

Sabina Spielrein: out from the shadow of Jung and Freud

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Abstract: Since the 1982 publication of Aldo Carotenuto's book, *A Secret Symmetry: Sabina Spielrein Between Jung and Freud*, there has been renewed interest in the life and work of Sabina Spielrein. She was Jung's first psychoanalytic case at the Burghölzli Hospital in 1904, and was referred to several times in *The Freud/Jung Letters*. Spielrein recovered, enrolled in medical school, and went on to become a Freudian analyst. Her most famous paper, published in 1912, 'Destruction as a cause of coming into being', was referred to by Freud in 1920 in relation to his Death Instinct theory. In the few Freudian publications on this controversial theory since 1920, Spielrein's contribution is consistently omitted. Jung also neglected to refer to her 'Destruction' paper in his early 1912 version of 'Symbols of transformation', even though he had edited her paper and had promised to acknowledge her contribution. He did refer extensively to Spielrein's first paper, her medical thesis, 'On the psychological content of a case of schizophrenia', published in 1911, as yet unpublished in English. In her paper Spielrein sought to understand the psychotic delusions of Frau M, a patient at the Burghölzli, much in the style of Jung's 'Psychology of dementia praecox' (1907). The purpose of this paper is to explore to what extent Spielrein's Frau M paper, and its companion 'Destruction' paper, make an original contribution to both Jung and Freud's emerging theories on the possible creative versus destructive outcomes of neurotic or psychotic introversion, culminating in Jung's concept of the 'collective unconscious' (1916) and Freud's concept of a 'Death instinct' (1920).

Key words: ambivalence, collective unconscious, death instinct, psychosis, transference

Introduction

In 1977 Aldo Carotenuto was the first to write about Sabina Spielrein as a possible inspiration for Jung's concept of the 'anima', based on his reading of passages in Jung's so-called autobiography, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (1961), cross-correlated with passages in *The Freud/Jung Letters*, edited by William McGuire (1974). That same year Carotenuto was given access to a package of letters and letter drafts between Spielrein and Jung, and between her and Freud, as well as sections of her diary. These had been left by her in

Geneva, in the care of Edouard Claparède, at the Institute of Psychology, before she returned to Russia in 1923. This led to the 1982 publication in English of Carotenuto's now well known book, *A Secret Symmetry: Sabina Spielrein Between Jung and Freud*. This book stimulated all subsequent research into her life and contribution to psychoanalysis.

Before that time, reference to Spielrein's early work, notably her medical dissertation, 'On the Psychological Content of a Case of Schizophrenia (Dementia Praecox)' (1911) could be found in both early (*Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido*, 1912, first published in English as *Psychology of the Unconscious* in 1916) and later editions of Jung's *Symbols of Transformation* (1952). However, despite the fact that he edited her second, more theoretical, paper, 'Destruction as the cause of coming into being', which was published in the *Jahrbuch für psychoanalytische und psychopathologische Forschungen* next to Part II of his *Wandlungen* paper in 1912, Jung made no reference to this paper. He did acknowledge her contribution to the death instinct theory in a brief footnote in the 1952 edition.

Sigmund Freud was well aware of both of Spielrein's articles, especially her 'Destruction' paper, a portion of which she had presented to his psychoanalytic group in Vienna in 1911, and which was briefly reviewed in the *Minutes of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society* (1910-1911). In addition, Paul Federn (1913) wrote a review following its publication in 1912. Yet Freud made no specific reference to this work until 1920, in a brief footnote in his *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. In Freudian circles today, there is minimal interest in Freud's Death Instinct theory, and I have found no acknowledgement of any contribution of Spielrein's. For example, at the 27th International Psycho-Analytic Congress (1971) in Vienna, whose theme was 'Aggression and Death Instinct Theory', including papers by Brenner, Garma and Rosenfeld (1971), there was no mention of Spielrein's contribution in the discussion of Freud's developing thoughts on these subjects between 1911 and 1920.

Today, Spielrein's published articles, in various psychoanalytic journals, mainly in German, are slowly but surely becoming available in English translation (Spielrein 1912, 1913-1930). Brigitte Allain-Dupré (2004) has compiled a comprehensive bibliography of these works, together with articles and books on Sabina Spielrein. There are a few omissions, notably van Waring (1992), but also Covington & Wharton (2003), and my own contribution, Skea (2003, 335-96), the latter two both too recent to be included in her bibliography. I find Kerr's *A Most Dangerous Method: The Story of Jung, Freud and Sabina Spielrein* (1993) the most comprehensive text on the role Spielrein played in the complex relationship between Jung and Freud. In addition, the *Journal of Analytical Psychology* has published an English translation of Spielrein's 1912 'Destruction' paper (Vol. 39, 1994) and has devoted a whole issue, Vol. 46, No.1 (January 2001) to important articles on Spielrein, English translations of her medical record at the Burghölzli, various short papers and diary extracts by Spielrein, and Jung's correspondence with Spielrein.

Elisabeth Marton's recent 2002 documentary, *My Name was Sabina Spielrein*, is the first film about the life of Sabina Spielrein. Marton's film creatively re-enacted Spielrein's hospitalization, using excerpts from her hospital record and Jung's published material on her 'case'. Marton sensitively portrayed the 'love affair' that developed between Jung and Spielrein, and then followed the triangular relationship between her, Jung and Freud, using actors reading from their letters, and from Sabina's diary. The film also showed Spielrein's work with Frau M in the Burghölzli Hospital, which she wrote up for her medical dissertation.

Spielrein seems to have been a creative but conflicted individual who struggled to define her calling, at times considering herself an artist or musician rather than a psychoanalyst. Though she continued to publish short psychoanalytic articles up to 1930, and also helped introduce psychoanalysis to her native Russia, she seems to have found it difficult to develop a thriving psychoanalytic practice, working mainly with children. Stalin banned psychoanalysis in 1930; in the mid-1930's each of her brothers was killed by the Stalinist regime; her father and husband died soon after in quick succession, leaving her alone with her two daughters. At the end of her life, this 57 year-old woman, in black clothes, saw clients secretly in her Rostov home in a dark windowless room. In 1942, despite ample warning that the Nazis were killing Russian Jews and were approaching Rostov, Spielrein chose to remain, leading to her arrest and execution, along with her daughters.

The case of Frau M

One of the mysteries about Sabina Spielrein's contributions to psychoanalysis is why two of her earliest publications, her medical school thesis, 'On the psychological content of a case of schizophrenia (dementia praecox)', published in German in the *Jahrbuch* in 1911, and one of the earliest publications on child psychology, 'Contributions to the knowledge of the child's psyche', published in the *Zentralblatt* (1912a), have never been published in English (Allain-Dupré 2004). In actual fact, Kenneth McCormick published privately in 1992 an English translation of her medical thesis along with her more famous 1912 'Destruction' paper. His translation of the latter work, along with his introduction and postscript, was published in the *Journal of Analytical Psychology* in 1994. It is unclear why it did not also publish McCormick's English translation of her medical thesis. At 71 pages it is almost twice as long as her 'Destruction' paper, which may explain this. My discussion here is based on a copy of McCormick's translation, kindly provided by him.

Sabina Spielrein had been hospitalized as an inpatient at the Burghölzli under Jung's care between August 1904 and June 1905, before entering medical school at the University of Zürich. As part of her training to become a psychiatrist, she worked at the Burghölzli under the supervision of Eugen Bleuler, the director, but also under the influence of Jung, who was now her outpatient therapist.

She had also assisted Jung in his research on the word association test, helping administer it to various inpatients, students and colleagues. For her medical dissertation she conducted a study of a profoundly schizophrenic woman, Frau M, in a style reminiscent of Jung's earlier study of B in 'The psychology of dementia praecox' (1907). Spielrein began her thesis thus:

Investigators of recent years have led to a conception of schizophrenia (dementia praecox) that in various respects requires a broad empirical foundation. Without consideration for existing dogmas, I resolved to study a case of paranoid dementia solely to obtain a deeper view of the patient's mental processes.

