

# SEEING 'RED' (ORANGE IS THE NEW BLACK) – RUSSIAN WOMEN, US HOMONATIONALISM AND NEW COLD WAR CULTURES /

M. KATHARINA WIEDLACK

**Abstract:** This article investigates visual, bodily, and cultural representations of Russian women in public media and takes the TV character 'Red' from the popular American TV show *Orange Is the New Black* (OITNB) as an example. The central points of discussion are the figure's racialisation and culturalisation. This article analyses how Red's body, mindset, and character are produced as Russian against the background of contemporary new Cold War discourses. It argues that Red is staged as a racialised Russian other, through the emphasis on her gendered heterosexual body, within a sexually and racially diverse group of imprisoned Americans in the show. Moreover, her presentation within such a diverse group also serves to present or confirm the US nation as liberal, sexually diverse, and modern by contrasting it with Red's strongly gendered and heterosexual body, which appears old-fashioned and from the past (also depicted as the Russian present). Referring to recent literature on the exotification and othering of Eastern European and Russian women as well as works on ethnicity and whiteness in the USA, this article is situated at the intersection of considerations of the specific racialisation of Eastern female bodies and queer and feminist discourses.

**Key words:** heterosexuality, Cold War Culture, national identity, homonationalism

Wiedlack, M. Katharina. 2016. „Seeing 'Red' (Orange Is the New Black) – Russian Women, US Homonationalism and New Cold War Cultures.“ *Gender, rovné příležitosti, výzkum*, Vol. 17, No. 1: 29-40, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.13060/12130028.2016.17.1.253>

Since around 2010, and especially in 2013 and 2014, there has been a noticeable rise in the number of Russian characters in North American TV shows. It is no coincidence that this general increase coincides with the popular recent adaptations of superhero comics (especially Marvel and DC comics), which can be read as signalling the emergence of new Cold War Culture (Whitfield 1996; Sakwa 2008) discourses in this film genre. While such discourses are evidently transposing past Cold War Cultures into the new millennium, they have not simply adopted the conservatism, misogyny and homophobia of the 1950s that largely defined its mindset, but have instead adapted them to neoliberalism in interesting ways. Most series introduce Russian characters alongside many other strong heroines and female, lesbian and transgender characters – for instance, in *Gotham* (Fox 2014), *Orange Is the New Black* (Netflix 2013), or in the Canadian series *Lost Girl* (Showcase 2010) and *Orphan Black* (BBC America/Bell Media 2013). Often, especially in series that have been interpreted as leaning towards feminism, the Russian characters are sympathetic towards emancipated women, lesbians and transgender persons, or show traits of female emancipation themselves. However, they are clearly distinct from the latter group, as they remain unmistakably and primarily marked by their ethnicity. This ethnic difference is signified by physical appearance, language, behaviour, and sexuality. Stereotypical representations of Russianness are created by underscoring the difference from US Americanness and Westernness, which in turn is –

although certainly not exclusively – marked by gender and sexual fluidity.

My article investigates visual, bodily, and cultural representations of Russian women in public media using the example of the character 'Red' in the popular US TV show *Orange Is the New Black* (OITNB). I will read the figure's racialisation and culturalisation against the backdrop of contemporary New Cold War discourses, with special attention to aspects of homonationalism (Puar 2007, 2013). Reviewing recent literature on the exotification and othering of Eastern European and Russian women, I point to the shortcomings of contemporary intersectional queer and feminist theory to analyse the specific racialisation of subjects and groups within north/western popular culture discourses. The literature on oppressive structures aimed at 'non-western geographical others' often utilises the analytical tools, language, and categories developed in postcolonial and critical whiteness theories. Although such usage is appropriate at some points, it often leads to problematic analogies being drawn between the experience and realities of racialisation of Eastern Europeans and people of colour (e.g. Parvulescu 2014), classifying the specific points of identification of othering and racialisation of all Eastern European women as being perceived or appearing as 'not quite white'. This downplays the hegemonic privilege of whiteness on the one hand, and creates invisibility for non-western bodily difference on the other. While others interpret racialised representations of Russian TV characters

as a form of sexualisation (e.g. Williams 2012), they continue to ignore the ways in which racialisation, sexualisation, and gendering are manifested in the characters' bodies. Here I am opening up a critical discussion of works on female non-western bodies to develop a more nuanced understanding of the construction of bodily difference that also considers factors such as style, body language, bodily affect, and representations of class. Following Robert Kulpa and Joanna Mizielińska (2011), as well as Larry Wolff (1994) and Iver Neumann (1996), I question the ambivalence of the "Western" structural enclosing of [the Eastern body] in toxically imbalanced relations of passivity and (expectations of) activity' (Kulpa and Mizielińska 2012: 23). Moreover, I critically discuss how presumptions of backwardness, traditionalism, and passivity that are oriented towards a hegemonic western model that increasingly uses pictures and ideas of queer sexuality and gender as a barometer for measuring the degree of modernity (Puar 2013) that characters from the TV series embody and personify.

### **North/Western Homonationalism and the Construction of Eastern European Bodies**

Wolff (1994) and Neumann (1996) were among the first to argue that the foundation of the contemporary cultural signification of Russia was not established through the Cold War but actually through the Enlightenment's invention of Eastern Europe as a cultural and intellectual construction in order to establish and stabilise the notion of western superiority and development. Within this framework, philosophers signified Eastern Europe, including Russia, as a paradox of difference and similarity, and situated it in between western European civilisation and the 'barbarian Orient'. The Enlightenment's notions of Russia are still valid today (Baer 2002; Stella 2015), although the very idea of what modernity and enlightenment mean today has indeed changed. The queer and postcolonial scholar best known for identifying the transformation of contemporary ideas of enlightenment, modernity, progress, and civilisation in the US context is Jasbir Puar (2007, 2013). Puar argues that the changes in the relationship between sexuality, the state, and capitalism within the global north/west transformed or actualised the concepts of civilisation, progress, and modernity. Although the narrative of progress is still the culturally predominant mode of signifying a state, nation or region and its population, it has changed insofar as it now includes an aspiration to gay rights. This narrative shift, however, 'is thus built on the back of racialized others, for whom such progress was once achieved, but is now backsliding or has yet to arrive' (Puar 2007: 337). In other words, the positive progressive attitude is constructed in opposition to racialised populations, who allegedly threaten its endurance. Racialised subjects become signified by their heritage, their racialisation, and their presumably 'different' values. Brian Baer (2002) and Francesca Stella (2015) equally identify the discursive field of (homo)sexuality as a place where ideas of

western progress and values are proliferated and Russians are rendered 'other'. They criticise earlier work on Russian sexualities as functioning as contemporary renditions of the Enlightenment development paradigm. Such representations situate Russia 'on the periphery of Western Europe' (Baer 2002: 502), which appears modern because of its seemingly 'egalitarian sexuality (the global gay)' (ibid.).

