered "subhuman" (Schloegel 3). However, it is also important to understand that this animosity represents a reversal of their perception of each other before the world wars—a culture in which Lou Andreas-Salomé writes. From the early years of the twentieth century until the end of World War II the perception of Russia was partially influenced by the Russian literature of the nineteenth and twentieth century. Some people at the time considered Russia as a nation offering hope for the salvation of a deteriorating and aging Western culture (Ibid., 3). The works of Thomas Mann, Eduard Stadtler and Oswald Spengler, in particular, depicted the existence of the shared interests and positive perceptions between Russian and German societies. There was a shared antipathy towards all things Western by both nations. Hitler had to dismantle the positive German views regarding Russia in order to launch his invasion of Russia (Schloegel 3). War crimes committed by the Red Army after the siege of Berlin during WWII and in the following years included pillaging and mass raping of thousands of German women and girls. These actions by the Russian army

reinforced the negative perception of Russians that perpetuated for decades (Bellamy 670).

World War II also marked the bleakest point for ethnic Germans in the Soviet Union, marked by unfounded governmental accusations of Russian-German soldiers' collaboration with the Nazi 'Wehrmacht'. These soldiers were withdrawn from the front lines, and approximately two hundred thousand ethnic Germans were sent to the Caucasus (Eisfeld 6). Thousands of Germans living in Russia and the Soviet Union were proclaimed enemies of the state and accused of treason and espionage.⁵⁰ Soviet leadership did not differentiate between Germans from Nazi Germany and Germans from the Soviet Union and deported approximately 800,000 so-called collaborators. This "was accomplished by the disintegration of the rich cultural infrastructure, the destruction of the economic base, and total disenfranchisement and life-threatening discrimination" (Krieger 160). These Germans were entirely stripped of their rights, sent to labor camps during the war and repressed during the post-war era. Stalin's fears of inner-revolt against the Soviet government lead to the annihilation of German culture within Russia in 1938 and 1939 through the extermination of thousands of Germans' living in Russia and the Ukraine and later in Soviet satellite states.

In the Ukraine between 1937 and 1938 hundreds of thousands of false accusations of Nazi collaboration were filed. 122,237 ethnic Germans were sentenced to death, 65,603 were imprisoned for ten to twenty-five years and 7,180 ethnic Germans were imprisoned for three to five years—most of the imprisoned Germans

⁵⁰ Viktor Krieger, "Patriots or Traitors? – The Soviet Government and the 'German Russians' after the Attack on the USSR by National Socialist Germany," in *Russian-German Special Relations in the Twentieth Century. A Closed Chapter?* edited by Karl Schloegel (Oxford/New York: Berg Publishers, 2006), 133-164. Krieger examines historical documents on Russian-Germans in the Volga region.

did not survive beyond the second year in incarceration (Eisfeld 13, 14). Between 1941 and 1945 around 1,300,000 Germans living in the Soviet Union were deported to the regions of Siberia. German men and women without children or infants were forced into the work-army, where they built railways, worked in factories, or in mines (Eisfeld 3, 4).

With the removal of the National Socialists from power and the end of the Holocaust, the situation began to improve, at least legally, for Russians residing in Germany after 1945. The Soviet Union, however, emerged as a victor of the war and was hardly motivated to change its policies towards Germans in Russia. The anti-German policies in the Soviet Union were part of more comprehensive policies of oppression that went beyond merely oppressing certain ethnic groups. However, Germans living in the Soviet Union were forced to remain in the work-army until the mid-1950s and were not permitted to leave the designated areas without special permission. Significant discrimination and prejudice existed toward the German population, as accusations of collaboration with the German army in World War II still existed. The living conditions for the majority of Germans did not improve, as many of them worked in the factories or social services, which held low economic and social statuses (Ibid., 1).

However, in the 1970s, the Germans increasingly attained jobs as engineers, technicians, teachers, doctors and other academic professions. Since schools no longer offered German language classes, the younger generation of Germans assimilated with the Russian culture, and towards the end of the twentieth century, many of them adopted Russian nationality. Records show that in 1926, 95% recorded

themselves to be German, decreasing by 1989 to around 49%. To escape persecution and the persistent discrimination of Germans before 1989, many of them requested the permission from the Soviet government to immigrate to Germany or move back to the former German regions within the Soviet Union; however, this request was repeatedly denied.

VI. German-Soviet Relations after 1945

It is difficult to give an all-encompassing account of “German-Russian” affairs after 1945, because there was not a unified German state. Germany’s defeat in 1945 resulted in a division of Germany into West and East sectors that developed into the nations of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the German Democratic Republic (GDR) respectively. West Germany allied itself with the capitalist West, and East Germany remained under the influence and control of the Soviet Union until 1990, which resulted in the emergence of an intertwined German and Russian/Soviet culture. Between 1945 and 1990, the FRG, GDR, and Soviet Union’s political relations were marked by failed negotiations and persistent economic contestations. The building of the Berlin Wall in 1961 is emblematic of the tensions these nations shared, and the political propaganda in all three countries created a perpetual negative perception of the ‘Other’.

This all abruptly changed at the beginning of the 1990s due to German unification and the fall of the Soviet Union a year later in 1991 (Wallender 3). During the decade before the collapse of the Soviet Union, the administration of Soviet President Michael Gorbachev initiated many democratic reforms, resulting in positive diplomatic relations between the East and the West. In the late 1980s, East German

peaceful public protests against the East-West German division partially lead to West German Chancellor Kohl's negotiations with Gorbachev over the unification of these nations. Subsequently, an economic-political deal between West Germany and the Soviet Union was reached during the July 1990 summit meeting, in which the Soviet Union agreed to the release of East Germany in exchange for 70 billion Deutsch Marks (Newham 89).

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Germany and Russia became increasingly tied together, with both an economic and political relationship serving to prevent future conflicts. By 1999, Germany received over one-third of its energy imports from Russia, the largest source of currency into Russia. Despite having other options for import, German policy was designed to buy energy supplies from Russia in part to increase regional stability. This trade relationship between Germany with Russia served to increase stability and alleviate some of Germany's difficult history in relation to Russia and the East (Wallander 54).⁵¹

Likewise, Russia's economic prosperity became dependent on German export, and both countries purposely established positive relations that reduce political tensions and the risk of a military threat. No longer threatened by wars both countries' interests lie in strong economic ties and cooperation, and the leaders of both Germany and Russia "understand the disastrous results of past policies, especially the push for 'Lebensraum' in Eastern Europe. This does not mean ... that they are not interested in Central and Eastern Europe: the difference is that now there is 'a real possibility for German influence in the east without war'" (Ibid., 49).

⁵¹ Wallander explores German-Russian relations since the end of the Cold War and investigates whether or not the institutions matter in the world of politics. She identifies that both states merely use their powers to pursue their interests.

Additionally, as Wallander states: “German-Russian conflicts have been the central cause in European wars, but cooperation between the two nations has not always produced peace” (Ibid., 2). Nonetheless, post-Cold War German-Russian relations became based on common interests, including the interest in preventing tension and developing stability (Wallander 50, 52). In the early twenty-first century, these economically and militarily powerful states remain in an economically ambivalent, but politically peaceful state.

VII. Russian and German Cultural Encounters after 1990

In the late 1980s, shortly before East and West German reunification and after Soviet Union president Gorbachev’s negotiations with German leaders concerning the opening of the borders to the West, a large number of predominantly Russian-Germans and Russian-Jews from the former Soviet Republics, living under oppression of the Soviet Union regime, took the opportunity to immigrate to Germany. With them was also an increased movement of Eastern Germans into western Germany. East Germans became acculturated to some degree with Soviet/Russian culture during the Soviet occupation of East Germany following World War II until the fall of the Berlin wall. As a result, even unified Germany experienced an increased presence of Russian culture.

Immigrants from the Soviet Union, especially ethnic Germans, were unaware of the challenges and cultural clashes they would face in contemporary Germany. Most ethnic Germans had assimilated with Russian/Soviet culture, but retained their ethnic identity as German. Upon immigrating to Germany, many of them were shocked to experience cultural intolerance and a negative public perception of

Russian-Germans in Germany. While the public remains hesitant to accept Russian-Germans into German society, immigrants from the former Soviet Republics make significant contributions to the intercultural understanding of Germany's multi- and intercultural society.⁵²

The integration of immigrants with different cultural backgrounds from the former Soviet Union and in part individuals from former East Germany proved to be problematic within the unified Germany. These differences, coupled with the economic decline within the unified Germany from the 1990s into the beginning of the twenty-first century, reinforced the negative perception of Russia and the Russians. This view expanded gradually into political and cultural spheres after the increase of immigrants from the East entered Germany and the consequent socio-cultural clashes.

VIII. Literature Review of Russian-German Literary Studies

Russian-German, in this study, is the term used to describe those people (and their descendants) who immigrated to Germany from Russia or the Soviet Union where they were labeled as ethnically German. This is not done in denial of the thousands of Germans of Russian birth who were never considered part of the German minority, such as the Russian-Germans of Jewish descent.⁵³ The texts selected for this study are considered representative of 'German literature'. However, these texts contain Russian cultural and linguistic features and the setting consists of a

⁵² Among most well-known intercultural writers in Germany, Vladimir Kaminer and Alina Bronsky participate regularly in writing intercultural texts, in intercultural radio and TV show programs.

⁵³ Rather, this choice reflects an attempt to simplify the language of this study and to avoid cumbersome, confusing constructions such as German-Russian-Germans. Should the term Russian-Germans be used to denote Germans of non-German-Russian heritage, this will be specified.

dual space, Russia/the Soviet Union and Germany. Also, common themes include border crossing and cultural exchange, which would be considered and defined as Russian-German or minority literature. Although the Russian-German texts of Salomé and Bronsky examined in this research project represent a novel contribution to German Literary Studies, the study of Russian-German texts experienced a resurgence following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990. Much of the scholarship concerning Russian-German literature has focused on its uniqueness within German Intercultural Literary Studies. Unlike the migrant and intercultural German-Turkish literature, this specific literature is considered a minority literature both in the authors' native Russia/Soviet Union and in Germany.⁵⁴

Russian-German literature has been classified under the blanket term 'Migrantenliteratur',⁵⁵ defined as the literature of German authors with foreign backgrounds, and which is explored more thoroughly in the first chapter of this study. However, Russian-German literature cannot be understood in simple terms of German and not-German, or 'minority' and non-minority, because the authors identify as German. Immaolata Amodeo defines Russian-German literature as an "offene Randliteratur in der Fremde, als deterritoralisierte Literatur einer Minorität, die sich in der großen Sprache einer Majorität bedient."⁵⁶ Due to the difficulty of identifying any single nationality to associate with Russian-German literature, methodologies of Literary Studies, which focus on the traditional constructs of a

⁵⁴ Graf H.-C. v Nayhauss, "Aspekte russlandsdeutscher Literatur nach 1990," in *Die andere Literatur. Istanbul Vorträge*, edited by Manfred Durzak and Nilüfer Kuruyazici (Würzburg: Verlags Königshausen & Neumann, 2004), 181 – 193.

⁵⁵ English translation of this term is 'migrant literature.'

⁵⁶ Immacolata Amodeo, "*Die Heimat heißt Babylon*": *Zur Literatur ausländischer Autoren in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag. Opladen, 1996), 21.

national canon and which form a stable German identity, have failed to fully examine the cultural richness of Russian-German texts.⁵⁷

The complexity of Russian-German identity has led some literary critics to entirely reject the notion of relegating this genre to ‘minority literature’ in Germany. For example, some recognize Russian-German literature as part of the multinational literature of the Soviet Union, which would then make it a separate genre from Russian-German literature, which is considered part of ‘minority’ literature and has a pejorative connotation. Graf Nayhauss (an intercultural scholar in Germany) even referred to it as a “Ghetto-Literatur” (Nayhauss 185).

By applying a German Cultural Studies approach to the texts of Salomé and Bronsky, this study illustrates not only that Russian-German and German-Russian literature must be regarded as a single genre, but this genre is integral for understanding German national identity by challenging ethnic and linguistic comprehension of ‘Germanness’ that are remnants of nineteenth-century conceptualizations of German identity. Russian-German literature discusses the life of a German minority group living under the Soviet oppressive regime. It also sheds new light on contemporary issues of assimilation and integration, by revealing that even those individuals who can demonstrate a German ‘ethnicity’ are denied a German identity, thereby challenging assertions of a biological construct of ‘Germanness’, which would determine membership into German culture.

⁵⁷ Examples include: Karl Esselborn, “Autoren nichtdeutscher Muttersprache im Kanon deutscher Literatur? Zur Erweiterung des Kanons deutscher ‚Nationalliteratur‘ um Texte der Interkulturalität,” in *Kanon und Text in interkulturellen Perspektiven*, Vol. 8, edited by Peter Wiesinger, (Wien: Akten des X. Internationalen Germanistenkongresses Wien, 2000), 176-172; Michaela Auer and Ulrich Müller, eds, *Kanon und Text in interkulturellen Perspektiven: “Andere Texte anders lesen”*, (Stuttgart: Verlag Hans-Dieter Heinz Akademischer Verlag, 2001), 344 .

Furthermore, Ivar Sagmo has argued that the study of Russian-German writers and their texts should function as a stimulus for societal debate, because Russian-German authors frequently address such politically charged topics as segregation and gender (Sagmo 285). Sagmo's definition of the function of Russian-German literature may not apply to all texts within the genre, but the examination of Lou Andreas-Salomé's and Alina Bronsky's texts here will evince a focus on political topics. Such examples have led literary critics to consider Russian-German literature as a form as self-assertion, a way of coming to terms with the writers' German past and a re-immigration of new Germany.⁵⁸

In the following study, Salomé and Bronsky's texts are analyzed as intercultural texts, examining them at once as Russian-German and German texts. This can only be done through an inter- and cross-cultural examination of the texts, which integrates various methodologies within the framework of cultural, intercultural and German Cultural Studies, as well as Feminist and Gender Studies as explained further in the first chapter.

⁵⁸ For more information see Annette Wierschke's *Schreiben als Selbstbehauptung. Kulturkonflikt und Identität in den Werken von Aysel Oezakin, Alev Tekinay und Emine Sevgi Oezdamar* (Frankfurt am Main: IKO - Verlag für Interkulturelle Kommunikation, 1996).

Chapter 1: Theoretical Framework

Introduction

The study's theoretical framework for the analysis of literary texts involves the combination of various theoretical approaches under the rubric of Cultural Studies. This innovative interdisciplinary approach to evaluate texts by female German authors born in Russia deconstructs traditional notions of 'Germanness', 'Russianness', and gender, demonstrating how these authors formulate alternative national identities. Specifically, these texts, including novels, novellas and journals, are investigated through the lens of Cultural Studies and German Cultural Studies while incorporating the ideas and theories of Intercultural Studies, as well as feminist and Gender Studies.

The utilization of German Cultural Studies is necessary for investigations of discourses concerning past and present German-Russian cultural exchanges. The field emphasizes the 'positionality' of writers and the influence of their cultural background on their perception of others. It also allows the comparison of such perception to that of the mainstream culture of the society in which they live. Also, the texts selected for this study are composed by German female authors who write in German and incorporate Russian in their works. Although these texts are considered part of German literature, they also illustrate pertinent and significant intercultural and minority discourses, which greatly influence the formation of German national identity, but which have been neglected by scholars. One aspect of German Cultural

Studies is not permitting texts of individuals from any class or gender to be viewed as superior or more culturally relevant, which enables the examination of these cross-cultural works “not as minority literature but as exemplars of the range of German literature”, and to question “what these texts do with and to language and how, . . . , they negotiate concepts of Germanness” (Bammer 40).

Intercultural Studies and some aspects of Linguistic Anthropology methodologies provide theoretical tools for identifying German and Russian and Russian-German cultural identity through acculturation and language—both are significant aspects in cultural and intercultural identity developmental processes for the writers, their heroines, and their readers. Finally, Feminist and Gender Studies’ conceptual frameworks are utilized to explore the gender aspect within Russian and German culture and society. Ultimately, this study builds a theoretical platform on which the role and development of ‘intercultural’ female identities can be examined and their influence and importance within Russian and German societies can be elucidated.

This chapter is divided into four parts; each one introducing the methodological approach for this study and explaining its importance for the analysis of Bronsky’s and Salomé’s texts. Since Cultural Studies’ redefines culture in a semiotic sense and recognizes concepts such as gender and ethnicity as being constructed through discourses, it forms the framework into which the other methodological approaches are fused. This chapter will begin by defining this new definition of culture and its consequences for literary analysis.

I. Introduction to Cultural Studies and German Cultural Studies

Cultural Studies seeks to redefine culture by replacing an aesthetic definition, understood in evaluative terms as a collection of a people's 'best' artistic projects, with a more anthropological definition of culture, which focuses on culture's relationship with power and its ability to affect people as well as be created by them. This reconsideration of culture has altered literary studies in several ways. A focus on the interplay of power structures and culture has broadened the array of texts that are studied in congruence with literature, including films, customs, and rituals. Due to the diversity of objects of analysis, the scope of interpretative theory has widened as well, leading many practitioners to adopt interdisciplinary approaches to research, such as, done in this study (Baldwin 3).

Recognizing the power structures inherent in a culture and the interrelation of texts within a culture—its production both being influenced by and influential to the culture in which it developed—Cultural Studies includes texts by authors who have been previously overlooked or marginalized, due to the author's gender, class or 'race' (Berman 168). Acknowledging that factors such as 'race', ethnicity or gender can alter the classification of a text as well as the perspective of readers and authors, the 'positionality' and the cultural background of authors and audiences must be taken into consideration when analyzing any text. Finally, early twenty-first century trends in Cultural Studies stress that culture does not cease where national borders end; rather, there is a constant flow between and a merging of cultures and, therefore, the adoption of a methodological approach to the analyses of texts that recognizes textual interculturality is particularly useful.

One of the first scholars responsible for redefining culture was Clifford Geertz, an anthropologist, who defined culture as a “... historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life” (Geertz 89). This definition not only challenged a traditional, elitist concept of culture, but its focus on semiotics indicates that culture is produced and absorbed by humans, that one learns a culture. This process of learning culture has been coined differently in diverse fields; however, this study has appropriated the term of acculturation (Baldwin 8).

The methodological decision to use anthropological terminology, instead of the sociological, stems from Cultural Studies’ recognition that culture must be distinguished from society; in any society several different cultures can coexist (Ibid., 6-7). Therefore, Cultural Studies practitioners examine culture in relation to society, understanding that culture can determine the position of any member within a society. For example, members within the same society but of different classes can develop different worldviews which shape and are guided by the culture of their specific class.

By identifying that multiple cultures can exist within a single society, sometimes as subcultures, the field of culture studies also emphasizes that these cultures exist within power structures, which privilege one culture over others, such as ‘male’ culture over ‘female’ culture, and the artificiality of such assessments. The academic analysis within the Cultural Studies’ considers the friction, which can be caused by the coexistence of multiple cultures within a society and “holds theoretical

and political questions in an ever irresolvable but permanent tension” (Hall “Cultural Studies and its Theoretical Legacies” 284).

Influenced by post-structuralists such as Michel Foucault and a semiotic understanding of culture as espoused by Geertz, Cultural Studies interrogates this tension and power within any culture as being related to knowledge and discourse. Cultural Studies recognizes that knowledge—for example, of the ‘Other’— is not *a priori*, but constructed across discourses, which are cultural ‘discussions’ of a topic created through the production of texts on that subject through media, literature, education, and scientific exchange. These discourses then go on to proliferate ‘knowledge’ of that subject to members of a given culture, artificially constructing concepts shared by members of the culture. Therefore, ideas such as gender, sexuality and ethnicity are understood as being constructed.

Texts have an increased importance in Cultural Studies, which recognizes that privileging specific texts can equate to empowering certain cultures over others. By participating in discourses, which create knowledge and power, the researchers using the Cultural Studies model of analysis question the teaching of a traditional canon, which is comprised of selected texts previously assumed to be of higher literary value. Critics of the traditional canon identify it as a form of sociopolitical power, or as Russell Berman describes it, “a vehicle of hierarchy”.⁵⁹ Cultural Studies looks at the canon not as “a literary category but a category of power” (Brans 81). Further, it “is commonly seen as what other people, once powerful, have made and what should now be opened up, demystified, or eliminated altogether” (von Hallberg 1).

⁵⁹ Berman citing Peter Uwe Hohendahl, *Building a National Literature: The Case of Germany, 1830-1810*, (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1989). ## Robert von Hallberg makes a similar argument in the introduction to his anthology *Canons* , 170.

In order to subvert the canon and the power it would establish, Cultural Studies scholars incorporate into their research neglected texts written by women and minority groups and previously undervalued genres such as popular fiction, which has greatly influenced this study's focus on ignored, intercultural authors Salomé and Bronsky. In fact, the "question of boundaries between levels of culture and the justification for them is an area of central concern for Cultural Studies" (Baldwin 16). Prominent scholars, such as Pierre Bourdieu, even assert that the boundaries between what is perceived as high and popular art are diminishing.⁶⁰ Cultural Studies, therefore, differentiates itself from traditional literary studies, because it spans various discourses and across disciplines by studying different subcultures, such as youth culture, popular culture, the culture of ethnic and religious minorities, and multiculturalism within a society.

Cultural Studies' acceptance of multiculturalism not only implies interrogations of various cultures within one society, but of cultures that cross borders between societies. The "processes of globalization have produced effects that raise questions at the borders of national canons", implying that a culture can be influenced by texts traditionally considered from a different culture (Berman 173). This is invaluable for my study, because the project demonstrates how including texts previously ignored by the traditional German canon unmask a deeper understanding of German cultural identity and memory, one that allows for intercultural identities, which will be discussed in a later section of this chapter.

⁶⁰ In Pierre Bourdieu's *Distinction. A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984).

Since culture and text have a reciprocal relationship, which can identify power and knowledge within a society, questions of ‘historical relativism’ must be addressed and evaluated. Such relativism questions the reliability of any text, recognizing that each text is influenced by the discourses of the culture in which it was produced (Baldwin 12). Researching from a point of view that takes into account this type of relativism challenges not only claims of impartiality made by supposedly objective texts, like scientific documents, but also allows for the identification of historical and social discourses within literature, noting that they also reflect historical discourses and knowledge.

In addition “to the difficulty of studying culture across history, there is the parallel problem of the interpretation of cultures from different parts of the world or of different sections of our society,” which is precisely the aim of this investigation (Ibid., 12). While historical relativism questions the reliability of texts, ‘perceptual relativism’ is concerned with ‘positionality’ of an individual or a group, the writer and the reader. Cultural Studies scholarship examines texts at two different levels: first, it determines whether an individual’s perception is relative and if that worldview differs from others; and second, it examines the degree to which this perception and understanding rely on language—an individual’s perception of other cultures, therefore, relies on his or her cultural background, and this cultural perception “will also be positioned in relation to not just one culture but many” (Ibid., 13-14, 15). This study identifies the intercultural nature of Salomé’s and Bronsky’s perspectives, their ‘positionality’ in relation to both Germany and Russia, and by doing so demonstrate how the uniqueness of their viewpoints can deconstruct their contemporary images of

‘Russianness’, ‘Germanness’, and gender. Examination of these perspectives and literary works transcends various research methodologies and thus involves new methodologies to examining cultural exchange.

Furthermore, interpreting and understanding cultures and texts crosses multiple academic disciplines, and only through the interdisciplinary approach of a cultural analysis of texts can cross-cultural examinations be made (Peck “The Institution of Germanistik and the Transmission of Culture” 310). Also, the interpretation of texts must be sensitive toward the ‘Other’ culture. As an interpretation of a text is subjective, an “understanding is made [...] more complex because the [individual studying the texts] is participating in the culture within which and out of which he/she speaks, understands, and writes” (Ibid., 311). The process of interpreting texts is therefore a reflection of the writers’ and readers’ ‘positionality.’

The personal experiences of Salomé and Bronsky enable their rare positionalities, which allow them to challenge a German identity construct that is comprised of German ethnicity coupled with German linguistic fluency. Clifford describes this form of textual analysis as an experience-influenced interpretation, in which both the experience and the interpretation of texts is connected based on the foundation of an individual’s experience.⁶¹ Geertz goes further in proposing that the creation of knowledge, whether of nationality or of the ‘Other,’ is created through an interaction of nationality with culture and ethnicity.⁶² This methodology is directly

⁶¹ Clifford identifies Wilhelm Dilthey as one of “the first modern theorists to compare the understating of cultural forms to the reading of texts” (129).

⁶² For a thorough explanation of Geertz’s methodologies for an anthropological study of texts, see Peck (312).

applicable to the literary studies of Bronsky's and Salomé's texts, due to its emphasis on the combination of 'positionality' and linguistic creation of knowledge.

In contrast, literary studies challenge the notion of literature only being a product of high culture and recognize individual works as being part of a set of texts, produced alongside other non-literary texts within a culture. Examining the works as a group creates a reflection of the politics and society of the culture in which the works are created. Further, literary studies allow for interpretations and analyses of texts not only for the author's intended meaning, but "for the conditions under which these meanings and interpretations are legitimized, transmitted, appropriated, transformed and consumed" (Ibid., 312).

For such literary analyses to be possible, texts must be read "against the grain of the text's dominant voice, seeking out other, half-hidden authorities, reinterpreting the descriptions, texts and quotations gathered together by the writer," exposing the diverse discourses that created the 'text' within and across cultures (Clifford 52). This type of cultural interpretation, one done through analyses of text and language, also points to "the possibility that language takes on unusual forms so as to inhabit the world at large" (Schneider 809). Therefore, scholars argue that culture is found in all cultural products, each one concealing stories waiting to be interpreted and deciphered, stressing that culture can also be viewed and studied as a text.⁶³

⁶³ Some anthropologists do debate such an interpretation of culture. For example, in *Rethinking Symbolism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), Dan Sperber suggests restricting the language domain to a publicly coded sign system. The arguments of Geertz and others who stress that restricting the study of culture to a system of signs, is to study only a minimal part of culture and eliminate significant aspects of cultural formation. Every part of culture is meaningful—and the textuality of linguistic or non-linguistic culture must be equally valued and *read* appropriately (Schneider 810). Geertz supports the idea of not just reading texts as culture but of 'reading culture as text.'

The examination conducted for this research not only looks at the works of Bronsky and Salomé as texts expressing culture, but incorporates an analysis of discourses of gendered, as well as Russian and German national identities in order to textually analyze the cultures in which they lived, investigating culture as text and text as culture. This research demonstrates how the positionalities of authors result in the formation of intercultural, hybrid identities within their texts, which go on to challenge traditional constructs of German identity that would equate ethnicity with language fluency.

II. Intercultural Studies

1. Encountering the ‘Other’ Culture

Intercultural Studies combines the social sciences with historical studies and focuses on the encounters of various cultural groups. Within this study, the theories of Intercultural Studies are utilized to investigate how the texts of Salomé and Bronsky expose processes of cultural and intercultural identity formation and acculturation. Further, the study of cultural and social integration through acculturation has been widely utilized in social studies to analyze forms of contact between members of different cultural groups within one or more societies.⁶⁴ While acculturation entails changes within both groups in order to ensure integration, the ways in which dominant groups transform are neglected. By investigating fictional texts written by members of a culturally non-dominant group and analyzing them through the lens of

⁶⁴ Although acculturation takes place between two diverse cultural groups, the dominant and the non-dominant, the non-dominant group has received greater attention in previous academic studies. The lack of representation of the dominant group acculturation with the non-dominant groups indicates a gap in intercultural study research.

Intercultural Studies, this study attempts to demonstrate an acculturation process of individuals of a non-dominant group within a society. Acculturation “is a process involving two or more groups, with consequences for both” and desired outcome of the process is both cultural groups’ acceptance of the ‘Other’⁶⁵ culture (Berry “Fundamental Psychological Processes in Intercultural Relations” 175). However, some might argue that cultural diversity in Germany could threaten national cultural values, and acculturation with any other foreign culture would lead to an annihilation of German culture.⁶⁶ Conversely, lack of acculturation and intolerance towards the ‘Other’ culture could generate a never-ending social division. Through the viewpoint of “ethno-pluralism” to counter the liberal claim to “multiculturalism”, some on the political right argue for equal rights for diverse ethnic identities only in order to bolster the potentially racist prejudice against the principles of a truly multi-cultural society, such as in the United States.⁶⁷

However, John W. Berry, one of the leading researchers on acculturation, developed a theory that addresses precisely those issues inherent in a lack of cultural acceptance within a society, while outlining the benefits of tolerance towards cultural diversity and forms of acculturation. Berry’s acculturation model depicts four types of acculturation: integration, assimilation, separation and marginalization (Ibid., 177).

⁶⁵ The philosopher Emmanuel Lévinas refers to the term ‘Other’ in Emmanuel Lévinas and Nidra Poller, *Humanism of the Other* (Urbana; Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003) and Edward Said in *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979) uses the term to identify as not of the same kind or as different.

⁶⁶ The Bavarian minister-president Horst Seehofer, for instance, represents this viewpoint. More on the topic can be found in the article “Seehofer gegen Zuwanderung aus ‘fremden Kulturkreisen’” <<http://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2010-10/seehofer-integration-zuwanderer>>. Accessed on 15 March 2015.

⁶⁷ Richard Herzinger and Hannes Stein, “Ethnopluralismus versus Multikulturalismus: Die Geschichte einer Begriffsverwirrung,” in *Endzeit-Propheten oder Die Offensive der Antiwestler: Fundamentalismus, Antiamerikanismus und Neue Rechte* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt 1995), 102-16.

Integration entails the acceptance of an individual into a society in a way which allows the person to retain his or her cultural heritage. Assimilation, however, indicates that the members of the non-dominant and culturally diverse group must give up their cultural heritage in order to enter the dominant society. Should the acculturation process involve separation, then members of the non-dominant group are separated from the dominant group and the culture of the non-dominant group is ignored. Marginalization is a state of “anomie or high individuality,” in other words of social instability and loss of social norms within the marginalized community (Berry “Intercultural Relations in Plural Societies” 15).⁶⁸

Although the linguistic aspect is vital for identifying a process of acculturation, cultural competency is crucial for acculturation as well. As Hinrich Seeba argues, speaking a fluency of a language does not necessarily demonstrate the cultural competence needed to fully understand all the cross-cultural intricacies of living within an intercultural society (Seeba 401). This research illustrates how these authors are able to create cultural competency through, and not despite, their utilization of two languages; how this in turn allows them to compare and contrast various aspects of German and Russian/Soviet cultures; and to develop acculturated German and Russian or German-Russian identities within the realm of fiction, which challenge a monocultural understanding of ‘Germanness’

⁶⁸ Berry also emphasizes language as a vital part of acculturation. The relationship between language and acculturation will be a key point of investigation within this study. Both authors’ works include a literal integration of the Russian language, and the study will demonstrate how the inclusion of the Russian represents the authors’ various attitudes towards intercultural identity formation.

2. Cultural and Intercultural Identity Development

Since a central claim of this study is that the formation of intercultural identities within a fictional framework can succeed in subverting dominant constructs of national identity, a full explanation of how cultural identity is understood within the scope of this project is needed. Most theoretical works on cultural identity have developed from diaspora studies which have focused primarily on African, Arab, Jewish, Polish, and Irish identity development; however, in Germany, the Russian-German identity has been gaining prominence as an object of study dominated by social studies since the 1990s. Intercultural Studies has also examined social and psychological developments of Russian-German immigrants and their integration into German society. The impetus to study identity development among Russian-Germans in Germany was ignited by an awareness of a growing negative perception and segregation between native Germans and immigrant Russian-Germans from the former Soviet Republics. The role of an Intercultural Studies' scholar is to examine the function of cultural differences in the development of German and/or German-Russian identities and develop strategies for effective and appropriate communication between the two cultural groups.

Although the most recent scholarship focuses on the twentieth-century migration of Russian-Germans, the consistent migration from Germany to Russia beginning as early as the fifteenth century is just as important for understanding current cross-cultural Russian and German encounters, but this half of the puzzle has been neglected. This study will fill a void in the academic body of knowledge regarding the analysis of these interrelated discourses. The presence of the 'Other'

culture has influenced both societies and cultures for centuries and so the distinction between German culture and the Russian culture is often blurred.

Individuals or groups of people with constant exposure to diverse cultures are typically affected by cultural exchanges and often develop intercultural identities by accepting and adopting certain traits of the 'Other' culture. Irene Kacandes argues that identities are connected with a particular local area, a city, a region and a country, to the extent of each being dependent upon the context of the discussion, and she describes these identities as being a product of conflicts and disagreements and a result in distributions of power within a society (Kacandes 19).

The literary texts examined in this project convey evidence of 'cultural hybridity' and intercultural identity formation within the German-Russian protagonists. However, delineating one's cultural identity is a problematic task, because identities are never constant and change continuously. In his essay "Cultural Identity and Diaspora", Stuart Hall explains that identity "is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already-accomplished fact, which the new cultural practice then represents, we should think, instead, of identity as a 'production,' which is never complete, [and is] always in process" (Hall 222).

Hall continues his argument that cultural identity can be determined in various ways and developed either through shared or collective culture (Hall 223). He postulates that "cultural identities reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes, which provide us, as 'one people,' with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning" (Ibid.). However, just as members of a

specific group share cultural similarities, the differences within the society are equally crucial for the formation of cultural identities. Hall maintains: “there are also critical points of deep and significant *difference* which constitute ‘what we really are’; or ... ‘what we have become.’ We cannot speak ... about ‘one experience, one identity’, without acknowledging its other side—the ruptures and discontinuities ...” (Ibid., 235).

As Hall notes, identity is in a state of constant transformation, influenced by the ‘Other’ culture, it is continuously evolving (Ibid.). Recognizing that cultural differences often play a crucial role in the formation of an identity, he emphasizes the importance of hybrid or intercultural identity. Studying identity from the perspective of people in the diaspora, Hall stresses the necessity of recognizing diversity and defines the experience of diasporas as “a conception of ‘identity’ that lives with and through, not despite, difference; by *hybridity*. Diaspora identities are those that are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference” (Ibid.). Although Hall primarily investigates postcolonial societies, his theories concerning cultural and hybrid identity are applicable to a feminist or linguistic study of intercultural individuals as it is done in this project. Any intercultural contact allows for the possibility of acculturation among the participating members of a society, which would ultimately result in a development of an intercultural identity.

3. Intercultural Identification through Language

Intercultural Studies scholars identify language as not only *the* most significant tool for communication among culturally diverse members of a society,

but as essential for intercultural identity development, especially in processes of acculturation. While Intercultural Studies focuses primarily on the social developments influenced by culture, the study of Linguistic Anthropology also investigates how language shapes and influences social life. Aspects of Linguistic Anthropology are also utilized in this study, because it can help distinguish the connection between multilingual texts and intercultural identity⁶⁹ within the selected texts of Salomé and Bronsky.

Furthermore, Linguistic Anthropology studies language by exploring the role and influence of the language on the formation of cultural identity within an individual or a community. Proponents of utilizing language as a tool for studying cultures have expressed the concern that “strictly literary ... even non-verbal representations [of culture] have de-emphasized the importance of the original language of any given text” (Seeba 405). Both Bronsky and Salomé incorporate the Russian language—such as phrases in Russian or expressions translated from Russian into German—into their German texts, exemplifying how the use of multiple languages is a vital tool for communication across cultures.

In his article “Theories of Culture,” Alessandro Duranti stresses language significance as a cultural resource allowing individuals to cross into different cultural and language communities. According to Duranti, culture consists of a “learned pattern of behavior and interpretive practices, language is important because it provides the most complex system of classification of experience” (Duranti 49). Duranti further suggests that language provides a useful link between inner thought and public behavior.

⁶⁹ Society for Linguistic Anthropology, September 10, 2012, <<http://linguisticanthropology.org/>>.

More than half a century ago, linguistic anthropologists began researching multilingual communities' use of languages in conversation and discovered a phenomenon known as code-switching. Code-switching refers to a linguistic act in which members of a multilingual community change and mix languages within a conversation, therefore, switching languages or codes (Wollard 73-74). Code-switching also occurs among members of a multilingual speech community "to enrich communicative potential within the community" (Ibid., 75). Since each language contains different social and cultural information, code-switching can influence the community member's cultural identity formation, which is significant for this study.

Further, changing and/or combining codes can reflect or create power relations among the members of a mono-lingual community, and while code-switching can unite members within the multilingual community, changing and/or combining codes can often produce boundaries separating cultural communities and/or recreate power relations within communities. The impact of code-switching is evident in Salomé's novel *Rodinka* and in both of Bronksy's novels. Although code-switching can create boundaries between cultures within a society, I will explain how this project's selected texts show that this practice not only enriches the German language by expanding it, but also results in a more positive attitude towards the 'Other' culture, indicating signs of the author's own intercultural identity.

The analyses of the selected texts, however, will also illustrate how positive views of code-switching can only develop in a state of antagonism to traditional concepts of Germany cultural identity. As stated earlier, since the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, dominant discourses of German identity have argued that culture

and ethnic identity developed through the use of the German language.⁷⁰ However, the notion of monocultural identification through monolingual practice should be questioned, because such practice hinders the promotion and maintenance of cultural diversity.

The historic concept of a *Kulturnation*⁷¹ and the belief that language is embedded in national cultures and vice versa creates a multiplicity of cultural classifications. Such ideas and the power of language can generate acts from prejudice and discrimination against culturally diverse individuals to segregation, persecution and even extermination (Seeba “Cultural versus Linguistic Competence?” 407). These views can limit the social integration of members of ‘Other’ cultures and prevent foreigners from crossing language boundaries as they will never reach complete proficiency in German (Ibid., 408). The importance of this area of study is that through the analysis of language, an understanding can be gained regarding cultural perceptions and ideological positions. Further, it helps to appreciate differences in culture in a complex world. It is important to recognize that cultural criticism, by definition, “is language criticism” and that “intercultural communication is predicated on bilingual competence” (Ibid., 407).⁷² To measure this competence,

⁷⁰ Significant examples of the development of this discourse are found throughout history. Noteworthy examples include: Jacob Grimm, who in a talk entitled “Über die wechselseitigen Beziehungen und die Verbindung der drei in der Versammlung vertretenen Wissenschaften” given at a Germanist conference in 1846 defined a *Volk* (a people) solely in terms of a shared language; and Wilhelm von Humboldt, who believed in the interdependence of the German language and national culture, which he outlines in the third volume of his *Über die Verschiedenheit des menschlichen Sprachbaus und ihren Einfluss auf die geistige Entwicklung des Menschengeschlechts* (1830-35).

⁷¹ The German concept of *Kulturnation*, can be roughly translated as a “nation based on culture.” This idea of ‘Germanness’ developed in opposition to the idea of a nation-state. Within a *Kulturnation* a people was formed not according to shared citizenship to central governing body, rather, according to a shared culture.

⁷² Seeba looks at the ideas of Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode. Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik* (1960) (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1965), 362. In Gadamer states that “Das hermeneutische Problem ist also kein Problem der richtigen Sprachbeherrschung, sondern der rechten

researchers must consider not only language proficiency, but also must include an “understanding of Otherness in the medium of language” (Ibid.).

By studying the use of bilingualism in the works of the two German-Russian authors analyzed here, it is possible to demonstrate the precariousness of the association between German language fluency and German ‘ethnicity’, which was first developed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. During those two centuries, diversity within ‘German culture’ and the multiplicity of ‘German identities’ has been studied through a variety of texts. This analysis is not only a further contribution to this study, but takes this field of study a step further by examining the experience of foreign women with culturally and ethnically different backgrounds. While the identity development of a ‘German woman’ is thoroughly documented, the identity of an ‘intercultural woman’ within the German and Russian societies is yet to be discovered. In order to fully understand the difference between intercultural and ‘German’ female identity, as it is formed through literary work, an introduction to the study of interculturalism within German literature, and more specifically to so-called ‘minority’ literature is needed

III. Interculturalism and ‘German Literature’

The concept of multiculturalism was first introduced into German politics in the 1970s and 1980s, when a large number of immigrants from southern European countries and from Turkey entered Germany for economic and/or political reasons. Since this time, writers of non-German descent, most of whom are immigrants, guest

Verständigung über die Sache, die im Medium der Sprache geschieht.” Also, Seeba illustrates the encounter with the foreign in his article “Fremdheit und Fremdsprachigkeit: Zur hermeneutischen Theorie der Alterität.” *Theorie der Alterität* (Munich: iudicium Verlag, 1991), 38-44.

workers or their descendants have participated in the production of literary texts within Germany or in the German language. This literature was subsequently categorized not as German but as ‘multicultural,’ ‘intercultural,’ ‘guest-worker,’ ‘immigrant,’ or ‘minority’ literature. This study follows the practices of German Cultural Studies, which challenges such terms as ‘minority’ literature, recognizing that there is a fundamental problem with attempting to define what constitutes ‘pure’ or ‘minority’ German literature, because it creates unnecessary boundaries between ‘us’ and the ‘Other’.

Since German Cultural Studies examines what ‘German’ means and the extent to which this is reflected in ‘German’ literature, questions of how and why German national and cultural identity is formed, what it feels like to be called German or be denied that identity are crucial and open the field of ‘German’ literature to include the authorship of persons denied German identity (Bammer 33). Today, scholars of German Cultural Studies have identified such notions of ‘pure’ or ‘minority’ German literature as symptomatic of an Eurocentric interpretation of literature, which in turn has caused intercultural German literature comprised of texts produced by minority authors to be overlooked, despite the fact that these texts hold a vital clue to the understanding of the construction of social and cultural German identities.

As previously explained, to be considered ‘German’ within the German society has long been associated with German language fluency. German ‘ethnicity’, however, has also been constructed within discourses of biological heritage (German through ‘blood’ and ethnicity), which, therefore, defined ‘Germanness’ as being in a fixed and non-alterable state. Cultural Studies, on the other hand, stresses that

identities and cultures are never stable and criticizes this understanding of German identity because it creates a form of German philology, which implemented literature as a tool for promoting cultural hegemony (Suhr 71-72). By categorizing literature created by persons born outside the borders of Germany, and their descendents, as 'minority', it created a strict division between 'self' and 'Others,' placing the privileged few identified as 'German' in positions of power above 'Others'. Studies of minority culture often defines them in contrast to the majority's culture and "reinforces images of the oppressor and the oppressed" (Peck "Methodological Postscript" 204).

In lieu of a hegemonic study of 'Germanness', German Cultural Studies incorporates 'minority' voices into German literature, reflecting German identity as heterogeneous, with "gaps ... through which the 'other' ... can enter and exit" (Şenocak 14-15). The incorporation of texts promoting such identities within German literature is meant to ensure that the 'positionality' of authors is considered. This interdisciplinary approach to German Cultural Studies, a field of study with "open borders" or a "heterogeneous interdisciplinary field ... which calls attention to its own divergent interest and ideologies disseminated across disciplinary and national borders" allows for an interpretation of the study of minorities from multiple perspectives (Ibid., 206). By removing the dividing line between 'us' and 'Others' and by integrating 'minority' voices into discourses on German national identity, in a way which respects the individuality of all of these divergent identities, Intercultural Studies can re-interpret and re-evaluate the differences between the cultures (Ibid., 205-206). The incorporation of 'minority' discourses sheds light on differences that

have been previously ignored and evaluates the various constructions of culture and their dominant or subordinate position within the society (JanMohamed and Lloyd 10).

The pitfalls of studying texts under the guise of ‘minority’ German literature could not be more vividly elucidated than through this study. Although Bronsky and Salomé share a German-Russian heritage, Salomé is considered a German author and Bronsky is categorized as an author of ‘minority’ literature. One must ask what legitimizes such a differentiation, especially considering that both share an ‘ethnicity’ and achieved a level of linguistic fluency, which allows them to create literary fiction in the German language. By examining the ways in which these women attempt to deconstruct gendered, German and Russian identity by creating cultural products depicting cross-cultural experiences and encounters, this study will demonstrate that texts previously understood as ‘minority’ texts can sometimes be better understood as intercultural German texts.

1. The Intercultural Text

Identifying and understanding an ‘intercultural text’ involves a study and comparison between literatures, epochs, and authors of various ethno-cultural and religious minority groups. There are numerous scholars who have attempted to define an ‘intercultural’ text. For example, Aglaia Blioumi has developed a theoretical model for the analysis of a potentially intercultural literary text, by assigning the writer’s perspective a narrative-technical function. He suggests looking for examples of what he calls the ‘doppelte Optik’ (‘dual optics’) and the ‘Perspektivenwechsel’ (‘change in perspective’), both of which describe the interchangeability of the ‘self’

and the ‘Other’ within a text, when attempting to identify an intercultural text (Blioumi 28). Similarly, Stephan Krause identifies intercultural texts as those which exist in the cultural ‘between.’⁷³ ‘Intercultural’ then is the opposite of ‘mono-cultural’ production, and it must not only be read against the grain, as Geertz previously suggested, but most importantly, a text must be read intercultural. For this reason, this dissertation will primarily follow Carmine Chiellino’s definition of an ‘intercultural text’, which identifies those literary works, in which the main character or the first-person narrator is committed to trace his/her own intercultural memory, pass it on, or preserve it from the dissolution as intercultural.⁷⁴ He identifies main features of intercultural as the point of view, the structure and the role linguistic latency plays in the text. An essential requirement for the narrative perspective is the inclusion of dialogue in a foreign language. Further, the construction of a text in two or multiple languages creates interplay between the applied and the exchanged language. The interplay of language can also be used in the creation of space and time constellations which create a ‘then or there’ which is then contrasted (sometimes through code-switching) with a ‘here and now’.⁷⁵

The mixing of languages and the creation of space and time constellations of difference enables an intercultural text to explore the ‘own’ and the ‘foreign’ (or

⁷³ For more information see Stephan Krause *Metropolen als Ort der Begegnung und Isolation: Interkulturelle Perspektiven auf den urbanen Raum als Sujet in Literatur und Film* (Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang, 2011).

⁷⁴ In Carmine Chiellino’s *Liebe und Interkulturalität. Essays 1988-2000* (Tübingen: Stauffenburg Discussion, 2001). Chiellino investigates texts, mostly novels, of German and minority authors, such as Albert Memmi *Die Fremde* (1955), R.W. Fassbinder *Katzenmacher* (1969), Heinrich Böll, *Gruppenbild mit Dame* (1971), Güney Dal, *Wenn Ali die Glocken läuten hört* (1979), Joseph Zoderer, *Die Walsche* (1984), Salman Rushdie, *Die Satanischen Verse* (1989), Cees Nooteboom *Mokusei!* (1985), Martin Walser, *Die Brandung* (1985), Aysel Özakin, *Das Lächeln des Bewusstseins* (1985). However, out of nine authors, he chooses to discuss, and only one single work by a female author.

⁷⁵ Not all of Chiellino’s ideas can be discussed here, for a more thorough description of his understanding of an intercultural novel see his article, “Der interkulturelle Roman,” in *Liebe und Interkulturalität. Essays 1988-2000* (Tübingen: Stauffenburg, 2011).

‘self’ and ‘Other’) in a manner in which the ‘foreign’ is liberated from the ‘self’. The ‘Other’ is not constructed as an opposite to the ‘self’, against which the narrator can identify him- or herself as belonging to a majority group by the grace of not being a part of the ‘Other’ group. Rather the ‘self’ and ‘Other’, ‘own’ and ‘foreign’ are often interchangeable, the cultures and identities are fused.

However, before one can speak of a ‘cultural fusion’ or ‘hybridity’ one should consider the idea that ‘interculturality’ can be studied only in the context of the official language of the nation.⁷⁶ This means that although the term intercultural is largely applied to ‘minority’ literary works, texts of native/ethnic-German writers can contain intercultural features as well. This project not only challenges the concept of ‘minority’ literature as is done by many practitioners of German Cultural Studies, but by applying an interdisciplinary approach to studying texts, it will identify intercultural texts written by authors who are considered ‘minority’ on the one hand, Bronsky, and German, Salomé, on the other, despite their similar linguistic and ethnic backgrounds. Ultimately, by analyzing the intercultural identity formations of their protagonists, this examination will demonstrate that constructs of ‘Germanness’ and ‘Russianness’, which prevail in German society and culture today, have nothing to do with any biological concept of German ‘ethnicity’—they are, rather, the consequences of the socio-historical events laid out in this project’s Introduction. The intercultural features of these texts, as defined by Chiellino, will be most effectively demonstrated through cross-cultural examinations of German and Russian constructs of gender, which is explained in the next section.

⁷⁶ Similar to Homi Bhabha’s concept of ‘Third Space’, Blioumi develops in literature the idea of a ‘Third Space’ as a ‘Hybrid Space,’ which refers to a space between and within two different cultures.

IV. Feminist and Gender Studies Perspective

1. The Development of Feminist Culture within Germany

One aspect of the texts under discussion that will be extensively examined is the different constructs of womanhood created within German and Russian cultures. Both Salomé and Bronsky set their fiction—although not exclusively—during eras in which women’s movements occurred. Salomé writes at the beginning of the twentieth century, at a time when women’s emancipation began to flourish in Germany, during the emergence of the so-called ‘New Woman’ in the 1920s. Salomé’s characters frequently address questions of women’s emancipation and women rights activists directly, sometimes criticizing the movement and other times sympathizing with its goals. Therefore, the specific goals of this early women’s liberation movement will be more thoroughly discussed within chapters two and three. Bronsky, on the other hand, shows women moving across Russian and German borders in the late twentieth century, from about the 1970s to the present. Although, this time spans the development of the feminist movement in West Germany, which began approximately in 1968, she engages with the topic more subtly, focusing on differences between Russian and German constructs of femininity perhaps influencing the Feminist movement.

During the late 1960s, feminism developed as an ideology for the liberation of women and as a movement based on principles of equal rights (Hooks 26). It attempted to transform existing social structures and establish a new society in which women no longer suffered injustice due to their sex (Humm 94). Feminist critics tended to focus on the liberation of women from traditional, patriarchal concepts of

gender which promoted the so-called ‘sexual division of labour’ and in which men’s responsibilities were primarily within the ‘public spheres,’ such as in work, politics, and culture, and women were restricted to the ‘private sphere’ of the family and home (Weedon 10). Additionally, feminists observed a lack of equal rights between women and men and insisted on “equal access to education and public life, equal pay, full-time nursery facilities, free contraception and abortion, lesbian rights, and an end to domestic and sexual violence” (Ibid., 2).

Although Bronsky’s texts do not discuss the feminist movement specifically, by creating texts with female characters moving to Germany from a Soviet nation, which did have a comparable movement, she is able to evaluate the successes and failures of this movement.⁷⁷ The application of a Gender Studies approach to the deconstruction of gender images depicted within Bronsky’s and Salomé’s texts, however, reveals the importance of gender difference in the formation of intercultural Russian-German identities.

2. Gender Studies

Gender Studies, which has been strongly influenced by the theoretical work of feminist writers and theorists, is an interdisciplinary field of study that analyzes constructs of gender within a given society. Gender Studies is often related to the study of class, race, ethnicity, feminism, sexuality, and location. Recognizing gender as a construct entails understanding concepts such as ‘man’ and ‘woman’ as also being in a state of flux and therefore allowing for infinite definitions of the terms

⁷⁷ Within the German-speaking context, critique first came from feminists such as Dagmar Schultz, see her article “Racism in the New Germany and the Reaction of White Women,” in *Women in German Yearbook* 9 (1993): 235-239.

depending on the cultural context (Weedon 20). This idea of infinite concepts of ‘men’ and ‘women’ is significant for the investigation of texts by writers with ethnically, culturally, and socially diverse backgrounds and, once again, emphasizes the idea of a culturally and socially changing identity. By acknowledging that gender can be constructed in many different forms, Gender Studies always re-evaluates gendered power structures.

Feminist Studies’ traditional focus was on the subordinate role of women within a patriarchal society and has been redefined within Gender Studies in terms of sexuality and sex during the 1970s through 1990s. Gender Studies, however, focuses on cultural representations and interpretations of the body and ways in which various discourses influence how society interprets gender difference (Kroll 143). Gender identity is understood as an effect of a linguistic-differential process (Butler *Bodies that Matter* xi, xv-xvi). Therefore, Gender Studies is less concerned with male dominance and/or gender equality, and more interested in specific constructs of gender difference within a particular society (Kroll 143).

For this study, the influence of Gender Studies on literary studies is most significant, because Gender Studies analyzes how cultural concepts of femininity and masculinity in literary texts are constituted, stabilized and revised, demonstrating, as Chris Weedon explains, that gender “has long been a fundamental but often unacknowledged category in the understanding of literary texts in their historical context, whether these are written by women or men” (Weedon 5). Weedon’s identifies the examinations of gender constructs as being most revealing about the values of a specific society is important, because this is the criterion against which the

texts studied here most frequently compare German and Russian cultures. It is through the differences of national discourses of gender that the values of each society are most poignantly revealed. Salomé and Bronsky's 'positionality', which informs their interpretation of German and Russian culture, is not only defined by their Russian-German heritage but by their gender as well. It is against the backdrop of femininity that these social values of cultures are exposed. These female authors' texts present various roles and values gendered as female in one culture and then as specifically 'unfeminine' in another, and challenge the reader to ask why these roles differ and what they reveal about each society.

In order to properly deconstruct constructs of femininity, however, scholars of Gender Studies must read texts intertextually, analyzing literary and non-literary texts together, comparing various discourses shaping gendered constructs such as religion, politics, medicine or law.⁷⁸ One of the most important 'discourses' constructing femininity are the discussions which encompass questions of the body, those which seek out to define a female body as a point of biological, and therefore cultural difference between men and women.

The most influential work on the construct of gender in relation to the physical body was done by Judith Butler.⁷⁹ She defined the construction of sex, which she understood as both gender and physiological sex, in term of 'performativity', implying that sex was created through repetitive performance. Although she argues that ritual performance constructs gender, it is not enabled by the practice itself but it

⁷⁸ For further information refer to Stephen Greenblatt, "Cultural Poetics," in *The New Historicism* (1989), 179-199, and Sigrid Weigel, *Topographien der Geschlechter. Kulturgeschichtliche Studien zur Literatur* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1990).

⁷⁹ See also Alaimo and Hekman's *Material Feminisms* and Butler's *Bodies that Matter*.

is prescribed by structures of power; that is, power structures give gender performances meaning. By analyzing how the female characters within each text choose to perform their gender, this literary examination can also determine power structures within each society and values inherent in such structures

Conclusion

The combination of various approaches presented within the methodological framework of Cultural Studies facilitates intercultural analyses of the texts by Lou Andreas-Salomé and Alina Bronsky. Investigating these texts by incorporating approaches from Intercultural Studies and Gender Studies with German Cultural Studies provides a new examination of the literary and cultural meaning of the texts. This interdisciplinary approach deconstructs and reconstructs traditional depictions of women, ‘Germanness’, and ‘Russianness’ by demonstrating how these women are able to create within literary texts intercultural female identities, which challenge hegemonic constructs of the immigrant woman and replace it with the construct of females as global citizens crossing social and cultural boundaries. Unlike other studies of ‘minorities’ and hybrid German identities, this study challenges categories of ‘Germanness’ and ‘Otherness,’ by looking at Russian-German identity before World War II and then after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Not only is Russian-German identity different from other minority identities, because it is at once historically, ‘ethnically’, German and constructed as non-German, but it also adds female authors to the literary and cultural discourse on the perception of Russia and the Russians by Germans.

Chapter 2: Interculturality, the Woman's Position, and the Persistence of Social and Cultural Dichotomies in Lou Andreas-Salomé's *Fenitschka*

Introduction

Lou Andreas-Salomé's literary, philosophical, and biographical work is as complexly unique as her own life story. From the beginning of her life in Russia in the nineteenth century until her death in Germany in 1937, Salomé continuously crossed and lived within social and cultural boundaries. Salomé's constant interaction with members of different cultures within various societies and her lifelong intercultural exposure influenced and affected her psychological development and, as evidence confirms, formed an intercultural 'hybrid' identity revealed in her autobiographical and literary work predominantly around the turn of the twentieth century. The loss and search for identity, her dual identification with German (Western) and Russian (Eastern)⁸⁰ culture and the contact with both nations and members of both societies influenced and enforced her nihilistically revolutionary position towards the societal norms, religion and the emancipation of women in

⁸⁰ The constructs of East and West have changed substantially through the ages, dating back to the medieval terms of orient and occident, which divided the world according to religion. Since the Christianization of Russian lands, however, such an understanding is too simplistic. And scholars, such as Edward Said, have even grouped Russia within Western society (17). Within this work, however, I use these terms to separate Western from Eastern Europe and Eurasia and specifically not in reference to those nations which could be associated with the 'Orient'. I do this because not all of the geographical territories under scrutiny here have always been or currently are 'Russian', and the term 'Eastern' is applied to the nations and cultures under scrutiny here which can be linked to cultures perceived as being Russianized (and therefore non-Western) by Germans contemporary to both Lou Andreas Salomé and Alina Bronsky.

European and Russian societies, as evident in her fictional and autobiographical work.⁸¹

With the following brief review of the studies conducted on Salomé's life and work, the aim is to provide information for the scholarship so far in order to elucidate the gap of research, which this study seeks to fill, by amplifying and expanding the notion of textual analysis and examining and challenging Salomé's previously studied texts. This study incorporates Bidy Martin's research results⁸² and examines Salomé's works written at the turn of the twentieth century, such as the novella *Fenitschka* (1898), the autobiographical journal with poems that Salomé composed during her journey to Russia presented in *Russland mit Rilke* (1900), and the novel *Rodinka. Eine russische Erinnerung* (1923). This research focuses predominantly on the exploration of interculturality and the emancipatory progression, or lack thereof, in various female characters within and across various European (French and German) and Russian nations and societies.

Salomé's brief biographical information in the second part of this chapter centers mainly on her personal intercultural upbringing and her many encounters with individuals of various cultural backgrounds in Germany and in Russia. In order to understand Salomé's literary work, especially those texts written around the time of her journeys to Russia in 1899 and 1900, the events and encounters of the formative

⁸¹ Her fictional work includes short stories, novels, and a few plays. Around the time period under scrutiny here, her work included the works being studied here, *Fenitschka* and *Rodinka* as well as the novel *Ma* (1900) and the novella cycle *Menschenkinder* (1899). They have not been included for analysis, however, because are not as readily examined as intercultural texts. As explained in the introduction, analysis of her autobiographical work includes her diary entries during her travels through Russian with Rainer Marie Rilke. These have been published in abridged version under the name of *Russland mit Rainer* (1900). For my research, I referenced her personal journals housed in the Goettingen archives.

⁸² In Bidy Martin, *Woman and Modernity: The (Life)Styles of Lou Andreas-Salomé* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991).

years of her childhood and her two journeys to Russia—in the second of which Salomé documented in detail in her journal—must be studied to establish a hypothesis of Salomé’s unconventionally progressive ‘positionality’ towards the issues of gender and interculturality. In addition, my study looks at Salomé’s perception of Russian culture and the Slavs (Russians and Ukrainians) in comparison to her view on German culture and its people, illustrating her search for her own place within these two cultures. Furthermore, the study documents Salomé’s rediscovery of her childhood and youth in Russia. The loss and rediscovery of her identity in later years is explored in Salomé’s poetry “Wolga”, “Altrussland” and “Wiedersehen.” Her non-fictional autobiographical texts on Russian culture, Russian people in general and Russia’s comparison to Germany, as well as Russian literature in *Russland mit Rilke* provides additional insights into Salomé’s multifaceted and complex life and work.

Although Salomé continuously worked with Russian texts throughout her life, at the end of the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries during her journeys to Russia she composed several works⁸³ which dealt directly with her perception of Russia and the Russian people, often in comparison to other cultures. This journey had a significant impact on Salomé’s personal and professional development and resulted in the writing and publication of works, including her novella *Fenitschka* and the autobiographical text *Rodinka: Russische Erinnerung*. Salomé spent a substantial amount of time in Russian villages on the river Volga and in St. Petersburg and documented the ‘Russian’ experience in her journal *Russland mit Rainer*. Rilke, at the turn of the twentieth century, was still an unknown and less accomplished poet and

⁸³ Including the works analyzed here, she also composed poems on the subject, but due to the scope of this project, they have not been included unless they were present in her journals.

writer, whom Salomé influenced in his literary development. Although numerous works have been published about Rilke's journey to Russia and his encounter with Russian culture,⁸⁴ Salomé's own encounters with Russia have been mentioned only briefly. Instead, Salomé is often mentioned in Rilke scholarship in a marginal role, despite the fact that Salomé was the driving force behind Rilke's encounter with Russia and his enthusiasm for the country, its people, and its culture. She also inspired Rilke to travel to the East and profoundly influenced him intellectually.

Salomé's biographical texts and theoretical and fictional literary works have undergone a continuous evaluation and re-evaluation by scholars across the disciplines and the globe. Scholars, especially within literary studies, Feminist and Gender studies have taken particular interest in her work and life. While early biographers focused on Salomé's significance for her association with several German-speaking male intellectuals, such as Sigmund Freud and Friedrich Nietzsche, later biographies depict Salomé as an artist, an intellectual, and woman in her own right and discuss Salomé's contribution to the question of women's emancipation at the turn of the nineteenth century, as well as her views on religion and her contributions to psychoanalysis.

