

Sabina Spielrein a psychoanalysis pioneer- Complete work, Volume 1

Organization, comments and critical texts by Renata Udler Cromberg

Editorial note

The publication of this collection of Sabina Spielrein's complete works aims to both pay tribute to her pioneering importance and redeem this figure that has no equivalent in the history of psychoanalysis. Organized in three volumes with comments and analyses by Renata Udler Cromberg, the collection is based on Cromberg's doctoral dissertation *The Love that Dares to Speak Its Name: Sabina Spielrein, a Pioneer in Psychoanalysis*, submitted to the Institute of Psychology at the University of São Paulo in April 2008. All of Spielrein's essays and articles were originally published in journals of psychology and psychoanalysis between 1910 and 1931. The first volume includes an introduction to Spielrein and her early essays: the medical dissertation *On the Psychological Content of a Case of Schizophrenia*, from 1911; *Destruction as the Cause of Coming Into Being*, from 1912; and *The Mother-in-Law*, from 1913. It also features a letter from Sabina to Carl G. Jung, expounding her understanding of the psychic apparatus. The second volume includes essays on what was known about the child's psyche, the origin of language, thought, and children's notion of time: *Contributions to the Understanding of the Child's Mind* (1912), *The Origin of the Child's Words 'Papa' and 'Mama'* (1922), *Some Analogies Between Thinking in Children, Aphasia, and the Unconscious Mind* (1923), *Time in Subliminal Psychic Life* (1923), and *Children's Drawings with Eyes Open and Closed* (1931), as well as 27 short articles written between 1913 and 1931. The third volume will include the four diaries of Sabina Spielrein known to date and three analyses: of the romantic, friendly, and intellectual relationship between her and Jung, through the letters they exchanged in two different periods, from 1908 to 1912 and from 1917 to 1919; of the relationship of friendship and professional trust between her and Sigmund Freud, through the letters exchanged between 1909 and 1923; and of the possible causes for the forgetfulness of Sabina Spielrein's importance and pioneering spirit in the history of psychoanalysis.

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Introduction

Sabina Spielrein: a pioneer

Renata Udler Cromberg

Aldo Carotenuto, Italian professor and Jungian psychoanalyst, had already suspected about the importance Sabina Spielrein had in Carl Gustav Jung's personal life and intellectual background — a thesis he defended in his classes at the University of Rome and in his book *Senso e contenuto della psicologia analitica*.¹ Supported by Jung's writings, Carotenuto sensed that something fundamental might have occurred in the transference and countertransference experience between Jung and Sabina during the first psychoanalytic treatment carried out by Jung — and which appears as the clinical case described by the psychoanalyst as early as in the fourth letter of his extensive correspondence with Freud. In his book, Carotenuto writes that "[Sabina Spielrein's] case is exemplary insofar as it gives evidence of Jung's encounter with the image of the anima, an encounter that probably influenced all his theories on the matter."² The book was read by a colleague, Carlo Trombetta, who had already come across the name Sabina Spielrein in his research on Édouard Claparède, a Swiss educator and psychologist. Trombetta mentioned it to Professor Georges de Morsier, from Geneva, who remembered the reference to Jung and Spielrein's case. In October 1977, De Morsier told Trombetta that some documents concerning Jung, Freud, and Sabina Spielrein had been found in the cellars of the Palais Wilson in Geneva, the former headquarters of the Institute of Psychology. A week later, Aldo Carotenuto had on his hands the papers that supported his thesis.

The documents comprised the correspondence between Sabina Spielrein and Jung (46 letters from Jung and 12 letters from Sabina), the correspondence between her and Freud (21 letters from Freud and 2 from Sabina), Spielrein's diary from 1909 to 1912, and letters from Bleuler, Rank, Stekel, among others. All this material was completely unheard of. The compilation of these documents gave birth to the book *A Secret Symmetry: Sabina Spielrein Between Jung*

¹ Carotenuto, A. (1997). *Senso e contenuto della psicologia analitica* [Meaning and content of analytical psychology]. Bollati Boringhieri.

² Carotenuto, *Senso e contenuto*, 10.

and Freud³, written in 1977, the milestone marking the beginning of the studies on the life and work of this groundbreaking psychoanalyst.

From the moment all this material came into Carotenuto's hands, it became an *archeological find* — an object that allows us to get in touch with different layers of time, disrupting the relationship between them, revealing something secret, unknown, shattering absolutes of knowledge and interpretation, and laying bare prejudices. The fact that the recipient of these findings faced dilemmas as to whether or not to publish a material that was rarely or never mentioned before — which references facts that Jung (for sure) and Freud (not so much) wanted to keep forever hidden — gives us a clue to the value of these documents.

The novelty of the documents found made it possible to unveil some aspects of a past that seemed immutable and perennial. The light cast on Sabina Spielrein reveals a conceptual character in the history of psychoanalytic thinking; the pioneering spirit of her work resonates with the current problematics of psychoanalysis, humanity, and culture. These documents, though fragmented, allow us not only to gain a new understanding of the past, but also new ways of understanding the present.

By analyzing the texts found in the early 1970s, labeled *Dossier Spielrein*, it is possible to argue that Spielrein was the visionary who introduced the concept of death drive into psychoanalysis, even though other seeds were present in the psychoanalytic field, such as in Freud, Stekel, and Abraham. This appeared in her essay from 1911, *Destruction as the Cause of Coming Into Being*, where the birth of the concept of the death drive anticipates the Freudian path and connects deeply with the split between Jung and Freud. The emergence of this concept is directly associated with the clinical aspects of schizophrenic patients under Spielrein's care at the Burghölzli Clinic, the University of Zurich's psychiatric hospital, and with the theoretical questions raised in her first essay, *On the Psychological Content of a Case of Schizophrenia*, a dissertation presented at the Medical School of the University of Zurich in 1910 (the first dissertation on psychoanalysis presented by a woman at that university) and published the following year in the *Jahrbuch*. Spielrein was the first to employ the newly developed concept of schizophrenia (even before its author, Eugen Bleuler, who would publish a book on this pathology only in 1911). As she herself concluded, her reflections are part of the *new psychiatry*, a movement for introducing psychoanalysis into the heart of psychiatry, which took place in the Burghölzli clinic during the first decade of the 20th century, providing it with a fresh outlook for understanding and intervening in psychotic distress.

³ Carotenuto, A. (1984). *Diário de uma secreta simetria* [A Secret Symmetry: Sabina Spielrein Between Jung and Freud]. Paz e Terra.

