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IN DEFENSE OF SCHREBER: POSTSCRIPT 1993

Zvi Lothane

I have the impression  
that in my future life  
some great and  
magnificent satisfaction  
is in store for me...that  
great fame will be  
attached to my name  
surpassing that of  
thousands of other people  
much better mentally  
endowed (Daniel Paul  
Schreber).

This year we are celebrating the centenary of the onset  
of Paul Schreber's second illness that led to the fateful  
admission to Paul Flechsig's Psychiatric Hospital of Leipzig  
University and the writing of his Denkwürdigkeiten eines  
Nervenkranken (Schreber, 1903), the most glorious book ever  
written by a former inpatient. This is why we are here  
today.

Schreber's Memoirs is not merely a case history. It is  
a work of art, a philosophical prose poem, a grand  
hermeneutic Rorschach test, and a magical scripture tempting  
an ever-growing host of exegetes, a prophetic text that has

prefigured many others.<sup>1</sup> However, in considering Schreber's magical text it might be useful to remember Empson's (1984) balancing of the mysterious and the mundane in his reading of Eliot's The Waste Land.

In my In Defense of Schreber: Soul Murder and Psychiatry I set myself, among others, the ethical task of giving Schreber back his own voice. For while Schreber belongs to mankind, he has been appropriated by psychiatrists and psychoanalysts. However, Schreber has been misdescribed, misunderstood, and mistreated by his psychiatrists, and misinterpreted by most psychoanalysts. The ethical task included removing from Paul Schreber the labels of paranoia and homosexuality. Not that one should be ashamed of being either paranoid or homosexual, but it was untrue of Paul Schreber. Moreover, it was also my task to vindicate the maligned father of Paul, Moritz Schreber. My book is a combination of biography, case history, and a pleading on behalf of the Schrebers, father and son.<sup>2</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup> Among the recent ones, Ostow (1990) views Schreber's Weltuntergang fantasy as informing the fundamentalist millenarian visions of Hitler, Krell (1992) sees in Schreber a philosopher who prefigured Heidegger while Yampolsky (1993; courtesy of Professor Eric Santner) believes Schreber can explain Artaud.

historical method also included an explication du texte utilizing as Ariadne's threads of Schreber's own hints, glosses and names.<sup>3</sup> Natural science may dispense with history, but the psychoanalytic method must remain intrinsically historical, or else it is in danger of turning history into etiology, ideology, mythology. In imitation of Kant, let me suggest that history without interpretation is chronology, but interpretation without history is mythology.

My method in reading Schreber was also informed by the ethics of love and love of Schreber. I read Schreber on his terms, based on the oxymoron that love makes one see more clearly than scientific detachment. I do not claim to possess the whole truth about Schreber but hope to have painted a portrait that balances facts and fictions.

#### FREUD AND NIEDERLAND

Freud (1911) and Niederland (1974) selected certain facts to fit certain preformed fictions, that is,

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<sup>2</sup> My pleading on behalf of Schreber has been appreciated by Devreese (1992, 1993) and Stingelin (1993a, b).

<sup>3</sup> This was begun by Freud (1911) and continued by Devreese (1989), Israëls (1989), Niederland (1974), Schreiber (1987), Busse (1991), and myself (Lothane, 1992a, 1992b, 1993a, 1993b).

etiologies. They demonstrate how an etiology becomes a mythology.

Freud's fiction was that Schreber's problems as an adult were caused by an eruption in the summer-fall of 1893, thus before setting eyes on Flechsig again in November, of a fully-conscious, ardent sexual desire for his former psychiatrist caused by a recent longing for and a deferred transference from the desire for his father. In Nederland's fiction (of which Morton Schatzman is but a derivative), the father was no longer the unmoved mover, as in Freud, but one who alternated between acting as child sadist and child seducer.<sup>4</sup> Again, the adult illness was viewed as a deferred transposition from childhood, the conflicts of the man Schreber seen as derivatives of his childhood traumas. Both Freud and Nederland are thus instances of the genetic fallacy and a denial of contemporary conflicts of love. I do not wish to deny the importance of Schreber's childhood, but as a historian I believe, to paraphrase Wittgenstein, what we do not know, we must pass over in silence.

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<sup>4</sup> The notion that childhood trauma invariably leads to deformation of personality or pathology was tellingly questioned by D. W. Harding (1973). In spite of the cruel upbringing of Charles and John Wesley by their mother, they "escaped Judge Schreber's fate." This essay, critical of Schatzman, went unnoticed by Israëls (1989).