Further, literary, feminist, and socio-historical scholars studying Salomé's life and work focused primarily on the analysis of Salomé's philosophical thoughts on religion and female emancipation. Also, scholars of science have investigated her contribution to the analysis of psychological developments and disorders. However, neither literary nor scientific scholars integrate the significance of the intercultural

⁸⁴ The most recent dissertation on Rilke's encounter with Russian culture is Victoria Finney's "Rilke's Russian Encounter and the Transformative Impact on the Poet", University of Maryland, College Park, 2014.

aspects into their analyses, despite Salomé's own intercultural background and the textual discourse of intercultural and cross-culturalism, which I argue is crucial for an analysis of her texts. Therefore, this study introduces and utilizes an alternative method in the investigation of Salomé's literary texts by centering on her international and intercultural hybrid identity and her intercultural texts.

Although a limited number of scholars, predominantly Salomé's biographers including Bidy Martin, make reference to Salomé's ethnic and cultural background and her origin of birth, this is done mainly to provide general biographical information. The uniqueness of her own position on the 'Woman Question' as a woman of intercultural background, German and Russian, within German and Russian society has been overlooked. The aspect of interculturality as an important factor in Salomé's perception of self and others as well as the study of German and Russian public views on women with intercultural background, who are seen by Russians as German and Germans as Russian, is revealed in great detail through her female protagonists in the fictional (yet, semi-autobiographical) texts *Fenitschka* and *Rodinka*, among others, and in her autobiographical work *Russland mit Rainer*. Salomé's study of all things Russian leads to a journey of self-discovery, or perhaps the self-discovery leads to the interest in studying Russian culture, literature, and language, before and after her intercultural experiences in Russia. Studying the reciprocal relationship of such journeys of self-discovery is a new approach to looking at Salomé's literary work. Her encounter with Europeans and their perception of Russians possibly resulted in the longing for the discovery of her own origin and identity.

While Salomé's biography and works have been studied from diverse perspectives during various time periods, earlier biographers Heinz Frederick Peters, Rudolph Binion, and Werner Ross focused on Salomé's close relationship with prominent writers and thinkers, such as Nietzsche, Rilke,⁸⁵ and Freud. In *Rilke's Russia: A Cultural Encounter* (1994)⁸⁶, Anna Tavis illustrates Rilke's lifelong interest in Russia. Rilke, whom Salomé met in 1897, became her traveling companion in Russia in 1899 and in 1900 visiting Moscow and St. Petersburg. Tavis also showed how Rilke's trips to Russia directly inspired his work, for instance his novel *Malte Laurids Brigge* (1910). Salomé, however, is depicted merely as Rilke's inspiration to visit Russia. Salomé's influence on Rilke was far more profound: apart from awakening his interest in Russia and Russian culture, Salomé was also his most significant and influential consultant and mentor before he became a published author. Salomé mentions her first encounter with Rilke and their visits and conversations in her personal journal and reveals her own passion for Russia and her strong interest in Russian literature.⁸⁷ Furthermore, in *Rilke und Russland: Briefe, Erinnerungen, Gedichte* (1986), the Soviet Rilke scholar Konstantin Asadowski provides a collection of letters on Rilke's cultural encounter with Russia, such as his

⁸⁵ This study will neither explicitly focus on Salomé's relationship with Rilke nor on her influence on his life and work. I will briefly describe their encounter, because Rilke accompanied her on one of her journeys to Russia. Rilke consulted Salomé about his work and his visions well before the journey, at which time she was already an accomplished writer. Rainer Maria Rilke became known as 'Rainer' after he met Salomé. On May 17, 1897, Salomé, who wrote daily entries on the back of her 'Goethe-Kalender' mentions him for the first time as 'René Maria Rilke.' Salomé writes: "Bei Hirth um 3 Uhr. Wärmeres Wetter. René Maria Rilke bei mir, drei seiner Visionen vorgelesen." Rilke's name appears in virtually every entry afterwards. A month later, she introduces the name 'Rainer Maria Rilke' on June 15, 1897. At that time, Rilke changed his name from René to Rainer. Such information could reveal the relevance of Salomé's seemingly 'insignificant' 'Goethe-Kalender.'

⁸⁶ In Anna Tavis, *Rilke's Russia, A Cultural Encounter*, (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1994).

⁸⁷ As an example, according to her personal journals, Salomé was reading the works particularly of Tolstoy on April 4, 1895, and worked with the "Russian" until July 16, 1894, three years before she met Rilke. This information is taken from Lou Andreas-Salomé's 'Goethe-Kalender.'

two trips to Russia and the contacts Rilke had with Russians.⁸⁸ Though Salomé is not the subject of Asadowski's study, he cites from her unpublished Russian diaries.

Ernst Pfeiffer, the late director of the Lou Andreas-Salomé Archive in Göttingen, biographer, and Salomé's close friend and confidant, edited and published numerous works about Salomé, and later, adding minimal analysis, he published a collection of letters exchanged between Freud and Salomé in *Sigmund Freud. Lou Andreas-Salomé. Briefwechsel* (1966).⁸⁹ The work's main focus is the depiction of the relationship between Salomé and Freud. It also analyzes Salomé's *Amor; Jutta; Die Tarnkappe* (1981)⁹⁰ and, once again, describes Salomé's relationship with Nietzsche, Rilke, and Freud. Although Pfeiffer intended to give Salomé a relevant role in these men's lives by continuously referring to her in connection with the 'elite' thinkers and writer, the contrary is achieved and she appears to be less important as an individual and as a writer and influential thinker.

However, recent biographers Cordula Koepke, Linde Salber, Ursula Welsch, and Michaela Wiesner have recognized this deficit and examined Salomé as a writer in her own right. Other scholars recognize Salomé as a scientist,⁹¹ philosopher and thinker,⁹² while scholars and critics Bidy Martin, Caroline Kreide, Birgit Wernz, and

⁸⁸ In Konstantin Asadowski, ed, *Rilke und Russland: Briefe, Erinnerungen, Gedichte*, (Berlin, Aufbau, 1986).

⁸⁹ Ernst Pfeiffer, *Sigmund Freud. Lou Andreas-Salomé. Briefwechsel*, (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1966).

⁹⁰ In Ernst Pfeiffer, *Lou Andreas-Salomé. Amor; Jutta; Die Tarnkappe*, (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 1981).

⁹¹ Barbara Hahn rediscovered Salomé as a scientist in her book *Frauen in den Kulturwissenschaften: Von Lou Andreas-Salomé bis Hannah Arendt*, (München: Beck, 1994).

⁹² More on this examination can be found in Chantal Gahlinger, *Der Weg zur weiblichen Autonomie: Zur Psychologie der Selbstwerdung im literarischen Werk von Lou Andreas-Salomé*, (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2001). Gahlinger also looks at Salomé as a philosopher and a thinker in *Der Weg zur weiblichen Autonomie: Zur Psychologie der Selbstwerdung im literarischen Werk von Lou Andreas-Salomé*, (Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang, 2001).

Chantal Gahlinger investigate Salomé's literary achievements in general.⁹³ The Russian language is integral throughout her texts, which is neglected by contemporary scholars, as well as her discourse on a multicultural society in Russia and her frequent comparison between Russian and German cultures and these cultures' social questions regarding gender norms and definitions. Salomé employs her multicultural background and hybrid identity to look at the socially constructed gender roles from a different perspective, and she challenges the definitions of 'woman' and 'man' within different cultures.

Nonetheless, Salomé's upbringing in Russia as a woman with a German ethnic and cultural background could have been influential for her personal development, particularly when considering that Catherine the Great ruled Russia at its cultural, political, and economic peak for thirtyfour years in the eighteenth century and re-defined gender roles. As a member of the German minority community in St. Petersburg, Salomé was in the position of having the privilege to adopt neither Russian social gender constructs nor German definitions of a 'woman'—rather, it enabled her to develop a unique individual hybrid identity. Through the influence of various cultures, Salomé creates female protagonists who are exposed to different societies across European borders, and she chooses specific geographical locations, such as Paris, St. Petersburg and the estate 'Rodinka', to illustrate women's struggles for equality in the East and the West but also the resistance to emancipatory progress within and across different countries and societies. The texts, *Fenitschka* and *Rodinka*, show evidence of the presence of German social norms within the German

⁹³ More detailed information on the study for Salomé works by these scholars is found in the section on *Fenitschka*.

minority in Russia and reveal discourses on women's roles within Western and Eastern (Russian) society. In addition, Salomé's journal *Russland mit Rainer* not only served as an inspiration for her novel *Rodinka*, but it presents detailed information on her most intimate connection to Russia and the Russian people and her close identification with Russian culture.

The following section provides an overview of Salomé's biographical documentation and focuses predominantly on her intercultural upbringing during her childhood and adolescent years in Russia and her close contact with international individuals predominantly in European countries, which became significant factors for the formation of her intercultural and intergendered identity in her early adult life. The biographical information describes the events and people in Salomé's life leading up to her journeys to Russia in 1898 and 1900 and offers a possible explanation for Salomé's unconventional life-style, which manifests itself also in her texts.

1. The Intercultural Lou Andreas-Salomé : Biographical Overview

... Ich kann weder Vorbildern nachleben, noch werde ich jemals ein Vorbild darstellen können, für wen es auch sei, hingegen mein eignes Leben nach mir selber bilden, das werde ich ganz gewiss, möge es nun damit gehen, wie es mag. Damit habe ich kein Prinzip zu vertreten, sondern etwas viel Wundervolles, – etwas, das in Einem selber steckt und ganz heiß vor lauter Leben ist und jauchst und heraus will. [...]
Wir wollen doch sehen, ob nicht die allermeisten sogenannten 'unübersteiglichen Schranken', die die Welt zieht, sich als harmlose Kreidestriche herausstellen!

Salomé, only 21 years old and not yet experienced in life, but enthusiastically eager to infringe upon social and cultural norms in Europe, wrote the above passage in a letter to her mentor Hendrick Gillot. This young German woman from Russia embarked on the task of reinventing and creating an alternative image of a ‘woman’ by using her own life as an example. Her childhood experience in Russia in the second half of the nineteenth century was the primary and significant force behind her unique perception on the social and cultural subject matter, and she lived a life consisting of perpetual crossing of social and cultural boundaries.

Louise Andreas-Salomé was born on February 12, 1861 in St. Petersburg in Russia, as the only daughter and the youngest child of General Gustav von Salomé and his wife Louise. The Saloméés were part of the upper class aristocracy in St. Petersburg, a city filled with drastic social and cultural contrasts. In the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, St. Petersburg was the city of progress, wealth, and beauty but also poverty in the metropolis’s outskirts. The Saloméés, as part of the upper-class, experienced the city from its refined, internationally cosmopolitan side, where the daughter Salomé spent most of her childhood surrounded by her parents, her five much older brothers and an international team of housekeepers, teachers and Russian nannies. Later in life, she reminisced about the city in her description as the “anziehende Vereinigung von Paris und Stockholm” (*Lebensrückblick* 61).⁹⁵

⁹⁴ In a letter to Hendrik Gillot, March 1882, found in Salomé’s *Lebensrückblick*, (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1979), 77.

⁹⁵ Livingston describes Salomé’s relationship to the city in the following: “Altogether, life in that misty northern city (Dostoyevsky’s ‘most deliberate city in the world’) whose lovely buildings had

Although German was the primary, and French the secondary, language spoken at home, Salomé's family employed a multilingual team of servants with different confessions and cultural backgrounds, who contributed to the international and intercultural atmosphere in the house, in which Ljola⁹⁶ grew up. Among the intercultural individuals employed by the Salomé's were Tatars and Estonian coachmen, Germans from Swabia, as well as a Russian nanny often serving Salomé as a substitute mother and who was the most the important connection to Russian culture and its people.⁹⁷

The intercultural atmosphere was also present in the school Salomé attended as a child. It was a small English private school, in which the majority of students consisted of international students with only a few Russian girls present.⁹⁸ Despite the fact that Salomé spent her entire childhood and youth in Russia, she never properly acquired knowledge of the Russian language and experienced major difficulties due to a lack of Russian language skills while attending the Gymnasium in the protestant-reformed 'Petrischule'. Only later in life, and around the time of her journey to Russia

been forced up by the will of one man over swamps and the myriad bones of laborers – bringing Russia all at once into contiguity with Europe – was for Lou von Salomé scarcely like living in Russia at all. 'St. Petersburg', she wrote, 'this arretractive combination of Paris and Stockholm, gave the impression – despite its imperial splendor, its reindeed-slighs and illuminated icehouses on the Neva, its late springs and its hot summers – of being purely international'" (16).

⁹⁶The name Ljola is a Russian diminutive form for the name Louise.

⁹⁷As the biographer Welsch cites *Salomé* and notes that : "Im Grunde stellte diese Amme damals für sie die einzige Verbindung zu Russland, zur russischen Mentalität dar; denn obwohl sie und ihre Familie sich ,nicht nur in russischem „Dienst“, sondern als Russen“[...] fühlten, hatte Ljola keinerlei Kontakt zum russischen Volk und wusste wenig von ihrem Land" (20).

⁹⁸Livingston writes: "At eight, she had been to a small English private school, later to 'the big school, where I learnt nothing' [...], the *Petrischule*, a Protestant-Reformed Gymnasium, where her classmates had been a mixture of nationalities, the Petersburg foreign communities joining with Russian pupils, [...] Lou's education and experience were predominantly German. From the beginning, Germans have been by far the most numerous of the foreigners living in Petersburg and showed the strongest tendency to form colonies. United by language, they were also, more widely, joined by the French and Dutch communities by religion: Lutheranism and the Protestant-Reformed churches" (16).

in 1898 did Salomé develop an immense interest in the Russian language and its culture, literature, and Russia in general.

Salomé's family was among the many Europeans who immigrated to Russia during the eighteenth and nineteenth century for economic and/or political purposes. Her mother, Louise von Salomé (1823-1913), born Wilm, came from a merchant family in Hamburg. A spirited woman full of temperament and a strong personality she was also a strict mother and a dutiful wife, who, nonetheless, did not personify the typical nineteenth-century female image. Salomé's mother was less than pleased about the birth of a daughter and more interested in watching a fight in the street than attending to her daughter (*Lebensrückblick* 51). Although Salomé called her mother "Muschka",⁹⁹ the mother rejected any emotional expression and the relationship between the mother and the daughter was cool and distant (*Ibid.*, 49, 50). Salomé's father, Gustav von Salomé, (born in 1804 in the Baltic – 1879) adored his daughter. Like his wife he was a migrant in Russia of French-German and German ethnic background.¹⁰⁰

Possibly some of the most influential male-figures in Salomé's childhood included her five brothers, who adored her above everything and everyone else. The three men had vastly different personalities and presented various types of men—from the flamboyant and intellectual to the artistic. Her oldest brother, Eugène, was called by his acculturated Russian name 'Genja'. Once, during Salomé adolescent

⁹⁹ 'Muschka' in Russian is an affectionate term for a mother (*Lebensrückblick* 47, 54).

¹⁰⁰ After the French Revolution, his descendants of Huguenot descent emigrated from Avignon to the Baltics, Gustav von *Salomé* was sent to St. Petersburg to receive a military education and after the revolt in Poland in 1830, and he received French and also a Russian title of nobility. Many notable politicians, artists, and authors—both Pushkin and Lermontov (Russian Romantics)—were among his close friends, and he was particularly close to the Tsar Nikolaus I (Welsch 14, 15). *Salomé's* father was 19 years older than her mother, but despite the age gap, the parents had apparently a harmonious marriage, and both saw each other equals and respectable partners.

years, when she was less than enthusiastic to attend the house ball, Genja decided to represent her by dressing up in women's clothes, including the corset, and apparently made quite a show while turning young officer's heads (Ibid., 45). According to Salomé, women adored and were mesmerized by Genja; he, however, never married (Ibid., 45). Salomé's other brother Alexander, nicknamed Sasha, was a kindhearted and intelligent man, who was always at Salomé's side and always willing to assist her morally and financially even in her later life. And Robert (Roba) was artistically gifted and a much more sensitive man than the other brothers; of all Salomé's brothers, Robert was tremendously and negatively affected by the Bolshevik Revolution after having all his possessions and property confiscated and transferred to his former servant (Ibid., 51).

The nurturing and loving relationship with her brothers and the lack of close friendships with girls and women in her childhood may have influenced Salomé to cultivate very close relationships with most men later in her adulthood. Most of Salomé's relationships with men were purely platonic in nature; with these men she sought an intellectual exchange and associated them with her father- and/or a brother-figure; only when she met the considerably younger Rilke did she develop a physically intimate relationship (Welsch 15-16).

From a psychological point of view, the most significant time in Salomé's life, affecting various aspects of her adulthood, were her formative years in Russia. Born into a distinctly male and intercultural family and as a member of the international and intercultural community in Russia, Salomé was constantly exposed to a culturally and socially diverse population. While these experiences form a unique intercultural

perspective, they, nonetheless, can negatively affect one's physiological development and result in a feeling of nostalgia. Only after her substantially long absence from Russia, while residing in Europe does Salomé recognize Russia as her "Heimat" (Ibid., 22).¹⁰¹ Later in life she consciously began to love her family and her homeland Russia, as he she recalls:

Ich denke jetzt oft: wenn ich sie [die Mutter] und die Meinen und ihr Land von klein auf geliebt hätte wie nun, dann müsste das die ganze eigene Entwicklung gehemmt haben. Aber ich ahnte in Petersburg nur kaum Russland, in den Meinen nur die Menschen, die ich später liebte: und das macht frei. Vielleicht zu frei? Jedenfalls ermöglicht es eine Fülle individuellen Lebensglücks. Tritt es dann später noch hinzu, bedeutete es allerdings dennoch eine Bereicherung, ohne die auch solches Glück arm, einseitig bliebe. (*Tagebuchaufzeichnungen* 9. Oktober, 1904; Welsch 9)

As a child, Salomé was of a reserved nature, experienced a feeling of loneliness spending most of her time in solitude and withdrawn. She lived in a fantasy world, with imaginary figures and people and her God, with whom she conducted dialogues from early morning into nightfall (*Gottesschöpfung* 170). Most of Salomé's memories about her childhood consisted of her interaction with God, as she later recalls, "Meine früheste Kindheitserinnerung ist mein Umgang mit Gott", a God she would lose as she entered her adolescent years (Ibid., 169). In her adulthood, she also recalled having searched for a positive place for her "individuelles Lebensglück" in her imaginary world (Welsch 8-9).

¹⁰¹ Home land

As Salomé entered the adolescent years, she increasingly developed an interest in philosophy and religion to the point of rejecting her previous protestant beliefs and refusing Confirmation in 1878, the same year she became acquainted with the pastor Hendrik Gillot (1836-1916) from the Netherlands, a progressive preacher within the German-speaking community in St. Petersburg. Gillot became Salomé's teacher and mentor, and he was also one of the most influential individuals in her philosophical and psychological development during her adolescence and early adulthood (*Lebensrückblick* 28). His philosophy on God and religion not only profoundly influenced Salomé's own view of God and philosophy of religion but also her unconventional relationships with men during her adulthood. With his guidance Salomé recognized a new and alternative way of thinking, and she was given a new name. Gillot's inability to pronounce Salomé's first name in Russian 'Ljola' led to the name 'Lou' (Ibid., 31).

Gillot was also the individual who, figuratively speaking, opened the gate to the West for her. Salomé, receiving Confirmation from Gillot in 1880 in the Netherlands, was permitted to leave Russia and travel to Europe. In the company of her mother, she traveled to Switzerland, and that same year in 1880 Salomé, as one of the first women, was granted permission to attend the university when she began her studies at Zurich University. Once in Zurich, she encountered a revolutionary group of Russian students; however, she neither joined the group, despite her mutual origin from Russia, nor connected with the Russian female medical students studying in Europe to return as "Narodniki"¹⁰² to Russia.

¹⁰² Narodniki was a literary and political movement in Russia, who studied abroad and usually returned to Russia after the studies.

In 1882, during a trip to Italy to recover from hemoptysis¹⁰³, Salomé made her first acquaintance with the progressive women's rights activist Malwida von Meysenbug (1816-1903). Von Meysenbug's facilitation of young male and female freethinkers and the promotion of interaction and philosophical and literary discussion at her residence in Rome fascinated Salomé, and she soon became a regular and popular member often contributing her profound intellectual knowledge. Through von Meysenbug, the 'young Russian',¹⁰⁴ as Salomé was referred to by her German friends, became acquainted with many intellectuals of the time: such as Paul Rée and Friedrich Nietzsche. Both of whom played a significant role in Salomé's later life. Although von Meysenbug initially saw in Salomé a future women's rights activist fighting for the same causes she and her contemporaries promoted, she was not as influential in Salomé's development as a freethinking and independent young woman. Salomé, despite the strong admiration for von Meysenbug's actions against the inequality towards women, neither shared von Meysenbug's ideas and aspirations nor the concept for female emancipation. At that particular time, she felt a "total entriegelten Freiheitsdrang" and wished to break away from any possible constraints and restrictions (Ibid., 76).

The very same year, Salomé formed a close relationship with the intellectual German-Jewish Paul Rée in Stibbe. They moved to Berlin and lived together in a

¹⁰³ Hemoptysis refers to a blood-expectorating cough.

¹⁰⁴ This is the English translation of 'junge Russin'. Of importance is the fact that due to her Russian birthplace, she was considered Russian in Europe, despite her German ethnic roots, "Sie ist ein energisches, unglaublich kluges Wesen ... Ich halte bei Fräulein von Meysenbug Vorträge über mein Buch, was mich einigermaßen fördert, zumal auch die Russin zuhört, welche alles durch und durch hört, so dass sie in fast ärgerlicher Weise schon immer vorweg weiß, was kommt, und worauf es hinaus soll. Rom wäre nicht für Sie. Aber die Russin müssen Sie durchaus kennenlernen," in *Paul Rée: Brief an Nietzsche* and in Helmut Walther, *Scherz, List und Rache. Die Lou-Episode: Friedrich Nietzsche, Paul Rée und Lou Salomé. Vortrag vor der Gesellschaft für kritische Philosophie Nürnberg vom 30. Mai 2001*.

shared flat. Salomé found in Rée an intellectual and a friend with whom she was able to live a free and independent life. Her life-style ruptured societal conventions and even the women-rights activists were perplexed by her unconventional life-styles and decisions. For Salomé, however,

[e]s erwies sich, dass durch Vermeidung des Scheines, durch die Beibehaltung der ganzen Schnürbrust von Vorurteilen und Rücksichten in welche man tausend von schönsten Lebenstrieben zurückzuwängen gewöhnt ist, nicht mehr Achtung und Liebe erworben werden können als durch die volle Auslebung der Persönlichkeit, die in sich ihre Selbstlegitimation trägt. (Welsch 70)

While in Berlin, Salomé continuously worked on her first book and published it in 1885 under the title *Im Kampf um Gott* (1885), in which Nietzsche, who was captivated by Salomé, serves as an inspiration for the tragic main character.

Salomé and Rée's cohabitation was not only opposed by other members of German society, but it was also condemned by the officials during their visit to Vienna, Austria, when their attempt to lease an apartment was rejected due to disobedience of social 'morality' code. Disappointed, Salomé returned to Berlin without Rée. Her alternative and non-confirmative life-style continued in Berlin once she married the Oriental Studies scholar Friedrich Carl Andreas in 1887, under the condition of sexual abstinence. And as much as Andreas suffered under Salomé's conditions, he, nonetheless, remained a devoted husband throughout his life. Andreas' personality of extreme contrasts between tenderness and hardness, emotionality and rationality, between East and West, fascinated Salomé and united them, though not

always without tension (Welsch 86). The couple resided in Berlin in modest accommodations and was frequently visited by contemporary writers and artists. Salomé adopted a modest lifestyle and preferred to wear comfortable clothes, and she developed an admiration for nature and the wild life.¹⁰⁵

During the 1890s, Salomé published various theoretical texts, of which some directly discussed the ‘Woman Question’. At this time, she began incorporating in her fictional work German-Russian intercultural subject matter. In 1891, Salomé was introduced to a like-minded and progressive woman and writer, Frieda Freiin von Bülow, who became one of her closest lifelong friends. Both women shared the experience of living and writing within and across geographical, political, social, and cultural borders—von Bülow in South-East Africa and Salomé in Russia—and both were progressive in their thoughts on gender roles.

At the end of the nineteenth century, Salomé’s acquaintance with René Maria Rilke turned into an intimate personal and professional relationship. One year before Salomé, her husband and Rilke embarked on a journey to Russia in 1899, her novella *Fenitschka. Eine Ausschweifung* was published, in which she depicted a young intercultural woman struggling with social norms and cultural differences across European and Russian societies. During her Russian journey, Salomé met with prominent Russian writers Leo Tolstoy and Boris Pasternak and became increasingly interested in studying Russian culture. Impressed by the Russian culture and people,

¹⁰⁵ At a later point in life, when they moved to Göttingen, she rejected a teaching position at the university where her husband Andreas held a professor position. Instead, she devoted herself to writing and caring for her garden and her chickens. At one point she wrote to Rilke on November 9, 1903: “Hier bin ich eine Bäuerin geworden und mein Mann ein Professor.” Letter reprinted in Rolf S. Günther, *Rainer Maria Rilke und Lou Andreas Salomé: Auf welches Instrument sind wir gespannt* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2005), 224.

Salomé and Rilke enthusiastically and rigorously immersed themselves in the study of the nation's history, art, culture and literature as soon as they returned from Russia to Germany. Shortly thereafter, both began preparing for their second Russian journey in 1900—this time, however, they planned to travel without Salomé's husband. From May 7th through August 22^d, Salomé and Rilke explored provincial sites and cities in Russia and the Ukraine, each assessing their view of and their experiences with Russia. During this journey, Salomé rediscovered her childhood and re-evaluated her perception of her identity, while at the same time distancing herself more and more from Rilke.

At the turn of the nineteenth century, Salomé published several literary works incorporating the discourse on interculturality and trans-nationality.¹⁰⁶ Although a particularly large number of works on intercultural encounters was published around the time of Salomé's Russian journeys, she translated numerous Russian works into German and composed poems, theoretical texts, and analyses of Russian literature before and long after these two most notable trips.¹⁰⁷ Inspired by her experiences in

¹⁰⁶ The novel *Fenitschka. Eine Ausschweifung*, (Stuttgart 1898), *Menschenkinder. Novellensammlung*, Stuttgart 1898; *Ma. Ein Porträt*, (Stuttgart, 1901), and in *Im Zwischenland. Fünf Geschichten aus dem Seelenleben halbwüchsiger Mädchen*, (Stuttgart, 1902), are among the most published works.

¹⁰⁷ Salomé's publications on Russia are numerous, including: "Das russische Heiligenbild und sein Dichter." In: *Vossische Zeitung*, Sonntagebeilage 1, sec. 2, January 1, 1898; "Russische Philosophie und semitischer Geist." In: *Die Zeit*, January 15, 1898; "Religion und Cultur. Relionspsychologische Studie." In: *Die Zeit* April 2, 1898; Drama "molodoi Germanii," in: *Severny vestnik* 2 (1898); Leo Tolstoi, unser Zeitgenosse: Eine Studie, In: *Neue Deutsche Rundschau* 9, 2 (1898); Fürst Sergei Wolkonsij: Bilder aus der Geschichte und Literatur Rußlands. In: *Das Literarische Echo* 1 (1898/99); Russische Geschichten. In: *Die Zeit* (Wien), 15 (1899); Wiedersehen (Gedicht). In: *Vom Fels zum Meer* 39 (1900/01); Ma. Ein Porträt. Stuttgart 1901; Wolga (Gedicht). In: *Vom Fels zum Meer* 40 (1901); Abschied (Gedicht). In: *Vom Fels zum Meer* 40 (1901); *Im Zwischenland. Fünf Geschichten aus dem Seelenleben halbwüchsiger Mädchen*. Stuttgart 1902; *Die Russen*. In: *Die Schaubühne* 5, 39 (1909); *Aus dem Briefwechsel Leo Tolstois*. In: *Das Literarische Echo* 15 (1913); *Nadja Strasser: Die Russin*. In: *Die Neue Generation* 13 (1917); *Karl Nötzels Tolstoi*. In: *Das Literarische Echo* 20 (1917/18); *Tolstois Jugendtagebuch*. In: *Der Neue Merkur* 3 (1919); *Der geistliche Russe*. In: *Der Neue Merkur* 3 (1919); *Nikolaus Leskow: Die Kleriserei*. In: *Das Literarische Echo* 22 (1920); *Unser Anteil an Dostojewski und Tolstoi*. In: *Vossische Zeitung* Nr. 365 und *Sonntagsbeilage* Nr. 32, 1920; *Michael Saltykow-Schtschedrin: Satiren*. In: *Das Literarische Echo* 23 (1920); *Russische Romantik*.

Russia as a child and during her second journey, she began work on her novel *Rodinka* in 1904, which she published almost two decades later in 1923.

Once her husband received a professorship position at the university in Göttingen, Salomé and Andreas settled in the ‘Haus am Hainberg’—a home she called ‘Loufried’—and remained in Göttingen for the rest of her life. Here, Salomé continued her literary work and became increasingly interested in the subject of psychoanalysis. Salomé’s interest in the study of psychoanalysis was sparked by a Swedish psychotherapist Poul Bjerre. He introduced her to the theories of psychoanalysis during her visit with Ellen Key in Sweden, and both remained in close contact throughout their lives. During the subsequent years, Salomé not only studied closely with Freud in the Wednesday Psychological Society that met in Freud’s apartment in Vienna, but she also opened her own psychoanalytical practice in her own home in Göttingen shortly after her first psychoanalysis-based essay “Vom frühen Gottesdienst”, which was published in 1913.

In: *Romantik* 3 (1921); *Tendenz und Form russischer Dichtung*. In: *Das Literarische Echo* 24 (1922); *Ródinka. Eine russische Erinnerung*. Jena 1923. *Rilke und Rußland*. In: *Russische Blätter*, Nr. 1 (1928).



‘Loufried’—Salomé’s house is on right side of the picture.¹⁰⁸

In the last two decades of her life, Salomé published numerous essays on psychoanalysis, literary fictional works and she continued working with Russian texts.¹⁰⁹ During the last few years of her life, Salomé dedicated works to some of the most influential men in her life: two years after Rilke’s death in 1926, Salomé published the memoir *Rainer Maria Rilke* (1928), and the open letter to Freud for his 75th birthday “Mein Dank an Freud,” only one year after Salomé husband’s death in 1930. She died on February 5, 1937 in her home in Göttingen, only two years after her breast cancer diagnosis.

In addition, Salomé’s presence of interculturality is not only apparent in her biography, which shows her as an intercultural member of the German minority in

¹⁰⁸ Source: Journal, Lou Andreas-Salomé Archive in Göttingen, Lower Saxony, Germany. Image was copied by Regina Ianozi from the original photograph on June 6, 2010 with the permission of Dorothee Pfeiffer, the archive director and daughter of *Salomé’s confidant* Ernst Pfeiffer.

¹⁰⁹ Among others, the essays “Zum Typus Weib” (1914), “Psychosexualität” (1917), “Drei Briefe und einen Knaben” (1917), “Narzismus als Doppelrichtung” (1921), the psychoanalytically based puppet show “Der Teufel und seine Grossmutter” (1922) and the essay “Die Stunde ohne Gott” (1922). Salomé was also accepted into the Vienna Psychoanalysis Society on June 13, 1922, and Anna Freud’s presentation on “*Schlagephantasie* und Tagtraum” was a project developed in collaboration with Salomé. The same year, Salomé also participated in the International Psychoanalysis Congress in Berlin.

Russia, but also in her consistent use of the Russian language in her work and in daily life. Her published journal *Russland mit Rainer* and private unpublished journal entries point to Salomé's integration through language. The following images of Salomé's daily journals illustrate how she used Russian language in her everyday life at the turn of the twentieth century. She wrote her journals in Germany and incorporated Russian words, which were later underlined in red by the individuals transcribing the document:

Lou Andreas-Salomé's 'Goethe-Kalender' June 1900



Source: Lou Andreas-Salomé Archive, Göttingen, Germany. The document was accessed on June 4, 2011 by Regina Ianozi.

vom Dorf mit Froitzdorf 1. Brief gegen 8 und Cucuagis Lazare, so, dort nicht
 und Kleingeldern Pfellau & banden mit Maaren & zig und Keruowu jenseit
 nach Sechar Rodruca. Von dort zu Fuß gegen 11 Uhr und Kosuabowa, zu
 bei Ulanu Kowogostreff. Um 8 zurück; Nationalbassan, Post, 1. Stadt.

2. Casobaps und Kargiss ueinmiff; traude über den gefessigen Mounst.
3. 29. 3. 30. 31. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26.
4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26.

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4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26.

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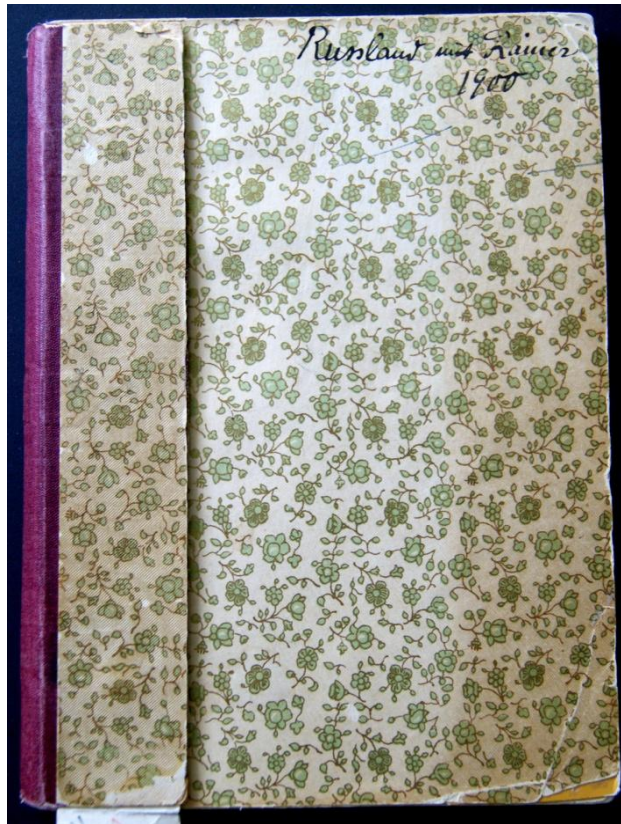
4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26.

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 bei Ulanu Kowogostreff. Um 8 zurück; Nationalbassan, Post, 1. Stadt.

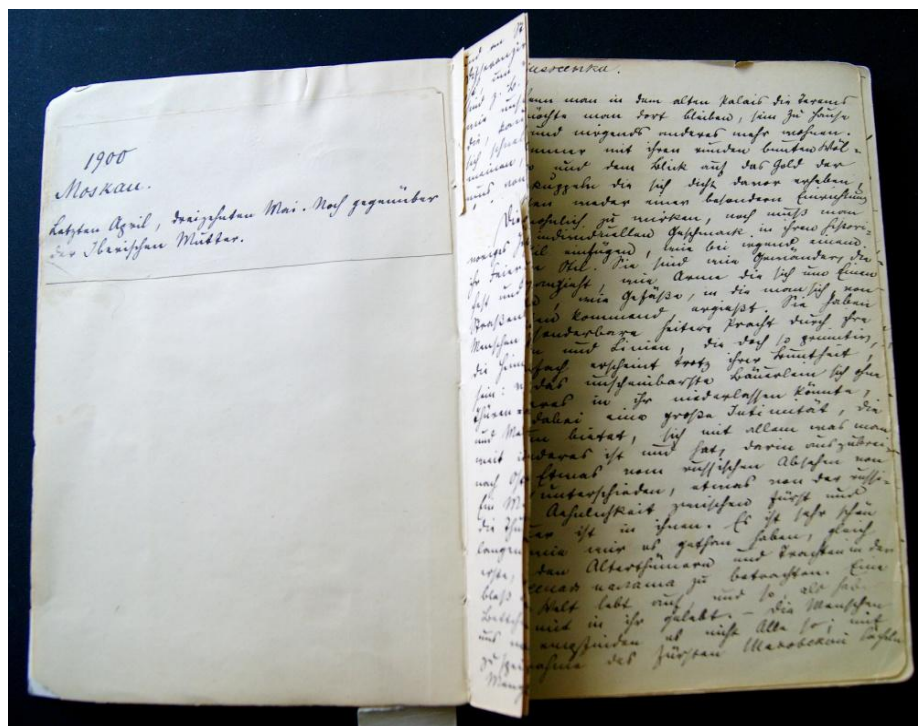
2. Casobaps und Kargiss ueinmiff; traude über den gefessigen Mounst.
 3. 29. 3. 30. 31. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26.

4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26.

Source: Lou Andreas-Salomé Archive, Göttingen, Germany. The document was accessed on June 4, 2011 by Regina Ianozi.



Source: Lou Andreas-Salomé Archive, Göttingen, Germany. Document was accessed on June 4th 2011 by Regina Ianozi.



Source: Lou Andreas-Salomé Archive, Göttingen, Germany. The document was accessed on June 4, 2011 by Regina Ianozi.

II. Salomé 's own Emancipation

“Meine Stellung zur Frauenfrage kann ich in wenigen Worten nicht präzisieren, ich nehme überhaupt nicht eigentlich Stellung zu ihr und weiß wenig von ihr.”

– Lou Andreas-Salomé¹¹⁰

Recurring debate in scholarly literature surrounds Salomé's stance as a feminist or anti-feminist. Her theoretical and fictional work may indicate a rejection of any participation in women's rights initiatives in Germany's, but she did live unconventionally, often rejecting social norms by breaking social rules and boundaries, which even among the most progressive feminists was difficult to accept.¹¹¹ For Salomé, partaking in a group of individuals fighting for a mutual cause possibly meant at the same time rejecting all forms of individuality by conforming to the rules of a particular group. By today's standards, however, she would be considered compared to the majority of women as a far more progressive woman for her time due to her emancipatory actions in her own personal and professional life, despite any lack of involvement in contemporary feminist women's movements.

Whereas Salomé's contemporary women's rights activists promoted social reforms, belonged to women's emancipation groups or “perhaps to a brilliant salon, or, as actresses and dancers, ... Salomé, who appeared to be always purposefully moving in a definite direction, had no cause” (Livingston 13). Salomé did not aspire to join any political movement and was often considered reactionary, neither a feminist nor an anti-feminist.¹¹² However, her actions in living an emancipated life by

¹¹⁰ In a letter to an unknown addressee on 6, March 1903. Stadt- und Landesbibliothek Dortmund.

¹¹¹ Malwida von Meysenbug, for instance.

¹¹² Hedwig Dohm, however, considered Salomé an anti-feminist. A discussion on Salomé's position towards feminism is discussed in Caroline Kreide, “*Lou Andreas-Salomé: Feministin oder*

achieving intellectual equality define her as a feminist not in the sense of the women's movement (at the turn of the twentieth century) but in a modern (twenty-first century) sense of feminism.¹¹³

Due to her own intercultural background, she was not a fully participating member of German Wilhelmine society, and, therefore, may not have shared the experience of social injustice and inequality faced by fully acculturated German women. Salomé's intercultural identity allowed her to develop of a perception of cultural fluidity—meaning that the definition of cultural identity could be explained as a rhizome¹¹⁴ and be narrow or wide or simply contain infinite definitions. In theory, just as cultural practices and beliefs are man-made, ever-changing metaphysical ideas, gender, as a socially constructed abstract concept also comprises infinite definitions—the only undeniable and notable difference between males and females is reducible to a biological trait, as Butler would argue in *Bodies that Matter* and Alaimo and Hekman in *Material Feminisms*. If an individual is able to live within two or more cultures and develop a third cultural identity, in theory, one's concept of gender could be similarly altered. Salomé's cultural and social position is particularly unique. She was regarded as German in Russia and Russian in Germany, and by

Antifeministin? Eine Standortbestimmung zur wilhelminischen Frauenbewegung. Diss. U. of California, 1992 (New York: Lang, 1996).

¹¹³ Salomé understanding of gender and identity is similar to Judith Butler's concept of gender performativity as developed in her work *Gender Trouble*.

¹¹⁴ The concept of rhizomes are introduced by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in their *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1980; trans 1987), trans. Brian Massumi, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987). Within the volume, they define rhizomes in opposition to linear concepts of culture and society, which would liken society to a tree, imagining society sprouting up teleologically from their historical roots or origin. Instead, the authors imagine cultural as existing as a multiplicity rather than a multiple. The points and texts within a culture are constantly in connection to all things. This concept is being applied to the idea of identity in an effort to distinguish between a bi-cultural Russian-German identity and Lou Andreas-Salomé's transcultural identity, which is created not by two distinctly different cultural identities, but of a formulation of identity in which the cultural artifacts and constructs of many different cultures exist next to each other, sometimes in opposition, but always in contact.

experiencing the diverse cultural practices and different social structures within Russia and Germany, she developed an alternative view on gender roles.

Although Salomé had an intercultural circle of friends' intellectuals and artists in Europe, she particularly felt comfortable with male writers and artists from her home-country. Among her numerous international friends and acquaintances were Iwan Turgenev, whom she met in Paris, and the Russian artist Paul von Joukovsky—the son of a Russian poet Wassily von Joukowsky and a German mother. When Salomé met von Joukovsky they instantly bonded and

... mit dem Mädchen aus seiner Heimat verstand er sich auf Anhieb, sie schäkerten heftig und provozierten – vielleicht sogar mit Absicht – die ehrwürdige Gesellschaft mit ihrem ungezwungenen Verhalten. Das Festspiel hatte seinen kleinen Skandal, als man erfuhr, das der Maler Lou von Salomé bei der Zusammenstellung ihrer Toilette behilflich gewesen war und ihr sogar direkt am Körper ein Kleid umgeändert haben soll! Elisabeth Nietzsche, mit deren Vorstellungen von Moral und Konvention sich dieses Verhalten überhaupt nicht vertrug, war empört und entsetzt. (Welsch 51-52)

Salomé raised eye-brows when she continuously crossed social borders by mingling with men. She moved freely and self-confidently in the circles of young scientists and “[b]ei den Herren, die die einzige Dame in ihrem Kreis heftig umschwärmten ... stieß Lous neutrale Haltung, die sie als ‘Junggeselle’ unter jungen unverheirateten Männern auftreten ließ, auf einiges Unverständnis und wurde nur schweren Herzens akzeptiert” (Ibid., 71). In a letter (1883) to Malwida von Meysenbug, the young

philosopher Ludwig Hüter describes his admiration and impression of Salomé's 'gender-hybridity' by describing her as a

sehr sonderbare Erscheinung, die ich erst begreifen musste; denn sie ist zu eigenartig als Mädchen, als das sie leicht zu erkennen wäre. Eine so ganz andere Art trat mir in ihr entgegen, als ich sie bis jetzt in irgend einer Frau gesehen. Aber um es gleich zu sagen, ich habe die Art verstanden, sie schätzen gelernt Wenn man eine doppelte Art, die Welt zu begreifen, feststellen wollte, eine männliche und eine weibliche, so würde ich sagen: Frl. Salomé begreift wie ein Mann, und das war mir gerade das Auffällige und doch so Interessante an ihr. ... Nun tritt mir ein liebenswürdiges, gewinnendes, ächt weibliches Wesen entgegen, das auf alle die Mittel verzichtet, die die Frau anzuwenden hat, dagegen die Waffen, mit denen der Mann den Kampf des Lebens aufnimmt, in einer gewissen herben Ausschließlichkeit führt. (Pfeiffer's *Friedrich Nietzsche. Paul Rée. Lou von Salomé*, 309)

Although Salomé's unusually unrestricted conduct with men and superb intellect was much admired, particularly among men, not everyone shared this enthusiasm, and some perceived her behavior as a threat to herself and to women. Nietzsche's sister, Elizabeth, went as far as publically criticizing Salomé's rapport with men and threatened to chase her out of Germany. Despite the fact that Salomé's life-style was accepted by many, some cautiously advised her to adhere to the social rules. One of Salomé's professors, Alois Biedermann, expressed his admiration, but also his concern, in a letter to her mother stating: "Ihr Fräulein Tochter ist ein weibliches

Wesen ganz ungewöhnlicher Art: von kindlicher Reinheit und Lauterkeit des Sinns und zugleich wieder von unkindlicher, fast unweiblicher Richtung des Geistes und Selbstständigkeit des Willens und in beiden ein *Demant*” (Pfeiffer 319). Despite his positive praise of Salomé, he advised Salomé to relinquish the free life-style and move back to St. Petersburg. An almost identical moment of societal rejection of a woman crossing gender lines is discussed in great detail in the novella *Fenitschka*.

Salomé’s close circle of female friends and acquaintances consisted of a variety of women, from wives and mothers to writers and feminists, including some who very actively participated in the women’s rights movement.¹¹⁵ Salomé’s ideas on women’s societal positions were undoubtedly influenced by her friendship with the Swedish writer and pedagogue Ellen Key. Key, a progressive liberal woman, valued the freedom of women and believed the role of mothers to be significant and a vital contribution to society. She developed concepts and ideas on the development and rights of children.¹¹⁶ Along with Key, Salomé also held a strong interest in the psychological development of children, as evidenced by her interests in the study of psychoanalysis, and especially the works of Sigmund Freud. Salomé’s friendship with Ellen Key was very important to her and influential in her development of viewpoints

¹¹⁵ Salomé was acquainted with numerous women’s rights activists of her time, including Ellen Key, a writer, social-educator, and a feminist, who became a close friend in later life. In 1896, Salomé met also Anita Augsborg, the leader of the radical “Frauenstimmrechtsbewegung” (Welsch 113). Despite their philosophical disagreements on feminism, Salomé was acquainted with Rosa Mayreder, an Austrian feminist. She was also in the company of many women writers at the turn of the twentieth century, including: Emilie Mataja (psydonym: Emil Marriot), Gabriele Reuter and Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, who praised Salomé for her literary work, and was acquainted with Hedwig Dohm, but only briefly mentions her acquaintance in her daily journals.

¹¹⁶ Ellen Key discusses the rights of children in *Das Jahrhundert des Kindes, Studien* (1905). The book was published originally in Swedish in 1900.

on women.¹¹⁷ Key and Salomé were both influenced by Henrik Ibsen's work, with Salomé being intrigued by Ibsen's various representations of female characters in his texts.

Affected by her personal experiences, Salomé's literary work—*Henrik Ibsen's Frauen-Gestalten nach seinen sechs Familien Dramen: Ein Puppenheim, Gespenster, Die Wildente, Rosmersholm, Die Frau vom Meere, Hedda Gabler* (1892) addresses women's emancipation, as well as an individual's realization in marriage. Salomé examines and interprets various characters in Ibsen's play's, such as Nora in *Nora, oder, Ein Puppenheim* (1879)¹¹⁸ and Hedda in *Hedda Gabler* (1890) among others. She particularly describes the ways the female characters represent women's emancipation and liberation from societal constraints. Salomé's own representation of an unconventional woman was portrayed in *Fenitschka* (1898), only six years after her analysis of Ibsen's female protagonists. She was not only influenced by German or Russian cultures, but was exposed to a variety of cultures and viewpoints including the Scandinavian. This supports the argument that Salomé's exposure to various real intercultural women as well as fictional female characters influenced her own fictional female creations. For example, *Fenitschka* deviates from societal norms and as an intercultural woman she transcends social borders of different nations.

Two of Salomé's closest female friends were polar opposites: Frieda von Bülow (a progressive woman and writer) and Helene Klingenberg (a wife and mother)—who embodied completely opposing constructs of womanhood during their time. While

¹¹⁷ Despite Key's and Salomé's mutual admiration for and own embodiment of women who cross social borders, Hedwig Dohm cited both, Key and Salomé, as anti-feminists in *Die Antifeministen: ein Buch der Verteidigung* (1902).

¹¹⁸ The play in the original language was published in Norway in 1879. Henrik Ibsen. *Et dukkehjem: skuespil i tre akter* (København: Gyldendal, 1879).

Salomé and von Bülow shared many common interests and experiences, Salomé recalls later that “[m]it Helene verband mich sicherlich irgendeine verborgen-tiefe Verwandtschaft” (*Lebensrückblick* 110). Salomé’s capability to form very close relationships with individuals of various social, cultural, and political backgrounds, and or of different life-styles, is evidence of an intrinsic ability to transcend social limitations and accept diversity without prejudice and/or judgment. To decipher Salomé’s position on the ‘Woman Question’, one must understand constructs of gender beyond any binary, seemingly contradicting concepts of a woman as either ‘traditional’ or ‘non-traditional’—and Salomé should be neither perceived as a feminist nor an anti-feminist, but an individual whose own identity spans within and between at least two cultures and whose ideas derive from this experience, which then manifests itself in her theoretical and fictional work.

Salomé’s interests in the individual, rather than the communal, deviated from mainstream feminist thought, and she neither actively worked towards changing or improving social situations for women, and “[a]uch in dieser Hinsicht war sie Individualistin – abseits und unabhängig von jeglichen Theorien und Richtlinien lebte sie ihre Emanzipation” (Welsch 119). Salomé’s idea of individuality without social constraints is similar to Judith Butler’s critique on social gender construction and her concept of gendered identity as infinite. Salomé was not seen as German in Germany or Russian by other Russians, which places her neither into a special position nor had she any specific sense of nationality.¹¹⁹

Salomé strived to live with absolute freedom and rejected any alliance with larger groups. To achieve her desired form of freedom and individuality, she had to

¹¹⁹ Biddy Martin briefly mentions Salomé’s interculturality in *Woman and Modernity*.

distance herself from any societal norms, because within these she would always have felt surrounded by artificial borders. Although Salomé refrained from partaking in the mainstream women's movement at the turn of nineteenth-century Germany, she did participate in the debate on the question of 'man' and 'woman,' 'feminine' and 'masculine,' and the 'Woman Question' in general. Due to the fundamentally different biology, Salomé argued that women have no need for competition with men.¹²⁰

Furthermore, in the debate on contemporary images of women within literary works, Salomé believed that both the image of 'Madonna' and the 'prostitute' and the notion of female sexuality are represented in Salomé's essays on women's emancipation and in her image of Fenitschka:

Denn nichts vermag ein Weib so tief und wahrhaft zu emanzipieren als die Ahnung, dass man ihr durch irgend eine Enge, in der man sie künstlich hält, den Weg verwehrt, auf dem sie zu voller frommer Hingebung und Andacht dem Leben gegenüber gelangen könnte, – den Punkt finden könnte, von dem aus das Leben und sie selbst ihre geheimnisvoll ineinanderrinnende Harmonie feiert. (*Der Mensch als Weib* 39)

Salomé's approach to the women's movement could have derived from her intercultural background, which allowed her to neither accept nor entirely reject one or the other concept or culture and to live not between, but within both. Her perspective on gender—femininity and masculinity—is therefore similar. She does

¹²⁰ Salomé reaction after reviewing Ellen Key's "Misuse of Female Strength" in 1898 and in an article in 1899, in Lou Andreas-Salomé, "Ketzereien gegen die moderne Frau" *Die Zukunft*, Jg. 7 (1898/99), Bd. 26, H. 20 (11. Februar 1899), 237-240.

not assign a specific terminology to the concepts of femininity and masculinity, as both are not fixed physical but mental states, feelings, which can alter slightly or entirely depending on the individuals' experience and psychological development.

The various relationships she cultivated with women earlier and later in life—ranging from mothers and wives to radical feminists—all influenced her portrayals of women in her literary and non-literary work. Although she is not reproducing the life of a factual individual in her texts, her 'positionality' and opinion of various models of women and men derives directly from her personal life. While most of Salomé's female friends were women from European countries and strongly identified with one nationality, men in her life were predominantly intercultural—many of whom were German, Russian, and Jewish-German.

Salomé, as an intercultural individual, accepted the uniqueness of the individual. For that reason, she was skeptical of the ideas of contemporary feminists and developed insights based on individual experiences and perceptions, deviating from and rejecting the mainstream perception of women, men, femininity, and masculinity as well as gender roles. Her work not only on the 'Woman Question' in general, but especially on the 'intercultural woman', and the physical and psychological movement within cultural and social borders, is a much discussed topic in some of her literary texts she composed around the time of her re-discovery of Russia and herself.

III. German, Russian, and German-Russian Socio-Cultural Norms: Interculturality
and Gender Discourses across Nations

Of Salomé's literary texts, *Fenitschka* is one of her most academically studied. Gender Studies scholars have paid the novella great attention for its progressive depiction of women within German society at the turn of the nineteenth century.¹²¹ The novella was written shortly before Salomé traveled to Russia in 1899 and is one of her first fictional works addressing cultural difference and hybrid identity through an interrogation of the 'Woman Question' across multiple societies—Germany, France and Russia. This border-crossing is accompanied by the cultural identity formation also of the male character Max, who begins to change his perception of women from a conservative understanding of women as wives and mothers to a more liberal view of women as intellectuals and equals to men. Depicting the many cultural and social conflicts *Fenitschka* encounters with various women, due to her liberal lifestyle, Salomé is able to evaluate women's own

¹²¹ *Fenitschka*'s depiction of a female protagonist's non-conformity has received much scholarly attention. Brigit Haines and Raleigh Whiting analyze the portrayal of female emancipation in "*Fenitschka: A Feminist Reading*" (1990) and "Lou Andreas-Salomé's *Fenitschka* and the Tradition of the Bildungsroman" (1999), respectively. Others focus on the male lead's changing perception of women, including Julie Doll Allen's "Male and Female Dialogue in Lou Andreas-Salomé's *Fenitschka*" (1997) and Muriel Cormican's *Women in the Works of Lou Andreas-Salomé* (2009). These scholars, however, minimize the interplay of larger cultural discourses with the characters' identity formation, which Elke Frederiksen in *Die Frauenfrage in Deutschland 1865-1915* (1981/1994) has demonstrated as being integral for the analysis of a female author's literary text. Birgit Wernz's *Sub-Version: Weiblichkeitsentwürfe in den Erzähltexten Lou Andreas-Salomé* (1997) does include an interrogation of the social limitations facing Salomé's female contemporaries but neglects the work's emphasis on geographical transitions. Laura Deulio's "A Tale of Two Cities" (2007) is the most extensive study to date of the relationship between border crossing and identity formation, but this work—which identifies Paris with modernity and St. Petersburg with an underdeveloped, old world that allows *Fenitschka* the freedom to grow (76)—overlooks questions of class, which complicate such simplistic dualities. The most inspiring work for this dissertation is Biddy Martin's *Women and Modernity* (1991). She argues that *Fenitschka* is an autonomous individual unconstrained by any hierarchical institution due to her passage across borders and "between the old and the new, the traditional and the modern" (22). She marginally interrogates Salomé's cultural identity but defines it in terms of its 'Germanness', disregarding Salomé's intercultural Russian-German identity, which she shared with her protagonist. This dissertation seeks to fill that gap.

responsibility in creating and maintaining socially limiting gender roles while simultaneously advocating women's emancipation.

Scholars have previously used *Fenitschka* in studies regarding the gender debate and the 'Woman Question', the women's rights movement,¹²² women's identity and emancipation, and constructions of femininity and sexuality particularly regarding Fenitschka's deviation from the traditional image of a woman. Others focused on the novella's main male character Max's development in his perception of the 'woman'.¹²³ However, the cultural and intercultural issues of this novella that are interconnected with the European (German) presence and the cultural and social transfer from Germany to Russian have been largely neglected.

Although the relationship between geographical transitions and gender identity formation has been made by other scholars, such as Bidy Martin, the interplay of intercultural and gender identity formation has been entirely neglected. Previous scholars have assumed a stability of the main character's national identity, classifying it simply as German; however, within this chapter, I demonstrate how the protagonist's cultural identity is far more complicated, abjuring a monocultural formation of national identity. By recognizing shared patterns of identity formation between Salomé and her protagonist, this chapter shows how discourses of class, language, gender, and nationality result in the intercultural and (inter)gendered

¹²² See Brigit Haines "Fenitschka: A Feminist Reading" (1990) and Raleigh Whiting "Lou Andreas-Salomé's *Fenitschka* and the Tradition of the Bildungsroman" (1999).

¹²³ Examples include: Julie Doll Allen, "Male and Female Dialogue in Lou Andreas-Salomé's *Fenitschka*", in *Frauen: MitSprechen, MitSchreiben: Beitrage zu Literatur und sprachwissenschaftlichen Frauenforschung*, edited by Marianne Henn and Britta Hufeisen (Stuttgart: Heinz, 1997), 479-89, Chantal Ghaliger, Schuetx and Wernz interpretation of *Fenitschka*, such as Bidy Martin, Caroline Kreide, Birgit Wernz, and Chantal Gahliger, are investigating Salomé's literary achievement in general. Salomé's texts *Fenitschka* (1898), *Eine Ausschweifung* (1898), and *Menschenkinder* (1899) received particular attention from critics (e.g., Brigit Haines, Raleigh Whiting and Gisela Brinker-Gabler).

identity of the protagonist, who ultimately identifies not with her German or Russian countrymen (or countrywomen), but with the French working class woman, the *grisette*.

At the turn of the twentieth century, the lack of women's rights in Western societies was not a class-based issue. Just as later black modern feminists¹²⁴ criticized mainstream white upper-class feminists disregarding women's struggles from different classes and across 'racial' lines, Salomé goes beyond the contemporary feminist agenda of her time. She also recognizes the common and collective problem women of all classes faced within and across multiple societies. She transcends social stigmas not only by creating a female character that transcends and crosses social and cultural borders, but she also constructs an equal male counterpart (Max) for Fenitschka, thereby foreground the issue of gender equality.

Like many novellas written in the nineteenth century, *Fenitschka* depicts only one single, peculiar, extraordinary, and for her time unheard of incident of an intercultural woman crossing social and cultural borders. A limited number of characters, who for the most part do not change, is present in *Fenitschka*, including the protagonist Fenitschka and the character Max, preceded by a number of various female and male characters—the *grisette*, the nameless French woman in the café, Nadeschda, Irmgard, and the Russian woman in the Inn, as well as Max, Fenitschka's Russian uncle, her Russian partner, and her absent father, who is mentioned briefly. As often occurs in novellas, one significant or complicated situation occurs, whereby

¹²⁴ Patricia Hill Collins' *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment* (1990) and *Black Sexual Politics: African Americans, Gender, and the New Racism* (2005), Bell Hooks' *Feminism is for Everybody: Passionate Politics* (2000), and Angela Davis' *Women, Race, & Class* (1983) argue that unlike white women, black women have been discriminated against to their race, class, and gender.

the issues and deepest problems of human life are exposed. In *Fenitschka*, the incident is her love affair with a Russian man and the societal reaction towards the deviation from social norms.

Around 1900, the cities Paris and St. Petersburg were considered the cultural metropolises of Europe and Russia respectively, and Salomé illustrates the socio-cultural differences between the West and the East by drawing comparisons between the distinct borders of the upper and lower social classes that coexist within one space. The scenes in St. Petersburg in *Fenitschka* often change from the wealthy, majestic European influenced cultural and social side to the scene of sheer poverty in the outskirts of the city. The intercultural flair of the city is illustrated through European architecture. Upon Max and Fenitischka's arrival in St. Petersburg, Max decides to spend the major part of his day touring the city and exploring the area beyond the palaces and museums. Once he proceeds down the Невский проспект¹²⁵ and passes the train station, he observes a vastly different side of St. Petersburg's social and cultural life: "anstatt der europäischen Hotels Wirtshäuser zweiten und dritten Ranges und Schnapskeller mit grellen Plakaten über der Tür" (*Fenitschka* 25).

The text further describes the multicultural society in St. Petersburg by incorporating a discourse on immigrants and European, especially German, colonization in Russia. The German cultural presence in Russia, as discussed in Chapter I, had an influence on the Russians, and both cultural groups acculturated by adopting the artifacts of the culture of others. At the same time, such intercultural exchanges between Germans and Russians created a culture within the German minority of dual (Russian and German) cultural and social elements. Salomé

¹²⁵ Невский проспект (Newskij-Prospekt) is the name of the main street in St. Petersburg.

illustrates such cultural transfer among Germans in Russia by integrating characters of German descent, who maintained German socio-cultural norms and the practice of the German language among the members of the family. After Fenitschka and Max's journey to St. Petersburg, "führte sie [ihn] gleich bei ihren einzigen Petersburger Verwandten ein, ins Haus ihres Onkels, des Mannes einer verstorbenen Schwester ihrer Mutter, weil man dort deutsch sprach und deutsche Interessen pflegte" (Ibid., 24). The maintaining of German cultural practices and the connection to German communities among the Germans in Russia involved the often conscious decision to marry fellow countrymen and women. Salomé demonstrates such an act by presenting a female character, who is "verlobt mit einem Attaché der deutschen Botschaft" (Ibid., 30).

