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Edited by Roula Hawa

Message from the President
Cindy Hanson, PhD
**President, Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education/
Association canadienne pour l'étude de l'éducation des adultes
(CASAE/ACÉÉA).**

I can hardly believe almost a year has gone by with me performing the role of President to CASAE. I am a professor at the University of Regina. The University of Regina's motto, dating back to the early years of extension divisions is, *as one who serves*. It has been my honour to serve CASAE and it is my hope that this year's conference will be memorable for you.

Normally when a CASAE conference ends, there is some idea about where the conference will be in the upcoming year. This year was different. It wasn't until October that the Federation of Social Science and Humanities (the folks who organize Congress) told us they were going completely online and we've been playing "hurry up and catch-up" ever since.

I would be remiss to not thank Shan Hongxia for her role as president last year in preparing me for co-hosting this conference and to Robert McGray as incoming-president for his co-leadership and collegiality in moving us to this point. Many good people, all members of CASAE, have helped pull off this conference and I'd like to especially thank the Board of Directors for their assistance and service.

Congress' theme, *Transitions*, became our own for the opening session at this conference. This theme is focused on recommitting to and advancing equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization which in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic laid bare long-standing inequalities. The 2022 CASAE conference team joins in Congress's efforts to "re-imagine the world we inhabit, so that together we can build a future that is more diverse, sustainable, democratic, and just" (<https://www.federationhss.ca/en/congress/congress-2022#theme>).

As you read and engage with the abstracts, papers, roundtables and poster presentation abstracts presented in this set of proceedings (edited by Dr. Roula Hawa) we ask you to consider how many of the writers engaged with the theme of transitions or to consider what transitions mean for re-imagining CASAE.

In Solidarity
Cindy Hanson (President)

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RELATIONSHIPS, POWER, AND CARE IN FEMINIST PEDAGOGY: OUR THEORY UNDER CONSTRUCTION

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Abstract

This paper presents a collective project with doing a 'creative literature review' about relationships, power, and care in feminist pedagogies, conducted with a feminist approach. Feminist pedagogies are based on reciprocity, shared responsibility, community building, individual voice, respect for diversity, and challenging fixed ways of doing or thinking (Webb, Allen & Walker, 2002). These principles are implemented through concrete and vital relationships involving 'subjects of difference' in material and symbolic spaces, where relationships and relationality are central to knowledge production. By working together in groups of peers, or in pairs, starting from our own experience and using cooperative and creative methods, we can investigate the social reality and flourish as adult subjects. These relationships are complex, never given for granted, challenging and always presenting asymmetries - themes of power and care - due to gender, age, class, social roles, profession, and previous learning.

In our *creative* literature review, we used other scholars' texts to illuminate our positions and their interplay in the learning process, using an ecosystemic framework that defines feminist pedagogy as a reciprocal circular process based on *transforming differences* (Bateson, 1979). More specifically, we focus the feminist notion of 'entrustment' or *affidamento* (Cavarero, 2000), a relationship thriving on the embodied encounter and dialogue of subjects of difference. Our method is duoethnography (Sawyer & Norris, 2013), based on different interpretations, writing as a collective form of research, and photographs as an iconic tool that enhances the role of materiality and body communication in learning, care and power.

Keywords: Relationship, power, care, duoethnography, embodiment

INTRODUCTION

We are three Italian adult educators and researchers engaged in practising 'entrustment', or *affidamento* (Cavarero, 2000), a term created in the Seventies at the Women's Bookstore in Milan; we re-interpret this cooperative practice as a pedagogy of care, power and self in relationships. *Affidamento* describes a relationship between two or more women, where each entrusts herself to the other(s), so that they can bring their talents, competences, and desires within a new political space for each and everyone (Martinis Roe, 2018).