Spielrein wanted to decipher 'meaning' in the patient's 'meaningless sentences' based as completely as possible on virtually a verbatim transcription of the patient's words. In her introduction she seemed very aware of the dangers of suggestion, as she did not consult the background history (anamnesis) and the clinical notes until the end of her investigation. Thus Spielrein was a researcher rather than the woman's doctor or psychotherapist. We do not know who Frau M's doctor was, though there are hints that both Jung and possibly his superior, Bleuler, were involved.

It is ironic that Frau M was hospitalized on Nov 18, 1905, only a few months after Spielrein's release from inpatient status herself, and with an initial presentation that is remarkably similar to Spielrein's. Her perception, memory and orientation were undisturbed, but with exaggerated affect, like a 'bad actress' confused speech, using meaningless puns, hallucinations, visual, aural and somatic, delusional ideas, mannerisms, restless detachment and occasional violence. Frau M, a married woman, (age not given, but probably late 30's) with two children (age and sex not given) with no prior psychiatric hospitalizations, was diagnosed as a 'paranoid form of dementia praecox'. The teenage (19) Spielrein's problem, admitted the year before with similar symptoms, which had been developing for the previous two years, was diagnosed as 'hysteria', or later in Jung's writings as 'psychotic hysteria'. I have previously described (Skea 2003) the different diagnoses given to her by various writers, from schizophrenia (Carotenuto 1982) to an adolescent turmoil resembling a borderline personality disorder (Hoffer 2001). However, Spielrein's psychotic-like symptoms quickly remitted during her year as an inpatient, while Frau M's psychotic symptoms continued unabated from her initial admission in 1905 to the time when Spielrein worked with her.

Bair (2003, p. 145) has asserted that Spielrein 'decided to write her dissertation under Bleuler's supervision toward the end of 1907', without providing a source reference. I am inclined to agree with Kerr (1993, p. 226) who believes that Spielrein began to study Frau M as late as 1909, after the breakup of her 'love affair' with Jung. Various diary entries in September 1910 (Carotenuto 1982) indicate that Spielrein was still writing her dissertation, having recently switched supervisors from Bleuler to Jung. In addition, many of her references, such as to Jung, Freud, Abraham, Bleuler or Ricklin, point to papers written as

recently as 1909 or even as late as August 1910. Spielrein took her final exams in January 1911, graduating with honours in psychiatry. Her dissertation was registered with the university a month later, and was published in August 1911, in Volume III of the *Jahrbuch*.

My impression is that Spielrein found it relatively easy to empathize with this woman, in spite of their difference in age and life circumstances, and the seeming meaninglessness of her communications. Despite the supposed objective nature of Spielrein's research investigation, I detect inevitable therapeutic interaction and concomitant transference reactions, albeit difficult to decipher with a psychotic person. I suspect that Jung had been similarly interested in Spielrein from a purely objective perspective as his first psychoanalytic test case, as he described her to Freud in their early communications (*The Freud/Jung Letters*, McGuire 1974) and in case vignettes in his published papers during that time ('The psychology of dementia praecox', 1907; 'The Freudian theory of hysteria', 1908). However, Jung was to become deeply subjectively involved with her, following the rapid transference cure which resulted in her release from inpatient status and enrolment as a medical school student. Transference and countertransference complications emerged, as their relationship evolved from doctor/patient via a combination of intimate friendship and mentor/student, to a sometime rivalrous collegial relationship (Carotenuto 1982; Kerr 1993; Covington & Wharton 2003; Bair 2003; Skea 2003).

Although the anamnesis that Spielrein provided for Frau M indicated a history of instability, it would appear that her hospitalization was due to a first psychotic episode. Since her condition apparently persisted five years up to Spielrein completing her dissertation, I can understand why John Kerr called her a 'chronic dementia praecox patient' (1993, p. 225). While it is likely that this was her subsequent fate, Spielrein hinted that Frau M may have chosen this fate:

The patient thus runs from her current conflicts. She does not seek to resolve them in reality, but rather by unconscious rumination. Take a concrete example: sexual intercourse with her husband offends her. Conscious reflection would consider the various possibilities of the real world that could help free her from this painful situation. Had she discussed the pros and cons, she could eventually have decided upon a divorce or found another appropriate remedy. Jung, particularly, has demonstrated that schizophrenics immediately do the opposite. As in a dream, they substitute an inner world with the value of reality for the real outer world.

This is the optimism and naïveté of a novice therapist (Spielrein was 25) in relation to her first case. Frau M's husband was Catholic, and likely did not believe in divorce, and Frau M did not personally have the financial resources to support herself or her two young children. Thus it is not so clear that Frau M had an obvious outer way of resolving her difficult marital predicament. Likewise the adolescent Spielrein had similarly regressed into a psychotic-like breakdown in the face of an intolerable family situation, the recent death of her sister, competitive romantic rivalry with her mother, and a sado-masochistic

relationship with her father (Skea 2003). Once removed from her enmeshment with family by hospitalization in the Burghölzli, Spielrein did seem to 'choose' to return to non-psychotic life in response to Jung's care and encouragement. Without Frau M's medical record, we do not know if or when Frau M was ever released from inpatient status, and whether or not her condition resolved or improved.

Frau M, a Protestant, had been married for 13 years to a Catholic 'professor of the faculty'. Despite being 'frigid in sexual relations' she had become pregnant easily, bearing two children, six years apart (no details of sex of children). The second pregnancy was difficult, complicated by anxiety attacks related to her mother's diagnosis with terminal cancer, and concluded with an equally difficult forceps delivery. Her mother died, which Frau M apparently handled calmly. But a year before her admission to the Burghölzli, pregnant a third time, she had a spontaneous abortion at 7 months, requiring a 3-week hospitalization, during which she had disturbing dreams when under anaesthesia. In the months leading up to her psychotic breakdown there were mood swings between manic euphoria and excessive work and depressive rumination, often focused on her husband's lack of religion. Finally, she became preoccupied with her own and others' filthiness and need for washing and salvation through prayer. This was reported by the husband at admission. What he did not mention was Frau M's belief that her husband had been seduced by two of his students, one of whom, a 'beautiful rich young woman' she called 'the wench'. I do not know if an attempt was made to confirm the possible truth of her allegation. Kerr (1993) took the allegation at face value, calling the husband 'philandering'. I wonder here if Spielrein saw the parallel in her own life situation, being at that time the 'wench' in Jung's marriage. That would put Frau M in Emma Jung's situation. However, Emma had many more resources, both psychological and financial, to deal with *her* distress at *her* husband's alleged 'philandering'. Bair (2003) believes Emma Jung considered divorce at different times during her marriage.

Regarding Frau M's childhood, her husband had reported that his wife had been healthy as a child, no mental abnormalities at school, intelligent, with many interests, mainly literary, and with a religious tendency. Frau M's description of her childhood, however, especially in relation to her father, was very different, albeit through the lens of her psychotic process. She had idealized her father as a young man, 'fun-loving, never drank, and spent his time singing and playing the guitar'. But her 'initial love for him dwindled because he beat her' and her siblings. He was now apparently an alcoholic. She escaped via fantasy into a magic world where God, 'like a toy giant... stood on a peak of a rocky crag' and looked down 'on a valley where there were charming little girls who weren't allowed to be beaten'. This is reminiscent of young Sabina's own escape into childhood fantasy following beatings she experienced from her father or witnessed her brothers undergoing (Carotenuto 1982). Frau M described bedwetting due to a 'chilled or bruised bladder' which Spielrein in her thesis linked both to beating and to masturbation, in true Freudian fashion,

based on her own similar childhood experience, as interpreted by Jung during her inpatient hospitalization (Jung 1908). Spielrein (1911) wrote:

We acknowledge cases in which beating introduces children to masturbation. ... On this basis, a strongly masochistic component confidently permits itself to initiate masturbation. Sadism that can be directly felt by the nursing attendants usually compensates this component during illness. The patient looked for and simultaneously fled from guilt and reconciliation. She was buffeted by those things that she loved and hated. Beating had a sexual coloring for her and the word produced an intense affect.