Within such a small community, individuals' behavior is closely observed by the members of that community. If a member's actions or conduct falls outside the norms, individuals find themselves particularly vulnerable to ridicule and gossip. Once Fenitschka's uncle takes notice of a rumor regarding a member of the immigrant community, he mentions that "[m]an redet immer viel davon, daß in der deutschen – überhaupt in der ausländischen – Kolonie hier der Klatsch zu Hause sei. Es hat natürlich so eine Kolonie, selbst wenn sie noch so groß ist, im fremden Lande leicht den Charakter einer Kleinstadt. Man wird leichter in bösen Leumund geraten als anderswo ..." (Ibid., 30).

By acknowledging the fact that within the colony in a foreign country one's actions are particularly closely monitored, the individuals are 'warned' to adhere to the traditional customs which illustrates a smaller chance of emancipation for women

within the colonies—any deviation from the traditional norms could possibly result in expulsion from the community. However, when the uncle asks Fenitschka: “Wie hast du es zum Beispiel anderswo gefunden, Fenia?”, she answers: “Darauf hab ich wirklich nur wenig geachtet, ... es mag sehr wohl der Fall sein, daß auch ich oft tüchtig verklatscht worden bin, weil ich mich absolut nicht um den Schein kümmerte” (Ibid., 30).¹²⁶ Although Fenitschka pays little attention to keeping up appearances either in Europe or in Russia, she is not entirely liberated from the societal expectations placed on her as a woman. In *Fenitschka*, Salomé portrays an encounter between a young Russian woman and a young German man in Paris, France. Fenia is a recent doctoral graduate from the university in Zurich and a native of St. Petersburg in Russia who spent a substantial part of her life in Germany and Switzerland. The young male protagonist, Max, whom Fenitschka encounters, is also a recent Ph.D. graduate from Germany and just like Fenitschka, he is visiting Paris. Paris, as a chosen location, is significant because it represents a physically, socially, and culturally neutral space for both characters, as Russia is Fenitschka’s homeland and Max is from Germany. As a city, Paris is the epitome of Modernity, intellectually progressive and culturally diverse, around 1900. Within this space, Fenitschka and Max are intellectually equals and both are withdrawn from the pressures of the societies of their homeland. The initial problematic developing between Fenitschka and Max is that of inter- and cross-cultural communication and the knowledge of the other’s culture as well as the issues associated with the socially influenced gender perception and the traditional gender roles of a ‘man’ and a ‘woman.’

¹²⁶ Fenia and Fenitschka are diminutive forms in Russia for the first name Fiona.

Salomé begins the story by describing the social and cultural scene in Paris: “Es war im September, der stillsten Zeit des Pariser Lebens. Die vornehme Welt steckte in den Seebädern, die Fremden wurden scharenweise von der drückenden Hitze vertrieben. Trotzdem drängte sich an den schwülen Abenden auf den Boulevards eine so vielköpfige Menge” (Ibid., 7). The text illustrates the practices of the upper class, “die vornehme Welt” escapes the summer heat by vacationing at lakes and the sea, while the “Fremden”, the ‘foreigners’ or the ‘strangers’, are being ‘exiled’ due to heat, implying that both the upper class and the foreigners would not be present in Paris at that time of year and already laying out the grounds for a false presumption and a social and cultural misconception (Ibid., 7).

Max is traveling in Paris, where he encounters a few mutual friends with a desire to experience the ‘typical’ Parisian nightlife. After the brief hesitation of Max’s female friends to visit a café after midnight—according to the Northern European nineteenth-century social norms, being in the company of men in public and after midnight would greatly jeopardize a ‘noble’ woman’s reputation—they nonetheless break the typical social constraints and join the male friend in the “Café Darcourt, das um diese Stunde schon überfüllt war mit den Grisetten und Studenten des Quartier, und besetzte ein paar der kleinen Marmortische draußen, die auf dem Trottoir, mitten unter den Passanten, an den weitgeöffneten, hellerleuchteten Fenstern entlang standen” (Ibid., 7). Windows, opened and closed, are recurrent throughout the entire novella and illustrate the openness of various societies, representing public and private spaces either within or outside the windows, indicating freedom from or confinement within social norms. Salomé also chooses to place the characters of

foreign background—Max, his friends, as well as Fenitschka, members of neither the general upper nor lower French class society outside of the café. This physical separation is indicative of their presence as foreigners outside of French society and the bourgeois social class. However, when Max encounters Fenitschka, he perceives her, on the basis of his own preconceived notion of social and cultural differences, as non-German, ‘other’ and foreign on the one hand, but as someone familiar on the other hand:

Max Werner kam neben eine junge Russin zu sitzen, die er zum erstenmal sah, – ihren langklingenden Namen überhörte er bei der Vorstellung, doch wurde sie von den anderen einfach als »Fenia« oder »Fénitschka« angeredet. In ihrem schwarzen nonnenhaften Kleidchen, das fast drollig unpariserisch ihre mittelgroße ganz unauffällige Gestalt umschloß und eine beliebte Tracht vieler Züricher Studentinnen sein sollte, machte sie zunächst auf ihn keinerlei besonderen Eindruck.

(Ibid.)

While Fenitschka’s name indicates her Russian background, she also resembles many of the female students from Zurich, and the text exposes Fenitschka’s duality in identity, combining Eastern and Western cultural and social representation in a single persona through the typically Russian name Fenitschka or Fenia combined with the typical attire of the female intellectuals in Switzerland.

Although Fenitschka was not much interested in Max as a woman at the beginning, he “musterte sie nur näher, weil ihn im Grunde alle Frauen ein wenig interessierten, wenn nicht den Mann, dann mindestens den Menschen in ihm,” he

indicates his interest in her not from a socially gendered male perception—perceiving the woman as a sex-object—but rather from an intellectual perspective (Ibid.). By allowing Max to see Fenitschka from a view that is not tied to the role of social upper-class male, the text promotes changes within men’s and women’s thinking to eradicate artificially created gender roles in society and to achieve alternative and unconstrained interactions between men and women.

While Max did not find Fenitschka’s taste in dressing down as appealing, he found her unique physical appearance of interest: “[a]n Fenia fielen ihm nur die intelligenten braunen Augen auf, die jeden Gegenstand eigentümlich seelenoffen und klar – und jeden Menschen wie einen Gegenstand – anschauten, sowie der slawische Schnitt des Gesichtes mit der kurzen Nase” and “dieses gradezu blaß gearbeitete, von Geistesanstrengungen zeugende Gesicht forderte so gar nicht zum Küssen auf” (Ibid., 8). He experiences mixed feelings during his first observation of and encounter with Fenitschka. At this stage, he is unable to associate her with any of the traditional images of a woman familiar to him. It engages the eighteenth and nineteenth century notion that educated women were physically unattractive, Salomé is confronting such stereotypes.

Fenitschka’s free and open interaction with him not only confuses Max, as he says that “[i]hre einfache Bereitwilligkeit irritierte ihn beinahe”, but evokes feelings of anger within him (Ibid., 16). The text implies here a psychological conflict and adjustment within the male when she describes Max’ reaction as

[e]ine Art von stiller Wut kam über ihn, seine Unklarheit über dieses Mädchen quälte ihn. War es wohl möglich, daß sie einem wildfremden

jugen Menschen so weit entgegenkam, sich ihm so arglos anvertraute, wenn das alles nicht bloßes Raffinement war? Lachte sie etwa im stillen über ihn? Oder von welchem fernen Stern war sie auf das Pariser Pflaster gefallen? (Ibid.)

Max's perception of Fenitschka's unusual behavior and his inability to decipher her character is indicative of his own psychological clash between his traditional definition of gender roles and his new experience with a woman, who seems to exist outside the socially accepted gender norms previously known to him.

Max's perplexity about Fenitschka's atypical manner in gendered interaction grows as the night turns into the morning. As their discussion proceeds from one controversial topic to another, he discovers Fenitschka's academic background and realizes his own lack of knowledge and acceptance of intellectual women: "Und was die studierenden Frauen betraf, gegen die er eine solche Abneigung besaß, so mußte er sich gestehen, daß er sie eigentlich noch nicht kannte, denn die Frauen seiner intimeren Bekanntschaft gehörten ganz und gar nicht zu dieser Rasse" (Ibid., 17). At this stage, he displays a disinclination towards educated women, possibly not because of what they are or do, but because they evoke in him not only a feeling of uncertainty, but a challenge to his own notion of and identity defined by concepts of 'masculinity' and what it means to be a man (e.g. educated, intellectual) as compared to a woman (man's intellectual subordinate). This notion ultimately results in an enormous misunderstanding between Max and Fenitschka. Subsequent to Max's invitation into his hotel-room for a cup of coffee, Fenitschka follows him without any suspicion of his intentions, not because of her naiveté about men, but merely due to

her previous, frequent interactions and experiences and her perception of herself as equal to men during her studies. While Fenitschka perceives herself as an equal to Max, he is still tied to his traditional notion of the roles of ‘man’ and ‘woman’ and entirely misunderstands Fenitschka’s intent to accompany him to his hotel.

Once Fenitschka realizes Max’s less ‘honorable’ intentions towards her and proceeds to leave, he realizes the consequence of his actions of preventing her from leaving the room by barricading the door and hiding the key in his pocket and appearing as “dumm, rot und wie ein Schulknabe” (Ibid., 18). With this scene, the text attempts to illustrate the problem of strictly set social roles for men and women. Individual women cross into the ‘male sphere’ of acquiring a higher education, perceiving this action as a gateway to equality with men, while conversely, men’s position remains in a static state and their roles neither change and nor do they see a need for a societal transition. This mindset, left unaltered, leads to conflicts between traditional men and ‘progressive women’ and points to a necessity in reconstructing gender roles as both men and women are affected by this clash. As Max comprehends the scope of his action, he follows Fenia in the hope of explaining himself to her, although he himself appears to be more confused about the situation than Fenia when he tells her:

Hören Sie mich an, ... hören Sie mich an! Sehen Sie mich an! Nein, –
sehen Sie mich nicht an, ... aber Sie sehen ja, daß ich über meine
eigne, wahnsinnige Dummheit außer mir bin! Sagen Sie mir, daß Sie
mir verzeihen, – sagen Sie mir ein Wort, – gehen Sie nicht so, – ich

meine: fahren Sie nicht so. Er wußte durchaus nicht mehr, was er eigentlich sagte. (Ibid., 19)

To his anguish, and in her own apology, Fenitschka replies:

Verzeihen? ... ich will Ihnen noch mehr sagen: da ist gar nichts zu verzeihen. Denn ich bin ebenso dumm gewesen wie Sie, indem ich Ihnen folgte, ohne Sie und Ihren Speisesaal auch nur ein bißchen zu kennen. Ja, das war sehr dumm, und so sind wir quitt, denn Sie sind auch nur so dumm gewesen, weil Sie mich nicht kannten. – Wir haben beide dieselbe Entschuldigung dafür, daß wir es nicht besser wußten. (Ibid.)

The misunderstanding between Fenitschka and Max arises not necessarily due to lack of knowledge about each other, but from perceiving ‘self’ and ‘other’ as members of a larger society, in which men and women adhere to a certain set of societal rules in interaction between the sexes, rather than as unique individuals. Max experiences a conflicting state of mind in which he sees Fenitschka as a traditional woman of the upper class, whose behavior, however, resembles a grisette; he is, therefore, unable to fully comprehend her unconstrained individuality, which ultimately leads to a misinterpretation of her character, resulting in a clash between the two individuals. The fact that Fenitschka remains close friends with Max, despite the misunderstanding and disagreeable incident between them, indicates her understanding for men’s own distress during the process of adjustment to the progression of women’s social condition.

At the beginning of Fenitscha's and Max's encounter in Paris—in the Café after midnight among the members of French society—Max feels flabbergasted by Fenitschka's free and unconstrained interaction with an unfamiliar man. Influenced by mainstream social expectations with respect to the customary social interaction between and among the sexes, Max reacts surprised by Fenitschka's choice in freely engaging in discussion on the subject of sexuality, at a time when it was a socially unacceptable and improper topic to discuss in public between a woman and a man, and especially not between two strangers of the opposite sex. After Fenitschka, in a very progressive manner, liberally unveils the cause for women's mistrust in men—their less 'honorable' or chivalrous intentions—Max reacts to her statement, exposing his deficiency in progress: “»Donnerwetter!« dachte er und sah sich Fenia genauer an. Dieser Grad von Unbefangenheit, womit sie über so heikle Dinge mit einem ihr ganz fremden Manne sprach, hier, in Paris, in der Nacht, in diesem Café, – und dabei ein Ausdruck in ihren Mienen, als unterhielten sie sich über fremdländische Käfer” (Ibid., 11). His thoughts on the discussed subject matter and especially his demeanor reveal his unease in his position and show a certain shame to be conversing about such subject in public: “Er blickte bei seinen Worten um sich, ob der kleinen Gesellschaft, die längst zu andern Gesprächsstoffen übergegangen war, die Unterhaltung vernehmbar sei, ...” (Ibid.). Although his previous confidence in his knowledge of women—explaining to the French upper-class woman, who was giving Fenitschka advice on avoiding interaction with 'free' women, to be harmless—he finds himself in an compromising and utterly uncomfortable situation and feels perturbed when interacting with Fenitschka on the subject of sexuality. However, the discussion of

this topic by Max while confrontating his own perception of the image of a woman, is indicative of the issues of the acceptable versus unacceptable male and female roles within society.

As Fenitschka breaks the socially constructed borders between men and women by engaging in conversation with a man about a highly controversial topic, she also crosses over into a new and 'risky' domain, but not without misunderstanding and experiencing negative consequences. Her open approach towards a discussion about a social taboo could indicate on one side a lack of knowledge about socially acceptable manners, and her actions could be easily misconstrued and perceived as naïve, but on the other side it might suggest, a woman too progressive in her views on the bigotry of social practices. Her status as a foreigner and a non-member of that particular society allows her to exercise freedoms to a certain degree and develop an impartial view, observing the situation from a dual 'positionality' without being invested in the mainstream society.

Salomé does not imply that women belonging to the majority of society are incapable of neutrality. This can be misinterpreted as such by her portrayal of Fenitschka, a foreigner as the only woman who stands up, not only to the majority of men's chauvinism towards a woman of a working class but also to women verbally insulting another woman for being different. This illustration is evidence of Salomé's intent to draw a distinction between the views of the dominant culture and the foreigner. Immigrants within a host society usually experience prejudice and discrimination against their cultural background at some point in their lives and show a greater solidarity between individuals considered social 'outcasts.' Fenitschka's

unique situation is even more problematic, because she neither belongs to mainstream Western society nor is she a member of the Eastern, Russian society and is, therefore, twice as alienated by social norms. Later in the novella, when Max's and Fenitschka's physical location changes from Western Europe to Eastern Russia, the problem of social and cultural differences becomes even more evident.

As the conversations between Fenitschka and Max progress, both in time and in ideas, the division between their views on the interaction among the sexes becomes discernible, and Fenitschka points out that each individual's communicated language can be a rhizomatic conflation of infinite meanings by stating:

Sie meinen also, auch diese Mädchen hegen oft rein kameradschaftliche Gesinnungen Männern gegenüber und äußern sie nur – nur – sozusagen nur falsch? Das kann ich mir schwer vorstellen. Denn wenn es auch die ihnen gewohnteste Sprache ist, worin sie alles und jedes ausdrücken, – alle Menschen haben doch verschiedene Bezeichnungen für total verschiedene Dinge. (Ibid., 12)

Max, conversely, observes the development and progress in the common social interaction between men and women; yet, he still believes that fundamentally, regardless of society's progress, the women's innate wish is to be loved by men; and, therefore, he makes an assumption about the differences between the woman and the man, but also among the women of different social classes:

Glauben Sie? Ich meinerseits glaube viel eher, daß auch in unsern Ständen sich eine ganz ähnliche Beobachtung machen läßt. Unsre Mädchen und Frauen werden so daran gewöhnt, mit den Männern

ihrer Umgebung eine rein konventionelle, ganz unsinnliche Verkehrsform zu üben, daß sie in dieser Sprache auch das noch ausdrücken, was ganz und gar nicht so abstrakt gemeint ist. Wie manches Mädchen meint mit einem Mann nichts als Geistesinteressen und Seelenfreundschaft zu teilen, während sie, – oft unbewußt, – nichts andres begehrt als seine Liebe, seinen Besitz. – Für eine kleine Grisetten ist die menschliche Anteilnahme eines Mannes das bei weitem seltenere, gewissermaßen ausgeschlossene, – für die Dame unserer Gesellschaft ist es das rücksichtslose Sich-Ausleben des Weibes.

(Ibid.)

His language used to describe a woman from the upper class acting outside of her social norms appears derogatory and signals his disapproval of women's free and unconstrained relations with men; however, the very same conduct is deemed socially acceptable in women of the working class (the *grisette*).

Yet, Max's confusion about Fenitschka's unconventional view on women's role and position within society is lifted when he learns about her background. While strolling through the streets of Paris,

erfuhr er von einem russischen Journalisten, der Fenias Eltern gekannt hatte, wenigstens etwas vom äußern Umriß ihres Lebens. Von Geburt war sie Moskowitin, begleitete aber schon früh ihren erkrankten Vater, einen ehemaligen Militärarzt, nach Süddeutschland und der Schweiz, wo sie ihre Universitätsstudien begann – und nach seinem Tode mit Hilfe von mühsamem Nebenerwerb, Stundengeben und Übersetzungen

aller Art hartnäckig fortsetzte. In Zürich schien sie mit lauter ihr befreundeten Männern zusammen zu studieren, – einer von ihnen hatte sie in den Herbstferien auch hierher, nach Paris, begleitet, war dann aber nach Rußland abgereist. (Ibid., 12-13)

Fenitschka's cultural background seems to be the explanation for her 'different' perspective on Western social norms. In addition, Fenitschka's character is positioned within diverse cultures. She differs culturally from the majority—but also between multiple societies—with a background in higher education, by studying and engaging in close platonic interactions with male students, a phenomenon that was entirely new to men and women at the turn of the twentieth century. Ultimately, the intercultural and inter-social experiences lead to a formation of views that range outside of the social norm. Nevertheless, Max contemplates about and questions the origin of Fenitschka's inimitable and uninhibited interaction with men:

Kam daher dieser merkwürdig schwesterliche, geschlechtslose Anstrich, den sie sich gab, als gäbe es für sie auf der Welt nur lauter Brüder? Oder war es nicht viel wahrscheinlicher, daß dies unendlich unbefangene Betragen nur den äußeren Deckmantel abgab für ein ganz freies Leben? Sie mußte doch schon recht viel von der Welt und den Menschen kennen – mehr als eines der wohlbehüteten jungen Mädchen unsrer Kreise. (Ibid., 13)

Through Max's reflections on Fenitschka, Salomé explains the source of Fenitschka's attitude towards men and women in general. Her 'sisterly' and 'genderless' or gender-free—in the sense of interaction without any socially constructed gendered

constriction—interaction evinces an ability to free oneself from the societal limitations and conditions, which would allow for a ‘free’ and liberal lifestyle. At the same time, Fenitschka’s views developed from knowledge of people and the world, meaning that she was exposed to various cultures and societies, and therefore differs greatly from the well-protected young women of the European upper-class society.

Max’s new recognition of women of a ‘third kind’, who fit neither the image of *Mary* nor *Magdalena*, neither the much feared *femme fatale* nor the *femme fragile*, but a ‘sister’ and a friend, is the turning point in his view of women, although he struggles to decipher her demeanor, going through the psychological process of denial, questioning and examining his own perceptions. At this point, he is still uncertain of his judgment of her character, and comes to the ‘safe’ conclusion that Fenitschka “keusch ausschauen will und doch geheimnisvoll umblüht wird von verräterisch farbenheißen, seltsam berauschenden Blumen – –? ... Ja, er nahm’s fast als Beweis, daß Fenia nur zum Schein eine solche sei –” (Ibid.). His perception of Fenitschka in Paris and view on women’s emancipation, however, changes during his encounter with Fenitschka in Russia.

Previous research by Laura Deiulio examined aspects of Fenitschka’s physical transition between East and West by focusing on modernity and contrasting the old and the modern at the turn of the 19th century in Parisian and St. Petersburg society. Furthermore, she engaged in the gender debate in her thesis “A Tale of Two Cities: The Metropolis in Lou Andreas-Salomé’s *Fenitschka*.” Her thesis presents the image of Paris as a modern society anchored in traditional gender roles, whereas St. Petersburg is depicted as having an “underdeveloped urban culture” permitting

Fenitschka a greater “freedom of development” (Deiulio 76). In contrast to Deiulio’s broad assessment, Salomé considers Russian culture in the rural villages near the Volga region as vastly different from Russian culture in Moscow and St. Petersburg. Salomé attributes the development of the cultural differences to the Europeans’ presence and their cultural and social influence on the Russian upper class. She further believes that the culture of the upper class society in St. Petersburg, did not differ greatly from European societies (in this case from the Parisian).

Through the depiction of women within European (German and French) and Russian societies, Salomé exposes gender related problems that women experience across cultures and societies, regardless of the physical location. Contrary to Deiulio’s depiction of Fenitschka, I argue, that she neither indicates naïveté in Paris nor maturity in Russia. Conversely, despite Fenitschka’s transition from one location to another, her psychological state of mind appears constant, and she retains her unique position throughout the entire story. However, the character Max does develop and change significantly through the novella.

Furthermore, Salomé’s comparisons of cultures and societies between Western Europe (Germany and France) and the East (Russia) are prevalent for the development of the male and female protagonists’ personalities. Depending on the location, Paris and Russia—both, in the countryside near Smolenks and the city of St. Petersburg—Max’s impression of Fenitschka changes drastically: her casual but also somewhat absent-minded demeanor in Russia in contrast to her observant and tense appearance during their mutual encounter in Paris is virtually unrecognizable to him. When he ‘sees’ her for the first time in Russia, he observes:

Fenia saß in lässiger Haltung zwischen einigen Bekannten, ihre rechte Hand in träger Gebärde mit der Innenfläche nach oben gekehrt im Schoß, und seltsam festlich und feierlich im leuchtenden Weiß ihres seidenen Kleides. Während sie heiter lachte und sprach, sah sie doch zerstreut aus, als verträumten sich ihre Gedanken ganz woandershin. Ihre Gestalt schien voller herangeblüht zu sein, in allen ihren Bewegungen lag etwas Weiches, Abgerundetes, was sie nicht besessen hatte und was ihr eine harmonische Schönheit gab. Fenia war schöner geworden, als zu erwarten stand.

... Ja, schöner, – doch den beunruhigenden Reiz von damals übte sie nicht mehr auf Max Werner aus, – das Widerspruchsvolle, Geheimnisvolle, was ihn damals an der fremden Studentin anzog und abstieß, schien von ihr abgestreift zu sein, seitdem das Weib, das er so unruhig in ihr gesucht hatte, in ihrem Äußeren voller hervorgetreten war. (*Fenitschka* 20-21)

In her homeland, Fenitschka's physical appearance and body language appears to Max as softer, balanced, and more harmonious when contrasted with the agitation and discontent she displayed in his presence in Paris. Unlike Fenitschka's nun-like, dark dress in Paris, her white silk dress and nonchalant attitude in Russia allude to the change in societal and cultural norms regarding gender roles and boundaries between men and women influenced by different physical locations. However, even in Russia, Fenitschka appears to continue to be "ein rätselhaftes Mädchen" for Max (*Ibid.*, 46).

The notion of cultural difference between the Russian and German world and the discourse on Russian traditions in contrast to the European ones is illustrated in the description of a Russian wedding ceremony. Although Max's integration into Russian society is shown through assimilation and his interest in studying Russian traditions, he questions the peculiarities of the specific church wedding ceremony and the Eastern-orthodox religion in general. In response, Fenitschka asserts the desire in belonging to a nation, a place to call *home*. By expanding on the significance of the subject on *Heimat*, the text elucidates the female protagonist's loss of national identity, as well as insists on contrasting Russian culture with other progressive (Western) nations. This notion is evident in Fenitschka's observation:

nun freilich, für einen Fremden, der's mitmachen muß. Für mich ist es gradezu köstlich, so unterzutauchen in Weihrauchduft und Gesang und Kindheitserinnerungen. Ich bin ja so viele Jahre fortgewesen. – – Und jetzt erst fühle ich mich wieder zu Hause, wo all dies Altvertraute wieder um mich ist. – – Rußland hat auch darin den großen Vorzug vor andern Ländern, daß man ganz sicher ist, alles auf dem alten Fleck wieder vorzufinden. Da ist kein Hasten von Fortschritt zu Fortschritt, – es ist alles jahraus, jahrein dasselbe. (Ibid., 21)

While Fenitschka compliments the laid-back atmosphere of *her* home-country Russia, Max shows pride in *his* homeland Germany's "Fortschritt" by stating: "Auch ein Grund, seine Heimat zu verehren!" and denotes pride in his country's progress (ibid 22). The irony, however, lies in the lack of social progress in regards to the 'Woman Question' in both countries.

The cultural and social comparisons are further evident in the discussion of the concept of marriage in Russia and in Germany. Fenitschka explains marriage according to the Russian tradition as a unity between two people not entirely based on love, but rather as one with a much deeper meaning of a mutual service to the Divine, as

zwei Menschen, die sich zusammentun wollen für immer, – vermutlich weil sie sich lieben, – aber nicht nur zum Zweck ihrer persönlichen Verliebtheit, sondern zu einer gemeinsamen Aufgabe, – sozusagen im Dienst eines Höheren, Dritten, worin sie sich erst unlöslich verbinden. Sonst ist die ganze Unlöslichkeit zwecklos. Nein, sie wollen darin über das nur Persönliche, rein Gefühlsmäßige hinaus, – ob sie es nun Gott nennen, oder Heiligkeit der Familie, oder Ewigkeit des Ehebündnisses, – das gilt dafür gleich. – – In jedem Fall ist es etwas anderes, – auch etwas durchaus Anderwertiges als nur Liebe zwischen den Geschlechtern. (Ibid., 22)

On the contrary, Max's (representing the German) understanding of marriage determines that the union must be based exclusively on love, and one is not absolutely bound to the other individual for life. Max responds to Fenitschka's explanation of marriage in Russia by saying: "Zum Glück irren Sie sich. Unlöslich ist die Geschichte wenigstens nicht. Es gibt ja doch Aussicht auf Scheidung –" (Ibid.). Fenitschka, however, identifies the diversity in German and the Russian tradition, the difference in 'self' and 'other' by replying to Max:

Mag sein – bei euch. Da drückt eben die Form den Inhalt nicht mehr voll aus. Hat also auch die ihr zukommende Schönheit und Feierlichkeit nicht mehr. Da kann ich mir ganz gut denken, daß ihr vielleicht leichtsinniger drauflosheiratet. – – Wir aber, – – ehe wir es tun, werfen wir uns auf die Knie – ganz so, als ob wir das Entgegengesetzte tun und auf Lebenszeit unsre persönlichen Genußrechte in einem Kloster aufgeben wollten. (Ibid.)

The inner conflict Fenitschka experiences is the duality in cultural and social influence of two cultures with opposing concepts of marriage. Although Fenitschka is in love with a Russian man, she is reluctant to marry him due to the very notion of marriage in Russia. The effect of exposure and integration (through acculturation) into Western European culture and society, in which marriage is not absolute, leaves Fenitschka torn between Eastern and Western cultural and social traditions that influence her beliefs on love and marriage when she proclaims: “Es hat sich so zugespitzt – all das mit den Heimlichkeiten. Wir sind nicht mehr sicher, – nirgends mehr. Es geht einfach nicht mehr. Es geht absolut nicht” (Ibid., 53). When Max responds with the question of whether or not a solution could be found in such a case, Fenitschka shakes her head and states that “[i]m Auslande zu leben wäre einer, – ja. Aber ich bin hier durch meine Stellung gebunden und habe keine andern Existenzmittel” (Ibid.). However, in Fenitschka’s view, the women’s situation in regards to financial independence appears to be much the same in Germany as it is in Russia by stating: “[I]m Ausland wär es dasselbe – in einer Stellung. Es scheint, man muß reich sein dazu. Lehrerinnen sind, scheint es, davon ausgeschlossen. ... Wir

haben eben die Wahl zwischen zwei Unmöglichkeiten” (Ibid., 53-54). Ultimately, she chooses not to marry—and refuses to practice either the German or the Russian traditional female gender roles.

Nonetheless, when Fenitschka asks Max about his intent to marry his fiancé Irmgard, he also shows reserved interest in pursuing marriage and gives lack in financial security as a justification for delaying the marriage. Similar to Fenitschka’s quest for knowledge and freedom, Max also prioritizes traveling and education prior to their encounter, and is now not entirely ready for entering a marriage, although his fiancé “würde natürlich gern so bald als möglich [heiraten] –. [Max hat] [s]einen sehr kleinen Vermögensanteil früher schon so sehr zu Reisen und Studienzwecken angegriffen, daß [er] erst eine Professur haben müßte” (Ibid., 24). His statement regarding reliable employment in order to enter marriage and support a family implies his ‘typical’ male role as a provider and an expected responsibility and duty of a married man within German society. Fenitschka, on the other hand, is about to accept a teaching position, which would allow for financial independence, but the notion of marriage would greatly hinder her personal freedom when she states:

sage mir, will es denn etwa einer von euch, – will es ein junger Mensch zum Beispiel, der seine ganze Jugend drangesetzt hat, um frei und selbständig zu werden, – der nun grade vor dem Ziel steht, – auf der Schwelle, – der das Leben grade um deswillen liebgewonnen hat, – um des Berufslebens willen, um der Verantwortlichkeit willen, um der Unabhängigkeit willen! – Nein! Ich kann es mir einfach nicht als Lebensziel vorstellen, – Heim, Familie, Hausfrau, Kinder, – es ist mir

fremd, fremd, fremd! Vielleicht nur jetzt, – vielleicht nur in dieser Lebensperiode. Weiß ich's? – Vielleicht bin ich überhaupt untauglich grade dazu. – – Liebe und Ehe ist eben nicht dasselbe. (Ibid., 55-56)

Marriage, for Fenitschka, means conforming and surrendering absolutely to the societal (German and Russian) female roles with no room for development and independence.

The difference in gender roles is further evident in the matter of love, and Salomé makes a strong case in describing the disparity between the male and female roles and criticizes the socially constructed and oppressive notion of female desire and social shame:

Ja, wissen Sie, das ist doch wirklich etwas Abscheuliches! Ich meine, daß den Frauen in manchen Beziehungen die Heimlichkeit einfach aufgezwungen wird! Daß sie auch noch froh sein müssen, wenn sie gelingt, – und vom Mann wie etwas Selbstverständliches erwarten, daß er sie durch seine Diskretion, seine Schonung, seine Vorsicht schütze und beschirme. – Ja, es mag notwendig sein, so wie die Welt nun einmal ist, aber es ist das Erniedrigendste, was ich noch je gehört habe. Etwas verleugnen und verstecken müssen, was man aus tiefstem Herzen tut! Sich schämen, wo man jubeln sollte! (Ibid., 37-38)

Any form of love deviating from socially acceptable moral standards deprives women of freedom and independence. Fenitschka proceeds to describe the desire to fight for equality and defend the right by stating that “wir haben nun einmal das Verlangen, für das, was uns am teuersten ist, auch am offensten einzutreten; und wir schätzen sogar

ganz unwillkürlich den Wert einer Sache ein wenig danach ab, ob wir sie zu einer Gesinnungssache machen würden, – ob wir für ihr Recht *kämpfen* können” (Ibid., 39). As a response to Fenitschka’s revolt against social inequality, Max’s lack of knowledge about women’s desire to break away from the societal norms manifests itself in his views on the public and the private spheres:

Mein Gott! die Frauen sind jetzt aber auch so entsetzlich kampflustig geworden... so entsetzlich positiv und aggressiv, daß es kaum zum Aushalten ist! Sehen Sie, das kommt nun von all der Frauenbefreiung und Studiererei und all diesen Kampfsidealen. – – – Die Frauen sind die reinen Emporkömmlinge! Verzeihen Sie, – – es liegt ja etwas ganz Jugendliches und Kräftiges drin, aber es hat nicht den vornehmen Geschmack. Alles zur Diskussion zu stellen, selbst das Undiskutierbarste, alles in die Öffentlichkeit zu werfen, selbst das Intimste, – – finden Sie das etwa schön? Ich nicht! Es vergrößert alle Dinge ungeheuer, fälscht sie ins Nationalistische hinein, wischt alle zarten Farbennuancen fort, setzt allem gräßliche, grelle Schlaglichter auf –. (Ibid.)

However, the private and the most intimate is oppressed by public societal norms. Only through public discussion involving both genders will socio-cultural practices be confronted and properly questioned. The debate on gender inequality, as aggressive and tasteless as it appears to Max, affects his own progress in recognizing the consequences women face when deviating from the moral codes of society.

Next to the discourse on interculturality and the gender problematic, the subject Salomé discusses in *Fenitschka*, and later in *Rodinka* and *Russland mit Rainer*, is the importance of formal education for woman's emancipation. While Salomé examines in *Rodinka* and *Russland mit Rainer* discourses on education, implying the importance for the liberation of working class and equality among the lower and upper classes in Russia, in *Fenitschka*, she demonstrates formal education as a form of true liberation from the societal restrictions and promotes independence for women and equality among genders based on intellect rather than on physicality. Salomé's promotion of emancipation through education is evident in the conversation between Fenitschka and Max, as he accompanies Fenitschka to her hotel room. While Max appears to be astonished by Fenitschka's desire for studying—the study of the sciences, for him, is equivalent to a compulsory service he would prefer to escape—she replies:

das, was unsern Gesichtskreis erweitert, uns das Leben aufschließt, uns selbständig macht – ? Nein, wenn irgendwas in der Welt einer Befreiung gleicht, so ist es das Geistesstudium. ... Für uns Frauen, – für uns, die wir erst seit so kurzem studieren dürfen, ... für uns bedeutet es keine Askese und keine Schreibtischexistenz. Wie sollte das auch möglich sein! Wir treten ja damit nun grade mitten in den Kampf hinein, – um unsre Freiheit, um unsre Rechte, – mitten hinein in das Leben! (Ibid., 14, 15)

Furthermore, the novella *Fenitschka* illustrates the differences between men's and women's societal roles through the deficit of formal education for women. As tedious

and as common as education might seem to Max, for Fenitschka, education is a 'weapon' against ignorance and for fighting for women's freedom. Salomé not only criticizes the oblivious male attitude towards education for women, but moreover, points to the lack in 'educated' men's knowledge of women's will for societal change, for achieving equal rights through education, and for erasing the distinct and discriminatory traditional gender roles.

Salomé articulates these dominant male attitudes through her figure Max, thereby allowing Fenitschka to respond to them and reveal their discriminating views. The dominating male attitude towards women and towards their position within society is evident in Max's position in regards to women's education as an unnecessary and even embarrassing pursuit as it suggests women's 'backwardness':

Ja, wissen Sie denn, was das beweisen würde, wenn es wirklich so ist?
... es beweist einfach, daß Ihr Geschlecht zurück ist, daß es da lebt, wo wir vor Jahrhunderten standen. Etwa da, wo wir für jede wissenschaftliche Erkenntnis auf den Scheiterhaufen gerieten, oder mindestens in öffentlichen Verruf. Damals hatte allerdings das Leben für die Wissenschaft noch etwas verdammt Charakterstählendes und zog die ganze Existenz eines Menschen in die abstraktesten Erkenntnisfragen hinein. Aber solange das so ist, ist auch die feinste geistige Kultur noch nicht möglich, – die Kultur von heute, die *über* den Dingen schwebt, – und von der die Frauen nichts wissen, wenn sie studieren. (Ibid., 15)

As Fenitschka asks Max what would happen, if women would refrain from studying, he replies: “Jawohl. Dann bekommen sie durch den Mann eine Ahnung davon” (Ibid.). With this statement, Salomé represents the typical mindset of traditionalists and of the mainstream nineteenth-century male position on women’s rights for education and the persecution of women as an extension of a man and not as an individual with a will of her own. Nonetheless, in the end of the story, Max cannot help but empathize with Fenitschka when, during his final visit with her, he experiences the consequences that traditional social gender roles have on man and women. This shift is crucial, since Max symbolizes the detractors of women’s rights (and women’s rights to education) by showing compassion and understanding for women’s causes.

The cultural and social difference between Fenitschka (Russia) and Max (Germany) is manifested in the discourse about the concepts of marriage and the different male and female roles within a marriage, as well as the discrepancy in their different views on education, which reveal the lack of equality between women and men and the importance of education and enlightenment for both sexes. Through the discussion of these subjects between Fenitschka and Max, the text demonstrates an approach towards social equality between women and men, as it proposes a gender neutral and equal relationship between individuals of different cultures. Neither Max nor Fenitschka have as close a relationship to anyone either from their own cultural background or of the same sex, suggesting that such an interaction between men and women would still be problematic among men and women of the same cultural and social background. A German man and a Russian woman develop a ‘neutral’

relationship possibly because the intercultural environment doesn't force them to take on specific roles within their native society, and instead of being appalled by Fenitschka's unique viewpoints, Max is rather amazed "über ihre Worte, – Worte einer Frau, die ganz so sprach, als sei sie ein Mann und als sei es eine unerhörte Zumutung, einen Mann, seinesgleichen zu heiraten –" (Ibid., 56).

When Max begins to understand women's desire for equality and in crossing the strict border between the gender roles, he himself begins the process of emancipation and liberation from his previous viewpoints on the roles of women and men. Salomé also transcends the border between the male and female gender identity by letting her male and female protagonists perform in the opposing roles of the female and male social normative. Max changes location from Europe to Russia, and this change in site is indicative to his own change in perceptions. His views of Fenitschka alter greatly from his observation of her in France and later in Russia. In Russia, he also finds Fenitschka in an "Übergangs- und Zwischenzeit", but at the same time recognizes his own transformation by stating: "Eigentlich haben wir also die Rollen getauscht" (Ibid., 26, 27). While Fenitschka assiduously pursued her studies in Europe and appeared nonchalant in St. Petersburg, Max describes the exact opposite of his life events. Fenitschka and Max, to a lesser degree, therefore, embody not only the concept of intercultural but also cross-gendered identity,¹²⁷ and the development of both identities occurs simultaneously.

¹²⁷ Cross-gender denotes a gendered identity of individuals who identify with their biological sex, yet who formulate gender identities which do not easily conform to the cultural expectations of the culture in which these identities are formed. This term should not be understood as being synonymous with transgender, which is "an umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from what is typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth" in "GLAAD Media Reference Guide – Transgender Glossary of Terms" Gay and Lesbian Alliance against Defamation, <<http://www.glaad.org/reference/transgender>>. Accessed April 21, 2015.

A few literary scholars have devoted research to the gender debate aspect in the novella. In her essay “Articulating Identity: Narrative as Mastery and Self-Mastery in *Fenitschka*,”¹²⁸ Cormican interprets Salomé’s novella *Fenitschka* by focusing on the psychological development of the male character Max and his relationship with the female protagonist Fenitschka. Although Cormican offers a limited analysis on Fenitschka’s geographical and physical transition from Paris to Russia, the essay emphasizes the male character and presents an alternative way of reading the novella, also offering another perception of the female protagonist’s character.

The following section of this project presents Salomé’s own personal encounters with various contemporary women, from housewives to progressive feminists, and men of different social groups and cultures, and provides background information for the analysis of Salomé’s complex position on woman’s question at the turn of the twentieth century and in *Fenitschka*.

IV. Lou Andreas-Salomé Questions the ‘Woman Question’ in Fenitscha: Women’s Stagnant Position on Social Issues

While Salomé creates a liberated male character (Max) that changes his perception of gender roles during his encounter with Fenitschka, she also includes images of women with various viewpoints regarding woman’s emancipation, female roles, and their position within the society of three nations. Fenitschka’s father raised her liberally to develop into an independent individual. This liberal upbringing can also indicate that Salomé’s portrayal of men is more lenient towards gender equality.

¹²⁸ This article is included in Muriel Cormican, *Women in the Works of Lou Andreas-Salomé: Negotiating Identity* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2009), 136-159.

Her Russian uncle and her lover, however, do try to shield her from the consequences of her behavior (without condemning it) stemming from social injustice and gossip which would taint her reputation. Max, especially, becomes a very close friend and confidant. Nonetheless, Salomé depicts women's own culpability for hindering and even opposing the emancipation of women when she presents the various constructs of a woman. Within her novella, the majority of the female characters tends to support, promote, and/or reject a 'traditional female' role and image.

Salomé incorporates contemporary discourses while constructing primarily two images of women, the *femme fatale* and *femme fragile*, but she also presents a new, different third type of woman—the 'intercultural woman', who transcends any specific cultural boundaries. She thereby argues against the 'typical' female image:

Warum nur? Warum hatte er in beiden Fällen ihr Wesen so typisch genommen, so grob fixiert? fragte [Max] sich. Es war ganz merkwürdig, wie schwer es fiel, die Frauen in ihrer rein menschlichen Mannigfaltigkeit aufzufassen und nicht immer nur von der Geschlechtsnatur aus, nicht immer nur halb schematisch. Sei es, daß man sie idealisierte oder satanisierte, immer vereinfachte man sie durch eine vereinzelte Rückbeziehung auf den Mann. Vielleicht stammte vieles von der sogenannten Sphinxhaftigkeit des Weibes daher, daß seine volle, seine dem Mann um nichts nachstehende Menschlichkeit sich mit dieser gewaltsamen Vereinfachung nicht deckte. (Ibid., 36)

In this text, the Russian female character Nadeschda is one extreme, as are the French grisettes. The Russian upper class young woman, Nadeschda,¹²⁹ represents images of the *Maria* or the *femme fragile*, while the grisettes in France personify the “young working woman who is coquettish and flirtatious”¹³⁰, and exemplifies the ‘traditional’ image of *Magdalena* or the *femme fatale*. The upper-class young German female character Irmgard,¹³¹ represents both nineteenth-century traditional female images of ‘*Maria*’ and ‘*Magdalena*’. In contrast to Nadeschda and Irmgard Fenitschka, Fenitschka is the only woman who exemplifies a multifaceted personality and an alternative hybrid female character comprising of upper-class and working class, intercultural, intersocial and intergendered identity.¹³² Fenitschka’s character is a combination of both traditional female and male roles differing from all other female characters in the novella.

Additionally, to illustrate the lack of progress in women’s emancipation, Salomé juxtaposes not only genders but more importantly both genders across two generations. She illustrates women’s own responsibility for any lack of liberation from specific gender roles. The older, traditional female generation, represented by the old Parisian woman, advises Fenitschka against conversing and associating with working class women, and warns that she may be perceived as socially unacceptable which could have negative consequences—in essence, she advises Fenitschka to keep

¹²⁹ Надежда (Nadeschda) is a Slavic name and means "hope"

<<http://www.behindthename.com/name/nadezhda>>. Accessed on 28/4/ 2015.

¹³⁰ 1835 edition of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* cited in “The Grisette as the Female Bohemian” Hanna Manchin, (Brown University, 2000)

<<https://www.mtholyoke.edu/courses/rschwartz/hist255s13/grisette/manchin.htm>>.

¹³¹ The name Irmgard derived from the Germanic elements *ermen* meaning “whole, universal” and *gard* meaning “enclosure” < <http://www.behindthename.com/name/irmingard>> Accessed. 28/4/2015

¹³² The term inter-gendered identity used here refers to the combination of specific traditional male and female gender roles at the turn of twentieth century Western and Eastern societies.

up appearances while in public. The upper-class younger female generation (represented by German Irmgard and Russian Nadeschda) shows disinclination towards changing or challenging social norms for women by maintaining and supporting distinct gender roles for men and women. In contrast to the women in the novella, the men's views on women's progress are depicted as less judgmental. For example, Fenitschka's uncle fondly remembers her father unusually open-minded approach towards her upbringing, recalling, "guter Vater hat [sie] so frei erzogen", revealing that—although in limited numbers—even men of the upper-class older generation are more liberal and progressive towards women's emancipation than the majority of women of the upper-classes (Ibid., 33).

To provide a picture of women's responsibility in maintaining specific gender roles by discriminating against fellow women with alternative views towards the female social norms, Salomé describes a scene in a Café in Paris involving various male and female members of both the upper and working class participating directly and indirectly in an incident concerning a grisette. Salomé criticizes certain social norms and practices by illustrating a spectacle erupting between two couples in the café criticizing a woman of lower social status—a grisette. Fenitschka observes the scene in which the grisette is ridiculed by her fellow countrymen and women:

mit einer Flut häßlicher Schmäreden überschüttet, ohne daß ihr eigener Begleiter ihr auch nur im mindesten beigestanden hätte.

Vielmehr stimmte er bei jedem erneuten Angriff johlend in das brutale Gelächter der beiden andern ein, das sich bald auch auf die benachbarten Tische fortpflanzte, wo neben den erhitzten

halbbezechten Männern die geputzten Genossinnen des mißhandelten Geschöpfs mit lärmender Schadenfreude ihre Konkurrentin niederjubelten. (Ibid., 8)

The fact that the other women partake in the verbal assault is an indication that women themselves participate in certain practices that discriminate against other women. While some women actively take part in the harassment, other women passively, as bystanders, observe the incident, although on some of their faces “prägten sich deutlich Mitleid, Ekel, Entrüstung und eine gewisse Verlegenheit darüber aus, einer solchen Situation beizuwohnen; eine von ihnen knüpfte furchtsam ihren Schleier fester. Niemand aber war so benommen von dem, was er sah, wie Fenia” (Ibid.).¹³³

Salomé creates a female character (Fenitschka) who recognizes the injustice committed by women and men against another woman, the grisette, and rises against this act by physically standing up and raising her hand. Realizing the consequences of her action, she could not raise her voice:

Sie hatte von allem Anfang an mit sachlichem Interesse um sich geblickt, jede Einzelheit, die ihr auffiel, mit großer Unbefangenheit beobachtet. Jetzt aber wurde sie ganz sichtlich von einer so intensiven Anteilnahme erfüllt, daß sie zuletzt, – offenbar ganz unwillkürlich, wie außerstande länger passiv zu verharren, – sich langsam erhob und die eine Hand gegen die Lärmenden ausstreckte, als müsse sie eingreifen

¹³³ Women’s role in participating and maintaining certain discriminatory practices against other women for failing to adhere to social norms and for their unconventional way of life, is a subject Salomé also analyzes in *Rodinka*. Also, Salomé’s own experience of discrimination against her unconventional way of life by Nietzsche’s sister Elisabeth, who publically ridiculed Salomé in an open letter to her, is an example of a real incident, which she discusses in her fictional literary work.

oder Halt gebieten. Im selben Augenblick ward sie sich ihrer spontanen Bewegung bewußt, hielt sich zurück und errötete stark, wodurch sie plötzlich ganz lieb und kindlich und ein wenig hilflos aussah. (Ibid.)

Instead of fearlessly defending the woman in Paris, Fenitschka recognized her own helplessness in changing this particular situation regarding the treatment of women and the inability of women to protect themselves. Her reaction, however, does help the affected grisette to overcome the ridicule by uniting with her in thoughts through the exchange of a nonverbal understanding of empathy and compassion:

Während sie aber so dastand, traf ihr Blick den der Grisette, die in ihrer Ratlosigkeit und Verlassenheit angefangen hatte zu weinen, Unter dem langen, eigentümlichen Blick, den sie mit Fenia austauschte, veränderte sich der Ausdruck des weinenden Gesichts; von Fenias Augen schien eine Hilfe, eine Liebkosung, eine Aufrichtung auszugehen, etwas, was die Einsamkeit dieses getretenen Geschöpfes aufhob. Man konnte vom Tisch aus deutlich den Stimmungswechsel auf ihren Zügen verfolgen, denn sie saß fast grade gegenüber am Fenster. Ein Danken, Staunen, Nachsinnen, – ein momentanes Taubwerden für ihre lärmende Umgebung und deren Schmähreden ließ ihre Tränen versiegen, und sie achtete kaum noch darauf, daß das Paar neben ihr sich erhob, um fortzugehen, und auch ihr Begleiter seinen schäbigen Zylinder vom Wandhaken abhob. (Ibid., 9)

By uniting her gaze with the grisette, Fenitschka lets the grisette understand that her pain is shared among other women, those of all classes. This unity between Fenitschka and the grisette, among two women of different classes, cultures, and nations, ultimately alters the situation, in which the individuals committing the verbal assault recognize their unjust action and quickly leave the scene. Soon after the incident, the grisette approaches Fenitschka, shakes her hands and “[e]inige Augenblicke lang standen sie da und lächelten einander an wie Schwestern, während alle verblüfft, interessiert, amüsiert um die beiden herum saßen” (Ibid., 10). It is a gesture of unity between two women of two different social classes and cultures comparable to the intimacy of sisters. Although most guests react to Fenias “Erfolg” positively, one woman gives Fenitschka a ‘warning’: “Ja, chérie, eine ziemlich unerbetene und unbequeme Freundschaft! Sie könnte Ihnen eines schönen Tages recht peinlich werden, wenn dies Wesen Sie irgendwo auf der Straße wiedertrifft und Sie auf das intimste begrüßt, – zur Überraschung derer, die vielleicht mit Ihnen gehen” (Ibid.). Again, Salomé’s criticism lies with the women supporting traditional gender roles—not only does this woman dehumanize the grisette by referring to her as a ‘creature’, but the interaction with women from the working class is clearly unfavorable for a woman of the upper class and mingling with the grisette is perceived as a taboo.

Max tries to clarify French cultural and social customs to Fenitschka by indicating that within French society each member plays a particular role, and women and men of various classes are aware of their social positions. He explains that they would not consciously try to embarrass another human being by stating:

Das brauchen Sie nicht zu befürchten, ... ich wette darauf, daß dieses Mädchen ohne merkbaren Gruß an Ihnen vorübergehen wird, falls es Ihnen je begegnet. Anderswo würden Sie vielleicht von ihrer Dankbarkeit verfolgt werden, – die Französin würde es für eine schlechte Dankbarkeit halten, Sie eventuell dadurch zu kompromittieren. Das ist der französische Takt, – der Takt einer alten Kultur, die allmählich bis in alle Schichten eines Volkes durchdringt und ihm seine fast instinktive Intelligenz gibt. (Ibid.)

Fenitschka is utterly affected by the harsh treatment of the grisette, especially since this woman is among the members of her own cultural background. She questions with fear the social behavior towards a woman with a different cultural background and within a foreign society by stating:

... was mich vorhin so entsetzte, das war das Gefühl, als ob diese Mädchen gleichmäßig sowohl von den Männern wie von den Genossinnen preisgegeben würden, – als ob sie gradezu wie in Feindesland lebten. – Ich habe noch nie so viel höhnische Verachtung gesehen wie in den Mienen der Männer, – so viel höhnische Schadenfreude wie in den Blicken der andern Mädchen. – Und das ist hier im Lokal, wo sie sozusagen bei sich ist, unter den Ihrigen. – Außerhalb nun erst! – O ich denke mir, ein solches armes Ding muß nach einer freundlichen, einfach menschlichen Berührung lechzen. (Ibid., 10-11)

Fenitschka's concern for the grisette's well-being could be understood as a fear of possibly experiencing the same social rejection and ridicule; therefore, she spontaneously and unconsciously reacts by 'standing' up, but consciously does not yet 'speak' up against the unjust treatment of the grisette. Salomé's portrayal of Fenitschka's silent uprising against societal injustice towards women is an indication of Salomé's view on the position of women within Western society at the end of the nineteenth century. While women recognized the need for change within society in regards to gender roles and women's positions on social issues, many feared the negative consequences for their revolutionary action.

Salomé uses symbols to represent the stagnation of women, such as the open or closed windows and curtains, the color of her dress as black or white. The numerous symbols and images in Salomé's novella support the message of the text—the most significant and recurring symbols are the colors 'black' and 'white' and the repeating image of Fenitschka at the window. The sharp contrast created through the colors black and white could symbolize society's understanding and maintaining of rules and norms in regards to gender roles; whereas, windows and elements of windows, such as window curtains, should be read as openings from the inside into the outside and vice versa.

Fenitschka is frequently positioned in front of a window—for example, outside of the "weitgeöffneten, hellerleuchteten Fenstern" in the Parisian Café through which she observed the mistreatment of the grisette (Ibid., 7). She, as a foreigner from outside the country, looks through the window into the Café symbolizing her gaze into French/Western society. When Max encounters Fenitschka

in Russia, whether she moves towards “eines der hohen Fenster” or at her hotel room, Max finds her “[n]eben dem Fenster, über eine Näharbeit gebeugt” and she “blickte nachdenklich in das Fenster hinein”, or she sat “hinter einer Palmengruppe am Fenster”, and when he entered her room for the last time, “Fenia [stand] am Fenster” (Ibid., 34, 37, 39, 49, 66). Fenitschka repeatedly stands or sits inside a room in Russia in front of a window looking steadily out of the window.

Fenitschka’s physical position inside a building in front of the window signifies her societal position as a member within the Russian society; yet the heavy curtains, could symbolize the separation between the private and public spheres: “Mit etwas erhobenen Händen faßte sie in die schweren dunkelroten Damastvorhänge, die geschlossen vor dem Fenster herabhingen, und schob sie ein wenig auseinander, um hinaussehen zu können” (Ibid., 34). The image of Fenitschka firmly clutching the window curtains points to her desire to tear them down and expose the concealed truth, the contradictions, and insincerity within upper class society: wie ihre Hände den Vorhang zusammenfassen und vor das Gesicht ziehen, – wie der Kopf sich tiefer und tiefer herabneigt in die schweren tiefrotschimmernden Falten, – wie der Rücken gebeugt ist, ..., – bis die ganze Gestalt in sich gesunken dasteht und, das Antlitz im Vorhang geborgen, weint ...” and “[d]ie Hände unwillkürlich noch ausgebreitet, den Vorhang wie zwei schwere Flügel hinter ihrem Rücken, stand sie da (Ibid., 34, 35). The curtains also symbolize the separation between her own desires and social expectations, a soft border – and this boundary is drenched in tears.

The recurring image of Fenitschka silently gripping the curtains tightly implies her wish to remove the veil between the inner private and the outer public

world: “Mit den Händen hatte sie in die Vorhänge hineingefaßt und ihr Gesicht darin verborgen. Er sah nur die gebeugte Rückenlinie, und es durchfuhr ihn das Gefühl, als hätte er dies alles schon einmal erlebt –” (Ibid., 66). The recurring image of Fenitschka standing next to the window gripping the curtains suggests her ongoing silent struggle within and with societal norms, with “Öffentlichkeit”, “öffentliche Meinung”, and “Moral” (Ibid., 38, 39, 34).

Additionally, Fenitschka is searching for various and alternative ways of avoiding marriage. During her visit to the convent, which is located on the outskirts of St. Petersburg, she is constantly moving between the European/German (uncle’s house) and Russian (the convent) cultural and social boundaries. By visiting the convent, Fenitschka could be searching for a place with social acceptance as an unmarried woman, and the colors of her dress, either black or white suggest her nun-like physical appearance, because only nuns held an acceptable position as unmarried women within society.

In contrast to the stagnation of women’s position, Salomé depicts Fenitschka in constant physical motion—she travels between countries or walks from one place to another, such as her hotel room and the garden of the convent or her uncle’s home. Fenitschka’s desire to break away from the traditions of the German community in Russia and live and love without constraints becomes clear when Max meets her in the garden of the convent and asks whether or not she was going inside the convent. She replies: “Ich habe mir das Kloster angesehen – – Und nun geh ich zu meinem Onkel, ...” (Ibid., 26). Once again, it shows her constant transition between cultural and social spheres. The frequent movement between the different physical locations also

suggests a psychological space of a physical *in-between* location or *within* two cultural spaces. When Max observes Fenitschka walking in public without an escort, he perceives her changes and states: “ich stelle Sie mir ja seit Paris immer noch wie besessen von Fleiß vor, – und statt dessen bummeln Sie hier herum”, to which Fenitschka reponds: “[i]ch lebe jetzt ja auch in einer solchen Übergangs- und Zwischenzeit” (*Fenitschka* 26). A transitional period or an in-between time refers to a point of growing up physically and also psychologically.

The notion of moving between geographical spaces and societies is discussed in Bidy Martin’s study of *Fenitschka* in her book *Woman and Modernity: The (Life)Styles of Lou Andreas-Salomé* (1991).¹³⁴ Martin provides an alternative interpretation of Salomé’s work and investigates the character Fenitschka as an autonomous and active individual unconstrained by any hierarchical institutions. Martin notes Salomé’s “efforts to imagine and to perform the oxymoron of feminine individuality, to imagine and to live a different passage between the old and the new, the traditional and the modern” (Martin 22). Salomé’s work depicts “a space in which ‘woman’ could exceed the constraints of ‘typical femininity’ without having to imitate man” (Ibid., 232). Martin briefly mentions Salomé’s own intercultural identity as a woman raised in Russian society and its impact on Salomé’s understanding of the position of women in Russia.

Such duality in identity may have influenced and contributed to Salomé’s development of her female protagonist’s perception of social issues which deviated

¹³⁴ Laura Deiulio also examines the novella by focusing on Modernity and contrasting the old and the modern, and on turn of the nineteenth century Paris and St. Petersburg society as well as the gender debate in the article “A Tale of Two Cities: The Metropolis in Lou Andreas-Salomé’s *Fenitschka*” in *Women in German Yearbook* 23 (2007): 76-101.

from the majority of members of upper-class society. Salomé's formative years are significant from a psychological point of view for the development of her identity. She depicts the fictional character Fenitschka as having very similar cultural experiences. Martin's work only marginally explored Salomé's interculturality. Instead, she placed emphasis on identifying Salomé within the German society, rather than across multiple societies or in Russian society. Although Martin identifies a common theme of the geographical transitions in Salomé's fictional female characters around 1900, she focuses more on the contrasts between the Western perception of the traditional and the modern than the incorporation and examination of the similarities in socio-cultural norms transferred from one nation to another and across cultures. Martin states that

[a]t the end of the nineteenth century the majority of Lou Andreas-Salomé female characters exist between two worlds (old-world Russia and new-world Germany) and two spaces (the domestic sphere and the realm of the public and professional). They move back and forth between the two, just as they negotiate traditional and enlightened concepts of female identity and female roles, constantly crossing borders and thresholds and donning, as it were, new skins. Rarely, however, do these women arrive at a final destination or a stopping point. (Ibid., 161)

However, while experiencing the feeling of being between cultural identities or the loss of national or cultural belonging, I argue that one develops a sense of being part of both identities at the same time. This 'hybrid' or rhizomatic form is the notion that

identity formation could indicate an infinite number of possible identifications. This concept also serves to suggest that individuals can form not only inter-cultural identities but also those of 'inter-gender' as the idea of a woman in one society is not the same within the other.

Neither Fenitschka's Russian 'ethnicity' and culture nor the German cultural influence is prevalent in her identity development of 'self'. Rather, she identifies most with a third category, that of the French working-class woman, which is a type of a woman dissimilar to her own cultures and class. Also, as Martin states, Salomé illustrates how discourses of feminist ideologies affect both men and women and cause personal dilemmas within men (Ibid., 139). Salomé demonstrates in *Fenitschka* not only the issue of individuals' quandary within a society, but primarily the problems between intercultural and social borders. However, once the characters leave the societies of their homeland and encounter individuals with culturally diverse backgrounds they do achieve personal growth.

While Salomé's *Fenitschka* illustrates the discourse on women and their shared gender roles across European (French and German) and Russian societies, the character Fenitschka adheres neither to German nor Russian social norms in regards to their traditional constructs of gender roles. Martin's study and other studies investigating Salomé's *Fenitschka* focus on the text from a predominantly Western European or American 'positionality'. These studies neglect the critical detail of intercultural women living *within* multiple identities who do not partake in the same experience with women who share one culture in the same society. The differences in the depiction and juxtaposition of the various women across cultures and societies—

the grisette in France, Irmgard in Germany, Nadeschda in Russia, and the Russian/German experience of Fenitschka's character—are examples of Salomé's attempt to present her female protagonists as oscillating *within* two or more diverse cultures and social gender norms. Nonetheless, Fenitschka's identity is constantly in motion within various places, not located between them, she is not in the mid-point, as Biddy Martin's 'in-betweenness' would imply, or a connection of two contradicting ideas or constructs as the concept hybridity suggests, rather, she is constantly moving among/within these many points, meaning that her identity can shift to any of the myriad of possible points within these different cultural constructs. Biddy Martin looks at identity linearly, as if it were a line with 'Germanness' on one end and 'Russianness' on the other. The author/character's personal identity is a point somewhere between these two cultural identities. However, this project suggests that Salomé and the character Fenitschka's identifies resemble a circle, the outside edge is made up of a images of femininity representing different cultures. It could also include ideas on masculinity, 'Germanness', 'Russianness', class differences, and she exists within this circle, free floating among (not between) the space in which all of these constructs intersect.

