

A thousand faces, one story: the early months of Collective Analysis through oral sources (1975-1976)

The aim of this article is to present “A thousand faces, one story”, a project funded starting in 2022 by Massimo Fagioli Foundation, which aims to establish an oral archive dedicated to the therapeutic, formative, and research experience represented by Collective Analysis. Such a phenomenon, founded on Fagioli’s innovative theories and conducted between 1975 and 2016, represents an unprecedented form of clinical and research practice within the international psychiatric, cultural, and social landscape. The article provides a preliminary overview of the theoretical and methodological premises guiding the collection of audiovisual interviews, fostering a reflection on the epistemological and ethical issues associated with using oral sources in this specific context. Through the testimonies of seven participants involved in the early seminars at Villa Massimo in Rome (1975-1976), an initial historical reconstruction is proposed. The narratives clearly reveal the foundational characteristics of the movement: a decisive break with Freudian psychoanalysis, the opening of sessions to free, voluntary, and collective participation, and the development of a therapeutic practice centered on dream interpretation. This work demonstrates how individual narratives, despite their inevitable subjectivity, gain historical value when woven into the broader fabric of collective memory and historiography, thereby contributing to future reconstructions of the history of Collective Analysis within contemporary psychiatric history.

Keywords: Collective Analysis; Massimo Fagioli; group psychotherapy; oral archives for the history of psychiatry.

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