



Glories of the Soviet Past or Dim Visions of the Future: Russian Teacher Education as the Site of Historical Becoming

OLENA AYDAROVA

In the 2000s, the Russian Ministry of Education introduced educational modernization reforms built on neoliberal principles. This critical ethnographic study examines how the memories of the Soviet past are being re-narrated to assess the current educational reforms. I use Bakhtin's theory of historical becoming to analyze how the vestiges of the past co-exist with the emerging forms of the neoliberal present and shape how teacher educators and their students interpret educational reforms and their daily work. [teacher education, neoliberalism, educational reform, memory]

The Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation welcomes each visitor to its website with an alternating title: “The Ministry of Education” fades away as “the Ministry of the Future” fades in. What is the future that is being manufactured there and what happened to the nation’s past? In 2002 the ministry that steers a centralized state system of education chose a particular future by initiating educational modernization reforms based on neoliberal principles: the *Concept of Education* introduced a shift from (post)socialist commitments towards a market-oriented ideology (Gounko 2008). Soon after this, despite multiple protests within the nation, the Russian minister of education signed the Bologna Agreement, initiating Russian participation in a European higher education policy framework that seeks to harmonize and restructure national systems following the Anglo-American model (Voegtle, Knill, and Dobbins 2011). The socio-cultural context for the ensuing transformations included an increasingly unequal and stratified society (Zajda 2010), growing nostalgia for the Soviet past (Nikitin 2012), and a spreading disillusionment with the West (Idov 2011).

Recent work on education in postsocialist contexts documented how restructuring educational systems toward Western models receives variegated responses (Steiner-Khamsi and Stolpe 2006). Iveta Silova (2009) and Olga Bain (2010) observed that international organizations or advisors who promote Western-based reforms rarely recognize the accomplishments of (post)socialist educational systems. In response, participants in postsocialist contexts tend to be critical of global discourses and seek to preserve educational approaches inherited from the socialist pasts (Dull 2012). What has received little attention is the role of memory and reinterpretations of the past in engaging with global discourses.

In the context of higher education, the Bologna Process and other globally circulated policies, along with introducing Western models, infuse educational systems and institutions with neoliberal ideology, manifested in prioritizing choice, competition, individual responsibility, and market values (Rizvi and Lingard 2010). Apart from creating conditions in which the material base deteriorates and financial resources of public universities dissipate (Gounko 2008; Morgan and Kulikova 2007), neoliberalism attempts to reconfigure the subjects of educational processes and to redefine relationships among them (Davies 2005). Because previous analyses examined the discursive changes towards neoliberalism in Russian policy documents (e.g., Zajda 2010), Konstantin Timoshenko (2011) called for

ethnographic work that would examine the implementation and interpretation of changes on the ground. This study responds to this call by focusing on a specific area in Russian higher education: teacher education.

Lynn Paine and Kenneth Zeichner (2012) emphasized how conversations on teachers, teaching, and teacher education are no longer constructed only locally but globally, whereas Susan Robertson (2012) called attention to the existence of a global neoliberal agenda underlying many reform efforts that target teachers. Neoliberal influences on teacher education, among other things, include decreasing funding and a greater degree of surveillance through accountability measures, changes that result in conflicts and contradictions that have received limited ethnographic attention. As an institution responsible for cultural continuity as well as social transformations (Lynch and Plunkett 1973), teacher education affords unique insights into how global reforms of today shape a nation's future by being layered over the traditions of the past. Yet international research on teacher education has for the most part overlooked "the humanizing dimension" (Gardinier 2012) and participants' historicization of the processes they experience as they examine, interpret, and act upon global neoliberal influences packaged in reform initiatives. These issues are particularly important in light of teacher education being the site that prepares teachers—"agents of change and continuity" (Gardinier 2012)—who will influence and shape the nations' and the world's future generations.

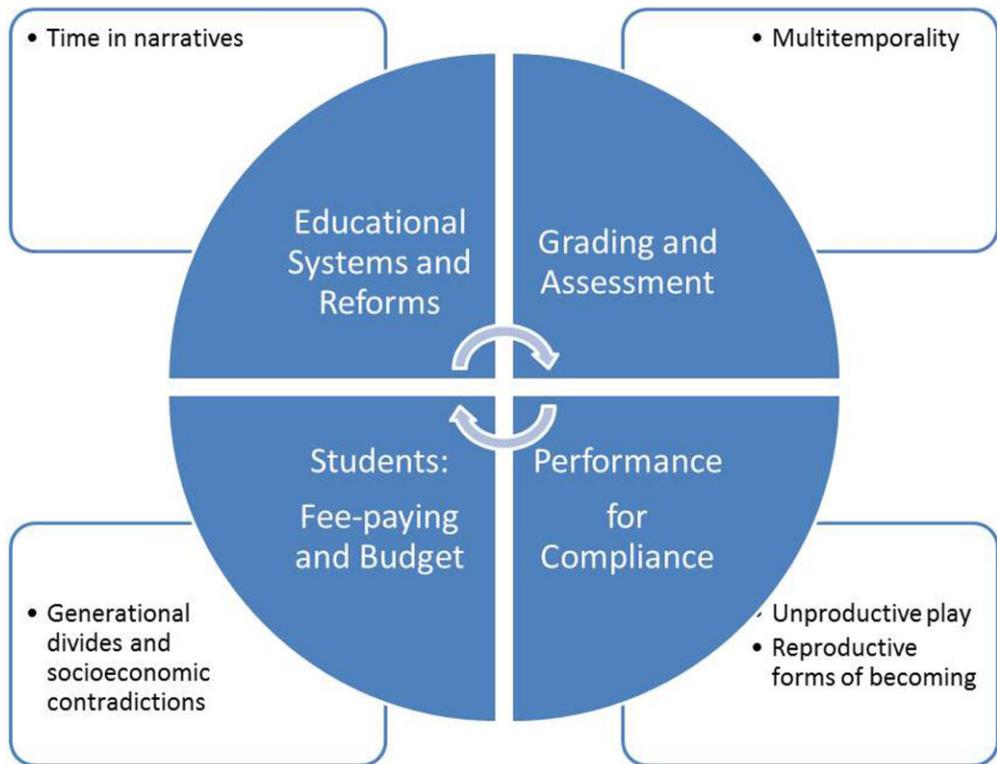
In light of this, my study focuses on participants' historicizing interpretations of transformations in the field of teacher education and on potential future trajectories of historical becoming that the changes may or may not afford. Through my ethnographic work, I show that the legacy of the socialist past and the current neoliberal moment present a dichotomy in participants' mental scapes of a better *before* and a lacking *now*. I argue that the memory of the Soviet accomplishments in education serves as a yardstick for assessing educational reforms, the quality of participants, and the reality of their work, which in turn shapes possibilities (or a lack thereof) of future change (Figure 1). My observations indicate that as participants debate, half-heartedly follow, or pretend to comply with modernization discourses and the newly introduced neoliberal ideology, they use the memories of the Soviet past as a moral compass to determine how desirable, how real, and how fictitious the policy terrains that they navigate are. Despite the democratic discourses promoted by the Bologna Process, the authoritarianism embedded in neoliberal educational policies prevents various groups from engaging in productive dialogues and play, without which a search for contextually appropriate models of education is less likely to occur.