The othering of Eastern Europeans and Russians can be found in a variety of contexts including analyses of individual and national sexualities, academia, or LGBTIQ activism. While western hegemonic institutions like the EU or the UN frequently attend to positive changes in gender equality and sexual citizenship rights, they just as frequently evaluate the success (or failure) of a country's modernisation or transition (Stella 2015; Binnie 2004; Binnie and Klesse 2013; Kulpa and Mizielińska 2012). Puar developed the conceptual framework of 'homonationalism' to narrate how "acceptance" and "tolerance" for gay and lesbian subjects have become a barometer by which the right to and capacity for national sovereignty is evaluated' (Puar 2007: 4) in the new millennium. She understands homonationalism, as implemented by the US and other north/western states (including Israel), as 'a facet of modernity and a historical shift marked by the entrance of (some) homosexual bodies as worthy of protection by nation-states' (Puar 2013: 337). Within homonationalism, 'western-style gay liberation' (Stella 2015: 138) and gender equality 'represent ... the high point of modernity' (Binnie 2004: 85); accordingly, gays and lesbians are put forth as visible signs of modernity and progress. Although Puar developed her concept to understand how US xenophobia and Islamophobia structure racialised Muslim subjects as terrorist subjects, and are used to delegitimise their cultural and territorial environment, the mechanisms of othering and delegitimation through identifying and rejecting homophobia in 'the other' is not dependent on or restricted to Islamophobia. Fred LeBlanc shows the ways in which public discourses in the US and the UK idealise 'the West ... as progressive and liberal against a foreign culture, in this case Russia, despite the inability for some Western states to extend full rights to LGBT subjects' (LeBlanc 2013: 7) with Puar as homonationalist. In his close reading of US and UK national debates in the wake of the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics, he argues that LGBTIQ activists and public figures presented the US and the UK as 'gay-friendly, tolerant, and sexually liberated' societies and enacted 'pro-national, pro-Western, and anti-Othering scripts that continually (re)produce the [Russian] Other as intolerant, sexually repressed, and uncivilized' (ibid.). LeBlanc<sup>1</sup> goes so far as to say that 'in 2013 Russian homophobia seems to have momentarily trumped Arab homophobia in the media's discussion' (LeBlanc 2013: 7). Understanding the current production of Russia and Russians as anti-modern through the gay rights lens, as homonationalism suggests, opens up the homonationalist concept to white othering or, in other words, to detaching its understanding

of racialisation from a marker that is necessarily coloured. Understanding homonationalism as a modern-day version of Newmann's and Wolff's Enlightenment paradigm where Russia is positioned in between the enlightened civilised north/west and the backward racialised Orient, we can understand how current discourses cement Russian bodies as in transition, leaning towards backwardness, and paints the Russian nation as being authoritarian and anti-modern. Although Russian citizens are increasingly understood as conservative and backward, accusations of homophobia are mostly reserved for the state. Russians are not necessarily or automatically understood to be homophobic, but their sexuality is nevertheless implicitly understood as traditional, which means heterosexual. Western homonationalism simply confirms the Enlightenment's designation of Russian bodies as premodern, which includes premodern – or traditional – sexuality. Current (new) Cold War discourses feed into the Enlightenment legacy of north/western imaginations of Eastern Europe and Russia and its population (Wolff 1994; Neumann 1996). The nationalist media storm that took place inside Russia aimed at propagating Putin and the nation as potent, strong, masculine, heterosexual, and virile has strongly affected the western imaginary. In her book on President Putin and masculinity, Valerie Sperling (2014) shows how the Russian media have successfully portrayed Putin as a white masculine sexually potent heterosexual hero in an effort to bolster national pride and successfully construct the Russian nation as strong, masculine, virile, and powerful, while at the same time promoting procreation as a solution to Russia's demographic crisis. Russia's national project was very greatly supported within western media, especially in the US. *Forbes* magazine crowned Putin as number one in its list of the world's most powerful people in 2015, and news media and magazines from the *New York Times* (Keller 2013) to *The New Yorker* (Remnick 2014) have noted both Putin's and Russia's antidemocratic masculine power. *The Financial Post* called him the 'greatest leader since the magnificent czars of the 17<sup>th</sup> century' (Solomon 2012) and CBS even posted a series of 33 pictures of 'Putin doing manly things' (CBS 2015) on their website. The increasing belief in Russia's (heterosexual) male power corresponds with Russians' self-image of 'their nation as universally, naturally, and purely heterosexual' (Haeley 2001: 253). The (new) Cold War vision of Russia as an autocratic, strong, and threatening power exists alongside notions of in-betweenness and development that simultaneously depict the region and its people as effeminate. These two contrasting visions, however, both share an understanding of Russia and Russians as heterosexual and oppositional to homosexuality.

### **Eastern European and Russian Female Bodies on Screen**

Heterosexuality also plays a significant role in the construction of Russian, and more generally Eastern European, women. Although most of the existing literature

that accounts for the othering of Eastern European and Russian women comes from north/western, especially US and North American, media focus on the construction of gender, this over-sexualisation of Eastern European women is frequently mentioned in other works, such as Valentina Glajar's and Domnica Radulescu's anthology *Vampirettes, Wretches and Amazons: Western Representations of East European Women* (2004). Heightened heterosexuality is stressed as a component in at least two of the three basic ways in which Slavic women (as white people from remote European areas) are depicted in post-1991 film, which Roumiana Deltcheva identifies as 'the scrupulous slut, the conniving trickster, and the helpless victim' (Deltcheva 2004: 164). Each of these three stereotypes 'carr[ies] distinct negative connotations that, in their totality, reinforce the idea of Otherness as negation: negation of voice, negation of space, negation of experience' (Deltcheva 2004: 181). Kimberly Williams (2012) similarly notes that 'gendered Russian imaginaries ... are inherently racialized and heterosexualized' (Williams 2012: 4). In her recent book *Imagining Russia* Williams shows that US imaginaries of Russian women, although they are understood ethnically as Slavic and therefore as white Europeans, are structured through a 'complex cold-war-era version of orientalism' (Williams 2012: 4) that signifies them as feminine and heterosexual. Analysing cultural products, from advertising to cinema and literature, as well as official documents, such as congressional hearings, Williams reveals that '[w]omen in post-Soviet Russia are ... always already positioned within Russian nationalist discourse as heterosexed and gendered subjects', (ibid.) and that this cultural myth significantly influences US imaginaries. Inspired by Russian self-representations of the 1990s, US viewers not only imagine Russia as feminine but also associate it with heterosexuality and often 'with crime, corruption and chaos, [and] prostitution' (104). Williams's work relies heavily on Eliot Borenstein's (2008) analysis of sex and violence in Russian popular culture during the 1990s and early 2000s. Borenstein argues that '[i]n the 1990s, the Russian prostitute was routinely deployed in the symbolic battle for Russia's soul. The collapse of the Russian state, the decline of patriotism, and the absence of a workable national idea shared center stage in the Russian media and culture industry with tales and images of sexually uninhibited young women offering their bodies and their services for pay' (Borenstein 2008: 78). The Russian cultural myth together with the frequency of the actual trafficking of Russian women into the United States for work in the sex industry in the 1990s were significant in shaping public views on Russian women (Williams 2012: 37).

Although Williams mentions the racialisation and orientalised of Russian women and even emphasises the connection between this racialisation and heterosexualisation (Williams 2012: 3, 10, 37–38), her work focuses on gender as cultural representation and



does not go into the specifics of the heterosexualised and racialised stratifications of its embodiment. Anca Parvulescu (2014) addresses the exotification and sexualisation of white Eastern European migrant women by looking at bodily difference in her most recent book *The Traffic in Eastern European Women*. My close reading of the character Red in *Orange Is The New Black* draws on Parvulescu's groundbreaking work. At the same time, I still question some of Parvulescu's interpretations, especially her notion of how the Eastern European body is othered and racialised as 'not-quite-white'. Although I agree with her thesis that women from the Balkans, as well as Roma and Sinti, are understood as 'not-quite-white', I disagree that this is true for all Eastern European (working-class migrant) women. I agree more with Williams, who states that Slavic women are understood as white (Williams 2012: 4). In my critical discussion of the existing classifications and interpretations of female non-western bodies, I aim to develop a nuanced understanding of the construction of bodily difference by considering factors such as style, body language, bodily affect, and representations of class.

