MY OWN PRIVATE GERMANY

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DANIEL PAUL SCHREBER'S SECRET HISTORY OF MODERNITY

Eric L. Santner

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To Pamela Pascoe

WITH LOVE

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PREFACE

MY INTEREST in Daniel Paul Schreber, whose autobiographical account of mental illness and psychiatric confinement has become, since its publication in 1903, the locus classicus for the study of paranoia in the psychiatric and psychoanalytic literature, began in earnest when my research turned to the history and prehistory of National Socialism. It was obvious that paranoia had played a crucial role in the ideology of National Socialism, that it had enjoyed the status of a quasi-official state ideology, even religion. It struck me that a proper understanding of the successes of the Nazis in mobilizing the population could only be achieved by a detailed study of the nature and structure of paranoid mechanisms as they functioned individually and collectively. Daniel Paul Schreber's *Denkwürdigkeiten eines Nervenkranken* (Memoirs of my nervous illness), a work drawing on the very phantasms that would, after the traumas of war, revolution, and the end of empire, coalesce into the core elements of National Socialist ideology, offered itself as a unique textual archive and "laboratory" for just such a study.[1]

Connections between the Schreber case and the paranoid core of National Socialist ideology had already been noted, albeit in broad and idiosyncratic strokes, by Elias Canetti in his remarkable treatise on mass psychology, published in 1960.[2] The final two chapters of that monumental work are dedicated to Schreber, whose *Memoirs* Canetti reads as nothing short of a precursor text to that more famous paranoid autobiography composed in confinement, Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. As Canetti puts it apropos of the political references and allusions in Schreber's text, "his political system had within a few decades been accorded high honor: though in a rather cruder and less literate form it became the creed of a great nation, leading . . . to the conquest of Europe and coming within a hair's breadth of the conquest of the world." For Canetti, the crucial link between paranoia and totalitarian leadership was not so much a matter of the historical content of the conspiratorial "plots" against which the paranoid and the totalitarian leader struggle—both Schreber and Hitler saw their fates profoundly bound to that of all sorts of historically specific dangers, including the danger of Jewish contamination and corruption. For Canetti, the link between paranoia and Hitlerite leadership was of a more formal nature. The paranoid and the dictator both suffer from a *disease of power*, which involves a pathological will to sole survivorship and a concomitant willingness, even drivenness, to sacrifice the rest of the world in the name of that survivorship. Apropos of Schreber's apocalyptic delusions in which the end of the world is staged in numerous ways, Canetti writes:

> We do not get the impression that these disasters came upon mankind against Schreber's will. On the contrary, he appears to feel a certain satisfaction in the fact that the persecution he was exposed to . . . should have had such appalling consequences. The whole of mankind suffers and is exterminated because Schreber thinks there is someone who is against him. . . . Schreber is left as the sole survivor because this is what he himself wants. He wants to be the only man left alive, standing in an immense field of corpses; and he wants this field of corpses to contain all men but himself. It is not only as a paranoiac that he reveals himself here. To be the last man to remain alive is the deepest urge of every seeker after power. . . . Once he feels himself threatened his passionate desire to see *everyone* lying dead before him can scarcely be mastered by his reason.

Because of this shared psychic disposition, because the paranoid and the totalitarian leader are both caught up in the same drive for power—and for Canetti, power is the ultimate object of the drives—he concludes that a "madman, helpless, outcast and despised, who drags out a twilight existence in some asylum, may, through the insights he procures us, prove more important than Hitler or Napoleon, illuminating for mankind its [i.e., power's] curse and its masters."[3]

Although far more sympathetic to the ambiguously transgressive dimensions of Schreber's delusions, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari ultimately second Canetti's reading of Schreber's text as a storehouse of protofascist fantasies and fantasy structures. Referring to Canetti's work, they characterize the paranoid type as someone who "engineers masses," as the "artist of the large molar aggregates . . . the phenomena of organized crowds." And regarding the 1902 decision of the Saxon Supreme Court—the very court on which Schreber had served as presiding judge—to rescind his incompetency ruling, they suggest that the decision might have gone differently for the former colleague "if in his delirium he had not displayed a taste for the socius of an already fascisizing libidinal investment" or, as they put it, "if he had taken himself for a black or Jew rather than a pure Aryan."[4] There will be much to say about Schreber's imaginary identifications, one of which happens to be with the Wandering Jew; for now, suffice it to say that these commentators on Schreber establish a powerful link between the *Memoirs* and some of the core features and obsessions of National Socialism.

A somewhat different approach to the larger political implications of the Schreber material and its ultimate relevance for the study of German fascism was broached by the American psychoanalyst William Niederland who, beginning in the 1950s, focused on the importance of Schreber's father, Daniel Moritz Schreber, in his son's mental illness. According to Niederland, Moritz Schreber, an ambitious physician, author, and promoter of exercise and physical fitness, chronically traumatized his son by a series of aggressive orthopedic and pedagogical interventions and controls. Schreber's paranoia was, Niederland suggested, the monstrous product of a monstrous medicopedagogical project, the delusional elaboration of years of real and systematic child abuse experienced at the hands of a domineering and medically trained paterfamilias.[5] These views were amplified and popularized in the early 1970s by Morton Schatzman, who, combining Niederland's findings and Canetti's speculations on power, proposed a direct link between the "micro-social despotism in the Schreber family and the macro-social despotism of Nazi Germany." Schatzman claimed that "Hitler and his peers were raised when Dr. Schreber's books, preaching household totalitarianism, were popular," and added that "anyone who wishes to understand German 'character structure' in the Nazi era could profitably study Dr. Schreber's books."[6]

Although my interpretation of the Schreber case differs in a number of crucial ways from the particular views proposed by these writers, I remain indebted to their intuition as to the profound connections between the Schreber material and the social and political fantasies at work in Nazism, fantasies endowing Nazism with the status of a perverse political religion. The wager of this book is that the series of crises precipitating Schreber's breakdown, which he attempted to master within the delusional medium of what I call his "own private Germany," were largely the same crises of modernity for which the Nazis would elaborate their own series of radical and ostensibly "final" solutions. I am, in a word, convinced that Schreber's breakdown and efforts at self-healing introduced him into the deepest structural layers of the historical impasses and conflicts that would provisionally culminate in the Nazi catastrophe. In contrast to Canetti, however, my question will ultimately be not how Schreber's delusional system prefigured the totalitarian solution to the crises already afflicting the bourgeois-liberal order at the turn of the century, but rather how Schreber, who no doubt experienced the hollowing out of that order in a profound way, managed to avoid, by way of his own series of aberrant identifications, the totalitarian temptation.

My hypothesis is that these impasses and conflicts pertain to shifts in the fundamental matrix of the individual's relation to social and institutional authority, to the ways he or she is addressed by and responds to the calls of "official" power and authority. These calls are largely calls to order, rites and procedures of *symbolic investiture* whereby an individual is endowed with a new social status, is filled with a symbolic mandate that henceforth informs his or her identity in the community. The social and political stability of a society as well as the psychological "health" of its members would appear to be correlated to the efficacy of these symbolic operations—to what we might call their *performative magic*—whereby individuals "become who they are," assume the social essence assigned to them by way of names, titles, degrees, posts, honors, and the like. We cross the threshold of modernity when the attenuation of these performatively effectuated social bonds becomes chronic, when they are no longer capable of seizing the subject in his or her self-understanding. The surprise offered by the analysis of paranoia—which, as shall become clear, bears important structural relations to *hysteria*, the proliferation of which in fin-de-siècle Europe has been much researched—is that an "investiture crisis" has the potential to generate not only feelings of extreme alienation, anomie, and profound emptiness, anxieties associated with *absence*; one of the central theoretical lessons of the Schreber case is precisely that a generalized attenuation of symbolic power and authority can be experienced as the collapse of social space and the rites of institution into the most intimate core of one's being. The feelings generated thereby are, as we shall see, anxieties not of absence and loss but of overproximity, loss of distance to some obscene and malevolent presence that appears to have a direct hold on one's inner parts. It is, I think, only by way of understanding the nature of this unexpected, historical form of anxiety that one has a chance at understanding the libidinal economy of Nazism, and perhaps of modern and postmodern forms of totalitarian rule more generally.[7]

Toward the end of his *Memoirs*, Schreber writes that his aim is to show the reader that his discoveries about, among other things, the profound connections between the nature of God, the soul, and sexuality "are the fruit of many years' hard thinking and based on experiences of a very special kind not known to other human beings." He adds that "these may not contain the complete truth in all its aspects, but will be incomparably nearer the truth than all that has been thought and written about the subject in the course of thousands of years" (185).[8] In a manner of speaking, I take Schreber seriously when he makes such albeit megalomanaical claims. I believe that he has indeed made genuine discoveries about a variety of important matters, above all about matters pertaining to the theological dimension of political and social authority, to what Clifford Geertz has called the "inherent sacredness of sovereign power." Geertz writes:

> At the political center of any complexly organized society . . . there is both a governing elite and a set of symbolic forms expressing the fact that it is in truth governing. No matter how democratically the members of an elite are chosen . . . or how deeply divided among themselves they may be . . . they justify their existence and order their actions in terms of a collection of stories, ceremonies, insignia, formalities, and appurtenances that they have either inherited or, in more revolutionary situations, invented. It is these—crowns and coronations, limousines and conferences—that mark the center as center and give what goes on there *its aura of being not merely important but in some odd fashion connected with the way the world is built*.[9]

Schreber made his discoveries at the very moment he entered, by way of a symbolic investiture, one of the key centers of power and authority in Wilhelmine Germany, the Saxon Supreme Court. His discoveries were grounded in an intuition that his symptoms were, so to speak, symptomatic, that they were a form of knowledge concerning profound malfunctions in those politicotheological procedures that otherwise sustain the very ontological consistency of what we call the "world." It is my purpose in this essay to unpack and evaluate this knowledge and to indicate the difficult pathways by which Schreber came to possess it.

My work on Schreber has coincided with a disturbing rise of expressions of paranoia in the United States and elsewhere just as new geopolitical arrangements, ideological investments, and shifts of populations and capital come to fill the vacancy left by the end of the cold war. To use Walter Benjamin's phrase, with regard to the question of paranoia and its critical analysis, we find ourselves at a "moment of danger."[10] One of the central fixations of recent paranoid anxieties, at least in the United States, has been the notion of the "new world order." When George Bush invoked that term it signified, first and foremost, the new geopolitical mappings that were to follow from the dissolution of socialist states at the end of the 1980s. It signified, in other words, the end of an era of the extreme paranoia that had dominated the years of the cold war. Paranoia about the "new world order" thus represents something of a paradox; it emerges at precisely that moment when one would expect an easing of paranoid anxieties about dangers emanating from the "evil empire" and its satellites. It now appears that cold war paranoia may have actually played the role of a collective psychological defense mechanism against a far more disturbing pathology that is only now beginning to find public avenues of expression. Nostalgia for the more ordered world of cold war anxieties would appear to be a nostalgia for a paranoia in which the persecutor had a more or less recognizable face and a clear geographical location. Although I make no efforts to forge explicit links between Schreber's "prefascist" paranoia and our own "postfascist" variety, my work is informed by a concern that where there is a culture of paranoia, fascism of one kind or another may not be far behind.[11]

My understanding of Schreber's paranoid universe as well as of the current crises of social, political, and cultural meaning is greatly indebted to Slavoj Žižek's dialectical revisions of the fundamental concepts of psychoanalysis. Few contemporary thinkers have done more to clarify the connections between the "private" domain of psychopathological disturbances and the "public" domain of ideological and political forces and realities. I also owe a large debt of gratitude to a number of other friends, colleagues, students, and institutions. I would like to thank the Cornell University Society for the Humanities for allowing me to try out my ideas about Schreber early on in the project; I am grateful to Jonathan Culler, Dominick LaCapra, and the wonderful staff at the society for making my stay there possible, productive, and thoroughly enjoyable. I would especially like to thank the students who took part in my seminar there. Their contributions to my thinking about a number of issues have been substantial. I would also like to thank the members of my seminar on the Schreber material at Princeton University who came in on the project at a much later date. Their involvement in the final formulations of my thoughts on Schreber has been significant. As always, colleagues and friends have helped with criticisms, suggestions, and the inspiration of their own work; special thanks to Diana Fuss, Eduardo Cadava, Stanley Corngold, Barbara Hahn, Hal Foster, Dominick LaCapra, Andreas Huyssen, Steven Beller, Biddy Martin, Mandy Merck, David Bathrick, and especially to fellow "Schreberians" Sander Gilman, Jay Geller, Philippe Despoix, Daniel Boyarin, and Louis Sass. I am particularly grateful to Zvi Lothane for his enormous generosity as the de facto dean of contemporary Schreber studies. I want to thank Mary Murrell for her energy, vision, and humor. My ongoing dialogue with David Schwarz on psychoanalysis, culture, and life in general has, as always, provided sustained intellectual, moral, and emotional nourishment. Finally, thanks to Pamela Pascoe whose love, good cheer, and jargon-free brilliance were crucial to the project and my general sense of psychic equilibrium as I made my way through Daniel Paul Schreber's "own private Germany."

MY OWN PRIVATE GERMANY

INTRODUCTION

I

DANIEL PAUL SCHREBER was born in Leipzig on July 25, 1842, the third of five children born to Daniel Gottlob Moritz Schreber and Pauline Schreber née Haase. The Schreber name is now known in Germany primarily for the small garden plots—*Schrebergärten*—that dot the perimeters of German cities and which were named after Moritz Schreber, whose numerous writings on public health, child rearing, and the benefits of fresh air and exercise inspired the institution of these gardens in the late nineteenth century. More recently, Moritz Schreber has become demonized as the sadistic paterfamilias whose pedagogic practices and orthopedic devices allegedly produced his son's psychotic predisposition. Schreber's older brother committed suicide in 1877; his three sisters all outlived him, though only the oldest, Anna Jung, had any children.

Schreber began to study law in 1860, one year prior to his father's death. After passing the state bar exam, he worked in various legal capacities, which included service in the civil administration of Alsace-Lorraine during the Franco-Prussian War as well as on the federal commission charged with producing the new Civil Code for the Reich. After his marriage to Sabine Behr in 1878, Schreber was appointed *Landgerichtsdirektor* (administrative director) of the District Court in Chemnitz.[1] During the Reichstag elections of 1884, he ran as a candidate of the National Liberal Party (with the support of the Conservative Party). His loss to the socialist Bruno Geiser triggered his first nervous breakdown, which culminated in a six-month stay at the Psychiatric Hospital of Leipzig University under the care of its director, Paul Emil Flechsig. His primary symptom at this time was severe hypochondria, which passed, as Schreber notes in his *Memoirs*, "without any occurrences bordering on the supernatural" (62). After his release from Flechsig's clinic, Schreber occupied various district judgeships in Saxony and appeared to enjoy good health and relative contentment. As he puts it himself, "After recovering from my first illness I spent eight years with my wife, on the whole quite happy ones, rich also in outward honours and marred only from time to time by the repeated disappointment of our hopes of being blessed with children" (63). Schreber is referring here to a series of miscarriages his wife suffered. But things were to take a turn for the worse with his nomination, in June 1893, to the position of *Senatspräsident* or presiding judge of the third chamber of the Supreme Court of Appeals. Under the shadow of this impending appointment, Schreber begins to develop new symptoms, one of which he singles out for its special significance:

> During this time I had several dreams to which I did not then attribute any particular significance, and which I would even today disregard . . . had my experience in the meantime not made me think of the *possibility* at least of their being connected with the contact which had been made with me by divine nerves. I dreamt several times that my former nervous illness had returned. . . . Furthermore, one morning while still in bed (whether still half asleep or already awake I cannot remember), I had a feeling which, thinking about it later when fully awake, struck me as highly peculiar. It was the idea that it really must be rather pleasant to be a woman succumbing to intercourse. (63)

Schreber assumed his post as *Senatspräsident* in October 1893. After an initial and stressful period of adjustment, he begins to experience more severe symptoms of anxiety, above all insomnia: "I started to sleep badly at the very moment when I was able to feel that I had largely mastered the difficulties of settling down in my new office and in my new residence, etc." (64). During his first extreme bout with sleeplessness he experienced "an extraordinary event": "when I could not get to sleep, a recurrent crackling noise in the wall of our bedroom became noticeable at shorter or longer intervals; time and again it woke me as I was about to go to sleep." At the time, Schreber assumed that the noises were caused by a mouse. "But having heard similar noises innumerable times since then, and still hearing them around me every day in daytime and at night, I have come to recognize them as undoubted divine miracles" (64). This was, in a word, the first act in what Schreber would experience as an elaborate and divine conspiracy: "*right from the beginning the more or less definite intention existed to prevent my sleep and later my recovery from the illness resulting from the insomnia for a purpose which cannot at this stage be further specified*" (64; emphasis in original). By November 9—the day before the anniversary of his father's death—his level of anxiety was severe enough to lead to suicide attempts. He consulted Flechsig and was admitted, once again, to the University Clinic where the continuation of his insomnia left him feeling shattered: "I was completely ruled by the idea that there was nothing left for a human being for whom sleep could no longer be procured by all the means of medical art, but to take his life" (66). Several months into this second hospitalization Schreber experienced a further decline in his condition triggered by his wife's four-day visit to her father in Berlin:

> My condition deteriorated so much in these four days that after her return I saw her only once more, and then declared that I could not wish my wife to see me again in the low state into which I had fallen. From then on my wife's visits ceased; when after a long time I did see her again at the window of a room opposite mine, such important changes had meanwhile occurred in my environment and in myself that I no longer considered her a living being, but only thought I saw in her a human form produced by miracle in the manner of the "fleeting-improvised-men" [*flüchtig hingemachte Männer*]. (68)

Schreber notes here the sexual dimension of this turn for the worse: "Decisive for my mental collapse was one particular night; during that night I had a quite unusual number of pollutions (perhaps half a dozen)" (68). It was also at this time that the structure of his paranoia began to take its definitive shape with his psychiatrist at the center of a vast and ultimately divine conspiracy: "From then on appeared the first signs of communication with supernatural powers, particularly that of nerve-contact which Professor Flechsig kept up with me in such a way that he spoke to my nerves without being present in person. From then on I also gained the impression that Professor Flechsig had secret designs against me" (68).

After a brief stay in a private clinic, Schreber was transferred on June 29, 1894, to the Royal Public Asylum at Sonnenstein, where he remained under the care of its director, Guido Weber, until December 20, 1902. In the meanwhile he had been officially declared incompetent, a ruling rescinded only after Schreber had filed his own writ of appeal to the Supreme Court. Among the documents submitted to the court was the text of the *Memoirs*, which Schreber had more or less completed by 1900 based on notes he had kept since 1897. After his release from Sonnenstein, Schreber published his *Memoirs* with the Leipzig publishing house Oswald Mutze, known for its promotion of occult and theosophical works.[2]

Upon his release, Schreber lived briefly with his mother and one of his sisters but soon moved with his wife into a newly built house in Dresden above whose entrance they had inscribed the Siegfried motif from Wagner's *Siegfried*. In 1906 the couple adopted a teenage daughter, Fridoline, who later reported that her adoptive father was "more of a mother to me than my mother."[3] He did legal work for the family, including the administration of his mother's bequests upon her death in 1907, took long walks with his daughter, played chess and piano, and continued to be an avid reader (he was comfortably fluent in Latin, Greek, French, English, and Italian). His general well-being was sporadically interrupted by short fits of bellowing, and, though he did not speak much about his illness, his sister reported that the voices that had tormented him for so many years had become a constant, unintelligible noise.[4] Sabine Schreber suffered a stroke in November 1907. Within weeks Schreber was hospitalized for the third and last time, now at the new state asylum in the village of Dösen outside of Leipzig. He remained there until his death on April 14—Good Friday—1911. Among the symptoms reported in his chart are outbursts of laughter and screaming, periods of depressive stupor, suicidal gestures, poor sleep, and delusional ideas of his own decomposition and rotting.[5]

II

Schreber's preoccupation with decomposition is a recurrent, even obsessive theme in the *Memoirs*. At one point, Schreber cites Hamlet's words that "*there is something rotten in Denmark*" (164; emphasis in original) to indicate the extent of the corruption of the normal relationship between God and himself as well as the physical states of decomposition that were among the by-products of that disordered relation. The metaphors Schreber uses to evoke this literal and figurative rottenness strongly resonate with the terms with which a general sense of decay, degeneration, and enervation were registered in fin-de-siècle social and cultural criticism. Max Nordau's famous treatise on decadence in the arts and culture, *Degeneration* [*Entartung*] (1892) helped to establish that term as the central metaphor for the diagnosis of cultural decline up to its fateful appropriation by National Socialist ideologues.[6] Though Nordau, a physician and writer who would become one of Herzl's key allies in the Zionist movement, himself remained committed to a bourgeois faith in progress through knowledge, science, discipline, and strength of will, he was acutely attuned to the signs of that faith's dissolution among his contemporaries, particularly among artists, writers, and intellectuals.

Nordau characterizes the fin-de-siècle mood as "a compound of feverish restlessness and blunted discouragement" culminating in feelings of "imminent perdition and extinction," a sense of the "Dusk of Nations, in which all suns and all stars are gradually waning, and mankind with all its institutions and creations is perishing in the midst of a dying world" (2). Central to Nordau's diagnosis of degeneration is what he characterizes as a condition of perpetual liminality or *interregnum* by which he means a state of cultural fatigue in which symbolic forms, values, titles, and identities have lost their credibility, their capacity to elicit belief, and so structure the life-worlds of individuals and communities:

> There is a sound of rending in every tradition, and it is as though the morrow would not link itself with today. Things as they are totter and plunge, and they are suffered to reel and fall, because man is weary, and there is no faith that it is worth an effort to uphold them. Views that have hitherto governed minds are dead or driven hence like disenthroned kings. . . . Meanwhile interregnum in all its terrors prevails. (5–6)[7]

This general sense of ideological fatigue, which Nordau specifically links to that most famous of fin-de-siècle maladies, hysteria, is, he argues, fostered by the jarring rhythms of technological innovations and their socioeconomic consequences:

> All its [civilized humanity] conditions of life have, in this period of time, experienced a revolution unexampled in the history of the world. Humanity can point to no century in which the inventions which penetrate so deeply, so tyrannically, into the life of every individual are crowded so thick as in ours. . . . In our times . . . steam and electricity have turned the customs of life of every member of the civilized nations upside down. (37)

Because of innovations in information technologies and transport—Nordau is thinking above all of the proliferation of newspapers and the expansion of railway and postal networks—"the humblest village inhabitant has today a wider geographical horizon, more numerous and complex intellectual interests, than the prime minister of a petty, or even a second-rate state a century ago" (39). By reading even a provincial newspaper, "he takes part . . . by a continuous and receptive curiosity, in the thousand events which take place in all parts of the globe" (39). Nordau's conclusions from these observations are representative of a widespread nineteenth-century tendency to transpose the terms pertaining to social and cultural crisis into a scientific and medical idiom: "All these activities, however, even the simplest, involve an effort of the nervous system and a wearing of tissue" (39). Equally typical of the late nineteenth century are Nordau's fears that the demands placed on the human organism by the accelerated rates of social change, the chronic shocks of urban life, and the labor requirements of a rapidly industrializing society will deplete its reserves of energy: "This enormous increase in organic expenditure has not, and cannot have, a corresponding increase in supply" (39).[8]

Anson Rabinbach has analyzed the nineteenth-century preoccupation with fatigue and enervation in light of the discovery, in the middle of the nineteenth century, of the second law of thermodynamics—the law of entropy—which drastically undermined the optimism inspired by the first law, that of the conservation of energy elaborated by Hermann von Helmholtz in 1847. The prospect of the wasting away of human energy and labor power generated not only anxieties of decline and even cosmic death, but also a new social ethic of energy conservation and a proliferation of research programs geared to maximize the productivity of the "human motor" and to minimize "the body's stubborn subversion of modernity."[9] Most important, the localization of the social dislocations that characterize modernity in the *body* and its relative states of vitality or degeneration opened the prospect of a scientific and medical analysis and, possibly, mastery of otherwise diffuse social, political, and cultural disorientations. Recalling Nordau's emphasis on the dissolution of symbolic identities, it was as if scientific and medical knowledge could become the source of a renewed sense of social and cultural location, a sense of certainty as to one's place in a symbolic network.

The lack of such certainty and strength of will and purpose that flows from it is seen by Nordau as part and parcel of a sort of generalized attention deficit disorder, for, as he puts it, "culture and command over the powers of nature are solely the result of attention" (55). The attenuation of mental focus and attention results in an overexposure of the mind to stimulation from *within*, from the forces of the unconscious: "Untended and unrestrained by attention, the brain activity of the degenerate and hysterical is capricious, and without aim or purpose. Through the unrestricted play of association representations are called into consciousness, and are free to run riot there" (56). Such morbid overstimulation can in turn produce an intense "feeling of voluptuousness," a state of bliss mixed with pain which Nordau links to "extraordinary decompositions in a nerve-cell" (63).

In the nineteenth century, jouissance and the decomposition of cell tissue were, of course, already strongly linked through widespread fears about venereal disease, especially syphilis. In the fin-de-siècle imagination, the venereal peril, which was linked above all to the practice of prostitution, called forth a veritable phantasmagoria of bodies in various states of decay and rot, as well as the prospect of dementia and enfeebled progeny.[10] But as with all sexual ailments, syphilis was a highly overdetermined disease formation, absorbing a wide array of social anxieties and cultural meanings. In an article on "Nervousness and Neurasthenic States" (1895), the leading German sexologist, Richard von Krafft-Ebing, evokes syphilitic contamination as the culmination and condensation of nearly all the social, cultural, and physiological deformations thought under the term "degeneration" at the fin de siècle:

> Countless modern human beings spend their lives not in fresh air, but in gloomy workshops, factories, and offices, etc., others in stressful duties which have been imposed on them by steam and electricity, the means

> of transport as well as the driving forces of modern times. However, increased work creates the demand for more of the pleasures of life. The progress of civilization has created a life style with greater needs, and the brain has to pay for the gratification of such needs. . . . One can see them [the human beings in their struggle for existence] in continuous feverish excitement hunting for money, using all their physical and mental powers in the form of railway, post and telegraph. However, such strained nervous systems develop an increased need for consumption and excitement (coffee, tea, alcohol, tobacco). Hand-in-hand with the improved living-conditions of the modern era it has become increasingly difficult to establish a home of one's own: the man of upper social classes might be able to feed a woman but not to clothe her. The consequences are extramarital sexual intercourse—specially in the big cities—, remaining single and late marriages. When such a modern man of business and work eventually gets married at an advanced age, he is decrepit, debauched and often syphilitic; with the modest remains of his virility, in the midst of the haste and exhaustion of his professional life, he fathers only sickly, weakly and nervous children.[11]

In a certain sense, Schreber's *Memoirs* could be seen as an attempt to answer the question implicit in this list of pathologies: *What remains of virility* at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century? No doubt because of Schreber's position as a jurist, his efforts to provide an answer to this question led him beyond the syphilophobia and ergonomic preoccupations of his era to a source of rot much closer to his professional home.

III

In 1921, three years after he found a copy of Schreber's "famous *Denkwürdigkeiten eines Nervenkranken*" in a secondhand bookstore, Walter Benjamin wrote an essay that, although addressing issues seemingly far afield from what he would later recall as the salient features of Schreber's text, nonetheless takes us into the heart of the latter's preoccupations with decay.[12] The essay, "Zur Kritik der Gewalt" (Critique of violence), has remained, because of its ominous ambiguities regarding "divine" force and violence, one of the more problematic texts in Benjamin's corpus.[13]

At the center of Benjamin's reflections is a meditation on a certain self-referentiality of law and legal institutions, which, Benjamin suggest, manifests itself most forcefully in the death penalty. He writes that "in the exercise of violence over life and death more than in any other legal act, *law reaffirms itself*. But in this very violence *something* *rotten in law* [*etwas Morsches im Recht*] is revealed."[14] What manifests itself as the law's inner decay is the fact that rule of law is, in the final analysis, without ultimate justification or legitimation, that the very space of juridical reason within which the rule of law obtains is established and sustained by a dimension of force and violence that, as it were, holds the place of those missing foundations. At its foundation, the rule of law is sustained not by reason alone but also by the force/violence of a tautologous enunciation—"The law is the law!"—which is for Benjamin the source of a chronic institutional disequilibrium and degeneration.[15]

Benjamin distinguishes two aspects of this "outlaw" dimension of law: law-making violence (*rechtsetzende Gewalt*) and law-preserving violence (*rechtserhaltende Gewalt*). The former refers to the series of acts that first posits the boundary between what will count as lawful and unlawful, the latter to those acts which serve to maintain and regulate the borders between lawful and unlawful acts once they have been established. Benjamin devotes some remarkable passages to the role of the police in the modern state because they, not unlike the institution of the death penalty, represent a "kind of spectral mixture" of these two forms of violence and thus mark "the point at which the state, whether from impotence or because of the immanent connections within any legal system, *can no longer guarantee through the legal system* the empirical ends that it desires at any price to attain." The police is for Benjamin the site where the extralegal violence on which the rule of law is structurally dependent is most clearly manifest. In his evocation of the quasi-demonic aspect of the police, Benjamin does not shy away from a rhetoric one would be tempted to call paranoid: "Its power is formless, like its nowhere tangible, all-pervasive, ghostly presence in the life of civilized states." He concludes by suggesting that in democratic societies, where the constitutive role of law-making and law-preserving violence is most fervently disavowed, the open secret of sanctioned police violence can be especially unnerving:

> And though the police may, in particulars, everywhere appear the same, it cannot finally be denied that their spirit is less devastating where they represent, in absolute monarchy, the power of a ruler in which legislative and executive supremacy are united, than in democracies where their existence, elevated by no such relation, bears witness to the greatest conceivable degeneration of violence.[16]

As Jacques Derrida has emphasized in a fine commentary on Benjamin's essay, the extralegal dimension of force that it was Benjamin's concern to lay bare to postwar and postrevolution Weimar parliamentarians can be subsumed under a more general notion of the performative structure of speech acts.[17] A performative utterance is one that brings about its own propositional content, that establishes a new social fact in the world by virtue of its being enunciated in a specific social context, as when, for example, a judge or priest pronounces a couple "husband and wife." Performative utterances are, as a rule, enchained or nested in sets of relations with "lower" levels of performatives that set the stage for their felicitous functioning. Before a judge can perform a marriage ceremony, for example, his effectivity as a social agent must first be established, his symbolic power and authority must first be transferred to him by other performatives that pronounce him "judge." Benjamin's claim is that at a certain point this chain of transferences bottoms out, encounters a missing link at the origin of the symbolic capital circulating through it.[18] To those of a "finer sensibility," this missing link is, however, *everywhere* present as, precisely, "something rotten in law."[19] It is, Benjamin suggests, this missing link pertaining to the emergence of institutions that *drives* the symbolic machinery of the law—for Benjamin, the paradigmatic institution—and infuses it with an element of violence and compulsion. Although he does not evoke the psychoanalytic theory of the drives, Derrida's particular contribution to our understanding of Benjamin's "Critique of Violence," and the "mystical foundation of authority" more generally, is his insistence on the link between performativity and the compulsion to repeat:

> It belongs to the structure of fundamental violence that it calls for the repetition of itself and founds what ought to be conserved, conservable, promised to heritage and tradition. . . . A foundation is a promise. Every position . . . permits and promises. . . . And even if a promise is not kept in fact, iterability inscribes the promise as guard in the most irruptive instant of foundation. Thus it inscribes the possibility of repetition at the heart of the originary. . . . Position is already iterability, a call for self-conserving repetition.[20]

When, in other words, one is "pronounced" husband, wife, professor, *Senatspräsident*, one is invested with a symbolic mandate, which in turn compels a regulated series of social performances, rituals, behaviors that corresponds to that symbolic position in the community, that "iterates" and thereby certifies the originary performative establishing the change in one's status.