After spending a substantial amount of time abroad and returning to the German community in Russia, Fenitschka now lives within traditional and modern societal gender roles and the German and Russian cultures but also in a Russian-German community comprised of both cultures. The complexity of Fenitschka's situation is that of her Russian-German intercultural background. While she is a member of Russian society, she is also a member of the Western immigrant minority

within Russia; therefore, the problematic lies in the misperception of Fenitschka by others. Her own view of cultural practices and social norms differs vastly from members of her own community and from Max's view. By depicting the transformation of Max's perception of a 'woman' through his gradual acceptance of Fenitschka's 'unconventional' life-style while simultaneously illustrating upper-class women's intolerance towards woman's deviation from the traditional gender roles, the novella suggests Salomé's criticism of women's own accountability in the oppression of progressive women across multiple societies.

Salomé's comparison of Fenitschka with other women is not only apparent through Max's perception, but the novella is structured in such a way as to create contradictions between the protagonist and other female characters, further indicating Salomé's criticism of women's social stagnation. Fenitschka's progression and deviation from the typical traditional female roles is juxtaposed mostly with Max's German fiancé Irmgard and partially to the Russian Nadeschda. Irmgard, the name derived from the Old-High-German *ermin/irmin* "groß", "gewaltig" and *gard* meaning "Schutz", represents the upper-class German younger female generation. The meaning of her first name is significant in some ways: on one hand, Irmgard despises traditional German social norms for women and wishes to break away by maintaining a love affair with Max; on the other hand, she supports these same traditional roles by trying to get married as soon as possible, seeking protection within marriage from any societal suspicions and gossip. Ultimately, Irmgard embodies the 'powerful' or 'big' 'protector' of traditional societal norms and practices them by sacrificing her own desires. She also represents the image of a

‘typical’ Western upper-class woman of the nineteenth century “... weil Irmgard eine Norddeutsche ist und das Leben nichts weniger als leicht nimmt. Jede Heimlichkeit jagt ihr hinterher tagelanges Entsetzen ein. Kleiner norddeutscher Adel, der in alten, festen Familientraditionen groß geworden ist” (*Fenitschka* 23). She is juxtaposed to Fenitschka, and unlike the Western educated, nonchalant Russian Fenitschka, Irmgard belongs to a strict traditional German upper-class society.

Conversely, as much as Irmgard adheres to the social norms, at least on the surface and in public, Max and Irmgard keep their engagement secret, as for her, Max was “anfangs eine Art Ausweg und Rettung aus der etwas engen geistigen Atmosphäre ihres Hauses[;] [d]amit fing es an” (*Fenitschka* 23). As Max proceeds to describe the circumstances of their engagement, Fenitschka, not much surprised, observes the pretense within German upper-class societal traditions but also women’s own hypocrisy by stating: “Doch nur eine Maskerade für lauter übergroße Demut, ..., – ach, wie deutsch ist das! Aber da bringt sie Ihnen doch lauter Opfer. Leiden Sie denn nicht darunter?” (*Ibid.*, 24). While Fenitschka would suffer under the conditions of Max and Irmgard’s engagement, Max does not believe that his fiancé is sacrificing herself when he asserts: “Leider nein! In dieser Selbstüberwindung und stolzen Demut liegt etwas, was unsereinen entzückt. Es steigert die gegenseitige Liebe, glaub ich –” (*Ibid.*). The statement “glaub ich” indicates that he actually questions whether or not his beliefs are accurate (*Ibid.*).

The difference between Fenitschka and Irmard is further illustrated through the inter-gendered interaction both women cultivate. Fenitschka approaches friendship among both genders with a platonic conduct, and Max experiences such

friendships similarly when he states: “Die sogenannten seelischen Freundschaften! Etwas wählerischer sind sie, aber auch sie kann man zu mehreren Menschen haben, mehrere können sich folgen, denn man bekommt ja auch in ihnen nur ein Teilchen des ganzen Menschen, und gibt nur ein Teilchen. – – Man bleibt bewußt, – geizig, – genügsam” (Ibid., 46). And later the text continues: “wo er nicht den ungewohnten Reiz einer so zutraulichen weiblichen Nähe ohne alle erotischen Nebengedanken durchkostete. Es schien ihm ein gradezu idealer Fall, geschaffen dank ihrer beiderseitigen Benommenheit von einer andern Liebe, und ganz besonders begünstigt durch Fenias Gewohnheit, sich Männern gegenüber zwanglos gehnzulassen” (Ibid., 48). However, in the matter of love, Fenitschka and Max are acting in a similar manner:

Das machte seiner Meinung nach einen gewaltigen Unterschied! Wenn ein Mann mitunter eine Frau weniger tief und absolut liebt als sie ihn, so mochte es nicht zum wenigsten damit zusammenhängen, daß sie für sein gesamtes Geistesdasein meistens eine geringere Bedeutsamkeit besessen hat als er für sie. Er erholt sich mehr bei ihr, als daß er ihrer außerhalb der Liebe bedarf. – – – So erholte Fenia sich vielleicht von ihren eignen geistigen Kämpfen und Anstrengungen bei dem Mann ihrer Liebe. Nach Jahren konzentriertester Studien, asketischen Lebens eine unbewußt vollzogene, ganz naiv hingenommene Reaktion –. Erst der Heiratsantrag rührte ihre friedlich ruhenden Gedanken darüber plötzlich auf, ließ sie erwachen, – sich klarwerden. (Ibid., 59)

Irmgard, on the other hand, strictly reserves any close interaction with men for love interests alone, which is seen through Max's impression of her: "Ein Mädchen wie Irmgard erschließt sich nur, wo es liebt, und hält sich sonst stets in der etwas kalten Strenge ihrer Mädchenhoheit zurück, – verschlossen und herb. Aber schließt sich denn ein Weib wirklich auf, wo es liebt? Täuscht es sich nicht unwissentlich darüber?" and "daß er für Irmgard von vornherein glücklicherweise mehr bedeute, als für Fenia ein Mann augenblicklich bedeuten konnte. Er bedeutete für sie zugleich das einzige sie belebende Geisteselement inmitten ihrer konventionellen Familienkreise (ibid 48, 59). Irmgard, unlike Fenitschka, would suffer greatly under the effects of a damaged reputation within her social circle. Again, the criticism the text is exercising is of the fear of crossing the social codes of morality, which plays a significant role in Irmgard's conduct, albeit she too experiences dichotomy of the expression of love:

Unwillkürlich versetzten Max Werners Gedanken Irmgard in die gleiche Lage, und er sah, wie sie schon bei der bloßen Vorstellung um vernichteten Mädchenruf litt und blutete. Besaß sie wirklich so viel mehr Menschenfurcht, so viel weniger Seelenkraft als Fenia? Nein! Dafür kannte er sie zu gut. Aber was die öffentliche Moral tadelte und lobte, das tadelte und lobte sie selbst bis zu gewissem Grade auch. Wenn sie in Zwiespalt mit der vorgeschriebenen Lebensführung geriet, dann geriet sie auch mit sich selbst in Zwiespalt. Daher mitten im Rausch eines Kusses das Erzittern geheimer Angst, als besäßen die Wände Ohren, – daher das Gefühl, daß die Liebe sowohl der Genius ihres Lebens als auch der allmächtige Dämon und Versucher sei, dem

Gewalt gegeben ist, den Engel zu verscheuchen. – Irmgard erwartete von der Liebe nicht – Fenias »Frieden«. (Ibid., 33-34)

The novella continues the portrayal of the socio-cultural difference between Fenitschka and Irmgard through Max's perception of both women and his personal inclination towards the traditional type. When a letter from Irmgard arrives for Max, he immediately responds "und berechnete zugleich das Datum seiner Ankunft in München. Seine Abreise aus Rußland war von ihm längst auf diese Tage festgesetzt worden, aber noch nie hatte es ihn so gedrängt wie heute, Irmgard wieder in die Arme zu schließen" (Ibid., 58). His desire to join Irmgard was instigated by his conversation with Fenitschka and his unexplained feelings towards her emancipated views: "– Denn plötzlich wollte es ihm weit weniger selbstverständlich erscheinen als bisher, daß Irmgard ihn so stark und treu liebe, wie sie es tat, – es drängte ihn daher, ihr das Geständnis ihrer Liebe aufs neue aus den Augen und von den Lippen zu lesen" (Ibid.). Max's confidence in Irmgard's traditional approach towards love comforted him, unlike Fenitschka's confronting ideas.

Furthermore, unlike Irmgard, who seeks protection from gossip by marrying Max, Fenitschka feels ashamed of male intentions to protect her from the gossip: "[o]ffenbar empfand sie es nur peinlich, daß irgend jemand für sie eintreten, verantworten, schützende oder verteidigende Maßregeln ergreifen wollte. Sie begehrte nicht nach dem Schutz der Familie, und es erschien ihr vermutlich ebenso lächerlich wie unbehaglich, mit einemmal wie zerbrechliches Glaszeug behandelt zu werden" (Ibid., 33). Max tries to defend Fenitschka's 'honor' in Paris and later in Russia: In Paris, after an old French woman gave her advice not to mingle with the

grissettes, he assured the woman there was not a reason for concern. In Russia, Max attempted to protect Fenitschka's reputation again. Through his perception of the two different female images, Salomé uses the contrast between Fenitschka and Irmgard to demonstrate mainstream societal views and the individual's desire to separate from the constraints women experience within society. The root of the issue is not the question of whether or not it is right to love a man in its entirety, but it is the fear of societal persecution due to the chosen relationship with men.

Although Salomé focuses predominantly on contrasting Fenitschka and Irmgard, and therefore Russian and German upper-class societies, she also portrays similar societal issues within Russian culture. The Russian young woman Nadeschda, whose name means 'hope', represents upper-class Russian women, and like Irmgard, she is about to get married. Nadeschda is shocked at Fenitschka's lack of reaction to gossip concerning her love affair when she says: "Mein Gott! daß du das so ruhig nehmen kannst! ..., ich war ganz außer mir, wie ich davon erfuhr. Wie schlecht ist die Welt! Ich zerbrach mir dermaßen den Kopf darüber, daß ich fast meine Migräne bekam. -- Bei dir wird es auch noch morgen nachkommen" (Ibid., 32). Such a reaction is 'logical' for a woman who chooses to be in a traditional relationship; yet, the contradiction lies in the fact that Nadeschda and her partner appear to be secretly engaging in physical intimacy. Although Nadeschda, a member of Russian upper-class society, seems to strictly follow the societal rules for women, similar to Irmgard and Fenitschka, she wishes nothing more than to be with the person she loves. The difference is that neither Nadeschda nor Irmgard are able to free themselves from the societal expectations of women.

Conversely, Fenitschka breaks through German and Russian societal barriers and is willing to sacrifice her status within society for an independent life and equality.¹³⁵ She responds to Max: "... das ist doch wirklich etwas Abscheuliches! Ich meine, daß den Frauen in manchen Beziehungen die Heimlichkeit einfach aufgezwungen wird! ... Etwas verleugnen und verstecken müssen, was man aus tiefstem Herzen tut! Sich schämen, wo man jubeln sollte!" (Ibid., 37-38). The idea of keeping *love* secret appears to Fenitschka not only as abominable, but demeaning and disgraceful.

To illustrate the lack in social progress in both Russian and German societies, Salomé lets Max return to his German fiancé in Germany and Fenitschka remains in Russia, although she chooses to follow neither Russian nor German traditional female roles and remains unmarried. Fenitschka's distinctive personality is attributed to the experience of intercultural and inter-societal contact, and her constant exposure to different cultures and societies allows her to broaden her views and develop various perspectives of 'self' and 'others', as well as to distance herself from and challenge the mainstream social concept of the 'female image', defined by both women and men in German and Russian cultures and societies.

Furthermore, the nameless grisette represents the working class women and is mentioned at the beginning and end of the novella. Fenitschka's encounter with the grisette had a strong influence on recognizing her identity, especially in regards to crossing social borders. Not only does Fenitschka identify herself with the grisette

¹³⁵ In fact, while Birgit Wernz does not identify a strong female image in Salomé's novella in her book *Sub-Version: Weiblichkeitsentwürfe in den Erzähltexten Lou Andreas-Salomés* (1997), she portrays the struggles and limitations women endured during her lifetime and presents the existence of a strong and independent woman in *Fenitschka*.

and desires to live a free and independent life, but the crossing of social borders lets her live firsthand through a societal injustice experienced among the members of the same gender, in which women of the upper class actively participate in the discrimination of lower-class women and condemn their life-styles. The same problem appears to be present in two different countries.

When Fenitschka is unable to fulfill her desires in reality, she works through her issues within her dreams. Salomé incorporates late nineteenth-century contemporary discourses on dream interpretation by depicting Fenitschka's innermost struggles through a dream: "Verstehst du dich auf Traumdeutung?" Fenitschka asks Max and continues "– – ach, übrigens Unsinn, – aber ich will dir erzählen. – – Es war in Paris, ja. In dem Nachtcafé, weißt du? Ihr saßet alle da am Tisch, – ganz wie damals. – – Und ich war auch da. Aber ich war nicht bei euch am Tisch", to which Max replies with a question: "Sondern?" Fenitschka responds: "Sondern irgendwo da. – – Irgendwo unter den Grisetten" (Ibid., 61). Max reacts to Fenitschka's explanation of the dream: "Ich verstehe nicht recht, Fenia. Das ist ja ein ganz dummer Traum", he elucidates a negative reaction not only towards social progress, but he also challenges the validity of psychoanalytic practice (ibid 61). Fenitschka, on the other hand, explains the dream as a space and time in which convoluted and confused thoughts come to light:

Nicht so dumm, wie du meinst – –. ... Ich glaube, unsre klugen Gedanken wirken nur wenig mit am Traumgewebe. – – Nein, alle die klugen Gedanken, die wir uns so allmählich erwerben, alle die aufgeklärten und vernünftigen Ansichten, die träumen wir wohl nur

wenig. – – Im Traum *taxieren* wir uns anders, – uns und die Dinge, – verworren und wirr vielleicht, aber doch so ganz naiv. (Ibid.)

As such, societal ailments damaging to one's psyche are reflected in Fenitschka's dreams. Her dreams reveal her own struggles and the treatment of women who deviate from social norms in both societies. She feels a separation between her own and mainstream German and Russian societal perspectives on women's freedom. Despite Fenitschka's higher level of education and social status, she breaks through the social moral code of conduct. Both women, the grisette in the Parisian Café at the beginning of the story and Fenitschka, experience similar societal pressures, injustice and discrimination according to their life-style.

Though the novella's concluding image is one of parity, such freedom and equality is reserved only for the protagonists. Salomé's work presents a wide range of characters with varying stances on female emancipation. Her *Fenitschka* suggests that the majority of women, sometimes in conjunction with men, create the gendered roles within each society by either promoting them directly by maintaining social and cultural practices or by demonizing individuals, who refuse to adhere to such norms. Salomé also depicts men and women progressive in their views, who actively or passively decline participation in such societal practices. Fenitschka, however, retains a unique 'positionality' throughout the text. As a Russian, who spent a substantial amount of time in Germany and Switzerland, she integrates into German society but never identifies with female gender norms as established in either Russian or German societies; rather, she identifies with the grisettes, the French working-class women.

Moreover, due to the geographical and cultural transitions, Fenitschka (as a Russian in Europe) and later Max (as a German in Russia) are exposed to at least one different culture and the various traditional male and female roles,¹³⁶ from which they distance themselves briefly during their short-lived friendship in Russia. During Max's stay in Russia, he develops an 'unusually' intimate, yet platonic, relationship with Fenitschka. The close interaction between both characters could be attributed to their difference in cultural background, as well as to their mutual experience in transnational and intercultural encounters while being displaced from the society of their native country at one point in their lives. These individuals are equals intellectually, both having a clear and rich understanding of their cultural differences.

However, Max is depicted as being in the process of developing and integrating into Russian society through assimilation, whereas Fenitschka shows aspects of cultural hybrid identity—she is well acquainted with the Western cultural practices, beliefs, and social norms while at the same time displaying psychological symptoms individuals with cross-cultural and intercultural backgrounds develop during the process of integration.¹³⁷ She partially adopts certain traits of 'Eastern' and 'Western' cultures but is unable to fully accept the socially constructed gender roles for women (and men).

The fact that Fenitschka's mother is neither involved in her upbringing nor even mentioned once, suggests Salomé's intent to show how women are partially responsible for influencing daughters to follow the traditional constructs of 'women'.

¹³⁶ The 'typical' male or female roles in Germany are not the same as the male and female roles in Russia; therefore, the 'typical' gender roles no longer hold their validity in individuals crossing cultural borders and entering into a 'gender-free' zone, in which the sex of the individuals becomes a mere physical and minor difference.

¹³⁷ As in Berry's understanding of 'psychological integration' which was explained in Chapter 1.

Her father, on the other hand, is Fenitschka's primary influence in regards to gender roles. The absence of a traditional 'female role model' resulted in the development of a woman living a gender-free concept. The younger generation, comprised of the male and female characters Max, Fenitschka's Russian lover, the grisette, Nadeschda, and Irmgard, also indicates that women who, despite having the chance to change their position often choose to submit to societal norms without much public upheaval.

Nonetheless, one cannot underestimate the influence of fear which these women face in their homeland. Because the reader sees the world through either a male's eyes or through Fenitschka, who has no desire to live in a Western European society, the repercussions for not adhering to gender roles (the gossip and the inability to marry) seem trite, but as women who wanted to stay in France or Germany, their fear of ridicule is justified. Fenitschka has the freedom to move across nations, but Irmgard and Nadeschda had to remain in their native lands. Should they never marry, they might succumb to poverty, and that is not women being petty, but inheritance laws, over which women had no control.

Conclusion

Despite her social criticism, Salomé sees a potential unity among individuals of diverse cultural groups, social classes and genders: the Russian Fenitschka identifies and unites with the French grisette; however, she identifies herself with neither Nadeschda nor Irmgard, although she shares similar social pressures in regards to morals and gender roles. Fenitschka is also able to form a platonic friendship with the German Max, a friendship which is traditionally found among individuals of the same sex. Within their relationship, typical female and male roles

appear to play little significance; in effect, Max and Fenitschka form an intimate relationship based on the intellectual and emotional level, rather than the physical.

By showing that all people, regardless of biological gender, are able to be equal, Salomé demonstrates that social and cultural ideas of gender are only constructs and not due to their biology. Norms are constructed, and gender is merely a physical trait akin to eye color or hair and does not determine the character of a human being. The belief that gender roles are biologically determined is false, rather it is the society itself, which constructs gender norms through rigorously teaching and correcting each member through the transmission of ‘appropriate’ behavior from mother to daughter, for instance, or by criticizing and ostracizing those who refuse to conform.

The phenomenon in Fenitschka’s character is that she belongs neither to the Russian/Eastern nor the German/Western societies and develops an entirely new and different understanding of the concept ‘Woman’. Salomé embraced the idea of alternative life-styles and experienced the diversity of cultures by growing up in Russia as a member of the German minority and within an intercultural household. Her extensive travels throughout Europe and in Russia allowed her to develop an alternative ‘positionality’ on socio-cultural questions and challenge their legitimacy. While Salomé explores the ‘Woman Question’ from an intercultural ‘positionality’ in *Fenitschka*, she shifts the focus on the interculturality and the individual’s cultural experience in a collective memory of Germans in Russia. Her drive for knowledge and for the achievement of equality is continued in her subsequent journal *Russland mit Rainer* and the novel *Rodinka*.

Chapter 3: Salomé's *Russland mit Rainer* and *Rodinka*

Introduction

Lou Andres-Salomé's novella *Fenitschka* was her first work extensively discussing aspects of the similarities and differences in Russian and German societies and cultures, as well as the development of an intercultural Russian-German women's hybrid identity. However, she continued to write about this subject matter around the turn of the twentieth century and later in her life. Salomé's published journal *Russland mit Rainer. Tagebuch der Reise mit Rainer Maria Rilke im Jahre 1900*, which she composed during her Russian journey in 1900, and the novel *Rodinka* consist of a study of the Russian people and their culture.

Throughout her journal, novel, and novella, Salomé incorporates pertinent background information regarding various cultures and ethnic groups within Russia and includes her personal views on each. Although her focus is primarily on Russia and the Russian people, she compares and contrasts the Russian with the German, the Russian, Ukrainian and Tatar cultures. While considering these diverse cultures, Salomé hypothesizes on the subjects of class difference and education within Russia and Germany. In her journal, she discusses the significant role of religion in Russian culture and its impact upon the people's mentality. She further makes distinctions between Eastern and Western ideologies, touching upon the Western presence in Russia and discussing the multiculturalism of Russian society. Besides mentioning the Ukrainian and the Tatar minority groups, she incorporates a discourse on the German

colonists in Russia and particularly those in the Volga region. An important aspect of Salomé's encounter with Russian culture is its effect on her own psychological acculturation. While evidence of her acculturation to Russian culture is apparent in her use and incorporation of the Russian language throughout her journal¹³⁸ and *Rodinka*, her psychological acculturation is more poignantly evident in her depictions of Russia as her homeland.

The following study of her poetic work demonstrates how her journal, during the journey to Russia in 1900, illustrates Salomé's acculturation with the Russian culture. In order to identify her inner desire and open-mindedness, her longing to live among the Russians, to experience what it meant to live and feel Russian, this investigation begins with the rediscovery of Salomé's childhood upon her return to Russia in 1900. Much of the work Salomé wrote around the time of her two journeys is centered on her experiences of Russia. This was also the time of her increasing interest in the study of psychoanalysis, in which childhood development plays an integral role.

Beginning with an analysis of Salomé's Russian journals, this chapter demonstrates how Salomé's inner struggle to find a geographic location, which she could consider her *Heimat*, homeland, led her to create new psychological hypotheses on the importance of childhood cultural encounters for the formulation of one's cultural and national identities. By examining these journals and her novel *Rodinka*,

¹³⁸ Salomé writes words in the Russian language using Cyrillic, and especially first and last names, street names, the names of cities, churches, etc. as well as phrases in Russian and sometimes in entire sentences. For instance, she writes the name of a church, the Sophia-Church: the name "Sophia" is written in the Cyrillic alphabet in Russian, but the "church" in German: Софиска-Кирче. This is a linguistic phenomenon, a Russian-German Creole (Russischdeutsch or also called Kwelja), that has been observed in Russian-German immigrants in Germany.

this analysis reveals how Salomé presents alternative cultural and national identities based on her theories of cross-cultural exchange, which destabilize traditional constructs of ‘Germanness’, ‘Russianness’ and gender.

1. Salomé 's Loss of 'Heimat' and Rediscovery of 'Rodina'

Salomé's journey to Russia in 1900 was unlike any other journey she had embarked on before. It was a journey of personal discovery in a familiar space and reminiscent of a distant time.¹³⁹ During that particular expedition, Salomé rediscovered her childhood in Russia and encountered a serene home (Heimat) within her inner self. In the first sentence of her Russian journal, Salomé writes on the 15th of May, 1900, in Wodswischenka, of that very sense of homecoming: “Wenn man in dem altern Palais die Terems sieht, möchte man dort bleiben, sein zu Hause finden und nirgendwo anders mehr wohnen” (*Russland mit Rainer* 27-28).¹⁴⁰ Throughout her journal, Salomé reiterates her feeling of belonging, by maintaining that “Матушка Москва (*Matuschka Moskwa, Mütterchen Moskau*) und Матушка Волга (*Matuschka Wolga, Mütterchen Wolga*)¹⁴¹ sind die beiden großen Herrlichkeiten Rußlands. Moskau ist wie ein Nachhausekommen nach allem was man gesehen hat im weiten Kreis um seinen heiligen Hügel und Kirchen” (*Ibid.*, 88-89).

Salomé reflected on her journey to Russia as a time of rediscovery and discovery of her identity, and a place to which she wished to belong. The experience of the beauty of Russian nature, Culture/culture and people, profoundly affected her

¹³⁹ Although Salomé traveled to Russia with Rilke, she does not mention him, rather describes the mutual experience merely as “we” and mentions him only once by making a marginal notation of his name with a mere “R” (*Russland mit Rainer* 73).

¹⁴⁰ ‘Terem’ refers in Old Russian to a living space for women.

¹⁴¹ Matuschka Moskwa und Matushka Wolga translated into English refers to ‘dear mother Moscow and dear mother Volga’.

psychological development. Her acculturation with Russian culture influenced and shaped Salomé's social and cultural perception, as is evident in *Fenitschka* and in the last paragraph of her journal, which reads:

Im Uebrigen blicke ich heut nur zurück, auf das Erlebniß von 1900 für mich, auf Russland. Und alle Einzelerinnerungen verschwimmen in ein Gefühl, wie von etwas Weitem, Silbernen, – wie Erhabenheit ohne düstere Schwere, wie Zutraulichkeit ohne Enge, – so etwas wie die kleinen an's Wolga-Ufer geschmiegtten Hütten, irgendwo im Unbegrenzten, zwischen Nord und Süd –. Beethoven und Volkslied. Und noch durch so manche Jahre, wohin ich auch gerathe, am Rande welcher Entwicklung ich auch gehe, ich werde in irgend einem Sinn an den Ufern dieses Flusses weitergehn, und wie einer Heimath zu. (Ibid., 145)

Throughout the entire journey, she makes comparisons between the Russian and the Western, specifically the German cultures. She also makes distinctions between the various ethnic and cultural groups within Russia and identifies differences and commonalities between the cultures, societies and even landscapes. One of the recurring themes and discoveries she makes is the beauty of 'Russian' nature and its landscape, including the architecture, particularly in rural Russia and the Russian villages: "..., am Ausgang der Wolgafahrt, wonach [ihre] Sehnsucht förmlich schrie angesichts Simbirsk: ein Stückchen Leben im russischen Dorf" and "[w]ar es schon eine Ueberraschung, zum Schluss der Reise in Дрож (*Drosh*. [*shins*])¹⁴² Dorf so viel und so Reiches geschenkt zu erhalten, so erschien dieser Einblick in einen köstlichen

¹⁴² Drozh refers to the name of the village.

Typus russischen Gutslebens als eine unerwartete Steigerung der ganzen Reise”
(Ibid., 82, 111).

For Salomé, the uniqueness of the peaceful, untouched landscape contributes to the development of the Russian culture and mentality and adds a physical location in which she experiences her own psychological development. Through the Russian landscape Salomé begins to rediscover her childhood and notes that: “Die Landschaft erinnert mich mehr und mehr an die mir bekannte im russischen Norden, nicht mehr an jene unsäglich ergreifende die ich nur wie im Traume sah –, und die wie eine Erfüllung ist, neben der alles ruhig in der Seele wird, als sei nun alles gut –.” (Ibid., 82).

Salomé states that “[a]m russischsten erscheint mir die Landschaft, belebt von den Pilgern; Birken und stille Weiher, wie gemalt ...” and she continues: “Darüber lag die Landschaft wundervoll sanft und russisch mit ihrer stark gewellten Ebene, weiten Wiesen auf denen Mengen von Maiglöckchen sich eben aus den Knospen öffneten, und die blau waren von ganz großäugigen tausendfältigen Vergissmeinnicht ... wie ein Heimkehren in eine stille Schönheit, die ich einmal geträumt habe. ... *Hier möchte ich bleiben* (Ibid., 53, 54-55).¹⁴³ Furthermore, Salomé describes the Volga region:

Am Abend waren wir am Wolgastrand, der hier wie Meerstrand ist;
alles muthet so sympathisch an, dass man für immer hier leben
möchte, aber ich könnte es doch nie ohne Heimweh nach der *großen*
Wolga mit ihren hohen Ufern, mit ihren machtvollen Waldungen und
Steppen; dies hier ist, in’s Nordische übersetzt, nur eine Probe davon,

¹⁴³ Salomé added an additional note in pencil: *für immer*.

nur ein Pröbchen; und das Nordische an sich ist für mich nicht das
Gesammtrussische. (Ibid., 108)

Salomé's identification with the Russian people and her sense of belonging to Eastern Russia, as opposed to the European influenced St. Petersburg, is heightened and intensified during her visit with her family at their summer-home in Finland, where she writes in Rongas on 15th August:¹⁴⁴

Weder Petersburg noch die finnländische Landschaft könnten in mir jenes allumfassende Heimathgefühl auslösen, wie es durch die russischen Eindrücke auf der Reise, durch die Wolga und Moskau für mich zu einer lebendigen Macht geworden ist. Aber weil ich den thatsächlichen Heimathboden hier habe, daher ist hier alles bevölkert von tausend Einzelerinnerungen, und in dem großen Gesang von Walk und Wasser in Rongas finde ich thatsächlich die vielen kleinen Kinderstimmen aus einem lang vergangenen Sommer wieder, – den Sommer, der am Ausgang meiner Kindheit stand. In ihnen aber klingt schon das an, was durch mein ganzes Leben gegangen ist und mir Russland, sein Volk und sein Land, jetzt so vertraut gemacht hat: deshalb reicht der ganze Kreis von Eindrücken bis hierher zurück, vollendet sich erst hier. (Ibid., 141-142)

During her journey through Russia, Salomé composed several poems reflecting on her lost and found identity and the emotional reunion with her homeland. One of the poems about the city Novgorod deals directly with her memory of Russia as a child, but also describes a new perception of Russia as an adult. In the

¹⁴⁴ This journal entry is marked by Salomé as 2/15 VIII.

following poem, Salomé particularly praises the simplicity of Russian culture and its people and her feeling of belonging. She states that “Новго[родъ]¹⁴⁵ (*Nowgo[rod]*) ist eine vergangene Schönheit und Macht, aber wenn man heute drin ist, baut es eine ganz neue Schönheit und Macht auf” (Ibid., 115). The poem continues this idea:

Mein Land, das ich so lang versäumt,
Mein Land, das ich als Kind geträumt,
Dem ich im Traume einst begegnet,
Das mich entließ, sehnsuchtsgesegnet.
Mein Land, wo Brod und Blume steht,
Wo Jeder Gott entgegen geht
Ob er ein Kreuz am Wege findet,
Ob er im Korn die Garben bindet.
Dich hab ich lieb, vom Hüttchen an,
Zu deiner Kuppeln Gold hinan,
Dich preis‘ ich, wo ich dich betrete,
Doch aller Preis wird zum Gebete.
(Ibid., 115)

Salomé recalls her childhood memories in another poem she once composed at her family’s summer home in Rongas many years before she returned to Russia in 1900 (Ibid., 125).¹⁴⁶ During this journey to Russia, she reflects many times on her desire to explore the horizon, her loss and longing for a home (Heimath) and a space in which

¹⁴⁵ The Russian city Novgorod.

¹⁴⁶ On this page, Salomé writes: “Ein Gedichtchen, von irgendwoher, aus einer hellen Nacht in Rongas vor vielen Jahren, mir wiedergekommen am Meer zwischen den Steinen und Tannen, wo es inzwischen im Moos und Seetang versteckt gelegen hat, durch vieler Jahre dunkle und helle Nächte hindurch.”

she would find the freedom to grow. Clear evidence of the discussion on the concept of home ('Heimat') is presented in Salomé's novel *Rodinka*. The title of the novel *Rodinka* is a diminutive form for 'родина' ('rodina'), which translated refers to 'little homeland' or 'kleine Heimat' or 'Heimatchen'. Her concept of home is not only tied closely to the geographical location, but also to a feeling of belonging to a certain nation. In her personal life, Salomé rediscovered her homeland in Russia, despite her German ancestral roots. Her characters in *Rodinka*, however, refer to Germany as their home—as their 'Heimat'.

24 VII/6 VIII 1900.

Du heller Himmel über mir!
Dir will ich mich vertrauen
Ich kann nicht bei den Menschen hier
Mein kleines Leben bauen.
Du, der sich über alles dehnt,
Durch Weiten und durch Winde:
Such' mir die Heimath, heiß ersehnt,
Wo ich mich selber finde.
Ich will nur eine Scholle breit,
Um fest darauf zu stehen,
Doch über mir: die Himmel weit
Und Gott in ihnen sehen.
Vom Glück will ich ein Endchen kaum,
Und will kein Unglück fliehen, –

Ich will nur eins: ich will nur Raum

Um unter Dir zu knieen –. (Ibid., 125-126)

Two decades after Salomé left for Germany in search of personal freedom, she returns to Russia to find the home ‘Heimath’ she longed for since her childhood. However, the reunion with her homeland is illustrated in an ambiguous manner in which she confronts the memories of her childhood. Her experiences at her return to Russia give her mixed feelings, and she notes that it was the time of “Wehmuth und Bangigkeit und Sehnsucht zugleich” (ibid 57).

In the following poem, Salomé illustrates the sentiment of reunion with her childhood home. The physical space depicting a scene in which she finds herself in a forest in a stormy night illustrates her psychological state stemming from her confrontation with her distant past, which evokes confusion between the strange and familiar, between a dream and reality; this was, nonetheless, the physical and psychological space of her childhood:

1/13 VIII 1900

Wiedersehen.

– Längst kein Pfad um mich her.

Steil durch Gestrüpp [,] Gestein,

Sturmverweht, über dem Meer,

Klomm ich waldein.

Fremd wird’s, fremder um mich.

– Ob ich im Traume geh?

Märchentraum glich

Waldnacht und See.

Horch! Wie der Sturm posaunt!

-- wird nicht noch etwas laut --

Ist's nicht, als ob raunt,

Seltsam vertraut -- ?

Lauschend starr ich hinaus,

Lauschend durch Welle und Wind --.

--- *Hier war ich ja zu Haus*, ---

Hier war ich Kind --. (Ibid., 126. Emphasis by Regina Ianozi)

While traveling by boat on the river Volga, Salomé was fascinated by the Russian landscape and the surroundings frequently reminded her of her childhood in Russia. Russia, which Salomé in her youth yearned to escape, became the place to which she longed to return and remain—and during this journey, she accepted and viewed Russia from an alternative perspective. The much-desired reunion with Russia, the Russian people, and the landscape is evident in the poem “Wolga”. In this poem, Salomé depicts her nostalgia for the Russian landscape, especially the river Volga, and the personification of the landscape evokes an image of a mother welcoming into her arms a restless child yearning for warmth and serenity:

Bist Du auch fern: ich schaue Dich doch an.

Bist Du auch fern, bleibst Du mir doch gegeben

Als eine Gegenwart, die nichts verlöschen kann.

Wie meine Landschaft liegst Du um mein Leben.

Umgiebst mich immer wieder; lächelnd groß.

Auf Deinen Höhen Kirchen, halbverborgen,
Um Deinen Ufer Fernen, grenzenlos,
Und Deine Wälder ragen in den Morgen.
Als müßte wieder, wenn es dunkeln will,
Ein Junihimmel Deine Nacht erhellen,
Als klänge durch die Nebelfrühe schrill
Der Klageschrei von Möwen auf den Wellen –
Hätt ich auch nie an Deinem Strand geruht:
Mir ist, als wüßte ich um Deine Weiten:
Als landete mich jede Traumesfluth
An Deinen ungeheuren Einsamkeiten. (Ibid., 132-133)

While traveling throughout Russia, Salomé experienced for the first time in 1900 a personal transformation. During this particular time and in the various places throughout Russia, Salomé reflected much more on her childhood and on her development during the adolescent years and the realization of her identity. Much of this contemplation on her psychological development is reflected in her novels *Im Zwischenland* (1902) and in *Ma* (1901), in which she depicts adolescent girls' development, and in both novels the location is set in Russia. The inspiration for these novels is rooted in Salomé's personal interest in explaining her introverted and lonely childhood and the necessity for the changing location for her psychological development. Here Salomé describes her thoughts on the physiological process of experiencing childhood and adolescence.

Und vielleicht auch rein physiologisch ein ähnlicher Kontrast in der Kinderseele selbst, der vorausgeahnt wird: dass man nicht im gleichen Masse naiv genießendes Kind mehr ist, sich jedes Jahr mühsamer in diese froh lebende Natur einnisten muss, jedes Jahr bewusster den Frühling erst in ganzer Prosa aufzupacken und einrichten muss, um ihn zu haben, weil Vögel und Blüthen allein dazu nicht mehr genügen. Etwas schon Verlorengangenes spricht aus jedem neuen Einzug, ein Rückblick, eine Zeitstrecke, und das macht bange: theils ist man stolz darauf, theils aber ahnt man, wie das Erwachsensein neu und schrecklich sein wird und der Tod für so vieles, was nie wiederkehrt. (Ibid., 57-58)

Reflecting on her journey to Russia, Salomé recognizes the entirety and the meaning of this journey for her. It was an opportunity to experience her life through a new perspective, to gain a renewed view of Russia, one which she was unable to fully embrace and comprehend in her childhood and adolescent years while still living in Russia. Just as Gillot opened for her the door to the West, which helped her acquire knowledge of the 'other', during this return journey to Russia, Salomé came to comprehend the East in a way she never had before, encountering the land, the people, and the culture more objectively. Salomé explains the new manner of familiarizing herself with the land by stating:

Und groß und weit, mit einem überschauenden Blick begreift man dann, was die Reise im Grunde gewesen. Für mich ein Anderes, Besonderes, das ich nicht erwartet hatte, – das ungerufen daherkam

und mich an der Hand nahm. Ein Erlebnis, wie es in der Jugend zu erleben wohl unmöglich ist. Ich könnte es so ausdrücken: meiner ganzen Natur nach habe ich immer alles sehr tief in mir selbst erlebt; als Kind und bald darauf so tief damit beschäftigt, nach allen zu greifen, was mich zu mir selber brachte, das ich blind und stark danach griff. Solch Erlebnis war Gillot. Er unterwarf mich mir selber. Später bliebe dadurch mein instinktiver Standpunkt der des Lebensschaffens von mir selber aus. Alles wurde dadurch stark subjektiv gefärbt, gerade weil ich dazu voll in's Leben einging und eingriff: ich verbrauchte es für mich. Nur so erlebte ich im Grunde auch Landschaften und Reisen. Sie stellten sich wie blühende Rahmen um ein subjektives Erlebnis, ein subjektives Bild. Was sie an sich bedeuteten, interessierte mich nur entweder als Menschen des Erkennens oder rein ästhetisch, aber der Weg zur vollen Ergriffenheit meines Innern führte immer durch das Subjektive hindurch. (Ibid., 89-90)

While Salomé's previous experience perceiving and acquiring knowledge about cultures and people was strongly subjective, this journey to Russia greatly reflects a widened understanding of her culture of origin. Rather than merely looking at the Russian people and the landscape, she embraces the experience and the feelings it evokes by entirely acculturating with the Russian culture, immersing herself in the Russian society and countryside. Salomé illustrates her becoming one with Russian

nature by presenting a picture of a personified river calling her to rest on her shores and experiencing the depth and richness of Russia:

Auf dieser Reise ist das plötzlich anders gewesen. Es begann mit großer Präzision des Geschauten, gewissermaßen unabhängig von meinem Vorhandensein, laut und mächtig wie eine Welt heiliger Erfüllungen zu mir sprach. Die Wolga-Landschaft schien mir zu sagen: »ich bin für dich nicht nur da, um dich etwas in mir anzusiedeln und in mir den edelsten Boden für dein Leben zu finden, – ich bin an mir selber eine Erfüllung für dich, d.h., in einer Landschaft verkörpert alles das, was dir vorgeschwebt und was du nur deshalb nicht als Landschaft im Träume gesehn hast, weil du zufällig kein Maler bist, sondern in anderer Weise Deine Träume bildest. Sonst würdest du mich längst gekannt, längst im Bild vorweggenommen haben. Zu mir magst du persönlich nicht mehr kommen können, oder du magst zu mir krank, unfähig, unglücklich kommen, dir bei mir dein Grab suchen, oder an allen verzweifeln, – unabhängig davon werde ich für dich immer der ungeheure Trost einer Erfüllung sein, die tiefe Ruhe des vollendet Geschauten haben. Denn was du je wolltest, ja betetest, je lachtest, was je in dir sang oder träumte oder weinte, – das alles als Landschaft bin ich.« Das alles sagte mir die Wolga wo sie am weitesten ist und ihre Ufer am ansteigen; – oben, im Norden sprach sie zu mir nur noch von dem, woher ich in Wirklichkeit stamme, von der nordrussischen Abstammung. (Ibid., 90– 91)

While the Russian landscape is illustrated as one aspect of Salomé's first engagement with the depths of Russia, she, nonetheless, depicts a similar experience when encountering the Russian people, their culture and mentality. Her adult perception of the Russian people and their culture differs vastly from that of her childhood, and she recognizes the location as a crucial facet of her process of physiological and psychological development as regards the perception of 'self' and 'others'. Once again, Salomé's reflection of Russian influences on her physical and psychological development is elucidated through more objective contemplations:

Und ähnlich erging es mir mit den Menschen: ich begreife es, wenn Tolstoi sagte: »werde einfach wie sie, so werdet ihr alles haben.« In ihnen ist hier und da etwas wie eine solche Wolgalandschaft erfüllt und vollendet, – und nicht mehr habe ich, (wie ehemals allen mir gefallenden Menschen gegenüber) das Verlangen, subjektiv nach ihnen zu greifen, sie meinem Leben einzufügen, sondern mich einfach ehrfürchtig ihnen zuzugesellen, momentan überhaupt dessen vergessend, was ich will oder bin. (Ibid., 91)

What Salomé describes here is a process of acquiring a different view of cultures by distancing herself from all previously attained information, learned or experienced knowledge, tainted by a preconceived notion of a culture. One might not fully develop an objective perception of a different culture, if one is unable to distance oneself from previously acquired knowledge about the country and its people and allow oneself to become a part of that culture. One might criticize Salomé's view of Russia as being nostalgic and purely positive, instead of criticizing the conditions of

lower-class citizens in Russia. Salomé overlooked the rampant poverty and looked for beauty in the simplicity of Russian life—certainly, a view of a privileged upper-class white woman. Nonetheless, her experience of Russia is individual, and she develops a ‘positionality’ that is neither entirely Western (German) nor Eastern (Russian), but influenced by both cultures. Such ‘positionality’ is developed through a constant interaction with people within an intercultural environment over a period of time.

Furthermore, Salomé’s childhood experience as a German in Russia, and later as a German viewed as Russian in Germany, resulted in an underdeveloped sense of cultural and national belonging, while simultaneously providing her with a unique ability to perceive cultures from multiple viewpoints, neither from an Eastern nor a Western view, but a third—intercultural hybrid—position. This position is not only evident in her perception of Russian and German cultures but transcends social and cultural boundaries commonly drawn along gender lines. Salomé recognizes that an individual is not limited to engaging with one single culture but is capable of experiencing and developing within two cultures and societies in order to gain an intercultural perspective.

The concept of maintaining multiple or even an infinite number of identities within one person also corresponds to her unique view of gender. As analyzed and defined in the previous chapter, gender, according to Salomé, is not limited to a male/female binary, but can be defined in an infinite number of ways. Therefore, her interaction with men and women, opposite and same sex individuals, was not constrained by social norms or socially prescribed roles for men and women. She neither distinctly differentiates between and among the sexes, nor does her interaction

with them—a controversial position from the perspective of members of German and Russian society, but natural for Salomé.¹⁴⁷ This unconventional perception of social norms and of the individual’s development within constrained societies demonstrates her hybrid intercultural identity.

Salomé liberated herself from social limitations by pursuing her preferred mode of life, which resulted in great criticism from members of the societies in which she lived (both Russian and German societies). Despite such social reproach, she acquired a distinctive understanding of social norms and the impact they have on an individual’s psychological development (or hindrance of development) during childhood and adolescence. Her harsh critique and response to conventional, restrictive social practices is evidenced when she states:

In dieser Zwischenzeit verwirren sich die Menschen aber oft so sehr in den Folgerungen dieses Persönlichen, dass sie sich auf ihre Grundlinie nicht mehr recht zurückfinden: Liebe, Kinder, Ehrgeiz, Beruf, Geldsorgen, das ganze Getriebe des staatlichen und des gesellschaftlichen Lebens, das so unpersönlich thut, während es doch nur um des Persönlichen willen da ist, man gibt dran was man an selbstloser Sachlichkeit hatte, hat keine für anderes noch – all das bewirkt ein sich Verlieren in Sackgassen. (Ibid., 93)

Salomé maintains her criticism of the lack of acceptance of an individual development within the restricted state and social life. She notes that one loses individuality, the true meaning of one’s life, through the distraction of less pertinent

¹⁴⁷ In *Fenitschka*—both Russian and German societies expect her to adhere to the social norms for women; however, Fenitschka disregards the gender roles by having a male as her confidant—a role that is typically found among individuals of the same sex.

activities practiced among the members of mainstream society. Instead of focusing on the experience of the simplicity of life, individuals within the society strive to reach a certain social status, Salomé states:

Das Ewige und Einfache, aus dem das Leben quillt, das Empfangen desselben aus unmittelbaren Quellen, und daher auch alles Einsehn und Erfahren tiefer Dinge, hört auf. Diese Thatsache klingt aus den meisten Lebensurtheilen der meisten Menschen heraus. Das Leben ist aber nicht eine solche vielspältige Urtheilerei, es ist in seiner Wahrheit wie die Osterglocke *Иванъ Великій (Iwan Welikij)*¹⁴⁸ – –. Die Menschen verheddern sich eben, wie ein schlechter Sprecher, in lauter Nebensätzen und bleiben darin stecken, weil der starke Antrieb fehlt, sich um jeden Preis deutlich zu werden, den Hauptsatz festzuhalten, um hinter seinen Sinn zu kommen. (Ibid., 93-94)

It is her wish to cross social borders and question mainstream society. Salomé believes one must rise above social practices, and enact a change of perception in a practical way, by expressing oneself artistically, observing life scientifically, or even deeply experiencing the change within oneself. As Salomé describes in the following statement:

Was nicht praktisch realisiert wird, oder künstlerisch ausgedrückt oder wissenschaftlich erhärtet, das hat keinen Weg, um aus dem Innern verständlich nach außen zu steigen, jedoch kann es darum als individuelle Erfahrung auf dem Grunde der Seele ruhen, und mag sich oftmals in der einsilbigen Weisheit eines Alten resümieren, der halb

¹⁴⁸ Refers to Ivan the Great.

lächerlich mit den Worten ringt um auszusagen, um was sich sein
Innenleben immer tiefer konzentriert. (Ibid., 137)

Furthermore, she expresses her belief that the traditions and conventions within the bigoted society impede the young individual's psychological development when she states:

Es ist eine grausame und bornirte Fälschung der Wahrheit, wenn man junge Menschen, die sich gegen Tradition und Convention aufbäumen, davon abhält, den kurzen, geraden, eigenen Weg zu allen tiefsten Lebenseinsichten selbst zu betreten, indem man behauptet, dass er doch durch das historisch Gewordene langsam hindurchgeht, und daß mithin Größenwahnsinn dazu gehört, sich davon zu emanzipieren, und bei Seite zu treten. (Ibid., 138)

Salomé did, indeed, reject social conventions and traditional practices by choosing to live an 'unconventional' life, but she was reluctant to participate in any progressive, collective movements. Her statement reveals that she was not against a progressive historical development but against conforming to societal rules and fitting into a specific format (a group or a "Schablone"), in which one would lose his/her individuality. This appears to be a reason for her rejecting the women's movement during her time. Uniqueness and individualism are greatly valued in Salomé's works, and she favored these characteristics to collectivistic membership—even if doing so meant rejecting membership to a collective cause, such as the women's rights movement.

Salomé further rejects the notion of fitting into a social movement, embracing instead the distinctively original, which challenges an individual's personality, and affirms this saying:

In Wirklichkeit handelt es sich dabei gar nicht um den Gegensatz zwischen der historisch fortschreitender Entwicklung und dem anspruchsvollen Einzelnen, der auf eigene Faust aus ihren Geleisen springt, – es handelt sich nur um seine Auflehnung gegen die schablonische Kruste und Versteinerung, die sich als hemmender Niederschlag jeder Zeitperiode über die Fortschritte der vorhergehenden Zeit legt. (Ibid., 138-139)

She maintains that some people might spend their entire life living within the borders of a mass society practicing its traditions and following the conventions without fully reaching their potential, as they are unable to publicly express their individuality. However, those members of society, who do not follow conventions, are quietly afforded room within the same society for individual accomplishments, as she suggests:

Diese Krusten sind nur ein Gewand, und wer willig drin bleibt, kann leicht sein ganzes Leben an etwas rein Aeüßerliches vergeuden. Man kann auch aus besondern Gründen drin bleiben, zum Beispiel um ungestört durch einen Kampf mit Zeit und Umgebung, sich Raum zu schaffen für ein individuelleres Thun, – man kann dann dies Gewand mit Schönheit tragen, indessen verzichtet man damit doch auf einen

volle fruchtbare Einheitlichkeit des Lebens, weil man dessen intimsten
Eigenerlebnisse dann nicht mehr nach außen tragen darf. (Ibid., 139)

Therefore, individuals not partaking in mainstream social practices tend to desire a unity with people of the same kind. Salomé appears to have found such unity with and among the Russian people, and within herself, she experiences such a profundity while encountering and (re-)uniting with Russians, which is evident throughout her entire journal.

II. Encountering Russia

Salomé's journal follows the central themes of the study of general cultural experiences and specifically of Russian culture. In addition to theorizing about proper methods of analysis of a culture or an individual's personal experience of cultures, Salomé offers her views on Russian culture and its people and interjects these with her examination of the cultural differences between German and Russian cultures. She favors neither the German nor Russian culture; instead, she observes and reports on any similarities or differences; however, one is unable to overlook her personal connection, almost a state of infatuation, with the Russian landscape, people and country.

Once Salomé leaves Russia to join her family at their summer home in Finland, she reflects with much nostalgia on the Russian people and the landscape:

Es giebt so viele Schönheit, die man nicht mehr leben kann. Im alten
Park von Новинки (*Nowinki*) ging ich herum und dachte mit
Erstaunen, und fast mit Schrecken daran. Die Menschen dort leben so
sehr einen eigenen großen Lebensstil, eine solche starke Harmonie,

dass jede Änderung hieran eine Verletzung ihrer Schönheit erschiene.
(Ibid., 115)

While illustrating the various aspects of Russian culture, Salomé discusses discourses on class difference within Russian society. Much attention is particularly given to the difference in education between the Russian aristocracy and peasantry. Russian aristocrats exemplify many Western traits. Many of them were educated in Western universities and influenced by Western philosophy, just as Salomé was herself. According to Salomé, the peasants, on the other hand, represented a more ‘authentic’ Russian culture. Salomé states that even Tolstoy, who would be *the* image of a Russian individual, was tainted by Western cultures:

Aehnliches könnte man allenfalls bei L. Tolstoi finden, und zwar deshalb, weil er in seiner religiösen Wandlung das ganz Westländische seiner bisherigen Kultur und Lebensrichtung abbüßte. Alle seine Irrthümer kommen daher, dass er als des Volkes hinstellt, was des europäisirten weltlichen Adels Läuterungsweg ist: dem Volk ist dies alles nicht Askese, und auch Коля (*Kolja*),¹⁴⁹ dem unverdorbenen russischen Adel nicht. ... Щаховско́й (*Schachowskoi*)¹⁵⁰ ist physisch noch eine starke, gesunde Blüthe des mit dem Volk vermischten Adels, aber intellektuell ist er zu unselbstständig, um es zu bleiben, sondern einst sich mit den westländischen Interessen seiner Freunde. Nur nicht allzu weit, weil sein Adelsstolz es ihm nicht erlaubt: der Bauer soll nur ein klein wenig lernen, im Uebrigen aber ja Bauer

¹⁴⁹ Diminutive form of Nikolaj.

¹⁵⁰ Refers to the last name of a male character in *Russland mit Rainer*.

bleiben, da der Adel weit geeigneter für die Aufgaben der Intelligenz sei. (Ibid., 118-119)

Salomé's uses sarcasm to express her disapproval of Russian nobility's views toward education for the lower social classes. However, despite the Western influence, even the Russian aristocrat's appearance resembles more a Russian peasant than a Western aristocrat, and Salomé observes that, "[i]n diesem Volk ist wahrlich Vornehm und Niedrig eins, und beides die menschlich-allgemeine Schönheit" (Ibid., 119). On the other hand, the character of the Russian peasants is illustrated as simple and cheerful, and Salomé states that, "[d]ie Bauern tragen keinerlei Tracht, sie sprechen durch ihre kleinrussische Accentuirung oft unverständlich" (Ibid., 71).

Salomé observes that while most Western nations support and promote the education and enlightenment of the lower classes, the aristocratic Russian rejects the notion of peasant education—due to the cultural belief in an indelible dynamic between education and an ensuing personal search inward. In Salomé's view, however, people must actively fight for the right of education for the lower class—a mere theorizing about the subject would not suffice, as she explains:¹⁵¹

Alle anderen Volksaufklärer bringen vielleicht vorwärts, aber die Slaven haben die Mission mit der Aufklärung ein heiliges Seelengut zu verbinden, das die andern schon verlieren: dieselbe schöpferische gläubige Innerlichkeit fruchtbar zu machen, unter der ihre Aufklärer leiden, weil sie sie fruchtlos zusammendrängen müssen. Es ist immer dieser Gegensatz von Innerlichkeit und Aufklärung, das das Problem

¹⁵¹ This conflict is also visible in the novel *Fenitschka*, where Fenitschka must decide between career (education) and marriage (family)—just as the conflict between the inwardness and the enlightenment in the Russian culture.

des Slaventhums ausmacht; der heutige Bildungsrusse hier ist sein stärkster Ausdruck; denn während er für die Bildung kämpft, thut er es aus lauter solchen innern heißen Quellen, und nicht aus Theoretisieren. (Ibid., 50)

The conflict between Western education and a personal passionate inner need (“Herzensbedürfnissen”) is evident mostly in Russian individuals who have been educated in the West (Ibid., 51). Salomé shares her own conflict with many educated Russians—Tolstoy is one of the Russians aspiring to recognize the synthesis between the heart and the mind and believing in sparing the Russian peasant the conflict of the educated Russian, as Salomé observes:

Er will nicht den Konflikt des gebildeten Russen, sondern er glaubt im Volk vorhanden sei was noth thue, und es deshalb unnütz sei, durch Lehre der Wissenschaft solche Konflikte im Volk herbeizuführen. Indessen das, was er im Volke vorhanden glaubt, ist vielmehr Tolstoi's individuelle Lösung seiner persönlichen Lebenskonflikte, und da dieselben ganz wesentlich, diejenigen des *gebildeten* Russen sind, nämlich die Synthese zu finden zwischen westlichen Wissen und den Herzensbedürfnissen. (Ibid., 51)

The lack of conflict between mind and heart in the Russian peasant seems evident in the practice of religion. During the journey in Russia, Salomé experienced and witnessed Russian peasants and their elaborate churches and dedicated practice of religion. She also incorporates much of these religious artifacts into her fictional

work; especially the religious architectural objects appear often as a backdrop and a location in Salomé's novels *Ma*, *In Zwischenland*, *Fenitschka* and in *Rodinka*.

The church and religion in Russia is a significant part of Russian culture, “[w]o Religion fehlt, da fehlt um jedes Ding seine Harmonie und Ewigkeit, (– das, was es ewiggültig macht) und keine kulturellen Ideale können das ersetzen, keine noch so laute Begeisterung für sie macht das gut: es fehlt das Unzeitliche” (Ibid., 137). Furthermore, Salomé illustrated the architectural form of the church and its resemblance to the Russian people's mentality. It is the round form of the dome that represents the unity among the people:

der Bau der Kirche war in Russland Sache des ganzen Volkes, Jeder konnte seine Meinung dabei abgeben, und Kirchen wie etwa in Новгород (*Nowgorod*) die Святая София (*Swjataja Sofija*, *Heilige Sophie*) oder Псковъ (Pskow) die Святая Троица (*Swjataja Troiza*, *Heilige Dreifaltigkeit*) sind daher nicht nur der wahrhafte Ausdruck des religiösen Gefühls der Gesamtheit, sondern auch social [sic]überaus bedeutsam. Es wurde eben aus tiefsten Gründen ein Heiligtum der Gesamtheit. (Ibid., 95-96)

Furthermore, Salomé states that, “Die Idee des Mehrkuppeligen, der Kuppelsammlung, gleichsam einer Gottesstadt, der Begriff des »соборъ« (*Sobor*, *Dom*) (von собирать, [sobirat, zusammenbringen]) ist so echt russisch wie derjenige mehrerer Häuschen im selben Gehöft, – überall das Gleichwertige nur durch die Vielzahl unterschieden. ... Beliebter beim Volk sind die »runden« russischen Kirchen” (*Russland mit Rainer* 78).

Salomé makes an observation and a comparison between the Russian (Orthodox) and the Western (Catholic) religious rituals and describes her discussion with Tolstoy:

Das Ritual ist daher trotz seines Formalismus, auch weiter und schmiegsamer zur Aufnahme individueller Stimmungen der Religion als die Dogmen. Nur im Katholizismus des Westens sinkt von einem solchen Stimmungsgefäß zum bloßen Spielwerk herab, weil dort schon zu oft keine Ehrfurcht mehr es betrachtet, während es dem Russen immer noch Gott vermittelt, gleichviel was die Dogmen Einzelnes über diesen Gott aussagen. (Ibid., 37)

Also, she maintains that, “Dadurch bleibt das Leben in der Kirche ein rein mit Symbolen spielendes: und dieselbe Trennung besteht zwischen ihr und der ganzen Kultur” (Ibid., 42-43). For Salomé, the religion with its symbols, rituals and practices is entwined with the entire Russian culture.

Salomé’s own mother, despite being German, is often depicted in her biographies as temperamental, and Salomé inherited this characteristic trait as well. The simplicity and humility of the Russian people, especially the Russians in the villages, fascinated Salomé and is summarized in the following fragment:

Reizend und rührend sind diese Menschen in ihrer Schlichtheit und Kraft, in einer Heiterkeit, die in ihrer frohen Ergebung kaum noch von dieser Welt zu sein scheint. Überhaupt findet man auch hier wieder, wie stark die Petersburger, – und sogar auch noch Moskauer! – Verkennung des rus.[sichen] Dorfs ist das Märchen von der Trunkenheit Aller, von dem man mit dem Gesicht in den Schmutz

gefallenen betrunkenen Popen, von dem Unsaubern, Widerlichen der Leute (Ibid., 106-107).

Salomé's study of Russian culture continued on the trip to Poltawa, the Dnjepr-trip, where she observes men and women who "auf dem allgemeinen Verdeck aller Klassen saßen und lagen Mädchen, die ihre Kleider flickten oder an Strickereien für ihre Hemdärmel arbeiteten, Männer, die auf dem Boden hockend, miteinander kleinrussische Lieder sangen" (Ibid., 69). Salomé's portrayal of Russian culture extends to her various observations on Russian women and men, who are often compared with Germans.

While visiting Russian villages, she encounters peasant women (one of them named Makarowna), who unlike women in St. Petersburg and Moscow, appear to be modest in character and fashion.¹⁵² As she writes: "Макаровна (*Makarowna*) thut alles und ist überall. In einem stets andern Kopftuch, je nach den Anforderungen ihrer Beschäftigungen, immer Heiterkeit und Güte" (Ibid., 83). Salomé further describes a woman in the village Golubinka:

Von den Frauen, die es hier giebt, ist die Bildhauerin aus (Rjasan) wie eine überlebensgroße Gestalt. Und garnicht wie eine Frau. Schön in der Entwicklung ihres Kopfes, ihre Hände, ihres breit und groß und brüsk sich gebenden Wesens, und doch garnicht wie eine Frau. Ganz nur wie ein schaffender Mann. Die weibliche Schönheit, auch im besten Sinn, muss doch wohl nicht viel anders sein, als eben Mangel an voller Entwicklung, voller Herausarbeitung aller Züge und

¹⁵² However, once Salomé moved to Göttingen, her newly acquired lifestyle resembled that of a Russian peasant woman.

persönlichen Möglichkeiten. Wo das dennoch eintritt, hört das Weib auf, und man kann es sich auch schwer in einer Situation speziell des Weibes vorstellen. (Ibid., 31-32)

Salomé describes with much admiration the Russian women of the lower classes as simple and natural but a fine and elegant beauty at the same time, stating:

Bewundernswerth war an ihnen Allen der natürliche Takt und das fast formgerechte Benehmen bei aller Natürlichkeit ihrer Aeußerungen. Dasselbe fiel uns schon am Morgen in der Schule für arme Frauen auf, wo Erwachsene грамота (*Gramota, Lesen und Schreiben*) lernen. Eine vornehme Schönheit in der Kleidung der Frauen und Mädchen, die sich zu dieser Stunde als zu ihren Feststunden kleiden, um in ihrer kargen Muße lesen und schreiben zu lernen, eine Feinheit der Hände, die ganz erstaunlich sind, und die man in Deutschland nirgends treffen würde in solchen Ständen. (Ibid., 40)

One of the major aspects to which Salomé returns throughout the journal is the architectural structure of the religious institutions, such as the church. Through this distinct architecture, Salomé interprets cultural differences as well as the parishioners' mentalities. For her, the Russian church resembles the intimate and domestic, whereas Western churches have an antique appeal:

Von den Kirchen macht die Alte Sophienkirche den stärksten Eindruck auf mich. ... Und dann haben die Wölbungen dieser Kirche, vom Chor aus gesehen, so stark das Haus-artige, Intime, das sich Mantelartig um den Beter Hüllende, das man als größten Reiz in den Kirchen der

Russen, zum Unterschied von frühromanischen westländischen Kirchen findet. Hier sind eben nicht antike Anklänge wie dort, vielmehr häusliche Anklänge, –. (Ibid., 62-63)

Salomé differentiates cultures through the symbol of religious temples and continues to describe in detail the various differences between the Russian, Ukrainian, and Western churches: “Aber trotz alledem sind nur die paar alten goldverkleideten braungestrichenen ИКОНЫ (*Ikony, Ikonen*) in der Kirche wirkliche ИКОНЫ (*Ikony, Ikonen*), und alles andere weltliche Malerei, weltliche Schönheit” (*Russland mit Rainer* 65). Her discussion of Europeans cultivating the Russians and her treatment of the European presence in Russia, culturally and socially, is evident in many of her fictional works composed around the time of her Russian journey, but in *Fenichka* and *Rodinka*, specifically, she criticizes the Western influence on Russian people by stating that “die Metropolitene Rußlands sich aus der vollen westländ.[ischen] Bildung Europas rekrutieren und das Volk mit seinen Heiligen weder lieben noch leiten können” (Ibid., 51-52).