Spielrein is almost totally absent from fundamental works on the history of psychoanalysis up to 1992, which raises several questions. In the *geoarchaeological* conception of history that I have, past and present are connected, new layers of past eras emerge, disrupting the historical relations that are usually established in single, hegemonic interpretations, creating new connections. This conception thinks about the pulse of the singular and collective magma that brings forth new configurations of desires, which in turn provide, *a posteriori*, new meanings to fragments, documents, or materials, whether theoretical or conceptual, that exist already, in different levels of understanding that are increasingly diverse, complex, inclusive, and open, proposing various axes of organization.⁴

The first of these layers prominently emerges through a footnote written by Freud in the sixth part of his text from 1919, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, which introduces into his work the twist of the death drive in opposition to the life drive:

A considerable part of this speculation has been anticipated in a work which is full of valuable matter and ideas but is unfortunately not entirely clear to me: Sabina Spielrein designates the sadistic component as 'destructive' ('Die Destruktion als Ursache des Werdens', *Jahrbuch für Psychoanalyse*, IV, 1912). In still another way, A. Stärcke (Inleiding by de vertaling von S. Freud, *De sexuele beschavingsmoral etc.*, 1914) has attempted to identify the libido concept itself with the biological concept of an impulsion towards death which is to be assumed on theoretical grounds (Cp. also Rank: 'Der Künstler'). All these attempts, as the one in the text, indicate how much the need is felt for a clarification in the theory of instinct which we do not yet possess.⁵

This note links the two texts, *Destruction as the Cause of Coming Into Being* (1911, Spielrein) and *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1919, Freud), and confirms Sabina Spielrein's anticipation of ideas that Freud was putting forward — although, at the time, they were not entirely intelligible to him.

That which is officially presented as the turning point in Freudian metapsychology, the creation of the concept of the death drive after *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, is, in fact, the expression of a previously established domain. A domain shaped not only by the theoretical-clinical Freudian concerns or by the repercussions of Freud's previous formulations (such as the *Project for a Scientific Psychology*,⁶ a draft from 1895, made public in 1950), or even by

⁴ This concept was based on Michel Foucault (archeology of knowledge), Walter Benjamin (ruin), Nelson da Silva Junior (*a posteriori*, from Freud), Renato Mezan (history of psychoanalysis), and Freud (truth emerges from permanent openings, in the construction of narratives).

⁵ Freud, S. (2006) *Edição standard brasileira das obras psicológicas completas de Sigmund Freud: Vol. II Estudos sobre a histeria (1893–1899)* [Brazilian standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud: Vol. 2 Studies on hysteria (1893–1899)] (pp. 123-198). Imago.

⁶ Freud, S. (1980). *Edição standard brasileira das obras psicológicas completas de Sigmund Freud: Vol. I Publicações pré-psicanalíticas e esboços inéditos (1886–1889)* [Brazilian standard edition of the

formulations about war neuroses based on Ferenczi's analytic experiences during the First World War, but also by the concerns raised by Sabina Spielrein's ideas, which guided Freud's path step by step to the 1919-1920 text (and also the one from 1924, *The Economic Problem of Masochism*), by the contributions of his followers, and by the political-affective conflicts among themselves and between them and Freud during the second decade of the psychoanalytic movement. Spielrein's text not only points to the multiple aspects of sexuality's destructive component, but, most of all, anticipates the paradox of the death drive concept, which is broken down into multiple psychic possibilities, both in its clinical manifestations and in its conceptualization.

Destruction as the Cause of Coming Into Being was partially presented to the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society in November 1911 (she was the second woman to join and become a member of this institution, immediately after both Adler and Margarete Hilferding, its first female psychoanalyst member, left) and published in 1912 in the *Jahrbuch*. Despite the wary reception, Sabina Spielrein's innovative and visionary approach made a deep and lasting impression on Freud.

A second layer, gleaned from analyzing the context of the production and dissemination of this essay, strongly suggests that the split between Freud and Jung was caused not only by the theoretical differences between them or by personal issues, but also by the pivotal role played by Sabina Spielrein in the relationship between both men. This layer was only able to emerge through the chance discovery of the documents in 1977, which had hitherto been buried in the library in Geneva. Through the letters exchanged between Freud, Jung, and Sabina, as well as her diary, we find out about the intense affective bond between Sabina and Jung, and also about Freud's role as a third party intervener in Sabina's transference during her distancing from her former therapist, lover, and mentor (later, also a colleague). The revelations are an important source of theoretical reverberations and clinical theory. Interestingly, they afford us with insights into the almost simultaneous writing, in the year 1913, of Freud's fundamental texts on psychoanalytic technique⁷ and *Totem and Taboo*,⁸ placing both under the aegis of, on the one hand, the questions raised by Jung, the risks of

complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud: Vol. 1 Pre-psychoanalytical publications and unpublished drafts (1886–1889)] (pp. 387-587). Imago.

⁷ Freud, S. (2006) *Edição standard brasileira das obras psicológicas completas de Sigmund Freud: Vol. XII O caso Schreber, Artigos sobre técnica e outros trabalhos (1913–1914)* [Brazilian standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud: Vol. 12 The Schreber case, Papers on technique and other works (1913–1914)] (pp. 131-222). Imago.

⁸ Freud, S. (2006) *Edição standard brasileira das obras psicológicas completas de Sigmund Freud: Vol. XIII Totem e tabu e outros trabalhos (1913–1914)* [Brazilian standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud: Vol. 13 Totem and taboo and other works (1913–1914)] (pp. 13-193). Imago.

transference love, and the creation of the concept of countertransference, and, on the other, the questions brought by Jung's *Symbols of Transformation*,⁹ initially called *Metamorphoses and Symbols of the Libido*. It has usually been said that *Totem and Taboo* is Freud's ultimate attempt to hold Jung in the ranks of psychoanalytic theory — a response to the ideas contained in Jung's book. At most, there is mention of the technical articles as a moment when Freud was concerned about dissidence and wanted to keep a body of technical recommendations organized. The texts on technique came directly from the period when the analyst Jung and the patient Spielrein became lovers and from Freud's role as a third party. At a time when psychoanalysis was just learning to walk, with only a few analysts under analysis, these articles aimed at domesticating, or at least containing, the demons awakened by the discovery of the unconscious in the transference relationship. What has strongly been suggested by the Freud/Jung and Freud/Spielrein correspondence is that the reason for the split between Freud and Jung was not only the theoretical difference between the two men but also the episode that involved all three of them.

A third layer concerns the acknowledgment of Sabina Spielrein's clinical and theoretical contribution. She became a Freudian psychoanalyst, she wrote and she published. Why haven't her writings received the attention they deserved for their disturbing innovation? Could it be because she was initially seen only as a disciple of the master Jung, as well as slightly disqualified for being a woman and for undergoing intense psychic distress? Jung excluded her from the accounts of his life; if he mentions her, she is merely a disciple of his. Freud mentions her, but as being “not entirely clear.”¹⁰ Yet, by the time she begins to publish her theoretical-clinical thoughts in 1911, Sabina Spielrein is perhaps the psychoanalyst who had been undergoing analysis for the longest time – three years, according to her, from 1904 to 1907 – in addition to the tumultuous and creative relationship with Jung — in which, through clinical and theoretical discussions, they performed some sort of reciprocal analysis.

A fourth layer concerns Spielrein's contribution to the difficult task of understanding psychotic mechanisms: as a patient and as a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst. The relationship between Freud and Jung, documented by intensive correspondence, lasted from 1906 to 1913. Sabina Spielrein was present, whether directly or indirectly, during this whole period when a theory was being consolidated, to which Jung greatly contributed. She brought new material,

⁹ Jung, C. G. (1999). *Símbolos da transformação da libido* [Symbols of Transformation]. Vozes.

