

Who has the power? A reflection on teaching drama improvisation with young children

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Abstract

The following study reflects and explores the dynamics of aesthetic experiences within drama improvisations. This arts-based research was carried out in Hong Kong with six Cantonese children who were aged 3–5 years. Data were collected from the video transcripts of five workshops and the researcher’s own research journal. Two significant milieus were observed: *switching in-between roles* and *intuitive creativity is not talkback*. I argue that because each of these two milieus provide the foreground for the complex – and at times contradictory – nature of children’s aesthetic experiences where Deleuzian power is at play, opportunities arise for both, challenging the traditional adult–child power relations, and in so doing, educators can be able to reconfigure and reconceptualise teaching goals and practices, both generally and specifically, within the context of early childhood education.

Keywords

aesthetic education, Deleuze, drama improvisation, early childhood, power relations

Introduction

This article is an exploration based on a study of *what kinds of environment are required to facilitate aesthetic experiences for young children?* Based on the previous research (Ho, 2017), intangible environment is identified as part of the aesthetic environment for cultivating aesthetic experiences for young children. The intangible aesthetic environment consists of providing the opportunity for young children to exercise ‘decisiveness, introspectiveness, and empathy’ (Ho, 2016: 8) and power relations.

Drawing upon Deleuze’s (1997) concept that power can be ‘subtracted, neutralized, or amputated’ (p. 241), this study explores how teachers may be able to reconfigure and

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reconceptualize relations of power within the adult–child dyad (e.g. child–teacher) and among the children (child–child). The study was conducted through a series of drama improvisations that set up aesthetic experience. My only intent was to use some of the concepts of Deleuze’s theatre of multiplicities to reflect on the adult–child power relations, especially for teachers like myself who has a strong background with concept of respect (e.g. Confucian).

Concept of respect

Living in a post-colonial environment and being a Hong Kong Chinese, I grew up in a mixed-culture. While deeply rooted in Confucian *filial obedience* where *respect* is a crucial Chinese traditional value (Feng, 1994; Hadley, 2003), I also learned about freedom and equity through the British influenced school system. These two concepts are considered as contradictory yet coexisting practices, and provide proof to me that reality is not singular but multiple and complex. These multiple realities normally are socially constructed (Berger and Luckmann, 1991 [1966]) and constantly changing. Based on such ontology, postmodernism was chosen as the epistemology and arts-based approach, and was used as the methodology to conduct the research. However, as a teacher, I found the concept of *respect* was problematic in facilitating young children’s drama improvisation.

Respect is a basic manner in our Chinese custom that sets the expectation for younger people to listen and obey older people as an act of respect. Thus, there is a clear emphasis on adults as the powerful dominants where children should be submissive, and such obvious social status creates the adult–child dyad power relations. Through the discovery of Deleuzian power relations, I wondered if my encounters of the children’s resistances in the workshops could have occurred due to my Chinese mind-set. However, after several conference presentations, I found that Western teachers also think that children should respect teachers. Therefore, power relations between child and adult (or student and teacher) can be seen as a universal issue. The reconceptualization of power relations with Deleuze’s (1997a [1979]) philosophical concepts, in which power is flowing and productive, may led to the new understandings and insights for my teaching perspective and practice especially for facilitating young children’s aesthetic experiences.

Deleuze’s concept of power

Deleuze (1983 [1962], 1997a [1979]) concept of power has its origins in Nietzsche’s philosophical notion of *will to power* (Deleuze, 1983 [1962]) that the importance of power does not lie in who has the power, how the power is used or the extent of the power. Nor is it about how the power is represented. Deleuze (1997a [1979]) argued that power itself does not have power. Rather, he believed that power is a much more complex dynamic. At its base, according to Deleuze, power is determined within an encounter between two separate forces. Power emerges when one of the forces acts over the other. Within this context, then, power fluctuates, is influenced and determined by networks or interactions and alters in intensities. Sellers (2013) points out that ‘both Foucault and Deleuze work with the understanding that power is a force in perpetual motion that flows through social networks, an affect that is operational’ (p. 144). Both Foucault and Deleuze wrote about how power circulates (Deleuze, 1983 [1962]; Foucault, 1978) and both of them mentioned about power can *produce* (Deleuze, 1997a [1979]; Foucault, 1977); however, Deleuze elaborated further, looking at what *positive affect* that power can *produce* (e.g. the effect of power).