Also, central in Salomé’s texts *Fenitschka* and *Rodinka* are the various cultural differences and intercultural encounters, and the evidence for these discourses is just as much present in the journal. During Salomé’s Russian journey, she also illustrates in her journal encounters with various ethnic and cultural groups. Salomé thoroughly shows the multicultural society in Russia and Ukraine, and presents the Russians, the Ukrainians, the Tatars, as well as the German colonists. While traveling through the Volga region and especially in Baronsk, Salomé encountered German colonists who had settled in that region after Catherine the Great

invited Europeans to settle in the uncultivated regions in Russia. Almost 30,000 Germans settled in the region of Saratov, and although the German colonies lost their colonial legal status in 1871, they nonetheless developed into a significant minority, continuing to practice their language, religion and even maintaining their own press. Baronsk was one of the first towns established by the German colonists on the Volga River, and it was named after the Dutch leader of the colony Baron Beauregard. During Salomé's river trip on the ferry Alexander Newski, she notes:

Am nächsten Morgen bei wundervollem Wetter Erwachen im 7 Uhr bei Баронскъ (*Baronsk*) (Jekatherinenstadt), wo wie in der ganzen Linie da herum, deutsche Kolonisten sitzen. ... Von allem Anfang an die Landschaft höchst sympathisch, leise und breit anziehend, in großen, einfachen Zügen, doch ohne Melancholie. Sie ist das Gegentheil des Pittoresken am Rhein; an ihre[n] Ufern denkt man sich keine Schlösser, aber man liebt ihre Hütten, und ihre Kirchen stehen in ihr wie in einer Heimath. (Ibid., 73-74)

Although Susanne Zantop utilizes the term 'Verortung'¹⁵³ to describe the colonists' discovery of a familiar environment within the colonies, implying that physical objects (flora and/or fauna, architecture, etc.) remind the colonizers of the country of origin, Salomé makes a sharp contrast between the scenery of the German Rhein River and the Volga River, both inhabited by Germans. She contrasts the sceneries, but both appear to evoke in Salomé a feeling of belonging.

¹⁵³ For more information on the concept of 'Verortung' see Susanne Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family, and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770-1870* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997).

Among her many intercultural encounters with Russians and German colonists, Salomé meets the Ukrainians and, again, makes cultural comparisons—here, however, between the Russian and the Ukrainian cultures. Just as Salomé juxtaposes the landscapes in Russia with the German landscape, she also continues to compare the Ukrainian landscape with both German and Russian regions and notices the intercultural environment in Kiev:

Unten auf dem Крещати[къ] (*Kreschtschatik, Kreuzstraße*) unter den vielen Menschen, die stolz darauf sind, dass man ihn le petit Paris nennt, wirkt Kiew ganz international. Es erinnert an Warschau, Petersburg, sogar an Wiesbaden. Die Menschen sind klein, meistens dunkel, schlecht gebaut, oft mit feinen, vielfach mir kleinlichen Gesichtszügen; ein Schlag, der schon physisch dem Großrussen nicht nachkommen kann. Dort wunderten wir uns, dass wahre Riesen nicht auffielen,— hier sieht [sic für: sind] neugierige Blicke, Taktlosigkeit, an der Tagesordnung. (Ibid., 60)

Besides the physical appearance of the Ukrainians in contrast to the Russians, Salomé depicts the cultural and social scene in Kiev as intercultural and resembling the Western cultures of the upper class. Although the lower class displays a certain originality, their traditional clothing is viewed by the public as ‘uneducated’—for Salomé, the Ukrainian culture in Kiev illustrates a mediocre replication of Western cultures, as evident in her thoughts:

Nirgends etwas Eigentümliches, alles banale, mittelmäßige
Nachahmung. Neben diesem mittlern Publikum hebt sich das Volk viel

stärker ab als in Moskau: die Tracht bedeutet hier das »Ungebildete«. Diese Tracht ist bunt und herrlich, – geputzter und unsauberer als in Moskau. An den Frauen mit ihren kleinen magern Figuren hängen die Bänder und Perlen oft wie an Puppen: an den »gebildeten« Damen ist die westländische Kleidung als demi-mondaine übertrieben. Auch die Stätten, an den[en] das »Volk« sich tummelt sind von denen des »guten« Publikums sehr unterschieden: nicht wie in Moskau schmückt es mit seinen Gebeten und seiner Einfachheit seinen Kreml: es ist auf den Schmutzigen Подоль¹⁵⁴ (*Podol*) verwiesen. (Ibid., 60)

Salomé's further observations on Ukrainian culture point to the difference and similarities between the Ukrainians' (from Kiev) and the Russians' character and mentality (here, she refers to them as 'Großrussen', indicating the difference between the Russians from the countryside and the Russians living in the larger, Western-influenced cities, such as St. Petersburg and Moscow). She notes, "[a]uf der Reise hierher entsetzte uns zum ersten Mal die unangenehme Reisegesellschaft, bis wir dann hier merkten, dass es einfach Kiewer waren: Leute, die ebenso zudringlich, unliebenswürdig, albern sind, als die Großrussen einfach, naiv, gütig" (Ibid., 59).

Before finishing her journal, Salomé also illustrates the Tatar people, focusing primarily on their culture and mentality. Salomé was looking forward to the visit in the East, the far East, as is seen in her statement: "Die Bahnreise von 2x24 Stunden brachte uns von Westrußland nach Ostrußland und weckt unwillkürlich das Verlangen, weit, weit in den Osten vorzudringen" (Ibid., 72). Her return to the East was disappointing, as all the beauty of Russian nature and the kindness of the Russian

¹⁵⁴ A name of a lower city quarter.

people were left behind as soon as she entered the Tatar town Kasan. With much dismay, she describes her experience:

Die höchste Schönheit der Wolga verlor sich bei Kasan. Die Tatarenstadt bereitete uns eine große Enttäuschung, sie erwies sich als fast so hässlich wie die kleine Tatarenschenke, die ich mir abends zum Ausruhen wählte. Am charakteristischsten die Pferdefahrt mit den Tatarenweibern und der Besuch des Minareth mit seinen stummen Betern. Nach Asien hin nimmt überhaupt jedenfalls das Stumme und die tiefe Stille zu; man würde dort das Innenleben des Menschen vielleicht nicht mehr so individuell deutlich erkennen, aber als Gesamttypus würde es, wie ich immer mehr glaube, uns heutigen Kulturmenschen unsern menschlichen Ursprung von gestern näher rücken. (Ibid., 79-80)

While Salomé identifies the uniqueness of the Tatar culture and the peculiarity of the Tatar people, her view of the Tatar culture and its people reveals a negative perception—the Tatar society is in Salomé’s view disturbing and disruptive: “Hier wie überall ist die Gesellschaft sehr störend, die weder zur ›élite‹ noch zum простой народъ (*prostoy narod*, *einfaches Volk*) gehört, – Beamten-gesellschaft mit den durch die un-russische Beamtenhierarchie großgezogenen Anklängen an westlichen Dünkel, an Neugier und Protzenthum” (Ibid., 81). The harmony embodied within the society was only discovered in Russia—in Salomé’s Russia—as she refers to the difference between the cultures, “[u]nd an dieses Asien das wenigstens an irgendeinem Grenzstrich ich mich sehne kennen zu lernen, liegt für mich Russland als lebendige

Synthese desselben mit uns, als lebendige Heimath, ja als meine liebe, liebe Heimath durch und durch!” (Ibid., 80).¹⁵⁵

Salomé’s journey to Russia was fruitful for her personal as well as her professional life. While encountering various cultures within Russia and thinking about the best method in approaching and perceiving cultures, Salomé discovered her own physical and psychological home, which she vividly depicts in her poems and prose. This rediscovery of her childhood in Russia represents a bitter-sweet encounter, which helps her to consequently develop thoughts and insights on psychological development in childhood and adolescence. Salomé’s perceptions and discussions of cultural and social differences and ideologies and the human need for individuality—innate to both woman and man—is incorporated and discussed extensively in her fictional work.

III. Russian and German and Russian-German Cultures in Salomé’s *Rodinka*

While Salomé’s *Fenitschka* remains popular among literary scholars studying her works, few scholars present an interpretation of *Rodinka*. Included among these select few scholars is Biddy Martin, whose article “In Conclusion: Women Who Move too Much” in *Woman and Modernity: The (Life)Styles of Lou Andreas-Salomé* (1991) examines *Rodinka* in terms of women crossing borders without going into a detailed analysis of the work. Martin identifies Salomé’s writing as notable for its description of women who move between countries, cultures, and societies (Martin 165-166). Muriel Cormican, in her book *Women in the Works of Lou Andreas-*

¹⁵⁵ Although Salomé reaches different cultural assessments by coming from a subjective perspective and then dismissing it, one could argue that she simply matured enough to appreciate her “liebe Heimath” and for that reason she views Russia so positively, but the Tatars negatively, as they are not part of her home.

Salomé: Negotiating Identity (2009),¹⁵⁶ investigates several of Salomé's prose texts, such as *Ma: Ein Portrait* (1923), *Jutta* (written 1898, published 1981), *Das Haus* (written 1904, published 1921), and *Rodinka: Russische Erinnerung* (1923), and includes an analysis of discourses on gender, feminism, and identity evident in Salomé's works.

In contrast to *Fenitschka*, the novel *Rodinka*, written after Salomé's journey to Russia, portrays Russia as an unconstrained society. Salomé's female protagonist in *Rodinka* visits the rural countryside in Russia; *Fenitschka*, on the other hand, is set in the city in which Russian society was strongly influenced by European cultures. While Salomé wrote *Fenitschka* before her Russian journey in 1899, she also composed several novels set in Russia after the return from her journey in 1900, such as prose texts *Ma. Ein Portrait* (1901) and *Im Zwischenland. Fünf Geschichten aus dem Seelenleben halbwüchsiger Mädchen* (1902).

The novel *Rodinka*, which Salomé started writing in 1904 and published almost two decades later in 1923. Salomé's own background served as an inspiration for the novel, as her correspondence with Rilke shows clearly. On January 3rd, 1901, Salomé notes in her journal in Schmargendorf:

Zum Mittag kam Rainer und nach Tisch gingen wir bis zur 'Wolga' durch den Wald, der auf dem Rückweg schon im Mondschein lag. Die Abendstunden oben in der blauen Mansarde, bei brennendem Weihnachtsbaum, den Liedern des Mönches und den andern Liedern. Nach dem Abendbrot unten tauchte mir im Gespräch unwiderstehlich

¹⁵⁶ For more information refer to Muriel Cormican, *Women in the Works of Lou Andreas-Salomé: Negotiating Identity* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2009).

der Nikolai Tolstoi-Stoff in der Seele auf, – zum ersten Mal als zwingendes Ganzes: er hatte dort geschlummert seit den Tagen von Nowinki. Nun war es, als ob, nach verklungener Weihnacht ... Nikolai Tolstoi zu einer Neujahrsvisite eingetreten sei, den Hut in der Hand, – um lauter Neujahrsglück heraufzubeschwören durch die Ahnung dieses Stoffes. (Salomé *Rainer Maria Rilke* 49)

Furthermore, Salomé recalls her memories of Russia as an inspiration for her novel by stating:

nahezu beendetet noch in Schmargendorf, schrieb ich mir das Heimweh nach Russland aus der Seele, – daraus ist ‘Rodinka’ geworden, von dem ich gerne gehabt hätte, dass es gelesen worden wäre, weil es von Russischem hatte erzählen dürfen; während mir sonst, was ich aufschrieb nur oder fast nur um des Vorgangs selber, um des Prozesses willen, wichtig war und irgendwie lebensnotwendig blieb. (*Lebensrückblick* 172)

While the evidence is clearly present of parallels between her journal *Russland mit Rainer* and the novel *Rodinka*, both engaging similarly in discourses of culture, society, history, and gender, the novel should not be read as a point by point fictional rendition of her actual Russian journey. Contrasts between Salomé’s incorporation of her Russian childhood memories in the novel and the actual journal will be eschewed; rather, the journal serves as a base with vital information for the interpretation of the fictional text.

In *Rodinka*, Salomé describes a female character named Margot and her return visit to Russia after years of living abroad in Germany. Her journey to Russia takes her back to the time of her childhood and the memory of the people, places, and events of her childhood. Resembling Salomé's *Russland mit Rainer* journal, the novel presents no clear chronological format; rather, the novel is divided into two major parts, "Erinnerungen an Witalii" and "Der Sommer auf 'Rodinka'", each part comprised of titled subsections describing various social and historical events. Just as the textual structure of the novel resembles Salomé's daily journal entries, contextually the novel exhibits many of the fragments of her childhood memories and the discourses Salomé discusses within her journal.

The striking similarities between the discourses present within Salomé's personal journal and the novel *Rodinka* are obvious and show clear evidence of Salomé's ongoing interest in and passion for studying different cultures and societies. She creatively combines and intertwines the cultural and social discourses in the narration of the main character's memories. Although Salomé touches on numerous discussions ranging from psychology, history, and culture to societies, aspects of cultural and social perception and the role of women as well as notions of identity are most closely engaged. The complexity of this text lies in the dual 'positionality' of the novel's protagonist, Margot. The novel depicts various plot events through Margot's unique perspective, one which is neither German nor Russian, but a third, Russian-German perspective, which makes the illustration of 'self' and 'others' more intricate

IV. 'Rodina' and 'Heimat' of the Germans in Russia

The unique perspective of author and protagonist is influenced and important for the subject of 'homeland' and Russia. The subject 'homeland' in general and Russia as homeland, specifically, is discussed throughout the novel *Rodinka*. The main character's close connection to Russia is illustrated partially and in detail towards the end of the novel in a fragment on Margot's recollection of her childhood in Russia. After residing abroad for an extensive period of time, the narrator is describing her childhood memories while at the same time illustrating her struggle to return to her roots, find acceptance among the Russian people, and develop a sense of belonging. For now, she remains still a foreigner wandering in foreign worlds, although her most inner wish is to find a 'Heimat' or 'rodina'—her home. Margot, a German woman, journeying to her childhood home of Russia, explains:

Auf dem Heimwege

»Guten Morgen!« sagt der Bauer mir; »woher kommst du? Wo steht dir deine Hütte?« »Ich habe keine Hütte, abgebrannt ist mir die meine bis hinab zum Boden: *die* Hütte, die mir unter den eurigen stand. ...

Doch dass ich dir dabei begegne, du mich grüßest, soll ein Zeichen sein: zeigen soll es mir, dass ich auf Heimatboden stehe.

Heim gelange ich nicht mehr: Die Hütte, dran ich baue, ist einsame Hütte an Wegesrand. ... Doch einem geschieht es, dass er aus

Fremdestem noch zurückkehrt bis in seiner Kindheit, seines Volkes

Hütte: das ist der Künstler. ... Dann wirst auch du mich Nachbar

heißen, wirst eintreten in meine Tür, dass ich mein Brot breche mit dir

und dich bewirte. An meinem Feuer wirst du sitzen und sinnen: ›Wie ist es mit seiner Hütte doch so heimatlich, dass Feierabend wie ein Weg hinführt zu ihr und in ihr jeglicher doch nur zu sich selber nach Hause kommt –?‹« (*Rodinka* 199-200)

While depicting her return to Russia—which she soon has to leave to return to Germany—she illustrates her perception and discovery (or still a lack of discovery) of Russia, a country she by now refers to as home, a place where she wishes to remain:

Um dies Land noch einmal ganz um mich zu fühlen, ehe ich – nun bald, demnächst – es verlasse. »Noch einmal?« Nein, ich sollte sagen: es zum erstenmal ganz zu fühlen. Denn jetzt, nach so langer Anwesenheit, ist mir’s doch, als stände ich gerade davor, als sollte ich es erst wiedersehen und hätte Russland noch gar nicht erreicht. Dieses Land ist mir von neuem, was es schon meiner Kindheit war, wo ich an seinem Rande lebte, ohne es zu kennen: ganz nahe, und eine Ferne doch; einer Zukunft, einer Sehnsucht ganz unfassliches Antlitz. ... Ja, des Ausgangs meiner Kindheit gedenke ich, des Auszugs aus Russland: Wie damals kann ich »Abschied« nicht fest ins Auge fassen, ihn nicht recht glauben: nur zu den Meinen zurück denken ich mich, in alles Glück der Nähe, und so, als sei sie erreichbar ohne Übergang. (Ibid., 226-227)

Salomé describes the character’s childhood memories in a manner reminiscent of her own childhood in Russia. She mentions the name ‘Rodinka’ for the first time in the illustration of the character’s home in Russia: “Es kam nicht dazu, dass wir zu

dreien Pferde spielten. Bald nach seinem Besuch bei uns wurde Witalii von den Masern befallen, und als er dann genesen war, kehrte er zu seiner Mutter zurück auf das Familiengut »Ródinka« im Jaroslawlschen Gouvernement” (Ibid., 16). And just like Salomé’s own lonely childhood in her homeland Russia (Heimat), the novel’s main character Margot observed Rodinka as a lonely place:

» – Ist es nicht einsam in Rodinka?« ... »Schöneres als meine Heimat kann es in der Welt schwerlich geben«, versicherte Dimitrii mir treuherzig. »Unsere Wälder, die Weite, über der im Herbst die Nebel stehen – die Dörfchen, die sich um die Kirche drängen – als um ihr Mütterchen in der Weite der Welt – die Kirchenglocken [sic], wenn sie in den Frühling hinausläuten, in den späten, plötzlichen – der Frühling selber, der alles überblüht, überwältigt, wieviel Winter auch da war – bis man in ihm irrt und irrt und nicht mehr weiß, wo es läutet, und nicht mehr weiß, wo das Heiligtum zu Ende ist – und nirgends, nirgends hat es ein Ende – Grenzen –«. (Ibid., 25-26)

The description of the homeland as a spatially and mentally open, borderless place is often evident in individuals with hybrid cultural identities and intercultural background. Germany as the homeland of Germans living in Russia is a notion Salomé portrays and also criticizes in the novel. While living in Russia as Germans for generations, Germany remained a homeland for many German colonists. Although many of them were born in Russia (having only briefly, if ever, traveled to Germany) their sense of national belonging was rooted in Germany.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁷ The phenomenon is true even until the beginning of the twenty-first century in Russia and many former Soviet Republics. Refer to Chapter 1 for Russian-German socio-historical overview.

In *Rodinka*, the father of the family represents the German older generation, who considers Germany his homeland (Heimat). He demonstrates an integration into Russian society through his acculturation with the Russian culture, but steadfastly considers his home to be in Germany: »– Es ist wahrhaftig gar nichts, obgleich – aber erschreckt nicht unnütz darüber: es ist – es scheint, dass ich nach Hause – ich meine, dass ich berufen bin – eine Professur in Freiburg, wisst ihr –« (Ibid., 47). However, the distorted perception of Germany among the Germans living in Russia illustrates a romanticized perception of the homeland, an ideal constructed through stories and pictures:

»Alles egal! Nur erst packen – ja wir packen uns! Ist denn nicht in Deutschland ohnehin alles besser?« ...

Da fuhr Michael ihn an: »Pfui, das ist undankbar! Wenn auch nicht Vaterland – Vaterstadt uns das hier doch –« ... Der Vater hob entsetzt, abwehrend die Arme. »Lass – Boris! Natürlich darf er! Jeder, wie er will. Natürlich!« Schon sah er im Geist die zärtliche Überregung umschlagen in Streit und Gereiztheit. Und vielleicht, wer konnte es wissen, unterdrückte seine Erlaubnis einen leisen Schmerz, dass nicht, wenigstens eine Stunde lang, nur allein die alte Heimat siegte – Heimat! Das Wort ging mir durchs Herz, in einem ganz sichern Sinn, wie Blicke in ein sich entschleierndes Land: gleich dem auf des Vaters Schreibtisch. Hügel sah ich, Bergrücken, Tal, Schluchten, quellendurchrieselt, immer wieder bebautes Feld, geschonte Waldung, immer wieder auch Dorf und Stadt, und wär es kleinstes Städtchen mit

seinem steinernen Brunnen auf dem Marktplatz, malerischen Gassen aus der Zeit, wo die Häuser sich schutzbedürftig auseinanderdrängten – jeder Blick Neues, Bezauberndes streifend; Natur in ihrem reichen Wechsel, die doch allüberall von ihren Menschen redete. (Ibid., 49)

While Germans were members of Russian society, they did not fully partake in a national common experience and therefore would still be considered as ‘other’ and ‘foreign’. Salomé makes this aspect of German cultural identity and national belonging evident when she describes the Russian-Turkish war and its influence on the Russians. She also makes a clear distinction between the Russian and German national belonging, unity, and experience, “[w]ie stark wir innerlich auch unter dem Druck der Kriegszeit standen, sie war uns doch nicht das gleiche allgemeine Erleben wie für den geborenen Russen” (Ibid., 27). Furthermore, evidence of German colonists’ close ties with Germany is presented in their preference to pursue academics in Germany,¹⁵⁸ “[z]ur Zeit, wo Boris und ich schon zu spielen aufhörten und Michael, unser Ältester – nach großem Familienkampf, ob er uns verlassen und in Deutschland studieren sollte –, sich doch für das Bergchor-Institut entschied, geriet vorübergehend ein anderes Mitglied der Familie Wolujew in unsern Gesichtskreis: Witaliis Bruder Dimitrii” (Ibid., 23).

Although Germans resided in Russia for generations, they remained connected to Germany.¹⁵⁹ Salomé illustrates the Germans’ strong ties to the fatherland and the

¹⁵⁸ While at the turn of the century the political relationship between Germany and Russia was still positive, German colonists had close ties to Germany and traveled to Germany without restrictions. Such travel and study to Germany were restricted after the Revolution and especially during Stalin’s reign.

¹⁵⁹ This is significant and resulted in the immigration of hundreds of thousands of Germans’ who were persecuted and discriminated due to their ethnicity and, who viewed their immigration as a return to the Heimat, after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

importance of German nationality through references to the construct of German blood. German cultures constructed national identity through discourses of ethnicity or ‘blood’, and therefore, Salomé reiterates the notion of ethnic identity as being governed through blood and not through a common culture. This construction of national identity as being biologically determined deeply influenced her depiction of the multicultural side of Russia.

Various representative cultures and ethnic groups in Russia are further identified in the novel, depicting Russia as a uniquely heterogeneous society. Such a *mélange* of cultural and ethnic groups could be seen only in Russia according to her, because only here did so many different national identities exist under one governing state each of which was constructed according to ethnicity and ancestral origin, as opposed to one’s country of birth.¹⁶⁰ The German colonists’ perception of themselves as German, as ‘non-Russian’ and as ‘other’ was also shared among the Russians.

In *Rodinka*, the encounters between German and Russians, although very positive and friendly, make a clear distinction between the members of German and Russian cultural groups: “Als er mir dann die Hand zur Gutenacht reichte, äußerte er nur: »Lass dich vom Lärm nicht stören, schlaf gut – deutsches kleines Mädchen«. Es lag jedoch ein zarter, zärtlicher Ton in dem Wort, nicht wie wenn er gesagt hätte: »Nichttrussin«” (Ibid., 65). The text continues: “Denn nun sollte er nicht, vielleicht minder zärtlichen Tones wie letztthin, von mir sagen dürfen: »Deutsches kleines Mädchen« (Ibid., 73). Later in the novel, the same phrase is repeated: »Deutsches

¹⁶⁰ This aspect of German national identity becomes a crucial reason for Stalin’s ethnic cleansing, persecutions of Germans in the Soviet Union before, during, and after the World War II and the re-immigration of Russian Germans (and its problematic) to Germany at the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union, which was discussed in Chapter I and will continue the discussion in Chapter 4 and 5.

kleines Mädchen! ... und weiter möcht‘ ich dir noch dies gesagt haben: Wenn irgend etwas mir zu schaffen gemacht hat, so nicht nur die Erinnerung an dich selbst sondern damit zugleich an deinen Vater – dein Vaterhaus – dein Vaterland –« (Ibid., 250-251). Although German immigrants and colonists continued to practice the German culture in Russia, they did integrate through a process of acculturation with the Russian culture and its people.

An indication of their hybrid cultural identity is seen through the use of both German and Russian names, implying that they feel both German and Russian. “«– Dies ist meine Schwester!« erklärte Boris etwas überstürzt schon an der Tür; »Musja heißt sie – eigentlich aber Margot. Und ich heiße auch nur so russisch nach einem Taufpaten. Wir sind Deutsche«” (Ibid., 12). However, evidence of the interculturality within the Russian society is shown in the following quote:

So fühlten wir uns vorwiegend im Verband mit den übrigen, zahlreich vertretenden Ausländern – ja, gelegentliche Verheiratung mit »echtem Russenblut« war seltener als die unvermutetste untereinander. Ob Deutsche, Franzosen, Engländer, Holländer, Schweden, unterschieden sie sich vom Russentum mit seiner nationalen Orthodoxie am gemeinsamsten durch ihre Kirchen; die evangelischen Kirchen, zu denen die Mehrzahl gehörte, und die ihnen angegliederten Schulen bezeichneten so ... gewissermaßen Mittelpunkte einer Stadt für sich, worin die fremden Straßen wie an einer Art von Heimatstätte zusammenliefen. Dies Internationale, verbunden mit dem Großzügigen russischer Verkehrsgewohnheiten, gab dem gesellschaftlichen Leben

einen gleichzeitig westlicheren und natürlicheren Zauber, als es vielleicht irgendwo sonst der Fall ist, und solange meine Mutter noch lebte, nahmen wir daran teil. (Ibid., 30-31)

Clearly, Salomé describes the German colonists as members of a German ethnic and cultural minority in Russian society. She does so while simultaneously identifying aspects of interculturality and cultural hybrid identity, in which one becomes a part of multiple cultures, consciously or unconsciously, and is able to fully acculturate and become a world-citizen, rather than segregate one's ethnicity and culture from the culture of the host society. Moreover, a discourse on hybrid identities and the notion of ethnicity, differences in cultures and mentality, and integration difficulties are observed in the following excerpt depicting a Russian boy, Petruscha:

»– Ist unser Faulenzer – lässig!« bemerkte Witalii zu mir und zog ihn dabei liebkosend zu sich. »Kann freilich nichts dafür: Im Russen steckt es: ist ihm zu lange und zu gründlich eingehämmert worden. Aber was steckt nicht alles, Petruscha, in uns, wer fand nichts alles Gastrecht uns im Blut, von Ost und West und Süd und Norden! Da gibt es noch mehr zu tun als bei andern: sich aufzubauen aus Fremdestem und Eigenem zu Einem! Keine dünne Seele ist unser – Lebensarbeit auf lange hinaus ist sie –«. (Ibid., 117)

Salomé further illustrates such acculturation processes in an ethnically and culturally German-French individual within the various cultures represented in Russia in the depiction of Margot's (Musja's) grandfather:

Wenige Monate nach dem Ausbruch des russisch-türkischen Krieges war es, heiße Herbstzeit, worin nur der Großvater bereits den gemeinschaftlichen Landaufenthalt verlassen und seine Stadtwohnung wieder bezogen hatte – vielleicht um unserer, der beiden schulpflichtigen Enkel willen –, vielleicht aber auch, weil es ihm in der allgemeinen Unruhe der Tage nicht länger im Sommerhaus draußen litt, wo die Post nur einmal täglich einlief; denn wenn es auch nicht leicht etwas Weltbürgerlicheres geben konnte als den Vater meiner Mutter, so hatte es, selber von deutschem und französischem Emigrantenblut, doch bis vor wenigen Jahren dem russischen Militär angehört. (Ibid., 23-24)

The notion of a biological ethnicity determined through blood, as Salomé states “deutsche[s] und französische[s] Emigrantenblut” previously has been a widely accepted aspect of identification of ‘self’ and ‘others.’ In Russia, and later during the Soviet Union, ethnicity played a critical part in identifying one’s nationality, which often led to persecutions and discriminations.¹⁶¹ Salomé depicts a similar form of intolerance based on ethnicity as well as religious intolerance towards the Jews and Muslims within Russian society when depicting Witalii’s reaction towards the Jews in the church: “Die beiden Juden, mögen sie noch ortsansässig sein seit Urahns Zeiten – und es gab Zeiten der Herrschaft hier für sie –, bleiben die ewig Ungeladenen, Unheimischen, Eindringlinge, weil sie das sind vor dem Gotteshaus” (Ibid., 58).

¹⁶¹ Germans were therefore persecuted for decades after the end of the WWII and were considered an enemy of the state before and during WWII. Anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union developed at the same time as well.

While admiring Russian culture and its people, the anti-Semitic aspect of Russian society evidently evoked in her a negative reaction.

Moreover, Salomé illustrates an encounter between two women of diverse religious backgrounds—Margot (a Christian German) and a Tatar (Muslim) woman—to show the unifying nature among individuals of different cultures, and eliminate all negative preconceived notions about Muslims by describing a gentle and intimate encounter between two women:

Eine ganz alte Tatarin war dort, die gab mir ihren ›Rachmet‹. Segen: ihr Gesichtstuch, womit sie sich verhüllt halten, breitete sie über sich und mich, und darunter streichelte sie mich und liebte mich dafür, dass ich, ›die Tataren den andern Menschen gleichachte.‹ – Nun, so denke ich, sollten wir tun auch unter uns: das Tuch breiten – jeden allen gleich achten –, nichts weiter. Aber die Leute – bald ist ihnen was zu gut, bald zu böse –, wer kennt sich da aus? (Ibid., 164)

It is an intimate moment which defines the characters' new understanding of what it means to be Tatar, because she comes to the situation without any bigotry or having internalized any of the preconceived stereotypes of Russian society:

Fürchten schon. Aber den Freitag, den wollen sie halten. Sagen: gearbeitet wird nicht. Was soll man machen, Witalii Sergeitsch: so ist das Volk! Hört nicht, wenn man es aufklärt: den Freitag haben uns ja nur die Tataren zum freien Tag eingesetzt – vom Tatarenjoch stammt er ja nur noch – vom dreimal verfluchten unchristlichen –. (Ibid., 138)

Furthermore, Salomé depicts not only the German-Russian acculturation with the Russian, but also with the Tatar and Muslim subgroup within Russian society through her illustration of a young German woman who grew up among Tatars and adopted most aspects of their cultural traits. Salomé points out and criticizes the notion that culture and ethnicity is tied to one's 'blood'. She presents the example of the character Margot, who has been exposed to various cultures and embodies the cultural traits of a Tatar woman; however, since German ethnicity is constructed specifically around the concept of 'ethnic blood', Margot's identity remains German notwithstanding her intercultural background. Salomé opposes the notion of identity through 'ethnic blood' and as is evident in the following:

– dies ist Margot! Drei Küsse gib ihr, und sag ›du‹ zu ihr.« ... Ksenia verabreichte ihre drei Küsse schnell und schallend und zog mich an der Hand zum langen Tisch, »Setz sich zu mir. Und nenn mich ›Tataraka‹, wie Witalii!« »Eine beträchtliche Ehre, Margot! Sie gestattet es nur den Intimsten«, Ich staunte ungläubig: »Du und Tatarenblut? Du Goldhaar?« »Nein – aber so gut wie aufgewachsen zwischen so heidnischem Zeug, Kirgisen und Baschkiren und Burjäten, Schewtschenzen, Tschuwaschen und Tataren und Schlimmeren«, bemerkte die Babuschka. »Denn in Sibirien zog der Vater herum, bis Japan kam er, und immer auf den Bahnbau, der richtige Nomade, dieser Ingenieur! (Ibid., 101)

Despite the numerous encounters with and the upbringing among members of various cultural groups, the identity of this individual was determined by her ethnicity, not

her culture. Salomé's reflection on the various cultural and ethnic groups within one (Russian) society is seen within the novel through the encounters among these groups and the positive and negative perceptions within mainstream society. This also indicates her inclination towards favoring personal and individual experiences for determining the character of individuals and culture, rather than a reliance on commonly held knowledge and stereotypes of cultures and ethnic groups.

Furthermore, as scholars of psychological acculturation observe, individuals with multicultural backgrounds often experience either a loss of identity or a psychological conflict.¹⁶² The phenomenon of developing an intercultural hybrid identity by living within two cultures is thoroughly discussed in Salomé's *Rodinka*. The tone of the next excerpt reveals the restless emotions associated with understanding one's identity and the psychological struggle experienced when searching for a physical and mental space of belonging:

– – Gib ihn nicht fort aus deiner Seele – ihn, den Allbewohner, den
Nomaden, Kind du deiner weiten Heimat.
Auf wie kleinem Fleck die Hütte dir auch steh', wie unerreichlich das
'Weißsteinernte', das 'Mütterchen' sich auferbaue, wie fernab die
Wolga sich verströme, sich die Steppe dehnen, sich Gebirge türme:
Nähe seien alle Fernen, alle Weiten.
Wachsen Grenzen deinem Land, so bleibe deine Seele ihnen doch
entwachsen: 'Heimat!' sage sie darüber hin, bis alles du beherbergst in
dir selbst und es dir aller Wesen Wärme einverleibte.

¹⁶² More on psychological conflict of Russian-Germans in Germany is discussed in Chapter 4 and 5.

Das dass auch ineinanderwachsen diese zwei, die, sich befehlend in des Menschen Enge, dennoch brudereins geboren sind: der da sich selber lebt und der da leb dem andern. (Ibid., 126)

Salomé seamlessly illustrates the juxtaposition of the German colonists' sense of national belonging to the nation-state of Germany to their acculturation process within the host country's culture. Evidence of German immigrants' acculturation in Russia is presented in the various ways in which Germans adopt Russian culture. The members of the older German generation retain a strong sense of loyalty to Germany and vigorously continue practicing German traditions, and therefore the integration of the younger German generation into Russian culture and social life is not always approved, but also not necessarily condemned:

Von unsern Verwandten – jenen verschiedenen Onkel und Tanten, nach denen Boris und unsere Ostereier benannt hatten – bleib es dennoch nicht unbemerkt, dass bei uns junge Leute aus und ein gingen, die sich ungemein »russisch« benahmen, und kopfschüttelnd wurde mein Vater darauf aufmerksam gemacht. Möglicherweise teilte er sogar diese Besorgnis: geäußert hat er es jedoch nie. Denn stärker war ihm ihm der Widerstreben, jemanden ihn Wahl oder Form seines Umganges zu beaufsichtigen. Jederzeit nahm er an, seine Söhne ständen für ihre Schwestern ein, und diese wiederum für den Ton des Kreises, mochte er im übrigen sich zusammensetzen aus wem immer es sei. (Ibid., 38)

Although Germans immigrated with the intention of permanently residing in Russia, Salomé refers to them as colonists and implies a position within Russian society that differs from the modern sense of an immigrant. For Salomé, this term indicates at once their permanent residence and their closely held cultural and social ties to the German ‘homeland’.¹⁶³

German colonists in Russia differed from the German colonizers in Africa, as most of those who went to Russia gave up their residency status in Germany. In contrast to the German colonizers in colonized African countries, over several generations German colonists in Russia developed a hybrid or intercultural identity by adopting and acculturating with the host country’s culture. The construction of German-Russian identities as being both strongly tied to Germany and dependent upon acculturation into Russian culture is shown in *Rodinka* through the russification of names and adoption of Russian cultural traditions:

Obwohl wir von klein auf die russische Sprache beherrschten, Boris russisch gerufen wurde und ich im zärtlich verstümmelten Koserussisch, dem ein Name nicht leicht dortzulande entgeht, blieb doch gegenwärtig, dass unsere Heimat ganz fern in süddeutschem Lande stand, mochten wir ihr auch seit mehreren Generationen schon entrückt sein. Der Vater war es, der, obwohl mehr unwillkürlicher-, absichtsloserweise, uns das nie vergessen ließ: und wär es auch bloß die verräterische Sehnsucht gewesen, womit er ein paar verblasste

¹⁶³ An illustration of a more traditional understanding of the term is located in the example of Germany’s colonial experiences in Africa. At the turn of the century (1882-1919), Germany partook in the colonization of South-East and South-West African countries, demonstrating the ‘traditional’ use of the term colonial, in the sense of occupation.

Landschaftsfotografien, als seien es Bilder teurer Angehöriger, auf seinen Schreibtisch gestellt hatte, oder die besondere Pietät, die allem galt, was aus der Zeit vor der Übersiedelung sich vererbt hatte, sei es noch so unbrauchbar und beschädigt. (Ibid., 30)

German colonizers in German South-East or South-West Africa were similar to European colonialists throughout Africa, as their mission on the continent was primarily driven by economic pursuit and partly the cultivation of land and people. In contrast, although Germans retained the traditional German cultural practices, they integrated into the Russian society through acculturation. The Eurocentric view of Russia, nonetheless, can be partially observed within the German colonists residing in Russia, because their intention among others was to cultivate the Russian land as well.

Nonetheless, Salomé critiques the Western, German perception of Russia as an uncultivated society by indicating that Germans in Russia tend to criticize Russians and their lack of “Ordnung”, a cultural aspect that clashes with tradition of German sensibilities. As Salomé already described in her journal, she is a proponent of viewing cultural aspects subjectively and disagrees with a Eurocentric perception of Russia. This belief is also expressed in her novel, as she describes German perceptions of Russia as incomplete with many gaps in a conversation between the German female character Hedwig and the Russian Witalii:

Nun – nun, es ist schon wahr: Lücken waren nicht –. Was du also hier getan hast? Und das siehst du nicht einmal, du Neunmalkluge? Aufgezeigt hast du erst die Lücken, die niemand bemerkt hat! Überall:

in der Wirtschaft, im Haus, am Tun der Menschen selber! Beinah möchte man es so sagen: russisch ging es einst zu bei uns – jetzt: – deutsch –. Herrgott, wenn du nun gingst, da kämen wir am Ende zu dir sehr schnell wie unsere Stammväter schon zu den Warägern:¹⁶⁴ kommt her zu uns – das ist das Land – mach mal drin Ordnung! (Ibid., 149)

A further indication of aspects of a colonizing mindset among the Germans in Russia is evident in the manner in which Germans interacted with each other and with the Russians. Despite their acculturation with the Russians, Germans predominantly married other Germans or immigrants of other Western-European countries. Comparable to the German colonizers of South-East and South-West Africa who were required to only marry and procreate among the ethnically European individuals to avoid racial ‘impurities’¹⁶⁵, the Germans in Russia, married only among people considered ‘German’ to achieve a similar objective. They justified these actions with claims of keeping their ‘German blood’ pure from contamination with ‘Russian blood’, whom the Germans considered at the time to be of an inferior ethnicity and ‘race’.

In *Rodinka*, Salomé looks at the phenomenon of limiting marriage among German colonists. The second part of the novel begins with Margot’s recollection of her journey to Russia and her reason for the trip. Just as in *Fenitschka*, *Rodinka*’s main character’s reason for traveling to Russia is the attendance of a wedding. In the novel her brother Michael is engaged to be married to a woman from the circle of

¹⁶⁴ In Old-Russian the term Warjagi refers to the Scandinavian tradesmen and warrior.

¹⁶⁵ The construct of ethnicity was constructed within Germany (and Europe) in such a way as to produce the myth of “impure” blood, see Uli Linke, *Blood and Nation: The European Aesthetics of Race* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999).

immigrant minorities in Russian “Der Zeitpunkt meiner Reise nach Russland war bestimmt worden durch die Hochzeit meines Bruders Michael, den es beruflich dort dauernd festgehalten hatte und der sich nun seine Frau aus denselben hauptstädtischen Emigrantenkreisen holte, denen auch wir nahegestanden” (Ibid., 85).

In *Rodinka*, Salomé discusses often the notion of German national identity rooted firmly in Germany and connected to German culture. Although the members of this German community have resided in Russia for several generations, traditional German cultural practices, including the use of the German language, have been transferred from generation to generation. While retaining their German identity, most members of the German community residing in Russia over an extensive period of time have integrated into the Russian society through acculturation with Russians.¹⁶⁶

V. The Intercultural ‘Woman Question’ within Russian Society in *Rodinka*

Although Salomé primarily explores intercultural aspects of Russian society, in this text she also incorporates discourses on women’s roles and includes various depictions of women within a multicultural society. Just as she describes various women in the novella *Fenitschka* – including the French (grisette), the German (Irmgard) the Russian (Nadeschda) and finally the intercultural German-Russian protagonist (Fenitschka),—the author touches upon the subject of differences and similarities among the women of various backgrounds and across various generations in *Rodinka* as well; however, within this novel, she reveals interculturality as it is found within only one (the Russian) society. Her discussion of women and their

¹⁶⁶ The acculturation process depicted in Salomé’s novel is in accordance with the J. Berry integration theory.

struggle within Russian society shows a vivid interest in the ‘Woman Question’ and femininity as well as the role and position of women around 1900.

Salomé’s female characters in *Rodinka* come from different classes, various cultural and ethnic backgrounds. The main character Margot is ethnically German and culturally Russian-German. She is an educated, young, unmarried woman from the upper class who enjoys the privileges of the upper class but experiences inner turmoil, searching within herself for a sense of belonging. The character Hedwig, although she is only mentioned briefly, is also representative of the female German colonist community in Russia. Salomé chooses typical German female first names, Margot and Hedwig, for her German characters to make a clear distinction between the German and the Russian women. Margot, however, is also frequently referred to as Margoscha or Musja to point out a part of her Russian identity, which exists alongside her German upbringing. The Russian female characters in the novel are represented through ‘Babuschka’—a member of the older Russian female generation—Tatiana and Ksenia, two young Russian women. Among the German and the Russian women, the novel also introduces a devout Muslim Tatar woman, who differs from the Russian and German women through her traditional attire.

Although these women are members of communities with culturally different backgrounds, they are all part of a shared Russian society, which maintains particular social norms. These social norms at the turn of the twentieth century resembled those of Western societies in terms of women’s rights and gender roles. Some of the gender specific tasks are illustrated in *Rodinka* and include domestic work, such as sewing, and humanitarian aid, which women would provide to soldiers in wartimes. Just like

in Germany, where women engaged in helping soldiers through the Red Cross, the Russian-German women in Russia also participated in the collection and distribution of care packages to the front during the Russian-Turkish war (1877-78). During this war, Russian-German women assisted Russian women caring for soldiers and, which often resulted in deadly consequences as Salomé describes:

Allmählich nahm der Krieg alle Teilnahme gefangen, drängte Persönliches mehr und mehr in den Hintergrund. In unserm deutschen Vaterhause saß ich mit den andern, nähte und zupfte Fäden oder half der Mutter im organisierten Frauenverein bei den Paketsendungen auf den Kriegsschauplatz. Boris, der als kleiner Junge einst hatte »russischer Dichter« werden wollen, dichtete schwungvolle Oden an die »fallenden Helden« – deutsch; mehrere junge Mädchen aus unserm deutschen Bekanntenkreis waren dem Roten Kreuz hinuntergefolgt; eins von ihnen erlag der Typhusseuche in den Baracken. (Ibid., 26)

Moreover, women of the upper and lower classes in Russia did not have rights equal to those of men, and the defined roles for women and men were as much present in Russia as in any Western-European society. Any deviation from the social norms resulted in rejection and expulsion from the community, having devastating consequences for both men and women. The discourse on deviation from gender roles is observed through the subject of marriage, and Salomé chooses a wedding as the impetus for the main character's trip to Russia. While describing the bliss surrounding the upcoming event, Salomé also looks at marriage as a societal

institution rejecting any form of freedom – a familiar scene she also illustrates in *Fenitschka*. She further discusses the subject of marriage and femininity and her opinion on that matter is particularly apparent in the following passage: “... weiblich bleibt ein Weib nicht durch den Umstand, dass sie just unter einen Mann gestellt ist. Aber freilich – eines Herrn bedarf sie! – Nur gibt es höhere Herren als ihr, meine Lieben” (Ibid., 191). At the same time, the novel suggests that a woman is no more and no less feminine through marriage: “[w]ozu dann sich verheiraten ums Himmels willen?! Wozu hab’ ich mich mit dir eingelassen, Witalii?! Schnell her mit dem höchsten Herrn für mich, Babuschka!” (Ibid., 191). Such passages are particularly telling of Salomé’s own relationship towards marriage and femininity, because she presents a similar scenario and asks similar questions in *Fenitschka* and in other essays.

The topic of marital relationships is also discussed through the subjects of infidelity and divorce which come up in a conversation between the characters about the groom’s brother, Dimitrii, who refuses to attend his brother’s wedding. The reason for not participating in the wedding is his family’s disapproval of his non-conventional and socially unacceptable life style. After falling in love with a young woman, Dimitrii left his wife and child and moved away to live with his mistress. Although Salomé illustrates the societal pressures women face when engaging in extramarital affairs, she makes it clear that these consequences are equally shared by women and men. The act of leaving his wife costs Dimitrii not only the financial support of his family but their complete rejection of him, especially his mother’s. At the same time, Salomé identifies the role women play in the enforcement of social

norms and gendered roles by depicting a mother who disapproves of her son's living with the woman he loves and the rejection of his responsibility as a husband towards his wife and family:

Die Rückkehr würde ihm ja sauer genug gemacht: nicht anders wie als Büßenden, Stirn an der Erde, würde ihm die Mutter wohl wieder zulassen; zu tödlich verletzt ist ihre Liebe zu ihm. Aber bedenke überdies, dass – stärker vielleicht sogar als die Neigung – seine Ritterlichkeit ihn jetzt bindend mag an dies Mädchen, das um seinetwillen sich selber aus Elternhaus und Gesellschaft verstieß, Rang, Wohlleben, Freunde ihm opferte und nur ihm lebt. (Ibid., 114)

Salomé criticizes social norms and practices and the constructed gender roles which can lead to devastating outcomes and which affect all members of society. At the same time, even if Dimitrii would have wanted to leave his mistress and return to his wife, his socially constructed chivalrous obligation towards a woman (his mistress), who has sacrificed her social status, wealth and friends to devote herself to him, does not permit him to do so. The notion of “Ritterlichkeit,”¹⁶⁷ symbolizes the highest value a man could achieve. Salomé uses this term here in a less serious manner, illuminating the societal contradictions and hypocrisy within both women and men (Ibid., 114). Similar to the discourse on women's hindrance of emancipation and social progress in *Fenitschka*, Salomé displays in *Rodinka* women who participate in the strengthening of gendered roles. Women, who refuse their sons' decisions to deviate from their socially acceptable norms are just as much responsible for

¹⁶⁷ The German term ‘Ritterlichkeit’ translated in English refers to ‘knighthood’—a noble code of conduct which dates back to the medieval times.

supporting the construction of the very male gendered roles. Social progress will only thrive, if both genders recognize the need for change.

Conclusion

Salomé's travels to Russia in 1899 served as an inspiration for her fondness and interest in all things Russian, and she devoted much of her time during this period to the study of Russian culture, language, art, history, and literature. However, the second journey in 1900 had a particularly strong impact on Salomé's own development, and the experience of Russian culture and its people provided rich material for her literary work, which she incorporated and developed in the novels she wrote at the turn of the century, especially in *Rodinka*. Although Salomé's journeys to Russia at the turn of the century were most influential for her literary productivity, her connection to Russia was a lifelong relationship. Despite the fact that she was born in Russia, she was not accepted as Russian in Russia, but rather German, and during her time in Germany, she discovered that there she was not considered to be German; instead, she experienced life as a member of the German minority in Russia and a Russian minority in Germany. This experience of living among Russians, Germans and intercultural people gave her the advantage to position herself not between the two cultures but within both Russian and German cultures, allowing her to develop a unique perception of cultures, being able at once to view each culture as both an insider and an outsider. Since this process of cultural perception and acculturation first begins to develop within Salomé during the journey to Russia in 1900, it is of crucial significance for the analysis of her fictional work. Understanding her literary texts at the end the nineteenth century, such as *Fenitschka*, *Rodinka*, *Ma*,

and *In Zwischenland*, requires a thorough examination of Salomé's thoughts on cultures and societies, mostly Russian and German.

This chapter's analysis of Salomé's fictional work alongside her journal offers new insights into her much debated relationship to gender and her standing as a German writer. Demonstrating that her perspective of identity formation and childhood development stemmed from intercultural experiences, this chapter's analysis of her novel places Salomé into categories beyond simplistic constructs such as pro- or anti-women's movement, or German or Russian. Salomé's experiential interaction with the world, as evidenced in the analysis of her journal, was both multi- and intercultural. She perceived the world as being more than either-or; she recognized that one could be both Russian and German, be pro-equal rights without belonging to the women's rights movement. Analyzing her fictional work as being rooted in this perspective, it becomes possible to analyze them beyond traditional discourses of Russian or German nationality, or pro- or anti-women's rights. Instead, Salomé's fictional depiction of the multicultural society reveals an until now unexamined cultural complexity apparent in these texts, an intricacy in which women could both be denied equal treatment and be responsible for the reinforcement of inequality, in which a person could be at once German and non-German, Russian and non-Russian. Ultimately, it is only through the development of her unique way of observing and perceiving culture that the true complexity of cultures and societies and their relationship to discourses of cultural and national identity can be fully explored.

Chapter 4: Alina Bronsky's Intercultural and Social Border Crossings in *Scherbenpark* and *Die schärfsten Gerichte der tatarischen Küche*

Introduction

Chapter 4 focuses on cultural and intercultural discourse presented in Bronsky's novels *Scherbenpark*¹⁶⁸ and *Die schärfsten Gerichte der tatarischen Küche*.¹⁶⁹ The

¹⁶⁸ In the novel *Scherbenpark* (2008), Alina Bronsky tells the story of a young teenage-girl named Sascha who is determined to kill her stepfather, who is incarcerated for killing Sascha's mother. Sascha and her two younger siblings live in Germany in a high-rise "Solitaer"—a "ghetto" apartment building designated to house predominantly Russian-speaking immigrants from the former Soviet Republics. In the story, Sascha portrays the dreams and desires of her Russian immigrant peers' and comes to the realization that they will not materialize due to their low social status within Germany. As the story unfolds, Sascha reflects on the early years of her life in Germany, to include her first encounters with Germans and explains the linguistic and cultural difficulties, along with the challenges in school and everyday life upon her arrival in Germany. She makes observations about the German state's efforts for integration of young students in school, but also discusses the challenges faced by the immigrants in Germany that resulted in despair, alcohol abuse, psychological and physical violence, and in some cases death. On her journey to find revenge for the death of her mother and rejected by her Russian-speaking community for superstitious reasons, Sascha meets a German man named Volker and later his son Felix, who both become her close friends and a substitute for her family. Seemingly defeated, Sascha's story concludes with her plan to move to Prague.

¹⁶⁹ In her second novel *Die schärfsten Gerichte der tatarischen Küche* (2010), Bronsky describes the life journey of a middle-aged Soviet/Tatar woman named Rosalinda who was born in the former Soviet Union in the 1970s and immigrated to Germany in the 1980s following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Rosalinda's character is very determined in her pursuit of a better economic situation for her family, even at the detriment of her family's physical and psychological wellbeing. The story begins with Rosalinda's reflection on her daughter, Sulfia, getting pregnant and the barbaric practices of eliminating the pregnancy. After the failed attempt to abort, Sulfia gave birth to a girl whom they named Aminat. From this point on, Rosalinda's only pursuit is to find a suitable husband for her daughter to improve her economic and social status. During this pursuit, Rosalinda reveals various aspects of Soviet society, economy and culture from the oppression of minority cultures, to the dire health care and shortage of medicine, food, vitamins, clothing and other necessities for every-day use. The poor economic conditions and the increasing crime at the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union prompted Rosalinda to immigrate to Germany by arranging a marriage between Sulfia and a German tourist named Dieter, who was more interested in Aminat. Once in Germany, Rosalinda learns that despite the economic wealth, the life for immigrants in the West proves to be more difficult from a cultural and social perspective. Their difficult situation in Germany took a toll on Rosalinda's daughter Sulfia, who dies of an unexplained illness and Aminat running away from home. Although Bronsky's novels are fictional, they reflect the reality of the economic, social, cultural, linguistic and other aspects of immigrants' situations and the Soviet and German societies.

first section is entitled “Transnational and Intercultural Discourse and the Encounter with Soviet Culture”; the later section “Soviet Everyday Life.” In these first two parts, Bronsky deconstructs traditional German notions of ‘Otherness’ through a comparison of discourses between Soviet interculturality and anti-Semitism. Stuart Hall’s concept of *hybrid identity* is the basis for the analysis of Bronsky’s novels in this project.¹⁷⁰ The section “Cultural and Ethnic Minorities in the Soviet Union – An Intercultural Encounter with a ‘Tatarka’” is an examination of various aspects of Soviet/Russian, Tatar, German and Jewish cultures. Additional cultural minorities, which characterize the former Soviet Union and contemporary Germany as heterogeneous societies, are also presented. By evaluating the intercultural exchange between immigrants and members of the host society, the perceptions of ‘self’ and ‘others’ are compared.

My discussion further includes Bronsky’s attempts to deconstruct and reconstruct the notion of ‘Otherness’¹⁷¹ in the sections “Germany as the ‘Other’” and “*Transnationalism through Music and Interculturality through Cuisine: ‘The Melting Pot’, ‘The Tossed Salad’ or the Central-Asian ‘Plov’.*” This cultural analysis includes a close examination of Bronsky’s use of language based upon interculturality through language integration. Although Bronsky is considered a German writer and her work is usually seen as part of *Gegenwartsliteratur*, the intercultural content of her texts, coupled with her own intercultural background places her into the category of a minority writer in Germany.

¹⁷⁰The concept of hybrid identity is explained in Chapter 1 in the section “Cultural and Intercultural Identity development.”

¹⁷¹ The term ‘otherness’ or ‘other’ is defined in Chapter 1, Part II in “Encountering the ‘Other’ Culture.”

Regarded as the literary newcomer¹⁷² and one of the most popular contemporary German authors, Alina Bronsky's novels have captured the attention of millions of readers and critics worldwide, earning her a nomination for the Ingeborg Bachmann Prize for her first published novel *Scherbenpark* in 2008¹⁷³ and the Deutscher Buchpreis (dbp) for her second novel *Die schärfsten Gerichte der tatarischen Küche* in 2010.¹⁷⁴ Bronsky's work has been an integral part of the *Gegenwartsliteratur*.¹⁷⁵ With her unconventionally free and innovative writing style and her approach to contemporary German social and cultural subject matters, Bronsky breaks through social, cultural, and linguistic borders, creating transnational,¹⁷⁶ transcultural,¹⁷⁷ and intercultural works of literature.

Both of Bronsky's novels are representative of current discourses of disorientation and reorientation in contemporary German literature. While her literary oeuvre exemplifies a German text embodying transnational literature, they raise questions concerning the positioning of transnational, transcultural, and intercultural texts within contemporary German literature. Bronsky breaks through and away from

¹⁷² "Alina Bronsky gilt als literarische Newcomerin [sic] der Saison" *Der Spiegel* 27 (2008): 136. Further, Alina Bronsky appears on the cover of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung, Feuilleton spezial*, October 7, 2012 as one of the "besten jungen deutschsprachigen Schriftsteller von heute," 43.

¹⁷³ <http://bachmannpreis.eu/de/texte/137> accessed on 3/16/2014

¹⁷⁴ <http://www.deutscher-buchpreis.de/de/391096> accessed on 3/16/2014

¹⁷⁵ German contemporary literature (*Gegenwartsliteratur*) is discussed and closely examined in terms of its purpose by Michael Braun in his article "Was ist Gegenwartsliteratur?" in *Die deutsche Gegenwartsliteratur: Eine Einführung* (Köln: Böhlau, 2010), 9-19. Further, Jacques Rancière analyses the politics of contemporary literature in his "The Politics of Literature," in *Dissensus. On Politics and Aesthetics*. ed. Steven Corcoran (London; New York: Continuum, 2001), 153-168. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari look at the transnational literature from a rhizomatic perspective in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, (Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 3-25.

¹⁷⁶ The word 'transnational' indicates the "extending or going beyond national boundaries", <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/transnationalism>. Accessed on 4/14/2015

¹⁷⁷ The term 'transcultural' is defined as something "involving, encompassing, or extending across two or more cultures", <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/transcultural>. Accessed on 4/14/2015.

the conventional literary genres by combining aspects of light fiction with social, cultural, and political discourses, while incorporating the interplay of linguistic elements such as Russian and German, by inserting grammatical errors into the German language to add authenticity by mirroring the linguistic deficit of many immigrants.¹⁷⁸ In addition to linguistic hybridity,¹⁷⁹ Bronsky further alienates the reader from the text through literary techniques and the intertwining and contrasting of languages as well as her use of popular-language; yet, at the same time, she expands and enriches the German language and depicts various linguistic communities within contemporary German society. Some of the widely discussed topics in Bronsky's novels deal with the life of Russian-speaking immigrants in Germany: global citizens living between and within two cultures, two societies, two languages, and their never-ending search for home and identity.

Bronsky herself spent her formative years in the former Soviet Union, in Yekaterinburg, and immigrated to Germany with her family at the age of twelve.¹⁸⁰ She was born in 1978; her mother was an astronomer and her father a physicist. She spent her adolescent years in Hessen, in Marburg and Frankfurt. She briefly attended medical school before deciding to pursue her career as a writer.¹⁸¹ Little is known about her ethnic background, apart from her father's Jewish heritage. Bronsky does not reveal much about her identity and uses a pen name to protect her private life and

¹⁷⁸ Examples for portrayal of the authenticity are provided in *Scherbenpark* on pages 237 and 273.

¹⁷⁹ The Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin understands linguistic hybridity as the "mixing of various 'languages' co-existing within the boundaries of a single dialect, a single national language, a single branch, a single group of different branches in the historical as well as the paleontological past" in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, trans. by Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 358.

¹⁸⁰ <http://www.fr-online.de/frankfurt/alina-bronsky-die-schreibende-hausfrau,1472798,11408086.html> accessed: 3/16/2014.

¹⁸¹ <http://www.goethe.de/ins/il/lp/kul/mag/lit/lpw/de8810972.htm> accessed on 3/16/2014.

to allow her literary work to be successful and recognized without being tied to the author's identity.¹⁸² However, the author's intercultural '*positionality*' is undeniably evident in both novels: the sensitivity and precise knowledge of the social environment the Russian-speaking immigrants experience in Germany, as well as their integration challenges due to isolation and language barriers enable Bronsky to create fictional, intercultural characters who deal with everyday authentic and real social and cultural issues within Germany.

One of these characters revealing a hybrid cultural identity¹⁸³ in Bronsky's *Scherbenpark* is Sascha—an intelligent and independent seventeen-year-old immigrant girl from Russia residing in Germany. Sascha lives in a segregated concrete high-rise, the "Solitär", which serves as the primary physical location for the depiction of everyday life for Russian-speaking immigrants from the former republics of the Soviet Union, predominantly from Russia and Kazakhstan (*Scherbenpark* 8, 86).¹⁸⁴ Sascha is the only individual in the Solitär who breaks through the social and cultural barriers¹⁸⁵ and develops a unique intercultural identity. She is the only one with realistic dreams, so she states, while everyone else has succumbed to the hopelessness of ever escaping the Solitär due to their present social, cultural, linguistic, and economic hardships (*Ibid.*, 7). Sascha, on the other hand, is determined

¹⁸² <http://www.goethe.de/ins/il/lp/kul/mag/lit/lpw/de8810972.htm> accessed on 3/16/2014

¹⁸³ Homi Bhabha defines cultural hybridity in terms of a Third Space, the "interstitial space in-between the designations of identity that opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed identity," in *The Location of Culture* (London; New York: Routledge, 1994), 4.

¹⁸⁴ Bronsky makes a reference to the Russian-speaking immigrants from Kazakhstan, the Russian-Germans whose ancestors were deported to Kazakhstan shortly before and during World War II and immigrated to Germany in late 1990s.