This peculiar combination of performativity, repetition, and force intrinsic not only to the efficacy of law, which it was Benjamin's concern to reveal, but to the "magical" operation of all rites of institution and their procedures of symbolic investiture has been explored in great detail by the noted sociologist of symbolic power, Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu has emphasized the imperative and, indeed, coercive, nature of acts of symbolic investiture, acts such as of the call issued by the Ministry of Justice to Daniel Paul Schreber in 1893 nominating him to the position of *Senatspräsident*. Official acts of interpellation, which, as Bourdieu notes, must be undergirded by "incessant calls to order" once the new social identity has been assumed, function in the manner of an act of fate:

> "Become what you are": that is the principle behind the performative magic of all acts of institution. The essence assigned through naming and investiture is, literally, a *fatum*. . . . All social destinies, positive or negative, by consecration or stigma, are equally *fatal*—by which I mean mortal—because they enclose those whom they characterize within the limits that are assigned to them and that they are made to recognize.[21]

The (repetitive) demand to live in conformity with the social essence with which one has been invested, and thus *to stay on the proper side of a socially consecrated boundary*, is one that is addressed not only or even primarily to the mind or intellect, but to the body. The naturalization of a symbolic identity, its incorporation in the form of a habitus, is, as Bourdieu emphasizes, a process involving ascetic practices, training, even physical suffering: "All groups entrust the body, treated like a kind of memory, with their most precious possessions."[22] In light of this dimension of corporeal mnemotechnics pertaining to symbolic identity and function, it may then be in a more than metaphorical sense that, as Bourdieu puts it, "elites are destined to '*waste away*' when they cease to believe in themselves, when they . . . begin to cross the line in the wrong direction."[23] It might, of course, be said that the crucial lesson of Benjamin's "Critique of Violence" is that this process of internal decomposition afflicting elites in crisis is, in fact, the *normal* state of things, which is then only more or less successfully disavowed, more or less successfully repressed into the unconscious. It will be my argument in this book that Schreber's *Memoirs* tells the unnerving story of a massive return of this repressed knowledge.

IV

Although Benjamin's passionate engagement with the work of Franz Kafka was to begin later, his reflections on what is rotten in law suggests why he would come to feel such a powerful affinity for the work of the Prague writer. Kafka's prose is largely a meditation on communities in chronic states of crisis, communities in which the force of social laws no longer stands in any relation to the meaningfulness of their content and the traditions from which they derive. No doubt the most explicit statement of this disproportion in Kafka's oeuvre is the interpretation offered by the priest apropos of the famous parable of the law in *The Trial*. At the end of their long exchange about the possible meanings of the relation between the doorkeeper and the man from the country seeking access to the Law, Josef K. expresses perplexed disagreement with the priest's point of view:

> "for if one accepts it, one must accept as true everything the doorkeeper says. But you yourself have sufficiently proved how impossible it is to do that." "No," said the priest, "it is not necessary to accept everything as true, one must only accept it as necessary." "A melancholy conclusion," said K. "It turns lying into a universal principle."[24]

Among the paradoxical features of Kafka's universe is that this surplus of necessity over truth endowing institutional authority (and its various representatives) with a dimension of obscene inscrutability is, in Kafka's texts, often linked to impotence, inconsistency, and debility on the part of that very authority. In his remarkable politicotheological allegory, "The Great Wall of China," for example, Kafka's narrator, a participant in the great national project as well as amateur historian and political theorist, produces the following surprising assessment of the empire: "Now one of the most obscure of our institutions is that of the empire itself. In Peking, naturally, at the imperial court, there is some clarity to be found on this subject, though even that is more illusive than real." At the lower levels of the educational hierarchy, what remains are "a few precepts which, though they have lost nothing of their eternal truth, remain eternally invisible in this fog of confusion."[25] Correlative to this confusion is the precarious status of the emperor himself whose very existence is shrouded in uncertainty and who, when he is imagined at all, is on his deathbed sending final missives that can never arrive at their destination.

This same admixture of inconsistency, weakness, and "law-making violence" also informs the narrative of one of Kafka's most famous short prose texts, "In the Penal Colony," where the letter of every law that has been transgressed is inscribed on the body of the transgressor, radicalizing and literalizing with grotesque brutality the mnemotechnics alluded to by Bourdieu. The debility of authority is here indicated by numerous details, from the displacement of the previous Commandant by one unfriendly to the penal apparatus, to the unreadability of the old Commandant's notations, to the impossible complexity and ultimate breakdown of the apparatus itself. We will return to Kafka in the course of this study; indeed, we will be approaching Schreber's universe as if it were the obverse of Kafka's. It is a world equally exposed to something rotten in law, but that exposure takes place from the opposite side—from the side of the judge rather than that of the supplicant to the law.

V

Before closing this series of literary historical digressions, we must briefly recall the figure whose writings about symbolic authority and power no doubt strongly influenced both Kafka and Benjamin: Schreber's Saxon contemporary, Friedrich Nietzsche.[26] In this context, one need only glance at a few key passages from *On the Genealogy of Morals*, published in 1887, to get a sense of the literary "genealogy" of Kafka's and Benjamin's thought regarding what is rotten in law. Consider the following remarks on what Benjamin later termed "law-making violence":

> The most decisive act, however, that the supreme power performs . . . is the institution of *law*, the imperative declaration of what in general counts as permitted, as just, in its eyes, and what counts as forbidden, as unjust: once it has instituted the law, it treats violence and capricious acts on the part of individuals or entire groups as offenses against the law, as rebellion against the supreme power itself. . . . "Just" and "unjust" exist, accordingly, only after the institution of the law. . . . To speak of just or unjust *in itself* is quite senseless.[27]

Indeed, Nietzsche goes on to make the paradoxical claim that true states of emergency or exception (*Ausnahme-Zustände*) are inaugurated by the legal order itself rather than by any criminal act committed against it.[28] For Nietzsche, the state of emergency is where the performative magic that animates all rites of institution is at its highest potency: at the moment of *emergence* of a new order of institutional conditions or interpretations. Nietzsche's name for this performativity was, of course, *will to power*, and his radical conclusion from the omnipresence of its effects was a view of history as a nonteleological series of ruptures and usurpations:

> there is for historiography of any kind no more important proposition than the one it took such effort to establish but which really *ought to be* established now: the cause of the origin of a thing and its eventual utility, its actual employment and place in a system of purposes, lie worlds apart, whatever exists, having somehow come into being, is again and again reinterpreted to new ends, taken over, transformed, and redirected by some power superior to it; all events in the organic world are . . . *becoming master*, and all . . . becoming master involves fresh interpretation. . . . [P]urposes and utilities are only *signs* that a will to power has become master of something less powerful and imposed upon it the character of a function; and the entire history of a "thing," an organ, a custom can in

> this way be a continuous sign-chain of ever new interpretations and adaptations. . . . The "evolution" of a thing, a custom, an organ is thus by no means its *progressus* toward a goal, even less a logical *progressus* by the shortest route and with the least expenditure of force—but a succession of more or less profound, more or less mutually independent processes of subduing, plus the resistances they encounter, the attempts at transformation for the purposes of defense and reaction, and the results of successful counteractions. The form is fluid, but the "meaning" is even more so.[29]

Nietzsche's work has long been recognized as a radical and potent critique of the faith in progress that formed such an essential part of the Enlightenment legacy and bourgeois ideology in the late nineteenth century, particularly in Wilhelmine Germany during the postunification boom years. What has been less appreciated, with regard to the *Genealogy* in particular, is its relation to debates concerning the legal culture of the new Reich. When read against the background of the debates surrounding the unification and codification of law in the new state, Nietzsche's work takes on an added dimension of historical urgency.

The debates about legal codification in Germany, which extended from the beginning of work on the new Civil Code in 1874 to its completion in 1896, was one of the key sites where German society confronted the radical social changes associated with modernization and state formation as well as the shifting meanings of national identity in a period of cultural turbulence and contestation. The codification of a unified law of the Reich would have to come to terms not only with strong differences and conflicts between the heterogeneous legal codes and interests of the various German states and regions, but also with the needs and interests of new social constituencies whose contours were taking shape in the waves of industrialization and urbanization that dominated the last decades of the nineteenth century. Of considerable importance in the debates about codification was the question of the social and political neutrality of the law, one of the basic tenets of the reigning Pandectist School, whose logical and systematic approach to legal questions was termed "conceptual jurisprudence" (*Begriffsjurisprudenz*).

Following Savigny's idealization of Roman law, the adherents to this positivist approach concerned themselves above all with highly technical aspects of legal interpretation and systematization in ostensible abstraction from questions of moral, social, or political justification. In the context of the debates on the Civil Code, they sought to restrict the degree of legislative "creativity" to be allowed the code; those who favored more creativity hoped that the code might thereby be adapted to the needs of a rapidly changing society. The effect of these debates concerning the role of legislative will in the codification of law was to force into the open the moral, social, and political commitments behind the supposed neutrality of the legal positivists; they exposed, so to speak, the degree of "law-making violence" behind the neutral face of conceptual jurisprudence. As Michael John has put it, "the fundamental norms from which conceptual jurisprudence attempted to deduce the details of the legal system involved value judgments with an obvious social and political relevance. To Savigny and his followers, the private legal order was composed of individual legal subjects whose wills operated within spheres of private autonomy."[30] Legal positivism's blend of principles, derived from Roman law and Kant, produced a legal philosophy that emphasized, in the realms of contract and property law, the free exercise of individual choice by autonomous legal subjects, a philosophy suited above all to property owners and entrepreneurs. Thus, as John notes, the "pursuit of legal certainty on the basis of individual freedoms came to seem a defence of the class interests of a narrow band of property-owners at the expense of the broader interests of the nation as a whole," and notes that "once the draft code was published in 1888 and subjected to public criticism, the social and political neutrality of conceptual jurisprudence could no longer be sustained."[31] The debate between the positivists and their various critics from the right and the left was thus not one between a "pure" and fundamentally "conceptual" jurisprudence, on the one hand, and one stained by sectional interests, on the other, but rather a debate between different conceptions of the society; it was, in a word, a *social* antagonism and not merely a legal-philosophical one.[32] And it was, I think, one of Nietzsche's fundamental insights that such social antagonisms bring out into the open what is normally repressed, namely that the texture of social reality is always at least in part constituted by a play of wills and forces whose outcome has a great deal more to do with compulsion and necessity than with truth. We might say, then, that at moments of heightened social antagonism, what is "rotten in law" begins to leak through from its normally circumscribed spaces. It was at such a moment that Daniel Paul Schreber underwent his symbolic investiture as *Senatspräsident* of the Supreme Court of Saxony.

The following chapters take up different aspects of the crisis inaugurated by this investiture and different features of the delusional world it "opened" for Schreber. I call this world Schreber's "own private Germany" because of his profound attunement to the exemplarity of the crisis he was undergoing, its resonances with the larger social and cultural crises of his era. The first chapter introduces the basic structure of Schreber's fantasy space by way of a commentary on Freud's famous interpretation of the material. The decision to begin with Freud is motivated by several considerations. First, because of the interpretive force and strong canonical nature of Freud's case study, Schreber is always, at some level, still *Freud's* Schreber; after Freud, one cannot read Schreber except in some sort of dialogue with Freud, however agonistic that dialogue might be. (As we shall see, the question of influence anxiety powerfully informs Freud's own reading of Schreber's anxieties about overexposure to malevolent influences.) Furthermore, Freud's interpretation of Schreber's breakdown as an instance of homosexual panic has become newly resonant in the field of gay and lesbian studies, thereby increasing the importance of Freud's reading of Schreber for a more general understanding of the cultural meanings of "aberrant" sexualities.[33] Finally, Freud's study of the Schreber material was conducted at a moment in the history of psychoanalysis when the symbolic authority of that new institution was being strongly contested from within the ranks as well as from without—at a moment of institutional stress that, I will argue, made Freud particularly sensitive to the nature of Schreber's investiture crisis even though Freud never explicitly addressed it. This chapter thus raises in a provisional way the question of the relation between a crisis in the domain of symbolic authority and the production of "deviant" sexualities and gender identities.

The second chapter turns to the historical background of Schreber's apparent predisposition to experience his crisis in the culturally resonant terms we find in his *Memoirs*. What was it about Schreber's biography that allowed him to enter so deeply into this "private Germany" and to tell, from the perspective of this fantasy space, a kind of secret history of modernity? In the course of this chapter, I will enter into the debates broached by the work of Niederland and others whose researches raise the question of the role played by Moritz Schreber in his son's psychosis and thus the whole question of childhood abuse and trauma. This will lead to a dialogue with the work of Michel Foucault, whose writings on institutional power and the history of sexuality will help to situate the discussion of Moritz Schreber's role (as well as of the pathogenic influences of Schreber's psychiatrists) within a larger history of post-Enlightenment transformations of symbolic power and authority.

The final chapter addresses in detail the cultural meanings of two of Schreber's core delusions: his slow metamorphosis into a woman—a process he was compelled to support through transvestitism—and his merging with the figure of the Wandering Jew. What was the historical background of this nexus of identificatory mutations? What cultural landscape did Schreber have to traverse to arrive at his perverse destination of unmanned Wandering Jew? All of these questions are motivated by a hope that by, so to speak, taking after him along his path, by traversing with him the space of his own private Germany, one has also, if only in the most modest and provisional of ways, entered into the process of working through the very totalitarian temptation that so many Germans after Schreber were unable to resist.

ONE

FREUD, SCHREBER, AND THE PASSIONS OF PSYCHOANALYSIS

I

PSYCHOANALYSTS have long known about the transferential dimension of literary production, about the ways in which texts provide opportunities for their writers to act out or, ideally, work through, some of the very issues animating the subject matter of the text. This insight applies as much to the texts produced by psychoanalysts as by any other group of writers. And, indeed, Sigmund Freud, who founded psychoanalysis to a large extent on the basis of his own self-analysis, was profoundly aware of this transferential dimension of his own literary production. As it turns out, with regard to the text of concern to us here, his study of Daniel Paul Schreber—"Psychoanalytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia (Dementia Paranoides)"[1]—Freud left a detailed record of the transferential dynamic informing its composition. A brief look at this record will allow us to appreciate better what we might call the passions of psychoanalysis, namely, the deeper motives and motivations animating its choices of subjects. Among the things that made Schreber matter to Freud, that made his *Memoirs* a subject matter worthy of a major study based exclusively on a reading of that text, was, it appears, Freud's own defensive struggles with what he would come to see as Schreber's core issue: homosexuality.

According to letters written around the composition of the Schreber essay, Freud was still very much engaged with bringing to emotional closure his homosexually charged relation with Wilhelm Fliess, who, it seems, was able to find new and troubling incarnations in various members of Freud's inner circle. On October 6, 1910, for example, Freud wrote to Ferenczi, who had accompanied him to Italy the previous summer while he was at work on the Schreber material, that this work had helped him to overcome much of his own homosexual inclinations: "since the case of Fliess, with whose overcoming you just saw me occupied, this need has died out in me. A piece of homosexual charge has been withdrawn and utilized for the enlargement of my own ego. I have succeeded where the paranoiac fails." Several months later, in another letter to Ferenczi, Freud widens the circle, as it were, of the paranoid queers with whom he saw himself struggling: "Fliess—you were so curious about that—I have overcome. . . . Adler is a little Fliess redivivus, just as paranoid. Stekel, as appendix to him, is at least named Wilhelm." In an earlier letter to Jung, Freud had already written, "My erstwhile friend Fliess developed a beautiful paranoia after he had disposed of his inclination, certainly not slight, toward me." Finally, in another letter to Jung written during the Italian journey with Ferenczi (and in the midst of the Schreber project), Freud characterized his traveling companion as being excessively passive and receptive toward him: "He has let everything be done for him like a woman, and my homosexuality after all does not go far enough to accept him as one."[2] Peter Gay's conclusion from this series of confessional remarks on Freud's part is fairly typical in the literature on Freud's Schreber essay; it opens up a kind of allegorical reading, one sensitive to traces of Freud's mimetic relation to Schreber, to his own struggle with Schreberian demons:

> Freud's rather manic preoccupation with Schreber hints at some hidden interest driving him on: Fliess. But Freud was not just at the mercy of his memories; he was working well and derived much comic relief from Schreber. . . . Still, Freud's work on Schreber was not untouched by anxiety. He was in the midst of his bruising battle with Adler, which, he told Jung, was taking such a toll "because it has torn open the wounds of the Fliess affair." . . . He blamed his memories of Fliess for interfering with his work on Schreber, but they were also a reason for his intense concentration on the case. To study Schreber was to remember Fliess, but to remember Fliess was also to understand Schreber. . . . Freud used the Schreber case to replay and work through what he called (in friendly deference to Jung, who had invented the term) his "complexes."[3]

Although this provisional reading of Freud's "allegorical" presence in his own text is persuasive, there are a number of details in Freud's essay suggesting a different set of emphases, suggesting that if indeed Freud was struggling with Schreberian demons, we may have to rethink their nature, reimagine the "closet" from which they emerged. I am thinking, for example, of Freud's surprising protestation, enunciated toward the end of his essay, concerning the originality of the views presented there. Freud remarks that certain details of Schreber's delusions "sound almost like endopsychic perceptions of the processes whose existence I have assumed in these pages as the basis of our explanation of paranoia." Apparently concerned by Schreber's analytic prescience, he goes on to reassure the reader that he has at least one witness who can testify "that I had developed my theory of paranoia *before* I became acquainted with the contents of Schreber's book" (*SE* 12:79; my emphasis).[4]

What are we to make of this "masculine protest"—to use the Adlerian term Freud will himself employ in his reading of Schreber—pertaining to possible doubts about the originality of his insights? To anticipate Freud's reading further, we might say that this protest translates a proposition, or rather the negation of one; it is *not* the case, Freud is claiming, that "I, a scientist, plagiarized a dement." Against the backdrop of this protest, the anxious irony of Freud's further remark becomes more palpable; he writes that it "remains for the future to decide whether there is more delusion in my theory than I should like to admit, or whether there is more truth in Schreber's delusion than other people are as yet prepared to believe" (*SE* 12:79). What is particularly striking about Freud's somewhat anxious claim not to be, as it were, one of Schreber's epigones—indeed, very early in his essay Freud remarks that one could almost suspect Schreber of being a disciple of the psychoanalytic school[5]—is that this anxiety is uncannily reminiscent of one of the central themes of Schreber's psychotic fantasies, namely a confusion about and concern with the originality of his own thoughts, thought processes, and language. Freud appears, in other words, to exhibit apprehensions about Schreber not unlike those which Schreber had experienced with regard to the maleficent forces assaulting his soul and body, the theological systematization of which makes up the bulk of his *Memoirs*. Both Schreber and Freud, it would appear, are, albeit with quite different degrees of intensity, concerned that they might only be repeating, might only be parroting back, thoughts, words, and phrases originating elsewhere. If there is indeed a transferential dimension to Freud's passionate involvement with the Schreber material, then it concerns not only matters of same-sex passion but also questions of originality and influence, questions pertaining to the transfer of knowledge and authority in the very domain that Freud was staking out as his own.[6]

II

The extent and intensity of Freud's influence anxieties during his work on Schreber become increasingly evident over the course of his essay. I have already noted that Freud explicitly and uneasily refers to parallels between Schreber's mystical visions and the theory of libido, which at this time formed the centerpiece of Freud's conception of psychic functioning. Alluding to Schreber's notion of nerves and rays as those substantial emanations making possible not only contact between the living and the dead, God and mortals, but also the phenomenon of "soul murder," which, as we shall see, suggests a traumatic experience of interpersonal influence at the hands of a powerful and trusted figure of authority, Freud remarks, "Schreber's 'rays of God,' which are made up of a condensation of the sun's rays, of nerve-fibers, and of spermatozoa, are in reality nothing else than a concrete representation and projection outwards of libidinal cathexes; and they thus lend his delusions a striking conformity with our theory" (*SE* 12:78).[7] In the course of his interpretation of Schreber's unwitting contribution to psychoanalytic theory, a contribution that produced for Freud no small degree of what I have called, following Bloom, anxiety of influence, Freud alludes to the work of colleagues who have helped him to come to the views presented in the text.[8] He notes, for example, at the beginning of the second part of his essay, that C. G. Jung had already made a pathbreaking contribution to the study of dementia praecox.[9] In the context of Schreber's preoccupation with rays and emanations as the materializations of potentially excessive and dangerous influences, it is interesting to note Freud's language in referring to Jung's priority in the study of the psychoses. He speaks of Jung's "brilliant example" (*SE* 12:35)—"das glänzende Beispiel"—of interpretation performed several years earlier on what Freud characterizes as a far more severe case of dementia than Schreber's. What Freud, however, does not mention is the fact that Jung also discusses Schreber in the book praised by Freud. It is also very likely that it was Jung who first brought Schreber to Freud's attention.[10]

Immediately after his reference to Jung's "brilliant" or "dazzling" example of interpretation, Freud goes on to discuss a hermeneutic principle intrinsic to psychoanalytic modes of interpretation according to which the usual hierarchical relation of principle and example is reversed. In psychoanalysis, Freud suggests, the example enjoys a paradoxical priority over the principle it would only seem to serve as illustration, and this reversal of priority extends to citations, glosses, and footnotes, which, as any reader of Schreber knows, play a rather large role in his text. Regarding the excess of such only apparently ancillary material in the Schreber memoir, Freud advises that "we have only to follow our usual psycho-analytic technique . . . to take his example as being the actual thing, or his quotation or gloss as being the original source—and we find ourselves in possession of what we are looking for, namely a translation of the paranoic mode of expression into the normal one" (*SE* 12:35).[11] Not surprisingly then, Freud's own footnotes turn out to be a key locus of what I have characterized as the allegorical dimension of the essay—a site where Freud stages some of his own defensive maneuvers against influences that would compromise the originality and integrity of his own authorial voice.

Toward the end of his essay, Freud remarks in a footnote that Karl Abraham's short paper, "Die psychosexuellen Differenzen der Hysterie und der Dementia praecox," published in 1908, "contains almost all the essential views put forward in the present study of the case of Schreber" (*SE* 12:70).[12] Freud had, in fact, already noted his debt to Abraham's exemplary paper earlier, upon first introducing the notion of transference into his account. This earlier footnote effects, however, a curious reversal of priority and indebtedness with regard to Abraham: "In the course of this paper its author, referring to a correspondence between us, scrupulously attributes to myself an influence upon the development of his views" (*SE* 12:41). Influence anxiety on Freud's part is made unnecessary by Abraham's deference to him; if, indeed, the essential views put forward by Freud in his Schreber essay were prefigured in Abraham's earlier work, this turns out to be the result of Freud's own seminal influence on Abraham. An intellectual debt is, thanks to a citation of thanks, converted into more authorial capital.

Freud's admiration for such a scrupulous attribution of influence did not prevent curious lapses in his own practice of paying intellectual debts. I have already noted that despite his homage to Jung's exemplary work in the analysis of the psychoses he failed to indicate that it was Jung who alerted him to the Schreber memoir in the first place. In the final section of his essay, Freud thanks Jung (and Ferenczi) yet again for providing crucial case material to support his hunch that paranoia is as a rule generated by a quasi-natural homophobia: "we [Freud, Jung, and Ferenczi] were astonished to find that in all of these cases a defence against a homosexual wish was clearly recognizable at the very centre of the conflict which underlay the disease, and that it was in an attempt to master an unconsciously reinforced current of homosexuality that they had all of them come to grief" (*SE* 12:59). At this point, Freud adds a footnote in which he refers the reader to Alphonse Maeder's analysis of a paranoid patient, "Psychologische Untersuchungen an Dementia praecox–Kranken," published in August 1910 in the *Jahrbuch für psychoanalytische und psychopathologische Forschungen*, in which, as it happens, an article of Freud's had also appeared.[13] In his citation of the paper, Freud expresses regret that his Schreber essay "was completed before I had the opportunity of reading Maeder's work" (*SE* 12:162). However, as Lothane has pointed out, Freud admitted to Ferenczi in a letter of October 10, 1910, that he had indeed read Maeder's report.[14]

Yet another instance in which Freud's own contemporary struggle with issues of priority, authority, and influence comes to haunt his essay from the "preconscious" space of the footnotes comes after proposing his crucial thesis that Schreber's second illness was precipitated by a homosexually charged longing for reunion with his psychiatrist, Paul Flechsig. There Freud notes that "This feminine phantasy, which was still kept impersonal, was met at once by an indignant repudiation—a true 'masculine protest,' to use Adler's expression," but, Freud is quick to add, "in a sense different from his" (*SE* 12:42). Freud provides a footnote to this, his own "masculine protest" against Adler, in which he elaborates that "According to Adler the masculine protest has a share in the production of the symptom, whereas in the present instance the patient is protesting against a symptom that is already fully fledged" (*SE* 12:42). In this context, one should recall that when Adler presented his views in detail to the members of the Psychoanalytic Society in January and February 1911, Freud had responded quite critically, suggesting that some of Adler's key ideas, including that of "masculine protest," were, in essence, misguided appropriations of his own prior insights and ideas—were examples of, to use Gay's phrase, "spurious, manufactured originality."[15]

This apparent obsession with issues of originality and influence around the composition of the Schreber essay had a particular historical context. These were crucial years in the consolidation of the psychoanalytic movement in the face of increasingly profound internal divisions—the final break with Adler would come in 1911, with Jung two years later—which, of course, only intensified and complicated the ongoing struggle for recognition from the larger scientific and intellectual community. The institution of psychoanalysis was, one could say, in a state of emergency, meaning a state of *emergence*, of coming-into-being, as well as one of *crisis* and endangerment. This was a period during which the founding words and concepts—what we might call, with Schreber, the *Grundsprache* or "basic language" of psychoanalysis—that would establish the shape and intellectual direction of this new and strange science, when the boundaries that would determine the inside and outside of psychoanalytic thought proper, were being hotly and bitterly contested. As I have indicated, these are conditions in which there is, so to speak, maximum exposure to the dimension of "performative magic," which under normal circumstances—or, as Schreber puts it, under conditions consonant with the Order of the World—provides a necessary though unconscious support to symbolic authority of all kinds. It will be my argument in this book that the crucial features of Daniel Paul Schreber's "nervous illness," including the central fantasy of feminization, only become intelligible when seen against the background of the issues and questions generated by such institutional and political states of emergency. Freud's passion for the Schreber material takes on an added dimension of internal "necessity" when set in relation to the anxieties of influence made urgent by the crisis in which the institution of psychoanalysis found itself in the years in which Freud was occupied with the case. Freud's preoccupation with originality indicates, in other words, his profound—and defensive—attunement to the performative force of his colleagues' utterances at a moment of heightened contestation of the fundamental concepts of psychoanalysis.[16]

Now it could be argued that psychoanalysis exhibits an especially strong dependence on the performative magic that contributes to the symbolic authority of institutional speech in general, that allows that speech to effectuate changes in social reality. With the notion of transference, psychoanalysis has, in essence, formally inscribed the dependence on performativity into its very foundations. An analysis or therapy will be effective only if the analysand at some level believes that it will, only if he or she believes that the analyst enjoys a privileged access to the true meaning of his or her words, stories, and symptoms. This transfer of faith and credit to the analyst and his or her power to decode, appreciate, and ultimately to participate in the analysand's message, is crucial to the production of that power in the analyst.[17] To put it somewhat differently, the analyst, like the classical monarch, has two bodies; the analyst's second, call it "sublime" body, is produced—and produces, in turn, analytical and therapeutic effects—to the extent that the analysand posits the analyst as a subject with special knowledge of one's deepest desires and secrets.[18]

The authorization of the analyst's power, his or her accreditation as a privileged subject of the transference in the preceding sense, comes, at least in part, by way of a prior transfer of credit and authority, namely the "consecration" or "investiture" of the analyst by the institution of psychoanalysis itself. As Bourdieu has put it, the efficacy of speech acts performed by delegates of an institution, specifically the ability of these speech acts to effect changes in reality—in this case, in the psychic states of the analysand—depends on the delegate's access to something on the order of a *skeptron*, some embodiment of institutional power that marks its bearer as an authentic representative of the institution:

> It is the access to the legitimate instruments of expression, and therefore the participation in the authority of the institution, which makes *all* the difference—irreducible to discourse as such—between the straightforward imposture of masqueraders, who disguise a performative utter-

> ance as a descriptive or constative statement, and the authorized imposture of those who do the same thing with the authorization of an institution. The spokesperson is an impostor endowed with the *skeptron*.[19]

Whether one is performing the role of psychoanalyst or judge, one's performance must, in other words, be authorized. One cannot invest oneself with the authority to act as analyst or judge, one cannot produce one's own private *skeptron*; it must be transmitted and the transmission must follow a particular and quasi-public procedure.[20] Around the time that Freud was at work on the Schreber case he was himself embroiled in a series of "fiduciary" failures, challenges to his role as the one who passes the *skeptron*, who authorizes the speech of others as that of legitimate representatives of psychoanalysis.

The importance of these reflections becomes obvious when one recalls the specific occasions that triggered Schreber's two breakdowns. Each one involved an experience of a *crisis of symbolic investiture*. The first, still relatively mild breakdown occurred in conjunction with Schreber's failure, in 1884, to win a seat in the Reichstag; the second breakdown, the one that initiated the full-fledged psychosis with its strangely sexualized delusions of wasting away, occurred in the wake of his appointment, in 1893, to one of the highest positions of judicial authority in Saxony. What I have been suggesting in these pages is that Freud's attraction to and passion for the Schreber material was above all a function of his own deep involvement with the "rites of institution" at a moment of significant crisis—one might even say at a moment of "signification crisis"—within the institution of psychoanalysis. With these parallels in mind, I turn now to a detailed commentary on Freud's "Psychoanalytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia (Dementia Paranoides)."[21]

III

Freud's essay is divided into three sections, framed on one side by a brief preface, in which he admits his limited experience with the treatment of the psychoses and justifies his use of a text as the basis of a case study, and on the other by a postscript, in which he briefly suggests possibilities of coordinating his findings in the Schreber case with anthropological studies of myth, ritual, and the religious imagination. The first section offers a presentation of the case history, in which Freud lays out the chronology of Schreber's various illnesses and treatments, discusses salient features of his delusional system, and sketches out some preliminary aspects of an interpretation. In the second section, "Attempts at Interpretation," Freud presents his central thesis regarding the etiology of paranoia as a defense against a sudden and overstimulating influx of homosexual libido. In the third and final part of the essay addressing the "mechanism of paranoia," Freud touches on, among other things, the role of projection in the formation of paranoid symptoms, the radical nature of repression in psychotic disorders and the metapsychological category of narcissism. In the final pages of the essay, Freud also begins to explore, in a preliminary and tentative fashion, the frontiers between libido theory and what would become the psychology of the ego. This final section also enters into debates on nosology, suggesting his own revisions of current diagnostic terminology.