Concept of affect

Since the Deleuzian concept of power can be both productive and generative, thus its power is about how power produces and generates *affect*. This term originated from the Latin ‘affectus’ (Deleuze, 1988 [1970]: 49), which Deleuze defined as ‘an increase or decrease of the power of acting, for the body and the mind alike’ (p. 47). In other words, the affected person is able to think or act differently. *Affect* can change an individual’s relationship with a socialized structure (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987 [1980]). *The Affect Theory Reader* (Seigworth & Gregg, 2010) shares similar idea through discussing different perspectives including critical discourses of the emotions (e.g. Gabriel Tarde’s resurgence of interest), post-humanism (e.g. Brian Massumi’s cultural studies) and performance-based studies (e.g. Susanne Langer’s ‘open ambient’, and Dewey’s pragmatic idealities). Although, within the context of the theatre, *affect* generally refers to emotions, feelings or empathy as they relate to the psychological response of a character, in Deleuze’s (1997a [1979]) concept of *affect*, it has nothing to do with psychology. Rather, Deleuzian affect is embedded in power relations as a product of power (Deleuze, 1983 [1962], 1997a [1979]). *Affect* is created whenever a power relation is formed and then remains in place. Thus, Deleuze’s *affect* is akin to influence (Deleuze, 1983 [1962], 1997a [1979]). One can be affective as well as affected; in other words, one can be influential as well as influenced.

Deleuzian power produces *affect* through *minority consciousness* and children provide excellent examples of *minority consciousness*. Building from Klein’s (1986 [1930], 1997) counter argument on Freud’s – Little Hans’ case of Oedipal situation, Deleuze and Guattari (1983 [1977], 1987 [1980]) see a child not as a passive receiver but an active participant who constantly explore and respond to his or her surroundings. Rather than viewing children as merely adults-to-be, Deleuze and Guattari focused on the concept of transformation: that children transform into adults. The *affect* of the becoming-child produced his or her transformation to be an adult. Thus, children are in the process of ‘becoming-child[ren]’ (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987 [1980]: 256). Hickey-Moody (2013) also claims that Deleuze presents children as generative force(s) as she thinks that Deleuze sees them as ‘a vector of affect: an activator of change’ (p. 273). This concept of child breaks through the adult–child dyad that children are passive receivers. Regarding the binary segments, Deleuze and Guattari (1987 [1980]) criticize that ‘[w]e are segmented in a *binary* fashion, following the great major dualist oppositions: social classes but also men–women, adults–children, and so on’ (p. 208). As educators of the 21st century, we are encouraged to get rid of the thoughts of binary segments but focus on the processes of *becoming* so that new capacities can be imaged and created (Blaise, 2013). Therefore, by exercising their minority consciousness during the processes of becoming-children, children produce *affects*, such as differences and transformations.

Young children’s aesthetic experience through drama improvisation

Aesthetics are fundamental to children’s development for appreciation of life and nature. It is also important for constant decision-making exercise with expression of emotions and feelings (Curriculum Development Council, 2006; Ho, 2016). In this study, aesthetic experience is considered to be an experience for child participants to gain understanding and interacting with their surroundings and the environment they were within (e.g. the drama improvisation scenes) using their senses and sensibility (Eisner, 2002; Heid, 2005).

Drama as a mean of aesthetic experiences encompasses aesthetic development (Bailin, 1993). In the last 10 years, aesthetic education through drama is gaining popularity especially within the early childhood education context (Blank, 2012; Heid, 2005; Lim, 2005; McCaslin, 2005;

McLennan, 2010; Tang, 2011). Tang's (2011) study on aesthetic responses of N4 children (aged 6 years) through drama appreciation is one of the few that focuses on young children's experience through drama. Yet, she only presents the view from educational perspective (e.g. education theories and play theory). In order to widen the understanding of young children's aesthetic experiences, this research takes on both arts (drama improvisation) and education (aesthetic education) perspectives.