¹⁸⁵ Some of the social and cultural barriers may include the proper communication between the immigrants and the members of the host society and the differences in gender roles, religion, and the individualistic versus collectivistic culture.

to pursue her two dreams: she aspires to write a book about her mother and to kill her stepfather Vadim (Ibid., 7). As the story unfolds, the reader is introduced to the heartrending conditions of immigrants living physically and socially segregated from the rest of German society: their everyday struggles due to lack of German language skills, various issues resulting from failed integration policies, and the loss of home¹⁸⁶ and cultural identity.¹⁸⁷ Bronsky further touches upon discourses on nations' intercultural societies by incorporating discussions on the diversity of cultural norms and traditions, and she introduces a method for successful integration of immigrants through acculturation between Russian-speaking immigrants and Germans. She adds a further dimension to her commentary on integration and acculturation by analyzing them in congruence with gender discourses, which will be closely analyzed in the following Chapter 5, where the investigation is focused on social differences in the gender roles of Russian/Soviet and German societies and the consequences of deviating from these roles. In the end, although content with her achievements, Sasha remains in search for her identity and a psychological and physical place of belonging.

Similar to Bronsky's novel *Scherbenpark*, her second novel *Die schärfsten Gerichte der tatarischen Küche* (2010) introduces the readers to the world of minorities within Russian-speaking immigrants in Germany as well as in the Soviet Union. This multicultural and multidimensional fictional novel centers on the story of

¹⁸⁶ 'Home' in this instance is understood as being synonymous with the German term 'Heimat'.

¹⁸⁷ The Oxford Reference defines Cultural Identity as "The definition of groups or individuals (by themselves or others) in terms of cultural or subcultural categories (including ethnicity, nationality, language, religion, and gender). In stereotyping, this is framed in terms of difference or otherness." <<http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095652855>>. Accessed on 1/12/2015

a female character Rosalinda, a strong and independent Tatar woman living in the former Soviet Union and her endeavor to immigrate to Germany. Belonging to a Soviet minority, the Tatar heroine feels neither entirely at home in the Soviet Union nor later in Germany and is in constant struggle between remaining true to her heritage, adapting to various societal expectations and maintaining her unique individuality which has been shaped by various cultures. A dominant theme in Bronsky's novel is the role of women within the former Soviet and contemporary German societies respectively—all female characters in this novel are perfectly capable of sustaining financial and emotional independence; yet, due to the former Soviet Union's social norms, women are expected to maintain the traditional role for women—often as a wife and mother. Rosalinda's character, however, embodies a contradiction between the traditional and the progressive—while she herself maintains and even imposes the typical roles for women onto her daughter and her granddaughter, she does not adhere to the same societal limitations. Her unorthodox lifestyle and her actions lead to various confrontations within her family and the society.

In addition to the gender discussion, Bronsky addresses critical topics ranging from multicultural discourses within the Soviet Union in the 1970/80s and Germany in 1990/2000, to criticism of the Soviet Union and Germany's integration policies for minorities to assimilate into the mainstream culture. Significant attention is also given to the subject of anti-Semitism and religious intolerance within the Soviet Union, which consequently forced Russian-Jews to immigrate to Jerusalem. These complex issues are intertwined with the plot's narration of Rosalinda's life.

Due to the fragile Soviet economy in the 1980s and its negative impact on people, including poor living conditions and shortage of proper housing and food, Rosalinda is compelled to abandon certain moral and ethical rules for a chance to obtain permission to immigrate to Germany. After their arrival in Germany, Rosalinda, her daughter and granddaughter face unexpected challenges with the German language and integration into German society, a country in which speaking the host society's language becomes a major factor in virtually every aspect of daily life.

In both novels, Bronsky elaborates on discourses of immigrants' positions within Germany and points to the current issues in German integration policies. She also combines multiple languages and introduces the reader to various cultures within the Soviet Union and Germany through the use of terminology and idioms in several languages, and she exposes the reader to the physical and psychological condition of minorities and particularly focuses on the psychological and identity development in (young) women living between and within the social and cultural borders.

Although Bronsky's popularity among readers in Germany and globally has risen in recent years, only a handful of academic studies have dealt with her literary work, despite the novels' richness in social and cultural discourses. Among the secondary literature are two published book reviews for *Scherbenpark*: one review examines the heroine's identity transformation, stating that she "leaves her mean streets in search of something better—love or friendship or merely kindness, but something different" and changes "her life by changing her physical environment

(and like the author, taking on a new identity).”¹⁸⁸ The book review by Elisabeth Powers merely depicts the contradiction in Bronsky’s heroine.¹⁸⁹ Only one article on the author’s biography¹⁹⁰ and one scholarly article examining Bronsky’s language use¹⁹¹ have been published. Bronsky’s use of language, which unquestionably transcends and crosses linguistic boundaries through the incorporation of different languages¹⁹² and idioms is markedly unique. Also, the representation of German society is particularly significant when observing it from the view of an immigrant, especially through the eyes of an immigrant woman.

I. Transnational and Intercultural Discourse and the Encounter with the Soviet

Culture

Bronsky intensively participates in discourses on interculturality and transnational identity within her novels *Scherbenpark* and *Die schärfsten Gerichte der tatarischen Küche*.¹⁹³ In *Scherbenpark*, she illustrates the general situation of Russian-speaking individuals in Germany, whereas in *Die schärfsten Gerichte* she focuses predominantly on the life of a member of Soviet society. Bronsky’s realistic depiction of people’s struggles under social pressure, the shortage of basic human needs arising from lack of housing and shortages of clothing, food and medicine, provides a vivid

¹⁸⁸ Alan Davis, “Risky Adventures,” in *Hudson Review* 63.1 (2010): 168-176.

¹⁸⁹ Elizabeth Powers, “Scherbenpark by Alina Bronsky,” in *World Literature Today* 83.3 (2009): 60-61.

¹⁹⁰ For more information on Bronsky’s biography, see Mary Ruby’s “Alina Bronsky,” in *Contemporary Authors: New Revision Series* (Detroit; Michigan: Gale, 2013).

¹⁹¹ Barbara Menzel, “Alina Bronsky, *Scherbenpark*: Global Ghetto Girl,” in *Emerging German-Language Novelists of the Twenty-first Century*, edited by Lyn Marven and Stuart Taberner (Rochester, New York: Camden House, 2011), 136-161.

¹⁹² Bronsky writes predominantly in German but incorporates Russian and English in *Scherbenpark* and includes also the Tatar language in *Die schärfsten Gerichte der tatarischen Küche*.

¹⁹³ Due to the length of the title *Die schärfsten Gerichte der tatarischen Küche*, the title will be abbreviated from this point on as *Die schärfsten Gerichte* in text and citation.

image of an individual's everyday-life in the Soviet Union. Her criticism is further directed towards persistent anti-Semitism in Soviet society and physical violence as part of the socio-cultural mode of discipline, both in private and public spheres. Nonetheless, despite the various depictions of the negative aspects of the Soviet/Russian culture and society, Bronsky introduces the rich intercultural community in the Soviet Union and Germany through linguistic variations and connects people of diverse cultural, social and ethnic backgrounds through intercultural cuisine and global music.

Comparing these two novels' engagements with inter- and multiculturalism is important for understanding Bronsky's unique method of deconstructing German and Russian/Soviet cultural identity as a homogenous concept. Few authors have portrayed the heterogeneousness of society with such skill and complexity. This section's analysis of her representation of the interactions between these minorities and diverse cultures will elucidate how Bronsky challenges any stable construct of German or Soviet/Russian cultural identity, replacing it with a myriad of unique cultural identities defined by an individual's (multicultural) experiences within a given society.

One of the discourses Bronsky's novels repeatedly examine is the reciprocal relationship between the individual and society, scrutinizing his or her role within the society as well as the culture and society's shaping of that individual's identity. This is best demonstrated in Bronsky's representation of a typical Soviet intercultural individual, an enthusiastic proponent of Socialism and devotee to communist

ideology, as embodied in *Die schärfsten Gerichte* by the character Kalganow, Rosalinda's husband:

Er war, unvermerkt auf den ersten Blick, Tatare. Aber er wollte nie darüber reden. Er sagte immer, das sei alles willkürlich, die Unterteilung in Russen und Ukrainer, Juden und Zigeuner, Usbeken, Baschkiren, Aserbaidshaner, Armenier, Tschetschenen, Moldawier ... und Tataren. Er war in Kasan geboren, aber es war ihm nicht gut bekommen. Er hatte einen Traum: alle Menschen zusammenmischen, von ihren Elternhäusern fernhalten, von dem, was man als kulturelle Wurzeln bezeichnet, befreien wie von lästigem Ballast. Er war der Meinung, dass alle diese Unterschiede Menschen diskriminieren. (*Die schärfsten Gerichte* 80)

By presenting the idea of cultural annihilation as a dream—as an unconscious wish as in Freud's psychoanalytic theory on dreams (*Traumdeutung*)—reveals the problematic of discrimination of cultural and ethnic minorities by the members of the cultural majority—Russians. Longing and wishing for something indicates an absence of what one desires; in this case, the wish for cultural and ethnic acceptance. Unlike in Western countries, and especially the United States, where one's nationality is based on the country of birth, in the former Soviet Union, the official nationality of an individual was determined by one's ethnic and cultural roots. Through this dream of cultural erasure and the fusion into a unified culture, Bronsky demonstrates both the harsh reality and the dream of many members of minorities.

Although, each former Soviet Republic maintained (un)officially their cultural practices and language, the Russian language became the official language in all former Soviet Republics after the formation of the Soviet Union. Its attempt to create a classless society by adopting, modifying, and ultimately misusing Marx's ideology never came to fruition. One simply cannot directly or indirectly force millions of members of subcultures to assimilate with a dominant culture and language—which was undoubtedly the Russian culture—without risking the creation of a society based on ethnic and cultural bigotry.

II. Anti-Semitism in the 'Classless', 'Marxist' Nation

Bronsky's criticism of the cultural and ethnic inequality is present in her illustration of the societal perception of Jewish minorities and the anti-Semitism in the former Soviet Union. The majority of the members of the Soviet society perceived Jews negatively, and persistent and growing anti-Semitism resulted in the immigration of a large portion of the Jewish population to Western countries or Israel.¹⁹⁴ Bronsky addresses the many prejudices against Jewish people from untrustworthy, to stingy, practical and wealthy. In *Die schärfsten Gerichte*, the novel's heroine Rosalinda expresses her perception of the Jewish people:

¹⁹⁴ The Russian-Jewish immigration is recorded in Israel CBS. 2006a. Immigrant Population from the Former Soviet Union: Demographic Trends, 1990-2001. [http://www.cbs.gov.il/publications/migration_ussr01/migration_ussr_e.htm]. Further, Mark Tolts examines the Jewish people from Russia in "The Jewish Population of Russia, 1989-1995," *Jews in Eastern Europe* 3. 31 (1996): 5-19. He further examines the grounds for Russian-Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union during the post-Soviet era in "Post-Soviet Jewish Demography, 1989-2004," *Revolution, Repression and Revival: The Soviet Jewish Experience*, eds. Zvi Gitelman and Yaacov Ro'i (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. 2007), 283-311. Also, Elazar Leshem and Moshe Sicron examine the immigration in "The Soviet Immigrant Community in Israel," *Jews in Israel: Contemporary Social and Cultural Patterns*, eds. Uzi Rebhun and Chaim Waxman (Hanover, NH and London: Brandeis University Press. 2004), 81-117.

Auch dieser Mann war nicht schlecht. Er war sauber gekleidet, und sein Hemd hatte ein würdevolles Muster. Allerdings war er ein Jude. Einen Juden erkannte ich schnell. Als er mich sah, stand er auf und küsste mir die Hand. Ich fand ihn galant. Er nannte seinen Namen – Michail. Ich fragte ihn nach dem Vatersnamen und dem Nachnamen. Na bitte – er hieß Rosenbaum. Ich fand das bedenklich, aber nicht katastrophal. Juden waren Juden. (Ibid., 126)

Other Jewish stereotypes are further described by Rosalinda such as “Juden [waren] praktisch veranlagt” or, for instance, “fand[en] große Hochzeiten spießig” and that “in Wirklichkeit waren sie einfach geizig”, despite the wealth of the Jewish characters, which is evident “in ihren braunen Klamotten aus gutem, teurem Stoff” (Ibid., 127, 137, 134). As it appears, Jews also are particularly adept in choosing a proper spouse, someone who is “bescheiden und eine Krankenschwester dazu. Die Juden wussten schließlich, worauf es ankam. ... Es war klar, eine solche Schwiegertochter würde nicht das ganze Geld für Klamotten ausgeben” (Ibid., 132, 133). However, the older Jewish mother and “[i]hre ganze kleine Person strahlte Misstrauen aus” (Ibid., 30). The irony in the prejudice against the Jews lies in the fact that although the society ascribes certain negative traits to this particular cultural group, the same exact characteristics are found among all people and Bronsky makes this point vividly by stating not only that “[b]ei ihnen musste man aufpassen, aber bei wem nicht?” but also “dass Juden kritisch waren. Das hatten wir mit ihnen gemeinsam” (Ibid., 126, 131). Nonetheless, Rosalinda assures that “[b]ei ihnen ging es offenbar zu wie bei normalen Menschen auch” (*Die schärfsten Gerichte* 136).

Further, when the Rosenbaums lost their home due to an explosion near the house, Rosalinda observed that “[e]s klar [war], dass sie auf Aminats Zimmer spekuliert hatte. Das hätte [Rosalinda] vermutlich auch getan, auch wenn [sie] keine Jüdin war” (Ibid., 143). The constant portrayal of negative character traits of what a Jewish person supposedly would and would not do exposes a self-reflection of one’s own inner fears and intentions—which appear to be universal to all humans. In this regard, Stuart Hall’s concept of cultural *difference* would be rather misplaced—what Bronsky describes as a prejudice according to one’s cultural background, is a mere socially constructed psychological condition derived from fears of the unknown, of the ‘Other’.

When Rosalinda intends to marry off her daughter to the Jew, she asserts to the future in-laws that “Unsere Familien werden sich bestens verstehen” and Mrs. Rosenbaum “griff sich ans Herz” (Ibid., 130). Rosalinda then continues: ”»Wir sind Tataren«, »Und Sie sind ... Na ja. Mein Mann sagt, alle Menschen sind gleich. Hauptsache, sie haben Anstand.« Rosenbaums Mutter begann zur Seite zu fallen” and continued “[d]ann sagte ich, dass alle Völker Freunde waren, so ähnlich, wie Kalganow es mir am Anfang unserer Ehe immer vortrug, und Rosenbaum verlor die Fassung und fiel mit seiner grauen Mähne in den Teller (Ibid., 130, 135). Bronsky’s use of humor and satire is a demonstration of these prejudices as projections of one’s own intentions and characteristic of the ‘Other’, clearly illustrating the underlying danger of how these images of ‘Others’ are consciously created and maintained. One does not need to be reminded of the practices that led to the Holocaust in Germany, which ultimately resulted in the creation of the nation of Israel—a nation, in which

even today survivors live who fled European countries due to the egregious anti-Semitic persecutions, societal intolerance and injustice of that time.

In *Die schärfsten Gerichte*, Bronsky broadens this discourse of Jewish immigration to Israel with a discussion of Russian-Jewish emigration from the Republics of the former Soviet Union. The discussion on Jewish emigration to Israel in the late 1990s is evident in Rosalinda's reflection on the subject: "Es war nämlich so, dass sehr viele Juden in diesen Jahren in ihre historische Heimat zurückkehrten. Jeder kannte welche, die nach Israel ausreisen wollten. Auch die Rosenbaums, zu denen inzwischen meine Tochter gehörte, begannen, sich auf die Flucht aus unserem Land vorzubereiten" (Ibid., 151). Bronsky's choice of words "die Flucht" alludes to a similar image of Jews fleeing into exile during the Nazi period in Germany. This is further indicated when Rosenbaum describes her feelings about losing one's home, not only a house, but a 'home' by stating: "Es ist einfach schlimm, sein Zuhause zu verlieren", and it demonstrates the ongoing debate of a much deeper socio-cultural, political, and historical issue¹⁹⁵ not only within the former Soviet Union but on a global level (Ibid., 151, 144). For example, in the Soviet Union, Stalin considered the Jews an ethnic group which was part of the "enemy" nations, which "included Jews and Germans, as well as Turkish Muslims in the Caucasus. ... [I]n many small towns and villages, Russian and Ukrainian soldiers massacred Jews and expelled thousands from their villages, deporting them into the Russian interior. ... Jews were considered politically unreliable" (Baberowski, Doering-Manteuffel 203).

¹⁹⁵In Jörg Baberowski and Anselm Doering-Manteuffel, "The Quest for Order and the Pursuit of Terror," *Beyond Totalitarianism. Stalinism and Nazism Compared*, eds. Michael Geyer and Sheila Fitzpatrick (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 203.

The negative attitude and aversion towards Jews in the Soviet Union persisted in the mainstream Soviet society into the 1980s, which Bronsky addresses thoroughly and throughout the novel *Die schärfsten Gerichte*. When Rosalinda discovers that her daughter Sulfia and granddaughter Aminat will join the Rosenbaums on their ‘escape’ to Israel, her dislike of the Jews emerges once again: “Irgendwas in meinem Leben war schiefgelaufen. Ich hätte niemals zulassen dürfen, dass Sulfia mit einem Juden anbandelte” (*Die schärfsten Gerichte* 154). She makes a clear distinction between ‘self’ and ‘Other’: “[w]as sollte sie dort ganz allein bei den ganzen Juden” and “[w]as soll ich da, unter lauter Juden?” (Ibid., 152, 156). For her, being and living among Jews evokes negative feelings and an animosity against what the Jewish culture represents. To illustrate the Soviet mainstream and wider common view of Jews, Bronsky allows Klavida, another fictional member of Soviet society and of non-Jewish cultural and ethnic background, to voice Rosalinda’s opinion of Jews: “Einerseits war [Klavdia] der Meinung, dass jeder Jude, der das Land verließ, ein guter Jude war. Andererseits gönnte sie keinem von ihnen das sonnige Ausland. Eine Auswanderung in die mongolische Steppe hätte Klavdia für sie viel besser gefunden” (Ibid., 157). This statement hints at Stalin’s deportation of the Russian-Germans to the Kazakh steppes in the late 1930s before the beginning of WWII. Russian-Germans were exiled into the most remote places in the Soviet Union for no other reason than Stalin’s fear of Russian-German’s collaboration with Nazi Germany and for his politically influenced perception of Germany.¹⁹⁶ Just as hundreds of thousands of Germans from the former Soviet Union immigrated to Germany due to the

¹⁹⁶ A topic worth further exploration would be the need for Stalin’s premature removal of Russian-Germans from the Russian and Ukrainian western geographical borders.

discrimination of their culture and ethnicity, the Jews from the former republics of the Soviet Union relocated to their historically native land after decades of anti-Semitic bigotry, which was rooted in the mainstream Soviet perception of Jews.

In this section, Bronsky's discussion of the persistent and ongoing socio-cultural problematic of the perception of 'self' and 'Other' is revealed through the analysis of the mainstream Soviet view of the Jewish minority. Bronsky expands on the notion of societal divisions through the negative view of diverse cultures in a classless nation by incorporating an additional discourse encompassing the cultural identity of a member of the Tatar and Muslim ethnic minority group, which was enduring persecution similar to the Jewish peoples in Soviet/Russia.

II. Cultural and Ethnic Minorities in the Soviet Union: An Intercultural Encounter with a 'Tatarka'

Bronsky juxtaposes discourses on the 'othering' of the Jewish minority with discourses surrounding the cultural subgroup of the Tatar people from the Caucasus region (Ibid., 20). Similar to Salomé's depiction of an intercultural encounter between a German and a Tatar woman in her novel *Rodinka*, Bronsky writes in *Die schärfsten Gerichte* from the 'positionality' of a Tatar woman encountering people of various cultural backgrounds, including German, thus crossing cultural and social borders. Bronsky also elucidates the issue of preserving one's cultural identity within a Soviet society and later in Germany. The issue raised in Bronsky's novels is the idea of cultural fusion resulting in the eradication of all traces of cultural identity—a traditional Soviet socialist society based on class rather than 'race' in contrast to the

ethnically rooted German society.¹⁹⁷ Such practice is also observed in the previously colonized nations, in which the economically more advanced nation occupied the less advanced parts of the world, in many cases forcing their Eurocentric ideology onto the colonized. The spread of the Soviet ‘Russcentric’¹⁹⁸ ideology onto the former Soviet Republics and onto its hundreds of cultural subgroups continued until 1990, the collapse of the Soviet Union. Some scholars still cite this Russian centric view of culture as creating ongoing conflicts between itself and other former Soviet nations.

Nonetheless, the problem of maintaining a non-Russian cultural identity while still assimilating with Russian culture during the Soviet Union is evident in Bronsky’s depiction of this integration process as demonstrated through the name changes. For example, problematic Tatar names like Sulfia and Aminat are changed to the Russian names “Sonja” and “Anna” or “Anja” respectively (Ibid., 53, 23, 22). Since Aminat “schon tatarisch genug aus[sah] [,] [s]ie musste nicht auch so klingen, ... Erst sprach man Tatarisch, dann vergaß man das Russische, und plötzlich war man Analphabet. Aminat durfte das nicht passieren. Sie sollte die Beste, Schönste und Klügste sein. Ein sowjetisches Kind ohne Nationalität, sagte Kalganow stolz” (Ibid., 32).

Although Rosalinda’s husband aspires to raise a child without a national identity, she is proud of her distinct cultural heritage, which shines through her name: “Ja, ich hatte einen schönen Namen, wie einem ausländischen Liebesroman entsprungen. Ich war nicht irgendeine Katja oder Larissa” (Ibid., 50-51). This quote

¹⁹⁷ This comparison is made by Gorlitzki and Mommsen when examining the Nazi German and Stalin’s Soviet society in their article “The Political (Dis)Order of Stalinism and National Socialism,” in *Beyond Totalitarianism. Stalinism and Nazism Compared*, eds. Michael Geyer and Sheila Fitzpatrick (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 42-59.

¹⁹⁸ Inspired by the term ‘Eurocentrism’, I constructed the word ‘Russcentrism’, which carries the same connotation as Eurocentrism, but pertaining to Russian culture and society.

indicates a rejection of her assimilation into Russian culture. Her husband, on the other side, “war sehr kategorisch. Er glaubte ... daran, dass alle Menschen gleich waren, und dass jeder, der das Gegenteil behauptete, noch im Mittelalter lebte”; she further describes his dislike for diversity when she says that, “[m]ein Mann mochte es nicht, wenn wir uns von anderen unterschieden” (Ibid., 15). Therefore, he called his daughter “Sonja” and as Rosalinda states: “Er nannte unsere Tochter nicht bei ihrem tatarischen Namen. Er nannte sie so, wie die Russen sie nannten, weil es außerhalb ihrer Möglichkeiten lag, sich einen tatarischen Namen zu merken, geschweige denn auszusprechen” (Ibid., 15).

However, even Rosalinda, sometimes, refers to Aminat as Anja, especially when she misbehaves: “Ich ertappte mich schon dabei, dass ich sie gegenüber den Kindergärtnerinnen sogar selbst manchmal Anja nannte, weil ich mich für sie schämte. Sie war so schwierig, dass ich es den Fachkräften nicht auch noch mit einem arabischen Namen zusätzlich schwer machen wollte” (Ibid., 22). In reality, it is not the issue of the name alone, but the other and additional prejudice against the Tatars that Rosalinda hopes to avoid, since the “Tatarenweiber” were already perceived negatively within the Soviet society (Ibid., 124).

Bronsky further demonstrates the Soviet young generation’s loss of cultural identity through complete assimilation with the Russian culture:

[Rosalinda] suchte in einer alten Enzyklopädie das Bild einer Tatarin in Tracht und legte das dicke Buch aufgeschlagen vor Aminat. »Wer läuft denn so rum?« fragte Aminat. »Deine Vorfahren«, sagte [Rosalinda]. Die Enzyklopädie zeigte die unzähligen Völker der

Sowjetunion in ihrer Nationalkleidung. »Sind das echte Menschen?«
fragte sie. (Ibid., 195)

Although the USSR was a union of Republics and represented all cultural groups, the younger generation is no longer aware of their cultural roots and heritage: “Einmal kam sie nach Hause und fragte, was ein Tatare sei. Sie mussten ein Referat darüber schreiben. ... Ich hielt das für eine dumme Aufgabe: Warum mussten sich die Kinder mit Dingen beschäftigen, die für sie keine Rolle mehr spielten” (Ibid., 231). The report Aminat had to write was in Germany—in a country of the eternal battle of evaluation and re-evaluation of one’s identity. Aminat’s identity changes once again in Germany from Aminat, once Anna and Anja in the USSR, and now to Anita and Alina in Germany: “warum nennen sie alle immer noch Anita und Alina – ist es so schwer, sich ihren Namen zu merken?” (Ibid., 303). The level of difficulty in memorizing a name lies not in the actual name, but in accepting one’s unique identity and diverse cultural background—a name holds an identity, which, in this case, Soviet and German societies’ attempt to compel individuals to conform to the nations’ socio-cultural norms, resulting in the surrendering of one’s individuality. Bronsky identifies and verifies the contradictions within Soviet society, which on one hand promotes equality among all cultural groups and on the other hand encourages assimilation into mainstream ‘Russcentric’ Soviet culture. The author further demonstrates how such enforced assimilation negatively impacts one’s cultural identity and individuality.

IV. Soviet Every-day Life

Next to the discriminatory practices towards cultural and ethnic minorities in Soviet society, Bronsky introduces the audience to the contradictions of Soviet socio-cultural practices. Despite the eradication of the class system, individuals holding a higher position within society enjoyed certain privileges—one needed only to mention his or her position in the government and instantly the Soviets adopt the German work-ethic: “Ich brachte sie zum Balletunterricht in den Palast der Jugend und Kultur. Dort wollte man sie nicht, bis ich erwähnte, wo mein Mann arbeitet. Aminat wurde aufgenommen” (Ibid., 33). Indeed, Rosalinda’s husband “war bei den Komsomolzen, auch das fand [Rosalinda] gut. [Sie] begrüßte sein politisches Engagement, [ihr] war klar, welche Perspektiven das eröffnete” (*Die schärfsten Gerichte* 80). However, as lucrative as it sounds to work for the government in the USSR, the reality of one’s dedication to the socialistic ideal is reflected in people’s struggles, which result from this same stern commitment to the Socialist principle:

Damals wurde ich ständig schwanger, das war ein Problem. Wir hatten kein Geld und keine Wohnung, trotz seiner Arbeit nicht. Er war ein Kommunist der Ideale, keiner, der dafür sorgte, dass seine Familie eine Existenzgrundlage erhielt. Seiner Meinung nach sollte es uns nicht besser gehen als anderen. Ich habe nicht gezählt, wie oft ich die unschuldigen Seelen deswegen zurück in den Himmel geschickt habe. Es war nicht mehr als bei den anderen auch. (Ibid., 81)

The tragedy Bronsky describes here—the inability to raise a child, forcing many women to terminate pregnancies due to horrendously poor living conditions—is

shared by the majority of the members of the Soviet society, regardless of one's cultural background, and they were affected by the Soviet political and economic conditions.

Bronsky's vivid presentation of housing shortage and the extensive wait to receive public housing are a recurring theme in *Die schärfsten Gerichte*. Several families shared a single communal apartment, and in Rosalinda's case "waren [sie] zwei Parteien in dieser Wohnung: zwei Zimmer für [ihre] Familie, eins für Klavdia, Bad und Küche zur gemeinsamen Nutzung, ein schöner Altbau und sehr zentral", and once Sulfia and Aminat moved out, Rosalinda hoped that "[ihnen] das zweite Zimmer nicht wegnehmen [wird], wo [sie] doch hier jetzt zwei Leute weniger sind" (Ibid., 10, 24). It was unthinkable to 'find' an apartment in a short time period—a reference to the Soviet practice of bribing to 'help' one's luck: "Auch ein klügerer Mensch hätte in so kurzer Zeit keine Wohnung in unserer Stadt finden können ..." (Ibid., 27). What was even more inconceivable was to receive a larger government apartment to house one single family:

Sie hatten nicht zwei, sie hatten drei Zimmer. Für sich allein. Obwohl sie zu dritt waren. Wir waren doch nicht im Ausland. Wer hatte bei uns eine Dreizimmerwohnung für drei Leute. Nicht einmal Kalganow als Gewerkschaftsvorsitzender. Da war er aber auch wirklich selber schuld: Er wollte nicht, dass es uns besser ging als anderen, und tat viel zu wenig, um uns das Leben zu erleichtern. Wenn ich nicht gewesen wäre, hätte er wahrscheinlich immer noch in einem Mehrbettzimmer im Wohnheim gehaust. (Ibid., 53-54)

However, the image Bronsky provides of public housing in the Soviet Union in *Die schärfsten Gerichte* resembles the picture of the ghetto Solitär in Germany in *Scherbenpark*. After a while, the new housing is turned into public squalor:

Es duftete sehr gut in diesem Hauseingang, weil das Haus noch neu war. ... Nach einem Jahr waren diese frisch gestrichenen Wände mit Kritzeleien überzogen worden, Katzen und Betrunkene hätten alle Ecken vollgepinkelt, und wenn man Glück hatte, blieb nur ein leiser Hauch von dieser Hoffnung auf ein besseres Leben, die in jedes neue Haus mit einzog. (Ibid., 49)

This is a true depiction of reality of the living conditions within public housing in the Soviet Union—people treated their living space with disregard and disrespected the building and the people living in it.

The intercultural Soviet society, nonetheless, apart from the cultural issues and the miserable housing situation, experienced a much deeper social issue arising from the lack of economic stability and the political conflict between East (The Warsaw Pact member countries) and West (member nations of the NATO alliance before 1990). Politics of the Soviet Union directly affected the economy and, therefore, individuals' everyday life. The Soviet's miserable economic situation when compared to Western nations such as West-Germany resulted not only in shortages of basic necessities, but further fuelled the illegal importation of merchandise from all over the world.

Since the Soviet government's censored media sheltered people from the world of Western capitalism, the Bazaars served as the literal and figurative ground

for intercultural exchange, where imported goods were usually sold or traded. Bronsky makes reference to this situation in *Die schärfsten Gerichte* particularly to goods from (Western) Germany, the GDR and the USA. Products for hygiene came from Germany, implying German fixation on cleanliness and, therefore, its production of high-quality products; fashion trends came directly from the USA. Products such as the “Parfum” came from Germany, and the “Lack [war] angeblich ... aus Deutschland” just as the “wohlriechendes Schaumbad ..., das Sergej in einer sehr hübschen Flasche aus der DDR mitgebracht hatte. Bei [ihnen] gab es so ein Schaumbad nicht zu kaufen, und [sie] verwendeten es äußerst sparsam” as well as the “Shampoo, das Sergej aus der DDR mitgebracht hatte” (Ibid., 112, 74, 102, 143).

However, the first intercultural encounters between the Soviet Socialist East and the US Capitalist West are illustrated in the form of fashion: “... Schuhe h[a]tte [der] Schwiegersohn aus Amerika mitgebracht. Aus Amerika! Trug man dort solchen Mist, oder waren diese Schuhe einfach besonders billig gewesen?” (Ibid., 62). While the shoes looked ‘American’, also the “Mantel sah verdächtig nach Amerika aus”, and the look would not be complete without a “amerikanische[n] Sonnenbrille auf der Nase, ...” (Ibid., 62, 87, 95). Bronsky demonstrates the development of a perception of ‘self’ and ‘Others’ through the gaze of the Russian-speaking characters encountering the Western cultures and at the same time she lets the German readers encounter the intercultural society and culture of the Soviet Union in 1980s.

Aside from the lack of material goods, Bronsky exposes much deeper socio-economic and political issues within the Soviet Union, which resulted in the shortage of food and medicine. Bronsky’s illustration of Rosalinda’s quest for oranges

summarizes the precise dilemma: Rosalinda “hatte nach stundenlangem Schlangenstehen ein Kilo Orangen für Aminat ergattert ...”, and since oranges were the only source of vitamins, “lief [sie] die ganze Stadt ab auf der Suche nach Vitaminen. Normalerweise hatte das genauso viel Sinn, wie in einem Komposthaufen nach Gold zu graben. ... Am Ende war [sie] schweißgebadet, hatte aber ein Netz Orangen und ein Kilo Trauben aufgetrieben, ...” (Ibid., 126, 144). Rosalinda’s obsession with vitamins has reasonable grounds, since medicine was not only scarce but counterfeit medication was too dangerous to consume. People either relied on preventing diseases through vitamins in a natural form or obtaining medicine from abroad, such as, again, from Germany: “Das Medikament, das [man] sonst einnahm, wurde nämlich in Russland von einem Tag auf den anderen nicht mehr hergestellt. [Man] sollte es in Deutschland besorgen” or “irgendwas mit [den] Tabletten [hatte] nicht gestimmt – sie waren zu billig und hatten offenbar zu wenig Wirkstoff” (Ibid., 239, 162). After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the situation worsened into the 1990s, which also prompted a massive emigration from the Soviet Union:

In meinem alten Land hatte sich vieles verändert. Es trug einen neuen Namen. Auch meine Stadt hieß inzwischen anders. Alles war sehr dreckig, und jeder verkaufte irgendetwas. Buden und Kioske drängten sich nebeneinander, auf Pappkisten wurden Lebensmittel, Kleider, Bücher und leere Coca-Cola Dosen verkauft. Die Menschen waren schlimm angezogen und hatten Elend im Blick. Alle Mädchen sahen wie Nutten aus, und offenbar waren die meisten auch welche. Alte Frauen zählten mit zitternden Händen Münzen ab. (Ibid., 266)

The text further discusses the physical violence within the Soviet culture, both social and political, and exposes the gruesome practices the members of the Soviet Red Army carried out on their own people. Basic training, which consisted of three years, was mandatory without exception for each 18-year old male. During this time, young men endured physically and psychologically demanding training. For many young men the psychological aspect of the training was particularly grueling. The so-called ‘*dedovshchina*’¹⁹⁹ (a hazing practice of the former Soviet Army and contemporary Russia) used violence against new and young or physically weak soldiers. This type of violence was and is particularly brutal, and has been harshly criticized after several young soldiers died due to the injuries inflicted on them during these practices. Within the novel, Bronsky exposes some of the gruesome practices in her description of Vadim, who applied physical violence as a mode to control and ‘discipline’ his children and his wife:

In der Armee, vor hundert Jahren, soll Vadim ein passabler Schütze gewesen sein. Er hat gern davon erzählt, wenn er einen Behördenbrief nicht verstehen konnte oder keine sauberen Socken fand oder wenn meine Mutter abends wegging, ohne ihn, und sich von seinem Donnerwetter nicht beeindrucken ließ. Er erzählte dann von der Armee und hatte dabei einen versonnenen Ausdruck im Gesicht. »Damals in der Armee«, sagte er, »haben wir Weicheier auf Kalaschnikows gespießt«. (*Scherbenpark* 46-47)

¹⁹⁹ Russian term *dedovshchina* (дедовщина) refers to grandfatherism—the senior officers and soldiers in the Soviet and Russian Army.

Bronsky's continuous depiction of the brutality within the Soviet military training signifies that such violence was not an isolated incident, but a substantial part of every-day life in the Soviet society:

Und dann diese Hand mit den kurzen Fingern, die den Ledergürtel mit wenigen Griffen öffnete, und das Zischen des Gürtels durch die Luft und meine Erinnerungen an seinen Spruch: »Also früher, bei der Armee, da hatten wir unsere Gürtelschnallen mit Blei vollgegossen, hat das gekracht auf den Schädeln.« Und Lachen, immer gleich hinterher. (Ibid., 174)

Use of physical violence embedded itself into Soviet/Russian cultures and became a norm not only among the former or current members of the military, but was utilized as a method of discipline by the majority, as Bronsky shows in Rosalinda's method of punishment for her granddaughter:

Ich zog Aminat am Zopf in den Keller. Die Haare auf ihrer Kopfhaut spannten, aber nach einem ersten Klagelaut verstummte sie und schwieg auch dann, als ich sie hinter die Garagen führte, ihr die Hosen runterzog und sie mit Kalganows altem Ledergürtel verdroscht, den ich vorsorglich in meine schöne neue Handtasche eingepackt hatte. (*Die schärfsten Gerichte* 101)

Bronsky proceeds describing how Rosalinda "holte aus und schlug [Aminat] mit der flachen Hand ins Gesicht" (Ibid., 118). Such an incident was nothing out of the ordinary within Soviet society and culture. It was a widely accepted custom to implement physical force to discipline and punish disobedience.

Nonetheless, even in schools children and adolescents were forced into submission, to follow strict rules without questioning or challenging the authority. Such conformity was reflected in institutionalized school policies, which required students to rise when the teacher entered the class, sit straight with arms folded on the desk, and wear a “braune Schuluniform”—a suit for male students and a dress with an apron for female students, and all students wore a red ‘galstuk’,²⁰⁰ which represented the Soviet flag, around their necks (Ibid., 93).

Failing to appear to school in proper attire resulted in a humiliating punishment, such as cleaning the classroom after school. My own experience in failing to adhere to the Soviet school regulations and forgetting to wear the ‘galstuk’ one single time resulted in a penalty I obviously still have not forgotten: As a student in the fourth grade, I was sent home in -20 Celsius weather to walk three miles just to get the red handkerchief and return to school the same day. After such an incident, even a 10-year old child begins to question such Soviet practices.

Nonetheless, each Soviet family with children in school dealt with the cumbersome care of the school uniform, which Bronsky recounts in *Die schärfsten Gerichte*:

[Sie] nähte ... Manschetten und Kragen an Aminats Schuluniform.

Das Schulkleid war ja braun und hatte einen Kragen und Manschetten aus weißer Spitze. Das Kleid brauchte nicht oft gewaschen zu werden, den Schmutz sah man daran nicht, außerdem trocknete sie immer lange. Die Manschetten wurden aber sofort schmuddelig. Jede Mutter

²⁰⁰ The red handkerchief represented the Soviet red flag. The Russian term *galstuk* derived from the German word *Halstuch*.

trennte die Manschetten und den Kragen am Wochenende ab, wusch sie, trocknete und nähte sie wieder an. (Ibid., 116)

Once again, the text gives an account of cultural practices within the Soviet Union, and at the same time it criticizes and questions the lack in progress. A demonstration of the rigid culture was shown by the tedious effort and time spent devoted to separating a collar, washing it, and sewing it back onto the uniform, rather than inventing a much more practical method or redesigning the uniform.

Bronsky also delineates the socio-cultural differences in German and Soviet schools through the discussion of grades. When Sascha explains to Maria that she has “den besten Notendurchschnitt des ganzen Jahrgangs,” Maria responds: “Was für komische Noten, Jetzt plötzlich diese komischen Punkte. Immer 15 Punkte. Da flimmert es einem vor Augen. Warum nicht so einfach wie bei uns: von eins bis fünf. Du hättest dann lauter Fünfer. Man nennt es eine ›runde Fünferschülerin‹” (*Scherbenpark* 165). The small and often seemingly insignificant representation of accounts of Soviet culture and the juxtaposition of Soviet and German cultural customs and social norms indicates Bronsky’s thorough knowledge of both cultures, producing an intercultural and transnational text. Bronsky’s vivid illustration of the various socio-cultural aspects of Soviet culture in comparison and contrast to Germany, demonstrates the cultural differences within the Soviet/Russian and the German society. By identifying the resemblance in the socio-cultural practices within both countries, Bronsky demonstrates that regardless of the nations’ political ideology (Socialism versus Capitalism), particular practices, such as the discrimination against

minorities, persist in collectivistic as much as it does in the more individualistic societies.

V. Germany as the 'Other'

The transnational, transcultural and intercultural discourses in Bronsky's novels continue in the demonstration of Russian-speaking individuals' various encounters with German culture and its people. In *Die schärfsten Gerichte*, Bronsky's heroine Rosalinda crosses geographical and cultural borders for the first time and her reaction of amazement and pride is captured in the following: "Ich konnte es kaum glauben: Wir waren im Ausland, wir alle drei, und zwar nicht in irgendeinem, sondern in Deutschland. In dem Land, das uns nicht besiegt hatte. Ich war stolz auf mich. Aminat war gerade zwölf und hatte bereits eine Landesgrenze überquert, etwas worüber ich bis jetzt nur in Büchern gelesen hatte" (*Die schärfsten Gerichte* 201). Rosalinda's perception of 'self' and 'Other' is evident in the use of the word 'wir', separating the two cultural groups—the immigrant from the German—and narrating from the 'positionality' of the Russian-speaking immigrant. However, Bronsky also underlines the intricacies of crossing geo-political borders: The reason Rosalinda never traveled to a Western foreign country before is tied to the politics of the Soviet Union. Often, only a very limited number of Soviet citizens, who were also members of the Communist party, were permitted to travel abroad for official business.

Moreover, the Soviet government was in control of the Media—before Glasnost was initiated in 1985 by President Gorbachev—and information about the West was greatly influenced by the political agenda. Based on the politico-historical relationship between Germany and the Soviet Union, the Soviet government shaped a

negative perception of Germany among the Soviet population through propaganda. Rosalinda's first cultural encounter with Germany was through books in the USSR: The only information she was able to procure about Germany is the nation's defeat during WWII.

Nonetheless, similar to Salomé's ideas on acquisition of cultural knowledge through subjective or personal experience, Bronsky displays the culture of the 'Other' (Germany) through the constant evaluation of the 'self' (Soviet Union and later Russia). Russian-speaking characters' first encounters dealt with the German sense for order and superb work-ethic, or as Rosalinda recalls: "Deutschland stellte sich als grün und menschenleer heraus", and her granddaughter from Israel was "begeistert, wie grün und aufgeräumt Deutschland war" (*Die schärfsten Gerichte* 201, 309). In fact, "[e]s war alles sehr sauber, [ihre] Schuhe spiegelten sich im Fussboden" and, although, in German homes everything "war kahl. Keine Teppiche, wenig Möbel. ... Aber alles war sehr sauber" (*Ibid.*, 201, 202). Nonetheless, "[i]n Deutschland konnte man nicht einfach so faul herumliegen. Hier bekam man nichts geschenkt und nichts hinterhergetragen" (*Ibid.*, 208).

Bronsky's work further evinces socio-cultural ideological differences between Germany and USSR/Russia through interpersonal communication. The subject of inter- and cross-cultural communication is addressed through the interaction between two different members of a socio-cultural community. From the collectivistic Russian-speaking individual's perspective, Germans tend to distance themselves through semantics by formally addressing an adolescent, in this case Sascha:

»Bitte, Frau Naimann«, sagt der Mann, als wir dann alle sitzen. »Was haben Sie auf dem Herzen?« Schon wieder Herzen, denke ich müde. Und ich bin noch nie in meinem Leben mit »Frau Naimann« angesprochen worden. Bis auf den heutigen Tag. Und dann gleich mehrmals. Mich drängt es, mich umzudrehen und nachzusehen, ob hinter mir nicht eine andere Frau Naimann steht. (*Scherbenpark* 70)

Speakers of the Russian language almost never apply the formal 'You', 'ВЫ', when addressing a child or adolescent regardless of the circumstances and familiarity or lack of it; in Germany, however, it is customary to address even adolescents to indicate respect but also establish distance between the individuals.

Additionally, Bronsky lets the reader into the 'underworld' of the German NPD (National Democratic Party in Germany) and their perception of culturally diverse citizens. By addressing the persistent sympathizers of the nationalist-socialist ideology, Bronsky identifies the significance of the subject and opens a discourse on xenophobia in Germany as a continual threat to a multicultural German society. By comparing the two societies, Bronsky exposes to her readers (who are most likely native Germans) the dangers of forcing minorities to conform. Bronsky summarizes the xenophobic views of the Neo-Nazi movement in Germany in a dialogue between the young Russian-speaking Sascha and a young German man Volker:

»Ich will ja nur sagen, es gibt doch inzwischen nur noch ausländischen Schrott.«

»Ja, leider«, sagt er betrübt. »Wir ersticken darin.«

»Wer – wir?«

»Wir Deutschen natürlich. Du und ich. Wir verlieren alles – unsere Wirtschaft, unsere Sprache, unsere Gene.«

»Unsere Musik«, sage ich ihm vor. »Die Kultur überhaupt.«

»Genau. In zwanzig Jahren gibt es uns nicht mehr.«

»Furchtbar«, sage ich. »Wen gibt es dann?«

»Die Chinesen und die Türken«, sagt er und greift sich eine weitere Haarsträhne. ...

»Du magst sie nicht, oder?« frage ich einfühlsam und streiche mir das Haar hinter die Ohren, bevor er sich noch mehr davon zwischen seine Finger schnappt.

»Die Chinesen, die Türken und anderes asoziales Pack?«

»Pfft«, sagt er. »Wenn wir an die Macht kommen, können die was erleben.«

»Wer sind wir?« frage ich müde. Eigentlich ahne ich es schon. »Die Republikaner? Oder wer finanziert deine Burschenschaft?«

»Die Reps? Ha.«

»Nun sag schon.«

»Rate mal.«

»Du bist bei der NPD.«

»Hey, du bist echt gut.« Wahrscheinlich findet er, dass ein Kuss von ihm Belohnung genug ist. Danach spricht er plötzlich viel und aufgeregt und stottert wieder, es geht um heuchlerische Politiker und Betrug und Volk und Ehre, die verlorene. Ich schalte ab.

Ich möchte auf irgendwas hinaus, was mehr mit mir zu tun hat.

»Die Russen sind schlimmer als die Chinesen, oder?« Frage ich den rot leuchtenden Himmel über uns, als mein Student kurz innehält.

»Die Russen? Pah. Die waren mal schlimm. Jetzt kann man die vergessen. Die saufen sich zu Tode. Die sind degeneriert.«

»Tja, was willst du«, sage ich. »Schlechtes Essen, schlechtes Wetter, soziale Ungerechtigkeit, nach der alten Diktatur neue Diktatur, Willkür und Gewalt, wie soll man da die Weltherrschaft für sich beanspruchen?«

»Da mach ich mir auch gar keine Sorgen«, sagt er. »Es dauert nicht lange, da haben die sich gegenseitig abgestochen. Wer überlebt, sitzt dann im Knast. Und wenn wir an die Macht kommen, machen wir die Grenzen dicht«. (Ibid., 226-227)

Through the demonstration of Volker's national-socialist ideological views and observation of the various cultural subgroups in the German society, the novel questions whether or not the society's ideology has progressed in the past 80 years since the time of National Socialism and the danger of the rising presence of National Socialist sympathizers. The name 'Volker' is derived from the Old-High-German term 'folk' or 'folc' and 'heri'²⁰¹, which carries the meaning of 'Volkkrieger' indicating his intention to fight for the nation.

The importance of this young Volker's xenophobia for the deconstruction of German cultural identity in the text becomes evident when compared to a character in

²⁰¹ Definition for the name Volker is found under the following link: <http://www.vorname.com/name,Volker.html>. Accessed on 4/14/2015.

Scherbenpark. It cannot be overlooked that this novel also contains a character named Volker, who functions as a type of antithesis to the younger Volker in *Scherbenpark*. Bronsky uses the same name within the same novel for another older German male character, who shows great enthusiasm for acculturation of the Russian-speaking members of German society and represents the open-minded and positive German members to juxtapose the xenophobia and intolerance towards a multicultural society.

The text presents opposing ideologies, as represented in both Volker characters, towards creating an intercultural society. However, the encounters between the culturally diverse members of the same society are sometimes described in the novels as physical reaction to the ideological clash:

»Das ist Volker«, sage [Sascha] in die Runde. Auf Deutsch. »Ein sympathischer NPD-Wähler und sogar Aktivist.« Sie regen sich nicht, sie wissen nicht, was NPD bedeutet. ... »Volker ist ein kleiner Nazi«, sage [Sascha] wieder auf Deutsch.... Er beginnt zu zittern. »Was soll das?« fragt [sie] Peter auf Russisch. (Ibid., 230, 231)

Bronsky takes the liberty of disregarding political correctness in order to intensify the authenticity of the reflection of issues within the multicultural societies of Germany and the Soviet Union, especially in her illustration of Russian-speaking individuals' views of other cultures. In addition to the Soviet/Russian, Tatar, Jewish, and German socio-cultural examples, Bronsky makes further cross-cultural references to the Chinese, Turks, English, and Hungarians and exposes culturally specific stereotypes. The Englishman "John schnitt Rosen, beobachtete Wolken und kochte Tee", while the Chinese are portrayed as diligent and goal orientated, as Rosalinda

states: “Ich seufzte, weil diese Chinesin nicht meine Enkelin war. Sie sah so fleißig aus, es war klar, dass sie bald eine eigene Praxis haben würde: Chinesen erreichen immer, was sie wollten” (*Die schärfsten Gerichte* 313, 292).

The ongoing negative stereotypes are evident in Russian-speaking individuals’ refusal to associate with Turkish individuals, which the text reveals: “Auf der Straße wurde Aminat oft für eine Türkin gehalten. [Rosalinda] konnte das nicht nachvollziehen. ... Das Türkische war dem Tatarischen auch ein bisschen ähnlich. [Sie] war trotzdem froh, dass Aminat sich von den Türken fernhielt” (*Ibid.*, 230). Tatars (a term for Turkic peoples) and Turks share a common history and possible ethnicity as a result of the Ottoman Empire’s colonization of the Crimean region in the eighteenth century, the area in which Bronsky’s Rosalinda character was born. In Germany, Rosalinda rejects any possible affiliation with the Turks precisely due to the negative stereotypes of the Turks during the Crimean colonization as well as the negative stereotypes of the Turks in Germany.

The text briefly mentions the situation of Hungarian immigrants in Germany, indicating the displacement of the ethnic German minority from Hungary:

Melanies Mutter stammte übrigens aus Ungarn. [Sascha] war sehr überrascht, denn erstens hatte Melanie das nie erwähnt, und zweitens sah das Mädchel so bilderbuchmäßig deutsch aus wie kein anderes Mädchen in meiner Klasse. Eben so, wie man sich als Ausländer eine junge Deutsche vorstellt, vor allem, wenn man das Inland noch nie betreten hat.

Sie hatte frisch geschnittenes und ordentlich gekämmtes blondes Haar bis zum Kinn, blaue Augen, rosige Wangen und eine gebügelte Jeansjacke, roch nach Seife und sprach mit piepsiger Stimme Sätze aus überwiegend zweisilbigen Wörtern, Ihre Mama dagegen sprach mit einem Akzent. (*Scherbenpark* 13-14)

Similar to the Russian-German reasons for immigration to Germany, the Hungarian-Germans also suffered persecution in Hungary under the Soviet regime.²⁰² Although Bronsky does not mention the Romanian-Germans, Herta Müller describes in precise detail in many of her novels²⁰³ a similar scenario of the socio-cultural challenges ethnic German minorities faced under the Soviet regime in Romania. Bronsky's intercultural, crosscultural, and transnational literary works, therefore, have shown that the concept of German identity crosses the geographical German borders and transcends the entire European and Asian continents.²⁰⁴

VI. Transnationalism through Music and Interculturality through Cuisine: 'The Melting Pot', 'The Tossed Salad' or the Central-Asian 'Plov'

Additionally, Bronsky crosses cultural and social borders through pop-music. The intercultural identity in Bronsky's characters, which will be discussed in Chapter V, develops through the global transfer and reception of various cultural expressions. Identifying oneself with a particular musical genre can reveal one's identification

²⁰² Apor Balázs examines the situation of the German minority in Hungary in his article "The Expulsion of the German Speaking Population from Hungary," in *The Expulsion of the 'German' Communities from Eastern Europe and the End of the Second World War*, edited by Steffen Prauser and Afron Rees (Florence, Italy: European University Institute, 2004), 33-46.

²⁰³ The following selected works by Herta Müller deal directly with the repression of the German minority in Romania: *Der Mensch ist ein großer Fasan auf der Welt* (1986), *Der Fuchs war damals schon der Jäger* (1992), *Heimat ist das, was gesprochen wird* (2001) and *Atemschaudel* (2009).

²⁰⁴ Lou Andreas-Salomé discusses a similar discourse on the German presence across European and Russian nations in *Fenitschka*, *Russland mit Rilke* and *Rodinka*.

with a certain cultural and social subgroup. Bronsky's discussion of pop-culture musical genres exposes the fact that while the older Russian-speaking generation "hat viel Pop und Rock gehört, Chansons und Musicals und Opern, sie [haben] nie in Schubladen gedacht", the younger generation of immigrants gravitates in particular towards the genres of Gothic-pop and Rap (*Scherbenpark* 183). Both music genres are popular within the younger generation of specific subgroups within the German and Russian/Soviet societies; however, the lyrics unite individuals from diverse cultural, social, and ethnic groups: "Es kann nicht sein, dass Peter die längst vergessene Musik einer alten Gothic-Band vom Ural einlegt, denke ich. ...

Im fremden Zimmer

mit weißer Decke

ein Recht auf Hoffnung

und der Glaube

an die Liebe. (Ibid., 183)

"Fremd" can signify both the 'foreign' and 'different' room, possibly also a location of hope and faith for the future.

However, while the young Russian-speaking Peter relates to Soviet/Russian culture by listening to the band from the Ural, Sascha identifies herself with US rapper Eminem—a musical artist, whose lyrics reveal the struggles within certain aspects of the US culture and society: "Was singen wir gerade, Marshall? *And Hailie is big now, you should see her, she is beautiful. But you'll never see her, she won't even be at your funeral.* Genau. Aber nicht Hailie, sondern Alissa" (Ibid., 203).

Bronsky's comparison between the American girl Hailie and the Russian girl Alissa

(Sascha's younger sister), indicates a close similarity in the global problematic of segregation, poverty, and violence within the 'ghettos'. Sascha addresses the rap-artist in her thoughts by his birth-name Marshall²⁰⁵ instead of his stage name Eminem, which reveals a certain familial connection she feels due to her belief that the singer and she share similar societal challenges. Through the lyrics of a particular songs and the use of specific musical genres, such as rap, Bronsky shows how certain socio-cultural issues are universal and transcend geographical borders, cultures, age, and gender.

Just as music transcends and transfers from cultures and societies, food is also one of the most recognizable features when encountering other cultures and Bronsky's detailed description of the cuisine introduces an intercultural Soviet society. On one hand, she recognizes the difficulty of maintaining individuality and cultural heritage within a heterogeneous society, but on the other hand, she identifies the richness of cultural hybridity. For instance, when the German tourist Dieter traveled to the Soviet Union in the hopes of writing a cookbook on culinary diversity in the Soviet Union, Rosalinda explains that

Dieters Bemühungen, mit seiner ganzen deutschen Genauigkeit die tatarische Küche von anderen Nationalküchen abzugrenzen, und von seinem Scheitern daran. Von seiner Verzweiflung, wenn er den Gegenstand seines Interesses von baschkirischen, kasachischen, usbekischen, aserbaidshianischen, jakutischen Einflüssen umringt sah und die Grenzen zu verschwimmen begannen – das war sicher etwas,

²⁰⁵ His given name is Marshall Bruce Mathers, III.

was für ihn schwer auszuhalten gewesen war. (*Die schärfsten Gerichte* 316)

In this case, Bronksy points towards a German individual's struggle to identify the separate cultures despite one's perception of this national culture as being homogenous and closely tied to one's ethnicity—a concept that has been observed in the German socio-historical context of the novel. However, unlike in Germany, where intercultural cuisine is divided into cultural groups, allowing for Italian, Greek, Turkish etc. restaurants, the culture of restaurant patronage practically did not exist in the former USSR and people encountered and exchanged intercultural cuisine through friends and acquaintances.

Precisely through cuisine, Bronksy illustrates how cultures of ethnic groups blended into a unique intercultural society sharing and borrowing cultural artifacts from one another. Bronksy gives the reader a glimpse into the world of the Soviet kitchen:

Maria kann Borschtsch und andere komplizierte Suppen. In der Wohnung riecht es immer nach Essen. Sie kocht richtige Brühen, aus Huhn und Rindfleisch, mit Gemüse und Bündeln von Grünzeug. Sie brät formvollendete Frikadellen und Pfannkuchen so dünn wie Spitze. Im russischen Supermarkt um die Ecke hat sie gezuckerte Kondensmilch entdeckt, eine zu Sowjetzeiten mehr als Kaviar begehrte Süßpampe, und da tunkt sie die zusammengelegten Pfannkuchen hinein. Sie legt Gurken ein und kocht Marmelade aus schwarzen Johannisbeeren. (*Scherbenpark* 24)

She further provides an understanding of the diversity of Soviet cultures through dishes such as a “Huhn in Walnusssoße” apparently the “beste Küche aus dem Kaukasus” or the “Pfannkuchen mit Hackfleischfüllung” (*Scherbenpark* 239-240; *Die schärfsten Gerichte* 49). Also, a “Rindfleischsuppe mit Fleischstücken” and especially the “Pilaw aus Reis, Hammelfleisch und Rosinen”—which is a popular main dish in the southern former Soviet Republics, as in Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, and especially Uzbekistan and which is prepared differently within each ethno-cultural group (*Die schärfsten Gerichte* 59). “Kasylyk”, a type of a “Pferdewurst” and particularly the “Vogelmilchpralinen” are considered delicacies (*Ibid.*, 83, 50). Despite the assumption that strange things happened behind the Iron Curtain, no birds of any kind were, indeed, milked for the production of the pralines.²⁰⁶

Also, within the former Soviet Union, the Tatar people were known for their culinary mastery and Bronsky incorporates this particular stereotype into the novel. Rosalinda, the Tatar woman from the Caucasus proclaims: “Ich koche sehr gut. Wir sind Tataren, wissen Sie?” (*Ibid.*, 54). Yet, as much as she wishes to represent and preserve the authenticity of the Tatar culture, she fails when she tries to prepare “ein tatarisches Nationalgericht”; later the novel explains, “[d]as Problem war, [sie] selber war ganz ohne die tatarische Küche aufgewachsen” (*Ibid.*, 54). Most Tatar, like other USSR citizens, acculturated within the intercultural society. Evidence of assimilation, rather than acculturation, and the encounter with German culture is also found in Bronsky’s description of Rosalinda’s cooking in Germany. Rosalinda explains, “[i]ch hatte gekocht, Hähnchen, Kartoffeln und Gemüse, dazu Salat, zum Nachtsch Torte,”

²⁰⁶ The pralines Птичье молоко (*Ptichye Moloko*) ‘Bird’s Milk’ consist of soft meringue or milk soufflé filling covered with chocolate. The Russians considered it such a rare, delicate and extraordinary treat that it could have only come from the ‘milk’ of birds.

in other words she prepares a popular and typical German lunch-dish (Ibid., 245-246). Bronsky has provided evidence of acculturation with the ‘Other’ through the use of various traditional Russian, Tatar and German cuisine.

VII. Interculturality Though Language Integration

In addition to the images of the various intercultural dishes in the Soviet Union and one typical German dish, Bronsky introduces the accuracy of the cultural interpretation but also the authenticity of an intercultural novel. Using Chiellino’s model for identifying an intercultural text, Bronsky demonstrates through the actual use of Russian and Tatar terms the validity of an inter- and trans-cultural literary work. She almost poses the question to the reader whether or not he or she is familiar with terms such as the “Kystybyj ... Kullama? ... Talkysch?” (Ibid., 185). She then proceeds with the explanation of the phrase: “*Pechlewe*—eine mehrschichtige Süßspeise” (Ibid., 313). Also, “*Kysybyj*, auch *kusimjak* genannt, ist eine Art Pirogge aus ungesäuertem Teig” and a

Katyk ist die Bezeichnung für die gesäuerte Milch, die bei den Tataren in einem Tontopf langsam erhitzt wird. Sie wird gern mit einer kleinen Beigabe von Kirschen oder Roter Bete zubereitet.... Für die Füllung der *Gubadia*, das ist ein aus festlichem Anlass gereichter gefüllter Teig, wird auch *Kort*, ein speziell aufgearbeiteter getrockneter Quark, verwendet. (Ibid., 314)

Other words in Bronsky’s text are simply translated from Tatar into German:

Bolalar – Kinder

Sengel – Kleine Schwester

Oschyjsym kilä – Ich habe Hunger

Sin bik sylu – Du bist schön

Schajtan – Dämon

Ischak (z.B. Du bist stur wie ein Ischak) – Esel. (Ibid.)

Also, Bronksy introduces words such as “tykryk”, which means a narrow street and “Babaj” as a term for grandfather in Tatar language (*Die schärfsten Gerichte* 36).

Expressions such as the “Zhiguli” and “Moskwitsch” refer to the type of typical automobile of the Soviet era (Ibid., 23, 138).

Besides Bronsky’s use of the Tatar language in a German text, she also introduces Russian/Soviet expressions and idioms translated into German. Phrases such as “meine Sonne”, “meine Goldene” and “ein Goldstück von Mensch” are not generally used in German but are affectionate, widely used expressions in Russian (*Scherbenpark* 26, 30 & 264, 33). Likewise, referring to an individual as “du Tier?” or “du Tarantel?” occurs more often in the Russian language and less in German (Ibid., 45, 46). Nonetheless, Bronsky’s play with language gives a depth to the German language by broadening and enriching it.

