

INTRODUCTION - ISSUE 26

This issue is dedicated to the 30th Anniversary of the Family Therapy Unit of the Attica Psychiatric Hospital. Additionally, there are two more papers and two book reviews that are in a way connected to the celebration of the Unit.

On Friday, October 11, 2024, the Family Therapy Unit of Attica Psychiatric Hospital held a conference to celebrate its thirtieth anniversary of operation and honor its founders, Katia Charalabaki, Fotis Kotsidas, and **Athena Goka**. As Dimitra Doubioti writes, "Anniversaries are not just celebrations. They are an opportunity to reflect on and honor the legacy we have received and an invitation to envision the future."

The entry of the papers of the conference in the journal is like an entry in the memory box.

By reading the articles, the reader will ascertain the particular approach and discourse cultivated by the unit, as well as the value system it served, as well as the osmosis of ideas and experiences.

At this conference, three roundtables and a keynote speech were held.

The first was a tribute session to the founders of the Family Therapy Unit, Katia Charalabaki, Fotis Kotsidas and Athena Goka. It was an opportunity to give the floor to the founding members of the unit... and to honor the legacy we have received. The creation of the unit was the result of the vision and values of Katia and Fotis. Both were visionaries; they remained consistent with their values until the end, with a deep love for humans and compassion for human suffering. Athena was the first head nurse of the unit, from its establishment until her retirement. Her tenure left its mark on the unit. She remained a person of importance. She was the soul of the unit.

For us systemic practitioners, it is not surprising that within the rigid institution, innovative structures emerged that overthrew the asylum, such as Katia's and Fotis's, project, but also Katerina Matsa and Theodoros Megalooikonomou's structures.

Katia Charalabaki in her paper entitled "**30 years of the Family Therapy Unit of the Attica Psychiatric Hospital.**" states that the creation of the Family Therapy Unit represented the vision of "de-institutionalization" within the bosom of the "primordial mother." Over time, the unit has formed its own discourse and identity.

Fotis Kotsidas refers to memory and time, invoking ancient Greek dramaturgy with figures such as Electra, Priam, Achilles, Odysseus, and Tiresias, but also

mentions persons who supported the genesis of the Family Therapy Unit, such as Varouhakis.

Athena Goka mentions in her article how, for the community, the unit was the asylum and, at the same time, for the asylum the Unit was something alien that was speaking a different language.

The papers that follow are based on the lectures given by the Unit's professionals.

In her paper titled "***Connections and Separations: From the Unit to the Family and from the Family to the Unit***," on the occasion of the farewell to/separation from the founders of the unit, **Kia Thanopoulou** discusses the process of separation in the family and therapy.

In the next article, entitled "***Values in Psychotherapy and the Family Therapy Unit: Telling a Story***," **Athanasia Kati** refers to the values and purposes of psychotherapy and the attitude of the therapist, presenting a clinical vignette that illuminates the importance of all of these elements.

The next article is a presentation by **Ioanna Anagnostopoulou** entitled "***Six short 'personal' stories***," in which, with respect and sensitivity, she chooses to talk about people who have left their intense mark on the staff, but are no longer in the unit.

Ersi Tsopanaki's article, entitled "***The Systemic Look at Clinical Practice***," focuses on the importance of a holistic approach and comprehension of family dynamics in clinical work.

In the next paper, entitled "***The Unit's Work — From Yesterday to Today***," **Maria Stathaki** presents the quantitative imprint of the work of the unit. These are, indeed, impressive statistical data!

Then follows the lecture by the guest speaker **Dimitra Doumpiotti**, entitled "***Power Dynamics in Clinical Practice and Theory: How Ideas 'Shape' the Field of Mental Health and Society***." It is an interesting critical view of our conceptual frameworks, and questions whether we reproduce power structures that trap us in the dualistic logic of functional versus dysfunctional, which may negatively affect the system.

In the third session, professionals who were trained in the unit during the thirty years of its training program in Systemic Psychotherapy presented their experiences.

Efi Konida's article discusses the imprint of the training on her professional and personal career until today. How her thinking moved to a new way of reading reality, but also how the experience of sharing genograms "connected us forever."

Lambrini Ioannou, in the next article entitled "***The Journey of the Professional Self Through Time***," describes how she utilised the systemic perspective in her work with parents of children on the autism spectrum.

Michalis Papantonopoulos, in his presentation entitled "***The Contribution of the Systemic Approach in a Community-Based Psychosocial Intervention Program***", presents the work of the Psychosocial Intervention Unit "Ploes."

Elpida Goutseli in the next article entitled "***Family Therapy Unit A.P.H.: Celebrating our 30 years***", discusses her training experience in the Family Therapy Unit, with theoretical references to the training framework and thoughts about the "learning community" and the process of becoming a therapist.

Next is the paper by **Maria Borcsa & Paula Witzel** entitled "***It makes no sense to tell our child fairy tales. Intergenerational aspects of forced migration in the digital age.***" This article refers to families experiencing separation due to forced migration and uprooting and examines the role of communication and information technologies, as well as the challenges for psychotherapy.

In his paper "***Commentary on the book "Lavrio Analyzed" by Giorgos Bitimitris***", **Sotiris Manolopoulos** presents reflections on the relationship between experience and narration, as well as on the grieving process. He writes, "Time and oblivion do not heal pain and death — memories heal them."

This is followed by the review of Dimitris Karagiannis's book, "***Hidden Psychic Beauty***," by **Nikos Marketos**. The publication of the book coincides with the thirtieth anniversary of the "Antistixi" Institute and thus has an anniversary character. It is a distillation of the experience and knowledge of many years of creative and pioneering clinical work in the field of psychotherapy. A book about self-awareness and the meaning of life.

Christos Mastellos, with the article entitled "***For a Little Justice for the People Who Were Not Yet Born***," presents the collective volume "*De-medicalizing*

Suffering, Psychiatry, Psychology, and the Human Condition." The author focuses on social reality, where mental anguish is produced. He raises the question of the inevitable political role of the mental health scientist.

Enjoy reading!

On behalf of the Editorial Board,

Nikos Marketos

30 Years of the Family Therapy Unit of the Attica Psychiatric Hospital¹

Katia Charalabaki, Psychiatrist, Systemic Psychotherapist



Painting by Kyriakos Katzourakis

It was 30 years ago that the Family Therapy Unit of the Attica Psychiatric Hospital was founded. This means that today we record the history of the individual, the framework, and of the system. Yet, we had celebrated the Unit's 23rd and 25th anniversaries seven and five years ago respectively, which means that many of the things that will be said today have been said before and will thus be a repetition. That, however, comes with celebrating anniversaries. When we have birthday parties – some times every single year – we give out similar cakes, we play the same kind of music on our turntables, and even the presents we receive are mostly similar... This, after all, is the essence of the concept of an “anniversary”: It contains, on a verbal level, the concept of historicising, of repeating, through representing events. However, in order for the repetition to not become cumbersome, I will not linger on elements that define it, but will rather refer those who are interested in the characteristics, the functioning and the special elements of the F.T.U. to previous references such as the “The peculiarities of psychotherapy in the public sector” (Notebooks of Psychiatry, 2010), “Something more... something less”. Personal and professional development as a part of the social process (from the book “Recollections & Revelations, Stories of Systemic Psychotherapy, KORONTZI PUBLISHING, 2018, that can also be found here today), “Family Therapy Unit of Attica Psychiatric Hospital: In 25 years what has stayed

¹ This paper is based on a lecture given at a conference held in October 2024 to celebrate the 30 years of operation of the Family Therapy Unit of the Attica Psychiatric Hospital, and a farewell to the founders of the Unit.