In this study, drama improvisation was chosen to be the art medium to convey aesthetic experiences. As Bouzoukis (2012) suggests, the nature of improvisation allows children to explore different scenarios. The children can do so by expressing emotions and feelings, exercising communication skills, creativity and imagination through five senses, memory and pretence. Improvisation in drama refers to spontaneous acting (verbal, physical or emotional) with respect to other players (Leep, 2008). Since then, improvisation has existed in various forms, for example, theatre games, actor-training exercises, story-devising, or a performance (Abbott, 2007; Leep, 2008; Salinsky and Frances-White, 2008), where the last-mentioned is the means adopted for this study. According to contemporary notions of aesthetics related to the importance of the art process (Heid, 2005; McLennan, 2010; Sawyer, 2000), improvisation, by itself, is both the art-making process and the art product. Each improvisation is a unique experience of spontaneity that requires intensive sensory perception, feelings and creativity. By taking Dewey's (1934) statement that art-making is 'active and experienced' (p. 162), Sawyer shows how Dewey's theory of art, as an experience, has led to the performing arts and improvisation. When children engage in art-making, it is not only the final artwork but the process (experience) of creating the art that is valued, as it can enhance their aesthetic experiences (Beardsmore, 1973; Bresler and Thompson, 2002; Dewey, 1934; Walsh, 1969). Sawyer's understanding of aesthetics is the core reason for adopting drama improvisation as the art-making approach to be incorporated in this study.

Therefore, in this study, drama improvisation provided an opportunity to reveal the power relations among child-child and child-teacher during their aesthetic experiences, while the Deleuzian concept of power contributed to the reconceptualization of the power relations in early childhood education context. Furthermore, the concept of affect brought into relief how children can be influential forces through their minority consciousness. Taking examples from the workshops, I will reflect on how Deleuzian power relations work and then address how power produces affect by making positive changes in the children and myself as the teacher.

Method

An arts-based qualitative research approach was used to study the aesthetic processes of six children who resided in Hong Kong. The child participants were purposefully selected as common language (Cantonese) was needed for drama improvisation. Therefore, three boys and three girls between 3 and 5 years of age were invited to be the participants. The children participated in five 90-minute drama workshops that were held at a private dance studio. In the beginning of each workshop, the children went through a pictorial consent for the study. Next they performed in solo, pair and group drama improvisation with the characters and scenarios at their choice, and followed by periodical discussions of their performances. Each workshop ended with a roughly 30-minute arts journal making as the children's reflection of the workshops.

The Human Research Ethics Committee at Hong Kong Institute of Education approved the study under the auspices of a child-oriented ethic approach. The children chose a pseudonym to shield their identity and ensure anonymity. As the participative research, I assumed three roles during these workshops: dramatist, teacher and researcher. The data for this research was collected on videotapes that were taken at the workshops as well as a reflective journal that I used to record

observations and reflections on the workshops. Art-based thematic analysis (Ho, 2016) was used to reveal the tangible and intangible environment (Ho, 2017). The finding of the intangible environment provoked my consideration of the power relations that occurred with these young children during the aesthetic experiences of drama improvisation scenes. Two examples are provided below from the 21st improvisation scene to illustrate the power relations that took place between the child participants and I playing the role of the narrator.

Power relations with young children in drama improvisation

In this 5-minute improvisation scene-21, in a forest setting, two crocodiles, named Ironman and Spiderman, were hunting two baby dinosaurs who were looking for their mommy, named Shark, at the same time.

Example 1. There is no sight of Mommy Dinosaur. The two baby dinosaurs are wandering around, hesitantly and restlessly in a forest.

Narrator: At this moment, there are two kind crocodiles . . .

Ironman: [Moves towards the stage on all fours, and then suddenly, turns back toward narrator and says immediately and firmly] No, I am not! I am a fierce crocodile!

Example 2 (excerpt from Ho, 2016: 7–8). The baby dinosaurs eventually saw their mommy but she ran away from the baby dinosaurs.

Narrator: Oh, no, Sister Dinosaur is crying. Why is Mommy Dinosaur running away and leaving the baby dinosaurs behind?

Shark: [Running in circles] I'm going to the market!

Narrator: You can bring your children to the market, too.

Shark: [Stopping suddenly] No, I can't because they eat a lot of food. They need lots of food. They need to get their own food because they are grown-ups now!

During these workshops, there were moments and situations involving power that defied explanation. For example, in the second example, the narrator suggested that the Mommy Dinosaur takes her children to the market. However, the child improviser resisted the suggestion and that aroused my uneasy feelings of being rejected as a narrator. This kind of moments shed the insight of the true power relations between the child improvisers and the narrator (adult–child dyad). It is moments like these that made me feel that the child improvisers had power over me and my narrator authority was lost. These power dynamics were both inter- and intra-related to the aesthetic experiences within this drama improvisation. Patton (2000) claims that Deleuze considers power not only as 'the capacity of a body to affect other bodies but also the capacity to be affected' (p. 74). It is in this way that I was empowered to reflect on the teacher–child(ren) power relations with the Deleuzian lens of power. Let us take a look with how I as a teacher was affected by the children.