In addition to short phrases, Bronsky incorporates Russian idioms into the German language. By explaining idiomatic expressions such as “»wenn man zu viel weiß, wird man schnell alt und runzlig.« Das ist ein russisches Sprichwort” and “Neugierde ist keine Sünde, aber eine große Schweinerei, Das ist auch so ein russischer Spruch”, the text consciously introduces the reader to certain Russian cultural norms and the Russian mentality (Ibid., 8, 99). However, while giving a direct translation of actual Russian idioms, Bronsky’s character, the intercultural

individual, is in a position to create new or change old expressions depending on his/her socio-cultural environment. For example, Sascha invents a ‘German’ idiom by stating that “»Hierzulande sagt man, die Wahrheit trifft härter als die Faust.« Dass ich mir das gerade ausgedacht habe, wird Maria niemals erfahren” (Ibid., 84). Another frequent linguistic expression influenced by Russian includes addressing an adult by a child or an adolescent as either ‘uncle’ or ‘aunt’. In Russian, it is courteous to address an acquaintance as such, regardless of one’s biological relations with the individual, and Bronsky shows this cultural practice through Sascha’s interaction with an adult man: “»Tag, Onkel Grischa«, sage [sie] automatisch”—the male individual is Sascha’s neighbor and has no biological relation to her (Ibid., 79).

Furthermore, through the constant interaction between the Russian-speaking immigrants and the members of the German host society, Bronsky presents linguistic acculturation. The character Sascha is empowered by her mastery of the German language, giving her the advantage to cross-cultural barriers between the Russian-speaking and German communities, something Bourdieu would define as linguistic capital.²⁰⁷ The Russian-speaking individuals adopt and use the regional German dialect and expression, such as the word ‘gell’,²⁰⁸ which is widely used in the province of Hessen—the story’s setting—to reinforce a statement or question: “»Das wusste ich«, sagt Alissa. »Gell, Maria, das wusste ich, dass es auch ohne geht. ...«”

²⁰⁷ Bourdieu defines linguistic capital as mastery of language in Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron. *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*. (London; Newbury Park, California : Sage in association with Theory, Culture & Society, Department of Administrative and Social Studies, Teesside Polytechnic, 1990) 114. A detailed analysis of the linguistic capital of Russian-speaking Germans in Germany is presented by Regina Ianozi in “Acculturation and integration in Germany : Russian accent and its consequence on cultural, social, and economic situation of Russian-German immigrants.” (MA thesis. University of Maryland Baltimore County, 2006).

²⁰⁸ “gell” derives from Middle-High-German “gelte” “es möge gelten”, <http://www.dwds.de/?qu=gell>. Accessed on 4/14/2015.

(Ibid., 166). While the Russian-speaking immigrants adopt the German dialect, the Germans acculturate linguistically with the Russian language. The following excerpt provides evidence for linguistic acculturation at work:

»Das ganze Leben ist kitschig«, sagt [Felix]. »Nichts als Kitsch und Klischees und Wiederholungen und geschmacklose Geschichten und Dialoge, die man aus jedem guten Drehbuch rauswerfen würde. Ein Regenbogen über der Frankfurter Skyline, wie wär das?«

»Das ist einfach ein blinder Regen«, sag[t] Sascha.

»Wie?«

»Blinder Regen. Kennen Sie den Ausdruck nicht?«

»Nein.«

»Das sagt man, wenn es regnet und gleichzeitig die Sonne scheint.«

»Wo sagt man das?«

»Bei uns. Kennen Sie das wirklich nicht?«

»Nein. Nie gehört. Bei uns sagt man so was nicht«. (Ibid., 95)

At the end of the story, the older German Volker uses the exact expression in the German language while interacting with Sascha. When Sascha's younger sister spills water on his shirt, Sascha reacts by telling him: "Tut mir leid, dein Hemd ist jetzt ein bisschen nass, hier auf der Schulter", Volker responds with "Blinder Regen?" and Sascha "kann nicht antworten" (Ibid., 274). Bronsky shows the interaction between different cultural groups as a successful acculturation process when both cultural groups are open to sharing their own culture and receiving the culture of the 'Other'.

However, during the process of acculturation and the encounter with other languages and cultures, miscommunications can arise which might lead to misunderstanding: When Sascha was hit by a rock, Volker misunderstood her aunt's description of the situation due to her linguistic deficit and took it as an act of 'stoning'. This misunderstanding not only indicates the difficulties of a proper explanation due to linguistic deficiency, but it also shows the German preconceived notion and assumption about Soviet/Russian socio-cultural practices: "Er hat sich mit deiner Verwandten, deiner Tante oder so, unterhalten, na ja, er hat es versucht, er hat nichts verstanden, er ist dann zu mir gerannt und hat geschrien, dass du gesteinigt worden bist und jetzt tot bist. Sascha – Stein – Kopf – Krankenhaus!" (Ibid., 273).

An intercultural encounter and the perception of the 'Other' is also evident in the interaction between Sascha and Volkers Sohn Felix:

- »Ich bin Felix«, sagt er dann. »Verstehst du mich?«
- »Und du mich?«
- »Bist du beleidigt? Volker hat gesagt, du kommst aus Russland.«
- »Na und?«
- »Warum ärgerst du dich so?«
- »Ich ärgere mich nicht.«
- »Du kannst aber gut Deutsch.«
- »Danke. Du auch« (Ibid., 104).

Based solely on the assumption that immigrants from Russia neither speak nor understand German, Felix is astonished at Sascha's linguistic ability. At the same time, Sascha's reaction indicates the immigrants' frustration with preconceived

perceptions held by members of the host society based on a lack of socio-cultural knowledge of immigrants.

Furthermore, the various language communities within and across the former Soviet Union as well as German societies are addressed in both novels and identified as multi- and intercultural communities. Although, the intercultural language community within the Soviet Union comprised of numerous ethno-cultural groups, Bronsky limits her discussion to the Jewish community and language as part of one's maintaining a cultural identity by stating that “[m]anchmal sprach er irgendetwas, was ich nicht verstand, ich hielt es für Jiddisch” and the Tatar people, whom she describes as “sehr einfache Leute. Sie sprachen ein alpträumhaftes Russisch. Ich redete tatarisch mit ihnen, sie verstanden nichts anderes. Ich hatte die Sprache schon fast vergessen gehabt, weil ich ja meine Familie früh verloren hatte und im Kinderheim Russisch gesprochen wurde” (*Die schärfsten Gerichte* 146). She continues that, “Erst ahmte [die Verwandten des Ehemanns der Rosalinda] ihre Sprache nach, in dem sie TYR-PYR-MYR vor sich hin murmelte. Dann aber ließ sie aufgeschnappte Wörter oder Satzketten fallen, die nicht immer sinnlos waren (Ibid., 83-84). Additionally, the commonality between the ethno-cultural groups in East and West is the continuous preservation of the cultural heritage through language and specific practices, and Bronsky makes such comparison by relating the Tatar people to the members of the ethno-cultural subgroup residing in the Swiss Alps:

Bei Gelegenheit erfuhr [Rosalinda], dass das was [sie] bei ihm für ein komisches Deutsch gehalten hatte, in Wirklichkeit eine ganz andere Sprache war. Er und sein ganzes Dorf sprachen die Sprache der alten

Römer, und in dieser Sprache schrieb er auch seine Postkarten. ...
Corsin war in seinem Land eine Art Tatare, er hatte andere Wurzeln,
andere Gerichte, eine andere Sprache und vor allem ein viel schöneres
Aussehen als der Rest der Bevölkerung. ... Er hatte eben keine
sowjetische Erziehung genossen, sondern eine etwas primitivere. Seine
Neigung, mit seinen Wurzeln anzugeben, erinnerte [Rosalinda] an die
Art kleiner Kinder. (Ibid., 263)

Bronsky's discourse on interculturality in the form of a *rhizome* or a *hybridity* of cultures reveals striking similarities between and among the cultural subgroups within different nation.

Furthermore, members within these ethno-cultural and intercultural subgroups maintain the language of their culture in addition to speaking the official language of the country. As a result, various forms of the creole language develop in the ethno-cultural subgroups, or members of the intercultural community use multiple languages within a conversation, also referred to as code-switching. Bronsky provides an example of *code-switching* in a conversation between a Russian-speaking immigrant and a German, in which the Russian switches from one language to another: "»Wir haben telefoniert«, sagt sie auf Deutsch, und ich sehe erstaunt auf. »Alissa!« sagt sie auf Russisch. »Du sollst nicht auf Sascha springen, Sascha ist noch ganz krank!«" (*Scherbenpark* 278). While this conversation takes place in Germany, another exchange between a Russian-Tatar woman and a German tourist takes place in the former USSR in which Rosalinda uses various short sentences in German such as "»Guten Tag«, »Wie geht es Ihnen«, »Hände hoch«, »Mein Name ist Sulfia, und

Ihrer?« ” and “Es freut mich sehr, Sie kennenzulernen,” as well as the use of the phrases such as “»Ist das auch Ihre Tochter?«... »Nein, das ist ihre Tochter« »Wie geht es Ihnen?« ... »Tut Ihnen der Kopf noch weh?«” (Die schärfsten Gerichte 179, 182). By describing the conversation between individuals of diverse cultural backgrounds who attempt to converse in the native language of the ‘Other’, Bronsky demonstrates the linguistic phenomenon that occurs within intercultural communities and the cultural exchange among and between members of the global community, while displaying examples of the difficulties each world citizen might face when encountering other cultures.

Nonetheless, the authenticity of an ethno-cultural or cultural minority individual’s use of the German language is exposed in its true form. When Sascha is hit by a taxi, she confronts the taxi driver, who appears to be a non-native German:

»Ist das Ihres« frag[t] [Sascha]. »Haben sie mich so geschleift, Sie alter Drecksack? Wollten Sie mich häuten?«

Und er holt aus, und eine Ohrfeige schallt durch die Nacht.

»Kleines Mistestück« sagt er.

»Miststück«, korrigier[t] [Sascha] ihn automatisch und [hält] [sich] die Hand ans Gesicht. ... Er kommt zurück, beugt sich über [sie], leise und unverständlich fluchend, in der Hand die gleiche Wodkaflasche, die [sie] bei Peter gesehen ha[t]. Er schraubt sie auf und kippt den Inhalt über die Beine,

»Autsch! Sind Sie verrückt geworden?« brüll[t] [Sascha]. ...

»Desinfektion«, sage er und zieht [sie] hoch. »Sonst Entzündung.« ...

»Wo du wohnst?« fragt der Taxifahrer hasserfüllt. (*Scherbenpark* 236-237)

The grammatically incorrect and simple limited sentence structure as well as the misspelling of words point towards Bronsky's attempt to present the language in the contemporary form of the average person of the day in order to represent the originality of an individual of a particular community.

Conclusion

This project examines Bronsky's extensive discussion of interculturality and transnationalism and presents many examples of the rich multicultural society in the former Soviet Union and in contemporary Germany. Her vivid and detailed description of cultural minorities' lives in the USSR, from their assimilation into the mainstream Soviet culture to the continuous struggles to maintain one's cultural heritage, provides a new understanding of a Soviet inner socio-political nature. Bronsky's texts also discuss the widespread anti-Semitism within Soviet society, which resulted in Jewish peoples' feeling of loss of home and identity and their subsequent immigration to Israel. The illustrations of Soviet/Russian culture and society contain criticism of the overall miserable economic condition of the nation. One of the recurring subjects Bronsky addresses in both novels is the aspect of physical violence as part of Soviet culture and the individuals' fear of authority. In contrast and often in comparison, Bronsky looks at German culture and its positive and negative socio-cultural norms and practices, including the discourses on the Neo-Nazi movement within a multicultural contemporary German society. By incorporating the subjects of music, cuisine, and language as part of one culture being

transferred to and influencing the other culture, Bronsky creates a literary work that is written from a unique 'positionality'.

Chapter 5: Integration through Intercultural and Gendered Identity Development in Alina Bronsky's *Scherbenpark* and *Die schärfsten Gerichte der tatarischen Küche*

Introduction

Chapter 5 continues the discussion on interculturality and immigration in Germany by providing an analysis of two further major discourses in Bronsky's novels: Russian-speaking immigrants' processes of integration in Germany and the development of gendered and culturally hybrid identities in young Russian-speaking female immigrants. Utilizing Berry's *acculturation* theories and Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of *cultural, social, and economic capitals*, the first part of Chapter 5 examines the immigration and integration of Russian-speaking immigrants in Germany and the social, cultural, and economic challenges immigrant minorities face within contemporary German society. The examination centers particularly on the correlation between the lack in linguistic aptitude and the low economic and social status resulting in the immigrants' physical and social segregation. Furthermore, this analysis will reveal the reasons for immigration, integration, lack of linguistic fluency and economic hardships, as well as discuss segregation in general, its psychological repercussions, and the role acculturation plays in the development of culturally hybrid identities.

An interrogation of individual cases—as found in Bronsky's work—demonstrates that acculturation processes shared between immigrants and members of the host society lead to various socio-cultural and psychological developments in

both immigrants and members of the host society; however, even those immigrant individuals with the most contact to the host country's members remain in a state of living 'in-between' or 'within' two cultures. This is seen in Bronsky's works, in which the immigrant individual develops cultural identities that neither bear a resemblance to the Russian/Soviet nor the German culture. By scrutinizing the social issues, a better understanding of the development of cultural hybridity and interculturality in individuals ensues.

The second part of this chapter focuses predominantly on the construct of gender, examining gendered roles within the cultures and societies studied here, and intercultural individuals' deviation from traditional roles, particularly as experienced by young Russian-speaking immigrant women. Within each society, Soviet or German, the definition of femininity and masculinity differs as much as constructed male and female roles, female roles. The analyses within this chapter demonstrate the transitions and metamorphoses that occur for the female characters in terms of their cultural expectations derived from gender constructs, all based on Judith Butler's conception of the *performative*. Through the struggles of integration, through the constant cultural exchange between the German and the Soviet/Russian, the young intercultural woman abandons social norms of both societies and morphs into a third—Bronsky's young female characters transcend and break away from the 'norm(al)'.

Theories of intercultural studies and linguistic anthropology provide methodological tools to characterize German, Russian and German-Russian cultural identity through acculturation and language—both are significant aspects for the

expression of cultural and intercultural identity processes for the writer and her heroines, but also for the reader. This chapter adds depth to these theories through the integration of gender studies' conceptual frameworks which explore constructs of gender within Russian and German society. This study utilizes this interdisciplinary theoretical platform for the analysis of the role and development of an 'intercultural' female identity and examines the meaning and definition of a 'woman' within Russian and German societies. The goal of this analysis is to demonstrate the effects of the processes of integration of immigrants from the former Soviet Republics in Germany and in how far the gender roles within two ideologically diverse societies influence the immigrants' integration.

I. From Failed Integration to Acculturation: The Social, Cultural and Economic Situation of Russian-speaking Immigrants in Germany

1. Reasons for Immigration from Former Soviet Union to Germany

One of the prominent discourses Bronsky discusses in both novels is the falling economic conditions within the Soviet Union, which prompted a massive immigration into Western countries at the end of its era around 1990.²⁰⁹ The uncertainty of the country's political and economic future and the ever growing deficit of necessities to meet everyday basic needs, such as proper housing, food and

²⁰⁹ In a report published by the Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtling, further reasons for Russian-speaking and ethnic Germans immigration to Germany were recorded, "They state various reasons for migrating to Germany, for example economic grounds, marriage to a German partner, reunification with family members already residing in Germany, a wish to live in a 'German environment' (especially important for Russian Germans), educational aspirations and a wish to provide better future prospects for their children. Most of these motives are quite typical reasons for international migration in general," in *Rückkehr und Reintegration: Typen und Strategien an den Beispielen Türkei, Georgien und Russische Föderation Beiträge zu Migration und Integration*, Vol. 4, edited by Tatjana Baraulina and Axel Kreienbrink (Nuremberg: Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2013), 287. <http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/EN/Publikationen/Beitragsreihe/beitrag-band-4-integration-migration.pdf?__blob=publicationFile>

access to medical as well as increasing crime compelled millions of Soviet citizens to search for stability and improved living conditions outside the Soviet borders. Many imagined a positive future not only for themselves, but especially for the younger generation and of whom they believed: “In diesem Land hat sie keine Zukunft mehr. Es wird sie verschlucken und nicht mal ihre Knochen ausspucken” (*Die schärfsten Gerichte* 170).

The novel’s detailed illustration of fear, hunger, and the desperation for survival and the escape at all costs are captured thoroughly and predominantly in *Die schärfsten Gerichte*, but discussed also frequently in *Scherbenpark*. “Der Wind hatte sich gedreht, draußen auch”, writes Bronksy in *Die schärfsten Gerichte* and refers to the ‘wind of change’ within the country’s political domain (*Die schärfsten Gerichte* 168). The consequence of the political and geographical shift brought the infamous downfall of the economy and as a result “Die Regale in den Lebensmittelgeschäften leerten sich” and people had to make an effort “um satt zu werden” (*Die schärfsten Gerichte* 168). Bronsky’s heroine Roaslinda describes the further effects of the economic crisis as it transforms into civilians’ financial insecurity:

Während die Wirtschaft draußen zusammenbrach, sorgte ich dafür, dass meine Familie keinen Hunger litt. ... Aber es wurde trotzdem immer schwerer. Zucker zu kaufen war zum Beispiel ein Glücksfall, Wir hatten uns längst an Lebensmittelgutscheine gewöhnt, das war überhaupt nichts Neues, dass im Treppenhaus jemand von der Hausverwaltung saß und die Bewohner Schlange standen, um die Coupons abzuholen, die zum Erwerb einer bestimmten Menge Wurst

oder Zucker berechtigten. Das Schwierige war, die Coupons einzulösen. ... Bevor ich einkaufen ging, brachte ich erst mal das Leergut zurück, die gründlich gespülten Milch- und Kefirflaschen, und zählte genau die Münzen ab, die ich dafür bekam. Vom Pfandgeld kaufte ich Brot und Kartoffeln. ... Vor dem Pavillon bildeten sich Warteschlangen, durch die ein Raunen ging, sobald der Automat leer gemolken war. Meist hing allerdings der Zettel. »Heute keine Milch« darauf. Ich fragte mich wieso die Milch auf einmal so rar wurde. Wo waren all die Kuhherden geblieben, waren die Weiden unseres endlosen Landes jetzt alle entvölkert? (Ibid., 168-169)

Apart from the catastrophic living conditions, the crime rate added to the despair and drastically rose in Russia in the years following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Crime, ranging from organized crime, such as the Russian Mafia, to petty crime, emerged from the lawless and political chaos and economical deficiencies: “In diesen Jahren verschwanden viele Mädchen am helllichten Tage. Später wurden sie vergewaltigt und ermordet in irgendwelchen Kellern gefunden” as well as “Raubüberfälle gab es inzwischen am helllichten Tag, nur Selbstmörder wagten es, mit derart wertvollen Sachen auf die Straße zu gehen” (Ibid., 169, 191).

Immigration for many was reserved as the last resort and last chance for a life in a humane system. For some, attaining the dream meant entirely abandoning all ethics, to which Bronsky’s works attest, “wie schwer die Zeiten waren”, and illustrate that people “die Zähne zusammenbissen und auch zu Menschen freundlich waren, die [sie] eigentlich unangenehm fanden, weil [sie] dann vielleicht ein besseres Leben

haben konnten” (*Die schärfsten Gerichte* 188). *Scherbenpark* refers to the dire living and working conditions after the collapse of the Soviet Union as a motive for individuals’ immigration and their desire to advance economically: “Maria ist nicht gekommen, um [den Kindern] ihr wertee Leben vor die Füße zu werfen. Wenn man in einer Kantine in Nowosibirsk arbeitet und gefragt wird, ob man nach Deutschland kommt, um für ein paar Kinder Suppe zu kochen, dann ist es zwar ein bisschen weniger als ein halbes Königreich, aber viel mehr als ein Sechser im Lotto” (*Scherbenpark* 24). However, the life many immigrants imagined for themselves in their new country is significantly different than their expectations, and integration into the new society proved to be problematic due to linguistic, cultural and economic challenges.

2. The Integration Process and its Effects on Russian-speaking immigrants

In the same year—2008—when German chancellor Angela Merkel declared the failed multicultural society in Germany by challenging old integration procedures of immigrants, Bronsky revealed the very problem of integration in her novel *Scherbenpark* and continued to discuss the matter in her second novel. The immense influx of foreigners in Germany and the state’s growing concern for the wellbeing of native- and foreign-born citizens brought the need for a conscious integration strategy. Among Russian-speaking immigrants, those with none or only limited German language skills endured the greatest hardships during the process of integration and had difficulties achieving or acquiring full social status in German society. According to Bourdieu’s theory on *social capital*, which consists of certain memberships or networks that are influential and supportive, the integration for

Russian-speaking immigrants without acculturation achieving this capital would be tremendously difficult if not impossible (Bourdieu, Passeron 29-31).

While the older generation often was encouraged to integrate through language and was required to participate in state funded German language courses, their children were placed into regular schools. Independent of their linguistic ability and without any prior knowledge of German, most immigrant children were placed into either the 'Realschule' or 'Hauptschule'. Only a selected group of individual students with profound talents were able to escape the stratified German school system, and Bronsky addresses such a discriminating integration process as following:

Und die Schulsekretärin Frau Weimers, die meine Mutter, mich und die Plastiktüte über ihren Brillenrand beäugt hatte, hatte von der Liquidität (wie wir Elite-Gymnasiasten das nennen) meiner Mutter bestimmt eine schnelle und realistische Vorstellung. ... Ich denke inzwischen, die an der Schule haben mich genommen, um ein bisschen Integration zu proben. Viele Ärzte, Anwälte und Architekten haben nämlich für ihre Kinder Absagen bekommen. Am Ende gab es vier proppevolle fünfte Klassen, und in meiner 5c war ich die Einzige »mit Migrationshintergrund«. In der 5a gab es einen Jungen, dessen Vater Amerikaner war, und in der 5b einen mit einer französischen Mutter. In der ganzen Schule habe ich keinen einzigen Schwarzen gesehen und auch niemanden, der annähernd arabisch aussah. Meine Klasse hatte es also mit mir am heftigsten erwischt. (*Scherbenpark* 11-12)

Nevertheless, Sascha is able to break free from the cycle derived from the lack of proper integration and ultimately acculturate, due to her education, well developed language skill, and continual contact with the German members of the society. As becomes evident, she, as all other children and adolescent characters in the novels, was affected psychologically throughout this process and experienced the greatest difficulties in integrating socially, culturally, linguistically, and most importantly psychologically into German society. The research on the correlation between language competency and social and economic progress in immigrants indicates the risk factors for integration as the lack of German “language skills, the immigration against adolescents’ will, the long term absence of contact with natives, rejection by school peers, conflicts within family or parental depression” (Schmitt-Rodermund and Silbereisen, “Acculturation” 900).

Apart from the integration challenges facing the younger immigrant generation, Bronsky touches upon the older generation’s limited chance of fulfilling one’s professional and personal aspirations: not only immigrants’ own perception of their restricted opportunities, but also Germans’ recognition of the immigrants’ integration difficulties are prominent when Bronsky writes in *Scherbenpark*:

Ich erzählte, dass meine Mutter Kunstgeschichte studiert hatte und zu Hause in einer Theatergruppe aufgetreten war, die immer wieder verboten wurde, und dass sie sich hier auch ein kleines Theater zum Mitspielen suchen wollte. Melanies Mutter schluckte und ging zu der Frage über, ob das Leben in unserem Hochhaus nicht zu gefährlich sei. Ich sagte, dass es viel sauberer und gemütlicher ist als das Haus, in

dem ich drüben gewohnt hatte. Zu Russland sagte ich immer
»drüben«. (*Scherbenpark* 14)

Instead of assisting immigrants with education to achieve their full potential and acquire the necessary skills crucial for obtaining proper employment and equal chances in the workforce, Bronsky demonstrates how the German state distributed cash prizes and awards: “»Ich habe sie mal kennengelernt. Sie hat doch diesen Preis bekommen, für«, er runzelte die Stirn und schnipst mit den Fingern, »so eine merkwürdige Bezeichnung, Beihilfe zur gelungenen Integration oder sonst was. Ich war in der Jury. Man hat manchmal so Pflichten«” (*Ibid.*, 116). The prize, however, has neither promoted in any way nor is it reflective of the proper integration of Russian immigrants in Germany. The devastation and consequences of failed integration extended across generations.

Nonetheless, the older immigrant generation endured hardship optimistic that the next generation would have a prospect for social and economic stability. The Soviet emigrants experienced a commonality when entering different countries, be they Russian-Jews immigrating to Israel or Russian-Germans migrating to Germany. Both groups—which included numerous highly educated individuals—are relegated into workforces below their educational status. In addition to the discussion on immigration in Germany, Bronsky’s texts look at the immigration of Russian-Jews transition into Israel. In *Die schärfsten Gerichte* Bronsky writes that Rosenbaum:

berichtete, dass sie gut angekommen waren, wie heiß es war, dass sie zu viert in einer leeren Wohnung lebten und alte Möbel von den Nachbarn bekommen hatten. Wie sie zu Sprachkursen gingen, wie er

in einem Obstladen frühmorgens die Sharonfrüchte sortierte, weil keine andere Arbeit für ihn da war, wie die alte Rosenbaum kränkelte und ihr Mann im Gegenzug aufblühte. (*Die schärfsten Gerichte* 165)

While the young Rosenbaum previously worked as a successful engineer in the Soviet Union, as an immigrant with limited language skills, he is sorting fruit at a local store in Tel Aviv; Rosalinda, similarly, a trained pedagogue in Russia, is demeaned in Germany to the position of a charwoman:

Er sollte mir einen Platz an einer medizinischen Hochschule verschaffen.

Er lachte kurz auf und wurde wieder ernst. Er sagte, mir fehle die Hochschulreife. Auf meinen Einwand, ich sei studierte Pädagogin, erwiderte er, meine alten russischen Zeugnisse könne man leider in der Pfeife rauchen. Ich musste das Abitur nachmachen, und das sei in meinem »fortgeschrittenem Alter eine ambitionierte Aufgabe.« ... Ich sagte, dass ich unbedingt im Krankenhaus arbeiten wollte. ... Dann sagte er, er könne nichts versprechen, wolle sich aber dafür einsetzen, dass ich als Putzfrau auf der Station arbeiten könnte, auf der er Belegbetten hatte. (*Ibid.*, 281-282)

Bronsky locates the major reason for either successful or failed integration in the ability to master the host country's language.

3. Lack of Linguistic Ability as Hindrance for Integration

Proficiency in the German language, as Bronsky delineates in both novels, is a major aspect for developing and sustaining a successful economic and social status in

Germany. The difficulties with language barriers, which Schmitt-Rodermund and Silbereisen outlined above for adolescents applies to immigrants of all ages. These two scholars especially stress the significance of social interaction between the immigrants and the members of the host country for the process of integration and acculturation: Prolonged interaction with members of the receiving society promotes an accelerated integration through assimilation; however, “acculturation experiences may result in discrimination or exclusion” (Schmitt-Rodermund, Silbereisen 895).

John Berry, one of the leading researchers on integration and acculturation, recognizes language as an important part of integration through acculturation and believes that “a great deal of attention has been paid to that of language knowledge and use ... and their relation to acculturation attitudes.”²¹⁰ However, apart from linguistic competency, the knowledge of cultures significantly fosters integration through the acculturation process, as “speaking the target language only as native speakers do, and thus knowing German culture from the inside, of course, does not yet constitute the kind of cultural competence required” (Seeba 401). Understanding other cultures necessitates “sensitivity to cultural difference, coupled with a critical awareness of how multicultural identities are created and shaped” (Ibid.).

Successful integration of immigrants depends significantly on the understanding and acceptance of cultural differences by members of the host society. The recognition of these Russian-speaking immigrants by native-born Germans has

²¹⁰ Also in Richard Bourhis, “Ethnic and language attitude in Québec,” in *Ethnicity and culture in Canada: That Research Landscape*, edited by J.W. Berry and J. Laponce (Toronto, Ontario: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 322-360; R. Clément and K. Noel, “Towards a Situation Approach to Ethnolinguistic Identity,” *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 11 (1992): 202-232. And in A. M. Masgoret and R.C. Gardner, “A Casual Model of Spanish Immigrant Adaptation in Canada,” in *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 20 (1999): 216-236.

resulted often in an unsuccessful process, which lead to social conflicts, challenging the interaction between native-born Germans and Russian-speaking immigrants. The Germans often lack the knowledge about the history and the experiences of Russian-speaking ethnic Germans and consider them Russian, due to their use of the Russian language and cultural expressions (Dietz, Roll 7, 8). Bronsky's adolescent characters attest to their unique difficulties and interaction with their German peers as a result of their lack of cultural knowledge. In *Scherbenpark*, Sascha describes her first time at the Gymnasium as follows:

[Die] Mitschüler haben mich am ersten Tag angestarrt, als wäre ich gerade aus einem Ufo geklettert. Sie stellten mir Fragen, die ich erst nicht verstehen konnte. Bald konnte ich sie verstehen, aber da dachten inzwischen alle, dass ich nicht ansprechbar bin. Es hat gedauert, bis sie sich umgewöhnt haben. Da die meisten von ihnen noch nie richtige Ausländer aus der Nähe gesehen hatten, waren sie alle nett zu mir.

(*Scherbenpark* 12-13)

Schmitt-Rodermund and Silbereisen's theory on integration could be applicable to Bronsky's Russian immigrant characters: Most of them live in segregated 'ghettos' with limited contact to the natives, and after years residing in Germany, many of them have not acquired the language skills necessary for proper interaction. Bronsky portrays the younger generation as having difficulties in school due to limited language skills and presents in *Scherbenpark* an immigrant student's difficulties in regards to linguistic deficit and its effects on academic performance: "Als [Sascha] vor sieben Jahren nach Deutschland [kam], war [Mathe] das einzige Fach, das [sie] in

der fünften Klasse auf Anhieb konnte. ... In Deutschland konnte [sie] am Anfang zwar kein Deutsch, aber die Zahlen natürlich trotzdem” (Ibid., 10).

Immigrant children with no prior German language knowledge usually were placed in lower classes and due to linguistic difficulties often had to repeat the same class. Bronsky addresses such matter in *Scherbenpark* by describing a scene between Sascha and her friend: “Sie hat eine Nachprüfung im Herbst, sonst muss sie die Klasse wiederholen, und sie ist schon einmal sitzen geblieben und sowieso ein Jahr später eingeschult worden. Sie hat geschluchzt, dass sie diese kleinen Scheißer in ihrer Klasse nicht ertragen kann, wenn die dann auch noch drei Jahre jünger sind als sie und alles besser können” (Ibid., 205). For many immigrant children, failing academically due to linguistic difficulties and enduring the public and private humiliation put a tremendous psychological burden and sometimes resulted in conscious isolation.

The older immigrants experience similar issues related to lack of German language skills in everyday life: “Ich hatte ein wenig Schwierigkeiten mit der Adresse. Ich fragte mehrere Leute auf der Straße. Was sie mir sagten, war schwer zu verstehen, sie redeten viel zu schnell und undeutlich” (*Die schärfsten Gerichte* 216). Although they did not share the pressure related to academic success with the younger immigrant population, the ability to speak German was crucial for everything from asking for directions to understanding official documents:

Maria sieht viele Gründe, mich zu verehren. ... Ich kann nicht nur Latein und Französisch, ..., sondern auch, völlig real, die Sprache dieses verflixten Landes. ... Ich weiß, wie man Sozialhilfe beantragt

und wie Kindergeld. ... Maria hat panische Angst vor allem, was mit Behörden zu tun hat. Vor jedem, der stattliche Autorität ausstrahlt, fühlt sie sich klein wie eine Ameise. Selbst den Fahrkartenautomaten siezt sie, und wenn im Bus tatsächlich kontrolliert wird, zerrt sie die Karte mit einem demütigen Lächeln so hastig aus ihrer Handtasche, dass ihr Lippenstift und ihre Tampons wie Geschosse durch die Gegend fliegen. (*Scherbenpark* 28-29)

Immigrants often had the impression that due to their lack of German language skills, they were perceived and treated as people with disabilities, despite the level of their educational background: “»Ceranfeld²¹¹ empfindlich! Ceranfeld empfindlich!«, sagte sie. ... »Genug! Genug!« sagte sie. Offenbar sagte sie alles doppelt. Mich störte es nicht, wenn es ihr half. ... »Vielen Dank! Vielen Dank!« sagte sie. ... »Nächsten Dienstag wieder? Nächsten Dienstag wieder?« fragte sie. ... »Okay. Okay« sagte ich” (*Die schärfsten Gerichte* 219, 220). As well as: “Die Krankenschwester sprach sehr langsam mit mir, in kurzen Sätzen, jedes Wort zweimal, als wäre ich geistig behindert” (Ibid., 291).

Nonetheless, Bronsky also shows the linguistic progression of immigrants after living for a longer period of time in Germany. In *Die schärfsten Gerichte*, Rosalinda overhears her granddaughter Aminat appropriating the German language in an unsettling situation when she states: “Einmal kam ich nach Hause und hörte sie wütend schreien. ... Den Sinn verstand ich nicht. Aminat schimpfte auf Deutsch, in langen, gewundenen Sätzen. Sie sprach nicht nur besser als ich, sie sprach Welten besser. Sie sprach wie die deutschen Kinder. Ich hatte das gar nicht gemerkt” (Ibid.,

²¹¹ Ceramic glass cooktop

225). The longer Rosalinda remained in Germany, and the more frequently she interacted with the native Germans, the more her linguistic ability as well as her social capital improved: “Ich hatte jetzt viele Einblicke. Ich sprach immer besser Deutsch, weil ich inzwischen so viele Menschen kannte” (Ibid., 231). Even Vadim, the Russian immigrant, who is described as serving a prison sentence for taking his wife’s life, when he shot her out of jealousy, claims to become a better human being as his language ability improves when he reports: “Ich bin ein anderer Mensch geworden. Selbst mein Deutsch wird immer besser” (*Scherbenpark* 60). And as much as immigrants felt as though they “sollten nicht schlechter sein als die anderen”, their overall situation, indeed, was worse than native-born members of German society (*Die schärfsten Gerichte* 256).

4. The Vicious Circle of Lack of Linguistic and Economic Capital

The general theory on immigration indicates that people primarily immigrate due to economic reasons, and often, the desired outcome for the immigrant is that he or she will do well economically and integrate into society rather quickly (Mailaender 32). Bronsky portrays the general problems associated with integration, but focuses predominantly on the effects that integration processes have on immigrant children and adolescents. Although the older generation of Russian-speaking immigrants hoped for a stable economic, social, and cultural status for their children and the future generations, the younger generation experiences difficulties in the German labor market due to their lack of language skills, resulting in low social, economic, and cultural status (Dietz, Roll 15). *Economic capital*, which Bourdieu describes as the command over economic resources (such as cash and assets) is pertinent for the

proper integration and acquisition of social and cultural capital of Russian-speaking immigrants (Bourdieu, Passeron 22). Since contemporary Germany embraces a capitalistic form of government and society, economic status becomes equal with social and cultural power.

Yet, most immigrants were unable to transfer financial assets from the former Soviet Union to Germany. Although immigrants were granted a financial support upon their arrival in Germany, obtaining employment in a challenging labor market needed to sustain an adequate life-style proved to be more challenging and detrimental to one's integration. As John Berry further asserts: "the receiving society enforces certain kinds of relations or constrains the choices of immigrants [...] [t]his is most clearly so in the case of integration, which can be chosen and successfully pursued by immigrants only when the receiving society is open and inclusive in its orientation towards cultural diversity" (Berry 177). The lack of economic capital is described in both of Bronsky's novels in the living conditions and employment opportunities. Russian-speaking immigrant adolescents, such as the young male character Valentin in *Scherbenpark*, in particular, are confronted with limited possibilities for economic advancement, which Bronsky's texts illustrate as a desperate and hopeless situation:

Valentin ... trägt [...] vor der Schule Anzeigeblättchen aus. Da das damit verdiente Geld viel zu langsam zusammen- und viel zu mickrig daherkommt, geht Valentin zweimal die Woche zu einem älteren Ehepaar putzen. ... Keiner darf wissen, dass Valentin putzen geht, sonst machen ihn die Jungs fertig, und Anna macht Schluss. Valentin

hat meistens einen Gesichtsausdruck, als hätte ihm jemand einen Kaktus in die Hose gesteckt. [Sascha denkt], das kommt daher, dass er weiß: Selbst wenn er irgendwann genug Kohle für einen Führerschein beisammen hat, für einen weißen Mercedes muss er zwei Leben lang putzen gehen. Im dritten Leben kann er dann vielleicht einsteigen.
(*Scherbenpark* 8-9)

The low income employment in correlation with the bleak prospects for an economically and financially secure future emerges as agony in the adolescent expression.

The limited economic growth for immigrants with inadequate German language ability and a Soviet education considered unequal to that of one from a German institution is further reflected in the kinds of employment immigrants are qualified to perform. Such employment requires little skill or education to perform, like driving a taxi or cleaning a house. Russian-speaking immigrants “with higher education certificates from Russia reported that because of economic constraints in the time directly after their arrival in Germany they went straight into jobs which were often unskilled and poorly paid (as cleaners, laborers employed on a contract basis by temporary employment agencies)” (T. Baraulina and A. Baraulina 290).

Unlike those immigrants who arrived in Germany during the 1960s and 1970s, who typically had low educational levels seeking employment in sectors requiring limited professional and language skills, such as working in the fields and/or factories, the majority of immigrants from the former republics of the Soviet Union were highly qualified and educated individuals of ethnic German or Jewish descent

fleeing lifelong oppression, the anti-Germanism and anti-Semitism of the Soviet regime:

In spite of privileged status, the occupational integration of the immigrants of the 1990s into the German labour market can hardly be called successful. According to internal data of self-estimation, 60% of post-Soviet immigrants in Berlin still live on state welfare. This despite the fact that the overwhelming majority of adults have higher education or technical training, which, as a rule, is only partially recognized by the receiving authorities. In Germany the foreign qualifications the immigrants attained in the Soviet Union are often devalued. In fact, it is the most important problem the migrants face.²¹²

Yet, the anchored traditional perception of immigrants as a low-class group of individuals with low-language proficiency seeking low-skilled employment not only keeps the immigrants in this low-economic position but inhibits the members of the host society to treat them as equals and possibly to acculturate and broaden their own perceptions. A vivid picture of such a situation is illustrated in *Die schärfsten Gerichte* in a scene, in which Rosalinda explains her situation. When Dieter, the German tourist, whom Rosalinda and her family encounter in Russia and who invites them to Germany,

sagte, dass er nicht in der Lage sei, uns zu ernähren. ... Ich sollte auch was tun, sagte Dieter. Aber gerne, antwortete ich, ich habe mein Leben

²¹² E-document: Tsypylma Darieva. More information on this topic is found in “Managing Identity. Some Insights into Russian Language Media in Berlin”, in *Ethnicity and Economy*, (St. Petersburg, Centre for Independent Social Studies), 96–103. <http://www.indepsocres.spb.ru/sbornik8/8e_darieva.htm>. Accessed on 4/16/2015.

lang hochqualifiziert gearbeitet. Dieter sollte seine neue Familie ernähren, also Aminat und Sulfia, ich würde es schon irgendwie ohne ihn schaffen. Hier gab es sicher auch pädagogische Berufsschulen. Als ich das Dieter sagte, lachte er sehr. Ich dachte sogar, er hätte so eine Art Nervenkrankheit, so schrecklich lachte er... »Du kannst doch gar kein Deutsch.« Natürlich konnte ich Deutsch. Ich versuchte es Dieter in seiner Sprache zu erklären, aber er wollte mich nicht verstehen, Dann erzählte er mir etwas von meiner Aufenthaltserlaubnis ohne Arbeitserlaubnis und sagte, er habe eine großartige Idee für mich.

Zwei Tage später hatte ich Arbeit. (*Die schärfsten Gerichte* 215-216)

The work Rosalinda received was a cleaning position in private homes. Germany also does not have an equal opportunity law to enable minorities to compete for high paying jobs and they are often employed in low income professions, such as factory workers, in cleaning services and in the agricultural sector among others. Similar to Sascha's mother's unsuccessful employment search in her profession in Germany, Rosalinda works below her skill level due to her immigration status and language deficiency. Once Rosalinda receives a full time cleaning position at a hospital, she feels pride in this accomplishment: "Es gab wenig Geld, dafür eine Festanstellung. Meine erste in Deutschland. Ich unterschrieb einen Vertrag, bekam einen weißen Kittel, weiße Hausschuhe musste ich mir mitbringen. Ich war sehr stolz: Nun war ich Angestellte eines Krankenhauses" (Ibid., 282).

Although the economy was depressed within the former Soviet Union at the time of its collapse, many of those emigrating had held a dignified position within the former republic. As an immigrant in Germany, not only has the economic situation not improved, but due to the desperate need for capital, immigrants additionally lose the status among their peers. In Rosalinda's native land she would have found the occupation in a cleaning service unacceptable, but within Germany she expresses a sense of pride in the job merely for its ability to create capital. However, this is coupled with a loss of status within the society, one she feels as a loss of dignity. The fact that an educator is proud to receive employment to clean floors shows utter desperation of one's economic situation. Subsequently, Rosalinda loses her job at the hospital resulting not only in the loss of all her financial income but also of her will to live, as it will be addressed later in the chapter: "Nach meinem Rauswurf aus dem Krankenhaus verlor ich fünf wichtige Kunden nacheinander. Ich hatte irgendwann nur noch zwei Putzstellen, eine davon bei John" (Ibid., 287).

Further depiction of low economic status is illustrated through the immigrants' living conditions: a high-rise segregated building with "Urindämpfen im Treppenhaus", an apartment furnished with "Sperrmüll-Couch mit dem kleinen Tisch.... Den kleinen Fernseher und den Stapel Videokassetten davor. Schon damals hatte kein Mensch mehr Videokassetten! ... Schrank ohne Tür.... fünf Stühle, und keiner war so wie der andere, denn alle kamen vom Sperrmüll" (*Scherbenpark* 16). In the novel *Die schärfsten Gerichte*, the family also shares one single room in which a sole mattress serves as the family's sleeping accommodations.

Bronsky juxtaposes the economic status of native Germans with Russian-immigrants: While in *Die schärfsten Gerichte* the homes of Rosalinda's German clients are illustrated as beautiful and impeccable, a strikingly similar scene is illustrated in *Scherbenpark*. The difference between both members of society is seen through Sascha's description of her visit with her school comrades:

Ich aber war zwei Mal bei Mädchen aus meiner Klasse zu Hause gewesen, bei Melanie und bei Carla, und konnte mir eine Umkehrung der Situation beim besten Willen nicht vorstellen.

Keine Ahnung, was mich damals erschüttert hat: die Ordnung in Melanies Zimmer oder die nach Politur riechenden Möbel, von denen ich früher gedacht hatte, dass sie nur im Katalog oder in Annas Fantasien vorkommen, oder die Tatsache, dass im Wohnzimmer an einem ovalen Tisch zu Mittag gegessen wurde und nicht in der Küche, oder die Bettwäsche mit Pferden. Ich hatte nie zuvor bunte Bettwäsche gesehen. Bei uns gab es nur weiße oder hellblau gemustert, auf jeden Fall uralt und verwaschen. (*Scherbenpark* 13)

The case of the Russian-speaking immigrant is the opposite of the desirable outcome of the immigration.

5. The Implications of Social and Physical Segregation of Immigrants

For many Russian-speaking immigrants, living in segregated areas depletes them of the opportunity to form relationships with members of the German community; the outcome of this lack of contact is reflected in the lack of acquisition of cultural capital. Cultural capital, as described by Bourdieu, includes specific forms

of knowledge and skills, and education plays a major role in establishing cultural capital. The educational level determines cultural status, which in turn will be advantageous and beneficial to one's higher status within a society (Bourdieu, Passeron, 36). Bourdieu further explains the acquisition of cultural capital in terms of being born into a wealthy or even a royal family or the election to a political authority, which would inherently provide a person with higher status.

Furthermore, cultural capital is transferred from generation to generation, providing the younger with certain cultural attributes such as manners, attitudes, knowledge, and ideologies. Most importantly, educational systems can offer students the opportunity to gain cultural capital by making school a place in which students can be given the manners, speech, and knowledge needed to successfully acquire cultural capital (Ibid., 37). For Russian-speaking immigrants, however, the life-long effects of the Soviet propaganda which proliferated heavily altered information about the West and the western cultures, acquiring cultural capital abroad in their home country was practically unattainable; therefore, they had to rely heavily on the educational system in Germany to gain knowledge about German culture.

The correlation between the lack of language skills and economic capital can be further attributed to the segregation of immigrants within German society. One might argue that limited linguistic competency leads to segregation and economic difficulties for immigrants, the segregation in the form of isolation of immigrants living in the so-called 'ghettos', indeed, influences underdeveloped or non-existent social relationships between the members of the host society and the immigrant group. Bronksy's contribution to the discourse on integration of Russian-speaking

immigrants addresses all types of integration developed by Berry's acculturation model, defines his four types of acculturation: 'integration,' 'assimilation,' 'separation,' and 'marginalization'. In particular, however, Bronsky's texts stress the 'separation' and the 'marginalization' of immigrants in Germany (Berry 177).

The novel's illustration of people's lives within the isolated Solitär²¹³ shows a vivid picture of individual resignation and collective desperation: while the men of the older generation have surrendered themselves to alcohol, the women show indications of depression; and, the younger immigrant population exhibits destructive behavior due to their experiences of being social outcasts. One particular scene in *Scherbenpark* illustrates the isolation and the restricted social, cultural and economic mobility as embodied in a physical immobility: a highly intelligent man with a photographic memory and an avid chess player is characterized as a crippled, paralyzed individual:

Auf der Bank vorn dem Hauseingang sitzt Oleg, der mit seiner Mutter im zweiten Stock wohnt, Ich weiß nicht, wie alt Oleg ist. Seinen vierzigsten Geburtstag hat er aber wahrscheinlich schon hinter sich. Seit ich hier wohne, sitzt er täglich stundenlang auf der Bank, und was soll er auch sonst tun – seine Beine sind gelähmt. ... Ich komme näher und sehe, dass viel Grau dazugekommen ist, seit ich ihn das letzte Mal so betrachtet habe. Neben Oleg liegt immer ein Schachbrett. ... Wenn Oleg allein auf seiner Bank ist, dann verschiebt er Schachfiguren, und wenn jemand neben ihm sitzt, dann erzählt er den Inhalt der Bücher nach, die er vor Kurzem gelesen hat.

²¹³ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/solitaire> - a single gem (as a diamond) set alone.

Nein, nicht bloß den Inhalt. Er liest vor, aber nicht aus dem Buch,
sondern aus seinem Gedächtnis. (*Scherbenpark* 241)

Although he was extremely intelligent, he succumbed mentally to the hopelessness of ever escaping either the physical location or the mental state. This scene, in particular, is representative for the broader immigrant population experience. Russian-speaking men are further depicted as aggressive, prone to physical violence and/or suffering from alcohol addiction. While alcohol consumption has become a part of Russian culture, the root of such behavior could be attributed to the unpromising socio-economic situation in the former Soviet Union and the same issues are evident within the segregated immigrant communities in Germany. The literal and figurative downfall of Russian-speaking immigrants is evidenced in a scene in *Scherbenpark*, in which Sascha illustrates a tragic event:

Ich halte mich am Gelände fest und warte, bis ich Grigorij vor mir
sehe, ganz nah und verdreht. Er fällt auf mich, und automatisch mach
ich einen Schritt zur Seite, denn ich möchte nicht unter ihm begraben
werden. Das Geräusch, mit dem er am Treppende aufschlägt, ist
sehr hässlich und stumpf. ... »der hat ja bestimmt wieder vier
Promille!« – und sie haben immer noch Angst vor
Ausnüchterungszellen. (Ibid., 264)

Furthermore, Russian-speaking immigrant women, similar to men, are affected by social isolation in a form of depression. Bronsky depicts the women's lack in social interaction through the struggles of the character Maria in *Scherbenpark*:

»Ich bin hier so allein«, schnieft sie in ihr Taschentuch. »Ich hätte nicht gedacht, dass es hier so furchtbar ist. Ich verstehe hier gar nichts. Nicht mal, was im Fernsehen kommt. Die paar Russen hier im Viertel gucken mich alle so komisch an. Nur Grigorij ist immer nett zu mir.«

»Wieso gucken die dich komisch an?« fragte ich erstaunt. »Hier kommt doch jeder Zweite aus Kasachstan oder so. Hast du keine Freunde finden können?« ... »Die wissen, dass ich mit *ihm* verwandt bin. Und, weißt du, eine Familie, in der so ein Unglück passiert ist, die wird gemieden. Die Leute denken vielleicht, so etwas steckt an. Das war in Nowosibirsk so.«

»Ich scheiße drauf, was in Nowosibirsk war«, sagte ich und falle in die Kissen zurück. »Sei mir nicht böse, Sascha, du hast deine Hölle, und ich habe meine«, sagte Maria. (Ibid., 85-86)

And yet, the linguistic deficit is once again the major obstacle in interaction and the cause for isolation, because “... in Nowosibirsk konnte sie mit jedem schwätzen und hat es auch getan, und hier ist sie meist zum Stummsein verdammt” (*Scherbenpark* 25). Living within a segregated community not only isolates the Russian-speaking immigrants from the rest of German society linguistically, but also culturally as illustrated in the passage:

Maria kann nach fast zwei Jahren ungefähr zwanzig deutsche Wörter, solche wie Bus, Kartoffel, Butter, Müll, kochen, waschen, fick dich (für die schwarzgelockten Heranwachsenden, die ihr manchmal auf der Straße hinterherpfeifen und beängstigende Gesten machen). Diese

Vokabeln gruppiert sie gelegentlich zu Sätzen. Meistens geht das schief.

Wenn sie nicht gerade im russischen Supermarkt einkauft, muss sie mit dem Finger zeigen und die Zahlen aufschreiben. Nach jedem Einkauf beim Aldi ist sie schweißgebadet. Wenn sie auf der Straße angesprochen wird, wimmert sie und kriegt rote Flecken im Gesicht. Den Satz »Ich spreche nur Russisch« habe ich zwei Wochen mit ihr geübt. Den trägt sie auf einem Papierchen in ihrem Portemonnaie, transkribiert in kyrillische Buchstaben. (Ibid., 25)

The perpetual hardships found in performing everyday tasks, which in the home country would have been trifling, appear to have a negative psychological effect, which ultimately may result in total isolation: “Eigentlich sprach ich mit niemanden Ich tat inzwischen, was mir früher sehr fremd gewesen war: Ich blieb einfach im Bett. Meine Zimmertür schloss ich ab, und eines Abends schob ich noch eine Kommode davor, um garantiert nicht gestört zu werden” (*Die schärfsten Gerichte* 289). In comparison to the older immigrant generation, the children and adolescents display similar behavior: “Aminat saß viel über Büchern in ihrem Zimmer, denn sie hatte keine Freundinnen. Das fiel mir irgendwann auf – dass es nicht normal war, wenn ein Mädchen immer nur im Zimmer saß und niemals Anrufe oder Besuche kriegte” (*Die schärfsten Gerichte* 228-229).

While some individuals isolate themselves completely, even from the immigrant community in which they lived, others formed cliques that comprised of members of the same minority group. When Bronsky depicts a clique of Russian-

speaking adolescents meeting in a segregated location referred to in the novel as Scherbenpark (broken glass park), she not only conveys the physical location covered with actual broken glass, which also indicates the adolescent excessive alcohol consumption; more importantly, the Scherbenpark is a mental state of shattered dreams and broken lives. When one of the adolescent boys asks Sascha to join them in the Scherbenpark by asking: “»Warum kommst du nicht mal mit in den Scherbenpark?« »Du weißt schon – unter den Eichen«”, Sascha responds: “»Wo ihr euch besauft und bekiffst und wo sich drei deiner Kumpels im Gebüsch ein Mädels teilen? Was soll ich da?«” (*Scherbenpark* 184).

However, individuals, such as Sascha, who display a greater ambition to integrate into German society, can often become trapped within the two communities. They are not entirely accepted by the majority of members of the German community due to their wish to break away from the isolated immigrant community, and become its outcasts, while simultaneously they are perceived negatively by the Russian-speaking immigrants. Bronsky illustrates this situation in a young Russian-speaking male immigrant, Peter's, address to Sascha and her attitude towards the members of the immigrant community: “Der reiche Daddy, den ich hier einmal gesehen habe. Der dich mal hier abgesetzt hat. So ein alter Knacker mit grauen Haaren. Ich weiß doch, wie du bist. Du tust so, als wären wir alle der letzte Dreck” (*Ibid.*, 185).

Segregation within the own community is further depicted through the conduct of the older generation towards individuals crossing social and cultural borders. For example, after one of *Scherbenpark's* male characters' Grigorij's

downfall (literally and figuratively speaking), a physical and social barrier is placed between Sascha and the members of the Russian-speaking community:

Ich will auch etwas sagen, aber Vera aus dem fünften Stock (gelernte Ingenieurin, derzeit Wahrsagerin im Hauptberuf, ziemlich klein), ... stellt sich mir entscheidend in den Weg.

»Geh mal schön weiter«, sagt sie. »Und lass ihn in Ruhe!« ... »Hau einfach ab, meine Goldene, ja? Geh hübsch vorbei, sag nichts, sprich uns nicht an, lass unsere Männer in Frieden, lass unsere Jungs in Frieden.« (Ibid., 264-265)

Just like Sascha in *Scherbenpark*, Aminat no longer “wollte ... in [Rosalindas] Nähe. In Dieters natürlich noch weniger” (*Die schärfsten Gerichte* 214). Both adolescent girls find themselves part of neither the Russian-speaking community nor German society. It takes a strong-willed and fearless individual to overcome the difficulties, to progress and make the transition from the ghetto to mainstream German society, but many aspiring to make these transitions remain psychologically affected by the process

6. Psychological Ramification of Segregation of Immigrants

In Bronsky's texts *Scherbenpark* and *Die schärfsten Gerichte der Tatarischen Küche*, the younger, just as the older, immigrant generation faces additional hardships emerging from their social isolation. Not only does the lack of linguistic skills and low economic status affect their integration, but many are prone to suffering psychologically when integration fails. Berry identifies the issue by stating that “individuals who are members of cultures in contact will experience various

psychological changes” (Berry 177). He notices that “for over 30 years, psychologists have focused on some fundamental aspects of these phenomena, particularly people’s attitudes towards the process, their overt behaviors (continuity or change), and their internal cultural identities” (Ibid., 176). He continues, “[A]t the psychological level, virtually everyone in an intercultural contact arena holds attitudes toward the two fundamental aspects (intercultural contact and cultural maintenance)” (Ibid.).

The researcher Andrea Riecken has studied psychological illness among non-native-born Germans in Germany and reports in her study “Resettlers in Lower Saxony’s State Hospital in Osnabrück” that due to lack of successful integration in Germany, Russian-German immigrants experience major psychological illnesses and she suggests a strong correlation between these issues, integration, and acculturation (Riecken 54). According to Riecken’s study, the causes of these illnesses in Russian-German immigrants often go undetected, due to their legal status as German citizens and, therefore, their psychological condition is not examined in connection with integration issues. Specifically, Riecken’s work includes an examination of a psychiatric facility in Osnabrück in which Russian-German immigrants outnumbered the native-born German patients. Riecken’s research demonstrates that a large number of issues such as crime, addiction, joblessness, as well as conflicts between Germans and Russian-speaking immigrants are reported as the cause for mental illness. Furthermore, Riecken’s research is demonstrative of the correlation between migration and mental health and centers on factors such as age, German language skills, family status, and work status and identifies a strong correlation between

mental illness, status, language skill, and integration processes among Russian-German immigrants.

The work of Schmitt-Rodermund and Silbereisen corroborates that of Reicken. Outlined in their article, “Acculturation and Development: Adolescent Immigrants”, they demonstrate that the number of psychological illnesses in immigrants as compared to the rest of the population in Germany is underrepresented, and they attribute this to difficulties associated with immigration (Schmitt-Rodermund, Silbereisen 89).²¹⁴ Their focus on the influence of immigration on the psychological health of adolescents is also important. In a further article, “Psychosocial Problems in Young Ethnic Germans - Longitudinal Study”, they concluded that Russian-speaking adolescent ethnics Germans often faced experienced failed integration into society, family issues and rejection from their peers which they reported as stemming from their (in)voluntary immigration and language skills, among other things (Ibid., 17).

The most powerful statement Bronksy makes about the condition of Russian-speaking immigrants in Germany is the first sentence of her very first novel *Scherbenpark* when Sascha states: “Manchmal denke ich, ich bin die Einzige in unserem Viertel, die noch vernünftige Träume hat. ... Die meisten Leute, die in unserem Viertel leben, haben gar keine Träume” (*Scherbenpark* 7). The residents’ lack of dreams denotes a lack of aspirations or hopes for the future. The image of despair is further intensified in the portrayal of inhabitants’ insistent feelings of

²¹⁴ Particularly interesting in this study is Schmitt-Rodermund and Silbereisen’s characterization of many of the psychological consequences of immigration as “minor psychological issues”, such as the development of a “fundamental mistrust in German institutions” (“Acculturation” 899). In *Scherbenpark*, however, Bronsky represents these seemingly minor issues as major cultural barriers which could lead to catastrophic consequences.

failure. In this case, Bronsky shows the emotional state of a young Russian-speaking female character named Angela and states: “Sie hat aber nicht nur deswegen geheult, sondern aus grundsätzlicher Verzweiflung. Sie heult fast jede Stunde” (Ibid., 208). The perpetual depressive emotional state turned into a visibly physical characteristic: “Irgendetwas Hartes hatte sich in ihren Gesichtszügen festgesetzt, und wenn man in ihre Augen sah, konnte man Angst bekommen”, and she was also “immer allein, ... Ihr Gesicht warnte jeden davor, sie anzusprechen” (*Die schärfsten Gerichte* 98, 214). The discontent and the impossibility to escape one’s situation are reflected in the form of hate towards self and others: “Ich hasse den Solitär. Ich hasse diese Leute. Ich kann nichts dafür, und sie können noch weniger dafür. Alles arme Schweine. Und sie werden immer ärmer” and Sascha continues, “Ich hasse mein Zuhause” (Ibid., 197, 276).

The psychological issues arise during the integration process and especially when the process results in segregation develop differently among persons of various genders. Men, whose Russian socio-cultural gender role is to be the provider for the family, are particularly distressed by their failed position and succumb to depression and addictive behavior: “Er säuft Er säuft meistens die Nacht durch. Morgens schläft er wie ein Stein ... Er ist rausgeflogen ” (*Die schärfsten Gerichte* 209, 210). And although Angela’s “Vater ist 36”, he looks “mindestens fünfzig” (*Die schärfsten Gerichte* 211). Due to the emotional stress, he aged beyond his years.

While some male immigrants numb their emotions with narcotics, others become violent. Bronsky illustrates a tragic incident in which a depressed and violent man, Vadim, kills his wife and the mother of his children due to jealousy. He shows

signs of suffering from a psychological illness associated with integration. He failed as a father and a husband, as a provider, and was dependent upon financial assistance due to language problems which resulted in difficulties in finding and keeping employment. This is an image of a man without status and any future economic, cultural and social prospects using violence as a method to control those physically weaker within his family:

Du bleibst ungerührt, wenn er seine Hasstiraden ausspuckt – auf die Scheiß -Deutschen, die ihr Land nicht im Griff haben, auf die Scheiß-Amerikaner, die alles unterwandern wie die größte Sekte der Welt, auf die Scheiß-Italiener, die immer so schnell reden. Auf die kriminellen Russen, die ihr Land verlassen, und auf die schwachsinnigen Russen, die es nicht tun. Auf das Scheiß-Arbeitsamt, das nicht in der Lage ist, für einen Weltklasse-Profi wie Vadim endlich eine geeignete Stelle zu finden, und das den strunzdummen Scheiß -Chef, der sich eine doofe Bemerkung erlaubt, zu doof für Vadim, um bei ihm bleiben zu können, und der deswegen auch der einzige und sehr kurzzeitige Arbeitgeber bleibt. (*Scherbenpark* 49)

The text warns: “Hütet euch vor Menschen, die sich schwach fühlen, denn vielleicht werden sie sich eines Tages mal stark fühlen wollen, und ihr werdet euch nie wieder davon erholen” (*Scherbenpark* 63). Regretting what Vadim has put his family through, he ends his life: “Vadim E. hat sich in seiner Zelle erhängt” (*Ibid.*, 257).

The consequences of psychological issues arising in adults due to failed integration also profoundly and negatively effected the psyche of their children. The

image of helplessness, hopelessness, and of despair is portrayed in children feeling a lack of empathy towards animals. In fact, Bronsky illustrates a disturbing image of a young boy dissecting a dead hamster with a knife without feeling disgust or empathy, which indicates an alarming sign of an abnormal mental state. While Sascha, "... zuckte auch zusammen, denn zwischen Antons Füßen lag etwas, das wie ein rohes steak aussah. Und mit winzigen Füßen", Anton cannot comprehend his act as immoral (Ibid., 186). The same boy has been in therapy, as Bronsky writes: "Er hat einen neuen Therapieplatz. Er ist ein bisschen durcheinander ... Anton hatte Angst" (Ibid., 270, 271).