¹⁰ Freud, S. (2006) *Edição standard brasileira das obras psicológicas completas de Sigmund Freud: Vol. II Estudos sobre a histeria (1893–1899)* [Brazilian standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud: Vol. 2 Studies on hysteria (1893–1899)] (p. 196). Imago.

particularly from her creative experience — which was already influenced by psychoanalysis — with patients deemed psychotic, mainly with cases of schizophrenia at the Burghölzli Clinic, directed at the time by Bleuler, an enthusiast of psychoanalysis. Freud, who had little clinical experience with psychosis, learns much from Jung's clinical and theoretical observations and twice visits the institute. One of the most brilliant parts of the correspondence between the two is the one devoted to the distinction between schizophrenia (*Dementia praecox* as it was called at the time, since the term schizophrenia, coined by Bleuler, took a while to replace the initial one) and paranoia, based on auto- and homoeroticism. As of Jung's third letter to Freud, Sabina Spielrein appears unnamed in a long and detailed clinical description, on which Freud comments and which will later become a paper presented by Jung at the first congress of psychiatry and neurology, as a psychoanalytic contribution to understanding a case he relabels as one of hysterical psychosis. This relabeling remains a mystery, considering that Spielrein was hospitalized and released from Burghölzli under the diagnosis of hysteria, attributed by him and Bleuler.

Jung and Bleuler's research from the perspective of psychoanalysis — which sought to understand the psychic dynamics by placing sexuality as the conflictual axis — greatly contributed to a better understanding of the psychic processes of schizophrenia and the possibility of new therapeutic methods. They warded off the ghost of therapeutic nihilism, which prevailed in the treatment of inpatients. Both Jung and Bleuler came from an innovative tradition of German psychiatry that made the differences between psychotic conditions intelligible. They were also pioneers in establishing academic research at universities, which would further contribute to the understanding of psychotic phenomena. We are talking here about Kraepelin, Kraetschmer, Griesinger, and Forel, the pioneers of German psychiatry, the two latter being among the first directors of the Burghölzli Clinic. As a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, Sabina Spielrein shares this creative moment with the help of Bleuler and Jung. In her dissertation *On the Content of a Case of Schizophrenia*, she writes an innovative theoretical elaboration of her creative clinical work at the same institution.

A fifth layer emerges from a dispute over her diagnosis. Sometimes diagnosed as schizophrenic, other times as hysterical psychotic, and others as hysterical with strong schizoid traits, if we take into account her theoretical production around love and femininity, we may state that the Spielrein case fosters a rich debate on what is the female madness perceived through male eyes, what is hysterical distress, and what is schizophrenic distress. In fact, she is the one who initiates this discussion, in her *princeps* work on schizophrenia and destruction. The dispute over her diagnosis casts a new shadow over the importance of her work in the conceptual history of psychoanalysis.

There is a sixth layer that presents another of Spielrein's innovative contributions, this time to the field of language. By developing a complex theory of the role of language and representations in the psyche and establishing a strong link between them and the dominant drive destinies, Sabina anticipates many connections that would be later underlined by Jacques Lacan when coupling the theory of psychoanalysis with the linguistic theory of Saussure and Jakobson. What proves it is her text *The Origin of the Child Words 'Papa' and 'Mama'*,¹¹ from 1919, written and presented at the same congress of psychoanalysis where the Freudian text *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* was presented —which presents the famous *fort/da* (Freud's grandson's playful experience with the reel, making it disappear and reappear, emitting the sounds "ooo-aaaa" as a form of symbolizing the movement of absence and presence of the mother, a source of angst) as the *princeps* example for the birth of language. Spielrein made professional connections with Piaget, of whom she was an analyst, at the Rousseau Institute — a place that carried out groundbreaking research on the development of thought and language in children — and with Vygotsky, Luria, and other Russian early researchers on the subject, when she returned to her home country.¹²

The last layer connects biographical and historiographical references to Freud and psychoanalysis to verify the complete absence of Sabina Spielrein in fundamental works in this field, such as the biographies of Freud written by Jones,¹³ Roazen¹⁴, and Schur¹⁵, and merely a brief mention of her name by Peter Gay in his book *Freud: A Life for Our Time*.¹⁶ In the 1995 book *Généalogies* [Genealogies], by Elisabeth Roudinesco, all the facts involving Sabina and Jung are already included in the psychoanalytic events from 1856 to 1991. Spielrein also appears in the *Dictionnaire de la psychanalyse* [Dictionary of Psychoanalysis], by Roudinesco and Michel Plon, in 1998.¹⁷ In 2008 this situation begins to change.

It is important to underline that one thing is Spielrein's writings fading into oblivion within the psychoanalytic movement and Freud's theoretical work; another thing is Freud's attitude towards Sabina, which was always characterized by friendship, support, and appreciation (despite certain ambivalences). He referred analysands to her and welcomed analysands referred by her. He credited her as being responsible for the promotion of psychoanalysis in

¹¹ Report presented at the 4th International Psychoanalytic Congress in the Hague, September 1920. Originally published in *Imago*, 8th edition, 1922.

¹² The second volume presents, in addition to Spielrein's writings on language, her association with the work of the linguist Bally and the then psychoanalyst Jean Piaget.

¹³ Jones, E. (1979). *Vida e obra de Sigmund Freud* [Life and work of Sigmund Freud]. Zahar.

¹⁴ Roazen, P. (1974). *Freud e seus discípulos* [Freud and his followers]. Cultrix.

¹⁵ Schur, M. (1974). *Vida e obra de Sigmund Freud* [Life and death of Sigmund Freud]. Imago.

¹⁶ Gay, P. (1989). *Freud, uma vida para nosso tempo* [Freud: A life for our time]. Companhia das Letras.

¹⁷ Roudinesco, E. (1995). *Genealogias* [Genealogies]. Relume Dumará.

Switzerland, after the split with Jung. He recommended her to Abraham in Berlin but supported her trip to the USSR in 1923, where she took *The Ego and the Id* to be translated in the same year it was published. Also, she was the one who edited the translation of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* into Russian, prefaced by Vygotsky and Luria. In his letters, Freud always showed his admiration for Spielrein; he also reaffirmed his affective interest concerning the destinies of her life. From the time she joined the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society, he asked Sabina to write short articles containing clinical observations supporting the psychoanalytic theory, which she did.

Sabina's writings had not been forgotten for not being published. They had all been published in the main psychoanalytic journals of that time. They were forgotten due to historical and political events, both within and outside of the psychoanalytic field, to the vicissitudes of the psychoanalytic experience in the USSR, and because Spielrein did not establish a school of thought, as Melanie Klein did, for example.