### Imagining the Russian in *Orange Is the New Black*

One of the most prominent TV representations of a Russian (immigrant) character is the figure 'Red' in the Netflix TV series *Orange Is the New Black* (2013–). Created by Jenji Kohan, the show is about Piper Chapman (played by Taylor Schilling), a white upper-middle-class New Yorker who is sentenced to 15 months in a women's federal prison, Litchfield Penitentiary, and about her fellow convicts – many of whom are also lesbians – and most of whom are women of colour, members of the white underclass, or drug addicts. The show became incredibly popular and widely celebrated for showing 'more strong female roles than most casting directors see in a year' (Greenwald 2013). In its first season, the show received twelve Primetime Emmy Award nominations, and media critics continue to praise it as 'the Best Netflix Series yet' (ibid.).

The character Galina 'Red' Reznikov is played by Kate Mulgrew – a white American actress, who became famous as Captain Kathryn Janeway on the TV show *Star Trek: Voyager*. Mulgrew has no relationship to a Russian or any other post-Soviet US minority, is clearly not fluent in the Russian language, and has never played a Russian before (Totally Kate 2001). Red is a Russian, working-class US immigrant and 'mother' of a clique of white inmates called 'Red's Girls'. In prison for over 12 years, Red holds a powerful position as head of the kitchen, because she oversees the preparation of meals and the prison commissary. She is feared and respected by the prisoners and prison employees alike, and has considerable influence over Sam Healy, a corrections officer and inmate counsellor. Red is visibly marked as a Russian by her bodily appearance, style, language, and demeanour. She speaks English with a thick – and mostly believable – Russian accent, and always

has brightly or aggressively coloured red hair, red lipstick, and red nail polish. Her broad shoulders, stocky figure, and forceful appearance match her character and her conviction for involvement in organised crime.

### 'The world is better in black and white ... and red'

(Red in 'Bed Bugs and Beyond', season three, episode two)

The construction of her character directly references Cold War clichés of Soviet citizens. One reviewer points out these references and describes Red as 'a Russian enforcer who trades favours and runs the kitchen with a hammer and sickle' (Greenwald 2013). She is characterized by her incredible seriousness and an occasional yet strong sentimentality for the women in her care. She also has a sense of humour, albeit one that is very crude, working class, and sometimes sexualised. With a cold, matronly, and firm hand she oversees the traffic of goods into and their distribution within the prison. Obedience to (unofficial) social rules is important to her, not the least because she is at the top of the social ladder and interested in maintaining her position. Her 'rule' is based on the law of discipline and punishment, with absolutely no leniency, not even with for own 'children' or her own aching and ageing body. It is no coincidence that Red, who introduces the series' heroine, Chapman, to the rules of the prison, does so with the words, 'Might not look like it, but there's rules in this place. The most important of which is, the second you're perceived as weak, you already are' ('Tit Punch', season one, episode two). One of her rules is no drug trafficking in prison. At the end of season one, she is, paradoxically, accused of just that, as a result of which she loses her power and family. Her adherence to rules, sacrifice of her own body and that of her 'children' – whom she can no longer grant special treatment – and her loss of power all signify her 'Soviet' character.<sup>2</sup> This stern attitude towards prison rules is especially remarkable as it is shown in contrast to Chapman's attempt to fight prison injustice through legal means, and communication/negotiation with the prison personnel in season one. Red seems to believe in the finality of rules, while Chapman is portrayed as a good (flexible) American who believes in positive change and progress.

Red's mafia activity reflects American anxiety about the Russian threat in US society, even though through its imprisonment, it is an already a discovered, defunct, or contained threat. Red represents the American 'obsession with domestic subversion [and a] belief in an outside world dominated by enemies and potential traitors' (Lieven 2004: 154). Her positioning or containment within Litchfield Penitentiary not only confirms the US's ability to fight organised crime and terrorism, but on a meta level it also reconfirms the 'alleged victory over the Soviet Union in the Cold War' (Williams 2012: 29). Despite the power she has over her business and fellow inmates, like all the prisoners Red is completely and utterly at the mercy of the correction officers. Most of the prison guards are white and male and

represent, or rather affirm, the US nation and state as a white, male, heterosexual, patriarchal, potent, misogynist, and aggressive guarantor of (corporate) democracy and peace. While still positioned as the 'other' in terms of this heterosexual white maleness, Red is not as far removed from their power as, for instance, her African-American and Latina inmates. Most importantly, unlike Chapman, who is white educated, modern, and progressive, Red does not believe anyone could ever challenge or change the system. Despite this belief, Red still frequently negotiates and collaborates with some of the white correction officers.

Red embodies the western view of Russia, as situated in between the democratic, developed, white and the barbaric (terrorist) racialised territories. As such, she is juxtaposed against the inmate Yvonne Parker, called 'Vee', one of the most painfully racialised figures in the series. Vee is a dangerous, unreliable black woman. Like Red she too has a prison 'family', but, while Red reigns according to what she believes are the 'prison rules', Vee manipulates people to serve her own evilness and needs, and does not shy away from using violence. When Red refuses to give her a cut in her business, Vee violently attacks her. The embodiment of unpredictability and evil, Vee is an almost animal-like, sleazy character and a product of the cruelty of the street, who has managed to work the system to her advantage by cheating, betraying, and exploiting those who care for her.

Red's working-class, mafia activity and her Russianness are tightly intertwined. In 'Tit Punch' the viewer is introduced to the reason why Red, a former restaurant owner, became a part of the Russian mob: She punching the mean-spirited, arrogant, and fake-blond Russian wife of a mafia boss in the chest, bursting the woman's breast implant, which put her \$60,000 in debt to the mafia boss. The juxtaposition of the mafia boss's wife and Red is interesting. While the first represents the stereotypical, newly rich, fake-blond 'Slavic femme'<sup>3</sup> – a woman who cares about her feminine appearance, likes to show off her wealth through expensive clothes and jewellery, looks down on people with less or no money, but has a simple mind – Red represents the good-hearted, old-fashioned, motherly, and modest working-class woman, who rises to the occasion in moments of need. Red is a real worker, practical and smart, authentic and principled – factors that mark her as ethnic, which means Russian – while the blond wife of the mafia boss represents the new Russia, rife with corruption and lacking ethics. Both women, however, are emotional and temperamental – a frequent attribute of Slavic women in TV shows – and it is Red's Russian temperament that seals her fate. The connection between Red's temper, working-class authenticity, and Russianness resurfaces in 'Empathy Is a Boner Killer' (third episode of season three), when Healy asks Red to translate for him and his Russian-speaking Ukrainian wife. Healy's wife Katya – like the mafia boss's wife – embodies the stereotype of the fake-blond, short-tempered, nouveau riche Russian woman. Enraged

by Katya's arrogant attitude, Red bursts out and calls her a 'mail-order bride', defending Healy. In the aftermath of this event, Healy grows fond of Red and she starts to flirt with him.

Red's mafia activity and its intersection with her specific gender and sexuality markers are crucial in the construction of her Russianness. Drawing on the cultural stereotype of the weak effeminate Russian man and the strong, family-oriented, (silent) breadwinning Russian woman allows for the development of a mafia character that is female and nonetheless racially marked. Matthew Jacobson notes that mafia film and TV characters, such as Tony Soprano, from the TV series *The Sopranos* (HBO 1999–2007), offered ethnicity as a reference to seemingly lost 'values such as loyalty, rootedness, and interdependence', values 'America ... is hostile to' (Jacobson 2006: 26). Whereas Italian mafia types revert to 'antimodernist' (ibid.) values through their masculinity, Red's mafia belonging underscores her ethnic, or in fact racialised, belonging – despite her whiteness and female gender. Red's mafia activity signifies antimodernist and seemingly un-American values like strong family bonds, rootedness, and independence, which pose a threat to the US system. Her Russianness, however, places the emphasis on her female gender and heterosexuality and vice versa.