When Frau M's mother became sick, the father apparently 'went to the brothel'. After her mother's death, Frau M angrily blamed her father 'for causing the death by his bad conduct' which led to family quarrels over family assets. The father subsequently 'died of a religious illness; he was unclean', possibly due to syphilis. These deaths, together with her marital conflicts, and her spontaneous abortion, led to Frau M's psychotic decompensation and hospitalization. She projected her negative feelings about her father onto her husband, sometimes accusing him of drinking and beating their children, even of contracting syphilis while being unfaithful. I wonder if Spielrein accepted these projections onto her husband as literally true since she apparently did not seek to confirm them. In compensation, Frau M mainly idealized the male doctors at the hospital, notably Jung, but also Bleuler and his predecessor, Forel, as teetotal, and 'pure' (rein, as in Spielrein, a possible pun made by the patient). At other times her ambivalence caused her to reverse her idealization of Jung, for example, calling him 'a drunkard because he must devote himself as a psychiatrist and teetotaler to the study of alcohol'. Another example was her negative reaction to Jung administering the association test, which she described as 'being beaten all over through Basel', as interpreted by Spielrein, Jung being from Basel. She also had a dream in which Dr Jung 'carried out an experimental essence in the lower atmosphere' which Spielrein interpreted as a wish for Jung to experiment sexually with her. Spielrein told the patient that it was merely a dream, not reality, which angered the patient, who replied:

Dreams are symbolic and must be interpreted. What if we don't comprehend the symbolism or don't want to comprehend it? What must dreams show us? If I speak of dreams, I must have experienced all of it at one time. Dreams are experience.

Ambivalence, a concept developed clinically by Bleuler (1910-11), the simultaneous positive and negative attitudes about something, for example, sexuality, or alcohol, or a person, such as Dr Jung, combined with a confusion about the 'reality' of a dreamed or fantasized experience versus an objective perception, were hallmarks of Frau M's psychotic experience. Unable to be resolved, these subject areas or persons became powerful complexes which intruded into her tenuous ego consciousness, demanding to be heard, yet leading to inner confusion and outer unintelligibility. Regarding Frau M's paranoid tendencies, Spielrein (1911) stated:

To the patient, the 'suspicions' which other people often express, are always feeling-toned groups of images, 'complexes'. The patient feels overwhelmed by the power of her complexes. She considers them to be independent living beings or beings that can come alive through their intrinsic volition.

With an intuitive sense of the concepts, 'projection' and 'projective identification', Spielrein outlined the way a projected complex can become 'real' under favourable circumstances: 'her erotic complex grapples for a means of expression that will evoke corresponding reactions in another personality'.

Spielrein patiently and creatively unravelled the patient's ramblings and organized them into a coherent group of the patient's key complexes. These related to sexuality (masturbation, frigidity, abortion), disease (her mother's cancer, her father's syphilis, the healing power of doctors), religion (Catholicism v. Protestantism, sin, guilt, punishment, forgiveness), money (her poverty v. the wench's riches), and the elements, water (or fluids, wine, semen, blood), fire, earth, and air (spirit). Spielrein's thesis reveals the influence of her training under Bleuler, her initial supervisor. His study of dementia praecox, renamed by him 'schizophrenia', involved a specific focus on negativism, ambivalence and 'autistic' thinking, clearly evident in Frau M's delusions. However, Spielrein was more influenced by Jung, her latter supervisor, especially his 'Psychology of dementia praecox' (1907). She confirmed that discrete complexes can be identified in psychotic process, and can be related to sexual or aggressive conflict, both current, in relation to her husband, but also back to childhood, in relation to her abusive father or neglectful mother. At this time, Jung, and hence Spielrein, was still strongly influenced by Freud, in regard to the role of childhood erotic/aggressive fantasy in the formation of adult hysterical, and possibly also psychotic symptoms. Freud had long since discarded his belief that actual childhood seduction or sexual abuse was implicated in the development of later adult psychopathology, despite the fact that several of his case studies would continue to reveal precocious childhood sexual activity, often involving seduction by adults or older children ('Dora', 1905; 'the Rat-Man', 1909; 'the Wolf-Man', 1918).

Jung had never taken the role of outer traumatization of children as seriously as Freud did, regarding the development of pathological complexes. For example, in his own autobiography *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (Jung 1961) or in his account of his cousin Hélène's altered ego states in his medical dissertation, 'On the Psychology and Pathology of So-Called Occult Phenomena' (1902), Jung described many outer traumatic experiences in his own or his cousin's childhood. However, he focused more on an innate capacity for vivid introverted fantasy and imagination as predisposing them to complex formation rather than as a defensive reaction to outer trauma. Jung was subsequently to see this introverted fantasy, especially if worked on consciously by 'active imagination' or by play or art therapy, as an attempt to heal the rifts between the host ego and the split-off alter ego states (complexes).

Similarly, Spielrein was well aware that many of her own childhood experiences had been traumatic, resembling those of Frau M, especially regarding sexual stimulation during beatings from their fathers. In his treatment of Spielrein during her 10-month hospitalization, Jung explored both the outer traumatic events which contributed to her anal-erotic complex, and the subsequent masochistic fantasy she utilized to masturbate. This led to rapid improvement in her condition and to his considering her his first psychoanalytic case. As a transference cure, Spielrein had transferred her masochistic 'painful' love for her father onto Jung, who contained her initial inpatient acting-out with both firmness and compassion, until it transformed by compensation into a positive father transference. However, their subsequent outpatient relationship escalated into some form of intimacy, 'poetry',¹ as Spielrein described it in her diary. There was also the fantasy of her bearing Jung a son, Siegfried.² At different times in her therapy with Jung this fantasy was mutually interpreted literally, from a Freudian psychoanalytic perspective, as an incestuous wish toward the 'father', and at other times symbolically, from the perspective of a mythological level of the unconscious, as in the Siegfried myth. However, when the threat of a scandal brought both of them back to the reality that Jung would never leave his wife, their relationship became collegial, and Siegfried was sublimated into her 'Destruction' paper.

Impressed by the archaic, mythological-like motifs that arose in Frau M's dreams, fantasies and delusions, and likely prompted by Jung, who had been feverishly studying mythology for the past year, Spielrein added a final section to her thesis in late 1910. She described the current interest at that time among psychoanalysts on the similarity between the mode of consciousness found in dreams, myths, and fairytales, and the delusional thinking of schizophrenics. She referred to Ricklin (1908), Rank (1909), Stekel (1909), Abraham (1909), and of course Jung, who was working on Part 1 of *Wandlungen*, and Freud, who was working on his 'Schreber' paper, both of which would be published alongside Spielrein's dissertation in Volume III of the *Jahrbuch* in 1911. Children's fantasy, resembling creation myths, fairy tales or schizophrenic delusions, which Spielrein mentioned here in relation to Frau M's childhood, were themes which she was to develop further in her 1912 *Zentralblatt* article.³ I could also

¹ Spielrein took the term 'poetry' from Frau M, who used the term ambiguously in her delusions where 'poetry' referred to a blend of sexual, artistic and religious meanings. Frau M apparently derived the term, according to Kerr (1993), from reading or hearing about Forel's 1905 book, *The Sexual Question*, where he explored the multiple meanings underlying poetry. He had been the previous director of the Burghölzli, and was the leader of the Swiss abstinence movement, which may explain some of Frau M's references to alcohol.

² Spielrein took the name Siegfried from the Teutonic hero in Wagner's Ring Cycle, the offspring of the union between twin brother and sister, Sigmund and Sieglinde, children of the god, Wotan. Siegfried slew the dragon, Fafner, rescued the goddess, Brunhilde, who committed suicide after Siegfried was killed. The child was to be a bridge between Spielrein being Jewish and Jung being Aryan, and symbolically, via her paper, a union of Jung and (Sigmund) Freud's theories.

link alchemical writing to this mythological mode of consciousness, which would be a later development of Jung's thinking, since Frau M's material reads very similarly like ancient alchemical texts. Spielrein mentioned that Jung had informed her of the Greek alchemical 'Visions of Zosimos', in relation to her patient's fantasy of spiritual transformation through boiling or burning of the body.