Reflecting on how my power as a teacher was neutralized

According to Deleuze (1997a [1979]), the power of a *major* (i.e. the elements of theatre) can be neutralized by the 'minority consciousness' (p. 241). For example, as a dramatist, I know

the language and rules of drama improvisation, so when the child improvisers assigned me as the narrator of the scene, I assumed that my role of narrator would bring along certain power as is the case in professional theatre practice. In other words, I had empowered myself based on my knowledge about the role of narrator: an authority who is a major, while the child improvisers were seen by me as minors because they were novice improvisers. Even though there were six of them and only one of me, I still viewed myself as the major and them as the minors who would be dominated by me and needed to react to my authority/power.

Instead, when tapping into a group of six novice child improvisers, I entered a space where ‘the entire world is minority’ (Deleuze, 1997: 253). In this space, my power was being neutralized by the *minority consciousness* of the child improvisers. Regardless if the young children were conscious of it or not, they formed a force; they held the power as demonstrated by their rejection of my narrative suggestions. This was borne out in the two examples provided here: when Ironman the Crocodile contradicts my narrative suggestion that he is a kind crocodile (Example 1), and when Shark the Mommy Dinosaur refuses to reunite with her babies (Example 2). These were, as I suggest, decisions made by the child improvisers’ minority consciousness. They exercised their individual decision-making through their own intuitive and spontaneous enactments. These decisions became a resistance that challenged my narrative suggestions. Moreover, the ‘negotiations’ between the character in the play and the child’s improviser self-represented the continuous ‘variation or movement’ (Cull, 2009: 6) of immediate presence. Their reactions to my suggestions – which neutralized my power as the narrator – were based on their own understandings about the characters. As mentioned earlier, since the concept of respect is deeply rooted in Chinese society, and adult/teacher-centred discourse in Hong Kong, that children’s resistance to adults can be easily taken as an irrespective/disrespectful act, particularly in home and school contexts. Although this research was not conducted in a kindergarten, I acted as the role of a teacher. In addition, this kind of thought never happened when I was improvising with adult actors, thus I seemed to have fallen into the concept of requiring respect mode unintentionally. At first, I was surprised when I encountered rejection from the child improvisers. I saw these rejections as resistance and a challenge to my authority as the narrator, which in my mind was a role that represented power and authority. However, in further thinking about Deleuze’s concept, I realized that I was merely a co-improviser in the theatre of multiplicities, simply as one of the characters. I was no longer offended by the children’s resistances and challenges. Thus, rather than causing discord in our relationships, I was able to see that their reactions not as misbehaviours, but rather, creative and intuitive interpretations or responses, just as my adult co-improvisers do. By incorporating Deleuze’s concept of power into my own thinking, I could better understand children’s resistances and view their behaviour as intuitive and creative. Best of all, I have a new perspective about what ‘respect’ in practice can be among adult–child and teacher–student relations.

Reflecting on how my power as a teacher was subtracted

Similarly, the power of the *major* can also be subtracted by minority consciousness. By focusing on my role as a researcher rather than my authority roles of dramatist and teacher, I was willing to be a participant with the children. I willingly shared my power with the children. However, when it came to the drama improvisation scene, I recognized myself finding it difficult to accept the children’s counter suggestions and I tried to assert my self-assumed authority over them. With Deleuze’s power concept, I came to realize that my hard feeling was actually the product that evident I did not respect the child improvisers as much as I did to adult improvisers. Because if I work with adult improvisers, I do not just take ‘yes, and’ instructions but also accept their game ‘no, but’. However, when I worked with the child improvisers, I felt difficult to accept their ‘no, but’

suggestions because I thought they were children and novice improvisers, and I then assumed they had to *listen and obey* my instructions. This relinquishment of power affected my behaviour in the research workshops; I was then constantly aware of my identity as a researcher and tried to rein in my teacher tone. This awareness created opportunities for me to listen to the child participants.

Finally, power can be amputated, also by minority consciousness, or by oneself. Notably, amputated power situations were not recorded in this research. For a teacher, the image of all the power in a classroom being amputated – essentially stripping the teacher of all authority – is disturbing, even frightening. However, Deleuze's concept of power is a concept of positive power; it is not about losing power but is rather about what power can produce. According to Deleuze (1983 [1962], 1997a [1979]), a reactive force (minor) can never become an active force (major) of power. That is, the status of the child improvisers and the adults cannot be swapped or exchanged; yet, their minority consciousness can produce affect. In this study, it first produced an opportunity for me to reconsider my teaching perspective and practice.