In her reading of representations of Russian women in American TV series, Williams shows that the construction of sexuality and gender plays a crucial role in constituting them as a threat to the US nation (Williams 2012: 123–132). While in the past deviant sexualities were often employed in constructing the racialised, culturalised, and gendered foreign enemy, certain forms of sexuality, especially white middle-class homosexuality, are not necessarily included in this process (Puar 2007, 2013). Although Williams does not offer a thorough analysis of the intersection of sexualisation, gendering, and racialisation, she emphasises heterosexuality and stresses femininity as aspects that render these characters Russian (Williams 2012: 3, 10, 37–38).

**'My hairy-backed husband, he always took care of me'** (Red in *'We Have Manners. We're Polite'*, season two, episode thirteen)

In contrast to most of the other characters over the age of 50, Red's (hetero)sexuality is frequently brought up over the course of the three seasons of OITNB. Although she is clearly positioned in opposition to the mostly white lesbian characters of the show, her heterosexuality is brought into focus towards the end of season two and continues in a plot line in season three. Her flirtation with correction officer Healy over the course of season three can be read as a prison version of what Deltcheva identifies as very popular stereotype of the post-Soviet woman in western cinema, 'the Slavic slut, ready to sell her body and soul for greenbacks' (Deltcheva 2004: 162). Red's heterosexuality is, however, not a mere means to an end. Rather, it is an innate drive and a characteristic of her class and racial

markings. This can be seen, for instance, in the fact that Red frequently brings up sex in conversations with her fellow inmates. Her inclination to sex appears especially strong in a dialogue with a former nun.

*Red: 'I always wondered about that whole celibacy thing with you people. ... Did you ever masturbate?' Sister Jane Ingalls: 'There's this statue of Jesus on the cross that was especially ripped. He was my guy.' Red: 'Before Dmitri, there was this man named Pavel. Even talking about him now there's a tightening.' Sister Jane Ingalls: 'So what happened?' Red: 'America home of the free. Dmitri was tame in bed, bold in life. Pavel, the opposite. I went with life. I went with the man who was going to go to America.' Sister Jane Ingalls: 'So, you didn't like having sex with your husband?' Red: 'I wouldn't say that, no. I like sex. I never rolled away after and thought, "Oh, I wish I hadn't done that." No, it was always nice. But there's a part of me, a part of every woman, I think, that doesn't want nice. That's the problem with married sex in general. No more fear.' Sister Jane Ingalls: 'Fear is good?' Red: 'Fear is very good. ... But I'll say this for my hairy-backed husband, he always took care of me. Turned him on. Could spend weeks down there.'*  
(*'We Have Manners. We're Polite.'* Season two, episode thirteen)

Red's clear heterosexuality stands out among her age group. Besides the nun, only Red shows sexual desire or at least talks about it and acts on it, among the cohorts of her age group. The sexual activity of the other characters is set in the past, for example, that of Vee or Rosa, 'Miss Rosa' Cisneros, who is dying of cancer. Moreover, while a nun talking about sexuality and desire is a juicy topic, the emphasis on Red's sexuality seems to serve a different purpose – it is used to underscore her personality and character. Among the white women whose sexual desire is depicted in the show, Red's desire is outstandingly heterosexual.

Red's heterosexuality constructs her as Russian because at this moment in time western and Russian media, along with the general public see Russians as not only as intolerant towards homosexuals, but as oppositional to homosexuality (LeBlanc 2013; Sperling 2014; Haeley 2001). Moreover, Russia's admittedly horrible 'Anti-homosexual Propaganda Law',<sup>4</sup> which forbids presenting homosexuality to minors in a positive light, appears anti-modern, backward and not progressive compared with the US nation state. It appears this way, because the US state highlights its positive (legal and social) attitude towards vulnerable groups like queers, to not only establish moral hegemony but also to promote itself. Constructing Russia as anti-modern versus the US nation state's progressive and homophile image is a clear case of what Puar (2007, 2013) calls US American homonationalism.

OITNB represents the US as a nation struggling but also striving for diversity, equality and justice. The show has

been celebrated as prime example of reflecting diversity and presenting sexuality, sexual identity and trans\* issues authentically and favourably among the media (Ross 2014; Gennis 2013; Shiro 2015; Van Der Werff 2013; Gay 2013) as well as viewers (Schroeder 2013; Paskin 2013; Najumi 2013). Critics view the show as a reflection of the acceptance of LGBTIQs in US society: 'It shows us how far we have come as women, women of color, and women of the LGBT community' (Shiro 2015). They see its message as a queer feminist statement (Lewis 2013; West 2014; Jennifer 2013) and, most importantly, as a reflection of current US reality (Lewis 2013; West 2014; Shiro 2015; McClelland 2015). Scholars such as Lauren J. Decarvalho and Nicole B. Cox argue 'that OITNB challenges gender performances and compulsory heterosexuality' (2015: 65). Others, however, argue that the show 'is diverse in the shallowest, most tokenistic ways' (Gay 2013). It 'privilege[s] mostly white-on-white female sexual relations' (Decarvalho and Cox 2015: 65) and uses multiple 'racist tropes: black women who, aside from fantasizing about fried chicken, are called monkeys and Crazy Eyes; a Boricua mother who connives with her daughter for the sexual attentions of a white prison guard; an Asian woman who never speaks; and a crazy Latina who tucks away in a bathroom stall to photograph her vagina ...' (Bogado 2013).

We can see a progressive agenda that promotes the tolerance of LGBTIQs and contrasts them with the racialised brown and white bodies in OITNB that can be called homonationalist. The main character, Piper Chapman, is a white upper-middle-class woman, who is clearly distinct from most of the prison population. In an interview, producer Kohan said that she introduced Piper Chapman as a 'Trojan horse' (NPR 2013), 'the girl next door, the cool blonde', who is an 'easy access point' to make the prison stories 'relatable to a lot of audiences' (ibid.). Commentators, such as Pozner (2013), have strongly criticised Kohan's remark, because it reveals that her target audience is white and suggests that white people only want to see shows where they are represented themselves. Kohan's comment speaks to the narrative of the show and its construction of the characters in general. Piper Chapman symbolises positive progressive values such as tolerance, a strong desire to uphold justice, and a thirst for knowledge (and education). Her 'just' character is corrupted by the system and by the bad influence of other even more corrupt convicts. Although she is at times too naïve, selfish and unaware of her white privilege to allow an easy identification, she still signifies what US society should aim for: wealth, justice, beauty etc. Even her body height suggests that she is elevated above the others. All her positive values and her class privilege are connected to her whiteness – a fact that is frequently pointed out by her fellow inmates who envy her. Piper Chapman is frequently paired with Red. Although they are both marked as white, Red's working-class status and her physical appearance



stand in stark contrast to Chapman's. What completes this contrast, however, and allows for an appearance of Chapman as a US citizen and Red as a Russian immigrant, is Chapman's homosexual desire. Red's heterosexuality becomes meaningful in contrast to Chapman's (and others') homosexuality. In combination with her stout figure, her accent, style, age, working-class status, and her ability to care for others as a fabulous and creative chef and a 'mother' of the white women's prison clan, her heterosexuality – and especially her sexual advances towards Healy – produce her as a racialised, i.e. Russian and post-Soviet, woman.

