

3 Memories from Luigi Onnis about EFTA Leuven, February 2015

I'm very sorry not to be able to participate to EFTA's anniversary owing to unexpected health problems (cold and fever). I would like to contribute however to reconstruct this, by this time, the long EFTA's history, through personal memories.

The first memory refers to a scenery in 1975, when in the rooms around the Brussels Market Place, Mony Elkaim organizes an extraordinary meeting between the representatives of Antipsychiatry and of the Alternative Psychiatry from different European countries. Laing and Cooper from United Kingdom, Felix Guattari and Robert Castel from France and Franco Basaglia and Giovanni Jervis were there.

Why this meeting was important? Because the connections between these movements and the systemic culture, that was beginning to spread in Europe was immediately clear. The common element was bound to the fact that both valorise the influence of the **context** in the origins of psychic suffering. The movements of Antipsychiatry use to give more importance to the larger social political context; the systemic approach, to the microsocial aspects as working groups, the school, and particularly, the family. But the interdependence between these aspects macrosociological and microsociological was evident.

When 3 years after, in 1978, in Italy, Basaglia's Law confirms the definitive overcoming of the Big Psychiatric Institutions, the mental health operators had themselves to face the emergency of the psychic discomfort in the social place of its origins, and it was not surprising that they had found in the systemic approach more adequate interpretative keys and intervention tools.

May be this explain, the particular expansion that systemic psychotherapy had at that times in Italy.

The second memory : another scenery. We are in the 1990, in a large hall of the Hotel Lutétia in Paris where under the Mony Elkaim 's initiative, met almost 50 family therapists, coming from different European countries and decided to found EFTA. It was important to give a more solid organizational structure to the « Family Therapy Network » that since that moment has connected the family therapists.

At that time, the need to better protect the family therapists professionalism and to guarantee the recognition into the different European countries, imposed the formation of an organised association with individual members and elected board.

I still remember with how much enthusiasm we undertake to this enterprise, designating Mony the first president, with the awareness to start a common battle of great importance.

The third memory : another scenery. We are again in Paris but this time in the APRTF building of Elida Romano's group, one of the members of the Board. It is in this place that since the end of the 1990's began regular meetings between the EFTA's Board and the representatives of the institutes from different European countries, and the national associations where they were build up. These meetings, I had the task to promote as coordinator, particularly concerned Training Standards and the family therapist recognition.

I think that these meetings reveal themselves of great importance because they had been the preamble of a demand from the institutes and the national associations, to participate in a more direct an active way, to the development of EFTA.

That is why I believe that these meetings had been the matrix of the today's EFTA three chambers structure that allowed, in the last years, the ulterior and important EFTA's expansion.

I'm very proud of having participated to all these important moment of the growing of EFTA, and to continue to give my contribute as an Honorary President, in order that it later reinforces as a serious scientific association that protects the professionalism and recognition of family therapists.

But most of all, I'm proud to be part of a systemic culture that I think today is essential because carrier of Complexity, Tolerance, Respect for others and Acceptance of differences.

Paraphrasing a Beatles's song « All you need is Love », I think we can say that today « All we need is a systemic culture », because it is the culture that allows in our globalized world to put in respectful and affective relations, all these identities and specificities that otherwise risk to disappear in the contemporaneous globalization.

And I'm very trustful that EFTA in the future will perform this important task of diffusion of a systemic culture of interdependence and Complexity.

Luigi Onnis, Honorary President of EFTA.