Already in his initial presentation of the case material, culled in large measure from the judgment of the Saxon Supreme Court rescinding Schreber's tutelage and the reports of Dr. Guido Weber, director of the Sonnenstein Asylum where Schreber was confined from June 1894 to December 1902,[22] the general direction of Freud's interpretation begins to take shape. From these documents Freud concludes that the two salient features of Schreber's delusional system are, first, the fantasy of messianic calling, of being chosen by God and the so-called Order of the World to redeem mankind from a condition of cosmic disequilibrium generated in large measure as a consequence of his own nervous agitation; and, second, the imperative to undergo, by way of divine miracles, a process of gender transformation for the purpose of repopulating the world with the issue of his divinely inseminated body. Freud hypothesizes, however, that the fantasy of feminization, which Schreber for the most part refers to as *Entmannung* or "unmanning," is the real core and primary symptom of the psychosis and that the soteriological fantasy arrives only after the fact to endow retroactively a condition of abjection and degradation with sublime meaning and purpose:

> It is natural to follow the medical report in assuming that the motive force of this delusional complex was the patient's ambition to play the part of Redeemer, and that his *emasculation* [*Entmannung*] was only entitled to be regarded as a means for achieving that end. Even though this may appear to be true of his delusion in its final form, a study of the *Denkwürdigkeiten* compels us to take a very different view of the matter. For we learn that the idea of being transformed into a woman (that is, of being emasculated) was the primary delusion, that he began by regarding that act as constituting a serious injury and persecution, and that it only became related to his playing the part of Redeemer in a secondary way. There can be no doubt, moreover, that originally he believed that the transformation was to be effected for the purpose of sexual abuse and not so as to serve

> higher designs. The position may be formulated by saying that a sexual delusion of persecution was later on converted in the patient's mind into a religious delusion of grandeur. The part of persecutor was at first assigned to Professor Flechsig, the physician in whose charge he was; later, his place was taken by God Himself. (*SE* 12:18)[23]

Freud bases this view on the numerous allusions in Schreber's text to the humiliations and abuses to which his transformation into a woman left him exposed. Freud refers, for example, to Schreber's account of Flechsig's machinations in this regard:

> Professor Flechsig had found a way of raising himself up to heaven . . . and so making himself a leader of rays, without prior death and without undergoing the process of purification. In this way a plot was laid against me (perhaps March or April 1894), the purpose of which was to hand me over to another human being after my nervous illness had been recognized as, or assumed to be, incurable, in such a way that my soul was handed to him, but my body—transformed into a female body . . . was then left to that human being for sexual misuse and simply "forsaken," in other words left to rot. (75; cf. *SE* 12:19)

To support his thesis of the priority and initial autonomy of the feminization fantasy further, Freud emphasizes that something on the order of a feminine identification had already surfaced during what he calls the "incubation period" of the second illness. Freud is thinking, of course, of Schreber's remarkable prodromal premonition, experienced just prior to assuming his post at the Saxon Supreme Court, of feminine jouissance: "one morning while still in bed (whether still half asleep or already awake I cannot remember), I had a feeling which, thinking about it later when fully awake, struck me as highly peculiar. It was the idea that it really must be rather pleasant to be a woman succumbing to intercourse" (63; cf. *SE* 12:20). Schreber adds that he "cannot exclude the possibility that some external influences were at work to implant this idea in me" (63), suggesting, in a way, that Freud was more right than he knew when he called this the "incubation period" of the illness: this was Schreber's first encounter with his "incubus." How this incubus was called into being, what forces it figured, by what processes of condensation and displacement it was produced—these are the questions Freud proposes to answer in the course of his case study.

After establishing to his satisfaction the centrality of the feminization fantasy,[24] Freud goes on to characterize the peculiarities of Schreber's relation to God as presented in the *Memoirs*. Absolutely central to this relation is the fact, emphasized by Schreber over and over again, that under conditions consonant with the Order of the World—Schreber's term for something like a cosmological *rule of law*—God does not generally enjoy intimate knowledge of or sustain prolonged contact with living human beings and their affairs. Freud cites a series of passages attesting to this crucial feature of Schreber's universe:

> *A fundamental misunderstanding* obtained however, which has since run like a red thread through my entire life. It is based upon the fact *that, within the Order of the World, God did not really understand the living human being* and had no need to understand him, because, according to the Order of the World, He dealt only with corpses. (75; cf. *SE* 12:25)

In a later passage describing some of the torments he underwent in the course of his illness, Schreber suggests that the apparent purposelessness of much of the suffering he had to endure in his relation to God "must be connected . . . with God not knowing how to treat a living human being, as He was accustomed to dealing only with corpses or at best with human beings lying asleep (dreaming)" (127; cf. *SE* 12:25). And finally, with regard to further episodes of physical and mental suffering, Schreber writes:

> *Incredibile scriptu* I would like to add, and yet everything is really true, however difficult it must be for other people to reconcile themselves to the idea that God is totally incapable of judging a living human being correctly; even I myself became accustomed to this idea only gradually after innumerable observations. (188; cf. *SE* 12:25)

Freud concludes from these passages that "as a result of God's misunderstanding of living men it was possible for Him Himself to become the instigator of the plot against Schreber, to take him for an idiot, and to subject him to these severe ordeals" (*SE* 12:25). Among the ordeals of special interest to Freud were the divine interventions in Schreber's bowel movements, descriptions of which Freud quotes at length, and the so-called *Denkzwang*, Schreber's compulsion to keep his thoughts in a kind of incessant motion so that God would not consider him to be demented and thus worthy of abandonment. For Freud, these characterizations of God's peculiarly flawed omniscience and authority along with Schreber's equally adamant defense of God as a worthy object of worship and reverence, places in the foreground of the analysis Schreber's deep ambivalence with regard to the deity and whatever other agencies or domains of authority he might eventually be seen to represent: "No attempt at explaining Schreber's case will have any chance of being correct which does not take into account these peculiarities in his conception of God, this mixture of reverence and rebelliousness in his attitude towards Him" (*SE* 12:28–29). Before going on to provide a more or less comprehensive explanation of these peculiarities, Freud dwells on a feature of Schreber's relation to God that struck Schreber as being especially paradoxical.

IV

In Schreber's cosmology there obtains a deep affinity or near identity between the state of blessedness or *Seligkeit* that, after a period of purification, awaits the soul after death as it becomes assimilated to the "forecourts of Heaven," and the state of feminine jouissance or female sexual pleasure called by Schreber *weibliche Wollust* and produced in him by overexposure to supernatural influences, ultimately identified as God's penetrating rays. As Freud has noted, at a certain point in his illness, Schreber not only reconciles himself to the process of feminization at first experienced as insulting and injurious, but endows it with soteriological purpose and significance. Part and parcel of this shift in perspective so crucial to Schreber's views on the possibility of his and the world's redemption is a transformation in the moral dimension of his relation to sexual pleasure.[25]

As Freud emphasizes in his presentation of the case material, Schreber considered himself to be a man of distinctly sober if not puritanical and even ascetic habits and attitudes with regard to sensual pleasures of all kinds. At a certain point in the progress of his illness, however, the moral pressure to abstain from such pleasures is transmuted into *a moral duty to enjoy*:

> Few people have been brought up according to such strict moral principles as I, and have throughout life practised such moderation especially in matters of sex, as I venture to claim for myself. Mere low sensuousness can therefore not be considered a motive in my case. . . . But as soon as I am alone with God, if I may so express myself, I must continually or at least at certain times, strive to give divine rays the impression of a woman in the height of sexual delight; to achieve this I have to employ all possible means, and have to strain all my intellectual powers and foremost my imagination. . . . Voluptuous enjoyment or Blessedness is granted *to souls* in perpetuity and as an end in itself, but to *human beings* and other living creatures *solely as a means for the preservation of the species*. Herein lie the moral limitations of voluptuousness for human beings. An excess of voluptuousness would render man unfit to fulfil his other obligations; it would prevent him from ever rising to higher mental and

> moral perfection; indeed experience teaches that not only single individuals but also whole nations have perished through voluptuous excess. *For me such moral limits to voluptuousness no longer exist, indeed in a certain sense the reverse applies*. (208)

And further, attempting to explain his exceptional status as a man compelled by moral duty to "imagine myself as man and woman in one person having intercourse with myself," Schreber writes,

> This behaviour has been forced on me through God having placed Himself into a relationship with me which is contrary to the Order of the World; although it may sound paradoxical, it is justifiable to apply the saying of the Crusaders in the First Crusade to myself: *Dieu le veut* (God wishes it). God is inseparably tied to my person through my nerves' power of attraction which for some time past has become inescapable; there is no possibility of God freeing Himself from my nerves for the rest of my life—although His policy is aimed at this—except perhaps in case my unmanning were to become a fact. On the other hand God demands *constant enjoyment*, as the normal mode of existence for souls within the Order of the World. It is my duty to provide Him with it in the form of highly developed soul-voluptuousness, as far as this is possible in the circumstances contrary to the Order of the World. (208–9)

Finally, Schreber summarizes this peculiar reversal in the moral universe by noting that in "my relation to God . . . voluptuousness has become 'God-fearing' [*gottesfürchtig*], that is to say it is the likeliest satisfactory solution for the clash of interests arising out of circumstances contrary to the Order of the World" (210).

Passages such as these were so crucial to Freud's reading of the Schreber case because they seem to underline the connection between mental illness and disturbances in the domain of sexuality, the connection that, as we have seen, Freud was so hard at work defending against doubts raised by Jung, Adler, and others at the time of his work on the essay. As Freud notes,

> we psychoanalysts have hitherto supported the view that the roots of every nervous and mental disorder are chiefly to be found in the patient's sexual life. . . . The samples of Schreber's delusions that have already been given enable us without more ado to dismiss the suspicion that it might be precisely this paranoid disorder which would turn out to be the "negative case" which has so long been sought for—a case in which sexuality plays only a very minor part. Schreber himself speaks again and again as though he shared our prejudice. He is constantly talking in the same breath of "nervous disorder" and erotic lapses, as though the two things were inseparable. (*SE* 12:30–31)

Freud's recruitment of Schreber as a disciple *avant la lettre* was, as we have seen, a gesture not without certain disturbing resonances for Freud. More important, his own struggles within what I have called the state of emergency of the *institution* of psychoanalysis kept him from seeing in the paradoxes of Schreber's sexualized relation to God the breakdown products of what I have referred to as an investiture crisis—a crisis pertaining to the *transfer* of symbolic power and authority. Schreber's paradoxical experience that the Order of the World—Schreber's term for cosmic rule of law and regulation of individual boundaries—became the locus of a carnevalesque command to transgress all boundaries and proprieties would seem to point beyond the "repressive hypothesis" that shapes Freud's view of the conflictual relations between psychic systems and agencies and which would become the object of Michel Foucault's powerful critique in the first volume of his *History of Sexuality*. Schreber discovers that power not only prohibits, moderates, says "no," but may also work to intensify and amplify the body and its sensations. Put somewhat differently, Schreber discovers that symbolic authority in a state of emergency *is* transgressive, that it exhibits an obscene overproximity to the subject: that it, as Schreber puts it, *demands enjoyment*. Schreber's experience of his body and mind as the site of violent and transgressive interventions and manipulations, which produce, as a residue or waste product, a kind of surplus enjoyment, is, I am suggesting, an index of a crisis afflicting his relation to the exemplary domain of symbolic authority to which his life was intimately bound, namely the law.[26]

V

Freud, we recall, begins the second section of his essay with an homage to Jung's "dazzling example" followed by a methodological reflection on the privileged status of examples in psychoanalytic interpretation. He then goes on to apply his method to the example of the talking birds in Schreber's text. These miraculous birds are introduced in chapter 15 of the *Memoirs* and rehearse a number of themes and motifs played out in other, equally striking incarnations in earlier chapters. Schreber notes early in the chapter that although, since the end of 1895 and the beginning of 1896, he "could no longer doubt that a real race of human beings . . . did in fact exist," it was "still perfectly clear . . . that, in Hamlet's words, *there is something rotten in the state of Denmark*—that is to say in the relationship between God and mankind" (163–64). Despite his restored confidence in the existence of the world, he thus continues to experience his body, mind, and environment as the site of divine interventions and manipulations. Perhaps the most striking feature of Schreber's illness is that his manipulation by divine rays—in Schreber's system "rays" are God's nerves—occurs above all in a *linguistic* register. As Schreber puts it, "it seems to lie in the nature of rays that they must *speak* as soon as they are set in motion; the relevant law was expressed in the phrase 'do not forget that rays must speak,' and this was spoken into my nerves innumerable times" (121). Here one should add that the rays speak a sort of dialect—the *Grundsprache* or "basic language," which is "a somewhat antiquated but nevertheless powerful German, characterized particularly by a wealth of euphemisms" (50). Schreber's experience of voices and fragments of speech being projected into his body by way of a kind of miraculous ventriloquism is among the torments that most directly endangers his capacity to experience himself as a source of individual agency and initiative. Schreber's initial definition of the "nerve-language" at the beginning of chapter 5 forms the basis of all later characterizations of this unnerving experience of divine ventriloquism:

> Apart from normal human language there is also a kind of *nerve-language* of which, as a rule, the healthy human being is not aware. In my opinion this is best understood when one thinks of the processes by which a person tries to imprint certain words in his memory in a definite order, as for instance a child learning a poem by heart which he is going to recite at school, or a priest a sermon he is going to deliver in Church. The words are *repeated silently* . . . that is to say a human being causes his nerves to vibrate in the way which corresponds to the use of the words concerned, but the real organs of speech . . . are either not set in motion at all or only coincidentally. . . . Naturally under normal (in consonance with the Order of the World) conditions, use of this *nerve-language* depends only on the will of the person whose nerves are concerned; no human being as such can force another to use this nerve-language. In my case, however . . . my nerves have been set in motion *from without* incessantly and without respite. (69)

Schreber situates this peculiar ventriloquism within the framework of a more global anxiety of influence:

> Divine rays above all have the power of influencing the nerves of a human being in this manner; by this means God has always been able to infuse dreams into a sleeping human being. I myself first felt this influence as emanating from Professor Flechsig. The only possible explanation I can think of is that Professor Flechsig in some way knew how to put divine rays to his own use; later, apart from Professor Flechsig's nerves, direct divine rays also entered into contact with my nerves. This influence has

> in the course of years assumed forms more and more contrary to the Order of the World and to man's natural right to be master of his own nerves, and I might say become increasingly grotesque. (69–70)

The miracle of the talking birds that so intrigued Freud is but one example of a divine violation that reduces Schreber's body to a condition of abjection and putrescence ("One probably . . . believed that at least one could choke me through the mass of poison of corpses [*Leichengift*] which in this manner was daily heaped upon my body"). The link between the birds and dead matter is secured by Schreber's view that "*the nerves which are inside these birds are remnants . . . of souls of human beings who had become blessed*" (167). Schreber then makes the association of the birds with language, and more precisely, with a language produced under conditions of *mechanical reproduction*:

> I recognize the individual nerves exactly by the tone of their voices from years of hearing them; I know exactly which of the senseless phrases learnt by rote I can expect of each one of them. . . . Their property as erstwhile human nerves is evidenced by the fact that *all* the miraculously produced birds *without exception*, whenever they have completely unloaded the poison of corpses which they carry, that is to say when they have reeled off the phrases drummed into them, then express *in human sounds* the *genuine* feeling of well-being in the soul-voluptuousness of my body which they share, with the words "Damned fellow" or "Somehow damned," *the only words in which they are still capable of giving expression to genuine feeling.* (167)

Schreber extends these metalinguistic reflections by noting the unexpected affinity between these privileged moments of genuine feeling, and the poetic dimension of language:

> It has already been mentioned that the miraculously created birds do not understand the *meaning* of the words they speak; but apparently they have a natural sensitivity for the *similarity of sounds*. Therefore if, while reeling off the automatic phrases, they perceive *either* in the vibrations of my own nerves (my thoughts) *or* in speech of people around me, words which *sound* the same or similar to their own phrases, they apparently experience surprise and in a way fall for the similarity in sound; in other words the surprise makes them forget the rest of their mechanical phrases and they suddenly pass over into *genuine* feeling. (168–69)[27]

After noting these peculiarities of the "miracled birds"—Schreber's phrase is "gewunderte Vögel"—Freud draws a stunning conclusion: "As we read this description, we cannot avoid the idea [*kann man sich des Einfalles nicht erwehren*; my emphasis] that what it really refers to must be young girls" (*SE* 12:36). I call this conclusion stunning not in view of the peculiar blend of patriarchal complacency and rhetorical virtuosity with which Freud supports his claim.[28] Rather, what is striking here is the way in which Freud's deduction repeats the crucial structural features of the object under investigation: the experience is one of an irresistible linguistic or ideational "implantation." With Freud's reading of the miracled birds we have encountered, once more, his allegorical presence in the text, the point at which his own analytic language mimes the processes being analyzed. To be seized by an "Einfall" against which one cannot defend, is, at a formal level, not unlike the situation described by Schreber as a kind of intoxication—having toxic matter, the "poison of corpses," unloaded into one's body. Schreber, for his part, is very clear about the nature of these toxins: they are bits of linguistic matter, phrases learned by rote and repeated mechanically *without concern for meaning.* These toxins materialize what I will call the *drive dimension of signification*; they link to abjection that aspect of signification that is purely "dictatorial" in that it positions its bearer as a kind of bird-brained stenographer taking dictation. Although Freud clearly senses that the "feminine" aspect of the miracled birds—Freud notes that Schreber eventually makes this association explicit[29]—is tied to a particular relation to and experience of the signifier, he seems at this point to want to quarantine the example from the larger consequences to be drawn from such a connection. But if "femininity" is in some sense linked to this drive dimension of signification, then Freud's own experience of ideational implantation—of being dictated to by foreign thoughts and linguistic associations—might indeed be viewed as an instance of feminization not unlike that experienced by Schreber under the overwhelming influence of the voices and language particles entering his body.[30]

VI

Freud continues his reading by noting the constraints placed upon any attempt to interpret the *Memoirs* by the fact that the crucial third chapter, in which Schreber ostensibly discussed details of his family history, was withheld from publication.[31] Although Freud could have made inquiries at the Sonnenstein asylum and possibly even tracked down an extant copy of the missing chapter in the asylum's records, he chose instead to "be satisfied . . . in tracing back . . . the nucleus of the delusional structure . . . to familiar human motives" (*SE* 12:37). According to Freud, one is thereby led to the centrality in Schreber's delusional system of his first psychiatrist, Dr. Paul Emil Flechsig. As

Freud notes, "the first author of all . . . acts of persecution was Flechsig, and he remains their instigator throughout the whole course of the illness" (*SE* 12:38).

Freud emphasizes the vagueness and obscurity of the charges leveled against Flechsig, a prominent neuroscientist and forensic psychiatrist known above all for his work on the myelination of nerve fibers.[32] Given Freud's decision to perform a close reading of Schreber's text rather than engage in more extratextual, historical research,[33] it is, perhaps, not quite so surprising that he should have failed to consider the possibility that Schreber's fixation on Flechsig could have derived at least in part from the actual interpersonal dynamics between patient and doctor. But it is a surprise nonetheless. For in his open letter to Flechsig appended to the beginning of the *Memoirs*, Schreber makes an explicit connection between soul murder and medical malpractice.

In the letter, Schreber confesses to Flechsig that "the *first impetus* to what my doctors always considered mere 'hallucinations' but which to me signified communications with supernatural powers, consisted of *influences on my nervous system emanating from your nervous system*" (34). Schreber admits the possibility, and even likelihood, that such an influence, understood on the model of hypnotic suggestion, was originally initiated for strictly therapeutic purposes. He suggests, however, that once realizing the uniqueness of the case, Flechsig was unable to resist the temptation to maintain a telepathic connection with him "out of scientific interest" (34). Schreber surmises that in the midst of this already transgressive contact with the patient—transgressive because no longer constrained by the demands of the therapy—"it is possible that . . . part of your own nerves—probably unknown to yourself—was removed from your body . . . and ascended to heaven as a 'tested soul' and there achieved some supernatural power" (34). Once cut off from Flechsig and, as it were, the law of healing, this outlaw soul "simply allowed itself to be driven by the impulse of ruthless self-determination and lust for power, without any restraint by something comparable to the moral will power of man" (34). Given such a scenario, Schreber is willing to consider that "all those things which in earlier years I erroneously thought I had to blame you for—particularly the definite damaging effects on my body—are to be blamed only on that 'tested soul'" (34). The gist of this scenario is, according to Schreber, that

> there would then be no need to cast any shadow upon your person and only the mild reproach would perhaps remain that you, like so many doctors, could not completely resist the temptation of using a patient in

> your care *as an object for scientific experiments* apart from the real purpose of the cure, when by chance matters of the highest scientific interest arose. One might even raise the question whether perhaps all the talk of voices about somebody having committed soul murder can be explained by the souls (rays) deeming it impermissible [*als etwas Unstatthaftes*] that a person's nervous system should be influenced by another's to the extent of imprisoning his will power, such as occurs during hypnosis; in order to stress forcefully that this was a malpractice [*Unstatthaftigkeit*] it was called "soul murder." (34–35)

It is clear, I think, that Schreber's purpose here and throughout his *Memoirs* is to tell the story of the catastrophic effects that ensue when a trusted figure of authority exercises a surplus of power exceeding the symbolic pact on which that authority is based.[34] Schreber's *Memoirs* attempt to bring into a narrative and theological system the crisis of authority—the *rottenness* in the state of Denmark, the breach in the Order of the World—which manifests itself at least in part as a demonic imbalance in the "professional" relationships imposed on him by his illness. Much of the difficulty faced by the reader of Schreber to make sense of this "system," which very quickly takes on Wagnerian proportions, is a function of Schreber's own difficulty in isolating and identifying this transgressive surplus, locating its origin and articulating its patterns of expansion and proliferation into what ends up as a generalized state of emergency of human relations and of relations between humans and God. The energies for this global expansion derive from structural homologies between the collapse of symbolic exchange (with Flechsig) into direct, "experimental" power over body and soul, on the one hand, and Schreber's investiture crisis, on the other (the fact that his symbolic investiture did not "take hold," was unable to seize him in his self-understanding). What becomes manifest in Flechsig-qua-"tested soul" is the inner "rottenness" of every symbolic investiture insofar as it remains dependent on a dimension of performative force, compulsion, drive. Schreber's fixation on Flechsig indicates that he materializes for him the emergence of this normally secret dependence—a dependence normally "secreted" in the unconscious—into the field of conscious experience. The "directness" of Flechsig's alleged influence and manipulations is thus correlative to Schreber's relation of exteriority to the symbolic operations governing his own investiture.[35]

Freud, for his part, is confident that he has discovered the true and, ultimately, erotic, origins of this "extrajuridical" surplus of power/influence that disturbs Schreber's relations first with Flechsig and then with God. He prepares his discovery by introducing the formula he and other researchers and clinicians have found to be key to deciphering persecutory anxieties in general:

> It appears that the person to whom the delusion ascribes so much power and influence, in whose hands all the threads of the conspiracy converge, is, if he is definitely named, either identical with some one [*sic*] who played an equally important part in the patient's emotional life before his illness, or is easily recognizable as a substitute for him. The intensity of the emotion is projected in the shape of external power, while its quality is changed into the opposite. The person who is now hated and feared for being a persecutor was at one time loved and honoured. The main purpose of the persecution asserted by the patient's delusion is to justify the change in his emotional attitude. (*SE* 12:41)

Noting that Schreber seemed to have had a quite positive impression of Flechsig at the time of his first illness, Freud's application of this formula suggests that Schreber's anxiety dreams of a recurrence of his illness along with the prodromal fantasy of feminine jouissance—"that it really must be rather pleasant to be a woman succumbing to intercourse"—which occur after being named to his new post as *Senatspräsident*, are to be understood as signs of a profound, though unconscious, *longing* for Flechsig. This longing, combining infantile dependency and homosexual desire, generates what Freud calls "the feminine phantasy": "The exciting cause of his illness, then, was an outburst of homosexual libido; the object of this libido was probably from the very first his doctor, Flechsig; and his struggles against the libidinal impulse produced the conflict which gave rise to the symptoms" (*SE* 12:43). According to Freud, the strange surplus of power/influence that precipitates the unmaking of Schreber's world is nothing other than an outburst of homosexual libido on Schreber's part, originally felt for his psychiatrist, Flechsig. Flechsig's ostensible transgression of the law of the cure regulating the "boundaries" between patient and doctor is, in other words, a projection of Schreber's own "perverse" desires. Freud stresses that his admittedly speculative claims concerning Schreber's homosexuality must be understood in the context of a theory of the unconscious, a theory implied by Schreber's own formulations.[36] Freud is thinking here of Schreber's distinction between Flechsig the real person and Flechsig-as-tested-soul; only the latter is of interest to Freud as the placeholder of the surplus value assigned to Flechsig in the unconscious. That this surplus value is produced by homosexual libido is indicated, for Freud, by several details in the *Memoirs*.

First, Freud argues that in the numerous passages linking feminization to sexual exploitation, there is little question that Flechsig is the intended beneficiary of this perverse enjoyment: "It is unnecessary to remark that no other individual is ever named who could be put in Flechsig's place" (*SE* 12:44). Furthermore, in one of his attempts to explain the meaning of "soul murder," which is, of course, the main charge brought against Flechsig in the *Memoirs*, Schreber refers to folkloric and literary examples of what appears to be at stake in this strange crime of taking "possession of another person's soul in order to prolong one's life at another soul's expense, or to secure some other advantages which outlast death." He adds that "one has only to think . . . of Goethe's Faust, Lord Byron's Manfred, Weber's Freischütz, etc." (55). The special importance of Byron's *Manfred* is indicated, for Freud, by an earlier reference to that dramatic poem in a footnote apropos of Schreber's use of the Persian Gods Ariman and Ormuzd to refer to the lower and upper Gods, respectively, who in Schreber's theological system together constitute the so-called posterior realms of God: "The name Ariman occurs by the way also in Lord Byron's Manfred in connection with a soul murder" (53). Regarding Byron's play, Freud suggests that "the essence and secret of the whole work lies in—an incestuous relation between a brother and a sister" (*SE* 12:44).[37] Freud's crucial point here is that soul murder is connected with incest; Flechsig-as-soul-murderer becomes a figure of *incestuous enjoyment*. The surplus of power/influence that Schreber sees as emanating first from Flechsig and then from God is thereby linked to that most powerful and primordial of transgressive stains on the "lawful" structure of kinship relations.

Freud appeals, finally, to another detail of Schreber's story to support his thesis that an outburst of homosexual libido was the basis of Schreber's illness. One will recall that Schreber's illness took a turn for the worse in February 1894, when Sabine Schreber went to Berlin for four days to visit her father, interrupting for the first time her routine of daily visits to her husband. After this interruption, Schreber's condition deteriorated so rapidly that he no longer accepted visits from her and indeed came to see her as one of those phantom beings produced by miracle in the manner of the "fleeting-improvised-men" [*flüchtig hingemachte Männer*]. It was, according to Schreber, at this turning point that the structure of the plot against him, with all its supernatural manifestations, took on its definitive shape. One will also recall the sexual dimension of this peripeteia: "Decisive for my mental collapse was one particular night; during that night I had a quite unusual number of pollutions (perhaps half a dozen)" (68). Freud concludes from this concatenation of events

> that the mere presence of his wife must have acted as a protection against the attractive power of the men about him; and if we are prepared to admit that an emission cannot occur in an adult without some mental concomitant, we shall be able to supplement the patient's emissions that night by assuming that they were accompanied by homosexual phantasies which remained unconscious. (*SE* 12:145)[38]

VII

Citing a lack of sufficient historical and biographical information, which, as I have indicated, he might have been able to acquire, Freud acknowledges an uncertainty pertaining to his hypothesis that Schreber's breakdown was triggered by homosexual panic following his appointment to the position of *Senatspräsident*: "The question of why this outburst of homosexual libido overtook the patient precisely at this period (that is, between the dates of his appointment and of his move to Dresden) cannot be answered in the absence of more precise knowledge of the story of his life" (*SE* 12:45–46). Curiously, Freud never seems to consider the possibility of a connection between Schreber's "perversion" and this important change in his symbolic status. In a sense, Schreber undergoes *two* changes in his symbolic status, which taken together constitute the full extent of what I have characterized as his investiture crisis: *Ernennung* or nomination to a powerful position of juridical authority—the *Senatspräsident* of the highest court in Saxony—and *Entmannung* or unmanning, which Freud reads as an outburst of homosexual libido. A connection between these two symbolic mutations is made plausible not simply by the obvious temporal contiguity, suggesting a causal sequence, but also by the fact that Schreber's gender transformation is at a crucial moment itself associated with an act of naming or nomination, that is, with a performative utterance endowing the subject with a new symbolic status.

The performative utterance I have in mind here is of a very particular kind; it is an *insult*, and indeed one issued by no less an authority than God Himself in a scene of high operatic drama:

> I believe I may say that at that time and at that time *only*, I saw God's omnipotence in its complete purity. During the night . . . the lower God (Ariman) appeared. The radiant picture of his rays became visible to my inner eye . . . that is to say he was reflected on my inner nervous system. Simultaneously I heard his voice; but it was not a soft whisper—as the talk of the voices always was before and after that time—it resounded in a mighty bass as if directly in front of my bedroom window. The impres-

> sion was intense, so that anybody not hardened to terrifying miraculous impressions as I was, would have been shaken to the core. Also *what* was spoken did not sound friendly by any means: everything seemed calculated to instil fright and terror into me and the word "wretch" [*Luder*] was frequently heard—an expression quite common in the basic language to denote a human being destined to be destroyed by God and to feel God's power and wrath. (124)

In spite of the insulting content of this quasi-operatic epiphany of divine power, the effects produced by its form, or more precisely by the performative force of its enunciation, turn out to be, as Schreber insists, strangely beneficial:

> Yet everything that was spoken was *genuine*, not phrases learnt by rote as they later were, but the immediate expression of true feeling. . . . For this reason my impression was not one of alarm or fear, but largely one of admiration for the magnificent and the sublime; the effect on my nerves was therefore beneficial despite the insults contained in some of the *words*. (124–25)

The most important of these words, "Luder," has especially rich connotations in the context of Schreber's torments. It can indeed mean wretch, in the sense of a lost and pathetic figure, but can also signify a cunning swindler or scoundrel; whore, tart, or slut; and, finally, the dead, rotting flesh of an animal, especially in the sense of carrion used as bait in hunting. The last two significations capture Schreber's fear of being turned over to others for the purposes of sexual exploitation as well as his anxieties, which would seem to flow from such abuse, about putrefaction, being left to rot. The latter anxieties merge at times with fantasies of being sick with the plague, leprosy, or syphilis.[39] I would like to suggest that this insulting nomination issued by the lower God Ariman stands in a direct relation to the crisis precipitated by that other nomination or official *Ernennung* that—inexplicably for Freud[40]—appears to "secrete" the unexpected by-product of feminine jouissance, itself bearing associations with abjection.