Theoretical Framework

Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of "historical becoming" serves as a useful lens for understanding social transformations in the Russian Federation. Bakhtin observed that a human being does not undergo the process of becoming in isolation, but rather through an emerging with the world: "it is as though the very *foundations* of the world are changing, and man must change along with them" (1986:23). The space of emergence "on the border between two epochs, at the transition point from one to the other" (1986:23) is particularly relevant in describing post-socialist contexts without imposing a predetermined destination for those societies. Not only did Bakhtin stress the open-ended nature of human becoming, he also challenged linear conceptions of time and human development. Historical becoming captures the co-existence of multiple time frames in a particular space and acknowledges their creative powers over human beings.

Unlike previous studies that have examined the transformations in postsocialist contexts as transitions from socialism to capitalism, in which incomplete or failed implementations are interpreted as "mutations" (Silova 2009) or failure on the part of the participants

Figure 1.
Educational transformations in a historical becoming framework.



to change, this study draws on Bakhtin's work "to see *necessary connections* between this past and the living present, to understand the *necessary place* of this past in the *unbroken line of historical development*" (Bakhtin 1986:33). I rely on Bakhtin's discussion of historical becoming to read time in space and in human activity and to theorize the effects of the past on the interpretations of the present and possible projections for the future. In this reading, both memory and the generational divide between faculty and students (on the border between the Soviet past and the post-Soviet present) play a significant role. Here memory is a multivocal collective process mediated through narratives and texts, which allows participants to perform remembering even of those events that they themselves may have never experienced (Wertsch 2002).

Methodology and Data Sources

As a critical ethnography, this study examines how participants interpret ideological, political, and sociohistorical forces that shape their lives. In the course of my inquiry, I began to ask how participants use narratives of the past to make sense of the changes affecting their present and future. My study incorporates Bakhtin's theory by attending to the multivocality present at the sites; paying attention to the tensions, contradictions, and ambivalences in the utterances produced and recorded; and by presenting participants through their perspective on the world and on themselves revealed in dialogue (Quantz and O'Connor 1988).

This study is also a multisited ethnography—a design necessary for the examination of transformations in localities under global influences (Marcus 1995). I conducted most of my fieldwork at two pedagogical universities that represented different ends of a political and geographic continuum: Ognensk State Pedagogical University¹ (OSPU) in a central Russian city and Dobrolyubov State Pedagogical University (DSPU) in a large industrial city in what is known as Russia's heartland. OSPU has played an important role in Russian education for over 200 years. It enjoys geographic proximity to the centers of political decision making and serves as a site of many educational innovations. DSPU was founded about seventy years ago and has limited presence on the political stage of Russian education. Despite the differences between these institutions, however, I received similar responses from the participants at both sites.

In addition to site-specific ethnography, I was a participant observer at two professional conferences: one organized by the OSPU leadership to contest educational reforms and the other one organized by an international organization to discuss globalization and transformation in Eurasia. During the conferences I took narrative notes, interacted with the participants, recorded presentations, and collected artifacts. In addition, I collected and analyzed program documents, policy texts, newspaper publications, and media representations of educational reforms.

I collected ethnographic data over the span of 14 weeks in the summers of 2011 and 2012. As a native speaker of Russian intimately familiar with the culture, I was able to gain insights into the cultural processes I was observing despite the short span of my fieldwork. My presence at the sites during the end of the semester hassle allowed me to see more clearly the tensions and contradictions introduced by the reforms. My observations and analysis were confirmed during my subsequent research trips to the sites during other parts of the academic year. For my fieldwork, I visited the university daily, spent time at the department offices, observed classes, and interacted with students and faculty. I conducted more than fifty class and public event observations, participated in numerous informal interactions, as well as carried out 15 interviews with faculty and eight focus groups with students. Participants in my study varied in age (students: between 17 and 23; faculty: between 24 and 80) and in their work experience. On several occasions, due to my professional qualifications as a teacher educator, I was invited to co-teach a class or be a guest speaker for the students.

In this paper, I focus on presenting the most salient themes from my fieldwork and my analysis of the data. While at the sites, I became aware of how frequently conversations about education or university work lapsed into discussions of the past and often noted the ensuing nostalgia in my analytical memos. As I was conducting an initial coding of the data, the interplay between *before* and *now* stood out to me both in how these categories were used in the construction of the narratives that I heard and how these categories colored participants' interpretations of the changes.

Because I seek to understand the process of historical becoming, I analyzed the presence of the past in the interpretations and arrangements of the present. In order to do that, I canvassed my dataset for sections where the notions of *before*, *past*, and *Soviet* were prevalent. My analysis was iterative: after the initial coding, I selected the themes, wrote a brief summary of them, and then re-read my analytic memos, field notes, and interview transcripts for confirming or disconfirming evidence. The re-reading of the data allowed me to expand the summaries, to add the nuances and the contradictions to my initial observations, and to refine my analysis.

In this paper, I present a bricolage (Denzin and Lincoln 2005) of four themes that capture consensus, contradictions, ironies, and ambivalences that the categories of *before* and *now* made visible across different sites and contexts. The themes represent four knots of contestations and interpretations: the portrayal of the Soviet system and interpretations

of reform efforts in the post-Soviet period, grading and systems of assessment, students' academic abilities and their financial roles, as well as the role of performance for compliance in daily lives of the departments. The themes complement each other in presenting the "vestiges of the past" co-existing with the present and shaping the future (Bakhtin 1986) as well as in demonstrating the complexity of Russian historical becoming in the context of educational modernization reforms.

Reflexivity: Insider/Outsider

In Ognensk, I was introduced as a citizen of Ukraine (even though I am ethnically Russian) who is studying in the States, but in the dean's words, "we don't want to emphasize that because we do not need anyone thinking that we have an American spy lurking around our department" (field notes, May 17, 2012). At both sites, I was aware of the caution in faculty members' voices, and I sometimes noted the lack of trust that my presence evoked. Often, however, I participated in conversations where I was "our own" and "one of us." In one interview, my role shifted from being an outsider to being treated as an insider ("You know how it is here, you are one of us") to being an outsider again within a minute. This interview became most emblematic of my constantly shifting identity at the sites—identity that evoked the kinds of narratives and responses that may not have emerged without this duality.

Time in Space: The Physical Arrangements of the Department Offices

Before the discussion of the main themes, I want to note how the memory of the past is inscribed into the organization of space. Bakhtin (1986) noted: "there are complex visible signs of historical time in the strict sense of the word. These are visible vestiges of man's creativity, traces of his hands and his mind: cities, streets, buildings, artworks, technology, social organizations" (25). Department offices represent one of those "complex visible signs." Most department offices host all faculty in one room. This means that the most an instructor gets is a shelf and a shared desk. Only the department head gets his/her own desk, often located in a space that allows a clear view of the entire room. As time went by, I began to see this arrangement of space as the vestige of the socialist past: a strong sense of a collective cultivated through a shared open space, with a watchful eye of the power present in the same room.