Added to this Russianness and overt heterosexuality is her embodiment of traditional gender roles and (stereotypical hetero-)sexual desires, for example, Red's ability to create a homely environment. Together with her ability to create fear, her desire to care for the people close to her (which includes violence against those who hurt them) is enhanced or created through her bodily affects and verbal communication. This sets her in contrast to Chapman again, who, besides her frequent homosexual activities, is a rather logical and cerebral – enlightened – person. This contrast enhances Red's visibility as Russian, as the 'Slavic races' are envisioned as being not as able to fully control their emotions and desires. The contradiction between the idea of irrationality and spontaneity and the idea that post-Soviet citizens blindly obey to rules, hence repress their wishes, desires and affects is not emphasised as irritation in the TV series.

### **Racialisation as an Analytical Category**

Red's working-class status, heterosexuality, her physical appearance, style and (body) language together signify her as Russian or 'Slavic'. The combination of her whiteness, broad stature, glowing sad eyes, and the frown on her lips creates the meaning of Russianness. This construction must be read as a creation of racialisation. Using the notion of race and racialisation in reference to post-socialist and post-Soviet bodies is not without risk. It risks the essentialisation and naturalisation of cultural signifiers. However, by using racialisation, rather than culturalisation, I attempt to highlight the bodily architecture of how Russians are signified, as in Red's case. The essentialisations and naturalisations of culture and heritage or nationality as race must be understood in Stuart Hall's terms as 'a sliding signifier' (Hall 2015: 5). Race is a 'badge, a token, a sign, ... a signifier, and ... racialized behavior and difference needs to be understood as a discursive, not necessarily as a genetic or biological fact' (Hall 2015: 7). Signifiers like race need to be understood as unstable and in flux. Yet, their meaning is neither arbitrary nor random. The 'stratification insignia' (Hall quoted in Parvulescu 2014: 14) that racially determine Eastern European women are subtle and there are no analytical tools to 'recognize and read ... racialized physical characteristics like hair, teeth, body type, and clothing styles as well as education, religion, and

"values"' (ibid.), as Parvulescu points out. I argue that these insignia can be read exclusively in contrast to the backdrop of the surroundings in which they appear. They also need to be read in their intersection with geopolitical discourses and within the context of cultural, political, and historical hegemonies.

The meanings attributed to race in reference to Eastern Europeans and Russians within much of the global north/west today can be traced back to the German age of Enlightenment. At the heart of the concept of the 'Slavic race' is the already frequently addressed orientalist design of Eastern Europe 'as a world "over there," an alien world of differences that is light years away not only from the economic prosperity but also from the social conventions and values of the West' (Deltcheva 2004: 162). By the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, German Enlightenment philosophers, such as Johann Gottfried Herder and Johann Gottlieb Fichte, had already developed a notion of the Slavic people as economically, ethnographically, and racially distinct, sometimes in close proximity to their anti-Semitic theories (Wolff 1994: 333). Often, Slavic women were attributed with 'a stronger sex drive than German females' (Fichte in Wolff 1994: 334). Parvulescu as well as Bridget Anderson (2000) highlight the economic factors that were involved in determining the racialised hierarchy of migrants from the global south and Eastern Europe within north/western European countries (Parvulescu 2014: 14). I would go as far as to argue that economic factors do not only determine the hierarchy but rather significantly shape who becomes racialised in the first place, not only within contemporary north/western Europe but within the whole global north/west.

Although Parvulescu notes that skin colour is not the determining factor for the racialisation of Eastern European women within north/western contexts, she argues that these women are nevertheless hierarchically positioned or labelled as 'not quite white' (Parvulescu 2014: 14). Parvulescu arrives at this interpretation because she rightly notices that skin colour corresponds uncomfortably to the economically produced hierarchy in Europe (and I might add the USA). She supports her argument by referring to Rosi Braidotti, who points out that '[p]eople from the Balkans, or the South-Western regions of Europe, in so far as they are not yet "good Europeans," they are also not quite as "white" as others' (Braidotti 2007: 34). With this reference Parvulescu suggests that all Central Eastern, South Eastern and Eastern European women are equally racialised. This generalisation, however, is highly debatable. I agree with Parvulescu and Braidotti that economic factors play a crucial role in the racialisation of Eastern European women. However, I disagree with Parvulescu's estimation that the racialisation necessarily refers to or equates with a less white skin colour. Rather, I argue that very specific forms of racialisation mark Russian, Ukrainian, Belarussian, Serbian or Polish women despite or in correspondence with

their assessment as white, while very different tropes of southernness mark the bodies of women from the Balkans.

For the US context, I refer to the work of critical studies of whiteness. Scholars such as Nancy Foner (2000), David Roediger (2002), Matthew Jacobson (2006), or Robert Zecker (2011) show that specific strata of the new – late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Jewish, Polish, Lithuanian, Italian, Greek, and Russian – immigrant population in the US were not perceived as white, but that their self-perception as well as their social status changed during the process of their Americanisation. Powerful entities, like labour unions and the state, were more interested in a ‘speedy, orderly Americanization and with both parties unwilling to vouch unequivocally for their racial character southern and eastern Europeans generally tried to change the subject from whiteness to nationality and loyalty to American ideals’ (Jacobson 2006: 357). Economic necessities, the need for loyal labourers, the “war against racism” in Europe’ (ibid.: 30), as well as the advent of the Cold War changed the political climate and supported a shift from a focus on race to nationality, and from racial difference to universalism and American unity. ‘The modest strength of herrenvolk, or “master race,” democracy, weakened even in the South at a time when huge numbers of the white poor were disfranchised, paled in comparison to the opportunities to try to live progressive spin to the idea of a particularly freedom-loving American race’ (Roediger 2002: 167). This new Americanism ‘whitened’ the new immigrants, including many Russian Jews and other ‘Slavic’ people. Until the 1960s, a melting pot ideology prevailed in US politics and culture.

By the time the civil rights movement gained some momentum, success, and power, however, ‘descendants of earlier European immigrants quit the melting pot’ (Jacobson 2006: 2) and ‘ethnicity’ emerged as a mode of differentiating white Americans. Supported by antimodernist thought and a longing for ‘authenticity’, a new public language of nationality and belonging emerged, and Italianness, Jewishness, Greekness, and Irishness became ‘a badge of pride, not shame’ (ibid.). Jacobson identifies the desire to distance themselves and the nation from white privilege as a strong motive for the emergence of the ethnic revival in the mid-1960s (ibid.: 20–22). This re-evaluation of ethnicity, however, did not challenge white privilege; it instead confirmed the whiteness of these ethnic markers (ibid.: 7).

While the category of race emphasised biology, ethnicity focused on culture and ‘represented an outlook rather than a condition of birth; a cultural affiliation rather than a bloodline; a set of sensibilities and associational habits that, however tenacious, were subject to the forces of assimilation and change’ (ibid.: 32). Jacobson argues that as ‘a corrective of race, the concept of ethnicity accomplished less as a term of distinction than it did as a partial erasure of “difference” – a universalizing appeal to the underlying

sameness of humanity and to the assimilative powers of American culture’ (ibid.: 33). I would argue, however, that it did not lose its connection to race. The racial residues of ethnicity can be clearly seen in the various examples of ethnically-marked, or I would argue racialised, figures within popular culture and especially on TV, for example in *The Nanny* (CBS 1993–1999), *The Sopranos* (HBO 1999–2007), *Will & Grace* (NBC 1998–2006), and *Everybody Loves Raymond* (CBS 1996–2005), or *Rizzoli & Isles* (TNT 2010).<sup>5</sup> The racialisation of such figures did not question or disturb their whiteness and the ethnic revival in American culture and politics as a whole did indeed emphasise and further naturalise the ‘whiteness of the white republic’ (Jacobson 2006: 316). Along with the public recollection of the ‘ethnic roots’ of American whiteness came a new focus on the ‘foreign’ as a potential threat (ibid.: 316). Migration became a special target point for identifying the threat, evaluated often based on the possibility of the various groups for assimilation. While non-white migrants were seen as foreign per se, ergo unable to assimilate, white migrants were granted greater opportunities to become American. We can see this possibility for assimilation and Americanisation, and the connection to whiteness in Red’s role as ‘the mother’ of the white prison clique. This privileged position within the prison hierarchy signifies the potential of upward mobility – the American dream – and also quite obviously signifies Red’s whiteness, because her clique is frequently and explicitly called ‘the white girls’. Significantly, all the white girls except Chapman are working-class women.