The reconsideration started from self-questioning, but the question was no longer about losing power in the classroom or how to secure my power as a teacher. Rather, the question became: *What do I see? What can I do? What does it mean to be in such a situation?* Thus, the second affect was the awareness and a new understanding of my power relations with young children. This, in turn, led to an emergence of new questions: *What is the affect?* This is a new understanding of power relations. And within the context of this research, another natural extension is that *what does it have to do with young children's aesthetic experiences?* Furthermore, *how might it influence my perspective and how I choose to teach my young students?* When reconsidering on the power relations between teacher and student/child, I found the concept of *respect* to be particularly problematic for me in facilitating young children's aesthetic experiences. Through the discovery of Deleuzian power relations, I have realized that my reactions to the children's resistance in the workshops might have occurred because of my Confucian mind-set. Thus, the reconfiguration of power relations based on Deleuze's philosophical concepts led me to a new understanding and important insights into my teaching perspective and practice.

Switching in-between roles as a dramatist, researcher and teacher

In *What Children Say*, Deleuze (1997b [1993]) claims that children will explore their milieus (surroundings/situations) ceaselessly and use the found trajectories to make sense of their circumstances. In these milieus, parents mark trajectories by their saying and doing and the way their children will explore these milieus. During this process, children exercise their power of 'minority consciousness' (Deleuze, 1997: 241) and generate changes, sometimes to themselves, another time to their surroundings, in this case, it was me. Throughout the course of this research project, I was constantly switching between three roles: researcher, dramatist and teacher. In the research, I assumed the role of researcher. When I was a co-improviser working with the child participants during the workshops, I assumed the role of dramatist. Finally, when introducing drama improvisation, room safety and disciplinary issues, I assumed the role of teacher. Although it was no surprise that I would be switching in-between these three roles, what *was* surprising was that my roles were changed in response to the child participants. For example, when there were disciplinary issues or the children ran into problems, they would seek me as the teacher in charge, coming to me to show me their hurts. At this moment, the child participants changed my role from a co-improviser to teacher. During those times, they regarded me as a higher level of authority; they expected me to maintain order in the classroom. Then, moments later when the child participants resumed acting in the drama improvisation scene, they would relegate me back as their co-improviser. As their assigned narrator, I would have an equal level of authority to co-create the story and narrative

development. I could suggest plot developments or character arrangements. Yet, the child participants, as my co-improvisers, could choose to accept or refuse my suggestions, according to their individual preferences. They were not bounded by my suggestions, and they were not required to obey me as their elder when I made these narrative suggestions. Just as showed in Examples 1 and 2, the child improvisers did not necessarily take on other's suggestions, moreover the ones given by their teacher. In their eyes, while being their co-improviser, I was just acting as a partner of theirs who did not assume any higher authority. Conversely, when I assumed my role as a researcher, dealing with research ethics procedures, they would show me respect by sitting down and listening to me carefully. It seemed that I could only assume my role (dramatist, researcher or teacher) with the child participants' subtle consents. Therefore, it appeared as though my roles were changing in two ways – like the earth's rotation and revolution – at times by myself but more often by the child participants. While I could initiate my own switching in-between roles, the child participants also switched my roles in accordance with their actions and reactions in the workshops. Deleuze's concept of power provides an insightful understanding to such changes that my roles can also be changed according to the children's *minority consciousness*.

As a facilitator or educator of aesthetic experiences, I realized that I need to be aware that my roles as teacher and dramatist can be interchanged. With that in mind, I must not insist on being solely a dramatist who focuses only on the artistic value of the activities, which means that having a complete and successful drama improvisation scene should not be the only aim of the workshops. I also cannot always assume my role of teacher, focusing on class order and discipline and the fulfilment of the lesson plan. I need to be aware that there are both artistic and aesthetic elements in one's experiences. Importantly, it is this *awareness of roles and ability and willingness to be flexible in those roles* that allows young children to freely experience and respond to aesthetic experiences. As an educator, if I am unaware of, or do not allow, these role changes, then I may misinterpret the children's resistance as interruptions or challenges to my authority. Conversely, if I am flexible and interact with the children based on the situation at hand – rather than insisting on a rigid role between teacher and student or taking a one-sided interpretation of the situation (Olsson, 2009) – then I can strike a balance between my roles of dramatist and teacher. In so doing, I will be in a better position to facilitate young children's aesthetic experiences.