Present complexes, according to Spielrein, 'do not belong merely to personal experiences, for we also have inherited a deposit of ancestral experiences'. She continued: 'I repeatedly had the illusion that the patient simply had become the victim of a deep-rooted folk superstition'. This was subsequently quoted by Jung the next year, 1912, in Part II of *Wandlungen*. Spielrein went on to refer to Jung's 'Significance of the Father in the Destiny of the Individual' (1909), where he had spoken of a realm beyond experiences of the personal father, 'with his constellating virtues and vices', where 'there appears on the one hand an altogether sublime deity, and on the other hand, the devil. ... These depths of the ego consist in part of 'images' that appear to belong to a past stretching far beyond the individual's'. Spielrein repeated this last sentence of Jung's but did not acknowledge the reference. She gave an example from her patient:

She no longer says: 'I became dirtied by the sexual act'. No, she dissolves her pain among the many analogous images in the universal 'Weltschmerz' that we harbor as an ancestral heirloom. Therefore, she even speaks the language of the mythological thought process: Not she, as an individual, no, universal woman became dirtied because in the past, she was only one of many women; the 'earth' becomes dirtied, because the ancients perceived the earth as an especially powerful woman, the summation of the idea 'Woman', the 'Mater genetrix'... It appears to me that a symbol owes its origin chiefly to the striving of a complex for expansion, for dissolution (transformation) in the universal totality of thought. ... Instead of 'I experience' you say 'She experiences'. Thus the complex becomes deprived of the personal.

Jung was to quote the last part of the above reference in his section on the conception and genetic theory of the libido (*Wandlungen*, Part II, 1912). Spielrein went on to address the simultaneous flight from the patient's situation in present time to the historical nature of the unconscious, even of its being beyond time:

The unconscious dissolves the present in the past. However we also know that the dream is a wish-fulfillment and thereby concerns itself with the future. The future builds on the past. Conflicts, represented by primitive symbols, even may be resolved through this symbolism as if the conflict had occurred and been settled long ago. Thus the unconscious also accepts the independent significance of the future: the personal future becomes a part of the universal phylogenetic past and this simultaneously maintains the significance of the future for the individual. In this way, we see that the unconscious stands somewhat out of time, or is concurrently, present, past and future.

³ This article was based on her own memories of childhood, strongly influenced by Jung's recently published 'Psychic conflicts in a child' (1910), based on his little daughter's fantasies in reaction to the birth of her younger brother, and on Freud's analysis of 'Little Hans' (1909).

Spielrein was describing here the defensive nature of psychotic regression from personal conflict into a universal impersonal experience, to avoid personal pain. She was also hinting at the possible transformative potential of such universal images should the patient be able to return renewed to personal consciousness, which apparently did not occur in Frau M's case. Nevertheless, in a footnote Spielrein added: 'The tendency for dissolution (transformation) of each individual complex is the source of poetry, painting and every form of art'. Here Spielrein acknowledged the potential of such regressive images as transformative symbols, not for the individual per se, but for all mankind via the visions of creative poets or artists.

Spielrein (1911) concluded her study thus:

I cannot resign myself to the thought of having completed a systematic and exhaustive analysis of this case. When patients dissociate to such an extent that they remain stuck in the raw material, indifferent to the true meaning of their inner world, the listener must shrewdly interpret its meaning. From the outset, analysis by current methods is simply impossible.

It seems that Frau M's ego complex was not strong enough to maintain a conscious reality stance against the flood of other complexes, mother, father, sexual, aggressive, and those related to mythological and religious rituals and symbols, erupting out of her unconscious, in the form of hallucinations, dreams and delusions. Her history reveals the origin of childhood fragility of her developing ego, notably deep-rooted ambivalence towards her abusive alcoholic father, and her ineffectual mother, and the origin of a tendency toward introversion of libido, from the real world to an inner world of fantasy. Nevertheless, as an adult she had recovered well enough to become the wife of a college professor and the mother of two children. Spielrein in her introduction had described her as an 'intelligent, well-read, productive woman'. It would appear that suspicions, or possibly paranoia, about her husband's fidelity, her miscarriage, involving frightening dreams during anaesthesia, and her father's death, had re-aroused old complexes which overwhelmed her ego. Her transferences to Jung and to Spielrein were apparently too profoundly ambivalent to allow for a stable relationship, which could have helped her regain a solid ego stance. I wonder if Frau M might have been helped more if her husband, or the rest of her family, siblings, or even her children, had been involved in her treatment. Bleuler and Jung had certainly recognized the role of Spielrein's parents and brothers in *her* conflicts, and had engaged them, both in letters and in face to face meetings ('Spielrein's hospital records', trans. Steffens 2001), mainly to challenge their incestuous enmeshment. We do not know why this was not attempted in Frau M's case. Her sense of abandonment and isolation could possibly have been ameliorated by visits from her children or her siblings.

An important area that Spielrein did not develop in her dissertation was the transference and possible countertransference between herself and Frau M, and

how it might have led to some sort of healing if it could have been analysed. Frau M confessed sexual desire, as well as envy and hate, towards the 'wench', the woman who had 'seduced' her husband. Voices ordered the patient to beat the wench, because 'the woman has corrupted my children, forcing masturbation on them...the patient expressed her identification with the wench in solitary sexual play and also in using the same name...thus the wench became the patient's sexual personality'. From a Jungian perspective, Frau M had projected her sexual shadow onto the 'wench', and even onto Spielrein herself.

The patient had such a positive transference to me that she often complimented me and even wanted to kiss me... Dr. J first had 'examined' her and then carried out the (sexual) function on her. The patient showed me her difficulties and expected me to treat her 'sexual dysentery' playing her desired one (like a husband). Since she transferred the pertinent fantasies to me, I immediately became a 'sexual person'.

Spielrein was well aware of Freudian theory on the subject of woman's more comfortable relation with homoerotic attraction than men, as well as witnessing and experiencing affectionate relationships with other girls and young women both in high school and in college (Carotenuto 1982). However, at 25, having only recently explored her own sexuality, Spielrein was hardly in a good position to analyse Frau M's homoerotic transference towards her.

Spielrein, almost as an afterthought in her thesis, finally mentioned Frau M's mother, having been more influenced by Jung's focus on the significance of the father (Jung 1909).

Mother plays an important part in the patient's destiny. The latter constantly identified with mother and experienced the same things that mother experienced. The patient also said that she felt mother's nature and character were transmitted to her.

This is unclear, and seems to me an idealized compensation for likely ambivalence towards a mother who tolerated her husband beating the children. We remember that Frau M reacted 'calmly' to her mother's death, rather than with grief. If we consider that behind Frau M's homoerotic transference towards Spielrein lay possibly a projected idealized mother complex, then healing would have involved transformation of a mother transference, just as Spielrein had experienced Jung as a father figure in *her* transference cure. This was apparently too difficult from the point of view of this disturbed older mother of two children towards the youthful Spielrein, and likewise, from Spielrein's counter-transference perspective, for her to carry the mother projection, and be able to image Frau M as wounded child.

The discovery of the 'collective unconscious'

As Shamdasani (2003) has comprehensively shown, the concepts of the 'Collective Unconscious' or its constituent components, the 'Archetypes', were

not original to Jung, but can be found in the writings of contemporaries such as James, Semon or Flournoy, psychoanalytic colleagues such as Ricklin, Abraham and Rank, but also back into the 19th century, writers such as Haeckel, Ostwalt, Bergson and Bastian. Jung's emerging focus on the collective unconscious can be seen as early as his 'Significance of the father' paper, published in 1909, but came to fruition in *Wandlungen* (1912), where he used the term 'archaic modes of adaptation'. He first used the term, 'Collective Unconscious' in 'Structure of the Unconscious' in 1916.

