

Dossier 10 years of IWA – Founder and the first president of the IWA (2013-2021)

Z. Loparic
IBPW/IWA

Being 10 years old is important both in individual and group life. We have existed as an institution for 10 years already and, thus, are no longer a toddler, if I may use this metaphor. I think we are even beyond latency; we've entered adolescence, we're on a journey towards independence. I am therefore very glad to be able to speak to the representatives of the IWA groups in terms of us becoming increasingly more independent from the founders, who are, as a matter of fact, just three people, Laura, Elsa and myself.

Let me say a few words about my and my group's journey from Brazil in the 1990s to our meeting today. As you may know, in 1995 I started a research group on Winnicott (GFPP) at the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo. That same year, I initiated two series of colloquia, one on Winnicott, which this year has reached its 26th edition, the other on Heidegger, also continuously active from the very start. In 1998, I had the pleasure of inviting Jan Abram – at that time president of the Squiggle Foundation – to take part in our third Winnicott colloquium. She delivered a paper titled “The Surviving Object”, which is also the title of her last book, published in 2022. That was the first step in an endeavour to transform my local university group into an international one, that is, to start building international connections to promote conversations on Winnicott. In 1999, I counted on the help from the members of the GFPP to launch *Natureza Humana*, a review dedicated explicitly, but not exclusively, to Winnicott and Heidegger. In its first number I published Abram's paper. The following year, Abram invited me to the Squiggle Foundation to deliver a Madeleine Danis Memorial Lecture. I titled my lecture “Winnicott's Paradigm”, a subject which, as far as I know, was absent from international discussions at that time, but has already well studied in my group in Brazil, as I exposed in great detail to Abram in 1998. By taking that step in 2000, I started exporting our Brazilian ideas on Winnicott's revolution. In 2002, I published a revised and expanded version of it in English under the title “Winnicott's Paradigm Outlined”.

At that time, we had already created (2001) the Winnicott Centre of São Paulo (CWSP), and soon after (2005) the Brazilian Society of Winnicottian Psychoanalysis (SBPW), as an umbrella institution for Winnicott centres that we were opening in Brazil.

A short time later, we began working actively on establishing contact with groups outside Brazil – Zagreb, Córdoba (Argentina), Lisbon, Paris, Hannover – already or at least potentially interested in Winnicott. Since 2008, the project to create an international Winnicott association (the soon-to-be IWA) was explicitly stated in the documents of the SBPW. And I remained in contact with Jan Abram, encouraging her to publish a collection of papers on Winnicott's revolutionary paradigm shift in psychoanalysis. In 2012, she invited me to London for a Colloquium in September, on the occasion of the launching of her collection which she titled *Donald Winnicott Today*. I must say I was jubilant, not because she included my 2002 paper in the main introductory section, but at seeing these words on the cover: "I'm asking for a kind of revolution in our work", handwritten by Winnicott and never previously published. Earlier that year, I met Laura in Paris, on a very nice spring day at the Sorbonne Square, and said to her: "Why shouldn't we make an international Winnicott association? We have Jan Abram with us". Laura agreed and decided to join me in London. On the same occasion, I met Ofra Eshel, who came to me after my paper and said: "You know, Loparic, I also have been thinking about the Winnicottian revolution for quite some time".

So, in 2013 the time seemed to be ripe for a new move. We invited some people from abroad to our 7th Winnicott Colloquium, held in May here in São Paulo, and felt strong enough to organize launch the IWA. Representatives of several Brazilian groups were present, as well as Laura Dethiville, from the Paris Winnicott Group, and Rosário Belo, from Portugal. The complete list of names of people present can be found on the IWA site. It was here in this house where I'm now speaking to you, that we met downstairs in the auditorium and founded the International Winnicott Association. Its main goal was suggested by the cover of Abram's 2013 collection: to fulfill Winnicott's plea for a revolution in psychoanalysis. The SBPW was ready to help the IWA from the very the beginning in several practical ways, with administration, finances, contacts, sites. This has continued until now, during my and Roseana's presidencies.

Soon after the foundation, the expansion of the IWA began. Elsa, Roseana and I travels to China on a tourist trip. By Laura Dethiville's intermediation we met and worked with a group of Winnicottians in Shanghai. In Beijing, we contacted Dr. Zhao, from the Huilongguan Psychiatric Hospital, who gave us the opportunity to introduce his group to aspects of Winnicott's theory and clinical practice. Zhao liked what we said and invited Elsa and me to start a course at the hospital, which we did in 2014. Later, in 2017, we started a full-fledged

training course in Zhao's own centre, which later became the first Chinese IWA member-group, soon followed by the Shanghai group. All the while, new members were coming, like the Winnicott Trust, in 2015, Ofra's new training programme on Winnicott and Bion, in 2016, and more recently the Rome Group and Rosário Belo's Associação Winnicottiana Portuguesa.

I have said that we agreed about the aim to fulfill Winnicott's plea for a kind of revolution, but we did not have and even now we do not have a consensus on the kind of it. That is why, from the very start, the IWA defined itself by a communication project, not by a theoretical project. The guiding idea was that the IWA be a place for exchange of ideas, including the ideas of the Brazilian group on Winnicott's paradigm, among others. The main thing to ensure a space for discussion.

These are some thoughts on the past 10 years of the IWA which I wanted to bring to you today. I hope very much that this place here in São Paulo where everything has started will remain a place of reference for the IWA. But I wish very much that other places continue to be created worldwide, dedicated to the study of and our love for Winnicott.

Thank you very much.