Since Schreber suffered from neither paranoia, but from melancholia, and showed no signs of homosexuality, but cross dressing, Freud's fiction is no longer tenable. And since the father has not be proven to have been a child abuser, Niederland's fiction also goes by the wayside. This is not to deny the enormous heuristic importance of both Freud and Niederland, without whom this conference would not have been possible. But Freud and Niederland read Schreber selectively, oblivious of the entire story that in addition to father included all the dramatis personae: Schreber's mother, brother and sisters, wife, in-laws, and, last but not least, his psychiatrists Flechsig and Weber, the conditions of life in the asylums, and, last but not least, the mental incompetency status -- all aspects of what Schreber called his soul murder. All these influenced Schreber, they all were reflected in the content of the Denkwürdigkeiten, in which illness plays its own central, but not exclusive, role.

An important issue that escaped Freud entirely was the connection between madness and money, between psychosis and power, and between madness and morals. Let us also not forget the connection between psychosis and pharmacology. Many of Schreber's hallucinations and delusions were caused by the side effects of overmedication with bromides and opiates, which were a big worry for Schreber. But looming above all was the connection between psychosis and the passions: unrequited love, jealousy, and rage.

Money matters, power and love confrontations weighed heavily upon Schreber. And as usually happens, money, power and love are not far away from morals. Schreber was keenly aware of moral issues; but moral values were beyond the biological psychiatry of Flechsig and Weber, and beyond the psychoanalytic sexology of Freud as well.

#### SCHREBER'S PATHOLOGY vs. SCHREBER'S POETRY

Schreber acknowledged he was ill, but insisted that he was a nervous, or neurotic, not a psychotic, patient, and thus not mentally incompetent. His emotional illness -- or, in his words, his Gemütskrankheit -- raises considerations concerning the

- (1) cause of his illness,
- (2) content of illness,
- (3) career, or the intent, of being ill, and the
- (4) creativeness facilitated by the illness.

The first three aspects fall within Schreber's pathology, the last is Schreber's poetry. Many a truant from life will choose illness as a career. Only a chosen few can turn a condition into an act of creation. Schreber was such a person.

As usually happens, the core of Schreber's emotional illness was a crisis of love: the love of others and of himself, and the love of his work, in Freud's words, a crisis of Lieben und Arbeiten. Schreber became a victim of Gemütskrankheit, i.e., a mood disorder, twice, in 1884 and

1893. The first time he came back after about a year and a half. The second time Schreber became depressed to the point of despair, of wanting his own death over his duty to marriage and work, precipitously ending his "six weeks of professional activity in Dresden" (1903, p. 102). Fearing remorse, figuratively the bite of his conscience, and the loss of love of the living and the dead, he sought explanations and justifications for his inability to love and work in the realm of the supernatural, the divine, and the exalted. The varieties of justification, i.e., interpretation -- from denial to delusion, from Deutung to Wahndeutung -- became the fantastic content of his illness. In this way the illness turned into a career of an inmate, replacing one set of relations with another: he escaped from Dresden society into asylum society, from the arms of his wife into the arms of Flechsig, at first his savior, later his soul murderer. The result was a "loss of an honourable position, a happy marriage practically dissolved, deprived of all the pleasures of life, subjected to bodily pain, mental torture and terrors...[he suffered] a martyrdom...like the crucifixion of Jesus Christ" (1903, p. 293). Schreber was farthest from any desire for Flechsig to rape his rectum or his reason; but that once he entered Flechsig's asylum, it was to be on Flechsig's terms, not Schreber's. Schreber only wanted a temporary retreat, but he miscalculated. The punctum saliens of soul murder was

the arrogance and abuse of power by the doctors, and their sins of omission and of commission (Lothane, 1992b).

Schreber's assorted hallucinations and delusions, the content and intent of his illness, were not just material -- or mythical -- events in his brain but were above all Schreber speaking, a combination of a langue and a parole. In emotional illness every monologue is a potential dialogue. And just as it takes two to tango, it takes two to speak, for every speech there is a counterspeech. Similarly, for every folie there is a folie à deux, for one man's mythology can easily become another man's pathology. Flechsig and Weber had their mythology, too, the brain mythology of the day, as distinct from the true brain science of the day. Schreber's paranoia fantastica was mirrored by Flechsig's and Weber's paranoia scientifica, reflected not only in their horror of Schreber's fantastic cosmology and sexology, but in the justifications they created for their actions, which caused Schreber such suffering. Szasz (1970) called this manufacture of madness. True, Schreber was responsible for getting himself into trouble: he could have dissimulated, he could have kept his ideas about transformation into a woman to himself. However that may be, he had a right to free speech but in this he was opposed by his psychiatrists who acted as prosecutors and policemen for the state. By the collusion of psychiatry and the law Schreber was robbed of his personal freedom by means of the incompetency ruling set in motion by his wife.