In a first approach, one can point to the structural similarities of the two speech acts. An official interpellation of the kind issued by the Ministry of Justice functions in much the same way as an insult issued in a quasi-public setting. Both share what Bourdieu has called the "performative or magical intention," both indicate to someone—often in the name of a group—that he "possesses such and such a property, and indicates to him at the time *that he must conduct himself in accordance with the social essence which is thereby assigned to him*."[41] But there is more at stake here than a formal symmetry or homology between the performative magic whereby one becomes a *Senatspräsident* (i.e., because the Saxon Ministry of Justice has declared it to be the case) and the effectivity of a divine interpellation. Indeed, I would like to make the stronger claim that in the second assignation Schreber experiences the *secret* of the first, that in the second performative utterance Schreber experiences what the first nomination begins to *secrete* when the institutional authority behind it is in crisis, no longer consonant with the Order of the World, as Schreber would say. With Ariman's epiphany, we are, in a word, in the midst of that dimension of symbolic function that Benjamin characterized as an internal, structural rottenness.[42]

Michel de Certeau's brief reflections on Schreber's text address precisely this "secret" relation between Schreber's two crucial encounters with the force of the performative or magical intention. Certeau translates, in effect, Benjamin's notion of "law-making violence" into the Lacanian notion of the *master signifier*:[43]

> In addition the name imposed by the other is authorized by nothing, and that is its special trait. . . . The name is not authorized by any meaning; on the contrary, it authorizes signification, like a poem that is preceded by nothing and creates unlimited possibilities for meaning. But this occurs because the word *Luder* plays the role of that which cannot deceive. It compels belief more than it is believed. . . . Naming does in effect assign him a place. It is a calling to be what it dictates: your name is *Luder*. The name performs.[44]

The privileged performativity of this name—what distinguishes it from an ordinary insult—is the fact that "in circumscribing the object of belief, it also articulates the *operation* of believing. . . . The signified of the word, which oscillates between decomposition and slut, designates the overall functioning of the signifier, or Schreber's effective relation to the law of the signifier."[45] Certeau's crucial point, which goes a long way in explaining why Schreber has continued to attract readers, is that this "madness is not a particular madness. It is *general*. It is a part of any institution that assures a language of meaning, right or truth. The only odd thing about Schreber, the jurist, is that he knows its hard and 'insulting' secret. He is not someone who can go on knowing nothing about it."[46]

As Certeau has emphasized, torture has much the same function in political contexts as the lower God's transformation of Schreber into a *Luder*, a process that, as the reader of Schreber well knows, makes ample use of a rich and varied technology of mental and physical torture: the production in the subject of a heightened experience of *abjection*. Torture is the way an institution simultaneously confesses and represses its deepest secret: that its consistency, its enjoyment of recognition as *a really existing social fact*, ultimately depends on the magic of performative utterances, on the force of their own immanent process of enunciation. The abjection produced in the torture victim, his betrayal of everything that matters and is dear to him, his confession of his own putrescence, is, as it were, the "substance" that stands in for the lack of substantial foundations to which the institution might appeal for final and ultimate legitimation. The torture victim's abject body is the "privileged" site of a politicotheological epiphany, for it is there that the reality of institutions and the social facts they sponsor—contracts, titles, money, property, marriages, and the like—bottoms out, touches on a dimension of vicious circularity that cannot be avowed if these social facts are to continue to enjoy credibility, if the social field structured by them is to remain consistent for the subject.[47] One could say, then, that the practice of torture serves to keep localized and off-scene the chronic state of emergency that, in effect, haunts all institutions insofar as they are dependent on the reality effects of performative utterances—utterances that bring about the propositional content of the social facts they pretend merely to certify. The torture victim's body is one of the places where, as it were, the knowledge is secreted that crucial constative utterances on which any social ontology depends really mask a performative, the form of which is, ultimately, that of a tautology—for example, "the law is *the law*."[48]

The Kafkan dimension of these reflections immediately strikes the eye. One could say that Josef K. encounters, but fails to comprehend, this insulting secret of the law, as the exemplary locus of symbolic power and authority, when, in the fifth chapter of *The Trial*, he stumbles upon the strangely sexualized—indeed, homosexualized—scene of sadomasochistic torture in the storage room hidden among the offices of the bank where he works. At such moments, it is as if the taint of tautological nonsense, the performative force that pertains, at some level, to all institutions and the social facts they sponsor, has begun to leak beyond its "normally" circumscribed space and to dissolve the institution's capacity to provide a credible context of meaningful reality. At such moments we are at the threshold of a psychotic universe where the subject has become unable to forget, unable (primordially) to repress, the drive dimension of symbolic function, which expands into a general state of rottenness and decay. The sense of surreal corruption in Kafka's texts would appear to derive from getting *too close* to this dimension of social reality.[49]

When one considers Kafka's own struggles with his sexuality, another, perhaps more obvious reading of this scene—and one in the spirit of Freud's reading of Schreber—suggests itself: Josef K., this typical Kafkan bachelor, has simply stumbled upon his own—and his society's—*closet*, the social space where homosexuality is constituted as a refused yet insistent possibility. Josef K.'s entire story becomes thereby the unfolding of a kind of litigious paranoia generated by homosexual panic. The curious fact that everyone K. encounters knows about his trial would serve to underline the dimension of open secrecy constitutive of the "epistemology of the closet."[50] Josef K.'s guilt could then be read as an indication that he ceded his homosexual desire and naively presupposed the unproblematic efficacy and stability of the closet. My argument about Schreber would, however, serve as a critique of this otherwise cogent reading of Kafka as well. By too quickly specifying the ideological content of the "closet" before sufficiently analyzing the closet as *form*, as a place where such ideological meanings can be inscribed, such a reading remains at the level of the cultural discourses, in this case homophobic ones, it sets out to undermine (a similar critique could be made of Freud's always disappointing specification of the *contents* of the unconscious). As a fantasy frame in which various ideological meanings can be inscribed and command a maximum of fascination, the closet is, I am suggesting, first and foremost a site where the drive dimension of symbolic functioning becomes manifest. Every ideological content borrows the "stuff" secreted within or, perhaps better, *as* this fantasy frame. When, in other words, an ideology captures the imagination, comes to matter for an individual or collective in a profound way, its "matter" has a share in, is animated by, this drive dimension of symbolic function. The importance of the Schreber material for the analysis of ideology is that it offers a glimpse of this "matter" of ideological fascination in a quasi-pure state, that is, at the moment of its inscription within a field of cultural values.[51]

VIII

These remarks on what we might call Schreber's *Ludertum*, his elaboration of a kind of abject femininity, were evoked by an impasse in Freud's argument. He was, we recall, unable to understand why an overstimulating outburst of homosexual libido should occur in conjunction with Schreber's nomination to the position of *Senatspräsident* of the Supreme Court of Saxony. After briefly alluding to the lifelong oscillation on the part of most adults between heterosexual and homosexual desire and the possibility of biological causation—a disturbance in sexual function as a consequence of male menopause—Freud returns to the main thread of his argument, which focuses on the role of Flechsig in Schreber's illness. What needs to be explained is, as Freud puts it, "that a man's friendly feeling towards his doctor can suddenly break out in an intensified form after a lapse of eight years and become the occasion of such a severe mental disorder" (*SE* 12:46). To put it in the terms I have been suggesting here, Freud's question is this: What was the nature of this dangerous surplus of power/influence that threatened Schreber's sanity and bodily integrity and how did it come to attach itself to Flechsig? Freud's answer to the question of the origin and dissemination of this dangerous "surplus value" leads him to the crucial notion of the *transference*:

> But for the benefit of those who . . . regard our hypothesis as altogether untenable, it is easy to suggest a possibility which would rob it of its bewildering character. The patient's friendly feeling towards his doctor may very well have been due to a process of "transference," by means of which an emotional cathexis became transposed from some person who was important to him on to the doctor who was in reality indifferent to him; so that the doctor will have been chosen as a deputy or surrogate for some one much closer to him. To put the matter in a more concrete form: the patient was reminded of his brother or father by the figure of the doctor, he rediscovered them in him; there will then be nothing to wonder at if, in certain circumstances, a longing for the surrogate figure reappeared in him and operated with a violence that is only to be explained in the light of its origin and primary significance. (*SE* 12:46–47)

The place that Flechsig came to occupy in Schreber's imagination and psychic economy was, in other words, already carved out in the course of his earlier relationships with significant male others. Although Freud alludes to the importance of an older brother, he identifies the father as the original locus of the disturbing surplus that only later gets transferred to Flechsig.[52] Wherever Schreber encounters this surplus he finds himself, as if by miracle, subject to a process of feminization, of unmanning, which Freud characterizes as homosexualization—the stimulation of a "feminine (that is, a passive homosexual) wishful phantasy" (*SE* 12:47). According to Freud, this surplus is a surplus of desire, of a primitive and overpowering longing for the father, against which Schreber defends by means of a paranoid delusion: "The person he longed for now became his persecutor, and the content of his wishful phantasy became the content of his persecution" (*SE* 12:47).

Freud supports his thesis of the paternal origins of the surplus that, once transferred to him, transfigures Flechsig into a demonic persecutor, by following the path whereby Flechsig comes to be displaced by God as the main focus of Schreber's persecutory anxieties. As Freud already noted, the latter displacement prepares the way for a triumphant reconciliation with what had at first appeared as a humiliation, his feminization: "Emasculation was now no longer a disgrace; it became 'consonant with the Order of Things,' it took its place in a great cosmic chain of events, and was instrumental in the re-creation of humanity after its extinction" (*SE* 12:48); Schreber would give birth to a new race of human beings by divine insemination. At a formal level, this displacement of Flechsig by God is made possible by the natural tendency of paranoia to split and divide up identifications into constituent parts, which may then, in turn, engage in struggles for predominance:

> the persecutor is divided into Flechsig and God; in just the same way Flechsig himself subsequently splits up into two personalities, the "upper" and the "middle" Flechsig, and God into the "lower" and the "upper" God. . . . A process of decomposition of this kind is very characteristic of paranoia. Paranoia decomposes just as hysteria condenses. Or rather, paranoia resolves . . . into their elements the products of the condensations and identifications which are effected in the unconscious. The constant repetition of the decomposing process in Schreber's case would . . . be an expression of the importance which the person in question possessed for him. All of this dividing up of Flechsig and God . . . had the same meaning as the splitting of the persecutor into Flechsig and God. They would all be the duplications of one and the same important relationship. (49–50)[53]

That this "same important relationship" (i.e., Schreber's relationship with his father) should have been able to generate such an opulent array of phantasmagorical duplications and splittings, was, according to Freud, a function not simply of the senior Schreber's "normal" status as a figure of paternal authority, but rather of a certain surplus authority attributable to his professional status as a physician and, as Freud seems to suggest, to the particular kinds of professional activities in which he engaged. "Now the father of Senatspräsident Dr. Schreber was no insignificant person," Freud notes. "He was the Dr. Daniel Gottlob Moritz Schreber whose memory is kept green to this day by the numerous Schreber Associations which flourish especially in Saxony; and, moreover, he was a *physician*." Such a father, whose "activities in favour of promoting the harmonious upbringing of the young, of securing co-ordination between education in the home and in the school, of introducing physical culture and manual work with a view to raising the standards of health . . . exerted a lasting influence upon his contemporaries"; such a father, whose "great reputation as the founder of therapeutic gymnastics is still shown by the wide circulation of his *Ärztliche Zimmergymnastik* [*Medical Indoor Gymnastics*] . . ."; such a father, Freud finally insists, "was by no means unsuitable for transfiguration into a God in the affectionate memory of the son from whom he had been so early separated by death" (*SE* 12:51). That is, Schreber senior was not simply an average bourgeois father toward whom the typical "infantile attitude of boys," composed as it is—or at least as Freud understood it—of a "mixture of reverent submission and mutinous insubordination," would suffice to explain the peculiarities of Schreber's relation with his God; by virtue of his status as a physician, someone who, like God, "performs miracles . . . effects miraculous cures" (*SE* 12:52), Moritz Schreber was, in a sense, *more father* than the typical father: he embodied a surplus of paternal power, influence, and authority that predisposed him for the transfiguration effected in his son's deranged imagination.

A feature of this transfiguration of particular interest to Freud is Schreber's appropriation of various elements of solar myth to symbolize the complex terrain of paternity on which he apparently faltered. That for Schreber the sun should be associated or even identified with God is already implied in the characterization of God's nerves as *rays*, which, according to Schreber, "have . . . the faculty of transforming themselves into all things of the created world." Schreber adds that the "light and warmth-giving power of the sun, which makes her the origin of all organic life on earth, is only to be regarded as an indirect manifestation of the living god," and notes that the "veneration of the sun as divine by so many peoples since antiquity contains a highly important core of truth" (46).[54] And later, after introducing a more detailed account of the heavenly architecture, Schreber notes that at a certain point early on in his stay at *Sonnenstein*—literally Sun-Stone—"the sending forth of the sun's rays was taken over directly by God, and in particular by the lower God (Ariman); the voices that talk to me now (since July 1894) identify him with the sun" (95). Freud concludes from these passages that the sun "is nothing but another sublimated symbol for the father" (*SE* 12:54). He develops this point more fully in the postscript to his essay in which he briefly enters the domain of comparative religion and mythology that would occupy him more fully in *Totem and Taboo*. Noting that in one of his footnotes Schreber claims that the sun pales before him if he addresses it in a loud voice and that he is furthermore able to stare into the sun without being blinded by its brilliance (cf. 126), Freud remarks that it is "to this delusional privilege of being able to gaze at the sun without being dazzled that the mythological interest attaches":[55]

> the natural historians of antiquity attributed this power to the eagle alone, who, as a dweller in the highest regions of the air, was brought into especially intimate relation with the heavens, with the sun, and with

> lightning. We learn from the same sources, moreover, that the eagle puts his young to a test before recognizing them as his legitimate offspring. Unless they can succeed in looking into the sun without blinking they are thrown out of the eyrie. (*SE* 12:81)

Freud concludes that "this is merely ascribing to animals something that is a hallowed custom among men. The procedure gone through by the eagle with his young is an *ordeal*, a test of lineage, such as is reported of the most various races of antiquity" (*SE* 12:81).[56] This ordeal or test of lineage is one of the ways in which a culture frames or encodes what Kierkegaard proposed as the fundamental question of social existence: "*How does the single individual reassure himself that he is legitimate*?"[57] Given the rigidly partriarchal society in which Schreber lived and in which Freud developed his own theoretical elaborations of the codes of social and existential legitimation and the ways in which they can be "jammed," it is no surprise that Freud concludes that "in the case of Schreber we find ourselves once again on the familiar ground of the father-complex" (*SE* 12:55). For reasons that Freud is unable to fathom but which he assumes more biographical and historical research would reveal, Schreber is unable to make "normal" use of, to inherit in an unimpeded way, the paternal resources that would have allowed him to reassure himself that he was, indeed, "legitimate."

That it was, indeed, the resources of legitimation and the paths and modalities of their transmission that were in crisis in Schreber's case, is underlined by Schreber's preoccupation with names, titles, and lineage. We read, for example, that "Both the Flechsigs and the Schrebers belonged, it was said, to 'the highest nobility of heaven'; the Schrebers had the particular title 'Margraves of Tuscany and Tasmania,' according to the souls' habit of adorning themselves with high-sounding worldly titles from a kind of personal vanity" (55). Indeed, Schreber himself seems to suggest that the crisis afflicting the Order of the World, beginning with the transgression which he calls "soul murder," may be understood as a disturbance first and foremost within the domains of symbolic power represented and transmitted by *names;* his very first formulation of the crisis, which his text frenetically, though never quite successfully, tries to endow with a narrative structure, points in this direction:

> This "miraculous structure" has recently suffered a rent, intimately connected with my personal fate. . . . I want to say by way of introduction that the leading roles in the genesis of this development, the first beginnings of which go back perhaps as far as the eighteenth century, were

> played on the one hand by the names of Flechsig and Schreber (probably not specifying any individual member of these families), and on the other by the concept of *soul murder*. (54)[58]

Earlier, in his open letter to Flechsig, Schreber writes:

> I have no doubt that your name plays an essential role in the genetic development of the circumstances in question, in that certain nerves taken from your nervous system became "tested souls" . . . and in this capacity achieved supernatural power by means of which they have for years exerted a damaging influence on me and still do to this day. . . . I still feel daily and hourly the damaging influence of the miracles of those "tested souls"; the voices that speak to me even now shout your name again and again at me hundreds of times every day in this context. (33)

Freud, for his part, draws Schreber's preoccupation with names and titles into the domain of issues pertaining to homosexuality:

> His marriage, which he describes as being in other respects a happy one, brought him no children; and in particular it brought him no son who might have consoled him for the loss of his father and brother and upon whom he might have drained off his unsatisfied homosexual affections. His family line threatened to die out, and it seems that he felt no little pride in his birth and lineage. (*SE* 12:57–58)

The first clause of the last sentence of this passage is one of the more remarkable and telling formulations in Freud's essay. In German it reads: "Sein Geschlecht drohte auszusterben. . . ."[59] Schreber's *Geschlecht*, that which threatens to exhaust itself, waste away, can, of course, signify not only lineage, family line, stock, or race, but also gender as well as sex. If we take the pun seriously—more seriously than Freud apparently did—it suggests that Schreber discovered, no doubt unwittingly and unwillingly, something quite remarkable about the relationship between symbolic function and sexuality: a crisis of symbolic function—one's inscription within a symbolic network by means of names and titles—can manifest itself in the realm of, or, to put it in more Foucauldian terms, *as sexuality*. It is almost as if Schreber himself were half-aware that his florid sexual fantasies were elaborations of the breakdown products of those symbolic resources which might have reassured him that he was legitimate in the "eyes" of the symbolic community, or what Lacan refers to as the "big Other."

A good example of Freud's failure to appreciate Schreber's "marvelous" discovery that symbolic power in distress "secretes" a kind of sexuality occurs just prior to the passage cited earlier dealing with

Schreber's endangered *Geschlecht*. Here we find Freud luxuriating in a sort of intellectual homecoming to the "familiar ground of the father-complex":

> None of the material which in other cases of the sort is brought to light by analysis is absent in the present one: every element is hinted at in one way or another. In infantile experiences such as this the father appears as an interferer with the satisfaction which the child is trying to obtain; this is usually of an auto-erotic character, though at a later date it is often replaced in phantasy by some other satisfaction of a less inglorious kind. In the final stage of Schreber's delusion a magnificent victory was scored by the infantile sexual urge; for voluptuousness became God-fearing, and God Himself (his father) never tired of demanding it from him. His father's most dreaded threat, castration, actually provided the material for his wishful phantasy (at first resisted but later accepted) of being transformed into a woman. (*SE* 12:55–56)

With this reading of God-the-Father's paradoxical demand that Schreber cultivate feminine jouissance, we have encountered once again the limits of the "repressive hypothesis" guiding Freud's analysis. The fact that voluptuousness had become, as Schreber put it, God-fearing—*gottesfürchtig*—leads us not to the masturbator's triumph, as Freud would have it, but rather, I would suggest, to the domain of symbolic power in distress and the secret of names revealed therein.

Fear-(of)-God—*Fürchtegott*—is, as we know, an important name for Schreber.[60] Immediately after noting the "souls' habit of adorning themselves with high-sounding worldly titles," Schreber continues his genealogy of the rupture in the miraculous structure of the world by listing the names of Flechsig family members implicated in the crisis:

> Several names of both families are concerned: of the Flechsigs particularly Abraham Fürchtegott Flechsig, Professor Paul Theodor Flechsig, and a Daniel Fürchtegott Flechsig; the latter lived towards the end of the eighteenth century and was said to have been an "Assistant Devil" because of something that had happened in the nature of a soul murder. . . . The only knowledge I possess of the Flechsig family tree comes from what was said by the voices that talk to me; it would therefore be interesting to find out whether there had actually been a Daniel Fürchtegott Flechsig and an Abraham Fürchtegott Flechsig among the forbears of the present Professor Flechsig. (55–56)

The resonances of this genealogy with Schreber's later claim that jouissance had become *gottesfürchtig* suggest that the middle names of these delusional forbears of Schreber's psychiatrist need to be understood not so much as indications of Schreber's deification of Flechsig—such a reading still remains within the orbit of Freud's analysis of the case—but rather as placeholders of the surplus of power/influence that Schreber experienced in his encounters with Flechsig's institutional authority. Schreber's own text indicates that he experienced this surplus as a kind of sexual transgression, as an obscene, even incestuous, indifference to his well-being culminating in a global condition of corruption and decadence. The middle name of (at least two of) Flechsig's imagined ancestors is thus both more and less than a name; it is the exceptional name that holds the place of a kind of state secret, which marks the place where the symbolic power and authority normally represented by the name secrete a kind of obscene, though *gottesfürchtig*, enjoyment.[61]

I would certainly agree with Freud that Schreber's extreme response to Flechsig—his perhaps excessive sensitivity to this other dimension of power, which "stains" Flechsig's institutional authority as a man of medicine—must have been in part the result of a transferential dynamic, the origins of which need to be sought in Schreber's relation to his own *Geschlecht* and above all to his father, Dr. Daniel *Gottlob* Moritz Schreber.[62] Schreber's uncertainty as to the identity of the original "soul murderer," his inability *to isolate* the original trauma and to provide a linear narrative of its sequelae, leads him to the vague supposition "that at one time something had happened between perhaps earlier generations of the Flechsig and Schreber families which amounted to soul murder" (55). My own conclusion from these difficulties in isolating the originary traumatic encounter is that the obscene dimension of power, which seemed to migrate, as a kind of transferential *daimon*, from Moritz Schreber to Paul Flechsig, enjoyed wide circulation throughout Schreber's *Gründerjahre* society, leaking, as it were, beyond the boundaries of either the Schreber family home or the psychiatric institutions in which Schreber lived, although these particular locations were no doubt sites of especially high "toxicity," of especially high concentrations of this other form or dimension of power.

Schreber tends to characterize the maddening fact that agencies and institutions entrusted with the care of individual and social well-being exert a sexualizing pressure in the language that dominated cultural analyses of late nineteenth-century bourgeois society. In one of Schreber's many attempts to explain the nature of the cosmic trauma to which his individual illness was tied, he cites topoi familiar from critiques of decadence and degeneration:

> The realms of God may always have known that the Order of the World however great and magnificent, was yet not without its Achilles' heel, inasmuch as the human nerves' power of attracting God's nerves consti-

> tuted some danger for the realms of God. These dangers were likely to become more acute when somewhere on earth or on any other star nervousness or moral depravity gained the upper hand. (140)

Schreber adds that such "a general spread of nervous overexcitement" might be understood as a "consequence of over-civilization" (140). Earlier, Schreber had offered a similar view in language underlining his deep affinity with Wagner:

> Not even God Himself is or was a being of such *absolute perfection* as most religions attribute to Him. The power of attraction, this even to me unfathomable law, according to which rays and nerves mutually attract one another, harbours a kernel of danger for the realms of God; this forms perhaps the basis of the Germanic saga of the Twilight of the Gods [*Götterdämmerung*]. Growing nervousness among mankind could and can increase these dangers considerably. (59)

What distinguishes Schreber's delusional "analysis" of decadence from the work of other bourgeois theorists of cultural decline is that Schreber was unable to maintain a safe distance from the "symptoms" of degeneration. Indeed, the force of Schreber's neurotheological analysis is inseparable from his "perverse" capacity for identifying with, acting out, and, so to speak, enjoying these symptoms.

IX

Toward the beginning of the final section of his essay, "On the Mechanism of Paranoia," Freud introduces what could be understood as his own theory of decadence. He claims, in effect, that Schreber's psychosis compels him to experience in direct fashion the real "glue" of social relations in nineteenth-century bourgeois society: sublimated homoerotic desire. On this reading, "decadence" or "degeneration" would be that condition in which the social glue assumes the properties of a solvent, a condition in which the homosexual component of social relations and fellow feeling begins to separate out from its place within a system of "higher" cultural purposes and becomes autonomous and purposeless. Summarizing his conclusion that Schreber, like other paranoids, had come to grief in an attempt "to master an unconsciously reinforced current of homosexuality" (*SE* 12:59), Freud writes:

> So long as the individual is functioning normally and it is consequently impossible to see into the depths of his mental life, we may doubt whether his emotional relations to his neighbours in society have anything to do with sexuality, either actually or in their genesis. But delusions never

> fail to uncover these relations and to trace back the social feelings to their roots in a directly sensual erotic wish. So long as he was healthy, Dr. Schreber, too, whose delusions culminated in a wishful phantasy of an unmistakably homosexual nature, had, by all accounts, shown no signs of homosexuality in the ordinary sense of the word [*im vulgären Sinne*]. (*SE* 12:60)

Freud goes on to situate this claim within a developmental theory according to which the human subject's sense of inherent relatedness to a world of objects is *constituted* across a series of differentiated stages of psychosexual organization. In this developmental model, one's sense of, to use Heidegger's phrase, Being-in-the-World, of involvement in a spatially, temporally, and symbolically complex network of social facts and relations, is *made real* (i.e., into a matter of profound existential care and concern) by way of an incremental and conflictual process of maturation in which the human child finds him- or herself increasingly implicated and interested in the affairs of other human subjects and the world more generally. At this point in his thinking about such matters, Freud proposes that this complex process of initiation into the world of "object relations" passes through a stage of extreme, even absolute, narcissism. This is a mode of libido organization in which the incipient self "unifies his sexual instincts (which have hitherto been engaged in auto-erotic activities) in order to obtain a love-object; and he begins by taking himself, his own body, as his love-object, and only subsequently proceeds from this to the choice of some person other than himself as his object" (*SE* 12:60–61). Narcissism is in this view a kind of psychosexual holding pattern in which the human subject gathers its energies and prepares, as it were, to make the inevitable choice of throwing its lot with the world of other subjects, which in a certain sense is *created* in and through that forced choice. That is, only by *positing* the world himself does the human subject begin effectively to take up positions, assume symbolic mandates, within the complex organization of social space, and it is Freud's view that this act of positing—of repeating the forced choice of being-in-the-world—has its own proper time or moment within an ontogenetic sequence.[63] Furthermore, Freud suggests, the path from a narcissistic libido organization to one allowing for a passionate engagement with the dimension of otherness, often, if not always, traverses a stage of homosexual object-love. Homosexuality functions in this schema as a kind of transitional compromise formation between narcissism and libidinal cathexis of otherness: I love an other, but one who is (anatomically) not too other—too "hetero"—from me (Freud's allusion to his idea that infants "theorize" that all people have the same genitals suggests that a pre-oedipal boy's love for his mother must in some sense be considered *homoerotic*). Freud concludes his brief summary of psychosexual development by returning to his thesis of the homoerotic nature of the social glue holding together human society:

> After the stage of heterosexual object-choice has been reached, the homosexual tendencies are not, as might be supposed, done away with or brought to a stop; they are merely deflected from their sexual aim and applied to fresh uses. They now combine with portions of the ego-instincts and, as "attached" components, help to constitute the social instincts, thus contributing an erotic factor to friendship and comradeship, to *esprit de corps* and to the love of mankind in general. (*SE* 12:61)

Appealing to the notion of "fixation" points put forth in his earlier *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, Freud now suggests that Schreber, and paranoids more generally, have never fully succeeded in negotiating the passage beyond a narcissistically tinged homosexuality. The residues of this unfinished process mark the subject as one "exposed to the danger that some unusually intense wave of libido . . . may lead to a sexualization of their social instincts and so undo the sublimations which they had achieved in the course of their development" (*SE* 12:62). Freud then famously suggests that the various kinds of paranoid responses whereby an individual whose development has been arrested in this fashion defends against libidinal intensities "can all be represented as contradictions of the single proposition: '*I* (a man) *love him* (a man)'. . ." (*SE* 12:63). According to this remarkable transformational grammar of symptom formation, delusions of persecution are generated by negating the *verb*: "'I do not *love* him—I *hate* him, because HE PERSECUTES ME.'" The final clause is necessary because "the mechanism of symptom-formation in paranoia requires that internal perceptions—feelings—shall be replaced by external perceptions" (*SE* 12:63). Feelings are thus not only negated; the homophobic law of this disorder demands that they also be disavowed and *projected* onto external reality.[64]

Eve Sedgwick has translated Freud's formula into terms much closer to my own emphasis on Schreber's crisis of initiatory investiture. She writes that "the usefulness of Freud's formulation, in the case of Dr. Schreber, that paranoia in men results from the repression of their homosexual desire" has primarily "to do with the foregrounding . . . of intense male homosocial desire as at once the most compulsory and the most prohibited of social bonds."[65] Expanding upon Freud's thesis, she argues that in nineteenth-century bourgeois society the normal patterns and procedures of male entitlement *demand* from men a high degree of homosocial desire that can only be distinguished from homosexuality *im vulgären Sinne* by means of arbitrary and inconsistent cultural mappings. As a result, the very procedures of investiture that inserted Judge Schreber into a powerful homosocial elite would have exposed him to the chronic threat of homosexual panic (which can in turn function only when *homosexual desire* signifies *dysfunctional masculinity*):

> If such compulsory relationships as male friendship, mentorship, admiring identification, bureaucratic subordination, and heterosexual rivalry all involve forms of investment that force men into the arbitrarily mapped, self-contradictory, and anathema-riddled quicksands of the middle distance of male homosocial desire, then it appears that men enter into adult masculine entitlement only through acceding to the permanent threat that the small space they have cleared for themselves on this terrain may always, just as arbitrarily and with just as much justification, be foreclosed.[66]

My claim here, as in my earlier discussion of Freud's struggle with the homosociality pervading the inner circle of psychoanalytic pioneers, is that homosexual panic was only one of the chronic breakdown products of symbolic power and authority in Schreber's Germany. But as any reader of the *Memoirs* knows—and as the following chapters will develop in more detail—Schreber experienced what threatened his rights/rites of institution under a number of different "ideological" signs: as a feminization not always reducible to homosexualization; as the threat of contamination by machine-like, depersonalized linguistic operations; as the prospect of "Jewification" (metamorphosis into the Wandering Jew). What I call Schreber's "own private Germany" consists of his attempts, using the available repertoire of cultural values and valences, to interpret and to assign meaning to a maddening blockage in meaning that prevented him from assuming his place as a master of juridical hermeneutics and judgment. The gesture of ideological specification—of historical and cultural content analysis—that reads Schreber's breakdown as homosexual panic may in fact serve to occlude the more primary question as to the nature of the semiotic blockage at the core of Schreber's troubles. And it is to Freud's credit, I think, that his attention to this more primary matter compelled him to question his own previous "queer" reading.

X

After presenting his remarkable grammar of homophobic negation, Freud turns to the mechanism of repression (a promise to address the "more general psychological problems . . . involved in the question of the nature of projection" [*SE* 12:66] is never honored). After a brief presentation of the dynamic structure of repression as it functions in the sorts of neurotic disorders that had been the main focus of Freud's work up to this time, he proposes to explore the particular profile of this pathogenic mechanism as it functions in the more extreme case of paranoia. This path of investigation leads him to a consideration of one of Schreber's central delusions, namely the conviction that the world as he knew it had come to a catastrophic end.

In the sixth chapter of the *Memoirs*, Schreber writes of the period in the spring of 1894 while still a patient in Flechsig's clinic, which, though "the most gruesome time of my life . . . was also the *holy* time of my life, when my soul was immensely inspired by supernatural things, which came over me in ever increasing numbers amidst the rough treatment which I suffered from the outside" (79–80). During these months, Schreber came to believe that the whole of mankind had perished or that an end of the world was imminent:

> It was repeatedly mentioned in visions that the work of the past fourteen thousand years had been lost . . . and that approximately only another two hundred years were allotted to the earth. . . . During the latter part of my stay at Flechsig's Asylum I thought this period had already expired and therefore thought I was the last real human being left, and that the few human shapes whom I saw apart from myself—Professor Flechsig, some attendants, occasional more or less strange-looking patients—were only "fleeting-improvised-men" created by miracle. (85)

Schreber associates these phenomena with various political and religious conflicts, in particular with Protestant Germany's struggle against Catholic, Slavic, and Jewish forces arrayed against it and seeking to convert it.[67]

In the next chapter of the *Memoirs*, Schreber develops more fully the fantasy of the end of the world:

> Varying with the suggestions I received I formed different opinions about the manner in which it might have come about. In the first place I always thought of a decrease in the warmth of the sun through her moving further away, and consequently a more or less generalized glaciation. In the second place I thought of an earthquake or suchlike. . . . I further thought it possible that news had spread that in the modern world something in the nature of a wizard had suddenly appeared in the person of Professor Flechsig and that I myself, after all a person known in wider circles, had suddenly disappeared; this had spread terror and fear amongst the people, destroying the bases of religion and causing general nervousness and immorality. In its train devastating epidemics had broken upon mankind. (97)

Among the diseases contributing to the apocalyptic demise of mankind, the abject signs of which had already become visible on his own body, Schreber mentions the plague along with several varieties of leprosy: "*Lepra orientalis, Lepra indica, Lepra hebraica*, and *Lepra aegyptica*" (97).