Many department offices have little kitchen tables with teapots and cups. The presence of these tables represents the insertion of the private into the public life. In Dobrolyubov, the table stands in plain sight with chairs arranged in a circle around it. In Ognensk, the tables are often hidden behind the office furniture. In one department, the back of the office furniture was wall-papered to give the place a greater sense of intimacy and hominess. It is around the table that faculty most often gather; it is over tea and coffee that they share stories and discuss work. James Wertsch (2002) noted that during the Soviet times, kitchens were the sites of narrating alternative positions and expressing discontent. In postsocialist spaces, kitchen tables inserted into the lives of public institutions seem to play a similar role.

Educational System and Educational Reforms: Before and Now

Policy documents, whether issued abroad or in Russia, often start with praise for the Soviet system of education. Whether the praise is a rhetorical move or a tactical strategy is unknown; what is important is that this praise evokes the "ghosts of the past" (Bakhtin 1986). For example, the report on Russian higher education issued by OECD in 1999 opens with the following:

The Russian Federation inherits a long and distinguished history in tertiary education and science . . . Among the most striking legacies are the successes in raising the education attainment of the population, the extension of access to tertiary education throughout the vast territory, exceptional academic achievements of students and academicians. [OECD 1999:9]

This report stakes out the territory for its recommendations by first acknowledging the strength of the legacy from the Soviet past. The World Bank report on Russian educational reforms follows a similar rhetorical move but transitions to critiquing the system inherited from the Soviet Union almost immediately:

The education sector in Russia is one with a proud tradition . . . Russia's educational system, with broad access and high levels of scholarly achievement, has long been a source of strength. The Soviet system however was grossly overcentralized, inefficient and lacking in accountability. [Canning, Mook, and Heleniak 1999:v-vi]

Similarly, Russian policy documents either implicitly or explicitly refer to the legacy of the Soviet past. For example, the *Federal Policy of Educational Development 2006–2010* states, “comparative advantages of Russia in the sphere of education and fundamental sciences are today mostly determined by the potential accumulated in previous decades.” While there is no overt reference to the Soviet past, the implied time scale of several “previous decades” places the discussion in the Soviet context. The note explaining the introduction of new standards in 2009 provided a historical background stating that previous standards “preserved the best traditions of the Soviet education—its fundamental character and the breadth of preparation.” The new standards, however, are designed to reflect “the international trends in higher education.” Similarly to international documents quoted above, national documents imply that the strengths of the Soviet system do not warrant preserving it. To enter “the international educational space” and “to offer quality education to citizens of the Russian Federation” (Government of the Russian Federation 2005), it is necessary to “update,” “upgrade,” and “modernize” the system based on neoliberal market principles and on “international” approaches. In the more recent policy documents, references to the past disappear completely. The past can be easily sacrificed to prepare the way for the affluent future that can only be accomplished through modernization policies.

In contrast, teacher education faculty members who have been around for ten, twenty, or more years often reminisce about the past over tea. An elderly dean in Ognensk described a Soviet docent's salary of 320 rubles and a doctor's salary of 500 as years of abundance and prosperity (for comparison, at that time members of my family who worked as engineers received 170 rubles a month). What is important about this discussion of salaries is not simply the amount of pay but the social status that this pay indicated. Being a university professor or a scholar was seen as a prestigious, highly desired occupation. These memories of the past are offset by the contrast with the present. If in the past a professor could afford to dedicate time to research and science, *now* working multiple jobs in order to survive reduces one's ability to do research. For example, one of the department heads explained:

They pay poorly. Instructors have to be constantly running, they work several jobs. Before they worked at one place, gave themselves away to their work. Science requires that you sit down, read, think about it carefully. And now, how? When? Always running . . . Running everywhere. No strength left. Human beings, after all. They are tired. And that reflects on quality. [field notes, May 17, 2012]

Ultimately, the focus in these assessments varies: whereas the official version focuses on what the system's output was, the participants prioritize experiential difference. With a favorable orientation towards the Soviet system, many participants, including young faculty, saw a greater need for preserving it rather than for reforming it to match international standards.

The contrast between *before* and *now*, which casts *before* in a much more favorable light, was often used to critique or to subvert the modernization agenda. During the national educational conference that I attended, two teachers gave a presentation describing the benefits and challenges of their work. In their opening statement, one of them, rather passionately, with a chin lifted up high and voice rising over the audience exclaimed:

During the Soviet times, the teacher was surrounded with an aura of holiness and activism. When I was starting out, I wanted to be a teacher, not give all of myself away, but many forced me to do that. And now? We have educational services! (The room sneers and erupts in angry whispering). [conference transcript, May 14, 2012]

The quote illustrates the ambivalence towards the Soviet times—the teacher acknowledged that she was forced to do more than she was willing. Yet, despite her critical attitude toward impositions in the past, she used the memories of it to demonstrate her dissatisfaction with the present. The concluding sentence of this quote and the telling response from the audience reveal a disdain of the teaching community towards the restructuring of the system based on market values. “Educational services” (Rus: *obrazovatel’nye uslugi*) represents a redefinition of teacher’s work from the enlightenment model prevalent in the past to the business-oriented model of being a service provider whose responsibility is to satisfy the customer. New neoliberal policies offer this redefinition; negative responses to this phrase that happened several times during the conference showed that many educators found this redefinition offensive. It seems that this negative response toward educational services relies on the memory (not always flattering, as the quote above illustrates) of the Soviet times when education was an obligation—teachers’ and students’ service to the homeland and the whole society’s commitment towards the public good. The sign of the *Soviet past* is a contested notion—there is no one way to interpret it or reach consensus about it. Yet often, despite its contested nature, the sign serves a useful function—as a yardstick to assess educational reforms of *now*.

In light of this, many assessments of the reforms that emerged from the interviews, focus groups, and observations reflected this contrast. Many participants framed changes as “destruction,” “degradation,” and “loss” by making implicit or explicit comparisons with the old system gained either through experiential exposure to it or through evoking the narratives of it circulating in the society:

Everything wrong starts with politics. They have from the beginning **destroyed** everything and it turns out now that it is not clear what are we going to be and who we are going to be. [student focus group 1, June 8, 2011]

As they always say, Russia had the best system of education; here there is good knowledge. Now, all of this is **going away**. [student focus group 4, June 15, 2011]

They keep reforming everything, keep **destroying** everything, but build nothing. [faculty interview, June 15, 2012]

These quotes reflect common narratives that circulate in the Russian space, taken up by some in active attempts to resist or subvert government policies.

There are, however, also those who appear critical of the legacy of the Soviet past in the current educational system (occasionally students or reform-minded visionaries of various ages). They note that systems and structures change but contents of teacher education remain outdated. For them, what keeps the system the same is a lack of self-criticism. “When you critically acknowledge that there are problems, you start looking for solutions,” stated one of the students during a focus group (Focus group 5, June 14, 2012). They see reforms as superficial changes that do not fully address actual problems on the ground. While the role of memory is decreased in this case, the overall assessment remains negative.