When Schreber said he had enough of his life in the hospital, believing himself entitled to his autonomy, Weber moved in on him with real legal psychiatric persecution.

In health and disease the words that express thoughts, emotions, and intentions, are the garments such actions wear. Words are either direct or indirect, candid or cryptic, in the form of metaphor, dream and symbol, or, as Freud said, an Einkleidung, the garment of imagination and concealment. Thus, Freud suggested that Schreber, owing to

The high level of...[Schreber's] intelligence...and his communicativeness...[he] not infrequently presses the key into our hands, by adding a gloss, a quotation or an example to some delusional proposition...we have only to strip the sentence of its negative form [negative Einkleidung], to take the example of being the actual thing...and we find ourselves in the possession of what we are looking for, namely the translation of the paranoid mode into the normal one [Freud, 1911, p. 35].

Note that 'paranoic' here does not mean persecutory but the inclusive generic sense of delusional, in the realm of Wahndeutung/Traumdeutung. The Einkleidung wraps the kernel of truth in the folds, or plicae, of the fantastic, or encoded, text, waiting to be decoded and unfolded, or explicated. Such a cryptic text presents the perennial

epistemological problem of correspondence: between the reference and the referent, the signifier and the signified, the concrete and the metaphorical, the riddle and the key to the riddle. It was Freud's Copernican revolution that the meaning is not in the dream but in the dreamer. We are unfortunately only the possessors of Schreber's dream, not the living words of the dreamer.

Words are not only the garment of action, they are themselves action: words can cut like swords, burn like fire, divide people into dogmatists and dissidents. Schreber was a dissident, like Christ, Luther and Hus he chose to speak in Flammenworte, fighting for personal liberty and freedom of self-expression, seeing beyond his times. Like James Joyce and Salman Rushdie Schreber felt he had the right to play with words, with hallucinatory moods, and like them, he was persecuted for his words.

Freud misread Schreber's sex words: he misunderstood their metaphorical meaning, reading homosexuality into them rather than from them, and he also missed Schreber's gender psychology as heterosexual fetishism. He also misread Schreber's God words, reducing Schreber's mystical insights to sexual instincts, unable to see the deeper aspects of Schreber's spirituality, what the visionaries called the unio mystica.

I would like to amplify the reading of the content of Schreber's delusions by suggesting two additional glosses on

his writing, the history of European torture and of the mystical tradition of Gnosticism and the Kabbalah.

#### SCHREBER'S TORTURE IMAGERY

Schreber protested the fact that he was "insane [and] detained in an asylum against his declared will" (1903, p. 363) describing his enforced hospitalization and its consequences directly as a cruel torture and indirectly -- both euphemistically and sarcastically -- as cruel miracles. In the anti-psychiatry of the day asylums were dubbed modern torture chambers.

Schreber's phantasmagoric miracles were, I maintain, not simply transformations of childhood experiences, the psychoanalyst's deus ex machina, but post-perceptual metaphors depicting his ongoing anxieties, depressions, and rages, the day residues of his hallucinations and delusions, i.e., his waking dreams (Lothane, 1983; 1983), and their somatic expressions in painful muscular spasms, twinges and other fleeting sensations, by which he felt tortured. The iconography of torture was taken by Schreber from the long history of torture in European history. A vast array of tortures was practised on witches, heretics, Jews, and other social deviants by the Holy Inquisition and on felons by the judicial system, with the help of an assorted arsenal of iron maidens, thumb screws, skull crushers, knee splitters and other such paraphernalia. Torture as a method of

extracting confessions from criminals by such means was abolished in Germany as late as 1831.<sup>5</sup>

For Schreber both his inner emotional states and his reactions to external conditions were "a mental torture from which [he] suffered severely for years...made all the worse by...the restriction of freedom [1903, p. 132]...the expression 'mental torture' was no exaggeration [footnote #63; Schreber's emphasis]," for he had "lived through cruel times and bitter suffering" (p. 31). He described his state of mind in words descriptive of real tortures: "my skull was repeatedly sawn asunder in various directions" (1903, p. 155); rays would "travel around one single head to tear it asunder and pull it apart comparable to quartering" (p. 155); miracles "compressed my head as though in a vise by turning a kind of a screw, causing the head to assume an elongated almost a pear-shaped form" (p. 159).

Another connection to torture was via the persecution and torture of heretics, witches, and sorcerers, the servants of the Devil. Flechsig is seen as a "wizard...in modern times... destroying all bases of religion and causing...immorality" (p. 91). Soul murder instigated by him is likened to diabolical possession, becoming "torturing of a soul as an end in itself [which] gave the

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<sup>5</sup> For details consult Swain (1931) and Robbins (1959). Another source, mentioned to me by Daniel Devreese, is Held (1985).

