



## EFTA 2022 Conference in Ljubljana



### **Nikos Marketos, Psychiatrist – Systemic Psychotherapist**

It was the 11<sup>th</sup> EFTA Conference,

It took place in Ljubljana from 7 to 10 of September 2022.

In a ceremony that took place in the presence of the members of the board of EFTA and a large audience, Haris Kataki was awarded for her long lasting contribution to family therapy and her work as an author.

I was impressed by the participation of many Greeks in the conference.

### **My experience from Ljubljana**

#### **Aimilia Markouizou Gkika, Psychologist -Psychotherapist**

EFTA's conference was held in Ljubljana, in person again after 3 years. Personally, I had participated 6 years ago in Athens with an independent presentation. This time I took part in a round table with HESTAFTA, an experience that proved to be extremely rich, both inside and outside the conference proceedings. I had the opportunity to get in touch with my colleagues differently, to exchange more personal moments, to present my work, to take part in excellent discussions. It also gave me the opportunity to connect more with colleagues from Italy and SIRTS, and to build bridges for future collaborations. I felt empowered in terms of my professional identity; I felt that I was exactly where I wanted to be and that I had developed and was getting the recognition I deserved. It was a unique experience when my presentation was attended by my therapist and teacher, Haris Kataki.

Conditions were created for a fruitful dialogue, indicatively, concerning the future of psychotherapy, the zeitgeist that determines the problems and difficulties of the modern family, interventions of centers in many different languages, the different forms of family, the status of family therapy in Europe, the possibility that technology offers us for online psychotherapeutic interventions, the theory of chaos in modern psychotherapies, as well as synergies and developments.

In my opinion, EFTA conferences are always a "therapeutic" opportunity for our "family", that of family psychotherapists, where we are all together in a "space", for a moment we stop working and reflect. They act as "fractals of change", as little "frames of stability" to deal with the chaos of the modern family; both in our own lives with their constant changes and challenges and in the lives of the families we "take on".

In Ljubljana this "frame of stability" (Frisina, 2022) had an "obscure outline" in that it was held in 3 different locations where care of needs was limited (e.g. little or no access to water, snacks, etc. in many



places). Furthermore, it ended, in effect "without closure", leaving something "pending". But the need for people to get together –for many to meet again after years or to finally meet in person - to show their work, to share experiences, thoughts, feelings and practices, to meet new colleagues, to tighten relationships with some others and ultimately to leave having been more "accompanied", somewhat stabilized the vague boundaries of this "frame". The beauty and amenities of Ljubljana as a modern European city, which acted as a big "embrace", a "cradle" that contained us all, contributed to this.

The "unfinished business", that was left pending in my opinion, has to do with the basic tenets of systemic family psychotherapy, which consistently, by its very nature, offers a different reading of the symptom, of the 'problem', of what is effective and what constitutes change. And this reading differs vastly from the mechanistic, easy, quick, Newtonian, linear approach to both illness and life in general, in a world that is constantly changing at breakneck speed, and that defines the inner experience of the individual, the family and society in the established status quo. What emerged at various times is the need for this "reading" to be supported institutionally, socially, and scientifically, so that family therapy can find a little more of its rightful place in creating Order in the Chaos of modern life. And it is our role to work in that direction.

Athens, 02.10.2022

### **EFTA Conference 2022**

#### **Katerina Theodoraki, Child Psychiatrist – Systemic Psychotherapist**

Ljubljana...

A beautiful city, people in motion, young people in the streets, drinking coffee, discussing, enjoying themselves... looking happy. A conference without facemasks, after two years of seclusion, with us trying to find our footing, to interact to communicate. Fear: will I get COVID? Isn't it dangerous? It must be. Isn't everybody else afraid? I am both here and there, inside and out, in space, in the mind, in thought, in the congregation, in the interaction. And the three locations of the conference come to make the "inside or out" up close or from afar dilemma even more difficult. I experienced a distraction that was partly mine but not entirely. Maybe the conference was not done justice by the locations where it was held and by it coinciding with the final stages of the pandemic. However, I wondered whether family therapy continues being a therapy or whether it is on its way to becoming a technique, or even many fragmented techniques. And where is the art that is a component of therapy? Where is it hiding? Have we forsaken it?

"Must we be blinded in order to see" as Kostas Georgopoulos asserts in his analysis of Oedipus?