The very circumstances of Sabina Spielrein's life turn her into a synthesis of visionary pioneering spirit — at its boldest — and of regression — at its most brutal; a unique, distinctive, but also an archetypical specimen of the tragedy of her time. Right from the start, there is something unusual about the history of this Russian Jewish girl: she became a physician at the beginning of a century when women were just beginning to get their citizenship recognized; she spoke several languages; she devoted herself to composing music; she became the second woman to cement the psychoanalytic plague in the days of Communist Revolution, a pioneer in combining psychoanalysis with education, and psychoanalysis with the incipient field of linguistics. On her journey back to her homeland, she also played a part in the rise of institutionalized psychoanalysis in the Soviet nation and the later prohibition and demise of psychoanalysis during the Stalinist massacre that killed her family. She died executed by Nazis, along with both her daughters, on an ordinary day — in a ditch on the outskirts of her hometown.

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Acknowledgements

Renata Mundt, coauthor of the Sabina Spielrein project. Without her outstanding translation, this work would not have been possible. A generous friend, she welcomed me in Hannover and we traveled together to Berlin to explore Sabina's passage through the area.

Sabine Richebächer, who did the extensive primary source research on Sabina Spielrein, which has also been published in Portuguese. She opened doors and showed me the way during my research trip, offering her archival material, an article to be published, and her generous friendship.

Nelson da Silva Junior, who generously accepted my post-doctoral project, making my research experience as smooth as it could be.

Flávio Ferraz, for having once again supported my desire to have this book published with a warm reception that has opened doors.

Adela Stoppel de Gueller, who generously and enthusiastically accepted my invitation to preface this book.

The Blucher publishing house and Eduardo Blücher, Jonatas Eliakin, Luana Negraes, Sonia Augusto, and the editorial team, for the professional, efficient, warm and appreciative welcoming of the author's cultural work.

The Department of Social Psychology of the Institute of Psychology at the University of São Paulo and Belinda Mandelbaum, who generously assessed my work and promptly assisted me with all the administrative requirements of the postdoctoral fellowship.

Zelia Ramozzi-Chiarottino, whose presence in my education as a psychologist and during my PhD studies and whose encouragement to publish Sabina Spielrein's work in several volumes served as a roadmap to my desire that evolved into the postdoctoral fellowship.

The Archives Institut Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Elphège Gobet, as well as the Archives Jean Piaget, Marc Ratcliff, and Katalin Haymoz for their warm and generous welcome in Geneva.

Tania and Marc Hendriks for their warm hospitality in Ferney-Voltaire, which made Geneva possible for the research.

Joana Setzer, Felipe Massao Kuzuhara, and Hyo Yoon Kang, whose generosity made London possible for the research.

Paulo Sérgio de Souza Jr and Claudia Berliner for readily and kindly assisting with the translations from French.

Graça Bandeira and the EPSI Research Center, Eugênio Canesin Dal Molin, Marcus Vinicius Neto Silva (who gave me the gift of the fundamental book for psychoanalysis research in Russia), Camila Terra, Samanta Antoniazzi, Fátima Caropreso, Taya Soledad and Arbeit group, Aline Sanches, Denise Hausen, and Sergio Gomes, whose passion and shared interest in Sabina Spielrein and her work promote fruitful exchanges.

The Group of Clinical Studies, Cristiane Curi Abud, Christiana Freire, Rodrigo Blum, and Roberto Villaboim for instilling in me the desire to talk about the love that dares to speak its name, starting from Sabina Spielrein.

Michael Plastow, psychoanalyst, psychiatrist, colleague, and friend from Australia, an enthusiast of the Portuguese language, which he acquired through the Bossa Nova, whose original writings on Sabina Spielrein have fueled this book, I thank him for endorsing my project.

Angie Oña, splendid actress, author of *Ser humano* [Being Human], directed by Freddy González, for making such beautiful artistic use of my work. I thank them both for offering me a magical evening by successfully portraying the Sabina of my imagination on a stage in Montevideo, a highly-awarded spectacle.

Caio Padovan, for the precious material he kindly sent me from Paris.

Daniela Smid, Lucia H. Y. de Paiva, and Aline Souza Martins, for the interview in the series *Psicanálise e Política* [Psychoanalysis and Politics], which promoted the research.

Andrea Tocchio, André Gomes, Francisco Capoulade, and Águeda Amaral, for the interview in the series *Os psicanalistas e suas análises* [The Psychoanalysts and Their Analyses], which promoted the research.

Norma Melhorança, for the podcast promoting the research.

Conexões Clínicas [Clinical Connections], a website by Bruno Esposito, Tomás Bonomi, and Bruno Mangolini, for promoting the research.

Daisy Lino and TRIEP, for wanting to know about Sabina Spielrein.

Francisco Capoulade, Associação Campinense de Psicanálise, Associação Livre, and Tykhe, for the invitation to present this book in an edition of Café Lacaniano.

The Department of Psychoanalysis at Instituto Sedes Sapientiae, with special thanks to the Winnicott group and Decio Gurfinkel, for their unlimited support and receptiveness towards my work.

Espaço Psicanalítico (EPSI) in João Pessoa, for appreciating and welcoming my project and myself for so many years, founding the first center for studies on Sabina Spielrein.

The Center of Psychoanalytic Studies of Porto Alegre, with special thanks to Aline Pinto da Silva and Luciana Redivo Drehmer, for the promotion and interest in the production of this book, which allowed me to formulate one of its chapters by holding conferences during the research period.

Formação Freudiana in Rio de Janeiro and Chaim Samuel Katz, who have always taken interest in my work and provided me with the opportunity to talk about it when it was still being developed.

Márcia Teixeira and the Scientia Institute for their generous reception to my work, during all these years, in courses and seminars.

The Sándor Ferenczi Brazilian Research Group and Adriana Barbosa Pereira, for providing me with the opportunity to speak and write.

Silvana Rabello (*in memoriam*), who has always taken interest in my work, promoted it, and wrote a beautiful dissertation that nurtured it.

My colleagues from the course on Psychoanalytic Theory at COGEAE/PUC in São Paulo, who have always appreciated, welcomed, and promoted my research.

Nebulosa Marginal, for promoting Sabina Spielrein's work in one of its courses.

Alcimar Alves de Souza Lima and Luís Serguilha, for providing me with opportunities to talk about my research.

Darcy Haddad Daccache, for the supportive environment for clinical and theoretical work. Flavia Steuer, for the warm virtual environment.

The D&D or Love Is What We Have to Give, friends brought together by Silvana Rabello to encircle her with care, who, in the process of mourning, built the most fun and sincere network of friends that, online and on a daily basis, made the pandemic isolation more bearable.

Silvia de Oliveira, Maria Aparecida da Silva, and Ilda Jesus de Sousa, my everyday friends.

Cristina Magalhães and Sergio Kon, for the friendly and insightful conversations that gave me editorial direction.that

The International Association for Spielrein Studies, with special thanks to its president Klara Naszkowska, for accepting me as a member researcher among international researchers.

Luís Carlos Menezes, Dominique Touchon, Silvia Alonso, and Wilma Swarc, that provided passages in me.