In *Relating Narratives: Storytelling and Selfhood*, Cavarero (2000) writes how the Other can be necessary to listen to our own story, taking care of it, and answering the question of 'who' we are. This contrasts the common attitude to categorise and objectivise people for 'what' they are: narratives have a power to embody and celebrate uniqueness, yet they bridge individual

lives and highlight the rhizomatic interconnections of women's experiences. Cavarero tells the compelling story of Amalia and Emilia, an educated woman and a housewife in adult education classes in the Seventies, invited to write about their lives. Emilia feels unable to do it, but Amalia knows her story because of the many times she has listened to her friend; so, she writes it down. Until that moment, Emilia's story was silenced due to "the lack of a true political space" (Cavarero, 2000, p. 57) for women's experience. Amalia's gesture creates such a space, and Emilia will keep these few sheets of paper always with her, reading and re-reading them with unending emotion.

This story suggests us to take a distance from mere identification, or empathy. A relationship based on difference and open to otherness is crucial, and we have tried to practise it since the beginning of our collaboration. In our first article (Formenti, Luraschi & Del Negro, 2019), Gaia selected a photo from a catalogue of Italian female photographers, *L'Altro Sguardo* (Perna, 2016), where the editorial staff of *Woman Daily* were sitting in a circle on the floor, in front of a standing woman. The embodied relationship between her and the group interrogated Gaia (Formenti, Luraschi & Del Negro 2019, p. 134):

The newspaper was a direct expression of women's collectives and made a claim for anti-authoritarian communication. The group in the picture, however, looks up to the woman on the left. Who is she? What kind of leadership does she exert?

The picture evoked in me a fantasy of the group of peers being led with care, and knowledge shared and personal, even embodied, whilst in our culture personal life, body and emotion are usually severed from rational thinking (Belenky et al. 1986). [...] Italian feminism challenged this way of thinking in the 1970s, as women not only invented alternative forms of organisation and peer-to-peer relationships [...] but they theorised on this, in order to develop a relational philosophy of difference.

More recently, Silvia and Laura have been writing on their relationship with their female mentors (Luraschi, 2022; Formenti, 2022). Laura has been Silvia's and Gaia's mentor. In writing about her own relationship with Donata Fabbri, she became more aware of the power games that shaped it and haunted her struggles to become. The pedagogic relationship may be imbued with power as well as care, intertwined and not separable. How can this awareness be shared and used?

Feminists are expected to work side by side and fight for their rights (Cavarero & Restaino, 2002; Woolf, 1938; Cavarero, 2020); however, collaboration and leadership are complex relationships, requiring time and specific spaces. This is not new. Afro-american and post-colonial feminists (Lewis & Mills, 2003) have focused power, intersectionality, and positionality (Davis, 1981), forwarding the need for new concepts and methods to identify differences and power issues among women.

Wary of the possible double binds (Bateson, 1972) - *be autonomous but learn from me* - we explore the pedagogical implications of *entrustment* in thinking and doing relationality. Looking for constraints and possibilities, dilemmas, and even paradoxes. *Entrustment* is a generative

lens to illuminate our becoming, the becoming of our relationships, and the struggles we experience(d) with power, identity, and care.

In the next paragraphs we introduce our methodology, present our writings and images, then reflect on what we have learned about entrustment by doing this and its relevance for a feminist pedagogy.

A COMPOSITIONAL METHODOLOGY

Our methodology combines writing as a practice of 'mineralogy' (Melandri, 2006), 'evocative objects' (Bollas 2009), and duoethnography as a collective form of searching and thinking (Sawyer & Norris, 2013; Formenti & Luraschi, 2017; Formenti, Luraschi & Del Negro 2019, 2020, 2022).