In the Author's Note at the start of her biography of Jung (2003), Deirdre Bair reported the accusation of some other biographers that 'Jung had stolen a cornerstone of his psychology, the idea of the collective unconscious, from a medical student whose work he had supervised'. This was Johann Honegger. Honegger was a contemporary of Sabina Spielreins, who was given the similar task to Spielrein of studying a psychotic patient at the Burghölzli, searching for evidence of mythological motifs in psychotic process. While Bair did address the impact of Spielrein's relationship with Jung on his life and work, in relation to Spielrein's own work, she seemed to defer to other writers, notably Kerr (1993), who viewed Spielrein's work favourably, or to Jung and Freud in the *Freud/Jung Letters* (McGuire 1974) where they tended to patronize and pathologize Spielrein. Bair was more focused on Honegger and his life, work and involvement with Jung. The patient he studied was Emile Schwyzer, who has been described as the controversial 'Solar Phallus Man' (Noll 1994; Bair 2003). There is evidence that Honegger suggested some of the mythological material to Schwyzer, which he had presented in a preliminary paper at a meeting in Nuremberg (Honegger 1910). When he attempted to expand it for his medical dissertation, he became hopelessly enmeshed with his subject, as revealed in his unfinished papers (Bair 2003, Appendix). It is unclear whether he reported his own 'psychotic' fantasies or those of his subject. This was just a few months before Honegger left the Burghölzli, and subsequently committed suicide in 1911. Beginning in *Wandlungen* (1912), but several times over the years, Jung used Schwyzer's alleged hallucination and delusion, that the sun possessed an erect phallus which created the wind, as evidence of a mythological motif arising spontaneously out of a mythological layer of the unconscious. Jung had discovered a Mithraic liturgy involving the identical solar phallic image in an obscure text which he believed Schwyzer could not possibly have read, thus eliminating the possibility of cryptomnesia. In *Wandlungen* Jung ascribed this discovery to Honegger. In later editions, however, he removed most references to Honegger, claiming the discovery of the solar phallus image as his own. This has led some authors, notably Noll (1994) to condemn Jung for stealing Honegger's contribution. From her study of the complete set of Honegger's papers, and Schwyzer's medical records at the Burghölzli, Bair (2003) has concluded that it is quite possible that Jung had heard this or a similar fantasy from Schwyzer years before he assigned the study to Honegger in late 1909, thus exonerating Jung.

The outcome of the parallel study of Frau M by Sabina Spielrein was totally different from Honegger's experience with Schwyzer. Despite immersing herself in Frau M's psychotic material, Spielrein was able to maintain her objective stance and successfully wrote it up as her medical thesis in 1911. In the following year she used her case material on Frau M to illustrate her theoretical paper, 'Destruction as the cause of coming into being'. From my study of her medical thesis and the companion 'Destruction' paper, I believe a case can be made for recognizing Spielrein as an important contributor to Jung's emerging theory of the collective unconscious.

In Part II of Jung's *Wandlungen*, published in the *Jahrbuch* in 1912 alongside Spielrein's second 'Destruction' paper, Jung referred to her 1911 study of Frau M no fewer than 17 times, citing delusional material that related to a mythological level of the unconscious. However, the 1916 English translation, and all subsequent editions, culminating in the 1952 *Symbols of Transformation*, incorrectly date her Frau M paper as 1912, rather than 1911, an error unfortunately repeated by Bair (2003). Although Jung maintained most of the references to Spielrein's 'Frau M' paper in *Symbols*, he did delete this sole reference to Spielrein found in Part I of *Wandlungen* (1911):

I wish to refer here to the interesting correlation of mythological and pathological forms disclosed in the analytical investigation of Dr. S. Spielrein, and expressly emphasize that she has discovered the symbolisms presented by her in the *Jahrbuch*, through independent experimental work, in no way connected with my work.

My impression is that Jung chose to use the 'solar phallus' delusion of Schwyzer in later discussions on the collective unconscious, rather than the many equally mythological images produced by Frau M, because he believed the former was a spontaneous creation, uncontaminated by possible cryptomnesia. This could not be said of Frau M's delusions. Jung believed Schwyzer, admitted to the Burghölzli in 1901, could not possibly have read or heard about the Mithraic myth, which Jung found in a 1907 publication by G.R.S Mead, and a 1910 publication by Dieterich (Noll 1994). Besides, Jung thought it was unlikely because of his lack of formal education (Bair 2003). However, as Noll has pointed out, there are earlier references to the same myth by Creuzer and Bachoven that predate Schwyzer's hospitalization; and Bair indicates that Schwyzer was by no means unsophisticated, having lived and worked in England, and whose delusions reveal knowledge of geography, global conflict of his time, and a fascination with European royalty. There is no evidence however of a prior knowledge or interest in folklore or mythology.

By contrast, Frau M was well-read and intelligent, and could easily have derived her delusions, at least partly, from books she had read or from overhearing discussions by the doctors at the Burghölzli. Spielrein's study revealed that Frau M possessed some knowledge of medicine, chemistry, dream theory, literature, art and religion; there is reference to August Forel's 1905 book, *The Sexual Question*, and to Haeckel's 1903 biogenetic theory, that

ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny, a theory relevant to the concept of the collective unconscious. Frau M's psychotic process dissociated and reassembled fragments from her personal life history, images and ideas from her educational background, as well as from deeper impersonal layers of her unconscious, into a confused kaleidoscope of delusions and hallucinations.

Noll (1994) considered that the abstract of Honegger's paper, probably written by Rank (1910, translated by Walser 1974), based on his 1910 Nuremberg presentation on Schwyzer, 'is important in that it is the first indication of the method of collecting evidence for a phylogenetic unconscious: the study of a single individual'. Jung credited Honegger with the discovery of the Schwyzer's 'solar phallus' hallucination in Chapter IV, 'The Song of the Moth', Part I of *Wandlungen* (1911), though he did not refer to the 1910 abstract, which incidentally mentions other mythological motifs, but not the solar phallus. As described above, Jung was later to claim the discovery as his own in later editions. But on the next page, Jung described his indebtedness to his friend and co-worker, Dr Ricklin, for a similar example from a paranoic who felt the entry of God into her in the form of a strong light and a blowing wind. Below the Ricklin mention was Jung's reference to Spielrein, mentioned above, omitted in subsequent editions, but with no actual reference to her study of Frau M, though it had been edited by him, and placed next to his Part I of *Wandlungen* in the 1911 *Jahrbuch*. It was not until the next year, 1912, that Jung referred extensively to her Frau M paper, wrongly dating it as 1912 rather than 1911. For this reason, and following Kerr (1993, p. 303), I consider Spielrein to be the first into print with examples of mythological motifs arising out of a case study conducted by the author. Jung's study of Miss Miller, and Freud's study of Dr. Schreber, found alongside Spielrein's in the 1911 *Jahrbuch*, revealed similar material, but they were conducted at a distance, via a study of their subjects' written material.

Spielrein's more theoretical paper, 'Destruction as the cause of coming into being' was completed in the summer of 1911, but was not published until September 1912. Alongside was Jung's Part II of *Wandlungen*, which he had been labouring on for over a year, and which was to be seen as causing the final rift between himself and Freud. While the focus of her paper was on creative versus destructive aspects of libido, which will be discussed below in relation to Jung's broadening of Freud's libido theory and Freud's later development of his Death Instinct theory, Spielrein also clarified her thoughts on the collective unconscious, as she reflected on her work with Frau M. She began by imagining what might lie behind a girl's interest in stories of witches. Analysis would quickly lead to the figure of the mother, but behind mother, following Silberer (1909), would be unconscious 'primal experiences which seek analogs in the present'. These might be images of the sea, as Great Mother, or, as in an example from Frau M, 'the earth was pierced' instead of 'I, (a mother) was penetrated' where the patient had transformed herself into an undifferentiated Great Mother image, the earth. Spielrein continued:

The closer we approach our conscious thoughts, the more differentiated our images; the deeper we penetrate the unconscious, the more universal and typical the images. The depth of our psyche knows no 'I', but only its summation, the 'We'.

