

Committee on Women and Psychoanalysis - COWAP

History

In 1998, Otto Kernberg established the Committee on Women and Psychoanalysis during his presidency of the International Psychoanalytical Association under Joan Raphael-Leff 's project to promote the development of the gender perspective in theoretical and clinical psychoanalysis to explore women's issues. At that time, gender studies within psychoanalysis were beginning around femininity and women. The creation of COWAP led by women, was innovative at the IPA; at that time, most of the psychoanalysts in charge were men.

At the first COWAP meeting attended by Joan Raphael-Leff, Helen Meyers, Beth Seelig, and Mariam Alizade, the committee's basis was established: the spirit of parity and camaraderie and the inclusion of different generations of analysts. Under the presidency of Mariam Alizade COWAP's themes were expanded to include men and to study the cultural and historical influences on the construction of psychoanalytic theories concerning men and women. However, the committee's name remained unchanged.

The first Chair was Joan Raphael-Leff (1998-2001), followed by Mariam Alizade (2001-2005), Giovanna Ambrosio (2005-2009), Francis Salo (2009-2015), and Gertraud Schlesinger (2016-2017), Paula Ellman (2017-2021) and Patricia Alkolombre (2021-2025).

Since its foundation COWAP has aimed to maintain a constantly open space for reflection, questioning, and exchange with other disciplines on complex issues such as sexuality and gender, femininity, masculinity, parenthood and reproductive techniques, maternity, paternity, hierarchical gender relations, and different forms of gender-based violence. Dialogues, Conferences, Workshops, Film Panels, and Study Groups were set up in all local, national, and international regions. The exchange through theoretical-clinical discussions on social relevance was realized within an interdisciplinary framework from the outset. We organize breakfasts or camaraderie lunches at congresses, dialogues, and local and international meetings.



COWAP breakfast in London

COWAP BOOKS

The COWAP events' publications mean that there are more than 40 books published by *Karnac* and *Routledge* in English, and *Lumen* and *Letra Viva* in Spanish.

Paula Ellman developed the Women and Psychoanalysis Book Series from the work of COWAP during her Presidency. Paula Ellman is the Editor-in-Chief from North America and formalized the Book Series Editorial Board with Carolina Bacchi (North America) Sara Boffito (Italy), Lesley Caldwell (UK), Amrita Narayana (India) and Paula Escribens Pareja (Peru). The publications encourage discussions on women, sexuality, gender, men and psychoanalysis, and intersections with diversity and cross-cultural experience.

Since constituting the *Book Series Editorial Board*, there have been proposal submissions from all regions of the IPA, all of which were carefully considered by the Board in our monthly meetings. Our Board works closely with authors and editors to ready proposals for Routledge, review book chapters, and guide through the publishing process.

PROJECTS

As a result of the work of the monthly meetings, a group project emerged for 2023, a COWAP Interregional Conference on our 25th anniversary. The title is: "Women in different social contexts: Giving voice to silence." COWAP 25th Anniversary 1998-2023.

The online event will be organized in Argentina in October 2023. The issues we will address are Women and reproductive rights, Women and gender-based violence, Women and oppressive social context, and Women, feminine and maternal care. We will work on different topics in each region throughout the year.

COWAP in EUROPE

Emanuela Quagliata (Chair EU), Ana Teresa Vale (Member EU), Melis Tanık Sivri (Member EU), Mayessi Svoronou (IPSO EU)

Since 2022, COWAP Europe team has been facilitating monthly meetings in order to discuss the work of European colleagues on several themes: women, mothers, refugees and migrants; oppression and violence against women; repudiation of the feminine; and motherhood through egg donation and surrogacy. In line with these themes, in October 22-23, 2022, the COWAP International Europe conference in Rome, entitled "Intolerance to the feminine" was organized, with the aim of gaining a deeper understanding of the underlying dynamics of intolerance to the feminine, discussed by psychoanalysts from different parts of Europe, including the team members, in dialogue with professional experts on these subjects, reflecting on psychoanalytic concepts, clinical examples, as well as experiences from contemporary social context. Currently, a book

based on the conference is being prepared for publication. Some examples of the contribution of the European team members to the scientific activities of the EPF and the IPA are "Idealization of motherhood" panel (Vienna 2022, EPF), "Illusions and disillusionment in assisted reproduction" panel (Cannes 2023, EPF), COWAP film analysis panel (Cartagena 2023, IPA).