Jacobson and Roediger argue that the prior racialisation of southern and eastern Europeans was strongly connected to their status as poor and working class. They implicitly abandon the connection between working class and underclass belonging and ethnicity by arguing that the formally racially marked became white. Turning to Parvulescu again, I argue that neither the racialisation within ethnic markings nor their connection to working-class signification was ever fully abandoned within the US cultural context. Although I disagree with Parvulescu that a racialisation of Eastern European women means that they are understood as ‘not-quite-white’ (Parvulescu 2014: 14), I do agree that an important clue to their racialisation lies within the ‘class-occupational stratification’ (ibid.), as this ‘class-occupational stratification does not overlap with familiar patterns of racial stratification’ (ibid.). It does not, in my view, make Eastern European bodies less white. On the contrary, I understand Eastern European women’s whiteness as particularly visible within US popular culture. However, ‘class-occupational stratification’ denominates the Slavic body as other. Following Parvulescu, we can read Red’s Eastern European or Slavic body as constructed through her working-class occupation. While her whiteness allows Red to become ‘the mother’ of other working-class Americans, her otherness



rests on her working-class status, or on her specific occupational habits. Red is a typical immigrant restaurant owner and cook with ties to the mafia. These occupational habits correspond with her strong position, and care for her (nuclear as well as her prison) family, including the spoiling of her incapable son (a very frequent cliché of Russian women), a strong sexual desire, and willingness to use sex to reach her goals. This mixture of personality and physical characteristics correspond to Red's style, her fierce red hair, red lipstick and nails, her often sad, piercing or wickedly glowing eyes, her always straightened back, and the corners of her mouth mostly point downwards. Together, her thick accent, bodily features, working-class status, mafia occupation, strength, melancholia, struggle and style construct Red as an Eastern European, or more specifically as a post-Soviet Russian, woman. Her racial stratification is accomplished through her whiteness. Feminist literary critics Glajar and Radulescu contend that the whiteness of European Slavic women is an important factor for why they 'have become a favorite and convenient site for the accumulation of stereotypical images feeding Western lust for the exotic and fear of the "barbaric"' (Glajar and Radulescu 2004: 162). Through their whiteness, they 'are not drastically Other and thus are endowed with an aura of familiarity, or Europeaness, and yet they are not fully familiar or European either, as they come from the more remote regions of Europe, perceived as almost Oriental, as almost exotic, yet not fully so' (ibid.). Whiteness, the position between familiarity and otherness, and the emphasis on heterosexuality together construct notions of Russianness.

It is important to emphasise that gender, sexuality and class are key components in the analysis of the process where culture becomes nature, where 'nature and culture ... operate as metaphors for one another' (Hall 2015: 13) in the perception of the individual female post-Soviet or Russian body. Eastern European women are generally often pictured as femme fatales, as 'alluring, slightly Oriental or exotic temptress with an edge of vampirism' (Glajar and Radulescu 2004: 6) in north/western media. Especially Russian and post-Soviet female bodies are doubly signified as (dangerously) female – once through the imagination of Russia and post-Soviet countries as a feminine (or emasculated) country of bad-tempered white women and drunk incapable men (Williams 2012: 116–118) and, second, through the imagination of the celebration of femininity by Russian and post-Soviet women. Williams argues that the feminised notion of Russia, which has become an 'integral part of the triumphalist mythscape so central to American national identity' (ibid.), is a rhetorical move to 'weaken Russia geopolitically' (ibid.: 22). It is mostly represented in juxtaposition to 'a gendered (masculinized) American imaginary that emboldens the (mostly white male) members of the U.S. foreign policy elite' (ibid.:

22). Analysing popular media from the 1990s and 2000s Williams identifies female Russian figures that represent the fear 'of bellicosity and indignation', 'the backward baba', 'the sorts of personalities with whom the United States would be forced to deal should the men in charge of pro-Western political and economic reform be ousted from power' (ibid.: 123). These highly sexualised figures are often willing to use sex as a weapon and means to an end. Williams traces this figuration back to 'the cold-war-era assumptions about and Orientalist stereotypes of female KGB officers engaging in sexpionage as a means of accomplishing Soviet intelligence goals' (ibid.: 123). Post-Soviet Russian men, in contrast to their female counterparts, are represented as weak and often incapable (drunk), but more willing to negotiate or work with the global west (ibid.). While the emasculation of Russian or rather Soviet men was signified through their alleged homosexuality during much of the Cold War (Dean 2001), today's images show emasculated yet heterosexual (drunk) men who are dominated by strong, sexualised women.

Red's attempt to get the correction officer Healy on her side by flirting can be read as the stereotypical aggressive sexuality and cliché that harkens back to the era of Fichte (Wolff 1994). Moreover, her sexual shadiness is reminiscent of Cold-War 'sexpionage'. Red's power and aggressive sexuality is paired with her emasculated male family members. The notion of weak Russian men also can be traced back to the Enlightenment and is simultaneously a reference to the Cold War. Red's husband Dimitri and her son embody the typical US stereotype of Russian men. They are completely emasculated, unable to sustain the family business without Red's leadership and too cowardly to tell her. Dimitri is too weak and too clumsy to hold his position within the Russian mob and things only start running smoothly when Red takes over. Consequently, Red's business (at least the legal shop in Astoria) fails after her incarceration, but Dimitri and his son are too afraid to tell Red, so they keep her in the dark about the closure of the shop. Red only finds out this fact in episode one of season two ('Mothers' Day', released 11 June 2015). As a reaction to her husband's betrayal she divorces him, showing again her relentless and uncompromising character. The weakness of her male family members lets Red appear even stronger and fiercer. Additionally, they enhance her sexuality, one her husband is unable to truly satisfy. In reference to the surrounding (white) homosexual women, on the other hand, her enhanced strength and heterosexuality sets her apart and specifically marks her as Russian.

### Conclusion

In this article I discussed the specific forms of othering and racialisation of white Eastern European, especially Russian women within north/western and US discourses. Analysing the example of the figure Red in the popular US TV series *Orange Is the New Black*, I showed how the

embodiment of Russianness as a distinctly racialised notion can emerge at the intersection of gender, class, age, origin, language, and sexuality. The racial insignia of the meaning of Russianness or 'Slavic' appears as amalgam of facial expressions, language particularities (accents), hair styles, body postures, values, sexual preferences and so forth. Referring to analyses on the north/western heritage of the imagination of Russia and Eastern Europe and the gendered aspects of this cultural and racial production, I argued that contemporary representations of racialised Eastern European women, as in my example of the Russian character Red, are significantly shaped through ideas of progress, development and civilisation. Such representations become meaningful as Russian (or Eastern European) within the framework of US homonationalism. As embodiments of cultural myths that strongly inform our imaginary and political as well as cultural evaluation of Russia and Russians, their roots can be found in the German Enlightenment and in the Cold War. They are however adapted to neoliberal capitalism and make use of the recent rehabilitation of the western white homosexual as the model citizen to newly differentiate the Russians from themselves. Against this background, Russian figures become meaningful as others in contrast to north/western bodies. However, they are not as different as racialised people of colour, and their whiteness thus comes to the fore. This whiteness and similarity of appearance allows for this character to mediate between the binary opposition among the races in OITNB. It cannot be trusted, however, because Russia and Russians are eternally becoming civilised, according to the Enlightenment's development paradigm, and can easily revert back into a barbaric and uncivilised state, according to the myths of US national identity-formation.