The effects of success or failure of the integration process is juxtaposed in the psychological wellbeing of the sisters, Aminat and Lena. While Aminat immigrated to Germany as an adolescent, Lena as a young child went to Israel. The psychological wellbeing of the two girls after immigration is identified as vastly different. From what the reader discerns, the integration of Russian-Jews of the younger generation in Israel is more successful than that of Russian-speaking immigrants in Germany. Lena "war eine ... unbeschwerte, mit leuchtenden Augen. Sie hatte meist gute Laune, und nahm einem nichts übel" (*Die schärfsten Gerichte* 309). In contrast to Lena's confidence and happiness, Aminat is described as timid and endlessly melancholic: "Aminat sang ein bisschen leise. ... Und obwohl es mir nicht gefiel, wie sie sang, war klar, wie unendlich traurig ihr Lied war" and "Es war nicht kraftvoll, nicht melodisch. Aber es stimmte schon, es drehte einem das Herz in der Brust um" (Ibid., 294, 300).

Age also plays a role in integration. The younger the child during the time of immigration, the more he or she assimilates into the host society. However, there are

differences in the level of integration based on history and cultures of the host nation and that of the immigrants. For example, the historical political relationship between Israel and Russia is significantly different than the history between Germany and Russia. Israel and Russian relations are relatively recent and without much conflict, whereas relations between Germany and Russia have been defined by years of warfare and by both negative perceptions of Russians in Germany and also Germans in Russia (Soviet Union). Therefore, the perceived bigotry of members of the German society by immigrants and their view of Russian-speaking immigrants is reflected in Russian-immigrants' psychological state.

7. Acculturation Process Through Interaction

Although the acculturation process is “based on the assumption that immigrant groups and their individual members have the freedom to choose how they want to engage in intercultural relations[,] [t]his, of course is not always the case”; nonetheless, Bronsky offers a plausible and realistic approach and solution in the hopes of creating a more successful acculturation process for immigrants in Germany and for removing the cultural and social borders between the host members of German society and the Russian-speaking immigrants (Berry 176). Although the immigrant majority in Bronsky's novels is portrayed as lacking in interaction with Germans and vice versa, some immigrant and German individuals illustrate an interaction that is mutually respectful of the others' culture, despite images of certain aspects of the immigrant's life as being disagreeable to natively born Germans. A scene in which a German family visits the Russian “ghetto” for the first time illustrates the host society members' realization of the immigrant living situation:

»Hier denkt man irgendwie sofort das Schlimmste.«

»Es stinkt gar nicht wie sonst«, sagte ich im Aufzug. »Jedenfalls nicht schlimmer als so ein Krankenhausesen. Jetzt bin ich abgehärtet.«

»Das ist ja schrecklich hier«, sagt Felix zeitgleich, und ich kriege mit, welchen Blick er dafür von Volker erntet.

»Na und?« sagt Felix. »Das ist doch höllisch hier. Soll ich sagen, es ist schön?« (*Scherbenpark* 277-278)

Only through true, unfiltered display of immigrants' lives in Germany and the subjective participation in one's cultures—as Salomé hypothesized on this concept in *Russland mit Rainer*—do members of the immigrant and the host society groups undergo an acculturation process. Furthermore, “at the psychological level,” as Berry maintains, “virtually everyone in an intercultural contact arena holds attitudes toward the two fundamental aspects (intercultural contact and cultural maintenance)” and “mutual accommodation is required for integration to be attained, involving acceptance by both dominant and non-dominant groups of the right of all groups to live as culturally different peoples within the same society” (Berry 176, 177). In addition to the importance of mutual acceptance of each other cultures, Bronsky stresses the insight German individuals' gain into the lives of immigrants.

The effort in understanding and experiencing the socio-cultural associated confrontation and encountering the unknown, might lead to a development not only in positive interpersonal relationship among all cultural groups within one society, but above all, this process of acculturation expands one's intrapersonal realization. Nonetheless, the problematized topic in Bronsky's novels is mainstream German

society's interaction with the majority of immigrants. The depiction of one isolated incident of an interaction between members of these different socio-cultural groups signals on one hand a glimpse of hope for the future but conversely also the present need for society's wider acceptance of immigrants.

Furthermore, some of the conditions that promote or hinder an acculturation process include "the widespread acceptance of the value to a society of cultural diversity (i.e., the presence of multicultural ideology), low levels of prejudice and discrimination, positive attitudes among ethnocultural groups (i.e., no specific inter-group hatreds), and a sense of attachment to, or identification with, the larger society by all individuals and groups" (Berry 177). At the very end of *Scherbenpark*, Bronsky portrays a scene in which a German family is fully integrated into the life of one Russian-speaking family. In the following scene, Bronsky describes an acculturation in process through Sascha's gaze:

Unsere Wohnung ist gerade voll mit Menschen, die essen, reden und lachen. Es sind zwei neue dabei, die ich niemals hier haben wollte, aber sie sind trotzdem gekommen. Und es sieht so aus, als wären sie gerade gern hier. Ich kann mir vorstellen, dass es nicht das letzte Mal sein wird.

Natürlich weine ich nicht, ich habe bloß was im Auge.

Anton zeigt Felix gerade seinen Gameboy, und ich glaube, sie verstehen sich wirklich. Felix würde sich nicht so gut verstellen können. Er genießt es, angehimmelt zu werden, und Anton ist sowieso hin und weg – so ein großer Junge beschäftigt sich gerade mit ihm!

Alissa zeigt Volker, wie man seinen Namen kyrillisch buchstabiert. Er ist beeindruckt, dass sie so schlau ist. ... Es ist richtig idyllisch, alles riecht nach Zimt. ... Ich habe hier nichts mehr zu tun. Ich habe das Gefühl, sie kommen jetzt auch ohne mich zurecht. (*Scherbenpark* 283-284)

Bronsky conveys in one single scene a sense of love and happiness, genuine understanding and respect, and above all—hope for the future generation.

Through the illustration of the various examples of immigrants' struggles due to immigration and integration, Bronsky proves that the discourse on failed integration of the Russian-speaking immigrant and immigrants in general is still present. By providing thorough examples for the correlation between the limited German language skills, the deficiency in social, cultural, and economic capitals, Bronsky addresses the issue of proper integration in contemporary society and offers a viable solution for eliminating the division between the immigrant and host societies' members through acculturation efforts on both parts. Nonetheless, in the following section, Bronsky demonstrates how, despite the attempt at integration through acculturation, immigrant individuals—in this case, the young Russian-speaking women—are psychologically affected by the integration process and display a deviation from the traditional gender roles for females in both societies, adopting some of Western characteristics gendered as male and ultimately developing an interculturally gendered hybrid identity.

II. Deconstruction of the Male and Female Images and Construction of an Intercultural Identity in Contemporary German and Russian/Soviet Societies

1. Alina Bronsky's Russian and German Male Characters Juxtaposed

Apart from the discussion on the prominent theme surrounding the Russian-speaking immigrant's cultural, social, and economic condition in Germany, Bronsky focuses also on the various images of men and women in her novels. Both genders are illustrated either in a traditional or a progressive male and female role. The male and female characters are portrayed, as Butler would identify them within "the limits of a discursively conditioned experience" (Butler 12). However, although Butler states that "[t]hese limits are always set within the terms of a hegemonic cultural discourse predicated on binary structures that appear as the language of universal rationality," Bronsky identifies problems specific to a gender that transcends hegemonic cultures (Butler 12).

Bronsky's research juxtaposes and evaluates men, with a Russian cultural background with German men—within and across cultures, societies and age groups—to portray their positive and negative socially constructed images. The older Russian-speaking male generation in Bronsky's novels is portrayed as victim of either the Soviet Regime or of the failed German immigration system. Although Sascha states that, "alle Männer gleich [sind]", Bronsky outlines a wide range of male characters in different roles (Ibid., 223). However, her most direct comparison of the divergences in Russian-speaking and German male constructs is demonstrated in the following scene:

»Es war ein ziemlich mieser Mann« »... Der Mann war ganz reizbar, eifersüchtig, er schrie oft rum, und er schlug auch mal zu.

Eines Tages lernte die Frau einen Prinzen kennen. Er war verzaubert, und vor ihr hat keiner erkannt, dass er eigentlich ein Prinz ist. Und dann war die Frau einige Zeit sehr glücklich, und ihre Kinder auch.

Denn der Prinz war wirklich ein richtiger. Wenn er da war, war alles gut. (*Scherbenpark* 136)

The Russian “mieser Mann” (Vadim) is contrasted with a German “Prinz” (Harry), which is a recurring theme in both of Bronsky’s novels, although sometimes the representation of male characters deviates slightly from this stern perception of men.

To begin and elaborate on the image of the “Mieser Mann”, Bronsky presents this type of character within both older and younger Russian-speaking immigrant males. The most prominent and aggressive type is embodied by the character Vadim—a Russian immigrant, who is incarcerated for killing his wife. The jealous, violent and chauvinistic tendencies of Russian-speaking men are depicted through this man’s interactions and views of a woman:

Sie soll nicht das Gefühl haben, dass sie deswegen was Besseres ist als er. Auf keinen Fall darf sie denken, dass sie einen alten unnützen Sack voll Scheiße geheiratet hat, als der er sich dann doch manchmal fühlt, den ganzen Morgen, Mittag, Nachmittag, Abend vor dem Fernseher, wo es doch nur Idioten gibt, die dem Vadim seine wertvolle Zeit stehlen und dafür wahrscheinlich auch noch Geld bekommen.

Damit sie sich also nichts einbildet, kann sie nicht oft genug hören, wer sie eigentlich ist. Eine nutzlose Ehefrau, die weder in der Lage ist, den Haushalt zu führen, noch anständig Geld zu verdienen, falls man dieses hektische Gerenne von einem bescheuerten Job zum nächsten überhaupt Arbeit nennen kann.

Eine Rabenmutter, die ihren Kindern die T-Shirts nicht bügelt. (Ibid., 51)

With this excerpt, Bronsky conveys that certain dominant male and female roles are prominent within the Russian-speaking community.

Moving on from a “Sack voll Scheisse” (Vadim) to a “Misthaufen” (Kalganow)—as Rosalinda refers to her husband Kalganow in *Die schärfsten Gerichte*—one now has a more vivid and ‘bigger’ image of a Russian man (*Scherbenpark* 51, *Die schärfsten Gerichte* 46). Other descriptions of typical Russian male characteristics include “stinkfaul” and “feige” and lacking in interest and ability to care for his child (*Die schärfsten Gerichte* 61, 72, 82).

In both novels, Bronsky portrays Russian-speaking men’s expectations for women to work and devote themselves to the domestic duties—child caring and the taking care of the household. While women entered the workforce during the 1930s to build up the Soviet Union economically and militarily by working in factories, men, on the other hand, continued to be absent in participating in the private sphere. As a result, women had and continue to have a double burden, physically and mentally. As Bronsky’s texts vividly show, if a Russian woman deviates from her role (as provider

and caregiver) she is the subject of abuse, rage, and violence from men and other women as well.

However, Bronsky also identifies a kinder and gentler characteristic within the Russian-speaking men. The widower Grigorij residing in the Russian ‘ghetto’ in Germany is described as “nett” and “ein guter Mann”, as a man who “kann seine Hemden selber waschen, und er bügelt sogar die Röcke von dieser Anschela. Und er war immer so hilfsbereit” (*Scherbenpark* 83, 84, 85). One assumes that a man’s character has less status within the society according to his domestic contribution, since washing his own shirts and ironing his daughter’s skirts is out of the ordinary for a socially acceptable male role—such a man is a rare commodity among Russians. Nonetheless, even this man succumbs to substance addiction, which literally pushes him over the edge (of a railing). All three male characters, Vadim and Grigorij in *Scherbenpark* and Kalganow in *Die schärfsten Gerichte*, are annihilated (death through suicide, a falling from the stairwell railing and illness) as male role models. By eliminating such images of men, Bronsky attempts to progress from the traditional male roles, which should no longer exist, to an alternative role for men.

In contrast, Bronsky presents the image of a German male dramatically different from her description of Russian-speaking men. The physical characteristics and pictures of German men are seen through Rosalinda’s view: “Mir war längst aufgefallen, dass die Männer hier sehr gut aussahen, alle sehr gesund. Es waren Männer, die nicht im Buero rumsaßen, sondern viel Sport an der frischen Luft trieben: nicht sehr groß, drahtig, mit schwarzen Locken und blauen Augen” (*Die schärfsten Gerichte* 259). However, a socially progressive and ‘ideal’ male individual

in Bronsky's novel is embodied in the male character Volker. Volker exemplifies the traditional male and female roles. His wealth in cultural, social, and economic capitals give him the opportunity to be successful in his career; however, unlike the Russian-speaking males who refrain from co-parenting their children, Volker, not only participates in child-rearing, but is the primary caregiver to his ill son, while his ex-wife—just as successful but absent from her parental role—pursues a career of her own. Through Sascha's admiration for Volker the favorable type of man becomes evident: "Wie kann man sich bloß von so jemandem scheiden lassen ... Von jemandem, der so grauhaarig ist und gut aussehend und edel und witzig" (*Scherbenpark* 160).

Furthermore, a similar image of man, although not as professionally successful is represented in another German character—Harry. The following extended description reveals the opposite image of Russian-speaking men typified in the novels:

Dass ein Liebhaber mit den Kindern seiner neuen Freundin gut umging, war nicht die Erfahrung, die ich bislang gemacht hatte. ... Ein Mann, der hier fast wohnt und beim Abwasch hilft und nie schreit und mit der Mutter Händchen hält und mit den Kindern Memory spielt und ihnen zuhört und Brote schmiert und gern als Babysitter einspringt, falls mal was ist.

Aber trotzdem nicht der Mann, den etwa Anne nehmen würde. Denn Harry war, das ist jetzt völlig wertfrei, ein Versager. Er war es, weil er sich als einer fühlte. Hatte seit zwölf Jahren Germanistik

studiert und sich dabei immer weiter von einem eventuellen Abschluss entfernt, wechselte regelmäßig Jobs, weil er für kaum was genug Biss hatte. (Ibid., 33, 34)

Harry, as Bronsky demonstrates here, is the complete opposite of Vadim, and although he is a gentle, sensitive and generous man, his lack in economic capital, helplessness, and indecisiveness earns him the description of a failure. Similar to Salomé's texts, Russian women help to perpetuate traditional gender roles and notions of masculinity.

Despite the praise for Harry and Volker, Bronsky also illustrates the image of a German man with significant character flaws. Dieter, whom Rosalinde "hielt ... schon lange nicht mehr für einen Mann" is described as feminine: "wenn [sie] es nicht besser gewusst hätte, hätte [sie] den Schreiber für eine Frau gehalten" and a "Feigling" whom a woman would not trust or as Rosalinda maintains: "Mir war klar, dass man Animate nicht allein bei Dieter lassen konnte. Zwar war er ein Feigling, aber ich traute niemandem" (*Die schärfsten Gerichte* 290, 313, 211). In the end, Dieter, just as the Russian men with negative male images, is removed from society through eradication of the character from the plot of the story. The surviving male characters are optimistic, progressive, and are those with the most desire and talent to adapt and evolve in their worldview, but only Volker represents such a character. Bronsky's idea of a model 'man' demonstrates the combination of the traditional male roles (the role of the protector and provider) and the traditional female roles caring for the home and family, which ultimately creates a harmonious balance between the traditional constructs of the masculine and the feminine.

Nonetheless, Bronsky also looks at the younger generation of men and illustrates alarming similarities between the men of the older and the adolescent Russian male generation. The persistent domineering and abusive attitude towards women as well as men's expectations of women is also evident in the younger Russian-speaking immigrant generation. Living within the segregated area in which cultural and social norms and attitudes are transferred from generation to generation, the younger Russian-speaking male characters exhibit a similar behavior - the less economically successful, the more violent and aggressive the men appear.

One particular young Russian-speaking male character, Peter, who's referred to as "Peter der Grosse" (Peter the Great) which mockingly underlines the sheer lack of social, cultural, and economic status, is striving to mimic the iconic type of man constructed from traditional 'masculinity' in order to appear dominant at least through his physical strength:

Er ist wirklich riesig. Zwei Meter Muskeln und Pickel, Adrenalin, Testosteron und Klebstoffdämpfe, merkwürdig eng sitzende Jeans, weißes Unterhemd. Marlon Brando im Russenghetto. Lange schwarze Wimpern, die seinem Gesicht eine feminine Note verleihen. Wahrscheinlich hebt er deswegen so verbissen Gewichte. Hellblaue Augen, rote Lippen, die sich leicht kräuseln, eine dicke Goldkette um den Hals und eine noch dickere ums Handgelenk. Ein fetter Ring am kleinen Finger und Tätowierungen auf den Oberarmen. Die obligatorische nackte Frau ohne Kopf und ein Adler und Symbole, die ich nicht kenne. (*Scherbenpark* 178-179)

Peter is a young man with a tough physical exterior, but being mentally weak, he develops a domineering and violent attitude towards women. However, Bronsky questions the Russian men's concept of masculinity, the supposed superiority over the 'weaker' female gender, and assumed the power derived from this masculinity by depicting Peter's attempt to physically assault a physically much weaker woman:

Ich bücke mich gerade noch rechtzeitig, um seinem Schlag auszuweichen. Einer seiner Kumpels setzt sich ins Gras. Der andere lacht kurz auf.

»Frauen schlagen«, sage ich. »Sehr tapfer.«

»Solche wie dich«, sagt er und atmet schwer, »muss man einfach schlagen. Und solche wie deine Mutter. Ich finde es rasend blöd, dass du überhaupt keine Angst hast. Ich glaube, das müssen wir ändern.«

(Ibid., 192)

The fact that men literally take into their hands the 'duty' of disciplining women deviating from their perception of a 'woman' may be an indication of mentally weak individuals.

The desire to appear physically strong and adopt this physical characteristic of traditional 'masculinity', however, is a direct result of an economic, cultural and social disadvantage. Bronsky clearly recognizes this issue and the Russian men's 'Achilles' heel'—without education and wealth, no physical strength will ever work to their advantage in the Western society: "»Ich kann nur mit Männern, die lesen können«, presse ich zwischen den Zähnen hervor. Wahrscheinlich reitet mich gerade der Teufel. »Daran wird es scheitern, Peterchen. Hartz IV und gebrochenes Deutsch

machen mich einfach nicht an. Da habe ich Orgasmus-Probleme«” (Ibid., 193). The less status—economically, socially and culturally—men have in the ‘ghetto’ and in German society, the more they aspire to fit the typical male image, by appearing physically strong.

To further compare and contrast the young male characters of different cultural and social backgrounds, Bronsky provides an opposing male image to Peter: the German adolescent Felix (Volker’s ill son). He “ist ein Kerl, ziemlich schwächig, aber eben im Stehen recht groß, ... Sein Haar fällt in ausgefransten Strähnen auf die Schultern” (Ibid., 103). Contrary to the big and muscular Peter, Felix’s physical appearance resembles more a feminine type: a slim build with long hair. However, Peter is unable to compete with Felix’s educational background, his cultural, social and economic capital, which gives Felix a socio-cultural advantage.

2. Gender Roles Through the Russian-speaking Women’s Perception

Unlike Bronsky’s juxtaposition of various male images within and across cultural borders, the illustration of Russian- and German-speaking female images is limited mostly to the discussion of Russian-speaking women. In order to amplify and expose the vast socio-culturally influenced female roles in the Russian-speaking community, Bronsky consistently depicts her female protagonists working through the perception of ‘self’ and ‘Other’, while either reinforcing traditional constructs of femininity and masculinity or deviating from them by developing an alternative female identities. In Bronsky’s novels, a more vulnerable female image manifests itself in the characters of Sulfia (the mother of Animat) and Maria (Sascha’s mother). Both female characters are described as physically and mentally weak and are prone

to physical and psychological abuse. They are also viewed by other characters as helpless and hopeless individuals, who ultimately succumb to social and physical forces.

Bronsky begins both works through a pejorative portrayal of these characters. Sascha narrates the story of her mother, which she describes as, “Die Geschichte einer hirnlosen rothaarigen Frau, die noch leben würde, wenn die auf ihre kluge älteste Tochter gehört hätte”, and Rosalinda sees no hope for her daughter Sulfia, “[d]umm war sie, wie gesagt, auch. Sie war schon siebzehn Jahre alt, und es bestand keine Hoffnung mehr, dass sie noch mal klüger werden würde” (*Scherbenpark*, 7; *Die schärfsten Gerichte* 10). Both mothers raise daughters who are able to deviate from this weak image psychologically. The relationship between these mothers and daughters is particularly important, because it demonstrates that the daughters are only able to develop a gendered identity which is appropriate for them as individuals by contradicting stereotypes of femininity which their own mothers attempt to pass onto them. Like Salomé over a century earlier, Bronsky also emphasizes the role women play in perpetuating negative constructs of womanhood, and within Bronsky’s texts this is most readily demonstrated through an analysis of constraints of heterosexual relationships and cross-cultural ideals of beauty.

Within Bronsky’s novels, not only do the majority of Russian-speaking women adhere to traditional gender roles, but they also expect a specific gendered performativity from men and, therefore, share responsibility for their own inequality. The culpability of Russian-speaking women is best examined through Bronsky’s depiction of the gender roles of German men and women through the eyes of

Russian-speaking characters, to whom the natively born Germans appear to reverse the gender roles. By illustrating German women as being more unwilling to conform to inequitable gender roles while also being able to achieve greater financial and social freedom, the novels insinuate that men would progress socially if women were to first reject traditional ideals of female beauty and their role as obedient wives.

One way in which Russian women within the novels perpetuate gender specific roles is through their expectations of masculine behavior and characteristics. Men must be physically tough and financial providers, as evidenced by Rosalinda's attitude: "Ich dankte nicht, als John mit seiner Kreditkarte bezahlte und die Tüten zum Auto trug. Ich wusste, ich hatte das alles verdient" (*Die schärfsten Gerichte* 300). Particularly disturbing is women's deliberate participation in the creation of gender roles through 'forced' marriage: "Wenn ein Mann ein Kind hat, dann läuft er nicht so schnell weg. [...] Wenn der Mann halbwegs anständig ist, dann kommt er zur Besinnung. Dann ist er gebunden" (Ibid., 91). While women are given the choice to marry, men, as in the situation Bronsky describes, must, even if involuntarily, conform to the role of the provider.

The role Russian-German women reinforce for themselves is that of wife and mother, which women of the older generations not only embody, but attempt to transfer through teaching gender specific acts and practices to the younger female generation. Most importantly, the roles of wife and mother are governed through certain constructs of physical beauty, which women are not only held to, but which they also reinforce. For example, Rosalinda reasserts her relevance to society through her confidence in her physical beauty, "Ich sah überhaupt nicht wie eine Oma aus. Ich

sah gut aus. Ich war eine schöne Frau und noch nicht alt” (Ibid., 68). Her duty as a woman within Russian-Germn culture is not only to perform certain rituals which emphasize her appearance, but she must also teach the next generation how to remain physically attractive at all times. Rosalinda explains the importance of beauty during her commentary on her daughter’s inability to learn such practices: “ich [hatte] sie von klein auf gelehrt, wie man weint, ohne hässlich zu werden, und wie man lächelt, ohne zu viel zu versprechen. Aber Sulfia war nicht begabt. Ich muss sogar sagen, sie war ziemlich dumm” (Ibid., 9).

Within her novels, Bronsky even characterizes Russian women’s intellects as being dependant on physical beauty. This is vividly shown in Rosalinda’s disbelief of Dieter’s assertion that German women demonstrate their intelligence despite their physical appearance. She states that “[n]ur eine attraktive Frau konnte sich Intelligenz erlauben, wenn sie jemals Chancen auf einen Mann haben wollte. Dieter meinte zwar, in Deutschland sei das anders, aber das glaubte ich ihm nicht” (Ibid., 230). While it would be a complete embarrassment for a Russian-speaking woman to go out into the public in her natural beauty, within German society it is the norm. This is seen in Rosalinda’s comments concerning how German women are presented on TV: “Warum hatte man sie nicht geschminkt, warum ließ man es zu, dass sie sich vor den deutschen Fernsehzuschauern derart blamierte (Ibid., 293).”

Additionally, if a Russian woman fails to follow this constructed female physicality, she will experience the highest ‘punishment’ within a society, which is to remain unmarried. Therefore, it was usually the mother’s (women of the older generation) greatest responsibility to ensure their daughters happiness and prevent

them from social ridicule, as Rosalinda states: “Sulfia verwandelte sich innerhalb weniger Tage in eine alte Frau. Das sollte kein Dauerzustand werden, dachte ich, mit einer solchen verbitterten Miene würde sie nie wieder einen Mann abkriegen” (Ibid., 164). Also, Rosalinda states that the art of becoming a successful and a ‘perfect’ wife is in the act of manipulation of the ‘stronger sex’:

In unseren ersten Jahren hatte er viel darüber gesprochen. Ich hatte ihm zugehört – ich wusste, wie eine Ehefrau sich zu verhalten hatte. Das Wichtigste war, den Ehemann nicht darauf hinzuweisen, was für dumme Dinge er redet. Die Nachsicht der Frau hielt eine Ehe stabil. Ich verstand sehr viel davon, erst theoretisch, dann bewährte ich mich auch in der Praxis. Ich war eine perfekte Ehefrau. (Ibid., 80)

The paradox ensues, however, in the fact that Rosalinda forced her daughter into marriages, but when her own husband left her for another woman, she felt an utter freedom in every possible sense: freedom from domestic duties, such as cooking, cleaning, ironing, shopping for groceries and especially sexual freedom:

Ich stellte mir vor, wie ich zur Tür reinkam und keiner da war, der gerade in der Küche schmatzte. Der meine Nerven damit strapazierte, dass er mein vorbereitetes Essen kalt verzehrte, weil er nicht in der Lage gewesen war, es aufzuwärmen. Überhaupt das Essen: Ich könnte das Kochen jetzt fast komplett lassen. Ich würde mir morgens einen Haferbrei kochen und abends einen Salat machen. Wie viel Zeit ich mir damit sparen könnte. In dieser Zeit könnte ich lesen, fernsehen oder Gymnastikübungen machen.

Ich überlege weiter. Ich würde mit niemandem sprechen müssen, wenn ich von der Arbeit heimkam. Ich begann zu zählen, wie viele Hemden ich pro Woche nicht mehr waschen und bügeln müsste, Socken, Hosen, Unterhosen.

Einkaufen! Ich würde kaum noch schwere Einkaufstüten schleppen müssen, weil ich jetzt viel weniger Lebensmittel brauchte. Ich würde nicht mehr so viel Dreck wegräumen, denn ich machte keinen Dreck. Ich könnte mit Gott reden, so viel ich wollte. Ich würde mich viel weniger aufregen, weil niemand mehr da war, über den ich mich ständig aufregen müsste. Und ich könnte mich mit Männern treffen. Neuen, jüngeren Männern, die Komplimente machten und am Morgen wieder weggingen, nach Hause zu Mama oder zur Freundin, mir doch egal. Die mir wieder das Gefühl gaben, eine Frau zu sein. Denn ich muss gestehen, ich mochte es längst nicht mehr, wenn Kalganow mich anfasste. (Ibid., 71)

The realization that a woman does not need a man to feel fulfilled comes with Rosalinda's newly found independence. Bronsky illustrates how men, in many cases, are used as mere objects to gain economic wealth: "Wäre er kein Ausländer gewesen und unsere Lage weniger prekär, hätte ich in diesem Moment beschlossen, dass Sulfia eigentlich auch ohne Mann im Frieden alt werden konnte" (Ibid., 181). Once the men no longer serve a woman's purpose, they are discarded and forgotten. However, certain hypocrisy is hidden in the fact that the women relegating women's role in society to that of a wife can only obtain worth and status through marriage.

Rosalinda, an older generation Russian woman, embodies the image of a vulnerable female; nonetheless, at the same time she also creates and maintains gender roles and the concept of the ‘feminine’. Bronsky devotes an entire chapter entitled “Bin ich eine böse Frau?” to the examination of the consequences of the continuation of gender roles:

Ich ging in die Küche, wo mein Mann gerade Gemüseragout aß, und fragte ihn, ob ich eine böse Frau war. Er verschluckte sich und begann zu husten. Ich warte geduldig. Er hustete noch mehr. ... »Und«, bohrte ich, »bin ich eine böse Frau?« Er spießte ein Stück Aubergine auf seine Gabel. Ich entriss sie ihm, bevor er den Mund erneut voll hatte. »Bin ich eine böse Frau?«

Er sah auf den Boden. ... »... Du bist ganz wunderbar. Du bist die Beste. Du bist so klug ... Und schön ... Und du kochst so gut!« »Aber das sagt doch gar nichts darüber aus, ob ich böse bin oder nicht«, beharrte ich. »Ich kann eine tolle Köchin sein, und trotzdem leiden all unter mir.« (Ibid., 68, 69)

And, indeed, the second and third generation of female members of the family as well as Rosalinda’s husband suffer the consequences of her “klare[r] und harte[r] Führung” and the lack of “Nachgiebigkeit” and her daughter “Sulfia brach völlig zusammen. Sie hatte einfach keine Lust, sich ein Beispiel an [ihr] zu nehmen” (*Die schärfsten Gerichte* 101, 96). In the end, the second Russian-speaking female generation, represented in the characters Sulfia and Maria –whose Eastern and

Russian influenced role division clashes with the Western German gender constructs—do not survive the struggle.

Nonetheless, Bronsky identifies a change in the gender roles of the third immigrant generation: Aminat and Sascha. As psychologically affected and ‘damaged’ as they appear to be, both progress either by becoming a writer (Sascha) or a singer (Aminat). Both young women deviate entirely from Rosalinda’s image of femininity and the idea of a ‘perfect woman’. As a result of their exposure to two diverse cultures and partially their difficulties with integrating in Germany, the adolescent Russian-speaking generation is comprised of interculturality and hybridity neither entirely rejecting the traditional Russian nor completely adopting the German female roles. Instead they embody a combination of the accepted models of femininity and masculinity within both cultures, creating a different female identity.

3. The Construction of the Intercultural Gendered Hybrid Identity

Despite the various images of men and masculinity, neither the Russian nor the German type of man appeals entirely to the novels’ female protagonists. The intercultural female characters distance themselves from the known and familiar, the Russian-speaking men, and experience cultural and social difficulties while encountering the majority of German individuals, specifically the men. The more Bronsky’s female characters deviate away from Russian culture and Russian men, the more they gravitate toward the image German men embody.

Bronsky’s analysis of female characters’ encounters with men from their home country (Russia) contrasted with men of their new country (Germany) demonstrate the effect that Eastern and Western socio-culturally influenced male

roles have on the development of the female protagonists', which is a consistent and conscious deviation from the traditionally constructed female images. When they remove themselves from the influences of the traditional female roles, they can develop their unique cultural and gendered identity. Butler questions and explains the notion of identity:

To what extent is "identity" a normative ideal rather than a descriptive feature of experience? And how do the regulatory practices that govern gender also govern culturally intelligible notions of identity? In other words, the "coherence" and "continuity" of "the person" are not logical or analytic features of personhood, but, rather socially instituted and maintained norms of intelligibility. Inasmuch as "identity" is assured through the stabilizing concept of sex, gender, and sexuality, the very notion of "the person" is called into question by the cultural emergence of those "incoherent" or "discontinuous" gendered beings who appear to be persons who fail to conform to the gendered norms of cultural intelligibility by which persons are defined." (Butler 23)

The hybrid gendered identity in Bronsky's third generation Russian-speaking female characters is demonstrated through the continuous dialogue of the depiction of traditionally socio-cultural influenced male and female roles and their rejection.

In fact, Bronsky's Sascha staunchly disapproves of the image of the Russian-speaking men by repeating "Ich hasse Männer. ... Ich hasse Männer. Alle, bis auf Anton", and Anton is Sascha's younger brother (*Scherbenpark* 17, 45). Her rejection

of the typical Russian socio-cultural image of the ‘man’ is evident in comparison with the common popular German or Western male image:

Anna sagt, dass es auch gute Männer gibt. Nette, freundliche, die kochen und sauber machen und Geld verdienen und Kinder wollen und Geschenke machen und Urlaub buchen und saubere Kleidung tragen und nicht saufen und vielleicht sogar gut aussehen. Wo gibt es die, frage ich da, auf dem Mond? Anna behauptete, dass es solche Männer gibt, wenn nicht in unserer Stadt, dann vielleicht in Frankfurt. Aber sie selber kennt persönlich auch keinen, höchstens aus dem Fernsehen. Deswegen wiederhole ich gern das, was meine Mutter immer gesagt hat: Ich bin mir selber ein Mann. Wobei sie das zwar gesagt, sich aber nie daran gehalten hat. (Ibid., 17)

The statement “[i]ch bin mir selber ein Mann” provides a strong indication for either a switch of gender role or a neutrality in gender roles or *gendered hybridity* (Ibid., 17). Essentially, an individual would perform certain roles or develop certain physical and/or psychological characteristics which would be traditionally assigned within a given society either as a male or a female role. However, Sascha not only expresses negative feelings towards males, but also towards females by stating: “Ich hasse Männer, denke ich selbstvergessen. Hasse ich Männer?” a “Mir kommt der Gedanke, dass ich vielleicht nicht nur Männer hasse. Sondern auch Frauen” (Ibid., 68, 108).

The most evident indication for Bronsky’s creation of the culturally and gendered hybrid identity is through Sascha’s first and last names Sascha Naimann. A given name is the most prominent form of identification and self-identification.

‘Sascha’ is a nickname for the male and female names Alexander and/or Alexandra; however, her last name ‘Naimann’ is a common Jewish²¹⁵ name of Ashkenazi descent, the German equivalent being the name ‘Neumann’ or a ‘newcomer’ in English. Bronsky chooses a gender-neutral first name and a last name with a long and rich historical background of Jewish migration from and to Germany, giving the character a socio-culturally diverse identity comprising of at least three cultures (Jewish, Soviet/Russian, and German). Of all common Jewish names in Russia, such as ‘Rosenbaum’ and ‘Berkowitsch’, Bronsky chooses a name with significant meaning—Naimann, a ‘newcomer’ with a different and alternative form of identity. Possibly, Bronsky’s own mysterious identity glimpses through Sascha’s character—a newcomer in the literary world, who writes under a pen-name. Nonetheless, Bronsky introduces Sascha:

Ich heiÙe Sascha Naimann. Ich bin kein Kerl, auch wenn das hierzulande jeder denkt, der meinen Namen hört. Ich habe aufgehört zu zählen, wie oft ich das den Leuten schon erklärt habe. Sascha ist eine Kurzform von Alexander UND von Alexandra. Ich bin Alexandra. Mein Rufname ist Sascha, so hat mich meine Mutter immer genannt, und so will ich auch heißen. Wenn ich mit Alexandra angesprochen werde, reagiere ich nicht. (Ibid., 9)

Apart from the significance of forming a hybrid identity through the first and last names, Bronsky addresses also the reverse in gender roles through physical

²¹⁵ The origin and the variations of the name Naimann (Niemann, Neumann, Naumann) are described under the following website: <<http://www.naumann.de/index.php?cl=1&id=20040726141918>>; however, the name Naimann is a common Jewish Ashkenazi and in Yiddish it is equivalent of German Neumann, which in English translation means ‘newcomer’. Source: <http://genealogy.familyeducation.com/surname-origin/naiman#ixzz39wK8NA73>

transformation: a simple short haircut, as portrayed in the following excerpt, has a tremendous impact on the performance of femininity:

Streng genommen sah sie jetzt aus wie ein Junge, ein hübscher Junge mit sehr kurzen Haaren. ... Es musste Entsetzen sein, denn welches Mädchen wollte schon wie ein Junge aussehen? Aber ein bisschen Entsetzen konnte diesem Kind nicht schaden, fand ich. Ich irrte mich: Aminat war begeistert. Sie fand es toll wie ein Junge auszusehen. Sie beschloss jetzt, einer zu werden. Wenn ich geahnt hätte, dass der Haarschnitt diese Wirkung haben würde, hätte ich es mir noch mal überlegt. (Ibid., 104-105)

Not only did Aminat find the atypical appearance for a girl stunning, but by stating that “[s]ie beschloss jetzt, einer zu werden” suggests an alteration in gendered identity. Her conscious decision to become a ‘boy’ shows her strong criticism of the construction of social norms for females and males (Ibid., 105). Other acts of deviation from the socio-cultural norms for women is illustrated in Sascha’s rebellious way of rejecting all norms of femininity by consciously performing acts only acceptable of the opposite sex: “Und Frauen, die rauchen, fandest du vulgär, und ich habe mehrmals versucht, mir deinetwegen das Rauchen anzugewöhnen, allerdings wurde mir immer schlecht davon” (*Scherbenpark* 202).

The crossing of the socially constructed roles and ascribed images for man and women is evident also in Aminat and Sascha’s altered psychological states. Bronsky addresses the typical and socially accepted mental attributes which guide

one's decision making. For example, women employ their 'feelings', whereas men exercise 'logic' and are rational beings.

Meine Mutter hatte darüber gelacht und gesagt, dass ich ihr unheimlich bin. Ich war ihr schon immer unheimlich, weil ich logischer dachte als sie. Sie war zwar nicht dumm, aber viel zu gefühlsvoll. ... Aber Mathe, Physik, Chemie, das konnte sie nie. Ebenso wenig wie erkennen, wann es Zeit ist, einen Mann vor die Tür zu setzen. Das sind alles Fähigkeiten, die ich offenbar von meinem Vater habe. (Ibid., 10, 11)

While biologically female, Sascha's state of mind is not guided by feelings but by reason, which Bronsky equates with the mastering in the subjects of science. The gender associated problematic, therefore, derives directly from the very issue of the mindset of women—women would be capable of changing their position if they were to eradicate the borders between 'feeling' and 'thinking', and Bronsky does so by creating Sascha's character and setting her apart from all other female characters in the novel.

Deviation from social standards set for women and men is further illustrated in Sascha's refusal to conform to the ideal of female beauty. When a young man remarks on Sascha's physical appearance by saying: "Du bist so dünn ... Wahnsinn. Das gefällt mir total. Wie machst du das?", she thinks to herself: "Indem ich vergesse zu essen, denke ich verärgert. Nicht etwa, um dir zu gefallen" (Ibid., 221). Sascha not only rejects a man's approval or admiration for her 'female' beauty, but such an

observation stirs a feeling of anger in her and suggests her refusal from representing any images of femininity.

Furthermore, Sascha's interests set her further apart from the man's perception of a woman. During a conversation about politics, Sascha surprises a young German man with her knowledge on the topic, who then responds to her by saying:

»Du redest so komisch«, sagt er dann. »Wieso, habe ich einen Akzent?« »Was? Nein, natürlich nicht. Ich meine das, was du sagst. Ist ziemlich schräg. Wählst du die Grünen, oder was?« Er spricht das sehr besorgt aus. Wahrscheinlich würde er es leichter akzeptieren, wenn ich ein verkleideter Mann wäre. (Ibid., 227)

Sascha's first reaction to his perplexed observation of her speech is understood as a linguistic aspect, because for her, representing the progressive young woman, she would not limit her interests to the private sphere only, but rather expands her horizons and crosses social borders between the constructed norms for men and women. She elucidates the issue inherent in persistent, gender specific differences when describing the man's mental limitation by his lack of ability to have an alternative image of a woman he encounters. Bronsky's criticism of the construction of the 'woman' and her depiction of a radical deviation from such an idea corresponds precisely with Butler's statement on gender construction:

If one "is" a woman, that is, surely not all one is; the term fails to be exhaustive, not because a pregendered "person" transcends the specific paraphernalia of its gender, but because gender is not always

constituted coherently in different historical contexts, and because gender intersects with racial, ethnic, sexual, and regional modalities of discursively constituted identities. As a result, it becomes impossible to separate out 'gender' from the political and cultural intersection in which it is invariably produced and maintained. (Butler 4-5)

Furthermore, Bronsky examines discourses of sexuality, examining sexually aggressive behavior which is deemed appropriate across gender lines. For example, in an intimate scene between Sascha and the young German man, Sascha tries to initiate love making, yet his reaction to her 'aggressive' approach takes him aback: "»Ddddas geht mir ein bisschen schnell«, sagt er. »Ich kann nicht einfach so gleich.« »Nicht? Wie viel Zeit brauchst du?« »Oh Mann. So jemanden wie dich habe ich ja noch nie getroffen«" (*Scherbenpark* 223). By stating that the character had never met someone like her before, the novel shows her progressive attitude towards sex, illustrating an unconventional image of a woman on the one side, but on the other side Bronsky reveals the deeply anchored mindset of the traditional roles for men and women when she continues: "»Ich finde es bloß komisch, dass wir uns so gar nicht kennen«, sagt dieser andere, falsche, blonde Volker, und es klingt recht gequält. »Es ist irgendwie nicht normal«" (*Scherbenpark* 224). For him and within his society, it appears to be uncommon or not within the 'normal' behavior for a woman to pursue an unconstrained sexual experience.

Finally, possibly the most vivid and explicit illustration of a gender-neutral or gender-free individual is portrayed in Sascha's response towards her aunt's observation of her lack of interest in men by stating: "»Ich habe es mir ja schon

gedacht«, sagt Maria und rückt näher, um mir in die Augen zu sehen. »Du hast ja was gegen Männer. Ist vielleicht auch besser mit Frauen. Hauptsache, man hat jemand«», to which Sascha responds: “»Was?« schrie ich. »Es ist nicht so eine Art von Freundin! Ich bin doch nicht lesbisch! Leider nicht! Ich bin gar nichts!«” (Ibid., 92). Stating that she is ‘precisely nothing’ in regards to her sexual identity also indicates her strong rejection of the persistent performative roles that create and define one’s identity, and as Butler refers to the *performativity* as “not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual, which achieves its effect through its naturalization in the context of a body, understood, in part, as a culturally sustained temporal duration” (Butler Preface xv). Sascha’s interests in conforming to the societal classification of a man and a woman are entirely absent, and she creates her own unique hybrid identity by adopting the typical physical and psychological characteristics of the ‘male’ and rejecting any traditional notion of femininity.

Bronsky’s depiction of Russian-speaking women of the third generation is one in which women try to distance themselves from traditional images that define womanhood and develop an alternative gendered identity, resulting from intercultural encounters. Through the constant evaluation and re-evaluation of self and other, not only among the same sexes, but more importantly between male and female members of the society, the young Russian-speaking women no longer belong to either one or the other socio-cultural group and create a subgroup of intercultural and inter-gendered beings.

Although Aminat and Sascha show a greater indication of integration through acculturation in Germany neither one of them remains in Germany or becomes

involved with a German or a Russian-speaking man. In fact, just like Salomé's *Fenitschka*, the culturally and gender hybrid female in Bronsky's texts searches for identification with culturally different individuals: Anmat moves to Canada and marries a Canadian of East-Indian descent, while Sascha's intent is to search in Prague for a place with more balance culturally, socially, and mentally between the Eastern and Western societies.

Conclusion

The first part of Chapter 5 provides examples of Russian-speaking immigrants' economic, social, and cultural position within modern German society. Through the explicit and detailed illustrations of the Russian-speaking immigrant situation in Germany, Bronsky participates in the socio-cultural discourse on immigration, integration and interculturality in contemporary Germany and questions the German governmental and societal approach and attitude towards minority groups. As Bronsky illustrates, for many Russian-speaking members of the German society the reasons for immigration from the former Soviet Union to Germany were based primarily on the pursuit of economic security as well as favorable social prospects for future generations; however, the immigrants' lack in German linguistic ability hindered not only their integration into the society and, therefore, their chances to advance economically, but negatively affected the immigrants' psychological state. Especially, the physical and social segregation of immigrants had serious psychological ramifications, which manifests itself in Bronsky's novels in the form of violence, fear, abnormal behavior in children, resignation, loss of identity as well as lack or a complete absence of cultural, social, economic capital. Nonetheless,

Bronsky proposes a solution to the immigration and integration question by providing examples of proper and effective acculturation through an open and constant interaction between the Russian-speaking and German members of the society.

The subsequent Part II focuses on the various male and female gender roles within the Russian/Soviet and German societies and on the unique identity formation of young female Russian-speaking immigrants in Germany. To accurately depict these young women's deviation not only from the traditional Russian/Soviet roles, but also from those in Germany, Bronsky presents differing male gender roles within both societies and their psychological influence on these women. Furthermore, while gender roles from German and Russian/Soviet societies diverge greatly, the cultural difference has a much greater impact of their identity. As a result, the young female individuals develop an intercultural gendered hybrid identity while physically residing in Germany; yet, both female characters in question search for a more physical place of belonging. Out of the rejection of both communities, these individuals seek an alternative. Sascha chooses to move to Prague, to a location culturally placed between the West and the East, and Aminat immigrates even further westward—to Canada.

As an intercultural writer, Bronsky composes her novels from an intercultural '*positionality*' that is influenced by two cultures—moving between and within the Soviet/Russian and German cultures without following any known writing style and addressing past and current social and cultural issues that transcend the former Russian/Soviet and contemporary German societies. Bronsky also writes under a pen name, giving her neither an identity nor placing her into a category—similar to her

younger female characters Sascha and Aminat, the name creates a hybrid cultural identity.

Conclusion

This dissertation examined the gender and intercultural hybrid identity formation presented in the works of two Russian-German female authors Lou Andreas-Salomé (1861-1937) and Alina Bronsky (1978-). Salomé and Bronsky's texts were examined through various interdisciplinary methodologies. The theories of cultural studies, German cultural studies, intercultural studies, feminist and gender studies scholars were utilized. This research fills void in the academic body of knowledge concerning the German-Russian constructs of Russia and 'Russianness'. This knowledge was derived through an examination of constructs of German identity from a Russian-German perspective based on questions of gender and immigration.

Prior to this research, no academic discussion was present on the comparison of Salomé's texts *Fenitschka* (1898), *Russland mit Rainer* (1900), and *Rodinka* (1923), with the Bronsky's novels *Scherbenpark* (2008) and *Die schärfsten Gerichte der tatarischen Küche* (2010). The importance of this comparison is that it illustrates the changing attitude of Germans towards Russians that greatly deviates from what scholars thus far have presented regarding Russian-German identity. The specific texts by Salomé and Bronsky were chosen for this study due to the authors' similar cultural backgrounds and the intercultural subject matter presented in each text. Through the analysis of these works, similar perspectives on cultures and intercultural encounters, the perception of the 'self' and 'Others' and the characters' struggles with integration into a foreign society were identified. A significant finding of the study was that the complexity of 'Otherness' is the result of more than a one-sided exertion

of a single, national, patriarchal power on a gendered or ethnic minority. This project questioned the traditional definition of culture, normally that of the majority and looked beyond its geo-political borders, by expanding research on gender and national identities to a global level.

This analysis examined fictional literature in conjunction with autobiographical texts and revealed the authors' various perceptions of Russian and German culture. By applying cultural studies methodologies, the project evaluated and revealed that these Russian-German female authors demonstrate a similar perception of 'self' and 'Others.' The project offered an alternative concept for Russian-German identities and questioned the hegemonic constructs of 'Germanness'. By examining this alternative concept through various discourses, such as class, ethnicity, language, and the construction of intercultural and gendered identity, the traditional understanding of 'monoculturality' was deconstructed.

This project looked at narratives of national belonging and the differing roles assigned to women in German and Russian society. Furthermore, by revealing these culturally differentiated constructs of gender and nationality, the project was able to demonstrate how living between these nationalities enabled the authors to create intercultural German-Russian identities. This research considered texts representative of those written by female authors with hybrid identities who focus on crossing cultural and social boundaries. This focus enabled a demonstration and documentation of the gender role deviations of Russian-German women. The creation of protagonists with intercultural identities allowed the authors to construct a third Russian-German identity that challenged the simplistic duality of 'German'

(understood as ‘self’) versus ‘Russian’ (understood as ‘Others’) which has a twofold importance. The research makes clear the shortcomings in the canonical categorization of Salomé as being ‘just German’ and it questions the popular, contemporary categorization of Bronsky as being ‘just Russian,’ or foreign.

The deconstruction of traditional constructs of ‘Germanness’ was best aided by elucidating the interplay of these texts with discourses of gender and immigration, which revealed not only the importance of Russian-German identity but also a century of contentious German-Russian political relations. In order to identify the perception of self and ‘Others’, the project focused on the German and Russian/Soviet political and cultural relationship across the twentieth century and demonstrated how these political factors might have influenced mainstream German perception of the Russian ‘Other’.

Although political relations between Russia and German have been at times peaceful, the beginning of WWII saw a souring of their political bond which influenced mainstream perception of Germans in Russia by both the Russians and the Germans, resulting in the discrimination and deportation of thousands of Russian-Germans during WWII. The intolerance against Germans within the Soviet territory diminished towards the end of the twentieth century, German mainstream society still showed a biased attitude towards the Russians in general. This study suggests that the ambiguous and ambivalent political and economic relationship between the East and the West influenced the perception of Russians in Germany and Germans in Russia.

This project’s focus on the dynamics of German and Russian political relations across the century makes it a unique contribution to Russian-German

studies, which has traditionally focused on categorizing Russian-German's as a 'minority' hybrid German identity formation. Also, this study's aim is to challenge categories of 'Germanness' and 'Otherness' by looking at Russian-German identity before World War II and then after the collapse of the Soviet Union. This project's analysis suggests that Russian-German identity differs from other minority identities in Germany. The politically influenced perception and gender discourses reveal that Russian-German female identity exists as a construct which deviates considerably from Russian and German constructs of femininity. The exceptionality of this construct of femininity allowed the authors to interrogate not only women's struggles and roles within German and Russian society, but it also enabled them to shed new light on global issues concerning women's rights. In the case of Salomé, her unique Russian-German take on the *Frauenfrage* caused her to deviate from the traditional agenda of her contemporary German women's rights activists. The project's intercultural textual approach exposed Salomé's assertion that women, often in conjunction with men, can create and perpetuate gendered constructs which hinder women's emancipation.

For example, in *Fenitschka* Salomé illustrates progressive female and male characters who reject participation in the traditional societal practices. The protagonist's 'positionality' on these social issues demonstrates evidence of Salomé's own 'positionality' as socio-culturally different. Through Fenitschka's character, a Russian-German living and integrating into German and Swiss societies, Salomé shows the difficulty for a Russian-German to identify with traditional gender norms established in either Russian or German societies. Instead, Fenitschka identifies with

a character of a different culture (French) and class (working class)—the grisette, demonstrating the protagonist's progressive attitude towards women's liberation. Due to her intercultural worldview, Fenitschka was more readily able to identify with someone of a different nationality and class, indicative of the complexity of the challenges facing women. In contrast, some of Salomé's contemporaries portrayed a more black-and-white battle between women, constructed as bourgeois or the upper-class, and men of the same economic class.

Additionally, Salomé questioned the concept of a gendered identity constructed by the society and offers an alternative to the traditional upbringing by letting Fenitschka's father, despite being a man be the sole parent responsible for her informal education. The male influence of her father and the lack of a 'female role model' in the absence of a mother led to a more liberal approach towards interacting with different genders, and allowed her to view men as equals. Through her illustration of how all people, regardless of biological gender are able to be equal, Salomé shows that social and cultural ideas of gender are constructs and not biological factors.

Salomé's non-traditional upbringing was not only influenced by the dominance of male authority during her formative years as her extensive travels throughout Europe and in Russia formed her unusual '*positionality*' toward socio-cultural questions. Salomé's intercultural interests were not limited to engagement with women's issues as she also became increasingly fascinated in rediscovering her Russian cultural roots. Salomé demonstrated this by her creation of a character who became intercultural through cultural exposure to the collective memory of Germans

in Russia. Salomé's interest in the psychological effects of an intercultural upbringing were elucidated most succinctly through this project's analysis of her novel *Rodinka*, studied alongside her autobiographical work. Salomé shared similar experience as her German characters in *Rodinka*—a feeling of a loss of home ('Heimat'/'Родина') and its rediscovery during encounters with Russia and its people. A reader familiar with Salomé's background might even mistake the author for her fictional protagonist. This study was designed to identify the ways in which the author's intercultural hybrid identity played a role in both her own and her character's deviation from traditional German and Russian social norms. This was accomplished through an analysis of her journal and with her novel *Rodinka*, revealing her perceptions of the Russian people and their culture, and of various minority cultures and ethnic groups within Russia.

In both texts, she distinguishes between Eastern and Western ideologies and discusses the Western presence in Russia and the Russian multicultural society. Within her journal and the novel, Salomé incorporates a discourse on German colonists in Russia in the Volga region. This study focused on Salomé's encounters with Russian culture and its people in terms of psychological acculturation and provided indications of her integration through acculturation into Russian culture. Some of the indications included her depictions of Russia as her homeland and her incorporating the Russian language throughout her journal, including her use of Russian idioms in *Rodinka*.

The study of her non-literary and poetic work illustrated how this journal exemplified Salomé's unique acculturation with Russian culture. The rediscovery of

Salomé's childhood upon her return to Russia in 1900 was examined to understand the roots of Salomé's progressiveness and tolerance towards other cultures as well as her wish to live among the Russians. Although Salomé viewed Russia and its people from a nostalgic point of view and from the vantage point of a privileged upper-class white woman, she was careful to note this 'positionality' and recognize her biases when viewing Russian culture. Salomé's perception of Russia was integral for the creation of the intercultural hybrid identity portrayed by her characters. Also, of importance to this study was Salomé's search for a psychological and geographic location called *Heimat*, and the discovery of new psychological thoughts and ideas as a result of these struggles. By examining the journals in comparison to the novel, this investigation revealed how Salomé's creation of fictional, alternative national and cultural identities led to the development of cross-cultural concepts concerning the importance of location and geography in identity formation.

In much the same way that Salomé's works provide great insight into Russian-German hybrid identity from studying Russian culture, Bronsky's works allow the same to be understood from a study of German culture. The project aimed to investigate in how far Bronsky deconstructs the traditional German notions of 'Otherness' through a comparison of discourses between Soviet interculturality and anti-Semitism. By utilizing Stuart Hall's concepts of hybrid identity, this project examined how Russian, Tatar, German and Jewish cultures converged to create Soviet culture. The investigation of intercultural exchange in Bronsky's novels, focusing on the perception of 'self' and 'Others', is revealed through the analysis of the interaction between Russian-speaking immigrants and Germans in Germany. The

study further contains an analysis of Bronsky's deconstruction and reconstruction of the notion of 'Otherness' through the use of language.

My project determined that Bronsky revealed the socio-cultural issues facing minorities' in both the Soviet Union and Germany. It looked at how members of cultural minorities in Soviet culture tried and failed to maintain their unique cultural heritage, which frequently led to emigration. This discussion provided an alternative and new understanding of a Soviet inner socio-political nature, in which minorities were discriminated according to their culture and ethnicity. In this chapter, Bronsky's depictions of anti-Semitism within mainstream Soviet society was examined, revealing that persistent anti-Semitism led to Jewish peoples' immigration to Israel and the Western nations.

Additionally, the project examined Bronsky's representation of the unfortunate Soviet economic conditions of the 1980s after the collapse of the Soviet Union, connecting it to discourses of political and physical violence and individuals' fear of authority. However, both her positive depictions of the German culture and the negative socio-cultural norms and practices are contrasted with the Soviet Union. An important subject matter of the Neo-Nazi movement within a multicultural contemporary German society is further investigated. Bronsky suggests that although Germany has moved toward a multicultural society, the xenophobia is still present within German society and more must be done to move toward a peaceful and friendly interaction between the immigrants and the members of the host society.

Also integral to the comparison of the authors was Bronsky's depiction of the integration of immigrants and intercultural and gendered identity development in her

novels. Specifically, this project examined the aspects of Bronsky's descriptions of failed integration processes and identified her, the author's, intent to promote acculturation through increased and meaningful interaction between immigrants and natively born German citizens. This study looked at how acculturation plays a role in the development of intercultural, hybrid identities and investigated the social, cultural and economic reasons for immigration from the former Soviet Union to Germany, revealing the serious ramifications of segregation and its affect on immigrants' psychological conditions.

Just as Salomé portrayed differing types of integration and assimilation in her novella *Fenitschka*, Bronsky's novel centered on discourses of integration processes, expanding this topic to encompass its effects on Russian-speaking immigrants in Germany. The analysis of these contemporary texts demonstrated how the lack of linguistic ability hindered the successful integration of Russian-speaking immigrants within Germany. It is clear that a lack of proper language skills by the immigrants was detrimental to their economic capital and resulted in poverty and social and physical segregation. The study also exposed a correlation between the segregation of immigrants and their psychological state, revealing psychological illnesses in immigrant characters, ranging from depression to the use psychological and physical violence.

Through her portrayal of immigrants' struggles throughout immigration and integration, Bronsky exposed the failed integration of the Russian-speaking immigrants in Germany. Bronsky examines issues of integration in contemporary society from a unique point of view, by presenting the correlation between limited

German language skills and access to social, cultural, and economic capital. Most importantly, this study was able to show how she presents in her texts a solution for reducing the tension and division between the immigrant and host societies' members by advocating the need for both sides to acculturate.

The analysis of *Scherbenpark* and *Die schärfsten Gerichte der Tatarischen Küche* deconstructed socio-culturally influenced male and female images in Russian/Soviet and contemporary German societies, demonstrating Bronsky's attempt to construct a female character with an intercultural gendered identity. By juxtaposing the images of the Russian and German male characters, Bronsky shows a distinct difference in the socio-cultural gender roles. Her concluded differences were further reinforced through the investigation of Russian-speaking women's perception of gender norms and their attempts to define and re-define their own identity as intercultural women living in accordance with both socio-cultural norms. Bronsky further proposes an alternative way to cope with the integration of individuals with differing cultural backgrounds through her portrayal of female characters with intercultural, gendered identities. However, this study revealed that despite attempts at integration through acculturation, many young Russian-speaking female immigrants are negatively affected by the integration process and show evidence of deviation from traditional definitions of femininity in both Germany and Russia. Rather, these women develop an interculturally gendered hybrid identity such as adopt certain characteristics of Western male gender roles.

Both authors challenge social constructs of gender and deviate from gendered roles within the cultures and societies which formed the settings of their fictional

works. This intercultural individuals' deviation from traditional roles is particularly experienced by young Russian-speaking immigrant women. Through the challenges of integration through assimilation and the constant cultural exchange between Germans and Soviet/Russians, the young intercultural woman abandons social norms of both societies and seeks the third—Salomé's and Bronsky's young female characters transcend and break away from the "norm(al)". Both authors' texts show evidence of how gender roles in German and Russian/Soviet societies diverge and how these cultural differences have a significant impact on their identity.

Despite the fact that Salomé and Bronsky lived almost one century apart and came from different social classes, their subject matter and the discourses they present in these selected texts are strikingly similar. As intercultural writers, Salomé and Bronsky write from a 'positionality' that is influenced by two or more cultures and both show evidence of moving between and within Soviet/Russian and German cultures addressing past and current social and cultural issues that transcend mere international political relations. Both Salomé and Bronsky present young female characters searching for a psychological and physical location to belong and show their development in the intercultural gendered hybrid identities which deviate from traditional gender constructs, moving instead toward an acceptance of male and female roles from both Russian/Soviet and German societies. While Salomé's Russian-German Fenitschka longs to take the role of the grisette in France, Bronsky's Russian-speaking Sascha seeks to move from Germany to the Czech Republic and her Aminat moves further to the West, from Germany to Canada. These female characters

find neither a place in Germany nor in Russia but in a third culturally, socially and geographically different place.

This project set out to examine Russian-speaking female authors with Russian and German cultural backgrounds and extricate possible patterns in their writings about Russia and Germany. The scope of this study was to compare the selected texts, with a focus on intercultural women writing about women with a similar cultural background, allowing for a more nuanced analysis of the intricacies involved in identifying truly intercultural texts and in the psychology of intercultural identity formulation. Based on these texts, the project ascertained how, despite a century of separation, women of Russian-German background regardless of class experienced very similar social and cultural hardships.

Such determinations could lead to further studies focusing on the examination of works by male authors of the same cultural background, questioning the ways their texts might differ from female authored texts, and whether or not the male characters exhibit similar struggles and/or develop intercultural identities, retain their Russian identities, or assimilate with German culture. How would these texts relate to male authored texts about Russian-Germans in Germany? To what extent would the gender of a male author from a similar socio-cultural background play a role in the development of the authors' 'positionality'? Also, a comparison of these texts and the texts by other intercultural female writers in Germany would reveal whether other intercultural women seek a 'third' space as it is evident in Salomé's and Bronsky's work.

It is their intercultural experience that makes these two authors and their characters unique—their experience living as ‘ethnically’ Germans in Russia and then being newly ostracized in Germany for being considered Russian. These authors did not belong to either nation, searching instead for the alternative, the third—neither Russian nor German—deviating from both countries’ social norms for women, developing an identity toward the hybridity and away from the traditional women’s roles. Not only the fact that they are intercultural, but the negative perception of Germans in Russia and Russians in Germany allowed them to deviate from both societies and their norms.

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