Devil special pleasure" (p. 23), while both Flechsig and Weber are described as devils. Schreber holds that the "Prince of Hell [is] not Schreber but Flechsig (p. 162), who persecutes innocent heretic -- or as we would say today, dissident -- Schreber, which is another oxymoron. Like Jan Hus at the stake, he could only say to his psychiatrists: O sancta simplicitas.

#### GNOSTIC AND KABBALISTIC SOURCES OF SCHREBER'S MYSTICAL COSMOLOGY AND SEXOLOGY AND MESSIANISM

The Gnostic and neo-Platonic images of God became in time intertwined with Jewish Gnosticism, and together they gave birth to the Jewish Kabbalah. The latter was introduced in Germany by the jurist Johann Reuchlin (1455-1522), a defender of Hebrew books and writings. These trends were in turn crucial for the development of German mysticism and philosophy of nature in the Renaissance, in Agrippa von Nettesheim (1486-1535), Sebastian Franck (1499-1542), and Jacob Böhme (1575-1642) -- and even young Luther, mentioned in the Memoirs. These were later continued in Knorr von Rosenroth's (1636-1689) Kabbala Denudata or the Christian Kabbalah.<sup>6</sup> Without these forerunners one cannot

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<sup>6</sup> This view was powerfully stated by Franz Joseph Molitor (1857), first edition in 1827, Frankfurt/M.: Verlag der Hermannschen Buchhandlung. I am indebted to Professor Yosef Haim Yerushalmi for reminding me of Molitor's work.

fully understand Swedenborg (alluded to indirectly by Schreber), Fechner, or Schelling, and, of course, Schreber himself. It is impossible to ascertain whether Schreber was personally aware of these sources either directly or indirectly, whether it was a matter of influence or of confluence, or, in Hegel's terms, due to the ubiquitousness of eternal ideas.

The Kabbalah became a vogue in France and Germany in the second half of the 19th century (Webb, 1974). Kabbalistic influences in Germany were discussed in a chapter in Dessoir (1920), in which he mentions a book suggesting that the Kabbalah was a hermeneutic key to Goethe's Faust. Dessoir also mentions the later Kabbalist Isaac Luria (1535-1572) who understood the transmigration of souls and the language of birds, a skill later mastered by Wagner's Siegfried. The pantheism and magical idealism of occultists like Carl Du Prel, an important subtext in Schreber, were also of kabbalistic inspiration, as in the tripartite divisions of nephesh, neshama, and ruah (Lothane, 1992), which I had mentioned there only in connection with occultism.

Daniel Paul Schreber's calling himself a "seer of spirits" (1903, p. 77) may well be an example of the old adage nomen est omen, doubly traceable to the Biblical Daniel -- also the name of his father Daniel Moritz and brother Daniel Gustav -- and to visionary St. Paul, in his own. For Schreber "the knowledge of supernatural matters

gained in the course of years" was so meaningful that he "would not erase [it] from [his] memory for the gold on earth" (1903, p. 228), even as he knew that he had "suffered...only because human beings did not appreciate supernatural matters" (1903, p. 201).

Schreber's image of God is twofold. On the one hand, he possessed a "certain knowledge of the existence of a living God" (1903, p. 253), of a God he viewed as selfish and hostile, who persecuted innocent Schreber as he did Job. This God was "unable to understand the living human being...and to judge his thinking correctly" (1903, p. 262), thus at times reminiscent of the selfishness of doctors who played God with him. This God is also, as in Gnosticism, a transmudane "distant God," a deus absconditus, the "Many in One or One in Many" (1903, footnote #83), and at the same time a God of "omnipotence and omniscience" (p. 257).

In the theosophical kabbalistic theory of creation, from the Einsof, or the infinite light, or splendor -- hence the name of the book, The Zohar -- the ground of all the created world orders, flow light emanations, or effulgurations, or the Sephirot, the ten potencies or agencies through which God reveals himself in the creation of the universe that are also the basic physical and psychological powers that rule the world of man. The concept of ground is evident in his notion of Grundsprache. Böhme calls the infinite der Ungrund. In the Kabbalah the ninth Sephira is called Yesod, variously translated as

Basis, Fundament, and also Urgrund (Scholem, 1935), and it corresponds to the angels called Cherubim and the angel's choirs, the seat of the sons. Schreber mentions cherubs, angels of indeterminate gender, in connection with defending man's right to sensuality, in a quote from Schiller's "An die Freude": "Wollust ward dem Wurm gegeben,/Und der Cherub steht vor Gott" (p. 281). Schreber describes the "nerves of the mind [as] his "foundation [Untergrund], as the expression goes in the basic language," footnote #26) and "my nerves [as] (my "basis") (Untergrund, pp. 220-221).