COWAP in LATIN AMERICA

Graciela Cardó (Chair LA), Aurora Romano (Member LA), Renata Vives (Member LA), Hildegarde Kochman (IPSO).

COWAP LA's activities focus on issues related to gender violence, the place of women in different countries, reproductive rights and new family configurations linked to assisted reproduction. Every two years it promotes Latin American Intergenerational Dialogues between men and women. In July this year, COWAP Peru organized the Dialogue on "Women, Gender, Culture and Future".

We commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women in an conference on "Dehumanisation at the beginning of life: Obstetric Violence". COWAP workshops and scientific activities also took place in different LA groups.

The *Childhood and Adolescence Research Group* was created in mid-2021 under the leadership of Ema Ponce de León together with Paula Escribens. The Childhood and Adolescence Research Group was created in mid-2021 under the leadership of Ema Ponce de León together with Paula Escribens. And we continue with the Bibliographic Project of Latin American publications started by Candida Sé Holovko as Co-Chair.

This year was notable for the committee's participation in the main LA events: Fepal, Febrapsi, among others. We celebrated the publication of the two volumes of "Power, Gender and Love", compiled by Patrícia Alkolombre, Graciela Cardo, Aurora Romano, Teresa Lartigue and Alejandra Mejía. And the book compiled by Rosa Lang and Renata Vives "The different faces of love".

COWAP in NORTH AMERICA

Margarita Cereijido (Chair NA) Lynne Zeavin (Member NA), Andrea Kahn (Member NA), Chrissy Wallace (IPSO)

This year's COWAP NA activities focused mainly on issues of *psychoanalysis and reproductive rights*. We launched the *COWAP NA Film Series Discussions on Gender*. Moderated by Margarita Cereijido and Anne Adelman, it has addressed the importance of reproduction rights, women's multiple desires, gender violence, class, and race. Discussants have included Rosemary Balsam, Heli Morales, Amrita Narayanan, Michael Diamond, and COWAP NA's members Janice Liberman, and Catherine Mallough. We published the book *Psychoanalytic Explorations of What Women Want Today*, co-edited by Margarita Cereijido, Paula Ellman, and Nancy Goodman. Contributors included Virginia Ungar, Rosemary Balsam, Leticia Glocer Fiorini, Patricia Alkolombre, Adriana Prengler, Adrienne Harris, Arlene Kramer Richards, Graciela Abelin-Sas Rose, Cecile Bassen and Janice Lieberman. The publication presents topics of female desire, authority, power, gender, stereotypes, community witnessing, and self-agency. We celebrated the book launch with a "Virtual March" to defend reproductive rights. The book authors presented their ideas with special consideration to the fight for the autonomy of women's bodies and reproductive rights. We have started the series *Revisiting the Maternal*. This yearlong symposium features a series of conversations on the contemporary meanings of the maternal. The series is organized by Lynne Zeavin and has already featured Adrienne Harris, Lynne Zeavin, Margarita Cereijido, Lindsay Clarkson, Kay Long, and Shelly Rockwell.

COWAP in ASIA PACIFIC REGION

Amrita Narayanan (Chair Asia Pacific Region), Gunjan Chandak Khemka (IPSO), Jhuma Basak (India Consultant), Teresa Yuan (China Consultant).

The Asia Pacific region led by Amrita Narayanan organised the COWAP Conference at the Asia Pacific Pre-Congress on 3 January on "Queerness, Women and Psychoanalysis". It already has more than 100 registered, interdisciplinary speakers and psychoanalysts from India, China and Argentina.

Amrita Narayanan participated in the COWAP North America Film Series "Gender Debates", organised by the Washington Centre for Psychoanalysis Baltimore, the Contemporary Freudian Society and IPA-COWAP.

Gunjan Chandak Khemka established a study group for candidates on issues of femininity and surrogacy in lesbian couples.

Since 1998, Cowap in China participated in events. In the framework of the 7th Chinese Psychoanalytic Congress "Life Nurture and Psychoanalysis" held in Shanghai on 18 December 2021, was presented the workshop "In the beginning of life: Motherhood and the desire for a child". It was coordinated by Teresa Yuan, hosted by Tong Jun Chair of the IPA China Study Group and led by Patricia Alkolombre Cowap's general chair and an invited candidate. From this year all Chinese members and candidates receive the COWAP Newsletter.



Wishing you a Happy New Year 2023,
Patricia Alkolombre, COWAP Chair

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