Renata Udler Cromberg

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1. Introduction: The Origin of Language, Thought and Symbolization in Children

Renata Udler Cromberg

*Sabina Spielrein anticipated that language is a place where the subject comes into being.*¹⁸

This book presents the pioneering contribution of Sabina Spielrein (1885-1942) to the studies of the origin of language, thought, and visual and body image in constituting the process of symbolization and to the field of child psychoanalysis. These 31 texts complete the publication of Sabina Spielrein's work in Portuguese — her first three essays were published in the first volume of these Complete Works. Sabina Spielrein's written and published work is thus made up of 34 texts known to date. They are accompanied by essays that contextualize the environment in which they were written, their geographical position in the course of both her personal and her family history, and the history of the psychoanalytic, educational, and health institutions in which she worked, in Berlin, Lausanne, Geneva, Moscow, and Rostov-on-Don, as well as a few remarks about the political history of the period spanning her life as a psychoanalyst and physician, during which she produced these pieces of writing. At the end, this book presents some thoughts on Sabina Spielrein's pioneering contribution.

Sabina Spielrein's authorship resulted from the end of her analysis with Carl Gustav Jung (1865-1961). Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) interfered in the relationship between Jung and Sabina in a way that enabled her to transfer her erotic drive to the writing of her own "*poesie*," her work. This was the metaphor she used when she wanted to talk about her love encounters and intellectual exchanges with Jung. After undergoing analysis, she became a physician, a psychoanalyst, a member of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society and, later, of the Moscow Psychoanalytic Society, a researcher and writer from 1910 to 1931. In my reflective work, the life story of Sabina Spielrein — in terms of her psychic, emotional, professional, and social journey, along with the historical, social, institutional, and cultural circumstances of her time, which contributed to the neglect of both her work and its importance for psychoanalysis — provided the framework for what I intend to highlight: *the importance of her pioneering work*. Becoming an author, being the writer of one's own life, implies a transformation of the sexual drive and imprints: ceasing to be the body-object of the father's writing to become the writer of one's own life. The abstract function of the father may arise when we are able to write in

¹⁸ Guibault, M., & Nobécourt, J. (1980). *Sabina Spielrein, entre Freud et Jung* [Sabina Spielrein, between Freud and Jung] (p. 9). Aubier Montaigne.

our own name, taking over our own lives, echoing our own words, both internally and for the next generations, making subjectivation, differentiation, and singularization possible.

The first volume of these Complete Works featured Spielrein's first three essays and a letter. During this first period, her place as a pioneer began when she formulated the following notions: (1) in the 1911 text "On the Psychological Content of a Case of Schizophrenia," by analyzing the discourse of a schizophrenic patient, she deduced that it carried sexual-affective elements. As a result, she became part of the New Psychiatry, a dynamic kind of psychiatry influenced by psychoanalysis, whose main exponent was Eugen Bleuler (1857-1939); (2) in the 1912 text "Destruction as the Cause of Coming Into Being," she demonstrated the existence of a destructive component within the sexual drive, acknowledging, nine years before Freud, the existence of a death drive that led, in a dynamic form, to transformation, to coming into being, and, in a static form, to the primary masochism, the gratification through pain; (3) in the 1913 text "The Mother-in-Law," she wrote about the masculine and the feminine, and the maternal empathy; (4) in the December 20, 1917 letter to Jung, she wrote about her own psychoanalytic metapsychology, primarily based on Freud.

The texts and essays in this second volume are presented in chronological order, right after a description of the atmosphere of the city where she was living. "Berlin Environment" includes the publication of "Contributions to Understanding a Child's Mind" (1912), in which she analyzes the onset of childhood fears, the symptomatic distress, associating it with sexual curiosity and the fantasies and theories they generate, as well as with unconscious sexual representations and the roots of anguish to which they give rise, providing a rich depiction of childhood omnipotence. She subtly demonstrates that the interest in scientific and intellectual work is derived from sexual curiosity. Prior to this work, only Freud, with the case of little Hans, and Jung, with the case of little Anna, had taken this initiative. This text placed Sabina Spielrein as the pioneer of child analysis, even though, in a paper from 1927, she referred to Hermine Hug-Helmuth (1871-1924), the third woman to become a member of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society, as the first child analyst. Nevertheless, this paper marks her entrance into the scientific arena, to which she will devote much of her professional life. Sabina Spielrein was the first child psychoanalyst in the history of psychoanalysis and the first to write articles about the child psyche based on the observation and treatment of children. In the perspective that prevailed until very recently in the psychoanalytic circles, Freud's daughter Anna Freud (1895-1982) figured as the founder of child psychoanalysis, immediately followed by Melanie Klein (1882-1960). But the first contribution on child analysis in psychoanalytic history was made by Spielrein with this piece published in the third issue of the *Zentralblatt* in 1912. Only ten years later did the first paper by Anna Freud appear, as she became a member of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society, on June 13, 1922, just one week before Lou Andreas-Salomé.

Seven years after Spielrein's article, Melanie Klein presented her first communication. This illustrates how her pioneering spirit was overlooked for more than half a century.

The other articles are notes, observations, and conversations with children, as well as their dreams, questions of child analysis, and the analysis of dreams: "Maternal love" (1913), "Self-Gratification in Foot Symbolism" (1913), "A Dream About 'Father Freudenreich'" (1913), "The Unconscious Phantasies in Kuprin's Duel" (1913), "Animal Symbolism and a Boy's Phobia" (1914), "Two Menstrual Dreams" (1914), "The Forgotten Name" (1914). "Destruction as the Cause of Coming Into Being" (1912) and "The Mother-in-Law" (1913) were also published while she was living in Berlin.¹⁹

Independence of thought and refusal to take sides in male disputes were some of her most remarkable qualities. She never shied away from asserting herself in the politics of theory, with her own voice and ideas, in pursuit of transdisciplinary reinventions of psychoanalysis. After the outbreak of World War I, she left for Switzerland, withdrawing soon after from the practice of psychoanalysis. After five years, in 1920, she returned as an analyst and researcher of child psyche. She remained alone with her daughter in the Swiss territory for nine years, living through WWI, the Revolution of 1917, and the Russian Civil War. It was unusual to find working women in the intellectual circles of Switzerland. And the rough times of WWI were not conducive to scientific work.

In Lausanne, she took a break from her work as a psychoanalyst. She then dedicated herself to the study of counterpoint and composition. The importance of her musical calling and the presence of music in both her personal and her family life were such that her daughters Renata, born in 1913 in Berlin, and Eva, born in 1925 in Rostov-on-Don, were both regarded as excellent musicians, having attended the Moscow Conservatory of Music and becoming a cellist and a violinist, respectively, in their adult years. During the five years in Lausanne, Sabina Spielrein observed and took notes on Renata's development and language acquisition. This contributed to Spielrein's reflection on the role of non-verbal languages — rhythm and melody as predecessors of verbal language, ever accompanying visual, tactile, and gestural language, as well as the important role of art and music for individuals and groups. During this period, two of her articles were published: "An Unconscious Sentence" (1915) and "The Appearance of the Oedipus Complex in a Child" (1916).

It was then a very different Sabina Spielrein who decided to leave Lausanne and actively, by her own desire, resume her job as a psychoanalyst and apply to the Congress in The Hague.