In Schreber's cosmology, the Order of the World is a "wundevoller Aufbau" created by emanations issuing from God as nerves or rays, that "have in particular the faculty of transforming themselves into all things of the created world...the essence of divine creation" (p. 8). Like the kabbalistic heavenly mansions and hierarchies, Schreber's heavenly realms of God (Gottesreiche) are constituted by God dwelling "above the 'forecourts of heaven'...or the 'anterior realms of God'," i.e., the great reservoir of energy", while "the posterior realms of God...are subject to a peculiar division, a lower God (Ariman) and an upper God (Ormuzd)" (p. 19). And Schreber explains in footnote #11:

This expression about the 'forecourts of heaven' may give an indication of the eternal cycle of things which is the basis of the Order of the World. In creating something, God in a sense divests Himself of part of

Himself...This apparent loss is restored when...the [purified] nerves of departed human beings who...had attained the state of Blessedness return to Him as the 'forecourts of heaven' [Schreber, 1903, p. 19]

Under the garment of the contemporary law of conservation of energy, Schreber may be expressing the Gnostic concept of the descent of man from God and the ascent back to God, and the transmigration of souls, in manner intended by Jonas (1967):

the typical Gnostic system starts with a doctrine of divine transcendence in its original purity; traces the genesis of the world from some primordial disruption of the blessed state, a loss of divine integrity that leads to the emergence of lower powers who become the makers and rulers of this world; then, as a crucial episode in the drama, it recounts the creation and early fate of man, in whom the further conflict becomes centered; the final theme -- in fact, the implied theme throughout -- is man's overcoming and eventual dissolving of the cosmic system and is thus the instrument of integration for the impaired godhead itself, the self-saving of God [Jonas, 1967, p. 337b].

The quoted passage refers to theories of creation and redemption. As regards revelation of God to man in the

prophet Ezekiel, and continued in the kabbalistic Merkabah mysticism, divine glory manifests itself as "a created light, the first of all creations," and the holy spirit as "the great radiance called Shekhinah" (Scholem, 1941, p. 111). Schreber also saw many radiant visions.

Freud was impressed by Schreber's "surprising sexualization of the state of heavenly bliss," for him confirming the view that the roots of every mental disorder are chiefly to be found in the patient's sexual life" (Freud, 1911, p. 30). While justification of the insistence on his right to sexual pleasure and the freedom to speak openly of bodily functions was indeed of utmost importance to Schreber, he may have also been aware of the recurrent habit among mystics, both Jewish and Christian, to render their ecstatic states in words depicting sexuality. Let us recall again the ninth Sephira, or the Urgrund. In the body it is located in the area of the genitals, and according to Rosenroth "Fundamentum denotat membrum genitale utriusque sexus" (Waite, 1929).

The other prominent Gnostic motif is the androgyny of God, and by extension, mankind. It followed mythological allegories of androgyny, such as the myth of Hermaphroditus, the anthropogeny in Plato's Symposium, and the myth of Tiresias. Paglia (1990) has focused on the androgyny of Dionysus (e.g., his feminine identification via the second birth from Zeus' thigh and the ritual transvestism of the Oschophoria) in order to dichotomize more sharply

Nietzsche's distinctions of Dionysian (feminine earthiness) and Apollonian (male intellectuality) principles. All these motifs may have bearings on Schreber's famed wish to turn into a woman and to bring forth a new race out of Schreber's spirit to redeem the world, which Weber branded as paranoia: "crystallized out so to speak into...a more or less elaborate delusional system...not amenable to correction by objective evidence...[as shown by] some of his writings" (Schreber, 1903, pp. 385-386). It was beyond Weber to grasp the difference, intuited by Schreber, between the male, oedipal, Jehovah, the clearly male and oedipal Apollonian imago of Moritz Schreber, and the Dionysian, mystical, feminine-to-androgynous Jesus -- his son Paul.

The following quotation from the Poimandres of Hermes Trismegisthus reflects the Gnostic idea about androgyny:

Now the Nous, Father of all, being Life and Light, brought forth man like to himself, of whom he became enamored as his own form...And Man...showed to lower Nature the beautiful form of God...And Nature, having received into herself the beloved, embraced him wholly and they mingled: for they were inflamed by love...though he was androgynous, having issued from an androgynous Father, and unsleeping from the unsleeping one, he is conquered by love and sleep...[The new world-era was initiated by the separation of all the androgynous creatures, animals and men alike, into male

and female, followed by citing Genesis 1:22, "Be fruitful and multiply"] [Jonas, 1967, pp. 150-152].