Freud takes his cue for interpreting these eschatological fantasies from Schreber's belief, expressed after he had reassured himself that the world had in fact not come to an end, that "*a very profound inner change has taken place nevertheless*" (93). On the basis of his theory of libido, Freud writes, "we shall not find it difficult to explain these catastrophes":

> The patient has withdrawn from the people in his environment and from the external world generally the libidinal cathexis which he has hitherto directed on to them. Thus everything has become indifferent and irrelevant to him, and has to be explained by means of a secondary rationalization as being "miracled up, cursorily improvised." The end of the world is the projection of this internal catastrophe; his subjective world has come to an end since his withdrawal of his love from it. (*SE* 12:70)[68]

Freud's reading of this delusion culminates in a remarkable claim that gives the psychic mechanisms of paranoia a nearly kabbalistic cast; if Freud is right, it is as if Schreber had recreated, in debased form, the Lurianic "procedure" of *tikkun*, the recollection of divine sparks scattered into earthly exile through the cosmic trauma of the "breaking of the vessels":

> And the paranoiac builds [the world] again, not more splendid, it is true, but at least so that he can once more live in it. He builds it up by the work of his delusions. *The delusion-formation, which we take to be the pathological product, is in reality an attempt at recovery, a process of reconstruction*. Such a reconstruction after the catastrophe is successful to a greater or lesser extent, but never wholly so. . . . But the human subject has recaptured a relation, and often a very intense one, to the people and things in the world, even though the relation is a hostile one now, where formerly it was hopefully affectionate. We may say, then, that the process of repression proper consists in a detachment of the libido from people—and things—that were previously loved. It happened silently; we received no intelligence of it, but can only infer it from subsequent events. (*SE* 12:70–71)

As I've already indicated, Freud's reading of Schreber's "internal catastrophe" initiates a revision of his previous claim regarding homophobic negation/projection:

> What forces itself so noisily upon our attention is the process of recovery, which undoes the work of repression and brings back the libido again on to the people it had abandoned. In paranoia this process is carried out by the method of projection. It was incorrect of us to say that the perception which was suppressed internally is projected outwards; the truth is rather, as we now see, that what was abolished internally returns from without. (*SE* 12:71)

Like a tiny thread that, once pulled, unravels an entire garment, this seemingly modest revision inaugurates a long series of reservations, doubts, confessions of confusion and ignorance, speculations on (possibly) related issues, and calls for further research. The crux of Freud's dissatisfaction is the fit between his interpretations of what he sees as the two central delusions described by Schreber, the one dealing explicitly with sexuality and the sexed body, the other with the unmaking and making of the world as a space of meaningful social facts and relations. Freud reads the delusion of unmanning as a wishful fantasy to occupy a feminine position vis-à-vis key male figures of authority and power and the delusion of cosmic disaster as a generalized withdrawal of libidinal cathexes from the world, which serves as a defense against the intensity of the "homosexual" fantasy.

After noting that only a more thorough examination of the process of projection "will clear up our remaining doubts on this subject" (*SE* 12:71), Freud admits that his analysis of paranoid mechanisms do not sufficiently delimit them from other psychic disturbances in which libido is withdrawn from the world, such as occurs, for example, in mourning. His own answer to this difficulty, however, defines paranoia in language that almost exactly matches the way in which he would soon characterize melancholia in his famous essay on the subject. In paranoia, thanks to a fixation point at the stage of narcissism, the free-floating libido withdrawn from the world becomes the source of a pathologically heightened secondary narcissism: "we can assert that the length of *the step back from sublimated homosexuality to narcissism* is a measure of the amount of *regression* characteristic of paranoia" (*SE* 12:72).[69]

Another problem raised by Freud's dependence on libido theory concerns what appears to be the paradoxical temporality of the relation between the two central delusional complexes, for, as Freud notes, "it can be urged that the delusions of persecution . . . made their appearance at an earlier date than the fantasy of the end of the world; so that what is supposed to have been a return of the repressed actually preceded the repression itself—and this is patent nonsense" (*SE* 12:72–73). Freud's answer to this more serious objection is also far more equivocal; for the ear attuned to Schreber's diction, it has all the markings of one of Schreber's speculations on the mechanisms of soul murder or one of the many miraculous "systems" by which he was tormented:

> We must admit the possibility that a detachment of the libido such as we are discussing might just as easily be a partial one. . . . The process may then stop at the stage of a partial detachment or it may spread to a general one, which will loudly proclaim its presence in the symptoms of megalomania. Thus the detachment of the libido from the figure of Flechsig may nevertheless have been what was primary in the case of Schreber; it was immediately followed by the appearance of the delusion, which brought back the libido on to Flechsig again (though with a negative sign to mark the fact that repression had taken place) and thus annulled the work of repression. And now the battle of repression broke out anew, but this time with more powerful weapons. (*SE* 12:73)

The third and final objection that Freud entertains apropos of his insistence on the primacy of libido theory proves to be the most far-reaching and in fact returns us to some of the issues raised at the very beginning of our discussion. For this final objection concerns the ongoing conflict between Freud and the dissident members of the psychoanalytic circle—above all Adler and Jung—who were pushing beyond the limits of Freud's conception of libidinal cathexis. This final objection was anticipated in a footnote that Freud appended to his initial reading of the delusion of the end of the world. Freud writes there: "He has perhaps withdrawn from [the world] not only his libidinal cathexis, but his *interest in general*—that is, the cathexes that proceed from his ego as well" (*SE* 12:70; my emphasis). What is at stake here is nothing less than the question of the primacy of the domain of sexuality for understanding the emergence and nature of the self's cognitive, moral, and existential involvement with the social world. How does the human subject come to have a rapport with other subjects and the world more generally, how does the human subject come to inhabit a world of institutions and social facts (money, marriage, laws, governments, etc.) that profoundly matter, that are experienced as real, vital, and meaningful, and how does such a rapport come to be shattered? These questions, it would seem, push beyond the limits of the theory of libidinal cathexis that had guided Freud throughout his reading of the Schreber case. Indeed, given Freud's ultimate dependence on this theory and his sense that the very identity and integrity of the institution of psychoanalysis stands or falls with it, one can only agree with Robert Jay Lifton's astute remark that "Freud's views on imagery of the end of the world [in Schreber's text] were in some measure a defense of—or at least a warding off of a beginning attack on—his own ideological world."[70] With the questions raised by Schreber's apocalyptic visions we have, in other words, encountered once again what I earlier characterized as Freud's allegorical presence in the text. The rhythm of equivocation and doubt that informs these final pages of Freud's essay registers the degree of "seismic" unrest provoked by the task of applying libido theory, and the "repressive hypothesis" to which it is committed, to the sort of radical disturbance in one's sense of (one's right to) being-in-the-world manifest in the delusion of world destruction. Confessing his helplessness in the face of such matters, Freud summarizes the central theoretical questions in the following terms:

> We can no more dismiss the possibility that disturbances of the libido may react upon the ego-cathexes than we can overlook the converse possibility—namely, that a secondary or induced disturbance of the libidinal processes may result from abnormal changes in the ego. Indeed, it is probable that processes of this kind constitute the distinctive characteristic of psychoses. (*SE* 12:75)

Following a series of speculative interventions into current debates concerning diagnostic categories and the remarkable confession, noted previously, of a structural homology between libido theory and Schreber's delusional cosmology, Freud concludes by giving the final word of the essay not to the libido but rather to the ego, the *Ich*. It is the developmental history of the ego and, ultimately, of that more amorphous locus of agency, *the self*, which, Freud seems to suggest, holds the key to understanding the sort of profound disturbance registered in Schreber's apocalyptic delusions. This disturbance is, I would suggest, best understood not in the context of the ego psychology that was to emerge from these final reflections,[71] but rather in one attuned to the operations and crises of symbolic power and authority.

XI

Freud shows his greatest sensitivity to these crises in the postscript to the case study, published a year after the original essay. In these reflections on Schreber's deep affinities with totemistic patterns of thought and on what Lifton has aptly termed the "disquieting border area of theology and psychopathology,"[72] Freud demonstrates a keen awareness of the problems pertaining to the historical transmission of legacies of social and existential legitimation. If Freud is right about Schreber's obsessions with names, titles, and lineage (i.e., the dimension of legitimacy ultimately transmitted by way of the patronymic—the Name-of-the-Father, as Jacques Lacan puts it), then it behooves us to attend more closely to the clues Schreber gives as to what has gone awry in the transmission of those symbolic resources with which he might have reassured himself that he was, in a deep and dependable sense, legitimate. Schreber himself indicates that the disturbance or blockage in question and the various aberrations in the psychic and cosmic order that follow from it, are the results not so much of an absence or lack of access to sites and resources of legitimation as of a kind of uncanny surplus of power and influence secreted by them. If Lacan is right about Schreber—that his psychosis is the result of a "foreclosure" of the paternal metaphor, the Name-of-the-Father, in short, what I have been referring to as the *symbolic* resources allowing for a deep and dependable sense of existential legitimacy—then this default would seem to be a function not of a "too little" but rather of a "too much," not of an excessive distance from the attentions of a solicitous authority but rather of an excessive proximity. Nowhere is Schreber clearer about this than in his repeated references to the fact that God normally remains distant from and ignorant of living human beings.

Freud's reading of Schreber's conception of God's *lack* of omnipotence as a critique or attack and thus as a sign of rebellion, hostility, and aggression vis-à-vis God and the paternal agency Freud sees him as representing, has become the standard reading of this peculiar element of Schreber's theological system. And yet we should recall Schreber's quite emphatic insistence that this lack is precisely what is demanded by, or better, what constitutes the so-called Order of the World, that reign of cosmic law the transgression of which is figured as excessive and prolonged "nerve contact" between God and Schreber. "As a rule," Schreber writes, "God did not interfere directly in the fate of peoples or individuals—I call this the state of affairs in accordance with the Order of the World" (48). This rule served, it seemed, to protect not only mortals from the overwhelming force of divine immediacy but also God Himself from the dangers of too much nerve contact, "because for reasons which cannot be further elucidated, the nerves of *living* human beings particularly when in a state of *high-grade excitation*, have such power of attraction for the nerves of God that He would not be able to free Himself from them again, and would thus endanger his own existence" (48). For these reasons, God entered into nerve contact with living human beings only in exceptional circumstances, for example, in dream states, states of poetic inspiration, or in moments of political and social crisis of entire nation-states, such as in war. The law regulating distances and proximities between the sacred and the profane—the Order of the World—deemed that "regular contact between God and human souls occurred . . . only after death" (48). Schreber notes that, from the perspective he is presenting, "'the Order of the World' may appear as something impersonal and higher, more powerful than God or even as ruling God." "In fact," he continues, "there is no obscurity. '*The Order of the World*' is the lawful relation which, *resting on God's nature and attributes, exists between God and the creation called to life by Him*" (79).[73] Schreber admits that such a view implies the paradox that

> God, whose power of rays is essentially constructive in nature, and creative, came into conflict with Himself when he attempted the irregular policy against me, aimed solely at destroying my bodily integrity and reason. . . . Or perhaps, using an oxymoron, God Himself was on my side in His fight against me, that is to say I was able to bring His attributes and powers into battle as an effective weapon in my self-defence. (79)

If Freud is right, that God stands in for the father, then Schreber has discovered a remarkable feature of this figure, a feature absolutely central to the emergence of Schreber's paranoid universe. Indeed, with his insight into God's internal division, Schreber may have discovered the key to that aspect of paranoia that, according to Freud, was typical for the illness, namely a certain tendency toward splitting (the father into God and Flechsig; God into the upper and lower God; Flechsig into multiple Flechsig-souls, etc.).[74] The father figure, it seems, undergoes a kind of self-division into two distinct paternal agencies: the one distant and marked by a peculiar ignorance about living human beings and their bodily functions—an ignorance that, as Schreber takes pains to emphasize, *accords with the law*—and the other, once lured by the right bait, the right *Luder*, obscenely involved in the affairs of sentient human beings: their sexual pleasures, their most private thoughts and dreams, even their bowel movements. One might say that the entire "plot" of the *Memoirs* revolves around Schreber's attempt to integrate these two fathers, to find a way to reconcile the "outlaw" or extralegal paternal presence—this "surplus father"—with the father identified with the Order of the World and the law of proper distances. In the following chapters, we will be concerned with what might be called the historical truth of this surplus father: the specific historical conditions under which such a figure comes to exercise his power.

TWO

THE FATHER WHO KNEW TOO MUCH

I

SINCE the publication of Freud's essay, much of the literature on Schreber has focused on efforts to flesh out the historical and biographical details surrounding Schreber's breakdown, to establish the referential dimension of the "surplus father" whose intrusive presence Schreber most often names "Flechsig" and which he ultimately makes responsible for the degeneration of the Order of the World. These efforts begin, in a sense, with Freud's own disclaimer regarding such concrete historical knowledge. Toward the end of the second part of his essay, just at the moment when he announces triumphantly that his analysis has found its way to "the familiar ground of the father-complex," Freud alludes to the missing historical dimension of his analysis: "The patient's struggle with Flechsig became revealed to him as a conflict with God, and we must therefore construe it as an infantile conflict with the father whom he loved; the details of that conflict (*of which we know nothing*) are what determined the content of his delusions" (*SE* 12:55; my emphasis). He later adds the following remark:

> Any one who was more daring than I am in making interpretations, or who was in touch with Schreber's family and consequently better acquainted with the society in which he moved and the small events of his life, would find it an easy matter to trace back innumerable details of his delusions to their sources and so discover their meaning, and this in spite of the censorship to which the *Denkwürdigkeiten* have been subjected. (*SE* 12:57)

Such disclaimers notwithstanding, Freud did, as we have seen, make a number of assumptions about Schreber's biography in general and the personality of his father, Daniel Gottlob Moritz Schreber, in particular (to avoid confusion, I will refer to the father as Moritz Schreber; the name Schreber will be reserved for the son, Daniel Paul). One will recall Freud's remarks about Moritz Schreber's significance as a doctor, public figure, and author of a popular exercise book, *Ärztliche Zimmergymnastik*. This is, of course, the one book among Mortiz Schreber's numerous publications on health, calisthenics, orthopedics, and child rearing that his son refers to in his *Memoirs*.[1] Freud acknowledges, also, the existence of numerous "Schreber Associations" in Germany (and in Saxony, in particular), which testify to Moritz Schreber's lasting influence (it was these organizations, formed after Moritz Schreber's death for the purpose of carrying forth his spiritual and cultural legacy, that first introduced "Schreber Gardens" in Germany). Finally, Freud also acknowledges the help of a Dresden psychiatrist, Dr. Arnold Georg Stegmann, in obtaining certain biographical data about Schreber and his family; there is no evidence as to what information Stegmann passed on to Freud.

The real breakthrough in efforts to situate Schreber more firmly within his historical and biographical context occurred in the 1950s with a series of publications by the American psychoanalyst, William Niederland. Niederland was the first "professional" reader of Schreber to submit the father's publications to systematic study. As he puts it in the introduction to his collection of essays on Schreber, the careful study of Moritz Schreber's theories and practices of health, fitness, and child rearing makes it "possible to correlate the bizarre mental formations in Schreber's delusional system (including florid fantasies, distorted images, hallucinatory experiences) to specific events in the early father-son relationship and thus to demonstrate *the nucleus of truth* in the son's paranoid productions."[2]

The symptoms whose referential truth is of most concern to Niederland are those affecting the body. Here is Schreber's own list of some of the body parts and organs that were subject to manipulation by supernatural forces:

> The miracles enacted against the organs of the thoracic and abdominal cavities were very multifarious. . . . I . . . remember that I once had a different heart. . . . On the other hand my *lungs* were for a long time the object of violent and very threatening attacks. . . . At about the same time some of my *ribs* were sometimes temporarily smashed, always with the result that what had been destroyed was re-formed after a time. One of the most horrifying miracles was the so-called *compression-of-the-chest-miracle*, which I endured at least several dozen times; it consisted in the whole chest wall being compressed, so that the state of compression caused by the lack of breath was transmitted to my whole body. . . . I existed frequently without a stomach. . . . Of other internal organs I will only mention the *gullet* and the *intestines*, which were torn out or vanished repeatedly, further the *pharynx*, which I partly ate up several times, finally the *seminal cord*, against which very painful miracles were directed. . . . Those miracles always appeared most threatening to me which were in one way or another directed against my reason. These concerned firstly my head; *secondly . . .* also the *spinal cord*, which next to the head was considered as

> the seat of reason. One therefore attempted to pump the spinal cord out, which was done by so-called "little men" placed in my feet. . . . All my *muscles* were (and still are) the object of miracles for the purpose of preventing all movements and every occupation I am about to undertake. . . . My *eyes* and the *muscles of the lids* which serve to open and close them were an almost uninterrupted target for miracles. . . . Some of the "little devils" participated in a miracle which was often enacted against my head. . . . This was perhaps the most abominable of all miracles—next to the compression-of-the-chest-miracle; the expression used for it if I remember correctly was "the head-compressing-machine." In consequence of the many flights of rays, etc., there had appeared in my skull a deep cleft or rent roughly along the middle, which probably was not visible from outside but was from inside. The "little devils" stood on both sides of this cleft and compressed my head as though in a vice by turning a kind of screw, causing my head temporarily to assume an elongated almost pear-shaped form. . . . Manifold miracles were also directed against my *skeleton*, apart from those against my ribs and skull. . . . In the foot bones particularly in the region of the heel, *caries* was often caused by miracle, causing me considerable pain. . . . A similar miracle was the so-called *coccyx miracle*. This was an extremely painful, caries-like state of the lowest vertebrae. Its purpose was to make sitting and even lying down impossible. (132–39)

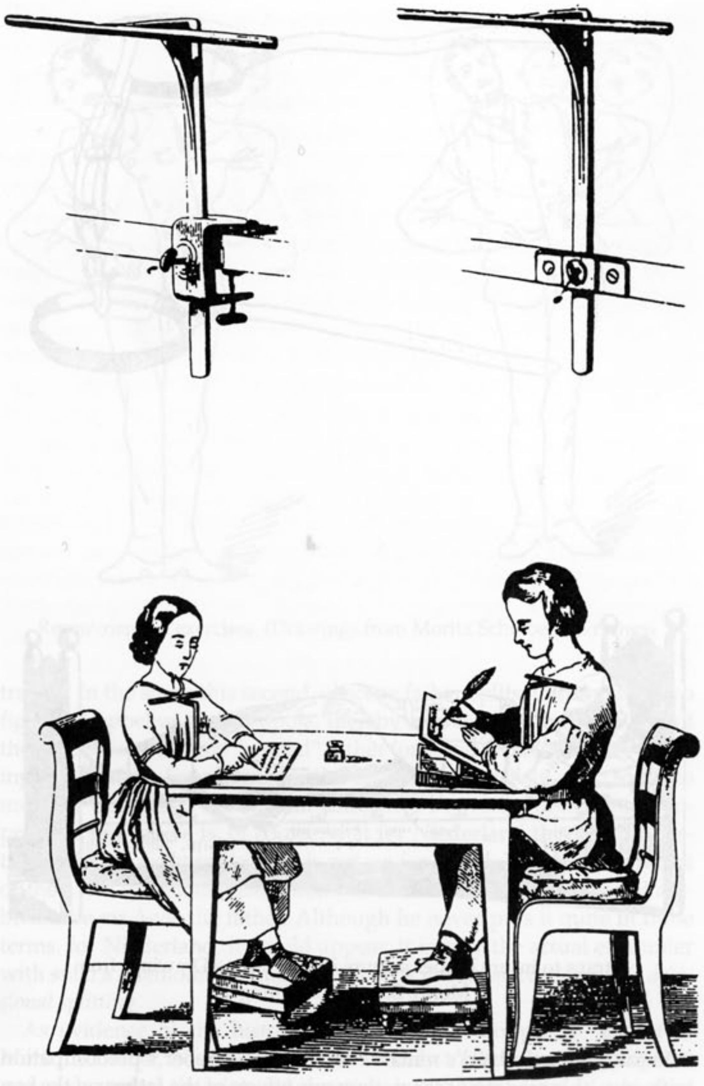
According to Niederland, many of these examples of a radically distorted bodily ego can be traced to the father's *actual handling* of his son during childhood. Others, Niederland allows, may have their source in the father's books, many of which were copiously illustrated and which detail a wide spectrum of medical and parental interventions into the physical and mental life of children. Still others might be traced to Schreber's encounter with the deformed bodies of his father's young orthopedic patients who, as a rule, lived in the Schreber home and took meals with the family. "One can assume," Niederland concludes, "that by the time the child Schreber entered his third or fourth year of life, he had already undergone a notable degree of traumatization." Schreber's delusional theological system is, in Niederland's view, a byproduct of this traumatization by the father's peculiar system of health and fitness: "He brought to bear on the child a whole system of medical gymnastics, calisthenic exercises, orthopedic appliances, and other regulatory practices which he had invented." In Niederland's view, then, each of Schreber's bodily symptoms has a kernel of referential truth to be found in the father's system. The "coccyx miracle" refers, for example, "to the strict rules for sitting down enforced by the father," while the miracles directed against the eyes and eyelids allude to fact that the "prescriptions of Schreber's father included a whole system of eye-washing, eye-sponging, lid-cleansing procedures and that this system was put into action several times a day beginning in the postnatal period." The two miracles that Schreber characterizes as among the most painful, the "head-compressing-machine," and the "compression-of-the-chest-miracle," are traced to the father's orthopedic inventions designed to improve the posture of children, the *Kopfhalter* and the *Geradehalter*, as well as to a system of straps pulled across the child's chest in bed to make sure that he or she remained supine during sleep. Schreber's sensations of bodily fragmentation refer, according to Niederland, to unconscious memories of illustrations of dissected bodies and body parts observed in his father's medical books, while the miracle whereby Schreber is himself addressed (by the souls in contact with him) as having several heads is to be traced to illustrations of exercises in Moritz Schreber's books on gymnastics. Schreber's characterization of the Order of the World as a "miraculous structure" or *wundervoller Aufbau*—Schreber himself notes that this expression was "suggested to me from outside" (54)—is seen by Niederland as an allusion to one of the father's books: *Anthropos: Der Wunderbau des menschlichen Organismus*.[3]

In summary, Niederland argues that although Schreber's symptoms at times resemble the manifestations of the "influencing machines" found in the persecutory delusions of many schizophrenics, "there is a realistic core in this [Schreber's] delusional material," the historical truth of which is to be found in the father's medical, orthopedic, and pedagogical theories and practices. These theories and practices provide the program, as it were, of that obscene paternal agency that I have referred to as the "surplus father." As Niederland puts it,

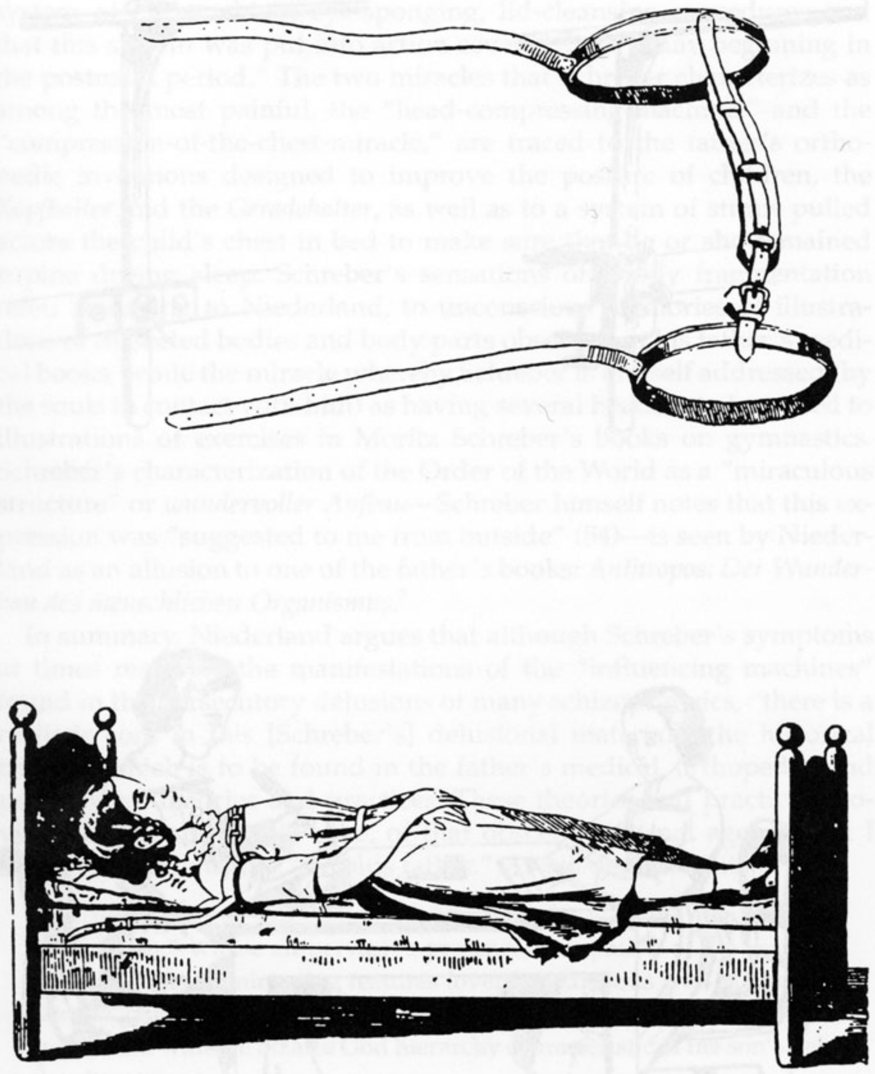
> With respect to the father, one might reason he was the type of "symbiotic father," whose all-pervasive presence, usurpation of the maternal role, and other domineering features (overtly sadistic as well as paternalistically benevolent, punitive as well as seductive) lent themselves to their fusion with the bizarre God hierarchy characteristic of the son's delusional system.

In Niederland's view, the *overproximity* of such a father to a son created an environment in which, as he puts it, "there was always castration in the air":

> The father's aggressive and coercive actions; the orthopedic contraptions; the disrupted, dismembered, and dissected aspects of the human body; the violence and authoritarian impetus of the injunctions; the sequence masturbation-plague-sterility-insanity (castration)—all belong in this setting.[4]

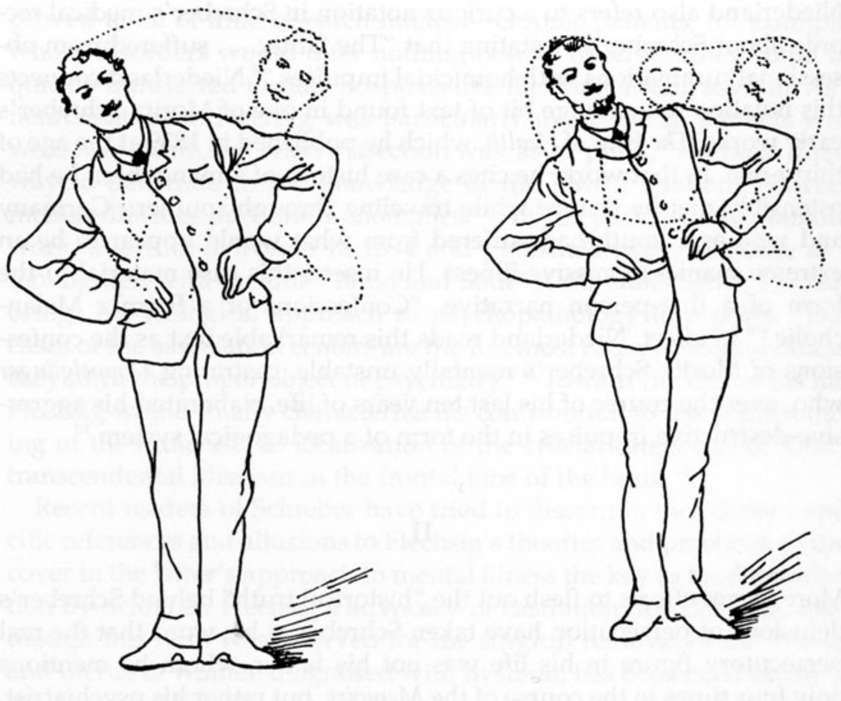


The "Geradehalter." (Drawings from Moritz Schreber's writings)



Straps to insure proper posture during sleep. (Drawings from Moritz Schreber's writings)

Recalling Niederland's remarks on Moritz Schreber's preoccupation with eyes, this reading of the pathogenic effects of the father on the son exhibits strong parallels with Freud's reading of E. T. A. Hoffmann's "The Sandman" in his essay on "The Uncanny."[5] In his interpretation of the story, Freud posits a splitting of the father into two distinct paternal agencies, the one nurturing and caring, the other demonic and cas-



Recommended exercises. (Drawings from Moritz Schreber's writings)

trating. In the story, this second, obscene father splits, in turn, into two figures, Coppelius and Coppola, thereby allowing for the repetition of the encounter with this "second" father (one will recall that in his reading of Schreber, Freud stresses the splitting of Flechsig and God into multiple agencies). The crucial difference between Niederland's approach and Freud's is, of course, that for Niederland this second, castrating father *really existed* and is not, as for Freud, largely the product of the son's delusional elaboration of an inevitable and universal ambivalence vis-à-vis the father. Although he never puts it quite in these terms, for Niederland, it would appear, it is only the actual encounter with such a "demonic" father that *converts normal ambivalence into delusional splitting*.