¹⁹ Published in Cromberg, R. U. (ed.). (2021). *Sabina Spielrein: uma pioneira da psicanálise* [Sabina Spielrein, a Pioneer of Psychoanalysis] (Vol. 1). Blucher.

This was going to be her first participation in a psychoanalytic congress, and she was going to present a theoretical treatment of language acquisition in children, hitherto an unprecedented approach both in the field of psychoanalysis and of child psychology or education, as well as in the field where psychoanalysis and linguistics connect. It was based on the observations she made of her daughter. Once the transference onto Jung was overcome and she took ownership of her own conception of the constitution of the psyche, she was able to reclaim her voice and become as helpful for the psychoanalytic cause as she had hoped to be, and in a field where she would eventually become one of its pioneers: child psychoanalysis. These observations were also the follow-up of her interest in and elaboration of the question of symbol formation and the relation between words and instinctual life, initiated in her first two works.

Spielrein's lecture "On the Question of the Origin and Development of Speech" was first known from its abstract, published in the Congress Proceedings. The abstract presents a visionary draft of a theory of language construction and of the importance of breastfeeding and suction in child development, and also distinguishes languages whose purpose is not to communicate with other people, the autistic and magical languages, from those whose purpose is to communicate, the social languages. In addition, for the first time, she postulates that child language originates in the relationship between the mother and the baby. The publication of the abstract of this unpublished lecture expresses her view that child language and its transformations are born not only from psychological development but from an absence connected to the unconscious mind, to perceiving the object of desire whose pleasure is derived from the act of breastfeeding and is perceived as being external to the self, in the passage from autoeroticism to an incipient heteroeroticism (eroticism directed towards the other).

Sabina Spielrein's decision to go to Geneva in 1920 at the invitation of the Jean-Jacques Rousseau Institute for Experimental Psychology and Child Development Research after the Hague Congress — rather than return to Russia or move back to Zurich — came from her intuition that a unique historical moment was unfolding in this francophone city. French was already her third language, after Russian and German, and it was the one she used to communicate with her daughter. She wanted to be at that place, the stage for the biggest revolution aimed at establishing an internationalist and pacifist educational platform after World War I. That fulfilled her desire to be in contact with people, books, and experiences that would allow her to research, reflect, and work in line with her scientific ideals. There she would find the grounds for theoretical, conceptual, and interdisciplinary practice in the development of language and thought in children in order to pursue her theoretical and investigative psychoanalytic project on symbol formation through reflections on the origin of language.

The Institute, which was fast becoming the leading pedagogical center in the world, had been founded in 1912 by Édouard Claparède (1873-1940) and Pierre Bouvet (1878-1965) and, at the time, it was the most advanced in terms of training educators, conducting research in the fields of psychology and pedagogy, and encouraging educational reforms.

In 1922, the lecture given by Spielrein in The Hague turned into a major and unprecedented comprehensive new work, "The Origin of the Child's Words 'Papa' and 'Mama': Some Observations on the Different Stages in Language Development." She begins from the child's basic need for physical contact and communication. It seems that the rich, creative, insightful, and deeply sensitive mind that Sabina Spielrein would leave imprinted in her article was very much motivated by her work at the Institute, which made her more familiar with an extensive number of authors and theories about language development in children and encouraged her attitude of appreciating the spontaneous observation of children as a method for proving her ideas. This work and the experience of being in an environment that encouraged free, innovative research motivated her to advocate for the role of the psyche and emotions in the genesis of thought and language processes from the point of view of psychoanalysis.

Jean Piaget (1896-1980), who arrived at the Institute in 1921, started working with her on a theory about symbol formation, a theory that did not come to light as a joint effort since they both took different paths in their interpretation of symbols. In 1922, Piaget presented, in turn, a communication at the VII International Psychoanalytic Congress, held in Berlin, next to Freud and attended by Spielrein, under the title "Symbolic Thought and the Thought of the Child," the seed of what would be his first and important book *Language and Thought of the Child*. Spielrein presented, at the same congress, "Psychology of the Problem of Time." Two of her published essays resulted from discussing her ideas with the linguist Charles Bally and Jean Piaget: "Time in Subliminal Psychic Life" and "Some Analogies Between Thinking in Children, Aphasia, and the Unconscious Mind," respectively, both of which made important contributions to the burgeoning field of psycholinguistics.

Spielrein's activities in science increased enormously in Geneva. She believed that research on child psychology could make fundamental contributions to psychoanalysis. But while, for Spielrein, it was a stimulating intellectual environment, where she was able to conduct practical and clinical research; while she engaged in experimentation with the children of the Maison des Petits, a school created and supported by the Rousseau Institute; while she treated patients with severe language problems, victims of head trauma or brain health problems, Geneva was also the place where she came into contact with linguistics in its early days. This was largely thanks to the linguist Charles Bally (1865-1947), whom she specifically

thanked for his cooperation in the second of three pioneering works on language, time, and thought that she wrote during her three years living in the city.

In her 1923 article "Time in Subliminal Psychic Life" (based on her 1922 lecture at the Berlin Congress, "Psychology of the problem of time"), Sabina Spielrein used her foreign language skills to compare how time is expressed in Russian, French, German, and English, and to demonstrate how verb tenses express a link between time and space in unconscious thought. She wonders: who created verbal language? Was it the adult or the child? Is the child capable of spontaneous creation in language or do they simply adopt the verbal language provided by adults, deforming it? She calls upon psychoanalytic experiences to help her find an answer to this controversial and unresolved question. From the outset, she assumes a position that links the emergence of language to the unconscious.

Is the child, according to their predisposition, a social being that has a need for communication? If the child has inherited the need for communication and belongs to the speaking populations, then they have also inherited the need for language, a need that makes them want to learn and create it. She refers to "language" in the usual sense; that is, language as a means of communication, which it was not originally. Naturally, adults rush to assist the little psyche in its struggle, stimulating the development of linguistic mechanisms, which have already been hereditarily prepared, through discourse imitated by the child. And they become adapted to their ability to create language: they seek to understand the little psyche and find the material for this task already at hand in the depths of their psyche, in their own previous stage of development, which enables them to speak to the child thanks to an unconscious impulse.

We see that she is adopting here the newly created conceptual language within the field of linguistics, which distinguished phonetics from linguistics proper: phonemes, labial and dental sounds, phonology. She was the first psychoanalyst to make the connection between psychoanalysis and linguistics — based on Freud's texts — and to formulate her own ideas about language.

Jean Piaget preferred to study the intellect rather than the unconscious, so he went into analysis with Sabina Spielrein for eight months, every day at 8 a.m., during the year 1921. According to him, she took the initiative to end the analysis, saying that he was not willing to undergo analysis but only to discuss theories. The two continued to have an intense intellectual exchange.

Spielrein believed that the research on child psychology could make essential contributions to psychoanalysis. Freud (1856-1939) became very excited by the fact that Spielrein was going

back to do scientific work in Geneva and to publish child analyses. There are eighteen published articles.