If reforms are seen in such a negative light, then how do reforms continue being rolled out? One of the speakers at the educational conference, again drawing on the memory of the Soviet past, suggested a possible explanation:

Many years have passed. I have gone through the Soviet school. What was its success? Its success was in this unity: that which was declared by the party and by the government, forgive me, was done at school and in many cases at home. But now look. We are conspirators. The government imposes one thing on us, destroys [everything]. The question really is whether this is treason or stupidity in many ways. [conference transcript, May 15, 2012]

Similar to many other participants, the speaker perceived reforms as a form of imposition. Moreover, the imposition came from a lack of competency or knowledge (stupidity) or as a form of destroying national resources for the benefit of an external power (treason). Top-down imposition, a common description of the reforms by different participants, leads to certain types of responses—either cautious and critical adaptation (a process that will be examined in the example on changing grading systems) or performance of compliance (multiple manifestations of which will be discussed later in this paper).

Before I move on to the next theme, I will add one final observation on top-down reforms. The educational conference organized by OSPU was described as the space of dialogue. During the plenary meetings, some of the organizers noted: “We have to act now before they pass all the laws. If we don’t act now, it will soon be too late” (field notes, May 14, 2012). In this statement, acting referred to creating a document—a resolution—that was supposed to be sent to the policymakers urging them to change their course of action. After the conference, I participated in a conversation with two faculty members who had attended the conference as well. *Before* emerged in the conversation yet again.

AD: Before, after the conference, we make a resolution and they read it, but now . . .

I: Oh, so the resolution is not a new phenomenon?

AD: No, this is how it was before. Overall, anything that concerned pedagogical education was sent to the universities. They could send their suggestions for corrections or changes. Those were read, those were listened to. Everything was discussed at the department meetings.

TV: And at the party committee meetings. [field notes, May 17, 2012]

This exchange reveals the irony of the so-called new democratic regimes and ideologies of autonomous universities: in participants’ eyes, dialogic spaces for contesting and effecting change have disappeared. From their perspective, a communist totalitarian system had more spaces for democratic dialogue and interaction than the modern regime. Most of the innovations and new regulations are believed to have come from the top without taking into consideration the local realities or participants’ suggestions. Similarly to some earlier comments, the re-narrated memory of the Soviet past rendered the present as problematic.

In this section, I have examined different “vestiges of the past” (Bakhtin 1986), which in unofficial conversations serve as the moral compass to debate, question, and challenge transformations in the present. In the next section, I examine how participants attempted to follow reform directives to use a new grading system while critically assessing them with an eye on the past.

Embodiment of Reforms: Grading Systems Before and Now

Prior to the collapse, a common grading system across the USSR was a five-point system with five being the highest grade (excellent), four (good), three (satisfactory), and two (unsatisfactory). Students from elementary school to university level were often given

names based on their grade level: *otlichnitsa* for a girl with all excellent marks or *troyechnik* for a boy with all threes, for example. The connections between the grades and the names assigned to students reveal the character-building or the upbringing element built into this system. In one of the letters published in *Voprosy Obrazovaniya*, a leading educational journal in the Russian Federation, the author explained this point in the following way:

As I see it, the five-point system is intended for addressing the challenges of upbringing. This is how it is interpreted by a child. For him, "Excellent! Good Job!" or "Good. Normal." Or "Satisfactory. Not bad." [Sachava 2010:53]

In this system, students were expected to perform consistently throughout the academic semester. At the university level, the final grade was largely determined by a student's performance on the oral exam administered during the final weeks of the semester (the time that many students found stressful and nerve wracking) and the numerical average of all the ongoing grades of the semester. In the absence of predetermined grading criteria, faculty relied on their perceptions of students in grade assignment. For example, one of the DSPU faculty shared, "I evaluate students based on *my impressions of them*, based on the results of their work" (emphasis added, interview, June 20, 2011). This statement reveals an underlying assumption that, in order to produce a good impression on the faculty, students had to be consistent in their learning by doing well on the ongoing assignments, such as homework, and on the final exam. This made the learning process cumulative but nebulous.

New educational policies sought to change the system of grade allocation to move away from what policymakers considered a narrow and constraining five-point system to a percentage-based grading scale closer to the Western model. OGPU in Ognensk was one of the first universities that experimented with a new point-ranking system (Rus: *bal'no-reytingovaya sistema*)—a system based on point accumulation where different parts of the course receive a certain percentage of the grade. The learning process became concretized in a "technological card of a discipline"—a document that lists how different elements of the course or different assignments will be graded. Because the technological card is designed by the department rather than by individual instructors, faculty authority over assessment is reduced. Concretizing prevents instructors from relying excessively on their impressions of students and forces them to focus more on the measurable outcomes of students' work. With this concretization, the *grade* becomes cumulative but not the learning process itself. The final exam is either completely eliminated or exists only as one of several other assessments (which certainly alleviates students' stress). The assumption of consistent performance is undermined because the learning process has been truncated into assignments and assessment segments captured in the technological card.

The introduction of the new system of grading, however, does not eliminate the existence of the previous system: different grading systems continue existing side-by-side in everyday conversations among faculty and students and in department documents. Department grade records and individual plans issued for students to keep track of their performance contained a chart showing how grades can be translated from one system to another. This process of translation was necessary because, as one of OGPU administrators shared during an interview, "only grades go into student grade books (Rus: *zachetnaya knizhka*) and into department grade records" (interview, May 31, 2012). What this means is that even though instructors were expected to use the point-ranking system to evaluate students' performance, the book-keeping systems were still set up to accept only the five-point grade. An interesting contrast emerges from comparing the grading scales released for the faculty and for the students. The version for the faculty still has the upbringing component of verbal evaluation, such as "excellent" and "unsatisfactory" as well as percentage points (such as 95% or 85%). The students' version does not have the

upbringing element but instead presents grades in Latin script (such as A, B, and C) as well as intervals on a continuum (such as 3.0, 3.25, or 3.5), features that did not exist before.

The persistent co-existence of different scales on many of the department documents captures *multitemporality*—"as remnants or relics of various stages and formations of the past and as rudiments of stages in the more or less distant future" (Bakhtin 1986:28). This multitemporality emerges in classroom exchanges and daily behaviors. It becomes infused with new meanings and reveals contestations around these approaches, demonstrated by several of the classroom vignettes and interview transcripts, which I describe next.

At an OGPU methods class, Yekaterina Alexandrovna, a middle-aged candidate of science, was giving a lecture on assessment and shared that Russian teachers have not incorporated language portfolios into their practices. One of the students asked why that was the case and another chimed in repeating Yekaterina Alexandrovna's earlier explanation for the difficulty of implementing the Bologna system in Russia, "It does not fit the Russian mentality." Another student joined the exchange by offering the example of the point-ranking system: "It is the same with the point-ranking system. Some faculty members have a hard time figuring out how many points, how to count. So, theoretically they changed over to the point-ranking system, but realistically . . . Well, it is hard." One of the students, sitting close to me, whispered with a degree of sarcasm in his voice, "They just don't know how to count." Baffled by their comments, the instructor rather defensively insisted that the point-ranking system is not that difficult, "because everything is counted up and written up in the technological card" (field notes, May 26, 2012). During my next class observation, I caught a glimpse of the little notebook where Yekaterina Alexandrovna recorded her students' grades. "There stand little fives and pluses," I wrote down later, "Even if she has changed over towards a point-ranking system, in her notebook stand old grades" (field notes, May 28, 2010). During subsequent interviews, I learned that faculty did indeed struggle with counting points, and each department had to hire a consultant who did the translation from the old into the new grades for them.