As evidence of the historical truth of the "Coppelius" aspect of Moritz Schreber, Niederland refers not only to the latter's orthopedic and pedagogical theories and practices but to indications of a kind of psychic, even psychotic, doubling on the father's part.[6] Niederland notes, for example, that the last years of Moritz Schreber's life were marked by recurrent depressions, the likely sequelae of a concussion caused by a falling ladder in 1851 when he was forty-three years old.[7]

Niederland also refers to a curious notation in Schreber's medical records about Schreber *père* stating that "The father . . . suffered from obsessional ruminations with homicidal impulses."[8] Niederland connects this notation to a strange bit of text found in one of Moritz Schreber's early works, *The Book of Health*, which he published in 1839 at the age of thirty-one. In that work, he cites a case history of a man whom he had ostensibly met by chance while traveling through southern Germany and who as a youth had suffered from what would appear to be an extreme manic-depressive illness. He inserts this case material in the form of a first-person narrative, "Confessions of a Former Melancholic."[9] In effect, Niederland reads this remarkable text as the confessions of Moritz Schreber's mentally unstable, castrating *Doppelgänger* who, over the course of his last ten years of life, elaborated his aggressive-destructive impulses in the form of a pedagogical system.[10]

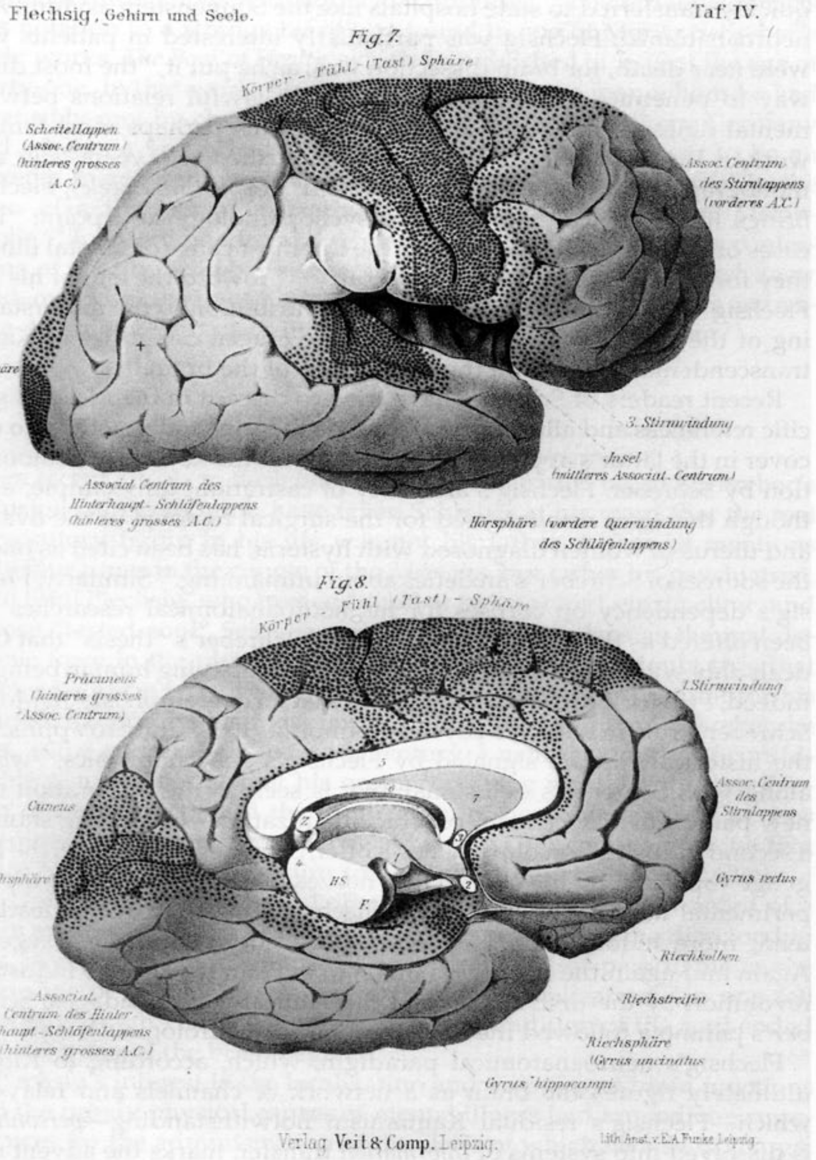
II

More recent efforts to flesh out the "historical truth" behind Schreber's delusions of persecution have taken Schreber at his word that the real persecutory figure in his life was not his father, whom he mentions only four times in the course of the *Memoirs*, but rather his psychiatrist, Paul Emil Flechsig, who treated Schreber twice at his Leipzig clinic, and whose "tested soul" Schreber repeatedly characterizes as the real demonic force in the plot against him. Although it is no doubt true that Flechsig's name would have largely been forgotten were it not for his immortalization by his most famous patient, Daniel Paul Schreber, he was, at the end of the nineteenth century, a neuroanatomist of considerable renown. Because of his groundbreaking work on the myelination of nerve fibers and the localization of nervous diseases, he was appointed professor of psychiatry at Leipzig University, a position that in 1882 would include the directorship of the new Psychiatric Clinic of the University Hospital. As Lothane has noted, the appointment of a brain anatomist with no real psychiatric experience to the directorship of a psychiatric clinic signaled a historical shift of paradigms in the discipline of psychiatry toward extreme medicalization: "in one fell swoop, through Flechsig's nomination, the tradition of the soul ended and the reign of the brain began."[11]

Flechsig's interest in the localization and mapping of brain functions and the purely physical causes of mental illness had immediate consequences for the administration of the clinic of which he was in charge. In order to guarantee a steady stream of fresh cases to study, he took an active role in the admission and discharge of patients. If a patient proved to be of little research interest—chronic patients, for example, whose disorders would offer nothing new to observe—they could be quickly transferred to state hospitals like the Sonnenstein asylum. As a neuroanatomist, Flechsig was particularly interested in patients who were near death, for brain dissection was, as he put it, "the most direct way to penetrate to the knowledge of the lawful relations between mental illnesses and brain anomalies."[12] In his perhaps most famous work, a lecture delivered in 1894 and published two years later as a monograph with the title "Brain and Soul" (*Gehirn und Seele*), Flechsig brings his biological approach to psychopathology to a point: "Diseases of the association centers are the foremost cause of mental illness; they form the proper object of psychiatry."[13] Toward the end of his life, Flechsig would finally characterize his contribution to the understanding of the mind as the localization of the crucial categories of Kant's transcendental idealism in the frontal lobe of the brain.[14]

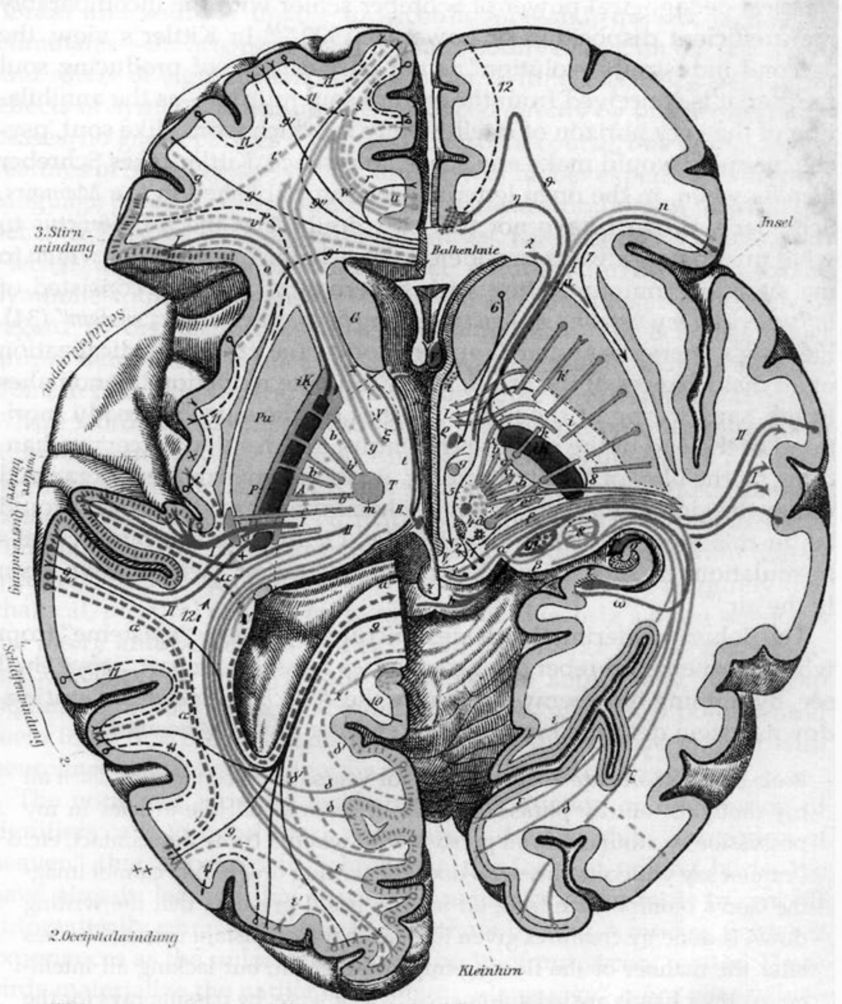
Recent readers of Schreber have tried to discern in the *Memoirs* specific references and allusions to Flechsig's theories and practices, to discover in the latter's approach to mental illness the key to his demonization by Schreber. Flechsig's advocacy of castration, for example, even though this term was reserved for the surgical removal of the ovaries and uterus of women diagnosed with hysteria, has been cited as one of the sources of Schreber's anxieties about unmanning.[15] Similarly, Flechsig's dependency on corpses for his neuroanatomical researches has been offered as the historical truth behind Schreber's "thesis" that God dealt only with corpses and knew nothing about living human beings.[16] Indeed, Friedrich Kittler has suggested that an overemphasis on Moritz Schreber's role in his son's psychosis amounts to a failure to appreciate the historical rupture signaled by Flechsig's "psychophysics," which along with Schreber's delusional text, is seen as the elaboration of a new paradigm of social and psychic organization—of nothing short of a second industrial revolution. For Kittler, Schreber's language, the language "spoken" by his overexcited nerves, is "the language of the experimental neurologist Flechsig": "Flechsig's message of the death of man, more hidden than Nietzsche's, has not reached the exegetes. Again and again the attempt is made to explain the second industrial revolution by the first. . . . Beyond mechanical head bandages, Schreber's paranoia followed the lead of an insane neurologist."[17]

Flechsig's neuroanatomical paradigm, which, according to Kittler, ultimately figures the brain as a network of channels and relays in which—Flechsig's residual Kantianism notwithstanding—*personhood* is dissolved into systems of *information* transfer, marks the advent of a far more radical and efficient intervention of power into the body of its "object" than Moritz Schreber's merely *mechanical* manipulations of


Flechsig, Gehirn und Seele.
Taf. IV.
Fig. 7.
Körper Fühl- (Tast) Sphäre
Scheitellappen (Assoc. Centrum) (hinteres grosses A.C.)
Assoc. Centrum des Stirnlappens (vorderes A.C.)
Sehsphäre
3. Stirnwindung
Insel (mittleres Associat. Centrum)
Associat. Centrum des Hinterhaupt-Schläfenlappens (hinteres grosses A.C.)
Hörsphäre (vordere Querwindung des Schläfenlappens)
Fig. 8.
Körper Fühl (Tast) - Sphäre
Praecuneus (hinteres grosses Assoc. Centrum)
1. Stirnwindung
Assoc. Centrum des Stirnlappens
Cuneus
Sehsphäre
Gyrus rectus
Riechkolben
Riechstreifen
Associat. Centrum des Hinterhaupt-Schläfenlappens (hinteres grosses A.C.)
Riechsphäre (Gyrus uncinatus
Gyrus hippocampi
Verlag Veit & Comp. Leipzig.
Lith. Anst. v. E.A. Funke Leipzig

Illustrations from Flechsig's monograph, *Gehirn und Seele*. (Leipzig: Veit and Co., 1896)

Flechsig, Gehirn und Seele. *Fig. 9.* Taf. V.


3. Stirn-windung
Insel
Balkenknie
Schläfenwindung
vordere / hintere Querwindung
Pu
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G
T
2. Occipitalwindung
Kleinhirn

▬ *Motorische Leitungen (innere Kapsel - Hiruschenkelfuss - Brücke, Rückenmark)*
▬ *Bahnen, welche mit der Hörsphäre bezw. dem Hörnerv (Nervus cochlearis) zusammenhängen*
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▬ *" " " " Riechsphäre, Riechnerv und Gyrus hippocampi "*
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▬ *Associations-Fasersysteme, welche in der linken Hemisphäre nur innerhalb der Associations-*
links Centren sich verzweigen, soweit sie aber (im Balken 9 9¹) die Mittellinie überschreiten auf der anderen Seite zum guten Theil mit Sinnescentren zusammenhängen
rechts s. Tafel-Erklärung

Verlag **Veit & Comp.** Leipzig. Lith. Anst. v. E. A. Funke, Leipzig.

Illustration from Flechsig's monograph, *Gehirn und Seele.*
(Leipzig: Veit and Co., 1896)

children's muscles and activities: "nothing allows us to equate the classical pedagogical power of Schreber senior with the incomparably more efficient disposition of power in 1900."[18] In Kittler's view, the "second industrial revolution" is not only capable of producing soul murder, it is conceived from the start *as* soul murder—as the annihilation of the very horizon of intelligibility in which words like soul, psyche, or spirit would make any sense. In essence, Kittler takes Schreber *literally* when, in the open letter to Flechsig published in the *Memoirs*, Schreber writes: "I have not the least doubt that the *first impetus* to what my doctors always considered mere 'hallucinations' but which to me signified communication with supernatural powers, consisted of *influences on my nervous system emanating from your nervous system*" (34). Flechsig's "nervous system," understood as the radical medicalization of all disturbances of the "soul," their ultimate reduction to anomalies in the hard wiring of the brain, finishes off the subject already moribund at the end of the nineteenth century as a result of excessive handling by the likes of Moritz Schreber. A clinical environment organized under the sign of Flechsig's psychophysical research paradigm would be, in this view, *inherently traumatizing*. Or to return to Niederland's formulation, in such an environment "castration" would have been in the air.[19]

The delusion offering the clearest picture of the new "episteme" from whose torments Schreber struggles to free himself—in part, as we shall see, by miming the enemy—is that of the *Aufschreibesystem* or writing-down-system described in the ninth chapter of the *Memoirs*:[20]

> *Books or other notes* are kept in which for years have been *written-down* all my thoughts, all my phrases, all my necessaries, all the articles in my possession or around me, all persons with whom I come into contact, etc. I cannot say with certainty who does the writing down. As I cannot imagine God's omnipotence lacks all intelligence, I presume that the writing down is done by creatures given human shape on distant celestial bodies after the manner of the fleeting-improvised-men, but lacking all intelligence; their hands are led automatically, as it were, by passing rays for the purpose of making them write down, so that later rays can again look at what has been written. (119)

For Kittler, the crucial feature of this registration system is its purely *mechanical and automatic* nature, specifically the absence of any animating soul or spirit: "If the recording occurs mechanically and without any *Geist*, the probability of its being a purely technical procedure is greater."[21] Kittler's important insight is that a radical despiritualization of language production (and reproduction) is structurally inscribed in Flechsig's neuroanatomical understanding of the mind.

To put it somewhat differently, Flechsig's biologistic approach to "brain and soul" is unable to account for—and, indeed, ultimately eliminates—the *heterogeneity* of organic, bodily *causes*, on the one hand, and *effects* of signification, on the other. Within Flechsig's paradigm, effects of symbolic meaning are produced *directly* by biochemical processes; no gap separates them. This is also, of course, one of the central features of Schreber's psychotic universe: Schreber experiences his own language production as a series of mechanical vibrations of nerve fibers set in motion by external physical causes. Kittler's thesis is that both Flechsig and Schreber elaborate in their writing a universe in which the symbolic-spiritual dimension—*Geist*—in its radical heterogeneity with regard to organic processes has been nullified. As Schreber's text amply demonstrates, once the symbolic dimension collapses into the domain of bodily causes, we are in a universe of extreme *literalization*, where words are assimilated to things that in turn produce immediate alterations in the body. Influence anxiety becomes the fear of real bodily violation. Kittler's point is that such fears were warranted; the new paradigms of brain science participated in this "psychotic" tendency to eliminate the gap separating the domain of bodily causes from that of meaning, to see signification as a series of *direct* effects of purely mechanical, physical causes. We might say that Flechsig's brain science is the *theory* and Schreber's delusions are the *practice* of the same traumatic collapse of the symbolic dimension of subjectivity, of the gap separating bodily cause and symbolic effect. Schreber's point would seem to be that the elimination of that gap—the attempt to fill it with neuroanatomical knowledge—is nothing short of soul murder.

The notion of a purely mechanical reproduction or registration of signifiers calls to mind those remnants of the erstwhile "forecourts of heaven" that appeared to Schreber in the form of talking birds. We have already learned that it was the nature of those birds to reel off automatically phrases drummed into them by rote, a process Schreber experiences as the unloading into his body of putrescent matter. These birds materialize the nature of the "nerve-language" more generally—language viewed under the aspect of the mechanical repetition and memorization of signifiers without regard to meaning or, as Schreber sometimes puts it, "genuine feeling." In one of his postscripts to the *Memoirs*, Schreber links the talking birds to Flechsig's "tested soul"; together they provide those "intermediary instances" [*Mittelinstanzen*] responsible for the writing-down system (235). These strange intermediaries offer one of the most compelling links between Schreber's mad cosmos and the Kafkan world of semihuman copyists, secretaries, and assorted servants. Such figures, partaking in characteristics of animal and machine, occupy an uncanny ontological domain—call it the *subal-*

tern sublime. They serve to mediate the transfer, the conversion of the materiality of meaningless, physical causes—the rote repetition of dead letters—into ideal, symbolic effects. They inhabit a space comparable with that impossible frontier that Freud identified as the locus of the drives, the site where blind nature begins to exceed itself—where the merely *sinnlich* becomes *über-sinnlich*—and is thereby converted into culture.[22] That these peculiar mediators—these "drive representatives"—appear at all, let alone command the stage of psychic and literary attention, indicates that something has gone profoundly awry with this conversion.[23]

At this point, we should pause to consider a peculiar paradox apropos of Schreber's methods of defense against the assault by the forces of mechanical repetition, of which the writing-down system is only one, more fully elaborated, instance. All such "systems" are species of that larger genus of torture, which Schreber calls *compulsive thinking* or *Denkzwang*. "Compulsive thinking," as Schreber defines it immediately after his discussion of the talking birds,

> contravenes man's natural right of mental relaxation, of temporary rest from mental activity through thinking nothing, or as the expression goes in the basic language, it disturbs the "basis" [*Untergrund*] of a human being. My nerves are influenced by the rays to vibrate corresponding to certain human words; their choice therefore is not subject to my own will, but is due to an influence exerted on me from without. (171–72)[24]

Schreber adds that what he directly feels is "that the talking voices (lately in particular the voices of the talking birds) as *inner voices* move like long threads" into his head and "there cause a painful feeling of tension through the poison of corpses which they deposit" (174), once more linking a linguistic repetition compulsion to death and abjection. It is here that Schreber introduces his paradoxical strategy of defense, which amounts to an attempt to appropriate for himself the abject site of this compulsion and, as it were, beat the psychophysical repetition machine at its own game:

> In earlier years my nerves simply had to think on, to answer questions, to complete broken-off sentences etc. Only later was I gradually able to accustom my nerves (my "basis") to ignoring the stimulation which forced them to think on, *by simply repeating the words and phrases and thus turning them into not-thinking-of-anything-thoughts*. I have done that for a long time now with conjunctions and adverbs which would need a full clause for their completion. If I hear for instance "Why, because I," or "Be it," *I repeat these words for as long as possible without attempting to complete the sense by trying to connect them with what I thought before*. (174; my emphasis)

Later in the same chapter, elaborating on his inventiveness in developing methods of defense, Schreber suggests that in addition to playing the piano and reading, he "usually found committing poems to memory a successful remedy"(176). The remedy against rote repetition, in other words, turns out to be a self-inflicted dose of rote repetition in which the content of the material mechanically committed to memory is of little or no importance:

> I learnt a great number of poems by heart particularly Schiller's ballads, long sections of Schiller's and Goethe's dramas, as well as arias from operas and humorous poems, amongst others from Max and Moritz, Struwelpeter and Spekter's fables, which I then recite in silence . . . verbatim. *Their value as poetry naturally does not matter*; however insignificant the rhymes, even obscene verses are worth their weight in gold as mental nourishment compared with the terrible nonsense my nerves are otherwise forced to listen to. (176; my emphasis)

Schreber adds to this catalog of defenses "counting aloud up to a large figure" and notes that when "severe bodily pain sets in or persistent bellowing occurs, the last remaining remedy is swearing aloud" (176).

III

Our interpretive dilemma has been, not unlike Schreber's own, to locate and identify the forces and entities producing his suffering without, however, falling back into Schreberian demonology or other, less fantastic, ideological habits of mind. We are, in other words, still very much within the Freudian project of accounting for the "demonic" in human affairs in a post-Enlightenment framework. What links Niederland's approach to Moritz Schreber and Kittler's approach to Paul Flechsig is an intuition that Schreber was traumatized not, as Freud had argued, by a close encounter with purely intrapsychic demons (i.e., previously repressed libidinal *desires*), but rather by exposure to particular forms of intersubjective *power*, in the one case, of a more paternal and pedagogical nature, in the other, of a more "scientific" and institutional kind. The advantage of Kittler's approach lies not so much in his appreciation of the differences, neglected by Niederland and others, between pedagogical and "psychophysical" power, between Moritz Schreber's child-rearing practices and Paul Flechsig's brain science, as in his insight that the possession and elaboration of certain kinds of *knowledge*—in this case, knowledge about the body, its development, and its functions—is already a form of power that can produce traumatic effects in those positioned as objects of such knowledge. Indeed, Kittler's crucial insight about Flechsig's neuroanatomical paradigm was that the attempt to account for Schreber's demons within such a paradigm can, by way of a "dialectic of Enlightenment," actually generate more demons.

Perhaps the best characterization of the traumatizing effects of a mode of expert knowledge is offered by Schreber himself in his open letter to Flechsig inserted at the beginning of his *Memoirs*. There, as we have already seen, Schreber suggests that the aspect of Flechsig responsible for his torments—Schreber refers to this dark, Coppelius-like side of Flechsig as the latter's "tested soul"—might be correlated with Flechsig's transgression of his clinical mandate for the purposes of scientific experimentation, and that "in order to stress forcefully that this was a malpractice it was called 'soul murder'" (34–35).

In a legal essay appended to the *Memoirs*, Schreber revisits the question of the limits of psychiatric expertise and power from another direction. In this "brief," Schreber considers the question: "In what circumstances can a person considered insane be detained in an asylum against his will?" (255). Here Schreber is concerned with a transgression of the clinical mandate not into the field of *scientific* knowledge but rather into that of *forensic* knowledge; he is concerned with the participation of medical practitioners in the domain of legal questions and concerns pertaining to the rights of patients. Certainly one of the most significant contributions of Lothane's work has been to profile the role played by the new discipline of forensic psychiatry, embodied in the persons of Schreber's two psychiatrists, Paul Flechsig and Guido Weber, in Schreber's symptomatology.[25]

The establishment of forensic psychiatry as a proper domain of medical expertise and authority accompanied the rise of institutional psychiatry in Germany since the mid-nineteenth century. Of particular importance for the consolidation of the forensic dimension of psychiatric expertise was the emergence of the first antipsychiatry movement in modern Europe, a public outcry over abuses of psychiatric practices culminating in Reichstag debates in the late 1890s on insanity laws, commitment procedures, living conditions within psychiatric institutions, and the state supervision of psychiatrists. It is likely that Flechsig's extreme ideological commitment to a medical-materialist conception of mind was in some measure motivated by the political need to repair the damaged image of psychiatry by endowing it with the status of a true science.

The antipsychiatry movement in Wilhelmine Germany crystallized around a series of prominent cases, including Schreber's, in which individuals had been declared incompetent and committed to psychiatric institutions against their will. The cases became known to the public in part through the publication of pamphlets and books in which the patients detailed their struggles with the medical and legal systems. In a speech delivered in 1896, the year he became a legal medical officer of the county court, Flechsig admitted to errors on the part of the psychiatric establishment but ultimately defended the integrity of the discipline in its scientific *and* forensic capacities:

> Among the alleged victims of the psychiatrist, who in the last years have mightily stirred public opinion, there is one group of persons occupying a prominent place, who live in a continuous state of war with the courts and the authorities. . . . These individuals, upon whose mental equilibrium state order and valid laws in many ways act as a poison, are commonly qualified as litigious . . . [or as sufferers from] *litigious paranoia* [*Querulantenwahnsinn*] . . . this question is of a predominantly practical importance also in the political sense. . . . Even if I know of no case in which a mentally healthy person has been declared mentally incompetent [*entmündigt*] on the basis of litigious paranoia . . . the psychiatrists are guilty of the error . . . of unjustifiably generalizing single observations. The so-called querulants are in no way uniformly afflicted by *psychosis* [*Wahnsinn*], they are not all of them driven by delusional *ideas*!

Flechsig concludes by insisting on the authority of the "*biologico-pathological* method of investigation" as the surest way of avoiding the errors to which an insufficiently scientific psychiatry had been heretofore susceptible.[26]

In the context of the public and parliamentary debates concerning the status of forensic psychiatry and the potential for conflicts of interest in this hybrid form of medicojuridical expertise, Flechsig actually proved to be more sensitive to the concerns of patients than many of his colleagues in the profession.[27] Schreber's expectations would have been shaped by Flechsig's reputation as a relatively propatient forensic expert. Against this background, Flechsig's decision to transfer Schreber to the public asylum at Sonnenstein would have been experienced as a particularly traumatic betrayal.[28]

Once at Sonnenstein, Schreber came under the care of Guido Weber, a psychiatrist firmly committed to the new and growing forensic authority of institutional psychiatry.[29] It was on the basis of Weber's various reports to the courts, which diagnosed Schreber as suffering from a dementia due to chronic neurological disorders, that Schreber was declared mentally incompetent and permanently retired from the bench. Beginning in 1897, Schreber undertook to have his incompetency ruling repealed; he lost these appeals in the county and district courts. In each instance, Weber's reports to the court provided the decisive forensic evidence against release. Interestingly, one of Weber's central arguments against Schreber's efforts to have his tutelage rescinded was the latter's desire to have his *Memoirs* published. I would like to quote at length from Weber's second report, dated November 28, 1900:

> The most important moment in judging the capacity of the patient to look after his own affairs is and remains the fact that he lacks insight into the pathological nature of the hallucinations and ideas which influence him; what objectively are delusions and hallucinations are to him unassailable truth and adequate motive for action. It follows from this that the patient's decisions at a given moment are quite unpredictable; he may follow and turn into action what his relatively intact mental powers dictate or he may act under the compulsion of his pathological mental processes. In this connection I wish to draw particular attention to a very pregnant example and for this reason also I enclose the patient's "Memoirs." It is understandable that the patient felt the urge to describe the history of his latter years, to lay down his observations and sufferings in writing and to put them before those who have in this or that matter a lawful interest in the shape of his fate. But the patient harbours the urgent desire to have his "Memoirs" (as presented here) printed and made available to the widest circles and he is therefore negotiating with a publisher—until now of course without success. When one looks at the content of his writings, and takes into consideration the abundance of indiscretions relating to himself and others contained in them, the unembarrassed detailing of the most doubtful and aesthetically impossible situations and events, the use of the most offensive vulgar words, etc., one finds it quite incomprehensible that a man otherwise tactful and of fine feeling could propose an action which would compromise him so severely in the eyes of the public, were not his whole attitude to life pathological, and he unable to see things in their proper perspective, and if the tremendous overvaluation of his own person caused by lack of insight into his illness had not clouded his appreciation of the limitations imposed on man by society.[30]

On July 23, 1901, having fired his lawyer, Schreber filed his own writ of appeal with the Saxon Supreme Court, the very court of whose Third Chamber he had been president. One year later, the Sixth Chamber of the court rescinded Schreber's incompetency ruling; five months later, Schreber left Sonnenstein.

Schreber's formal appeal as well as his brief forensic essay concerning the general principles of his case are, in essence, attempts to delimit the boundaries of medical and juridical realms of power and authority. Schreber argues that in entire classes of cases—he is thinking primarily of patients who do not present an immediate danger to society or themselves—institutionalization represents a transgression of medical competence and authority into a realm that, one might say, is in principle ignorant of the internal workings of the body or brain. In his essay, Schreber formulates this thesis as a distinction between medical and police powers: "Towards harmless mental patients the Director of a Public Asylum is after all not an organ of the security police with authoritative power, but essentially only a medical advisor; *on the question of deprivation of liberty* his relation to his patients is in no way different from that of any private practitioner towards his patients" (260). He further argues that liberty must be granted to patients even if the medical evidence speaks for institutionalization: "Should the administration [of an asylum] force this opinion on the patient (capable of managing his affairs) himself or on his legal representatives, whether persons or bodies, they would transgress the limits of their competence" (261). In effect, Schreber is arguing that the state has no mandate pertaining to the physical or mental *health* of its citizens. The only concern should be, as Schreber paraphrases the relevant legal principle in his writ of appeal, "*whether I possess the capacity for reasonable action in practical life*" (290). If the state can be confident that a citizen can manage his personal affairs, there can be no *medical* ground for the deprivation of liberty. To take the example of his compulsive bellowing, Schreber argues that it should be treated as a normal case of a disturbance of the peace—a strictly police matter. Although Schreber explains that his attacks of bellowing are not willful but rather generated by miraculous processes, his crucial point is that *medical* knowledge of his bodily or mental state would in this instance be irrelevant and, indeed, inadmissible. We might say that in conditions in accordance with the Order of the World, the *law* is ignorant of living human beings; it deals only with juridical subjects and brackets out the individual's "life substance."

In an attempt to further clarify the boundaries of medical and psychiatric competence, Schreber addresses the status of the religious beliefs and practices he had, over the course of his illness, come to maintain, above all those pertaining to his feminization: "The *only thing* which could be counted as somewhat unreasonable in the eyes of other persons is, as mentioned by the medical expert, that at times I was seen standing in front of the mirror or elsewhere with some female adornments (ribbons, trumpery necklaces, and suchlike), with the upper half of my body exposed" (300). Schreber defends this practice on several fronts. He argues first that he is very careful to engage in cross-dressing only when he is alone. He further notes that since his female adornments are for the most part rather cheap, his transvestitism cannot be cited as an example of poor judgment in the management of his financial affairs. As additional evidence of his capacity for judgment he adds that the "danger of catching cold which the medical expert considers possible, certainly does not arise at usual room temperatures, as the example of ladies in *décolleté* sufficiently shows" (301). His final and most forceful argument in defense of cross-dressing is, however, that it is for him a religious practice, one necessitated by the special relation he has come to have with God. Regarding his delusional system in general, Schreber maintains, "I could even say with Jesus Christ: 'My Kingdom is not of this world'; my so-called delusions are concerned solely with God and the beyond; they *can* therefore *never in any way influence my behaviour* in any worldly matter" (301). He then adds: "apart from the whim already mentioned [i.e., cross-dressing], *which is also meant to impress God*" (301–2; my emphasis).

Although Schreber expresses the desire to have his body examined by scientists to verify his feminization, it is, finally, not to medical science but rather to theology and philosophy that he addresses his *Memoirs*. His response to Weber's argument that the very desire to have the *Memoirs* published be construed as a further symptom of psychopathology is to appeal precisely to those disciplines for which the radical heterogeneity of organic, bodily causes and symbolic-spiritual effects continues to be of crucial importance:

> The medical expert acknowledges . . . that the "emanations of my pathologically altered psychic state" are not, as commonly in similar cases, meagre and monotonous, but show a fantastically formed intricate structure of ideas very different from the usual way of thinking. Pursuing this remark, I plan to submit my Memoirs for examination to specialists from other fields of experience, particularly theologians and philosophers. This would serve a double purpose, firstly to prove to the judges that my "Memoirs," however strange much of their content may be, could yet form an appreciable stimulus to wider scientific circles for research in a most obscure subject and make understandable how lively my wish must be to have them published. Secondly, I would then welcome the expert opinion of men of science in the mentioned fields, so as to ascertain whether it is probable, even psychologically possible, that a human being of cool and sober mind as I used to be in the eyes of all who knew me in my earlier life, and besides a human being who . . . did *not have a firm belief in God and the immortality of the soul* before his illness, should have *sucked from his fingers* so to speak the whole complicated structure of ideas with its enormous mass of factual detail. . . . Does not rather the thought impose itself that a human being who is able to write on such matters and attain such singular ideas about the nature of God and the continued existence of the soul after death, must in fact have had some particular experiences and particular impressions from which other human beings are excluded? (296)

In the context of his more general effort to circumscribe the proper domains of medical and juridical power, Schreber's appeal to theologians and philosophers suggests an awareness that the real causes and significance of his illness are not only inaccessible to the neuroanatomical/forensic gaze embodied by Flechsig and Weber, but that exposure to that very gaze may have contributed to his derangement in the first place.[31]

IV

It is, of course, in the work of Michel Foucault that we find the most sustained analysis of just such professional gazes and the will to knowledge embodied by them.[32] Foucault's radical depsychologization of this will to knowledge is anticipated by Schreber's remarkable willingness to abstract the demonic aspect of the professional gazes disturbing his psychic equilibrium from the person of their bearers. As he puts it in his open letter to Flechsig,

> you might have continued contact with me for a time out of scientific interest, until you yourself felt as it were uneasy about it, and therefore decided to break it off. But it is possible that in this process a part of your own nerves—probably unknown to yourself—was removed from your body, a process explicable only in a supernatural manner, and ascended to heaven as a "tested soul" and there achieved some supernatural power. (34)

Schreber returns to these ideas in his writ of appeal:

> I dare not state definitely that the supernatural events with which his name [i.e., Flechsig] is connected and during which his name was *and is still daily given to me* by the voices, ever reached his awareness. It is of course a possibility that in his role as a human being he was and remains removed from these events. *The question how it is possible to speak of the soul of a still living person as different from him and existing outside his body naturally remains mysterious*. (311; my emphasis)

Freud's answer to this mystery was, as we know, that what Schreber refers to as Flechsig's "tested soul" corresponds to the *libidinal value* assigned to Flechsig in Schreber's unconscious. "Flechsig" was, thus, first and foremost the name of that upsurge of homosexual desire against which Schreber defended himself by a psychotic act of world destruction—radical withdrawal of libidinal cathexes from all objects. That inner "end of history" was, in Freud's reading, followed by an effort at self-healing, an attempt, as it were, to repopulate the world.