Spielrein considered Freud's explanation of the rich fantasy life of patients suffering from dementia praecox, to be 'as if there were withdrawal or regression of libido, followed by a struggle between the withdrawal of the libido and its distribution'. Spielrein rather interpreted the 'lack of ego activity that produces...the typical archaic mode of thinking...as a battle between the two antagonistic tendencies of the species-psyche (Artpsye in German) and the ego-psyche (Ichpsye). The species-psyche wants to make the ego-image into an impersonal typical image. The ego-psyche tries to restrain this dissolution'. Here we have Spielrein's definition of the collective unconscious, the species-psyche, four years before Jung was to define it, never acknowledging Spielrein's prior contribution.

The discovery of the 'Death or Destructive Instinct'

When Spielrein's case study on Frau M was finally printed in August 1911, in Volume III of the *Jahrbuch*, she was anxious to publish her theoretical 'Destruction' paper, as soon as possible. In a final paragraph in her Frau M case study, Spielrein had acknowledged the importance of Freud's 'representation by opposites' (Freud 1910) in the derivation of the delusional image, adding:

A notable instance of this is the representation of sexual activity by death symbolism. In my view, the cause of this phenomenon lies in the nature of sexual activity itself or, to be more precise, in the antagonistic components of sexuality.

Here Spielrein set the scene for her 'Destruction' paper, published the next year in 1912, where she referred extensively to her previous work with Frau M. But it would have been useful here, in the conclusion of her thesis, if she had pointed out examples of images of aggression or death accompanying images of sexuality. There are many of these: Frau M's second pregnancy coinciding with her mother's diagnosis with terminal cancer; beating and masturbation; the fantasy of being healed by 'coitus with a pure man' versus contracting syphilis from a sexually unfaithful man; her attraction-repulsion towards the 'wench'; and animal symbolism, notably the horse and the snake, which she saw as representing both Eros and Death. I tend to agree with Covington (2001) that it is unfortunate that Spielrein saw the images of destruction and death in her patient's delusions and in her own material as solely an innate component of erotic libido rather than at least partly as resulting from their own conflictual experience of intimate relationship, dating back to their parents.

In July 1911 Spielrein had given Jung a final draft of her 'Destruction' paper to read, but he was too preoccupied with what was to become the lengthy Part II of his *Wandlungen* paper. He was also busy organizing the Weimar Congress, scheduled for September 1911. Spielrein obsessed that Jung would

steal her ideas and perhaps give them as his own. Jung reassured her that he would not do this, that her ideas on the death instinct were prior to his (Skea 2003). For some reason, he asked her to present her dissertation at the Congress rather than the shorter and more readable 'Destruction' paper. She was invited to join the entourage of women that Jung was bringing from Zürich, Maria Moltzer, Beatrice Hinkle, 'a new discovery of mine', Antonia Wolff, and 'last but not least', his wife, Emma. At the last moment Spielrein decided not to go, complaining of pains in her feet, much to Jung's annoyance. It is not clear why she 'got cold feet'; did she intuit that Jung had already replaced her with his new protégée, Toni Wolff, or was she perhaps reluctant to expose her patient's florid delusions publicly? Jung handed out copies of her paper at the conference. Spielrein retrieved her 'Destruction' paper from him, still unread, and read the difficult mythological third section aloud at her first meeting with Freud's Vienna group in November, 1911. Her paper was finally published almost a year later in September 1912 in the *Jahrbuch*, Volume IV, next to Jung's Part II of *Wandlungen*.

In a letter to Jung, following Spielrein's presentation of her ideas to his group, Freud stated that Spielrein's 'destructive drive is not much to my liking, because I believe it is personally conditioned. She seems abnormally ambivalent' (*Freud/Jung Letters*, 306F). Jung, responding to Freud, felt that her theory was 'heavily overweighted with her own complexes' (*F/J Letters*, 310J). Freud took many years to come to terms with the reality of hatred, aggression, cruelty and destructiveness as a force, Thanatos, equal but opposed to Eros, related to but not quite the same as Spielrein's theory. His earlier theory of ego-libido as opposed to object-libido, corresponding to the drive for self-preservation as against preservation of the species, evolved via a theory of narcissism, which helped him understand perversions such as sado-masochism, which were not easy to explain by Eros alone. At first he viewed sadism as primary, related to an instinct for cruelty, with masochism as sadism turned toward the self. Later, in accord with his Thanatos theory, he saw masochism as primary, with sadism as masochism projected outwards. One wonders if he had continued to ponder Spielrein's sado-masochistic past and the resulting theory she had developed. In his 1920 footnote in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* he stated:

A considerable portion of these speculations have been anticipated by Sabina Spielrein (1912) in an interesting and instructive paper which, however, is unfortunately not entirely clear to me; she there describes the sadistic component of the sexual instinct as 'destructive'.

In *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930) he was to reflect: 'I remember my own defensive attitude when the idea of destruction first emerged in psychoanalytic literature, and how long it took before I became receptive to it'. In fact Spielrein had written to him on her theory as early as 1909 (Carotenuto 1982), stating:

This demonic force, whose very essence is destruction (evil), at the same time is the creative force, since out of the destruction (of two individuals) a new one arises. That is in fact the sexual drive, which is by nature a destructive drive, an exterminating drive for the individual, and for that reason, in my opinion, must overcome such great resistance in everyone.

Freud was well aware of the threat to the integrity of the ego by the overpowering power of love, for example, when he quoted the poet Rumi in his 'Schreber' paper (1911): 'for when the flames of love arise, then self (*das Ich*), the gloomy despot dies'. Spielrein used this same quote in the summary of her 'Destruction' paper, without acknowledging either Freud or Rumi.

In January 1912 Spielrein sent Jung her paper again, in preparation for printing. Though disappointed that it was not going to appear in Part 2 of the 1911 *Jahrbuch*, (actually published in March 1912) she wrote:

Receive now the product of our love, the project which is your little son Siegfried. It caused me tremendous difficulty, but nothing was too hard if it was done for Siegfried. If you decide to print this, I shall feel I have fulfilled my duty toward you. Only then shall I be free.

However, after sending it, Spielrein slumped into depressive self-doubt. She had just read Stekel's new book, *The Language of Dreams*, published in 1911, which contained many references to life and death appearing together in both dreams and fairytales, especially involving sexuality⁴. She inserted a footnote to acknowledge his contribution as prior to hers. In actual fact, Stekel had written on this subject in his earlier 1909 *Jahrbuch* paper, which Spielrein quoted:

Death in a dream denotes as much as life and even the most intense of life's pleasures may express itself in a wish for death. ... Poets have repeatedly discussed such ideas and philosophers often have illuminated the relationship between Eros and Thanatos.

One might wonder why Freud did not acknowledge Stekel rather than Spielrein in his footnote in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Stekel, one of Freud's original disciples in Vienna, like many others, left the Freudian fold. He edited the *Zentralblatt* journal where Spielrein published her study of children's fantasies in 1912.

Jung made no mention of Spielrein's 'Destruction' paper in his Part II of *Wandlungen*, published in Volume IV of the *Jahrbuch* in 1912, next to her paper, despite the fact that he had edited it, and had noted the many points on which their ideas had coincided, however independently conceived (Wharton 2001; Skea 2003). He did add a footnote in his chapter, 'The Dual Mother', in

⁴ Kerr (1993, p. 499) adds Metchnikoff (1903) and Stärcke (1914), who independently described a form of death instinct theory. I could add Federn (1929, p. 324), who preferred the term, 'mortido' to thanatos (as opposed to 'libido'), and his disciple, Weiss (1935), who coined the term 'destrudo' for the active destructive form of thanatos. I have used the term, Ares, as opposed to Eros, in conjunction with Logos and Mythos, as one of four dynamic aspects of the Self (Skea 2003).

the 1952 edition, *Symbols*, following a comment on the Terrible Mother 'who devours and destroys, and thus symbolizes death itself':

This fact led my pupil Dr. Spielrein to develop her idea of the death-instinct, which was then taken up by Freud. In my opinion it is not so much a question of a death-instinct as of that 'other' instinct (Goethe) which signifies spiritual life.