## References

- Anderson, B. 2000. *Doing the Dirty Work? The Global Politics of Domestic Labor*. London: Zed.
- Baer, B. 2002. 'Russian Gays/Western Gaze', *GLQ* 8 (4): 499–521.
- Binnie, J. 2004. *The Globalization of Sexuality*. London: Sage.
- Binnie, J., Klesse, C. 2013. 'The Politics of Age, Temporality and Intergenerationality in Transnational Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Activist Networks.' *Sociology*, Vol. 47, No. 3: 580–595.
- Bogado, A. 2013. 'White Is the New White.' [online]. *The Nation*. [cit. 16.8.2013]. Available from: <http://www.thenation.com/article/white-new-white/>.
- Borenstein, E. 2008. *Overkill: Sex Violence, and Russian Popular Culture after 1991*. Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press.
- Braidotti, R. 2007. 'On Becoming European.' Pp. 32–44 in L. Passerini, E. Capusotti, D. Lyon, I. Laliotou. (eds.), *Women Migrants from East to West: Gender, Mobility and Belonging in Contemporary Europe*. New York: Berghahn.
- CBS. 2015. 'Vladimir Putin Doing Manly Things.' [online] CBSNews [cit. 1.9.2015] Available from <http://www.cbsnews.com/pictures/vladimir-putin-doing-manly-things/>.
- Dean, R. 2001. *Imperial Brotherhood: Gender and the Making of Cold War Foreign Policy*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Decarvalho, L., Cox, N. 2015. 'Queerness (Un)Shackled.' Pp. 65–76 in A. Trier-Bieniek, *Feminist Theory and Pop Culture*. Rotterdam, Boston, and Taipei: Sense Publishers.
- Deltcheva, R. 2004. 'Eastern Women in Western Chronotypes: Representation of East European Women in Western Film after 1989.' Pp. 161–185 in V. Glajar, D. Radulescu, *Vampirettes, Wretches and Amazons: Western Representations of East European Women*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Foner, N. 2000. *From Ellis Island to JFK: New York's Two Great Waves of Immigration*. New Haven, NJ: Yale University Press.
- Gay, R. 2013. 'The Bar for TV Diversity Is Way Too Low. Why Are We Still Talking about "Orange Is the New Black?" Because There's So Little Out There That's Better.' [online] *Salon* [cit. 22.8.2013] Available from [http://www.salon.com/2013/08/22/the\\_bar\\_for\\_tv\\_diversity\\_is\\_way\\_too\\_low/](http://www.salon.com/2013/08/22/the_bar_for_tv_diversity_is_way_too_low/).
- Gennis, S. 2013. 'Trans Actress Laverne Cox Breaks New Ground with Orange Is the New Black.' [online] *TV Guide*. [cit. 24.7.2013] Available from <http://www.tvguide.com/news/orange-new-black-laverne-cox-1068255/>.
- Glajar, V., Radulescu, D. 2004. 'Introduction.' Pp. 1–11 in V. Glajar, D. Radulescu, *Vampirettes, Wretches and Amazons: Western Representations of East European Women*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Greenwald, A. 2013. 'The Great Orange Is the New Black Is Suddenly the Best Netflix Series Yet.' [online] *Grantland* [cit. 15.7.2013] Available from <http://grantland.com/hollywood-prospectus/the-great-orange-is-the-new-black-is-suddenly-the-best-netflix-binge-watch-series-yet/>.
- Haeley, D. 2001. *Homosexual Desire in Revolutionary Russia: The Regulation of Sexual and Gender Dissent*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Hall, S. 2015. 'Race, the Floating Signifier. A Lecture Given at Goldsmiths College in London, 1997.' Transcript: Sut Jhalley, Media Education Foundation. [online] [cit. 21.7.2015] Available from <http://www.mediaed.org>.
- Jacobson, M. 2006. *Roots Too: White Ethnic Revival in Post-Civil Rights America*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Jennifer. 'Orange Is the New Black: Feminism without the F Word.' [online] *The Feminist Premise: Feminist Issues, Pop Culture, and Motherhood*. [cit. 14.8.2013] Available from <https://thefeministpremise.wordpress.com/2013/08/14/orange-is-the-new-black-feminism-without-the-f-word/>.
- Keller, B. 2013. 'Russia vs. Europe.' *The New York Times*. New York. 16 December 2013, p. A25.

- Kulpa, R., Mizielińska, J. 2012. 'Guest Editors' Introduction: Central and Eastern European Sexualities "in Transition". *lambda nordica. journal of LGBTQ studies*. 19–29.
- Kulpa, R., Mizielińska, J. 2011. *De-Centring Western Sexualities*. Farnham: Ashgate.
- LeBlanc, F. 2013. 'Sporting Homonationalism: Russian Homophobia, Imaginative Geographies & the 2014 Sochi Olympic Games.' *Sociology Association of Aotearoa New Zealand Annual Conference 2013*: 1–14.
- Lewis, F. 2013 '3 Reasons Why Orange Is The New Black Is The Most Queer Feminist Thing Ever: Taco fest, swirrrrrl, swirrrrrl and Voldemort.' [online] *Curve*. [cit. 16.8.2013] Available from <http://www.curvemag.com/Reviews/3-Reasons-Why-Orange-Is-The-New-Black-Is-The-Most-Queer-Feminist-Thing-Ever/>.
- Lieven, A. 2004. *America Right or Wrong: An Anatomy of American Nationalism*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- McClelland, M. 2015. 'Orange Is the New Black: Girls Gone Wrong.' *Rolling Stone* No. 1237, 18 June 2015: 42–47.
- Najumi, M. 2013. 'COLLEGE FEMINISMS: A Critical Analysis of Orange Is The New Black: The Appropriation Of Women Of Color.' [online] [cit. 28.8.2013] Available from <http://www.thefeministwire.com/2013/08/a-critical-analysis-of-orange-is-the-new-black-the-appropriation-of-women-of-color/>.
- Neumann, I. 1996. *Russia and The Idea of Europe*. New York / London: Routledge.
- NPR. 2013. "Orange" Creator Jenji Kohan: "Piper Was My Trojan Horse". [online]. NPR. [cit. 13.8.2013]. Available from: <http://www.npr.org/2013/08/13/211639989/orange-creator-jenji-kohan-piper-was-my-trojan-horse>.
- Parvulescu, A. 2014. *The Traffic in Women's Work: Eastern European Migration and the Making of Europe*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Paskin, W. 2013. 'The Awesome, Original "Orange Is the New Black".' [online] *Salon* [cit. 11.7.2013] Available from [http://www.salon.com/2013/07/12/the\\_awesome\\_original\\_orange\\_is\\_the\\_new\\_black/](http://www.salon.com/2013/07/12/the_awesome_original_orange_is_the_new_black/).
- Pozner, J. L. 2013. 'TV Can Make America Better: "Orange Is the New Black" Has Lots of Problems – But Like the Great Shows of the Past, It's Opening Viewers' Minds.' [online]. *Salon*. [cit. 29.8.2013]. Available from: [http://www.salon.com/2013/08/29/tv\\_can\\_make\\_america\\_better/](http://www.salon.com/2013/08/29/tv_can_make_america_better/).
- Puar, J. 2007. *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Puar, J. 2013. 'Rethinking Homonationalism.' *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 2: 336–339.
- Remnick, D. 2014. 'Watching the Eclipse: Ambassador Michael McFaul Was There When the Promise of Democracy Came to Russia – and When It Began to Fade.' *The New Yorker*, 11 August 2014: 52–65.
- Rivkin-Fish, M., Hartblay, C. 2014. 'When Global LGBTQ Advocacy Became Entangled with New Cold War Sentiment: A Call for Examining Russian Queer Experience.' *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, Vol. 21, No. 1: 95–111.
- Roediger, D. 2002. *Colored White: Transcending the Racial Past*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, CA, and London: University of California Press.
- Ross, L.A. 2014. "Orange Is the New Black" Cast Dishes on Prison Sex, Women Calling the Shots, and What Red Did.' [online] *TheWrap* [cit. 15.3.2014] Available from <http://www.thewrap.com/orange-new-black-prison-sex-women-paleyfest-netflix/>.
- Sakwa, R. 2008. "New Cold War" or Twenty Years' Crisis? Russia and International Politics.' *International Affairs*, Vol. 84, No. 2: 241–267.
- Schroeder, A. 2013. 'How "Orange Is the New Black" Changed the Way We Talk about TV.' [online]. *The Daily Dot*. [cit. 5.8.2013] Available from <http://www.dailydot.com/fandom/orange-new-black-fandom-feminism/>.
- Shiro, L. 2015. 'Minorities: It's Taken a Long Time But Finally Shows Like OITNB Are Taking a Stand and Exploring Reality.' [online] *Curve* [cit. 18.6.2015] Available from <http://www.curvemag.com/Culture/Minorities-518/>.
- Solomon, L. 2012. 'Vladimir the Great.' *Financial Post*. [online] [cit. 2.3.2012] Available from <http://business.financialpost.com/fp-comment/lawrence-solomon-vladimir-the-great>.
- Sperling, V. 2014. *Sex, Politics, and Putin: Political Legitimacy in Russia*. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Stella, F. 2015. *Lesbian Lives in Soviet and post-Soviet Russia: Post/socialism and Gendered Sexualities*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Totally Kate: The Official Fansite of Kate Mulgrew. 2001. [online]. [cit. 1.8.2015] Available from: <http://www.totallykate.com/filmogra.htm>.
- Van Der Werff, T. 2013. 'Orange Is The New Black.' [online] *A.V. Club*. [cit. 9.7.2013]. Available from: <http://www.avclub.com/review/orange-is-the-new-black-orange-is-the-new-black-99887>.
- West, C. 2014. 'Orange Is the New Black: Feminism without the Hard Sell.' [online]. Screen Robot. [cit. 13.7.2014] <http://screenrobot.com/orange-new-black-feminism-without-hard-sell/>.
- Whitfield, S. 1996. *The Culture of the Cold War*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins.
- Williams, K. 2012. *Imagining Russia: Making Feminist Sense of American Nationalism in U.S.-Russian Relations*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Wolff, L. 1994. *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Zecker, R. 2011. *Race and America's Immigrant Press: How the Slovaks Were Taught to Think Like White People*. New York: Continuum.