But because this effort took place under the sign of (homophobic) repression, this new world order had a distinctly paranoid coloration and was populated by persecutors.

Foucault's analyses of power allow us, I think, to follow Schreber much more closely and precisely in his awareness that certain kinds of expert knowledge and research paradigms—Flechsig's form of brain science, for example—may *in themselves* produce an array of maddening effects in the mind and body of a person positioned as an object of such knowledge. The particular bearer of such knowledge need *not*, in other words, have been a tyrant, a sadist, or even especially unempathic. Flechsig's "*tested* soul" becomes, in Foucault's terms, the locus of a will to knowledge that exercises power precisely by testing and examining. Indeed, it is Foucault's thesis in the first volume of his *History of Sexuality* that the domain of functions, sensations, pleasures, and perversions known as human sexuality—the primary locus of Schreber's symptoms—was largely a by-product of an institutionalized will to knowledge whose regimen of tests and examinations became, in the nineteenth century, obsessively focused on the body.[33]

The History of Sexuality, whose introductory volume was originally entitled the *La volonté de savoir* or "the will to knowledge," develops and augments analyses begun in Foucault's earlier work on the will to punish and imprison, which contains, as far as I can tell, the only direct reference to Schreber in Foucault's oeuvre.[34] Schreber appears there as a signifier for a general tendency that became dominant in the nineteenth century toward that form of individuation that allows the human life to be understood as a "case," the life story as a "case history." It was, Foucault argues, only against the background of ever expanding regimes of expert knowledge or "disciplines"—criminology, psychiatry, pedagogy, among others—that something like the "Schreber case" could first emerge and become the "classic" text that it is today. Of special interest to Foucault were the procedures of examination elaborated by the disciplines that served to interpellate the "individual as a describable, analysable object" (*Discipline*, 190):

> The examination as the fixing, at once ritual and "scientific," of individual differences, as the pinning down of each individual in his own particularity (in contrast with the ceremony in which status, birth, privilege, function are manifested with all the spectacle of their marks) clearly indicates the appearance of a new modality of power in which each individual receives as his status his own individuality, and in which he is linked by his status to the features, the measurements, the gaps, the "marks" that characterize him and make him a "case." (*Discipline*, 192)

In Foucault's view, the crucial model of the procedures of observation, examination, and registration that characterize the disciplines and therewith "constitute the individual as effect and object of power, as effect and object of knowledge" (*Discipline*, 192), was provided by Jeremy Bentham's *Panopticon*. Not simply an ingenious architectural design for an ideal prison in which the inmate would learn to internalize the agency of observation, it was, for Foucault a crucial metaphor for the technical rationality that emerged in the Enlightenment, "a figure of political technology that may and must be detached from any specific use" (*Discipline*, 205).[35]

In the context of Schreber's efforts to defend his juridical personhood against what he experienced as a transgressive expansion of psychiatric powers, Foucault's characterization of this new political technology as a kind of "counter-law" becomes especially compelling. Foucault describes the kind of power exercised within the disciplines as a kind of chronic, institutional violence that both supports and undermines the rights and liberties of the juridical subject normally seen as the primary legacy of the Enlightenment project:

> Historically, the process by which the bourgeoisie became in the course of the eighteenth century the politically dominant class was masked by the establishment of an explicit, coded and formally egalitarian juridical framework, made possible by the organization of a parliamentary, representative regime. But the development and generalization of disciplinary mechanisms constituted the other, dark side of these processes. The general juridical form that guaranteed a system of rights that were egalitarian in principle was supported by these tiny, everyday, physical mechanisms, by all those systems of micro-power that are essentially non-egalitarian and asymmetrical that we call the disciplines. And although, in a formal way, the representative regime makes it possible . . . for the will of all to form the fundamental authority of sovereignty, the disciplines provide, at the base, a guarantee of the submission of forces and bodies. . . . The contract may have been regarded as the ideal foundation of law and political power; panopticism constituted the technique, universally widespread, of coercion. . . . The "Enlightenment," which discovered the liberties, also invented the disciplines. (*Discipline*, 222)

Foucault's analysis of panoptical discipline makes it plausible to read Schreber's struggle with what I have characterized as the "obscene father" as an *agon* between these conflicting legacies of the Enlightenment: the *liberties* and the *disciplines*. This struggle must have been especially poignant for Schreber whose father's orthopedic and pediatric treatments, pedagogical theories and practices, and public health and fitness programs offer a near caricature of those "systems of micropower" that Foucault associates with the disciplines. Schreber's own legal philosophy and political loyalties placed him, by contrast, squarely on the side of a "formally egalitarian juridical framework," exemplified by the ideology of liberal individualism promoted by the National Liberal Party, on whose ticket Schreber ran for Parliament in 1884.[36] Schreber's struggle with the obscene, surplus father—with the demonic, "Coppelius" aspect of paternal and institutional authority—becomes legible as one between the law and a transgressive infra- or counter-law, which Foucault characterizes as an "unassimilable residue of 'delinquency'" (*Discipline*, 282) pertaining to the very functioning of the law:

> In appearance, the disciplines constitute nothing more than an infra-law. They seem to extend the general forms defined by law to the infinitesimal level of individual lives; or they appear as methods of training that enable individuals to become integrated into these general demands. They seem to constitute the same type of law on a different scale, thereby making it more meticulous and more indulgent. The disciplines should be regarded as a sort of counter-law. They have the precise role of introducing insuperable asymmetries and excluding reciprocities. . . . Moreover, whereas the juridical systems define juridical subjects according to universal norms, the disciplines characterize, classify, specialize; they distribute along a scale, around a norm, hierarchize individuals in relation to one another and, if necessary, disqualify and invalidate. In any case, in the space and during the time in which they exercise their control and bring into play the asymmetries of their power, they effect a suspension of the law that is never total, but is never annulled either. (*Discipline*, 222–23)

The characterization of disciplinary power as a counter-law secreted by and within the law—Foucault's version of the violence or force internal to law that preoccupied Benjamin in his "Critique of Violence"—exactly parallels Schreber's efforts to elucidate what he calls conditions contrary to the Order of the World, conditions under which, as we have seen, God takes an exceptional interest in and comes to have knowledge of *living human beings*. One might say, then, that the chronic state of emergency generating the bizarre array of symptoms and delusions described in the *Memoirs* was inaugurated by that partial suspension of the law effectuated by the disciplinary power to which Schreber had been exposed since early childhood and to which he was exposed again, though in a different form, in the psychiatric institutions of Flechsig and Weber; Schreber's soul murder becomes, from this perspective, a sustained traumatization induced by exposure to, as it were, *fathers who knew too much* about living human beings. Certainly Foucault's most "Schreberian" insight is that exposure to this excess of knowledge that characterizes the disciplines produces a new kind of "intensified" body, one that, in a certain sense, recollects and travesties the sublime body of the king.[37] And for Schreber as well as for Foucault, such an intensification of the body is first and foremost a *sexualization*.

Foucault's central thesis in *The History of Sexuality* is that sexuality, understood in its modern sense as a defining and essential feature of human existence, as the locus of one's core identity, the expression of which comes to be seen as a form of *self*-expression considered to be crucial for one's mental and physical well-being—that sexuality in this sense is largely a product of a panoptical attentiveness focused on the body and its sensations. This attentiveness is, for Foucault, manifest above all in the proliferation of medical, psychiatric, pedagogical, and other "professional" discourses addressed to questions of human sexuality that achieved a critical density in the nineteenth century, culminating in the formation of a "science of sexuality." It is easy to recognize in Foucault's description of this discursive production of sexuality the precise pattern of Schreber's struggle first with Flechsig's "tested soul" and then with the "rays of God," a struggle that, as we know, produced ever greater degrees of sexual excitation, culminating in Schreber's mutation into a woman completely saturated with sexuality:

> More than the old taboos, this form of power demanded constant, attentive, and curious presences for its exercise; it presupposed proximities; it proceeded through examination and insistent observation. . . . It implied a physical proximity and an interplay of intense sensations. . . . The power which . . . took charge of sexuality set about contacting bodies, caressing them with its eyes, intensifying areas, electrifying surfaces, dramatizing troubled moments. It wrapped the sexual body in its embrace. There was undoubtedly an increase in effectiveness and an extension of the domain controlled; but also a sensualization of power and a gain of pleasure. . . . Power operated as a mechanism of attraction; it drew out those peculiarities over which it kept watch. Pleasure spread to the power that harried it; power anchored the pleasure it uncovered. (*History*, 44–45)

Foucault's characterization of the "*perpetual spirals of power and pleasure*" (*History*, 45), generated within the overproximities of medical examinations, psychiatric investigations, pedagogical reports, and family controls, accords exactly with Schreber's encounter with a God who demands from him the perpetual cultivation of jouissance.[38] Indeed, Schreber's repeated requests that he be examined by scientists to confirm the spread of nerves of "feminine voluptuousness" throughout his body might be understood as a distorted confirmation of Foucault's thesis that the sexual agitation he experiences is in large measure produced by such "scientific" examinations.

This sexual agitation was, as we now know, experienced by Schreber as a transgression of the laws normally regulating relations between God and living human beings, laws that normally impose on the former *ignorance* of somatic depths and sensations, of, in a word, the life substance. What Schreber characterizes as conditions contrary to the Order of the World corresponds, then, quite closely with what Foucault refers to as the "juridical regression" (*History*, 144) which obtains when law becomes entangled in the management of *life*, a state of affairs which is for Foucault and, I would suggest, for Schreber, a defining feature of modernity:

> For the first time in history, no doubt, biological existence was reflected in political existence; the fact of living was no longer an inaccessible substrate that only emerged from time to time . . . ; part of it passed into knowledge's field of control and power's sphere of intervention. Power would no longer be dealing simply with legal subjects over whom the ultimate dominion was death, but with living beings, and the mastery it would be able to exercise over them would have to be applied at the level of life itself; it was the taking charge of life, more than the threat of death, that gave power its access even to the body. If one can apply the term *bio-history* to the pressures through which the movements of life and the processes of history interfere with one another, one would have to speak of *bio-power* to designate what brought life and its mechanisms into the realm of explicit calculations and made knowledge-power an agent of transformation of human life. (*History*, 142–43)

When God's legitimate involvement with the *dead* as well as ignorance of *living human beings* is, so to speak, perverted by knowledge of the life substance, society has reached, as Foucault puts it, its "threshold of modernity" (*History*, 143).

Foucault further characterizes this tension between competing forms of power as one between a "deployment of alliance" (i.e., a "system of marriage, of fixation and development of kinship ties, of *transmission of names and possessions*"), on the one hand, and a "deployment of sexuality," on the other, which in its turn "has been linked from the outset with an *intensification of the body*—with its exploitation as an object of knowledge and an element in relations of power" (*History*, 106–7; my emphasis). The two systems provide the matrix of Schreber's struggle with the sexualizing and soul-murdering power that, as he puts it, created a rent in the miraculous structure of the world and threw into disarray the symbolic ordering of names and titles regulating relations within and between (Schreber and Flechsig) family lines and generations. The "case" of Daniel Paul Schreber no doubt owes much of its fascination to the fact that it brings into such sharp relief a moment of crisis in this history of tension between different forms and systems of power and authority.[39]

V

According to Foucault, the techniques elaborated by the institutions of disciplinary knowledge function as methods of training that serve, as he puts it, to "extend the general forms defined by law to the infinitesimal level of individual lives" and thereby to "enable individuals to become integrated into these general demands" (*Discipline*, 222). Such methods of training are the subject of Moritz Schreber's important book on child rearing, *Kallipädie*, published in 1858 as a practical guide for parents, educators, and teachers.[40]

Moritz Schreber's book, which represents a grand synthesis of his medical and pedagogical thought, is in essence a detailed pediatric, hygienic, and educational program for fostering in children the central values of Enlightenment ideology and culture, above all a sense of individual moral agency and autonomy.[41] The book is divided into four main parts, each dedicated to a phase in the life of the child: the first year ("infancy"); two to seven ("age of play"); eight to sixteen ("age of learning"); seventeen to twenty ("coming of age: transition to independence"). Each section is in turn divided into two subsections addressing the physical and mental sides of life, respectively, which are in turn subdivided into discussions of behaviors and activities appropriate to each phase of life and the things parents and teachers can do to control and regulate them. Among the topics covered are nutrition, movement and exercise, sleeping habits and positions, posture, hygienic practices, and forms of play. The entire program is organized around rituals and procedures of repetition and habituation. These rituals are designed not only to instill certain behaviors in the child; they aim also to convert these behaviors elicited in *heteronomous* fashion (i.e., by means of external commands and pressures) into behaviors willed by the child *autonomously*, of its own free volition. The goal is, in other words, that habits inculcated by the sheer (and repetitious) force of parental authority and the child's absolute obedience to that authority be "sublimated," as he puts it, "to an act of free will," and "that obedience become self-conscious." "The child," he continues, "should not become the slave of another will, but rather be educated toward a noble independence and the full strength of his own will." "This transition," as is claimed repeatedly in the book, "*is made much easier by the prior habituation*" (*Kallipädie*, 135; my emphasis).[42]

That Moritz Schreber's program is designed to produce proper Enlightenment subjects capable of thinking (the right things) for themselves is most evident in his remarks on religious education. As a Lutheran and a Kantian, Moritz Schreber associates true religiosity with a person's capacity to experience and to heed the inner voice of reason and conscience. For that reason, he insists that a child be protected from coercive impositions of religious practices and that regular visits to church first begin at the age of twelve. Otherwise the child is in danger of forever confusing the dead letter of religious doctrine—one can't help but think of Schreber's phrase for rote repetition: "poison of corpses"—with the voice of authentic spiritual authority:

> *This spirit, which stands in the most intimate, God-given relationship with the kernel of our selfhood [dem Kernpunkte unseres Ichs], with the freedom of conscience, thought, and will—this we do not allow to be robbed from us, which occurs when it is subordinated to the letter. The compulsion to believe that comes from the outside is the death of true religiosity. Thousands of people are thereby driven to (open or dissimulated) irreligiousness, or among the more impressionable souls some even to religious insanity. (Kallipädie*, 255; emphasis in original)

Here he adds a footnote in which he acknowledges, close to forty years before the outbreak of his own son's "religious insanity," that "*in recent years observations of alienists have established a significant increase of such cases . . . especially among the female sex*" (*Kallipädie*, 255; italics in original). True faith, he continues, presupposes that the object of faith be "*thought through or felt through, spiritually digested, appropriated, transformed into the blood of spirit* [*Geistesblut*]" (*Kallipädie*, 255; emphasis in original).

We might say, then, that Moritz Schreber's program offers a practical guide for fostering the proper metabolization—conversion into second "nature"—of the principles and values of enlightened Christian culture. It is, in short, a systematic training program for the Enlightenment, a kind of instruction manual for parents to supplement Kant's philosophical formulation of Enlightenment values. Foucault's analyses of power suggest, however, that just such a disciplinary supplement may ultimately serve to undermine the values they are intended to promote. One of the lessons of Foucault's work is that the disciplinary side of Enlightenment culture represents a chronic endangerment to its ethical, political, and juridical project. Rather than fostering a capacity for independent thought and volition, rather than attuning the body to the inner voice of reason and conscience, programs such as those of Moritz Schreber for the regulation of a child's physical, mental, and spiritual development, well meaning though they may be, may end up producing what, from the perspective of Enlightenment culture, can only be called monstrosities. Foucault's studies of the disciplines and the emergence of what he calls "bio-power" are, in effect, elaborations of a fundamental paradox at the heart of the Enlightenment project, a paradox related to what Adorno and Horkheimer famously theorized as that project's dialectical undoing: the "scientific" knowledge that accompanies and puts into practice the principles of Enlightenment culture, that seeks to foster, in the terms of technical rationality, the cultivation—the *Bildung*—of Enlightenment subjects, is marked by a kind of aberrant and "perverse" productivity.

To put these matters in somewhat different terms, we might say that the *conversion of heteronomy into autonomy* so crucial to Moritz Schreber's medicopedagogical system leaves a residue of heteronomy—of *Leichengift* ("poison of corpses"), as Schreber would say—that not only resists metabolization (transmutation into *Geistesblut*) but returns to haunt and derange the subject whose physical, moral, and aesthetic cultivation that system was designed to achieve. It was, I would suggest, Schreber's overexposure to this nonmetabolizable remainder of the rituals of Enlightenment *assujetissement*—the social processes whereby one is interpellated as an autonomous subject—that predisposed him to experience that sexualized wretchedness that would later constitute his "secret" status as *Luder*.[43] What Foucault calls disciplinary power is potentially so damaging not because it opposes the principles of Enlightenment or the liberal values of Schreber's National Liberal Party—rule of law, universal rights of property and contract—from some exterior cultural domain, but rather because it in effect *literalizes* the "performative magic" sustaining the authority of those values and the institutions built upon them. The disciplines transform the performative dimension of *symbolic* authority into regulations for the *material* control and administration of bodies and populations. Such a literalization has the effect of reversing the most fundamental processes whereby humans are initiated into a world of symbolic form and function.[44] For Schreber, as we know, signification is repeatedly drawn back into the bodily depths, symbolic function repeatedly experienced in a register of purely biomechanical causation (e.g., vibration of nerve fibers, deposits of putrid matter).

Although never stated as such, Foucault's fundamental insight about psychosis would seem to be that the psychotic's entanglement in "the real" of his intensified body, his repeated failure to convert soma into signification—this blockage seems to be the crux of what Schreber means by *conditions contrary to the Order of the World*—is at least in part brought about by exposure to the literalizing tendencies of disciplinary power, specifically forms of power conceived as direct interventions in and manipulations of somatic existence. What Foucault associates with juridical power and the "deployment of alliance" are, by contrast, eminently *symbolic functions*: marriage systems, kinship ties, transmission of names, titles, and possessions. Put somewhat differently, the domain of juridical power in the broad sense used by Foucault is structured around laws of *symbolic causation* (e.g., one's becoming a *Senatspräsident* is "caused" by an official act of nomination). When this symbolic or pseudocausality, on which all acts of symbolic investiture depend, becomes chronically dysfunctional, we have crossed the threshold into a psychotic realm of extreme literalization. Foucault's Schreberian point would seem to be that disciplinary power fosters this chronic dysfunction. Schreber's struggle with Flechsig, Weber, and, no doubt, with his own father, to limit the reach of the disciplines and to clear a space for the rule of law, which, as Schreber insists, must remain ignorant of living human beings and their bodies, might thus be conceived against the backdrop of a Foucauldian variation of Freud's famous maxim: *Wo Es war, soll Ich werden*. In Foucauldian terms, this imperative would run something like: Where It, the proliferation of disciplinary power, is, there the juridical subject, the subject of *symbolic* power and authority, must (re)emerge.

VI

It would, however, be a mistake to see in such an imperative the essence of Foucault's intellectual or political position regarding the proliferation of disciplinary power in the modern period. Foucault's apparent nostalgia for all that he associates with the "deployment of alliance" is not his last word on these matters. Indeed, Foucault's ambivalent position with regard to psychoanalysis is tied to his understanding of Freud's innovation as a failure to come to terms with the radical transformations brought about by the new techniques of power, a failure caused by just such a nostalgia. According to Foucault, psychoanalysis attempts "to reinscribe the thematic of sexuality in the system of law, the symbolic order, and sovereignty" (*History*, 150). He suggests that it was the great surge of racism and the proliferation of racial theories of degeneration that led Freud "to ground sexuality in the law—the law of alliance, tabooed consanguinity, and the Sovereign-Father, in short, to surround desire with all the trappings of the old order of power" (*History*, 150). Although this allegiance to "system of law, the symbolic order, and sovereignty" guaranteed that psychoanalysis was "in theoretical and practical opposition to fascism," Foucault insists on the fundamental blindness of psychoanalysis to the crucial features of its own historical moment. For "to conceive the category of the sexual in terms of the law, death, blood, and sovereignty . . . is in the last analysis a historical 'retro-version.'" Psychoanalysis fails, in other words, in the essential historical task of conceiving "the deployment of sexuality on the basis of the techniques of power that are contemporary with it" (*History*, 150).[45]

Foucault's ambivalence concerning psychoanalysis and its attempt to theorize sexuality around issues of law, taboo, and desire—in a word, around *oedipal relations*—has a close parallel in Schreber's *Memoirs*.[46] Earlier in this chapter, we noted a paradox apropos of one of Schreber's strategies of defense against the tortures suffered under conditions contrary to the Order of the World, conditions marked by the collapse of symbolic function into the symptoms of an "intensified" body. We saw that Schreber found relief from the torments of rote repetition not only by struggling to recuperate meaning from these mechanically reproduced signifiers, but also by the reverse strategy of beating the repetition machine at its own game. Rather than simply trying to restore the lawful syntax and semantics of his "prelapsarian" symbolic order, Schreber finds a way to meet his symptoms on their own terms and thereby gain a modicum of mastery over them. Kittler has characterized this strategy as a prefiguration of avant-garde artistic practices. Like so many modernist experimenters, Schreber deploys a parodically *mimetic* mode of defense: he mimes the mechanical and the mechanistic in order not to be reduced to the status of a psychophysical machine: "In the Sonnenstein asylum high above the Elbe, a solitary and unrecognized experimenter practiced the apotropaic techniques that twelve years later would win fame and a public for the Zurich Dadaists in the Café Voltaire."[47] Schreber discovers what might be called the paradox of modernist masochism. Engulfed by a meaningless chatter of voices and inarticulate noise, Schreber survives, at least in part, by momentarily refusing to make sense of it all and by himself becoming a player in the ruination of meaning. Rather than trying to restore his symbolic identity by repressing the drive dimension underlying it, he finds a kind of relief by entering more deeply into its patterns of repetition and acting them out.[48] Whether this strategy could be called "modernist," "avant-garde," or already "postmodernist," it was surely linked, for Schreber, to his feminization. Schreber experiences exposure to the dimension of nonsensical drivenness at the core of his own identity as an elite and powerful heterosexual male—a dimension he finds "doubled" in the uncanny, Coppelius-like aspect of Flechsig—as the beginnings of his unmanning.[49]

VII

We might clarify some of these implications by way of reference to recent theoretical work on gender identity. Schreber's "perverse" strategy of identifying with his *Ludertum*, an eroticized condition of abjection produced at least in part through excessive and chronic proximity to the normative pressures of disciplinary power, is consistent with much of what Judith Butler has argued in her groundbreaking study, *Gender Trouble*.[50] Butler claims, in essence, that gender identities are constituted in and through socially regulated *performances*, that gender is a *social fact* produced, and not simply expressed, through the performances one is *compelled to repeat* as a member of the social group. When, in other words, a doctor or parent establishes the fact of a newborn's gender, the speech act enunciating that fact—"it's a girl"—is, in other words, not simply a constative speech act; it is also, in part, a performative one. In human culture, gender is *established* not simply in the sense of ascertaining and certifying, but also in the sense of constituting and setting up what must then be (performatively) elaborated.[51] One of the central tasks of disciplinary power, as Butler glosses that Foucauldian notion, is to regulate particular gender performances, to compel their rule-governed repetitions and thereby to guarantee the social intelligibility of the sexed body. But because no performative gesture or utterance can be completely predicted or controlled—an insight that Schreber invokes apropos of the writing-down-system's failure to exhaust his inventory of possible utterances and thoughts—the social laws and institutions regulating gender performances can never achieve full consistency. Rather, such laws will always exhibit an inadvertent and aberrant productivity, the possibility, namely, of deviant, "queer" performances. Butler suggests that such queer performances do not exist in a space or time "before" or "outside" of the law they appear to transgress but are rather secretions *of* the law, points at which the secret of the law's performative "ground"—its ultimate dependence on the compulsion to repeat—is, so to speak, leaked to the public. At such moments, the compulsion to repeat that otherwise serves to stabilize gender identities can become the pulsive force whereby such identities are disrupted and shattered. Butler's political project strives to enlist that pulsive force—what I have called the drive dimension of symbolic function—in the service of a new conception of moral and political *agency*; indeed, her project might even be characterized as an *ethicopolitics of the drive*:

> As a process, signification harbors within itself what the epistemological discourse refers to as "agency." The rules that govern intelligible identity,

> i.e., that enable and restrict the intelligible assertion of an "I," rules that are partially structured along matrices of gender hierarchy and compulsory heterosexuality, operate through *repetition*. . . . The subject is not *determined* by the rules through which it is generated because signification is *not a founding act, but rather a regulated process of repetition* that both conceals itself and enforces its rules precisely through the production of substantializing effects. In a sense, all signification takes place within the orbit of the compulsion to repeat; "agency," then, is to be located within the possibility of a variation on that repetition. If the rules governing signification not only restrict, but enable the assertion of alternative domains of cultural intelligibility, i.e., new possibilities for gender that contest the rigid codes of hierarchical binarisms, then it is only *within* the practices of repetitive signifying that a subversion of identity becomes possible. The injunction *to be* a given gender produces necessary failures, a variety of incoherent configurations that in their multiplicity exceed and defy the injunction by which they are generated.[52]

Particularly these last remarks could be read as a commentary on Schreber's discovery of a kind of "Dadaist" agency in his strategy of repeating back in parodic form the phrases mechanically repeated by the voices—his way, in other words, of transforming abjection, the "poison of corpses," into cure.

In subsequent work, Butler has revisited questions of gender and sexuality from the perspective of a new conception of *matter* understood "not as site or surface, but as *a process of materialization that stabilizes over time to produce the effect of boundary, fixity, and surface we call matter*."[53] In this later work, Butler shows a far greater sensitivity than previously to the kinds of "gender trouble" suffered by a Schreber, to the enormous pain and psychic disequilibrium that can follow when one finds oneself at the place of the law's "perverse" productivity. In a word, she attends to the link between "gender trouble" and trauma: "The normative force of performativity—its power to establish what qualifies as 'being'—works not only through reiteration, but through exclusion as well. And in the case of bodies, those exclusions haunt signification as its abject borders or as that which is strictly foreclosed: the unlivable, the nonnarrativizable, the traumatic."[54] If Schreber has anything to teach us about these matters, it is surely that the bodies which find themselves at the place of *abjection*—of that sexualized wretchedness denoted by the title *Luder*—are those which have been positioned in closest proximity to the drive dimension of symbolic function, bodies in which a society "deposits" its knowledge of what Schreber repeatedly refers to as *enjoyment*. And if Foucault is right that disciplinary power "intensifies" the body, produces rather than represses sexuality, then it is because such power *literalizes* the scandalous dependence of socially established ontologies on performativity-as-repetition-compulsion—on what Schreber has characterized as a certain (normally repressed, normally secret) *rottenness* internal to every symbolic identity.

VIII

Finally, Schreber's own language suggests that this perverse dependence is intimately connected to that most problematic of Freudian agencies, the *superego*. In a sense, Schreber defines the superego as a *super ego*, that is, as the ego-drives of the "big Other": God's instincts of self-preservation manifest in the miracles to which he subjects Schreber to defend against the latter's forces of attraction. "I have no doubt," he writes in his last postscript to the *Memoirs*,

> that God, in His relation to me, is ruled by egoism. . . . Egoism, particularly in the form of the instinct of self-preservation, which at times demands the sacrifice of other beings for one's own existence, *is a necessary quality of all living beings*; individuals cannot do without it, if they are not themselves to perish. . . . *God is a living Being* and would Himself have to be ruled by egoistic motives, if other living beings existed who could endanger Him or in some way be detrimental to His interests. *In circumstances in accordance with the Order of the World there could not be, nor indeed were there, such beings next to God*; this *is the only reason* why the question of God's egoism could not arise as long as these circumstances remained in unadulterated purity. But in my case different circumstances have set in as an exception; since God by tolerating tested souls—probably in connection with occurrences of a soul-murder-like character—had tied Himself to a single human being by whom He had to let Himself be attracted, albeit unwillingly, the conditions for egoistic actions were given. These egoistic actions have been practiced against me for years with the utmost cruelty and disregard as only a beast deals with its prey. (251–52)

Conditions contrary to the Order of the World are, in a word, conditions in which the superego, which Schreber, like Freud, associates with law and morality, takes on a cruel and obscene aspect. One of Schreber's most persistent symptoms, the so-called bellowing miracle or *Brüllwunder*, might indeed be understood as Schreber's horrified response to the torments of this punishing superego. But as we have seen, his most effective and fully worked out response to this divine superego pressure is to provide that "agency" with enjoyment, more precisely, with feminine enjoyment. Schreber actually identifies the period—November 1895—when he began to embrace and to elaborate, by means of, among other "perverse" procedures, cross-dressing, the damage caused by exposure to this superego:[55]

> I remember the period distinctly; it coincided with a number of beautiful autumn days when there was a heavy morning mist on the Elbe. During that time the signs of a transformation into a woman became so marked on my body, that I could no longer ignore the imminent goal at which the whole development was aiming. In the immediately preceding nights my male sexual organs might actually have been retracted had I not resolutely set my will against it, still following the stirring of my sense of manly honour. . . . Soul-voluptuousness had become so strong that I myself received the impression of a female body, first on my arms and hands, later on my legs, bosom, buttocks and other parts of my body. . . . Several days' observations of these events sufficed to change the direction of my will completely. Until then I still considered it possible that . . . it would eventually be necessary for me to end [my life] by suicide. . . . But now I could see beyond doubt that the Order of the World imperiously demanded my unmanning, whether I personally liked it or not, and that therefore . . . nothing was left to me but reconcile myself to the thought of being transformed into a woman. Nothing of course could be envisaged as a further consequence of unmanning but fertilization by divine rays for the purpose of creating new human beings. (148)

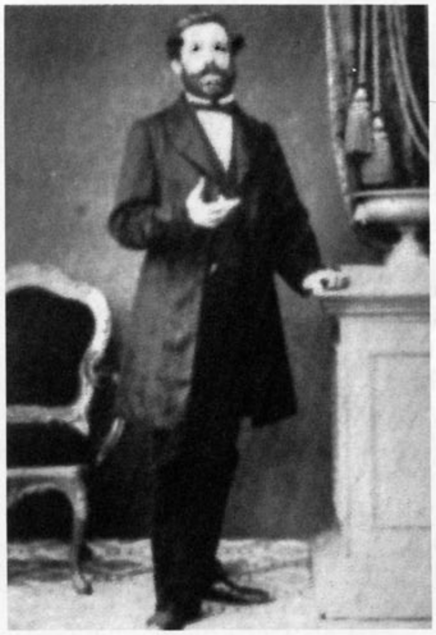
Schreber notes that this change of will was facilitated by his belief that all of mankind had already perished. He also adds that there existed rays that worked to hinder his unmanning by appealing to his sense of manly honor with phrases such as "Are you not ashamed in front of your wife?" or "Fancy a person who was a *Senatspräsident* allowing himself to be f . . . d" (148). He did not, however, allow himself to be diverted from that behavior which, as he puts it, "I had come to recognize as essential and curative for all parties—myself and the rays" (148). He even proclaims a kind of manifesto of femininity: "Since then I have wholeheartedly inscribed the cultivation of femininity on my banner, and I will continue to do so as far as consideration of my environment allows, whatever other people who are ignorant of the supernatural reasons may think of me" (149). Schreber acknowledges that his yielding of the phallic prerogative and cultivation of femininity is really a forced choice: "I would like to meet the man who, faced with the choice of either becoming a demented human being in male habitus or a spirited woman, would not prefer the latter. Such and *only such* is the issue for me" (149).[56]

Though Schreber did indeed find a way to enjoy and to cultivate his unmanning, a certain ambiguity attaches to this enjoyment. Schreber's own formulations indicate that his cultivation of femininity is intended

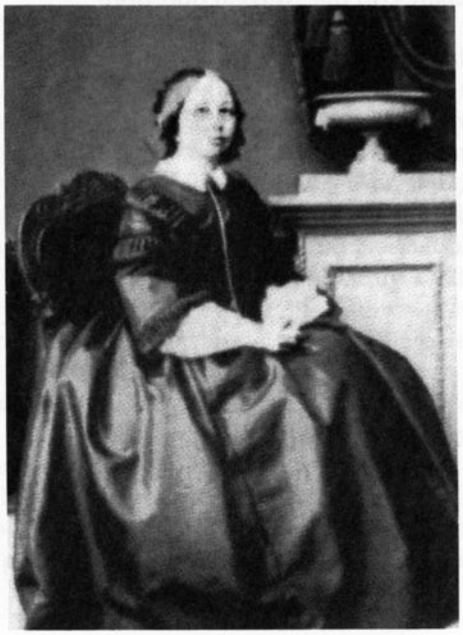
Family portrait of the Schrebers, 1851. (Courtesy of Zvi Lothane)

above all *for the enjoyment of God*. It is God who, as Schreber puts it, "demands *constant enjoyment*" and it is Schreber's duty "to provide Him with it in the form of highly developed soul-voluptuousness" (209), a duty he is able to fulfill only by means of various perverse procedures. These include imagining himself as "man and woman in one person having intercourse" with himself or standing in front of a mirror with bared upper body, adorned only with ribbons and jewelry (208, 207). "I believe," Schreber writes, "that God would never attempt to withdraw (which always impairs my bodily well-being considerably) . . . if only I could *always* be playing the woman's part in sexual embrace with myself, *always* rest my gaze on female beings, *always* look at female pictures, etc." (210). To emphasize that these various perverse behaviors are cultivated above all for the enjoyment of God, Schreber adds: "If I can get a little sensuous pleasure in this process, I feel I am entitled to it as a small compensation for the excess of suffering and privation that has been mine for many years past" (209).[57]

The point not to be missed, however, is that Schreber's relation to the divine ego/superego does *not* work to deny the scandal of what he repeatedly refers to as God's lack of omnipotence and omniscience. On the contrary, his cultivation of femininity must be understood as a means of keeping this unnerving secret well in the foreground of his—and the reader's—awareness. Schreber's elaboration of his *Ludertum* is, in other words, the exact opposite of a fetishistic disavowal. It is rather a way of structuring a relation to *God's desire*, to the revelation that this ultimate master's knowledge and powers are *lacking*. Schreber's perversion is, I am suggesting, precisely his way of *refusing* the "normal" path of the fetish, the "normal" process of disavowing a master's lack.[58] If, as Freud insisted, God occupies the place of the father formerly occupied by Moritz Schreber and then Paul Flechsig, Schreber's delusional system is not, in the end, designed to repair the imperfections and inconsistencies of these paternal masters but rather to elaborate a *modus vivendi* with the lack manifest in them. Indeed, by publishing his *Memoirs*, Schreber performs an eminently *democratic* gesture: he insists on sharing his crisis, on disseminating its significance as a general state of emergency of symbolic authority that touches everyone, but above all those who occupy elite positions of institutional power.[59] In Wilhelmine Germany and late nineteenth-century Europe more generally, that meant of course not only *men* of a certain class but of a certain religious confession as well, which, at the fin de siècle, came to be understood in *racial* terms. In the following chapter we will explore the ways in which Schreber's text not only registers these other social and cultural dimensions but becomes legible as a forceful intervention in the European debates on the "Jewish question."