It is intuitive creativity, not talkback

As in traditional Chinese culture, a child who frequently talks back is considered naughty. It is not surprising, then, that I would have perceived some behaviour of the child improvisers as being disrespectful, impolite and resistant to my authority. In particular, when the children rejected my interpretation or suggestions, I initially understood these behaviours to be talkback, and was offended by it. However, the data showed that these responses were neither scripted nor did they contain any pretext; they were the child improvisers responding with intuition and spontaneity. Abbott (2007) writes, 'Children all have great imaginations. The trouble starts when other people—grown-ups, older brothers and sisters—make children question their imaginative creations' (p. 132). It is very true what Abbott claims that sometimes, somehow, grown-ups like me, who are supposed to be a teacher for cultivating imagination, may actually block children's creativity and imagination. Taking Example 2 in account, I, as an adult, assumed Shark the Mommy Dinosaur would be happy to reunite with her lost babies. This was due to the perception that I carried of a caring mother should take care of her children. However, according to the imagination of the actress portraying Shark, the Mommy Dinosaur, she had a different interpretation of a caring mother. This child improviser portrayed a mother who would like to see her babies to be independent. As the actress of the character, Shark had the right to make the decision based on the

interpretation of her character. Thus, that interpretation should not be intervened in by adult's (regardless from an artist or teacher) perceptions. Therefore, even though 'connection' of past experience was noted (Bundy, 2003: 176), these child improvisers' connections through imagination could be very different from the common understandings.

Again, Abbot (2007) explained this well: 'By making something unexpected happen during an improvisation, an improviser can stimulate the creativity of both themselves and the person they are working with' (p. 149, italics in original).

From this study, we now see that the mentioned talkback is, in fact, child improvisers' expression of their own creativity and imagination and through their understanding of their characters. The child improvisers' creativity and imagination do not abide by traditional concepts, such as 'listen to the teacher', or 'a mother should take care of her children'. These acts of backtalk are expressions of children's imagination but they also show a child's capability with language and creativity as well as the child's ability to solve problems (Neville, 2009). As Abbott (2007) observed, there is no such thing that some people have 'no imagination' or 'a weak imagination' (p. 132). The limitations are merely evidence of how their creativity or imagination was repressed and restricted, either by grown-ups or self-censorship (e.g. 'I should be well-behaved in front of my teachers', or 'I should listen and obey adults').

Reflection on my teaching perspective of respect

In the workshops, though at times I was feeling uncomfortable, I did not stop the child participants at the spot, nor did I discipline anyone for being rejection to my suggestions, which would be one way to interpret their behaviour based on my perception on respect. Instead, I played along with their counter-suggestions (e.g. being a fierce crocodile or letting the baby dinosaurs learn to be independent) so that I could witness their creativity and imagination on the narrative developments. These counter-suggestions stirred some uneasy feelings in me that gradually turned into valuable lessons for reconsidering my unintentional teaching perspective and practice. I also observed how these aesthetic experiences were experienced, and that the child improviser responded to his or her reaction to that experience.

I learned from these experiences. I realized that I could have 'incarcerated' the child improvisers' creativity and imagination (Abbott, 2007) if I had insisted on exerting my influence and my own reaction or interpretation based upon my teaching perspective. Thinking with Deleuze's power relations helped me to alter my perspective on *respect*, most notably by not considering any child's actions and reactions as challenges to my authority. Rather, I learned that I should consider those actions and reactions as their intuitive and spontaneous creativity and imagination. This change of teaching perspective allowed me to facilitate aesthetic experiences that allow the child a chance to experience and be in touch with a diverse array of emotions. Maybe, a child for the first time becomes able enough to get in touch with his or her feelings by viewing those feelings through a character's eyes (Bouzoukis, 2012: 4).

Conclusion

In the recent decade, the awareness of power relations in the field of early childhood education is increasing, not only with a Chinese teacher like me but as a common concern for early learning aspects including curriculum, learning experience, and behaviour across the world (Anguiano, 2001; Hadley, 2003; Olsson, 2009; Sellers, 2010). While Olsson (2009) acknowledges there is an 'enormous increase in attempts to control, supervise and evaluate even very young children' (p. 87) in the field, the power of minority (child(ren)) is also getting more positive acknowledgement

(Sellers, 2010). Taking the Deleuzian power relation concept, as well as part of the intangible environment of aesthetic experiences, children's resistance can be given a positive consideration as a creative response instead of judged as misbehaviour, or disruptive actions.


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