Students, however, did not need a consultant to figure out their points and grades. At OGPU, I saw students waiting in the hallway for their turn to go inside the classroom to take a final oral exam. Huddling together with their friends, students kept adding up their points: "Thirty-five, forty, forty-seven, fifty-nine . . ." Their voices resounded in unison as the number of points climbed to the desired seventy-one points necessary to get a pass. Unlike many faculty, students seemed eager to accept the innovation probably because the point-ranking system curbed some of the instructors' authoritarian power over their performance evaluation and in some cases decreased the impact of the final exam on their grades.

Students in Dobrolyubov referred to the point-ranking system as a positive alternative, but distinguished between the new approach and the "real" exams of the past:

S1: We had **real** exams only during the first and second years. Now, they have the point-ranking system. Maybe, they don't want to sit with us during the exams.

S2: But it is a good system. [Focus Group 4, June 15, 2011]

DSPU's faculty, however, had a different perspective. An administrator during an interview stated, "We were not forced to do it, but it is not taking root here" (interview, June 20, 2011). Drawing on a metaphor of transplanted trees, his statement implied that the foreignness of the approach did not allow it to become useful in the Russian context. Anna Sergeevna (AS), a former department head, elaborated on this point during an interview:

AS: Educational reforms have to be carried out while keeping the Russian mentality in mind (Rus: *uchetom russkoy specifiki*) . . . Before we used to have five-point system. Now, are we not going to have exams? We will have them but only for appearance sake? They should be working during the

semester. Right now, we are grading just so that they get a checkmark for each completed task. Adding up the grade, students may have questions. This will smear the learning process (Rus: *smazyvaet uchebny process*)

I: Meaning, the exams check what has been accumulated?

AS: Yes. [interview, June 20, 2011]

This quote reveals several important threads that constitute the knots of the conflict over the incorporation of the new grading system. First, Anna Sergeevna confirmed an earlier observation that the point-ranking system is perceived as too foreign for the Russian context as it was introduced without taking “the Russian mentality” into consideration. Second, the percentage ratings allow students to manipulate their grade by attending to those aspects of the course that are graded higher and slacking on those that are assigned less points. From a faculty perspective, as this quote illustrates, this “smears the learning process” or results in uneven learning gains. An administrator from a pedagogical university in another central city shared with me a similar observation during an interview: “The problem is that students pass but do not gain deep knowledge. They accumulate points—everything is very interesting, interesting projects—but they do not know basic things. They pass but a lack of foundations does not reveal itself until the graduation exams” (interview, June 25, 2012). What different faculty seem to indicate is that the point-ranking system allows students to do well on one assignment or another, but their overall knowledge of the discipline appears to be significantly weaker.

The contrast in perspectives and practices between mostly Soviet-born faculty and post-Soviet born students reveals the emergence of new forms; yet, the direction of the changes may be less predictable than expected. The contestations surrounding the grading system represent different historical and ideological perspectives on the role of assessment and on the notion of the learning process. The co-existence of multiple perspectives and multiple time-scales points to Bakhtin’s (1986) notion of historical becoming: the past co-exists with a potential future shaping the present interpretations and conflicts. What is important about the co-existence of these scales is both how different groups interpret them (as ours or not; as helpful or as detrimental) and the different ideologies that these represent, with the five-point system being perceived as authentically Russian and fitting the Russian mentality and the point-ranking system as foreign and detrimental to learning. The notion of performance enters the narrative: the practices of the past are seen as “real” whereas the practices of the present, such as giving exams only as one of the many assessments, are interpreted as “for appearance’s sake,” the issue that I will take up in a later section. Before that, however, I will focus on how modernization policies shaped the distinctions between what is considered real and not real among students. In the next section, I examine what happens to students as they enter the spaces so heavily populated with narratives of the past.

Students: Before and Now

One of the themes that became salient to me during fieldwork at both sites is common references to “good students” of the past and “weak students” of the present. Over tea, faculty chatted about students from *before* who were “fabulous,” whose “eyes were glowing with excitement to learn,” and who were eager to take on “challenging topics and hard questions” (field notes 2011, 2012). Those comments stood in stark contrast to the comments about students nowadays. A common refrain among instructors was “Students are no longer the same.”

These comments did not escape students’ attention. Students noted this type of attitude during focus groups, and one particular group listed the whole range of teachers’

comments about them. In one or two minutes of our conversations they listed all the qualities that faculty say students had in the past that they did not have now: “smarter,” “more prepared,” “more hard-working,” “initiative taking,” “more motivated.” They finished this list by saying, “That is how our teachers tell us. This comes from our teachers’ mouths” (Focus Group 2, June 10, 2011).

What, I wondered, could have created such a rift in how students are perceived, narrated, and positioned through department discourses? One of the common explanations that I heard from many different participants is the perceived cultural decline in the society in general, which leads to poorer school achievement results and weaker preparation of students for college work. While that accounts for some changes, modernization policies contribute the rest.

Following global trends, the structures of university funding changed. *Before*, the government provided higher education free of charge. Russian Law on Education from 1996 stated that each citizen has the right to receive higher education free of charge on a competitive basis. OECD (1999) suggested a revision in funding policies arguing that “within the current context of severe state austerity and the development of market relationship the old order is no longer holding” (p. 136). To cut government expenses on higher education, universities were encouraged to take fee-paying students.

Change in funding structures created two groups of students: *budget* students receive education free of charge and *contract* students pay for their education themselves. The socialist contract between the state and the citizen became renegotiated: the state is no longer providing funding for all who have passed the entrance competition. Instead, now the competition exists only among those who cannot pay themselves—or potential budget students.

This becomes treacherous in a number of ways. On the one hand, in tight budget times, universities compensate for the lack of state funding by taking in more contract students, which often means taking anyone who applies and is willing to pay irrespective of their level of preparedness. The fewer demands placed on the entrants, the higher the expectations that the faculty will adjust to the new situation. This means that they have to lower student performance standards, which creates tensions among the faculty.

It also leads to drawing moral boundaries (Lamont and Molnar 2002) between budget and contract students. It is commonly believed that because budget students had to compete to be admitted, their abilities are higher and their knowledge is better. One of the instructors shared an observation commonly held by faculty: “Fee-paying students are weak, not like the budget students. These are all stars!” (field notes, June 5, 2012). Potentially, faculty draw some of the boundaries among the students based on the memory of the socialist contract in which the perceived real students are those who earned their right to be at the university through fierce competition, placing those who pay into the category of second-rate students because they failed in that competition.

Fee-paying students often recognized that they are dismissed as a second-rate population of the university and responded to that treatment with resentment.

S1: I think they treat us worse. You, the 17th group, you pay and there is nothing we can do with you.

S2: If you are paying, then it means you are not smart enough.