The first century Hebrew Midrash, or interpretation, of the story of Genesis says that God created Adam androgynous.<sup>7</sup> Later, in the medieval kabbalistic tract, the Zohar, The Book of Splendor, i.e., light, the mystery of the Shekhinah, the divine immanence, consists in her gender ambiguity. Like a Gnostic female aeon, she is considered female as a Bride of God, and the mother of the sons of Israel, and a symbol of "eternal womanhood" (Scholem, 1941, p. 230). When sent down upon earth as a liberating angel, she assumes the form of a male when dispensing benedictions or a female when dispensing judgment. Other manifestations of the Shekhinah, as the Matrona and Metatron, may show gender fluctuations back and forth (Waite, 1929, pp. 343-344). Also in the Zohar Moses is described as the "'husband of the Shekhinah', implying that he has mythical intercourse with this divine manifestation" (Idel, 1988, p. 228).

Schreber is also concerned with gender fluctuations in his body and defines unmaning as follows:

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<sup>7</sup> It may be a mere curiosity, but the title page of a Polish anti-Jewish tract depicts a Jew named Androginus (Rostworowski, 1993).

Following "world catastrophes which necessitate the destruction of mankind...when...moral decay ("voluptuous excesses") or perhaps nervousness has seized mankind to such an extent that the forecourts of heaven...could not be adequately replenished by their excessively blackened nerves...in order to maintain the species, one single human being -- perhaps the relatively most moral -- was spared...the "Eternal Jew"...[meant in] a somewhat different sense from the legend of the same name of the Jew Ahasver [but related] to the legends of Noah, Deucalion and Pyrrha, etc. The Eternal Jew had to be unmanned (transformed into a woman) to be able to bear children [Schreber, pp. 52-55; last emphasis added]...[b]efore my own case...there might have been a number of Eternal Jews...amongst them occurred...the name of a Polish Count Czartorisky [footnote #30].

In this passage Schreber, with his usual precision, defines unmanning as a transformation into a woman for the purpose of bearing a new human race, thus a messianic redemption of mankind, not a homosexual wish, contrary to Freud's misreading of it as a castration for the purpose of covert homosexual gratification (Lothane, 1993b). As if anticipating a literal reading of his text, Schreber states that the similar Christian notion that "Jesus was the son of

God can be only meant in a mystical sense, which but approximates the human sense of these words, because nobody would maintain that God, as a being endowed with human sexual organs, had intercourse with a woman from whose womb Jesus came forth" (1903, p. 3). In medieval paintings the conception of the Virgin was represented as a ray travelling from the mouth of the Heavenly Father to the Virgin's ear. It is also noteworthy that Schreber takes pains to emphasize that his "Ewiger Jude" has nothing to do with the Ahasuerus the Wandering Jew of the medieval anti-Semitic legend who spurned Jesus and was cursed. Schreber is speaking of the Eternal Jew as a righteous man, who like the God of Jakob Böhme, has the attribute of self-begetting (Urzeugung, or spontaneous generation, Schreber, 1903, p. 251).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> This is continued in von Baader's idea of God's self-creation (Selbsterzeugung Gottes). Eliade (1987) doubts the idea of androgyny came from the Kabbalah, but I in turn doubt that. His references point to the spread of the notion of the androgyne to German 18th century theosophists (Oettinger, Eckartshausen), and their disciples; to Novalis's friend J. W. Ritter's (1776-1810) portrayal of the ideal androgyne, like Christ himself, in his Nachlass eines jungen Physikers, as a way of the future; to a youthful work by Wilhelm von Humboldt, Über die männliche und weibliche Form; to Schlegel's Über die Diotima; and to Balzac's fantastic novel Séraphita about a perfect androgyne.

It is of interest to follow some leads suggested by Schreber's astounding description of "Czartorisky" as one of number of unmanned Eternal Jews of the past.<sup>9</sup> What has this Polish aristocrat to do with Jews, especially an unmanned Jew? This name provides a verbal bridge, hitherto unnoticed, to Schreber's references to catholicizing, slavizing, and judaizing trends in Poland and Germany. These trends would have incorporated a number of mystical, messianic, and occult strands and tracing such influences may extend our understanding Schreber's philosophical-

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<sup>9</sup> We cannot know which of the Czartoryskis Schreber has in mind: Adam Jerzy (1770-1861), or his father Prince Adam Kazimierz, 1734-1823, who had important links to Saxony, or another one yet. Father and son were members in lodges of Polish freemasons. In the 18th century the Polish lodges included members of the Saxon aristocracy, among them the Saxon minister Heinrich Brühl. The freemasons and occultists were active in Dresden (Hass, 1982. p. 78). Here we should note the close historical links between the Kingdom of Saxony and Poland and the fact that the ruling House of Wettin was Catholic in a country predominantly Protestant. The Saxon elector Friedrich August I, who later ruled Poland as August II, showed a great interest in alchemy, the Kabbalah, and astrology (Hass, 1980, p. 71).

mystical musings and delusions. Here delusions are not a nosological but a dream concept.

Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski (1770-1861), dead the same year as Schreber's father, left his partitioned Poland for an exile in France. Other than being a statesman, he was also a sympathizer of far Eastern mystical ideas and a friend of the founder of the Asiatick Society, Sir William Jones. A man close to his heart was the great Romantic Polish poet Juliusz Slowacki (1809-1849), who in turn was influenced by Böhme, Swedenborg, and the German Romantic poets Schiller, Novalis and Schlegel.<sup>10</sup>

Czartoryski was also a supporter of the Polish philosopher, jurist, polymath and mystagogue Joseph Maria Hoëne-Wronski (1778-1853). That follower of Kant and Hegel, like other contemporary Polish philosophers, combined

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<sup>10</sup> Slowacki's poetry was translated into German, but I do not know if his deeply spiritual works, influenced by Towianski -- such as the dramatic poems like Ksiadz Marek and Sen Srebrny Salomei. I do not know if these two were known in Germany in Schreber's days. Slowacki published two letters addressed to Prince Adam Czartoryski (Slowacki, 1846), which are an ardent appeal to the Prince, supposedly a kindred spirit, to hearken to the messianic role of the Poles, God's chosen people, to their deep mystical Christianity, and urgent plea to cast his voice in defense of Mickiewicz.

religion and philosophy, thus a belief in an eternal soul, a personal deity, and in Poles being the Messiah among the nations, destined to redeem mankind.<sup>11</sup> Having lived in Poland, Wronski was knowledgeable in the Jewish Kabbalah. Wronski combined Kabbalah with Polish Messianism becoming a source of inspiration for two other Poles with mystical leanings.

One was Andrzej Towianski (1799-1878), who settled in Paris in 1841. This self-styled prophet promulgated a spiritual change for mankind. Earlier in his career he had been connected in Dresden to occultist Freemasons and Martinists, or followers of mystic St. Martin, the translator of Böhme into French. Towianski believed in the existence of immortal souls connected with each other down the generations through transmigration. The souls formed communities of spirits with their hierarchies that were ruled by God, acting through Christ and the new Messiah Towianski. Poland was designated as a messianic servant of Christ (Polska Narod Sluga Bozy), to be led in exile by Towianski, God's apostle himself, who would inspire other

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<sup>11</sup> He expounded his ideas in French in such works as Prodromes du messianisme, révélation des destinées de l'humanité (1831), Métapolitique messianique (1839), Messianisme ou reforme absolue du savoir humain (1847).

apostles to help bring heaven and earth together. A collaborator of Towianski was the Jew Gerszon Ram.<sup>12</sup>

The other was the Polish national poet Adam Mickiewicz, whose name, although not mentioned by Schreber, rhymes with Starkiewicz, a name allegedly similar to that of a Benedictine Father whose band of 240 monks "suddenly moved into [his] head to perish there" (p. 49).<sup>13</sup> Schreber saw dangers for "German nationalism [wanting] to retain for the German people the place of God's chosen people, in contrast to the Catholicizing and Slavicizing efforts" (1903, footnote #49) and feared "Protestantism...[succumbing] to Catholicism" (p. 85). He may have also been fearing going against his father who did not approve of mysticism and occultism (Lothane, 1992).

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<sup>12</sup> He was born in Wilno as Gerszon Ram and later converted to Christianity to become Jan Andrzej Ram (Gawronski, 1910).

<sup>13</sup> This name, Starkiewicz, was also found by Schreber to rhyme with that of a "Viennese nerve specialist, a baptised Jew and Slavophile, who wanted to make Germany Slavic through me and...to institute there the rule of Judaism" (Schreber, 1903, p. 49) Busse (1991) traced the name to Albert Adamkiewicz, a Jewish neurologist born in Poland who settled in Vienna and whose polemical articles in response to Flechsig's theory of myelogenesis were published alongside Flechsig in the Neurologisches Centralblatt.

