

REUBEN'S FALL: A RHIZOMATIC ANALYSIS OF MOMENTS OF
DISOBEDIENCE IN KINDERGARTEN
(411 pp.)

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This dissertation provided a lens on two kindergarten classrooms, examining moments of disobedience as children interacted with children, their teachers, and the space and time elements of the classroom environments. Also examined in this study via Eisner's *educational criticism* were the elements of "school," "kindergarten" and "teachers" within the spaces of their intersections with the children.

While typically, research has directed our attention to "fixing" the problems of classroom disobedience, this study proffered an opportunity and means to view these familiar actions through fresh lenses of possibilities. Predicated by an event in the researcher's teaching life, this study utilized Deleuze and Guattari's *rhizoanalysis* to openly seek lateral paths of understanding by linking and folding the findings with texts other than those would normally used toward developing new "truths," understandings, and questions regarding children's disobediences.

In seeking to destabilize, disrupt and challenge the known and given texts regarding the actions and interactions of young children as either "bad" or "good," this study seeks out surprising connections and complications in order to "see" each moment of interaction as many things—both/and/neither "bad" and/nor "good." This study seeks these surprises because there is more to goodness than compliance; and there is even

more to goodness than empathy and altruism—there is also the goodness of joy; of awareness and wonder; of sensuality and sensing; of valuing, mystery and awe; and of engagement and belonging. This serious project assumed a playful quality that further resonated with the purpose of the study itself—that of discerning the spiritual, democratic, moral, and joyful possibilities inherent in moments of children’s disobediences.

The intent of this research was to view with fresh eyes the ways that children negotiate the context, complexity, constraints and freedoms of kindergarten classrooms as represented through moments of disobedience. The careful synthesis of educational criticism and rhizomatic analysis in this study served to simultaneously sharpen and blur the view on children’s moments of disobedience and to disrupt the typical line of understanding and response. In this way, the researcher seeks to complicate teachers’ roles and lives as they might join the ride on unexpected lines of flight. Perhaps, inspired by an event such as a moment of disobedience—one disrupted further by a rhizomatic twist—a teacher might become an ally in embracing the spirit and democracy of disobedience toward breaking through to new truths in kindergarten and beyond.