## Notes

**1** Rivkin-Fish and Hartblay note that US and north/western European discourses framed 'Russia's anti-gay legislation as evidence of Russian authoritarianism' and ignored 'the collaborations between U.S. Evangelicals and Russian conservatives that facilitated this law and related attacks against Russian women's reproductive rights. Rather than framing Russia's gay politics as yet another example of global cultural politics between religious fundamentalism and secular morality that plays out every day in the West, they portrayed Putin as a rogue despot, exceptional among contemporary political leaders' (2014: 98).

**2** Other TV and film characters sporting a similar inflexibility and obedience are Nina Sergeevna Krilova, Elizabeth, and Philip Jennings in the TV show *The Americans* (FX 2013), Illya Kuryakin in *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* (2015), 'Agent 47' in *Hitman* (2007), or Rudolf Abel in *Bridge of Spies* (2015).

**3** Other TV characters who embody this stereotype of the fake-blond Russian wannabe rich, newly rich, or mail-order bride are Svetlana from the TV show *Svetlana* (HDNet 2010) or Paulina, the Russian waitress in the first episode of *2 Broke Girls* (CBS 2011). This stereotype is also represented by the Polish character Sophie Kachinsky in *2 Broke Girls* (CBS 2011–) and the Russian-American character Marina in the reality TV show *Russian Dolls* (Lifetime 2011).

**4** The Russian federal law 'On Protecting Children from Information Harmful to Their Health and Development' forbids the 'propaganda of non-traditional sexual relationships' among minors and was introduced in summer

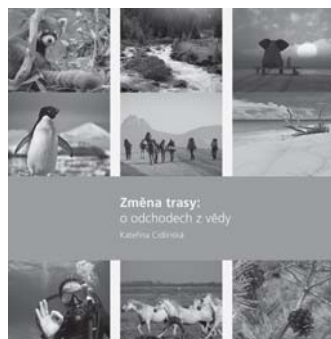
2013. It has been circulated in US media discourse as the 'Russian anti-gay law' or 'anti-homosexual propaganda law'.

**5** Some other white ethnic examples include shows like *Chicken Soup* (ABC 1989), *Thirtysomething* (ABC 1987–1991), *Brooklyn Bridge* (CBS 1991–1993), *To Have and to Hold* (CBS 1998), *Seinfeld* (1989–1998), *The Education of Max Bickford* (CBS 2001–2002), and *Costello* (Fox 1998).

© M. Katharina Wiedlack, 2016

© Institute of Sociology CAS, 2016

*Dr. M. Katharina Wiedlack is a post-doc Research Fellow at the department for English and American Studies, University of Vienna. She teaches Gender, Queer and Disability Studies in Vienna, St. Petersburg, Novosibirsk, Vilnius and other places. She finished her doctoral thesis on queer-feminist punk counter-cultures in the USA in 2013, and has completed several publications on the topic, the most recent of which is her monograph *Queer-feminist Punk: An Anti-social History* (Vienna, Zaglossus 2015). She received a Hertha Firnberg scholarship from FWF – the Austrian Science Fund (2015–2018) for her new research project on representations of Russian bodies in US media and the construction of US national identity. She was writer in residence at the Jordan Center for the Advanced Study of Russia at NYU from September 2015 through May 2016. Email: katharina.wiedlack@univie.ac.at.*



**Cidlinská, Kateřina. 2015. *Změna trasy: o odchodech z vědy*. Praha: Sociologický ústav AV ČR.**

Kniha se zaměřuje na příčiny odchodu začínajících vědkyň a vědců z české vědy a na průběh jejich studijní a pracovní dráhy od doby vstupu do vědy až dodnes. Cílem publikace je zjistit, kdo jsou lidé, kteří v posledních deseti letech opustili akademické pozice v ČR, jaké byly příčiny jejich odchodu, jaké je jejich současné pracovní uplatnění a jakým způsobem dnes využívají znalosti a dovednosti nabyté za dobu působení ve vědě. Pro tuto publikaci byly vybrány rozhovory s osobami, které opustily vědeckou dráhu v doktorské a postdoktorské fázi. Kniha proto naznačuje, jaké podmínky poskytuje česká věda začínajícím vědkyním a vědcům pro rozvoj jejich vědeckých kariér. „Bohužel musím říci, že tato kniha přináší poněkud nelichotivou zprávu o tom, jak současné nastavení hodnocení vědecké práce a systém jejího financování vedou u vědců a vědkyň k pocitům samoúčelnosti a ztráty smyslu vlastní práce, namísto toho, aby zejména začínající vědecké pracovníky a pracovnice povzbuzovaly k dalšímu bádání a kvalitním pracovním výkonům,“ konstatuje Cidlinská. Zároveň však upozorňuje, že kniha není souborem depresivních příběhů. Spíše ukazuje pestrou paletu životních osudů, postojů a možností profesního uplatnění.