The first group includes (a) a review of an article by her brother Isaak Spielrein (1891-1937), "About Numbers that Are Hard to Memorize and Arithmetic Problems." Despite being published in 1920, this review was written while she was still in Lausanne. During WWI, the siblings exchanged letters discussing scientific matters; (b) "Russian Literature," which features an annotated list of the main books and articles published in Russia between 1909 and 1914, and the main translations of Freud's works during the same period, with the purpose of promoting them among Western psychoanalysts; (c) "Switzerland" is a report on the activities carried out by the Psychoanalytic Society of Geneva, founded in 1920; (d) "Who is the perpetrator?" is an article reviewing the play *The Dream Eater (Le Mangeur de rêves)*, by Henri-René Lenormand (1882-1951), a scholar of psychoanalysis who, at one point, was a member of the Groupe Psychanalytique Internationale from Geneva. Spielrein wrote a long article that occupied the entire second page of the January 15, 1922 edition of the *Journal de Genève*.

The second group includes articles on children's comments based on observations and verbal records that Spielrein gathered during the early childhood of her daughter Renata — on child sexuality, curiosity, anatomical differences between boys and girls, and children's sexual theories, as well as reports of experiences and analyses with children carried out at the outpatient clinic of the Jean Jacques Rousseau Institute: (a) "The Three Questions;" (b) "Feelings of Shame in Children;" (c) "The Weak Woman;" (d) "Repressed Oral Eroticism;" (e) "Renata's Theory on the Origin of Man;" f) "Brief Analysis of a Child's Phobia," which is based on Sabina Spielrein's presentation of a case during a class, where she shows her analytical work done in conjunction with a physical examination and the application of the Binet-Simon intelligence test; g) "A Spectator Type," and the article mentioned by her but not yet located, "Symbolic Actions of Castration in Childhood."

The third group includes articles whose central theme is dreams: a) "A Dream About a Postage Stamp;" b) "Shooting Stars in Dreams and Hallucinations;" c) "The Automobile: A Symbol of Male Power."

The fourth group includes theoretical articles on the origin of child language, child thought, and the notion of time: a) "The Origin of the Child's Words 'Papa' and 'Mama': Some Observations on the Different Stages in Language Development;" b) "Time in Subliminal Psychic Life;" c) "The Reflection Process in a Two-and-a-Half-Year-Old Child," a conference held in Zurich at the invitation of Emil Oberholzer (1883-1958) and announced in the *Neue*

Zürcher Zeitung; d) the follow-up article to this conference, "Some Analogies Between Thinking in Children, Aphasia, and the Unconscious Mind."

Sabina Spielrein left Geneva for Moscow in 1923, after enthusiastic letters from her father arguing that she could develop her research and work under the new Bolshevik regime, under Lenin, making her contribution. The local psychoanalytic society was flourishing under the leadership of Moshe Wulff (1878-1971) and Ivan D. Ermakov (1875-1942). There, she could put her ideas into practice in the educational field, in the education in psychoanalysis, she could teach and help build psychoanalytic institutes. Freud encouraged her and suggested that she should put her name on the letterhead, noting that not many women did this and that Sabina Spielrein, as a woman, had earned an address in the male-dominated intellectual and professional world.

When Spielrein returned to the U.S.S.R., initially to Moscow, it was a time of opening to the West, of Lenin's new economic policy, and of important experiments in all spheres of Russian life. The chapter "Environment Moscow" presents the historical and political background to the blossoming of psychoanalysis in this atmosphere. In Moscow, Sabina Spielrein-Scheffel held three posts in 1923: scientific collaborator at the State Psychoanalytic Institute, medical-pedagogical consultant to the Third International (something like a children's village), and director of the Department of Child Psychology at the First Moscow University. In addition, she ran the famous psychoanalytic daycare center, or psychoanalytic kindergarten, or simply White House — named after the building where it was located — and officially called the Experimental Home for Children, created in 1921. Ermakov invited Spielrein to work there as director immediately after she arrived. She was the best-trained psychoanalyst in the U.R.S.S., thus she cooperated in all the important committees of the Psychoanalytic Society. Co-chair of the program of science courses at the State Psychoanalytic Institute, her Seminar on Child Analysis — on basic problems of psychoanalysis for beginners — attracted the most interest, gathering 30 participants. In the area of scientific courses on psychoanalysis for doctors, educators, psychologists, and students, she gave weekly one-hour lectures on the psychology of subliminal thinking. From early 1924, Sabina Spielrein also worked as a scientific assistant in the Psychology Section of the Institute of Scientific Philosophy.

In the same year, after the death of Lenin, Sabina Spielrein returned to her hometown, Rostov-on-Don, in the northern Caucasus, where she reunited with her husband, giving birth to their daughter Eva in 1926. The atmosphere in Rostov-on-Don and Sabina Spielrein's fight for psychoanalysis in the north Caucasus, in the Soviet Union under the rule of Stalin, are described in "'I look forward to reuniting with all of you...': A letter from Sabina Spielrein-Scheffel (Rostov-on-Don) to Max Eitingon from August 24, 1927," written by Sabine

Richebächer. Sabina worked in two places: as a pedologist²⁰ at the prophylactic school outpatient clinic in Rostov and at the psychiatric polyclinic, where she treated children and adults. In lectures and courses, in publications and congresses, she took a firm stand for psychoanalysis in the increasingly heated controversies over the relationship between Freudism and the Marxist-inspired sciences. Sabina Spielrein's confidence and faith in the future worth of her own work and in psychoanalysis' ability to survive remained intact, even with all the professional and personal pressures and problems.

Spielrein wrote three texts during her Russian period, from 1923 to 1931, the year psychoanalysis was banned: "Some brief comments on childhood," a text written between 1927 and 1928, in which she gives examples of the treatment of children between the ages of 8 and 13 in her outpatient clinic. The only text written in Russian is "On Dr. Skalkovsky's lecture" from 1929, the result of her lecture at the 1st Meeting of Psychiatrists and Neuropathologists of the Northern Caucasus held that same year, based on her clinical investigations and subsequent research at the psychiatric polyclinic where she worked. "Children's Drawings with Eyes Open and Closed: Investigations on Subliminal Kinesthetic Representations," published in German in 1931 in the journal *Imago*, thanks to her father's translation into German, was the last essay on psychoanalysis to come out of the Soviet Union. It stems from her research and a conference held in the winter of 1928 at the Pedological Society at the North Caucasus University in Rostov-on-Don and deals with the investigation of kinesthetic experiences on the structure of thought.

Nowhere else in the world has psychoanalysis been institutionally established so many times. The chapter "A Historical Arc of Psychoanalysis in Russia" presents the six periods, from 1909 to 1989, situating along a timeline the importance of Spielrein's pioneering work and its erasure by the history of the disappearance and prohibition of psychoanalysis in the Soviet Union from 1931 to 1989.