The only other reference is found in the 1943 edition of 'On the psychology of the unconscious' at the end of his chapter, 'The Eros Theory' (Jung 1943/53, para. 34). Jung described Freud's libido theory as being 'one-sided and exclusive' and that 'in his advancing years, Freud himself admitted this lack of balance in his theory, and he opposed to Eros, whom he called libido, the destructive or death instinct'. Jung added a footnote:

This idea came originally from my pupil S. Spielrein: cf. 'Die Destruktion als Ursache des Werdens' (1912). This work is mentioned by Freud, who introduces the destructive instinct in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (orig. 1920).

This is the only time in the *Collected Works* that Jung gives the full reference to Spielrein's 'Destruction' paper. His conclusion which followed the Freud/Spielrein reference was as follows:

It is sufficiently obvious that life, like any other process, has a beginning and an end and that every beginning is also the beginning of the end. What Freud probably means is the essential fact that every process is a phenomenon of energy, and that all energy can proceed only from the tension of opposites.

Here Jung reiterated his genetic theory of the libido, originally stated at the start of his Part II of *Wandlungen*, as psychic energy, capable of transforming into a variety of forms, including a sexual form or a destructive form. Jung was here invoking Spielrein's paper as evidence that Freud was forced to enlarge his conception of the libido. However both Jung and Freud were misunderstanding Spielrein's original thesis, which was that libido, 'the reproductive instinct, harbours negative feelings in addition to the inherently positive anticipated feelings', that is, that the sexual instinct has within it two libidinal streams, one directed outwards pleasurably towards the beloved object, and the other directed backwards and inwards negatively, and experienced by the ego as fear, disgust or even as death. This is because erotic attraction, with the image and feeling of two persons merged as one, is both euphoric in terms of transcending the limits of the ego boundary, yet also threatening to its integrity and independence. The ego risks plunging into the archetypal depths of the collective unconscious, constellating spiritual euphoria or megalomania, or its opposite, profound depression or feelings of annihilation or dismemberment. This is found in reactive psychosis, as in the case of Frau M or Dr Schreber, who were both struggling with an outer life crisis. These introverted symbolic transformations might lead to a 'rebirth' phenomenon, or even be the origin of creative works of art, poetry or scientific discovery. Freud, sounding surprisingly 'Jungian' in his 1911 paper, considered Dr Schreber's published fantasies (Schreber

1903) as attempts at healing his troubled life situation, stating: ‘the delusion-formation, which we take to be a pathological product, is in reality an attempt at recovery, a process of reconstruction’. At the end of his paper, Freud remarkably conceded the difficulty, even in the case of his own theory on the etiology of paranoia, of discerning the difference between a delusion and a genuine revelation:

It remains for the future to decide whether there is more delusion in my theory than I should like to admit, or whether there is more truth in Schreber’s delusion than other people are as yet prepared to believe.

Jung in *Wandlungen* similarly saw Miss Miller’s creative writings as potentially transforming in relation to what he saw as prodromal schizophrenia. However, his conclusions about her personal prognosis were surprisingly pessimistic, especially in the light of the researches of Shamdasani (1990), who has concluded that she never became schizophrenic. We can similarly consider Spielrein’s ‘Frau M’ and ‘Destruction’ papers as transforming for her journey out of adolescent near-psychosis, and also out of an incestuous enmeshment with Jung. Jung was to point to his active imagination experiments, recorded in his ‘Red Book’, as inspiring much of his later work, as well as rescuing him from a near-psychosis, arising out of his ‘confrontation with the unconscious’ following his break with Freud (Jung 1961).

Out from the shadow of Jung and Freud

On June 14, 1912, shortly before her ‘Destruction’ paper was finally published, Sabina Spielrein married a Russian physician, Pavel Scheftel, and just over a year later gave birth to a daughter, Renate. She never met Jung in person again, though they did correspond for a few years up to 1919. Though she wrote several other small psychoanalytic papers, she never wrote again on the subject of the death instinct or on the collective unconscious. She corresponded with Freud up until she returned to Russia in 1923, but they apparently never discussed the death instinct. And as far as I know, she never met or mentioned Frau M again.

This paper has attempted to bring Sabina Spielrein’s work, notably her previously unpublished dissertation on Frau M, out of the shadow created by the brilliance of two great psychoanalytic pioneers, Jung and Freud. She worked with and was influenced by both of them, and in fact her work shows a blend of their seminal ideas. Yet she was also caught in the crossfire that emerged between them and their followers. Jung’s colleagues in Zürich mistrusted her because of her betrayal in going over to the Freudian camp, the early Freudians because of her persistent interest in mythology, which was altogether too Jungian.

From the point of view of Jungian Shadow theory we can also consider her caught in the crossfire between Jung and Freud’s shadow problems, which they projected onto each other. Jung tended to flee from the reality of his own sexual and destructive impulses, rationalizing them as merely symbols of the play of

opposites inherent in the transformations of psychic energy. Freud, especially after the break with Jung, denied the reality that spirituality, art and other forms of creativity, are inherent aspects of psyche, rather than disguised or sublimated sexual or aggressive impulses. By shadow projection Jungians have in the past tended to exaggerate their impression of Freudians as hopelessly reductionistic, while Freudians have tended to dismiss Jungians as inflated mystics. Narcissism on both sides would seem to derive from Jung and Freud themselves. Both initially over-idealized the other as a self-object, for Jung, the search for a wise father figure he could respect, for Freud, the search for a chosen son, who would carry on his message. Inevitably mutual disillusion followed, leading to distrust, enmity and estrangement. Long after their break, Spielrein continued to admire them both, and in her letters it is clear she still hoped for reconciliation between them.

With regard to shadow issues in relation to Freud and Jung's treatment of Spielrein, I believe my paper has demonstrated their ambivalence both toward taking her clinical and theoretical contributions seriously, and toward acknowledging them in their subsequent publications. Just as the controversial Part II of *Wandlungen* was being published in September 1912, Jung left for America to reveal his new approach to psychoanalysis in lectures given at Fordham University. These were published the next year in Volume V of the *Jahrbuch*, as 'The Theory of Psychoanalysis' (1913). Not only did Jung not refer to either of Spielrein's papers, but he used Maria Moltzer's⁵ analysis of a young girl to illustrate mythological elements in children's dreams and fantasies. Spielrein's paper on her own and her child patients' mythological fantasies, published in 1912 in the *Zentralblatt*, addressed this same area. Freud responded to Jung's publication with a rebuttal in his 'History of the Psychoanalytic Movement', published in 1914 in the *Jahrbuch*. While he attempted to give due respect to Jung and his followers on their efforts to find 'correspondence of schizophrenic phantasy-formations with the cosmogonies of primitive times and races', the 'pupil of Jung' he referred to was the unfortunate Honegger, not the equally unfortunate Spielrein. While she had been affiliated with Freud's group since late 1911, Freud declined to mention her in his 'History', an oversight he was not to correct until 1920.

In the last known letter to Jung in 1918 (Carotenuto 1982, p. 90), Spielrein was agonizing over whether to consider music as her 'calling' rather than psychoanalysis. She concluded:

Why cannot one assume, with Freud, that I am a 'saviour or sacrifice' type, one who depicts her desires in symbols that express complete dissolution of the personality, like,

⁵ Maria Moltzer was another student of Jung's, contemporary with Spielrein, and with whom he was also rumoured to have had an affair. Shamdasani (1998) suggests that she is more likely than Spielrein to be the woman Jung based his 'anima' theory on. I believe both of them can be equally considered.

for instance, all the great heroes who die for their ideals, like the sun-god, Siegfried, like music in particular among the arts, which likewise demands total self-surrender.

There is obvious truth in this depiction of Spielrein as self-sacrificing, if not self-destructive, from her adolescent descent into near-psychosis in reaction to her narcissistic parents' selfish using of her, her affair with Jung, which endangered her reputation as a woman more than his, her impulsive marriage to a man she barely knew, to her tragic death at the hands of the Nazis. However, we can also consider her a 'victim' of narcissistic and self-serving parental figures, notably Jung and Freud, to whom she was fatally attracted, and who, despite their best intentions, treated her in ways ultimately reminiscent of her parents.