S3: That means something is wrong with us. [Focus Group 4, June 15, 2011]

In addition, the demographic decline and a deteriorating status of the teaching profession reduce the pool of applicants to pedagogical universities. Not to lose state funding because of low student numbers, departments lower admission standards, in some cases making all the students who apply budget students. Over lunch, one instructor rather

dissatisfied with the student body vented, "They admitted as many people as applied. They got 20 points on the Unified Exam, and that's the fewest points one could earn, they still took them. Some did not even take English. They were accepted nonetheless!" (field notes, June 6, 2012). By accepting all who apply in an attempt to survive, some universities act like an entrepreneurial university actively promoted by the Bologna Process. They operate as a business by prioritizing profit over selecting the most qualified students in order to maintain high standards of teaching and learning. Acting like a business, a university or a department does not choose among its clients.

A business model of operations comes at a price for teacher educators and for students. The emotional work of observing a decline and having to work with students who under different circumstances would not have been admitted and who through a memory of a better past are considered undeserving is emotionally draining. The satisfaction normally gained through the status of a university professor and through work with those who worked hard for a chance to get a higher education is lost. Faculty often say, "They take everyone in and then we have to suffer."

During a department meeting, a department head said with a sigh, "See what the Bologna Process is doing! The students' rights are expanded but their responsibility is not developed, and teachers' rights are decreased." The faculty present at the meeting almost unanimously objected, "What does the Bologna system have to do with this? We just hold on to the students too much." One of the instructors, Arkadiy Dmitrievich, went on "We know this comes from administration. One teacher to ten students. I would love to take a few students away with me for my half salary" (field notes, May 29, 2012). The policy of optimization, here referenced as "one teacher to ten students," is currently used to fire university instructors in order to increase the teacher-to-student ratio (which in 1999 was one-to-seven [OECD 1999]). The same policy is used by university administrators to force departments to accept or retain students despite their inability to cope with academic work. Most likely, Arkadiy Dmitrievich receives workload for only half a salary. Playing with the Russian expression "to take someone away to the grave with you" (Rus: *zabrat' s soboy v mogilu*) akin to the English expression "if I am going down, you are going with me," Arkadiy Dmitriyevich jokingly volunteered to resign so that undeserving students can be more easily expelled.

With everyone being accepted to keep the university afloat, faculty are urged to lower their expectations of the students. During a department meeting in Ognensk, one of the faculty shared, "Students are weak. We are trying to do everything as *before* but we don't have time." "Can you show some flexibility?" inquired the department head in response. "I can give them all fours but those cannot be compared to other groups. At least, they won't all get twos." Feeling the pressure to pass students even though their performance may not be on par, she consented to give higher grades and soon left the meeting. An administrator noted this tension in an interview:

Our grading scale is very strict. Instructors still orient themselves towards the old criteria. Maybe it is a good thing that the university is introducing a new, more lenient grading scale. Maybe it is time to re-adjust, to start teaching towards the modern children. You see the kind of contradictions that appear here? [interview, May 31, 2012]

In both of these excerpts, *before* plays an important role in shaping instructors' expectations and interpretations of the changes. Hidden between the lines is the resistance to the changes because they are perceived as a decline. Doing "everything as before" or applying "the old criteria" is more akin to doing real education than what the new conditions imply. High standards and high expectations made for quality education; this is the message that both instructors and students seem to adhere to, often stating that *before* there was real and high quality education that is no longer available. Faculty members communicate this and

their perceptions of the new student body, or modern children, to students, which has its consequences.

In Dobrolyubov, I was invited to speak to two different groups of students. After my first presentation, I chatted in English with the fourth-year students about their observations of educational reforms. Born in 1991, students quickly acknowledged that they had never seen the Soviet Union but were told many stories by families, teachers, and older friends about how much better everything was before the collapse. Many people had told them that education was of higher quality, things were of better quality, and people were better off despite the deficits and a lack of material resources. These students, similar to the focus group participants quoted earlier, acknowledged their sense of inferiority towards the students of the past. They described themselves as the “generation in-between.” “We are guinea pigs. They tested all their experiments on us: the Unified Exam, now this Bologna Process, and higher education reforms.” The next group of students referred to themselves not simply as a “generation in-between” but as a generation of failure and of *brak* (Rus.)—“waste, defective products, rejects” (field notes, June 7, 2012). Reducing their own humanity, they conjured up an assembly line image where quality control personnel pick out defective products and toss them into trash. Their perspective echoes across society: those born in the 90s are often called “the lost generation.”

What emerged out of these multiple in-roads into conversations about so-called weak students is how modernization policies created conditions under which students are consistently positioned as less than. The narratives of *before* as well as neoliberal educational policies create generations of students who perceive *themselves* to be a loss. They (unwillingly) accept and internalize their own inferiority, reproducing the moral boundaries between the superior *before* and inferior *now*. Through the lens of Bakhtin’s theory, students’ self-perceptions as inferior beings in contrast to the students in the past represent dim visions of the future. This realization made me wonder whether there is any hope of change. To explore possibilities for the future, I examine daily practices on different levels of department work, the focus of my next section.

Performance: Before and Now

Research examining the effects of neoliberal transformations in Western educational systems note trends of “staged performance” (Shore and Wright 1999) or performativity (Ball 2003, 2012), in which actors distinguish between the real work of teaching or academic work and the production of outputs that are measured by external evaluations (Davies 2005). The notion of performance acquires new significance in the Russian context because participants rarely acknowledge the presence of performance *prior* to the collapse despite its long-standing presence in socialist societies (see Verdery 1996). In interviews and in informal chats, participants said that *before* it was important to “give your soul away” to studies, to research, or to teaching, but *now* all that matters is overt compliance. Narratives of the past are about dedication and commitment; stories of today are of survival and performing to create visibility (Rus: *sozdat’ vidimost’*) of following rules and orders. This re-interpretation renders the practices of the past as more real than the actions in the present, which are often perceived as staged performances across different levels: from classroom interactions to departments’ implementation of modernization policies.

In classrooms, overt compliance is manifested during lectures when students’ bodies lean forward and their heads are bent down as their pens go through the motions of writing, all the while they are scribbling in the margins of their notebooks. During a methods class when the professor gave a lengthy lecture on conducting discussions, I saw some heads bent down over books carefully wrapped up in notebooks. During an informal chat with a different group of students, I heard one of the male students note about

a class, "It was a useful class. We got a lot of books read there." Surprised to hear that about a lecture-format class, I asked what he meant. He explained, "The professor would lecture, and we would be reading books assigned for home reading" (field notes, June 7, 2012). Present bodies signify compliance; there is no way to check the presence of minds.

It was not only the bodies that were used to perform the role of a good student. Many of the classes that I observed seemed to follow a script: a teacher asked a question, one student recited an answer; a teacher asked another question, another student recited an answer; and on and on they went. The assignment could be slightly different: for example, in one class instead of a teacher asking questions, the teacher asked students to give reports, and students one after another took five to ten minutes to present their reports. The teacher said, "Who is next?" after each recital was over (field notes, June 8, 2012). I was curious how students and faculty interpreted the script. The faculty explained the script as a necessary routine. In most of the focus groups, students explained that they distributed the questions among themselves and performed the tasks set by the teachers for a checkmark.

S1: You get online, find a slide, come to class, retell it, and get your checkmark. . . .