Finally, I present my reflections on Spielrein's work which place her as a pioneer of child psychoanalysis in three chapters, each referring to three different moments. In the first moment ("Sabina Spielrein, a pioneer of child psychoanalysis"), her texts aim to (1) provide evidence of child sexuality through children's symptoms, inhibitions, dreams, and games, as well as manifestations of language; (2) provide evidence of the role of theories on child sexuality and child curiosity in the sublimatory acquisition of knowledge; (3) observe and report the occurrence of symbols, gestures, and games that demonstrate the presence of a sexual

²⁰ The concept of *pedology* first appeared in 1900, created by Stanley Hall. It was a practical, interdisciplinary science of child development that was based on pedagogical, psychological, psychohygienic, and psychoanalytic concepts.

difference, building insight into the Oedipus complex in children and their perception of masculinity and femininity; (4) demonstrate the relation between sexuality and the hormone-producing sexual gonads in their manifestation in secondary characters; (5) prove the relation, but also the difference, between sexual manifestations in childhood and adulthood; (6) demonstrate the emergence of feelings of shame, repulsiveness, and fear in children, resulting from the repression of sexual representations.

In the second moment ("The Origin of Language and Thought: Spielrein, Piaget and Vygotsky"), we see how her main theoretical works written during her time in Geneva show an implicit awareness of the absolute necessity of integrating psychoanalytic theory into the new discoveries in developmental psychology and linguistics. They also prove that she had the intellectual qualities required to formulate such a synthesis. After she left for Russia in 1923, the important task she had just undertaken would only be resumed decades later within the psychoanalytic field. From 1920 to 1923, the study of Freud's *fort/da*, Spielrein's stages of language, and Piaget's hypotheses, studied and developed with absolute freedom in the field of experimental psychology, produced a melting pot which eventually gave rise to the reflections on psychoanalysis and language that branched out into the concept of genetic psychology, a field of knowledge independent from psychoanalysis. The differences and similarities between her thoughts and those of Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934) and Piaget, pioneers in the study of thought and language in children, are finally presented, pointing out her importance in the literary unconscious of these thinkers, considering that they took part in passing on her psychoanalytic knowledge before they developed their own ideas.

The third moment in the career of this pioneer of child psychoanalysis ("Considerations on Sabina Spielrein's Theory of Symbol Formation") takes place between 1923 and 1931 in the Soviet Union. Her last article published in *Imago* in 1931 is "Children's Drawings with Eyes Open and Closed: A Study on Subliminal Kinesthetic Representations." It was not even published in the original Russian language, at that time when criticism was being constructed and psychoanalysis was banned. This article includes the final elaboration of Spielrein's reflections on the origin of thought and symbol, and allows us, in retrospect, to retrace the preceding steps of her elaboration, possibly a theory on the formation of the symbol that she has never actually written down, despite having announced it since 1920. For her, logical-abstract thinking is not a higher stage of thinking that eliminates the previous stages; rather, it happens in parallel with an organic, imagetic, kinesthetic-visual thinking, rooted in the body and its perception by the psyche, which prevents a disconnection between mind and body, inner and outer worlds. She differentiates between cortical and non-cortical thoughts, borrowing terms that highlight her transdisciplinary vocation for integrating psychoanalysis and some of the findings of neuroscience known at the time. Cortical thoughts connect the cortex,

the center for rational, logical, conscious thought, a direct way of thinking that deals with external reality, to the subcortex, the center for non-conscious, subliminal, non-direct, kinesthetic-visual thought, associated with sensations, affections, and the unconscious.

In this last essay, she conducts studies on subliminal kinesthetic representations, trying to detect the influence of kinesthetic experiences on the structure of our thinking by using seventeen examples of children's drawings with their eyes open and closed. She formulates her theory of symbol formation and representation and reaffirms the superiority of current psychological terminology over the reflexological terminology that was trying to impose itself as the dominant one. Starting with the question "How do we think?" she demonstrates the fundamental role of kinesthetic-visual thinking and the role of imagery in the thinking process. She brings examples of cooperation between verbal and imagetic thinking and mentions the importance of drawing — with the eyes both open and closed — for diagnosing and preventing psychological distress, mentioning its pedagogical use as well. Our logical-abstract thinking, usually expressed in a verbal form, is matched by the "imagistic hallucinatory" or "organic" thinking that runs in synchronicity. Here, Spielrein suggests a hierarchical process of symbolization and a composite origin of symbols: organic, unconscious, subconscious. We can observe fragments of this kind of thinking in cases where, for some reason, the sharpness of our conscious mental activity is impaired, such as in dreams, in states of exhaustion, psychic illness, intoxication, and other similar cases.

We can see how this essay by Spielrein is original and contemporary. Her theoretical-clinical ideas lay the foundation and anticipate concepts that will only appear a few years later in the field of psychoanalysis, such as somatopsychic integration, unconscious body image, and mentalization. The current relevance of the essay and of the reflection about the importance of the kinesthetic and the visual and the role of teaching children on how to see stand out when we think about today's context, when there is a technological revolution going on, with the Internet, computers, and smartphones, bringing to the foreground issues related to the virtual image and the risks of becoming disconnected from the external world and the decline in interacting with the non-virtual other. This brings up the debate about the changes in how we think, about thinking through images, and about how regressive or progressive this phenomenon and its consequences might be, as the visual is superimposed over face-to-face interactions, in which one feels one's own body and the corporeal presence of the other.

The final chapter ("Considerations on Sabina Spielrein's Ethics of Psychoanalysis") was inspired by a lecture on Ethics and Psychoanalysis given by Spielrein in March 1914 at the Berlin Psychoanalytic Society, amid a charged atmosphere, where Jung's ideas were under debate for several sessions, ending in his demise as a scientist. She certainly sent the

conference to Jung, who praised her courage in a note found behind a letter of hers that Jung returned — as she always asked him to do, so that she could be in possession of her reflections in order to support her thinking process. This conference, whose transcription has not yet been found, and the highly meaningful fact that its theme came after Spielrein confronted the end of her romantic transference relationship with Jung, which led her to become a Freudian psychoanalyst and author, brought about a desire to emphasize the psychoanalytic ethics that permeate her writing. For her, in psychoanalytic practice, the intuitive understanding of the afflicted patient was more important than the classification, as she thought of psychotherapy as an art of healing, in which scientific experience would be merely a guideline. Sabina Spielrein affirms how important it is for the analyst to listen to the patient and not intervene, especially in the analysis of children, where being attentive to the connection between thought disturbances and the centers of repressed representations was not an indication of a pedagogical psychoanalysis, quite the contrary. There is a resignation to verbal explanations, focusing instead on the influence exerted by the expression of what has been repressed. Besides this, the way in which the author approaches different pathologies with a combination of different techniques, bringing together different pioneers in psychoanalysis, recreating clinical approaches and concepts from it, is highly relevant to the present moment. Finally, it points to how versatile psychoanalysis is in adapting to time and space constraints, to different pathologies, to different ages, and to different institutional settings.

We inherit the spirit of transformation from Sabina Spielrein, for she was a founding force, a threefold transdisciplinary warrior, in psychiatry, in education, and in neuroscience, emerging fields which she brought into contact in an unprecedented way, preserving psychoanalysis as the core immanent force of her creations, introducing new ways of understanding madness, language, and child thought, formulating a theory of symbolization between body and thought to make it more vibrant, simultaneously unique and universal, inventing therapeutic forms, generating transformation in the reborn and renewed reality of her work.