In the Seventies, groups of women intellectuals, housewives, workers, artists, activists explored new relational pedagogies as ways to support changes in their lives and challenge interiorized patriarchy. Women invented new narratives, methods, and epistemologies, using creative languages to represent life and gender in disruptive ways. Writing was essential: there is no freedom without an alphabet, so feminist adult educators in new spaces for adult learning, such as the 150 hours courses, invited women to write about sexuality, intimacy, feelings, and the private spaces where they had been confined. These were legitimised as political topics to be explored, problematized, and de-constructed. Among the leading figures, Lea Melandri (2006, 2017) devised a practice, named "mineralogy of thought" after Asor Rosa (1985), to overcome thinking as head work, and search its roots in the sediments of experience unconsciously shaping our lives. Influenced by psychoanalysis, Melandri explores passions, dreams, imagination, and the stratified representations of the world, including masculine and feminine. She invites a personal/collective exploration of texts (usually, a collection of different authors' pages on a relevant topic); the reader appropriates (fragments of) the text following personal resonances, then highlighting and hand-copying the selected parts. Each fragment is incorporated by the writer, who then re-composes them in a new, original text.

"Differently from autobiography, that works on *memories*, and gives them a form within a meaning-full narrative, this writing wants to push 'at the boundaries of the body', in the proximity of the most hidden areas to consciousness, and entrusts itself to *fragments*, splinters of thought, emotions, that show up just when a loss of meaning is operated". (Melandri, 2006, *our translation*)

Here, *entrustment* goes beyond relying on another person; it is an exercise of trust on the Other inside us, as parts of our mind that may be silenced and blinded by hegemonic ideas. Body, emotions, uncertainty, disorder, nature, and the power of presentational knowledge are key for a feminist pedagogy. Reworking existing texts, recomposing them in personal ways, has aesthetical, cognitive, formative, and healing effects. It *must* be a collective inquiry, since the Other's eyesight is there to reveal our blindness, contradictions, prejudices, and interiorized models. So, entrustment is not about consolation or encouragement; it entails conflict and struggles to find meaning in contradictory and messy landscapes, as Melandri wrote:

"learning the hybrid language of the inner world, dispel its myths, dissuade its silence, recognize the 'culture treasures' it hides, naming those 'things that we have not yet been able to name'" (2006, *our translation*)

In the Seventies, women photographers also started to emerge, proposing unprecedented ways to mirror, witness, and criticise (Casero, 2021) current representations of gender, women's body, and the dominant masculine eyesight. Their images convey 'another eyesight', challenge stereotypes and trigger resonances. Images open up to the plural: along with writing, they illuminate lessons learnt, hidden values, and future dreams and hopes. As 'evocative objects' (Bollas, 2009) they say what words can't say.

OUR FEMINIST CREATIVE LITERATURE REVIEWS

We decided to do a creative literature review on entrustment, power, care, and relationships to disrupt standardised methods and dialogue with other women's texts. Each of us started her selection process based on personal interests and resonances; then, she chose one paper and:

- read it, underlying sentences,
- hand-copied those sentences one after the other,
- re-composed them into a new text,
- added an image by free association.

In presenting our mineralogies and evocative objects, we use normal type for the original words and *italics* for ours. This is not plagiarism but it is how the human mind works, combining elements and creating connections to produce the new (Corballis, 2016). We added infos about the author and searched for commonalities as well as differences. We wondered: what moves my interest for this paper?

Silvia: Becoming a feminist

"Feminism is a movement in many senses. I am moved to become feminist, but becoming a feminist was not just a project of the intellect. Feminist ideas have landed on my body and have earned my attention because of material condition. They have made sense to me and are giving me grief or a new way of moving forward because of bodily experiences and resonances.

Luckily, I have worked with women that have supported me to challenge disembodied academic conventions in my own research and writing, to bring my embodied self into my work and urge others (women and men) away from camouflage and conformity. The most powerful opening from feminism have come from these embodied encounters with people. I have particularly enjoyed *conferences where we had long conversations in front of a cup of coffee or, in the evening, a glass of wine. We have shared stories and emotions.* Some of them have shown me that our bodies and body parts (tongues, arms, ears) are often less compliant than our mind, enabling us to resist and protest what society says we should do.

I was wondering what I could do. How can bodies, embodied experiences, and feelings, be recognized as a central element of *becoming and being a researcher in Adult Education?*

I learned I could speak about unpopular and unamendable things. If I was present in my body when I speak to people, I could be heard even though, *to be honest*, it is very hard to be heard from power.”