S2: Teachers don't care that we are reading off the paper, even though it is time to be speaking [on our own].

S2: But it all is for the checkmark. You say it, you read it, you still get a checkmark. We have no stimulus to speak.

S3: What are they going to do? If they force us to retell it, we'll come unprepared. But this way, we can read it off the paper and everyone is ready. [several students laugh] [Focus Group 4, June 15, 2011]

This conversation shows that students realized that they are putting on a show to convince instructors that they are doing the work. They recognized that they are being short-changed by the performance because they do not seem to be getting the knowledge or the understanding out of their classes, but they blamed teachers for not demanding more of them and for not being interested in their learning. Often, students could name one or two faculty members that demanded real work from them, but most often they saw classroom events as a game of charades. On one occasion, I saw students passing back and forth photocopies of their homework: when only one or two students had done the homework before class, the rest would perform by reading the copies of their peers' work. Rebelling against homework assignments was possible but not very helpful; overtly demonstrating that one has not done the work was an option but it could create negative consequences if the instructor reduced one's grade later. In such situations, performance was used for self-protection.

But students were not the only ones engaged in performance. Faculty often referred to writing reports or designing syllabi based on the new standards for a checkmark as well. One instructor, critical of his colleagues' status quo, shared during an interview, "When they write new syllabi, they see if there is some alignment with the standards, for the attestation. But it is only for a checkmark. The rest continues the old way" (interview, June 22, 2012). One of the faculty referring to the implementation of an alternative form of evaluation—language portfolios—provided an explanation that encompasses more than just a refusal to change practices:

This is the kind of politics that comes out. We are required to do stuff, we pretend to be doing it. We create the visibility that it exists. We try to incorporate things but there is no material base for it. [interview, May 24, 2012]

Performance of compliance extended to the department-level work as well. At OSPU, one of the departments updated their curriculum plan through a hybridization of the old

and the new: the first half of the document was based on the new 2009 standards and included the list of competencies that students were supposed to develop during the course; the second half of the document was based on the itemization of contents and lists of lecture topics, similarly to the old standards issued in 2000–2005. The document represented an upgrade: it reflected new policies and incorporated the language of modernization. During interviews, however, faculty and administrators alike repeated the same phrase, “We cannot change the content. How can we?” My numerous classroom observations confirmed that statement: while the documents reflected some of the new discourses, classroom practices followed the same lecture/seminar format that existed during the Soviet times (Long and Long 1999). While the practices with some rare exceptions remained largely the same, program texts were used to signal compliance with the policies of the Ministry of Education by incorporating modernization buzzwords (Steiner-Khamsi 2010).

Performance is necessary not only for demonstrating compliance but also for ensuring survival. At an international conference in a central city, I met a couple of instructors who taught at a pedagogical university in one of the large industrial centers of Russia. They confided that the department administration creates a visibility of a student body signed up for courses, submitting lists full of “dead souls”—names of students who don’t exist or never attended. Performance becomes separated from daily lives of regular work—the regular work requires that the process continues as usual, but survival requires putting up a performance that will bring in needed financial resources. Touching on a similar theme, Bakhtin wrote about Goethe, “he wanted to bring together and unite the present, past, and future with the ring of necessity . . . It was visible, concrete, and material, but it was materially creative, historical necessity” (1986:39). The incident of adding “dead souls” captures this creative potential evoked by necessity and connected to the past of the nation. The very phrase “dead souls” comes from the title of Gogol’s famous novel, in which accountants keep books with names of people who do not exist. Improvisation in dire financial times rests on the memory of historic performances, conducted before and during the Soviet era.

An important nuance about performance is the role of power as the gravity force that sets performance in motion. At one of the OSPU departments, I asked if I could see the technological card for one of the courses. The department head asked the assistant to search for it and when the assistant said that she could not find it, the department head exclaimed, “How? I remember how we filled it out when a pro-rector threatened to come here” (field notes, June 1, 2012). This exchange revealed that the card describing how grades are allocated was created not for actually calculating students’ grades but for convincing those higher up in the educational hierarchy that the department was following the script of the point-ranking system. A similar event occurred during my time at DSPU. In the expectation of an upcoming accreditation, the department head moved the binders holding curriculum plans and syllabi, rarely seen during daily functioning of the department, onto the window sill of the department office. She was going to make revisions to align them closer to the language of modernization—not for teaching but for convincing accreditors.

The opposite is also true: performance dissipates when power that holds the performance together is not present. During a class taught by a graduate student, student bodies that performed the role of studious students unraveled and slouched in their seats the moment the professor left the room (field notes, May 25, 2012). Modernization and innovation may be discussed as positive and desirable in official public settings, but in private settings one is more likely to hear comments similar to the one offered by an OSPU’s administrator, “With all of these reforms, education is only getting worse” (interview, May 21, 2012).

This duplicity and the effect of power on people's performance are not new in Russian history. Wertsch (2002) described the division between public and private lives in productions of historic narratives during the Soviet times. Similar observations were made about factories and collective farms putting out reports of production that matched official expectations but greatly exaggerated actual industrial or farming output in many socialist states (Verdery 1996). Performances happening in the educational sphere today are memories inscribed in the bodies and preserved in the collective mind: the urge to perform compliance convincingly enough to avoid invoking wrath. Yet, with the past being re-narrated as a more authentic mode of existence, that which was performed in the past is perceived as real work, whereas that which is performed in the present as implementation of reforms is interpreted as a staged show to demonstrate compliance.

This performance, however, has long-lasting consequences. Bakhtin (1984) described the important role of carnival in the process of historical becoming. During times of carnival, when hierarchical relationships are suspended, actors' performances on stage allow them to experiment with new ideas and new roles. It is the suspension of oppressive relationships and the absence of power that allows for renewal and regeneration to be conceived. Imagination and play—key features of the carnival—become resources for liberating human consciousness from old categories and for creating new forms. Bakhtin wrote: "The carnival spirit . . . frees human consciousness, thought, and imagination for new potentialities. For this reason great changes, even in the field of science, are always preceded by a certain carnival consciousness that prepares the way" (1984:49).

In the case of Russian teacher education, the analysis of performance that multiple actors engage in demonstrates the opposite: the presence of power and entrenched hierarchies eliminate the possibility of the *carnivalesque*. In their attempt to use performance to convince power-holders that the script often created or initiated elsewhere is followed, the actors do not experience the freedom to create, innovate, and shape new approaches but instead reproduce the existing structures only superficially modified for the modern days. Compliance and survival become forms of unproductive play; the constraints placed on participants limit opportunities for creativity; a lack of resources leave little room for innovation or design.