Adam Mickiewicz came under the spell of Martinism, the Kabbalah, and the Frankists, the 18th century Jewish sect in Poland formed by Jacob Frank, reviving the messianism of the 17th century false messiah Sabbatai Zevi and popular Kabbalah. The Frankists practised orgiastic sex and converted en masse to Catholicism, thus influencing the mysticism of Poles. Later the Frankist set up a lavish court and a private army in Offenbach, in the Duchy of Isenberg in Hessen (Mandel, 1979). One of Mickiewicz's parents may have been Jewish and a follower of Frank, while his wife Celina, a daughter of Frankist converts, was at one point cured of a bout with mental illness by Towianski himself. A propounder of feelings and ethics as living truths, Mickiewicz joined forces with Towianski and expounded messianism at the College de France to audiences that included Jules Michelet, Edgar Quinet and George Sand. In the tradition of German romanticism, Mickiewicz composed an epic poem, Dziady (eve of the forefathers), first translated in Germany in 1878, in which the main protagonist called first Gustav, who died a suicide due to unrequited love -- like Schreber's older brother Gustav -- returns to earth as a haunting spirit and is then reincarnated as Konrad, who challenges God in a grand Job-like, Faust-like monologue. Job and Faust have a dual relevance for

Schreber: the concern with good and evil and the attack on God's justice.<sup>14</sup>

From the Kabbalah to Polish mysticism and back again. In the spirit of the Isaac Luria's story of creation as a paradigm for an aesthetic reading of the texts of strong poets, Bloom (1975) defines "Zimzum as the Creator's withdrawal or contraction so as to make possible a creation that is not himself. Shevirat ha-kelim is the breaking-apart-of-the-vessels, a vision of creation-as-catastrophe. Tikkun is restitution or restoration -- man's contribution to God's work" (p. 5). It is tempting to apply these ideas to a possible new (mis)reading of Schreber: one could see the crisis in Schreber's life and in the Weltordnung as the preparation for the creative Weltuntergang and Soul Murder, to the final triumphant restitution in the transformation of Entmannung and the birth of a new race aus dem Schreberschem Geiste, which we, all the assembled here, assuredly are. Without mentioning the Kabbalah, with which he might have

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<sup>14</sup> Mickiewicz's "The Slavs" (1845) was translated into German, for it contained a "Préface de l'édition allemande," pp. xxxi-xxxii. The mystical doctrines later cost Mickiewicz his Chair of Slavonic Literature at the Collège de France. As documented by Webb (1974), Towianski and Mickiewicz organized the circle of Oevre de Dieu that propagated their messianic ideas and included Slowacki.

been at least indirectly familiar, Freud's (1911) most amazing insight -- seen against the backdrop of the organicist psychiatry of his day -- was that hallucinations and delusions were a restitution of lost love relations (Lothane, 1982).

#### CONCLUDING REMARKS: THE DEBATES ABOUT SCHREBER

I found only one review of Freud's essay on Schreber in the German psychiatric literature (Allers, 1912) in which the reviewer characterized Freud's interpretations as "geistreiche Aphorismen." For all its stature as a canonical psychoanalytic text about paranoia and homosexuality, and its place in the history of psychoanalysis, it is surprising that Freud made no mention of his 1911 essay on Schreber in his "On the History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement" (1914). Over the years, Schreber was debated only four times at international psychoanalytic congresses: by Freud in 1911, Katan in 1949, Baumeyer in 1952, and myself, three weeks ago, at the 38th congress in Amsterdam (Lothane, 1993a).

However, the most interesting debate about Schreber occurred between Freud and Jung. It is a truism that psychoanalytic writings do not only serve pedagogical but also polemical and confessional purposes. Freud hid his confessional and polemical intentions in the published essay, but expressed them in his letters to Jung.

Freud was told of Schreber's Memoirs by Jung; Jung found Freud's essay uproariously funny. I submit it was a

chuckle of recognition of messages Freud had been giving him on other occasions. Jung started by telling Freud about his erotic thoughts about him. One message would have been: if you do not analyze your latent homosexuality, and your erotic transference to me, you will end up paranoid, like Schreber. The other, mentioned in a letter, was: do not become ensnared, like Schreber, in the black mud tide of occultism.

Jung disobeyed on both counts, and after abandoning the *sexul libido* concept of the Jew Freud for the vital libido concept of the Jew Bergson and after the break with Freud he indeed became transiently psychotic, from which he recovered without the blessing of an analysis. He sublimated his homosexuality, his entourage being mostly women, but he never got rid of a certain measure of homophobia. He also gave in to his occult impulses, culminating in such works as Seven Sermons to the Dead, following a trajectory that may have started with his reading Swedenborg when he was a high school student. I believe that Jung's anima-animus theory and the idea that God yearns to become man were strongly influenced by Schreber's fantastic cosmology and theology and his wish to turn into a woman. As said by Horace: multa renascuntur quae iam cecidere; and in Seneca's words, veniet tempus, quo ista, quae nunc latent, in lucem dies extrahat (Lib. 7, l. 25).

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