(Transcription of Silvia’s mineralogy, Milan 31th January 2022)

I selected Amanda Sinclair’s paper “Five movements in a embodied feminist: A memoir” (Sinclair, 2019), attracted by the word ‘movements’ that has called my interest on the role of perception and awareness in education (Luraschi, 2020, 2021). The term is used by Amanda to describe her path to becoming a feminist in five phases over three decades. She is professor at the Business School of the University of Melbourne, recognised as a pioneer in diversity and women’s leadership, and explorer of mindfulness in leadership. I didn’t know her work and her focus on mindfulness surprised me. Mindfulness, the ability to be present in your doing, is connected with my studies and practice of somatic movement as a practitioner of the Feldenkrais Method (Feldenkrais, 1985, 1990, 2010). Amanda writes in the first person, “as a memoir” (Sinclair, 2019, p. 144), aiming at evoking “in the reader memories and experiences that highlight their own embodied feminism” (Sinclair, 2019, p. 144). In fact, this is what happened to me when reading a short sentence in brackets:

“(We have also shared baby clothes and recipes)” (Sinclair, 2019, p. 154).

It evoked by difference a dinner in Portugal with a group of feminist scholars (Figure 1) attending the Connections Workshop “Feminists and feminisms in museums and art galleries: International knowledge exchange and engagement with common research issues”, where I shared for the first time in my life, and ironically, my struggle to not be a mother in a traditional and patriarchal society.



Figure 1 - Lisbon, January 2019: Feminist researchers at dinner, Laura is the second on the right, Silvia the fourth

Gaia: Performativity is not an explanatory concept

“Performativity is not an explanatory concept so much as itself part of an intervention... it will imagine and articulate the possibility of things being “otherwise” (hooks 2007, p. 5) - *oh, good to hear that! What’s the point of researching, otherwise?*”

These are 'troubling' enterprises, associated with the work of Judith Butler, who through her own experiences of identifying as a butch lesbian and observing drag performances of femininity in a gay bar was inspired to analyse camp as a practice which drew attention to the enactive process of gender (Segal 2008). We are always in excess of ourselves (Manning 2007). "If the relations that have had to be denied emerge to floor us, the competent and useful subject unravels a little" (bell 2007, p.23) - *enough of 'hiding and performing' the good girl!*

Performance of amnesia focuses on how embodied forms of performance (in this case Cambodian dance) allow bodies to "speak what they can't" (Pollack 2005, p. 76). *Is this what brings me to dance? What did I perceive living in Cambodia?*

The family that Hamera attempts to interview has been displaced through forced migration to Los Angeles following the genocides carried out by the Khmer Rouge in the 1960s in Cambodia. *During my sabbatical in 2012 I lived 100 metres from Tuol Sleng ex-school now genocide museum (see photo).* The Sems talked about the voices they heard whilst dancing who communicated the traditional Khmer dance movement to them.

Thus Tango enacts a form of affective symbiosis characterised by a reaching-toward the unknown and unknowable. The film follows the relationship of two gay Hong Kong men, Lai-Yu Fai and Ho-Po-Wing and their travels to Buenos Aires in order to 'start over'. Argentine Tango, Manning suggests, demands "a learned desire to be aware, awake, attentive to another as another" (2007, p. 29). *So, Is this desire? (P.J.Harvey)?'*

(Transcription of Gaia's mineralogy, Milan 17th February 2022)



Figure 2 - 2012, Gaia's first room in Phnom Penh, 100 m from Tuol Sleng genocide museum.



Figure 3 - Nina's pin from a drag queens' theatre company is permanently on Gaia's coat.

I engaged with Lisa Blackman's paper "Affect, performance and queer subjectivities" (2011). She is a Professor in Media and Communications at Goldsmith University and her research focuses upon affect, subjectivity, and embodiment in connection with mental health, activism, and recently post-truth communication. Her work made me think about Virginia Woolf's immense sensitivity and wit that made her literary and political writing so unique and her life fragile. How can we be open to otherness in ourselves?