Conclusion

According to Bakhtin, "a creatively effective past . . . produces in conjunction with the present a particular direction for the future, and, to a certain degree, predetermines the future" (1986:34). In this paper, I have demonstrated the effects of the past in the Russian context: in participants' assessment of educational reforms not as a path of progress but rather as a path of destruction and decline, in the contestations over a new grading system that decreases the quality of students' knowledge, and in a divided moral order, in which students of the present fade in comparison with the students of the past. The memories of the past are used to appraise and to distinguish the quality of people, practices, and processes: on the border between two epochs, the closer something is to the old, the more it is esteemed. This appraisal results in performance for compliance where actors go through the motions to convince those with greater power that they are following the script, but all the while they attempt to preserve established practices or maintain the status quo. Authoritarian power structures within various social institutions lock participants under the dominion of the old categories. To break through and to experience deep transformative change, spaces of creativity and play, as well as spaces for dialogue between various levels of power and policy implementation, are necessary. Even though the process of becoming is open ended, without freedom, imagination, and dialogue, the hold of the past and the unproductive forces of the present pave the way for a bleak future.

The analysis of the Russian context is relevant for the consideration of neoliberal globalization and its interpretations at educational sites around the world. First, the future-oriented project of modernization in many contexts calls for the erasure of the past. Neoliberal educational policies present past traditions as barriers for future progress, urging individuals and social groups to break away from them. The Russian case demonstrates that by drawing on historical memory, participants challenge the victory narratives of modernization discourses. Second, global reforms are inserted into new contexts as a panacea without considering their appropriateness for the sociocultural conditions or the consequences that the overlay of the changes they evoke can have for future generations. When students and future teachers begin to view themselves as defective products after experiencing onslaughts of educational reforms, it may be necessary to begin critical conversations about expediency of such approaches. Finally, neoliberal discourses promote notions of freedom yet materialize in tighter top-down control and an authoritarian push for change. Authoritarian measures of control hidden under the promise of greater freedoms preclude possibilities to envision alternative futures. Where the visions of a better future and attempts to create it could come from remains an important question for reflection and exploration both in the Russian and global context.

Olena (Helen) Aydarova is a doctoral candidate in Curriculum, Instruction, and Teacher Education at Michigan State University (aydarova@msu.edu).

Notes

Acknowledgments. This project was carried out with the help of Michigan State University Summer Research Fellowship. I would like to thank Lynn Paine, Alaina Lemon, Kyle Greenwalt, and Aaron Bodle for the help and support during my research and during the preparation of this manuscript. I also thank Bevin Roue for helpful advice and suggestions.

1. All names used in this paper are pseudonyms.

References

- Bain, Olga
 2010 Education After the Fall of the Berlin Wall: The End of History or the Beginning of Histories? *In Post-Socialism Is not Dead: (Re)Reading the Global in Comparative Education I*. Silova, ed. Pp. 27–57. International Perspectives on Education and Society, Vol. 14. Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail
 1984 *Rabelais and His World*. Indianapolis: University of Indiana Press.
 1986 *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Ball, Stephen J.
 2003 The Teacher's Soul and the Terrors of Performativity. *Journal of Education Policy* 18(2):215–228.
 2012 *Global Education Inc.: New Policy Networks and the Neoliberal Imaginary*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Canning, Mary, Peter R. Moock, and Timothy E. Heleniak
 1999 *Reforming Education in the Regions of Russia*. No. 457. Herndon: World Bank.
- Davies, Bronwyn
 2005 The (Im)Possibility of Intellectual Work in Neoliberal Regimes. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 26(1):1–14.
- Denzin, Norman K., and Yvonna S. Lincoln
 2005 *The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research*. *In The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, eds. Pp. 1–28. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

- Dull, Laura J.
2012 Teaching for Humanity in a Neoliberal World: Visions of Education in Serbia. *Comparative Education Review* 56(3):511–533.
- Gardinier, Meg P.
2012 Agents of Change and Continuity: The Pivotal Role of Teachers in Albanian Educational Reform and Democratization. *Comparative Education Review* 56(4):659–683.
- Gounko, Tatiana
2008 Translating from Soviet to Neo-liberal: Policy Transitions in Russian Higher Education and the Role of the World Bank, the OECD, and the IMF. Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag.
- Government of the Russian Federation
2005 O federal'noy tselevooy programme razvitiya obrazovaniya na 2006–2010 [About the federal policy of educational development for 2006–2010]. Moscow: Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation.
- Idov, Michael, ed.
2011 *Made in Russia: Unsung Icons of Soviet Design*. New York: Rizzoli.
- Lamont, Michèle, and Virag Molnar
2002 The Study of Boundaries in the Social Sciences. *Annual Review of Sociology* 28:167–195.
- Long, Delbert H, and Roberta Long
1999 *Education of teachers in Russia*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Lynch, James, and H. Dudley Plunkett.
1973 *Teacher Education and Cultural Change: England, France, West Germany*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.
- Marcus, George E.
1995 *Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography*. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24:95–117.
- Morgan, Anthony, and Nadezhda V. Kulikova
2007 Reform and Adaptation in Russian Higher Education: An Institutional Perspective. *European Education* 39(3):39–61.
- Nikitin, Vadim
2012 Back in the USSR. *Nation* 294(2/3):18–21.
- Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development
1999 *Tertiary Education and Research in the Russian Federation*. Paris: OECD Publications.
- Paine, Lynn, and Kenneth Zeichner
2012 The Local and the Global in Reforming Teaching and Teacher Education. *Comparative Education Review* 56(4):569–583.
- Quantz, Richard A., and Terence W. O'Connor
1988 Writing Critical Ethnography: Dialogue, Multivoicedness, and Carnival in Cultural Texts. *Educational Theory* 38(1):95–109.
- Rizvi, Fazal, and Bob Lingard
2010 *Globalizing Education Policy*. London: Routledge.
- Robertson, Susan L.
2012 Placing Teachers in Global Governance Agendas. *Comparative Education Review* 56(4):584–607.
- Sachava, Olga S.
2010 Nereshennie problemy pedagogicheskogo diskursa: dvoika ili troika? [Unresolved challenges of pedagogical discourse: a two or a three?]. *Voprosy Obrazovania* 4:50–56.
- Shore, Cris, and Susan Wright
1999 Audit Culture and Anthropology: Neo-Liberalism in British Higher Education. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 5:557–575.
- Silova, Iveta
2009 Varieties of Educational Transformation: The Post-Socialist States of Central/Southeastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union. In *International Handbook of Comparative Education*. Robert Cowen and Andreas M. Kazamias, eds. Pp. 295–320. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Steiner-Khamsi, Gita
2010 The Politics and Economics of Comparison. *Comparative Education Review* 54(3):323–342.
- Steiner-Khamsi, Gita, and Ines Stolpe
2006 *Educational Import: Local Encounters with Global Forces in Mongolia*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Timoshenko, Konstantin

2011 The Winds of Change in Russian Higher Education: Is the East Moving West? *European Journal of Education* 46(3):397–414.

Verdery, Katherine

1996 *What Was Socialism, and What Comes Next?* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Voegtli, Eva M., Christoph Knill, and Michael Dobbins

2011 To What Extent Does Transnational Communication Drive Cross-national Policy Convergence? The Impact of the Bologna-Process on Domestic Higher Education Policies. *Higher Education* 61(1):77–94.

Wertsch, James V.

2002 *Voices of Collective Remembering*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Zajda, Joseph.

2010 The Politics of Education Reforms and Policy Shifts in the Russian Federation. *In* *Globalisation, Ideology and Education Policy Reforms*. Joseph Zajda, ed. Pp. 175–191. Dordrecht: Springer.