TRANSLATIONS OF ABSTRACT

Depuis la publication en 1982 du livre de Aldo Carotenuto, *A Secret Symmetry: Sabina Spielrein Between Jung and Freud*, il y a eu une recrudescence d'intérêt pour l'œuvre et la vie de Sabina Spielrein. Elle a été le premier cas suivi par Jung d'une manière psychanalytique au Burghölzli en 1904, et est mentionnée plusieurs fois dans la correspondance *Freud/Jung*. Spielrein sort de sa crise, fait des études de médecine et finira par devenir une analyste freudienne. Son article le plus connu, publié en 1912, « Destruction comme cause du devenir » est cité par Freud en 1920 en relation avec sa théorie de l'instinct de mort. Dans les quelques publications freudiennes au sujet de cette théorie controversée, la contribution de Spielrein est systématiquement omise. Jung n'a pas non plus fait référence à l'article de Sabina sur la Destruction dans sa première version de 1912 des *Métamorphoses*, alors même qu'il a publié cet article et avait promis de faire référence cette contribution. Il se réfère longuement au tout premier travail de Sabina Spielrein qui est sa thèse de médecine : « sur le contenu psychologique dans un cas de schizophrénie » publiée en 1911. Dans ce travail, Sabina Spielrein cherche à comprendre le délire psychotique de Frau M. une patiente du Burghölzli, dans un style très proche de celui de Jung dans « psychologie de la démence précoce » (1907). Le présent article cherche à regarder dans quelle mesure le travail de Spielrein sur Frau M et son autre, article sur la Destruction est une contribution originale par rapport aux deux théories qui se sont constituées au même moment, celles de Jung et de Freud; c'est une contribution sur la visée possiblement créative et pas seulement destructrice de l'introversion névrotique ou psychotique dans l'interrogation sur la visée de la destructivité qui arrive à son apogée avec la conceptualisation par Jung de « l'inconscient collectif » (1916) et celle par Freud de « l'instinct de mort » (1920).

Seit der Veröffentlichung von Aldo Carotenutos *Tagebuch einer heimlichen Symmetrie: Sabina Spielrein zwischen Jung und Freud* (1982, dt. 1986) gab es immer wieder neues Interesse am Leben und an der Arbeit Sabina Spielreins. Sie war 1904 Jungs erster psychoanalytischer Fall am Burghölzli Krankenhaus und wird des öfteren im Freud-Jung-Briefwechsel erwähnt. Spielrein wurde wieder gesund, studierte Medizin und wurde später Freudsche Analytikerin. Freud bezog sich 1920 im Zusammenhang mit seiner Theorie des Todesinstinktes auf ihren bekanntesten Artikel, *Die Destraktion als Ursache des Werdens* (veröffentlicht 1912). In den wenigen freudianischen

Veröffentlichungen über diese umstrittene Theorie seit 1920 wurde Spielreins Beitrag beharrlich ignoriert. Auch Jung versäumte es, ihren Destruktionsartikel in seiner frühen Version der *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido* (1912) zu erwähnen, obwohl er Redakteur und Herausgeber dieses Artikels war und versprochen hatte, auf ihren Beitrag zu verweisen. Er bezog sich ausführlich auf Spielreins erste Veröffentlichung, ihre Doktorarbeit *Über den psychologischen Inhalt eines Falles von Schizophrenie* (veröffentlicht 1911, bis zum heutigen Tage nicht im Englischen veröffentlicht). In dieser Arbeit bemühte sich Spielrein, die psychotischen Wahnvorstellungen von Frau M, einer Patientin am Burghölzli zu verstehen. Dabei ging sie ähnlich vor wie Jung in seiner Arbeit *Über die Psychologie der Dementia praecox* (1907). Die Absicht der vorliegenden Arbeit ist es, herauszufinden, in welchem Umfang Spielreins Artikel über Frau M und der verwandte Artikel 'Destruktion' einen originären Beitrag leisteten zu den sich entwickelnden Theorien über die möglichen schöpferischen vs. zerstörerischen Folgen der neurotischen bzw. psychotischen Introversion, von beiden, Jung und Freud, die in Jungs Konzept des 'kollektiven Unbewussten' (1916) und Freuds Konzept des 'Todesinstinkts' (1920) gipfelten.

A partire dalla pubblicazione del 1982 del libro di Aldo Carotenuto 'Un segreta simmetria: Sabina Spielrein tra Freud e Jung' c'è stato un rinnovarsi dell'interesse per la vita e il lavoro di Sabine Spielrein. Lei fu il primo caso psicoanalitico di Jung al Burghölzli Hospital nel 1904 e se ne trovano molti riferimenti nelle Lettere tra Freud e Jung. Spielrein guarì, si iscrisse alla facoltà di medicina e divenne un'analista freudiana. Il suo libro più famoso 'La distruzione come causa dell'incominciare ad essere' venne citato da Freud nel 1920, mettendolo in relazione alla teoria dell'istinto di morte. Dopo il 1920 nelle poche pubblicazioni freudiane su questa controversa teoria il contributo di Sabina Spielrein è totalmente omissso. Jung stesso mancò di accennare allo scritto sull 'Distruzione' nella sua prima versione del 1912 di 'Simboli della trasformazione', nonostante lui avesse pubblicato il suo scritto e avesse promesso di riconoscere il suo contributo. Egli fece spesso riferimento al primo scritto di Sabina Spielrein, la sua tesi di laurea, 'Sui contenuti psicologici di un caso di schizofrenia', pubblicato nel 1911 e non ancora pubblicato in inglese. Nel suo lavoro la Spielrein cercò di capire i deliri psicotici di Frau M., una paziente del Burghölzli, sullo stile di Jung nella 'Psicologia della Dementia praecox' (1907). Lo scopo del mio lavoro è di capire fino a che punto il lavoro della Spielrein su Frau M. e l'altro su 'Distruzione' portano un contributo originale a entrambe le teorie di Jung e di Freud sui possibili esiti creativi o distruttivi dell'introversione nevrotica o psicotica, che culminano con il concetto di Jung di 'inconscio collettivo' (1916) e il concetto di Freud di un 'istinto di morte' (1920).

Desde la publicación de la obra de Aldo Carotenuto, *Una Simetría Secreta: Sabina Spielrein Entre Jung y Freud*, ha surgido un renovado interés en la vida y obra de Sabina Spielrein. Ella fue el primer caso psicoanalítico de Jung en el Hospital de Burghölzli en 1904, y se relata en las cartas de Freud y Jung. Spielrein se recuperó, estudió medicina y se convirtió en analista freudiana. Su trabajo mas reconocido, publicado en 1912 'La destrucción como causa del transformarse en ser' es referido por Freud en 1920 en relación con su teoría del instinto de Muerte. En las escasas

publicaciones freudianas sobre esta controversial teoría, la contribución de Spielrein es omitida en forma consistente. Tampoco Jung se refiere a ella en su primera versión de 'Símbolos de Transformación' de 1912, aun cuando en 1911 había publicado su trabajo su contribución y prometido reconocer su contribución. Él se refirió extensamente al primer trabajo de Spielrein, su tesis de graduación en medicina, 'Sobre los contenidos psicológicos de un caso de esquizofrenia', publicado en 1911 y aun no publicado en inglés. En su trabajo Spielrein busca entender los delirios psicóticos de Frau M., una paciente del Burghölzli, muy al estilo de Jung en su 'Psicología de la Dementia Praecox' (1907). El propósito de este trabajo es explorar hasta que punto la obra de Spielrein sobre Frau M, y su compañero el trabajo 'Destrucción', son una contribución original a las teorías emergentes de Jung y Freud sobre las posibilidades creativas contra los desarrollos destructivos de la introversión neurótica o psicótica, las cuales culminarán en el concepto junguiano de 'Inconsciente Colectivo' (1916) y el concepto freudiano del 'Instinto de Muerte' (1920).

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