During a meeting of an art-based project about multimodal translation, I found out that our colleague Noèlia Díaz Vicedo, poet, translator and researcher of women's literature, did her PhD on entrustment and uses the spiral symbol like Laura. These unexpected resonances and variations make me eager to keep dancing.

Laura: Am I a badass?

I present my work on Kivijärvi (2021) "*Stop whining and be a badass*": A postfeminist analysis of university students' responses to gender themes. Marke Kivijärvi has a postdoc fellowship at Eastern Finland University, working on gender and equality in male-dominated contexts, management and leadership. She studied how female students understand gender in management; their learning logs illuminate interiorized neoliberal and postfeminist discourses. Reading fragments from these students' writings started a fictional dialogue with them, making me reflexive about their professional narrative and mine.

"Are men and women different facts of nature?"

I resonate with other women's experiences, but I do not feel discriminated against, maybe because I am used to it, and I reject female (my own) vulnerability and the nurturing role.

Family or career? Consider alternative views.

Grand structural changes *were implemented but* equality policies remain impractical.

Iron ladies reproduce empowered senses of themselves, “as long as you work hard enough”
and “stop complaining”

Should we (*I*) aim to change women’s (*my*) aims and personalities?

They are free to enact traditional femininity. *Am I?*

A competitive scene requires qualities, ambition, and arrogance. Women lack arrogance (*when I talked back, I was defined arrogant indeed*)

Women are free to make their own choices. *Do I feel free?*

(Transcription of Laura’s mineralogy, Toirano 17 March 2022)



Figure 4 - Laura’s headless torso

I feel strong when I wear a leather jacket. My headless selfie (Figure 4) suggests that it is not only about me. Besides, taking out the head I brought attention to my chest, hence a new poem:

breasts, breathing, bra, brave, broooooommm!, bringing a broader theory embracing more than head and thoughts - (to be read aloud)

THE EMERGENCE OF “US”

We read our writings aloud and presented our objects to each other. Our papers are different: a memoir, a theoretical text, and a classic research paper. This practice seems to work whatever the text, it depends on what we do with it. After sharing, Laura talked about feeling a “badass”

and her struggles with enacting leadership in academia. Gaia and Silvia told stories of the university as a hierarchical institution crawling with toxic narcissism and competitive violence. How can we build trust in such an environment, where some leaders feel seduced or forced to 'cut heads'? We shared our happiness in allowing ourselves to be vulnerable and supportive to each other. It was possible to talk more openly and ironically about the asymmetry of power among us. Our social roles are different: Laura is the professor, older, a mother and wife, established in her job. Silvia and Gaia, as freelancers, live in precarious working situations. Laura has been supervisor of both and she leads a research network where we all belong. We are adult educators and researchers; when we work together, each brings her own expertise. We were uncertain about who has more power.

In formal education, leadership and entrustment are ambiguously connected. Drawing on hooks (1994), Vanessa Roghi (2017), historian, independent researcher and teacher, writes about collective writing to challenge power relationships in the classroom. Feminism is a radical practice of reciprocal education and empowerment. Laura knows the paradox of asking students to be authentic and tell their own truths. Her deontic power cannot be denied, so the path to 'jointly created authority' is a long one. Entrustment is a challenging practice of reciprocal listening, a circular movement to be constantly enacted and checked, recognizing our positionality and keeping on with interrogating power, among us and with others. This entails meta-communication, humour and the creative management of unavoidable conflicts (Sclavi, 2003).

CONCLUSIONS

What contribution does this method bring to research? It disrupts falsely objective literature reviews: paradoxically, feminist publications may present the 'state of the art' hiding the subjectivity of the researcher behind established procedures that make serendipity impossible. Secondly, it may enhance differences and fuel a process of entrustment based on self-disclosure. New topics can emerge from the process. Finally, it sustains a relevant feminist practice: the emergence of a collective that transcends individual personalities and biographies. This may heal the competition and narcissism of contemporary academia.

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