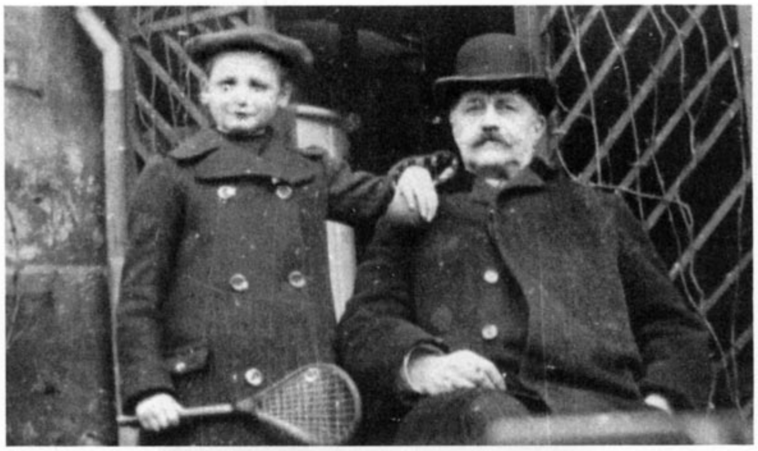
Moritz Schreber, ca. 1855.
(Courtesy of Zvi Lothane)



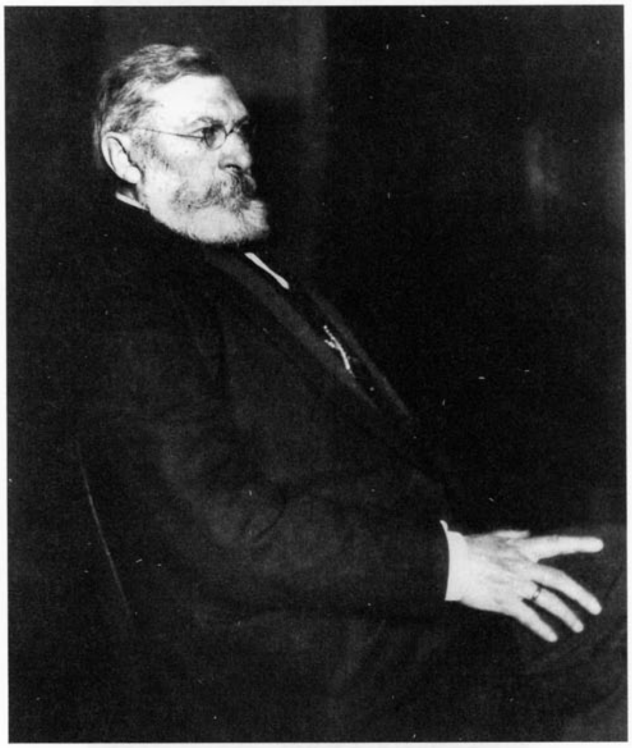
Pauline Schreber, ca. 1855.
(Courtesy of Zvi Lothane)

Daniel Paul Schreber.
(Courtesy of Zvi Lothane)

Sabine Schreber. (Courtesy of Zvi Lothane)



Daniel Paul Schreber and his adopted daughter, Fridoline, ca. 1906. (Courtesy of Zvi Lothane)



Paul Emil Flechsig, 1906. (Photograph by Nichola Perscheid; courtesy of Zvi Lothane)

THREE

SCHREBER'S JEWISH QUESTION

I

IN THE PAGES of Schreber's *Memoirs* one finds numerous references and allusions to historical events, circumstances, and figures in Wilhelmine Germany and in European culture and society more generally. One cluster of references to contemporary political life that attracted the early notice of commentators attentive to the historical context of Schreber's delusions centers on Bismarck's struggles with the Catholic Church in the 1870s, the so-called Kulturkampf. Bismarck's antipapal campaign, aggressively supported by the liberal parties and designed, in large measure, to limit the power of the (Catholic) Centrist Party, resulted in, among other things, the institution of civil marriage in Prussia, the extension of state authority over ordinations of priests and ministers, and restrictions of church supervision of schools. The most aggressive governmental measures to emerge from the Kulturkampf, measures suggesting a paranoid core to this entire campaign against transmontanism, were reserved for the Jesuits whose institutions were systematically dismantled. To indicate the extent of the Kulturkampf and its effects, Gordon Craig notes that by 1876, due to the imprisonment and expulsion of clerics refusing to comply with the new state regulations of religious institutions, some 1,400 parishes were left without incumbents.[1]

In the fifth chapter of his *Memoirs*, immediately after introducing the notion of the "nerve-language" as the medium through which, among other "miracles," the painful practice of "compulsive thinking" was maintained, Schreber begins to connect his personal struggle to larger politicotheological motifs largely derived from the Kulturkampf. Recalling the period during which the influence emanating from Flechsig's nerves was supplemented by a series of "departed souls," Schreber writes,

> In this connection I could mention hundreds if not thousands of names, many of which I learnt later, when some contact with the outside world was restored to me through newspapers and letters, were still among the living; whereas at the time, when as souls they were in contact with my nerves, I could only think they had long since departed this life. Many of the bearers of these names were particularly interested in religion, many

> were Catholics who expected a furtherance of Catholicism from the way I was expected to behave, particularly the Catholicizing of Saxony and Leipzig; amongst them were the Priest S. in Leipzig, "14 Leipzig Catholics" (of whom only the name of the Consul General D. was indicated to me, presumably a Catholic Club or its board). The Jesuit Father S. in Dresden, the Ordinary Archbishop in Prague, the Cathedral Dean Moufang, the Cardinals Rampolla, Galimberti and Casati, the Pope himself who was the leader of a peculiar "scorching ray," finally numerous monks and nuns; on one occasion 240 Benedictine Monks under the leadership of a Father whose name sounded like Starkiewicz, suddenly moved into my head to perish therein. (70–71)

In the next chapter, Schreber recalls that various political and religious events had played an important part in his visions. He notes, for example, that "a widespread Catholicizing was said to have taken place; my own mother was to have been converted, I myself was continually the object of attempts at conversion by Catholics" (85). Schreber later offers a quasi-physiological, neuroanatomical metaphor for such efforts at conversion: "'Jesuits,' that is to say departed souls of former Jesuits, repeatedly tried to put into my head a different 'determinant nerve' [*Bestimmungsnerven*], which was to change my awareness of my own identity" (99). Finally, attempting to elucidate the period in early April 1894 that he calls the "time of the first Divine Judgment," Schreber writes that this particularly concentrated series of religious and political epiphanies was based on "one common basic *general idea*":

> This was the idea that after a crisis dangerous for the existence of the realms of God which had arisen in the circles of the German people through the conflict between Professor Flechsig and myself, the German people, particularly Protestant Germany, could no longer be left with the leadership as God's chosen people, had perhaps even to be excluded altogether when other "globes" ("inhabited planets?") were occupied, unless a champion appeared for the German people to prove their continued worth. At one time I myself was to be that champion, at another a person chosen by me. (92)[2]

It may not be surprising that a man who failed to win a seat in the Reichstag on a National Liberal ticket, a party counting among the most aggressive anti-Catholic forces during the Kulturkampf, should, in paranoid hindsight, see himself as a victim of a transmontane conspiracy. There was, as I have noted, already a rather strong dose of paranoia in the initial and ultimately ill-fated antipapal campaign initiated by Bismarck and his supporters.[3] But when one reads further in those passages of the *Memoirs* concerned with the threats emanating from Catholics and Jesuits, one discovers that the focus of Schreber's fantasies about political and religious conspiracies periodically shifts from the Catholics to the Jews. This shift of focus within Schreber's fantasy space was, in many ways, prefigured by the course of events in Germany in the decade prior to his first mental collapse, namely the deepening discontent with and eventual abandonment of the policies instituted against the Catholics and, more important, the widespread revival and increasing social acceptability of anti-Semitic discourses and sentiments, particularly in the wake of the stock market crash of 1873. To return to Schreber, one might say that at certain points in the *Memoirs* his Kulturkampf fantasies begin to secrete a deeper level of preoccupation with the "Jewish question." The mediating or transitional term between these clusters of motifs would appear to be "Slavism," a signifier allowing Schreber to shift the focus of his politico-religious preoccupations from Polish Catholics—a crucial target in the Kulturkampf—to Eastern European Jews.

The previously cited passage in which Schreber recalls the 240 Benedictine Monks who, under the leadership of a priest whose name sounded like Starkiewicz, perished in his head, continues as follows:

> In the case of other souls, religious interests were mixed with national motives; amongst these was a Viennese nerve specialist whose name by coincidence was identical with that of the above mentioned Benedictine Father, a baptised Jew and Slavophile, who wanted to make Germany Slavic through me and at the same time wanted to institute there the rule of Judaism; like Professor Flechsig for Germany, England and America (that is mainly Germanic States), he appeared to be in his capacity as nerve specialist a kind of administrator of God's interests in another of God's provinces (the Slavic parts of Austria). (71)

And in a later chapter, in the midst of an inventory of miraculous bodily transformations undergone since his contact with divine rays began, Schreber reports that "already during my stay in Flechsig's Asylum the Viennese nerve specialist named in chapter 5 miraculously produced in place of my healthy natural stomach a very inferior so-called 'Jew's stomach'" (133).

But certainly the most remarkable reference to Jews in Schreber's text occurs where Schreber addresses the phenomenon by means of which the Order of the World is able to weather extremes of decadence and moral decay among mortals:

> When on some star moral decay ("voluptuous excesses") or perhaps nervousness has seized the whole of mankind to such an extent that the forecourts of heaven . . . could not be expected to be adequately replen-

> ished . . . or there was reason to fear a dangerous increase of attraction on God's nerves, then the destruction of the human race could occur either spontaneously (through annihilating epidemics, etc.) or, being decided on by God, be put into effect by means of earthquakes, deluges, etc. . . . In such an event, in order to maintain the species, one single human being was spared—perhaps the relatively most moral—called by the voices that talk to me the "*Eternal Jew*." (73)[4]

Given the salvific role assigned to this Eternal or Wandering Jew and the fact that a non-Jew is to assume his place, Schreber suggests that this "appellation has . . . a somewhat different sense from that underlying the legend of the same name of the Jew Ahasver" and goes on to link him to a series of other mythical "survivor" figures such as Noah, Deucalion and Pyrrha, and Romulus and Remus. In the context of Schreber's *Memoirs*, however, the most salient feature of the Wandering Jew is his status as a feminized (i.e., unmanned) survivor and savior:

> The Eternal Jew . . . had to be *unmanned* (transformed into a woman) to be able to bear children. This process of unmanning consisted in the (external) male genitals (scrotum and penis) being retracted into the body and the internal sexual organs being at the same time transformed into the corresponding female sexual organs, a process which might have been completed in a sleep lasting hundreds of years. (73–74)

After noting that this process was prevented from occurring in its purity and in accordance with the Order of the World due to the interference of Flechsig's impure rays and those of other "tested souls," Schreber continues his characterization of the Eternal Jew:

> The Eternal Jew was maintained and provided with the necessary means of life by the "fleeting-improvised-men" . . . that is to say souls were for this purpose transitorily put into human shape by miracles, probably not only for the lifetime of the Eternal Jew himself but for many generations, until his offspring were sufficiently numerous to be able to maintain themselves. This seems to be the main purpose of the institution of "fleeting-improvised-men" in the Order of the World. (74)

Schreber adds in a footnote that "perhaps in some vastly dim and distant period of the past and on other stars, there might even have been a number of Eternal Jews," and that "amongst them occurred, if I am not mistaken, something like the name of a Polish Count Czartorisky" (74).

Commentators on Schreber have pursued the thread of the Jewish question in the *Memoirs* by, in effect, applying Freud's approach to dreams and parapraxes to the vast array of proper names that populate

Schreber's text. As I have already suggested, the more one digs into the names linked with the Kulturkampf, the more one discovers traces of a deeper preoccupation with the Jews. While exploring the passage cited here in which Schreber's anxieties about Catholics are first registered, Niederland, for example, discovered that there was a crucial anomaly in the list of cardinals provided by Schreber ("the Cardinals Rampolla, Galimberti and Casati"). Casati, it turns out, was not a church dignitary but rather an Italian major and explorer who participated in African expeditions led by Emin Pasha and, after a break with Pasha, by Stanley. He became known in Germany through the translation, in 1891, of his account of his adventures with Pasha (*Dieci Anni in Equatoria*). Niederland has suggested that some of Schreber's delusions of catastrophic epidemics and strange journeys might have been appropriated from Casati's memoir. In the present context, however, it is Casati's link to Pasha that is of interest. Emin Pasha, alias Eduard Schnitzer, was a (baptized) Jewish physician from Silesia who eventually became governor of the Sudan and agent of the German government in its quest for colonies in Africa. Niederland's reconfiguration of these associations, supported in part by certain biographical parallels between Pasha and Moritz Schreber, suggests that a fusion of these two figures might stand behind Schreber's delusions of persecution by Jews and Slavophiles.[5]

Though ultimately calling into question Niederland's essentially oedipal reading of the associations generated by the name Casati, Lothane suggests that Niederland stopped too short in his analysis of the Jewish dimension of this remarkable chain of signifiers. Lothane's research has shown that a certain Carl Paasch, author of numerous anti-Semitic pamphlets during the 1890s, was a patient at Flechsig's clinic in 1894, during the period of Schreber's second residence there. Among Paasch's anti-Semitic writings was an "Open Letter to His Excellency the Reichskanzler von Caprivi" (1891), in which Major Casati is mentioned as an ally of Stanley against the Jew Emin Pasha who is in turn accused of various crimes and transgressions that resonate with popular anti-Semitic fantasies about the Jewish role in the spread of alcoholism and syphilis.[6]

And in a recent postscript to his book on Schreber, Lothane has attempted to follow the thread of Schreber's speculation linking the unmanned Wandering Jew to a Polish aristocrat named Czartorisky. In this instance too, Lothane suggests, the name of a (Polish) Catholic serves as a metonymy for a chain of associations that ultimately widen the range of Schreber's Jewish preoccupations. For as Lothane reports, Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoyski, who died the same year as Moritz Schreber, was a Polish statesman whose sympathies with occult doctrines and mystical philosophies involved him in circles of Polish thinkers, poets, and mystics who made extensive use of the Jewish Kabbalah in their elaboration of a distinctly Polish Messianism.[7] Among these figures, Lothane mentions the poet Adam Mickiewicz who in his turn "came under the spell of Martinism, the Kabbalah, and the Frankists, the eighteenth-century Jewish sect in Poland formed by Jacob Frank, reviving the messianism of the seventeenth-century false messiah Sabbatai Zevi."[8] Lothane suggests that Mickiewicz might be the figure behind the Jewish alienist mentioned by Schreber whose name, like that of the Benedictine father who perished in his head, sounded like Starkiewicz, and whose aim was to Slavicize Germany and institute there the rule of Judaism.[9]

II

Certainly the boldest attempt at articulating the depth of Schreber's preoccupation with the Jewish question has been argued by Sander Gilman in a recent study of Freud.[10] Gilman has been at the forefront of new historicist efforts to provide "thick descriptions" of the cultural milieu out of which the fundamental concepts of psychoanalytic thought emerged in the European fin de siècle. In particular, Gilman's research aims at demonstrating the extent to which these fundamental concepts were formed in the crucible of a virulent and racially—rather than theologically—understood anti-Semitism. The basic tenets of Freudian thought, particularly those pertaining to female sexuality, become legible, in Gilman's view, as a series of phobic gestures designed to clear Freud himself of the charges that were being systematically lodged against Jews as being predisposed to those pathologies that sexological discourses had been busily inventorying in the late nineteenth century under the general heading of *degeneration*. The degeneration of the male Jew in particular, as Gilman's research has amply documented, was, in scientific and popular literatures, obsessively figured as correlative to his feminization—that is, to his status as a man never quite at home in masculinity. The male Jew's ostensible predisposition to an array of behavioral and physical aberrations and pathologies was to a large extent understood as a by-product of a masculinity variously conceived as congenitally damaged, underdeveloped, or pathetically conflictual.

The locus classicus of the fin-de-siècle obsession with Jewish effeminacy is, of course, Otto Weininger's hugely influential treatise, *Sex and Character*, published in 1903, the year in which Schreber's *Memoirs* appeared. In this book, whose popularity among European intellectuals was perhaps as much a function of Weininger's spectacular suicide in the house where Beethoven had died as of its radical and deeply misogynist theses about the psychological, intellectual, and moral limitations of women, Weininger proposes that femininity and Jewishness are profoundly linked. He argues that Jews and Jewishness are saturated with a femininity itself conceived as an abject sensuality impeding the (Kantian) faculties of theoretical and practical reason from attaining the levels of sublime abstraction proper to them. For Weininger, femininity and Jewishness are in essence the names for the metaphysical guilt man brings upon himself by commingling the purity of his theoretical, moral, and aesthetic callings with the base needs and desires of material, embodied existence. I will return to Weininger's work later in this chapter; for now suffice it to say that Gilman's reading of Schreber is largely a demonstration that the latter's symptomatology was generated out of the same misogynist and anti-Semitic cultural archive as was Weininger's metaphysical phantasmagoria and, more important, that Freud's reading of the case was structured around a radical disavowal of his own implication in that cultural archive.

Gilman thus places the link between feminization and Jewishness, a link suggested by the image of the unmanned Wandering Jew, at the very center of his reading of Schreber. As he programmatically puts it: "Daniel Paul Schreber was afraid he was turning into an effeminate Jew, a true composite of Weininger's images of the Jew and the woman" (142). He traces, one by one, the fundamental features of Schreber's delusional system to cultural images and discourses, culled primarily from nineteenth-century medical and popular literature, of the "diseased Jew." The nineteenth-century medical literature that formed the backdrop of Schreber's diagnosis and treatment was, Gilman argues, so steeped in racialist biology and anti-Semitic ideology that Schreber had little choice but to experience his nervous agitation as indicative of a metamorphosis of Kafkan proportions—a metamorphosis into an object of sublime monstrosity: the unmanned Wandering Jew. "Schreber's paranoid system," Gilman writes, "uses the vocabulary of fin-de-siècle scientific anti-Semitism as a rhetorical structure to represent his anxiety about his own body. Schreber senses himself being transmuted from a 'beautiful,' masculine Aryan to an 'ugly,' feminized Jew" (147).

In the framework of such an interpretation, certain curious details from Schreber's *Memoirs* take on added weight. One thinks, for example, of the racial coding of the Zoroastrian gods, Ormuzd and Ariman, who together constitute what Schreber refers to as the posterior realms of heaven. Schreber notes, for example that "the lower God (Ariman) seems to have felt attracted to nations of originally brunette race (the Semites) and the upper God to nations of originally blond race (the Aryan peoples)" (53). Furthermore, given the notoriety of Nietzsche's *Also sprach Zarathustra*, one can readily assume Schreber's knowledge that in Zoroastrian theology Ariman represented the evil principle. If one adds to this the fact that in Schreber's system the lower god is intimately connected with the miracle of unmanning—"The rays of the lower God (Ariman) have the power of producing the miracle of unmanning; the rays of the upper God (Ormuzd) have the power of restoring manliness when necessary" (74)—then we are indeed faced, once more, with the link between femininity and Jewishness.[11] As Gilman sees it, Schreber's central fantasy about unmanning was primarily an expression of anxiety "about acquiring the Jew's circumcised penis, the sign of the feminization of the Jew" (155). Against this background and given the sensitivity of the voices that speak to Schreber to the similarities of sounds, one begins to hear in the word *Luder*, that insulting nomination at the center of Ariman's solar revelation, another, equally problematic nomination: *Jude*.

Gilman's work presupposes the predominance, in the nineteenth-century European imagination, of a connection between circumcision, feminization, and anti-Semitism. Perhaps the clearest formulation of such a connection was provided by Freud himself in a now famous footnote to the case of "Little Hans." Once more, it is Weininger who figures as the exemplary representative of these cultural fantasies:

> The castration complex is the deepest root of anti-Semitism; for even in the nursery little boys hear that a Jew has something cut off his penis—a piece of his penis, they think—and this gives them a right to despise Jews. And there is no stronger unconscious root for the sense of superiority over women. Weininger (the young philosopher who, highly gifted but sexually deranged, committed suicide after producing his remarkable book, *Geschlecht und Charakter*), in a chapter that attracted much attention, treated Jews and women with equal hostility and overwhelmed them with the same insults. Being neurotic, Weininger was completely under the sway of his infantile complexes; and from that standpoint what is common to Jews and women is their relation to the castration complex. (*SE* 10:36; cf. Gilman, 77)

According to Gilman, florid fantasies about the consequences of circumcision abounded in nineteenth-century European culture in general and in medical discourse in particular:

> In the medical discourse of the nineteenth century, circumcision was as evil as it was inescapable for the Jew because it led to specific diseases that corrupted the individual and eventually the body politic. . . . The linked dangers of sexuality, syphilis, and madness were constantly associated with the figure of the male Jew. The Jew, who had become identified with his circumcised state, came to personify this threat. Central to the definition of the Jew was the image of the male Jew's circumcised penis as impaired, damaged, or incomplete, and therefore threatening to the wholeness and health of the male Aryan. The damaged penis represented the potential ravages of sexually transmitted disease. (60–61)

Against the backdrop of this chain of associations (within the context of a widespread syphilophobia in the nineteenth century) and Schreber's own reference to a syphilitic epidemic in one of his more elaborate fantasies of cosmic disaster, Schreber's other references and allusions to plagues and various forms of leprosy—including "*Lepra orientalis, Lepra indica, Lepra hebraica* and *Lepra aegyptica*" (97)—might be read as further expressions and ramifications of Schreber's troubled identification with the image of the diseased, feminized Jew: "But being Jewish means . . . suffering from a disease, and Schreber suffered from a disease of the body that was at the same time a disease of the mind. . . . The disease of the Jews alters the Jew's skin, the shape of the Jew's nose. . . . It is syphilis, the plague associated by Schreber with the Jews and leprosy" (157).[12] The fantasy that Jewish sexuality was particularly prone to degeneration allowed for the further association of Jews and "the relatively newly medicalized 'disease' of homosexuality" (159).

Gilman argues that other details of Schreber's delusions, particularly delusions associated with the body, need to be understood as outgrowths of a core identification with the diseased/feminized body of the Jew as it was "constructed" in the medical discourses and popular anti-Semitic literature of the nineteenth century. For example, apropos of Schreber's delusions of miracles affecting his bowels as well as his repeated allusions to the smell of particular souls and putrescence more generally, Gilman writes:

> Even the act of defecation was associated with an anti-Semitic image of the Jew. In contemporary culture, the Jew stank of the *foetor judaicus*. The smell, like the smell of the sewers of the nineteenth century, which epitomized the source of decay for nineteenth-century public health, was the smell of shit. Within the scatological culture of Germany, Jews had a special role in the German fantasy about defecation. Beginning with Luther, there had been a powerful association between the act of defecation and being Jewish. (155)

Finally, Gilman suggests that the contributions of Niederland and other commentators who have emphasized the role of Moritz Schreber's orthopedic manipulations in the etiology of his son's psychosis should be reread in light of the Jewish dimension of Schreber's phantasmatic world: "The machines have another level of meaning. They are machines for the restructuring of the body, they are machines that feminize Schreber's body by unmanning him with magical rays. These machines also make the body into a Jew" (160).

Many of these arguments can be found in somewhat different form and with somewhat different emphasis in a series of articles by Jay Geller.[13] Geller's more Foucauldian reading suggests that the social and economic crises that plagued Germany in the 1870s played a key role in strengthening the hand of disciplinary forms of power, that when "the Great Depression revealed the inadequacy of liberalism, the administrative rule of expertise and welfare mechanisms embodied by public health policy came to the fore." Once crises of political economy were translated into anxieties about degeneration, the future health of the body politic could become a matter for doctors and psychiatrists. Geller, however, makes the more radical claim that, in the context of the nineteenth-century "sciences" of degeneration, "to be the object of the psychiatrist's gaze . . . is also to be the Jew."[14] He supports this claim, which is also central to Gilman's work, by referring to, among other things, Charcot's well-known hypothesis that "Jewish families furnish us with the finest subjects for the study of hereditary disease" and that among Jews "nervous symptoms of all sorts . . . are incomparably more frequent than elsewhere."[15] Geller also cites the work of one of Charcot's pupils, Henri Meige, who wrote a brief monograph on the Jewish predisposition to nervous illness in 1893 with the telling title *Le Juif-errant à la Salpêtrière: Études sur certains nevropathes*.[16]

Meige begins his remarkable essay by citing one of Charcot's case presentations from 1889, that of a Hungarian Jew named Klein who was apparently subject to compulsive wanderings and migrations: "I introduce him to you," Charcot reported, "as *a true descendant of Ahasverus or Cartophilus*, as you would say. The fact is that, like the compulsive (neurotic) travelers of whom I have already spoken, he is constantly driven by an irresistible need to move on, to travel, without being able to settle down anywhere. That is why he has been crisscrossing Europe for three years in search of the fortune which he has not yet encountered."[17] Meige's typical Wandering Jew is not so much a man in search of fortune as one driven to wander in search of a cure for the compulsion to wander:

> They are constantly obsessed by the need to travel, to go from city to city, from hospital to hospital, in search of a new treatment, an unfindable remedy. They try all the recommended medications, avid for novelty, but they soon reject them, inventing a frivolous pretext for not continuing, and, with the reappearing impulse, they flee one fine day, drawn by a new mirage of a distant cure.

Meige adds to this description the following *racial* diagnosis:

> Let us not forget that they are Jews, and that it is a characteristic of their race to move with extreme ease. At home nowhere, and at home everywhere, the Israelites never hesitate to leave their homes for an important business affair and, particularly if they are ill, to go in search of an effective remedy.

In Meige's view, what is ultimately pathological about these modern Wandering Jews, whose trajectory is not surprisingly from an impoverished Eastern to a more affluent Western Europe, is their *drivenness*, the intensity of their compulsion "to be always seeking *something else and somewhere else*. What is pathological is not to be able to resist this need to keep moving, which nothing justifies and which may even be detrimental."[18] At least one of the results of such views was indeed that maladies that had been typically associated with women—above all hysteria—came to be seen as diseases to which Jewish men in particular were also prone.[19]

In their efforts to establish the predominance of the anti-Semitic discourses under whose auspices Schreber ostensibly elaborated his mutation into the unmanned Wandering Jew, both Gilman and Geller make extensive use of another curious cultural document, a bizarre prose text entitled "Der operierte Jude" written by the psychiatrist, author, and eventual psychiatric patient, Oskar Panizza.[20] Published in 1893, "The Operated Jew" tells the ghastly story of a Jewish medical student, Itzig Faitel Stern—a stock character of nineteenth-century anti-Semitic literature—who undergoes a series of surgical and orthopedic procedures in his efforts to transform himself, body and soul, into a true German. As Geller notes, in this quasi-pornographic narration of a pathetically literal attempt at assimilation, Panizza "drew on virtually the entire repertoire of anti-Semitic stereotype."[21]

And indeed he did. Panizza's narrator describes Faitel Stern as a physically deformed and "dreadful piece of human flesh" (52) whom Christian tailors are unable to fit properly; his speech is characterized as a "mixture of Palatinate Semitic babble, French nasal noises, and some high German vocalic sounds that he had fortuitously overheard"

(50); his aggressive gesticulations are portrayed as a grotesque theater of bestial expressiveness:

> But when he became zealous and had a good opportunity to wage an argument, then he reared up, raised a hand, pulled back his fleshy, volatile upper lip like a piece of leather so that the upper row of teeth became exposed, spread open both his hands like fans pointing upward with his upper body leaning backward, bobbed his head up and down against his breast a few times, and rhythmically uttered sounds like a trumpet. (50)

And of course Stern is enormously wealthy. But perhaps the most curious detail of all is a peculiar linguistic repetition compulsion attributed to Stern, a habit of peppering his speech with a series of meaningless phrases or "speech particles":

> Faitel Stern said something like this when I questioned him about the immense luxury of his wardrobe and toilet articles: "Why shoodn't I buy for me a new coat, a bootiful hat—menerá, fine wanished boots—menerá, me, too, I shood bicome a fine gentilman after this Deradáng! Deradáng!" His upper body rocked back and forth. At the same time, there was a spreading of the hands at shoulder height in a slightly squat position; an ecstatic look with a glossy reflection; an exposure of both rows of teeth; a rich amount of saliva. (51)

As disturbing as these passages may be, Panizza reserves his most grotesque descriptions for Faitel's surgical metamorphosis the goal of which, as Faitel puts it, is "'to become such a fine gentilman just like a goymenera and to geeve up all fizonomie of Jewishness'"(55). He enters the care of a Heidelberg anatomist named Professor Klotz, who strikes the reader familiar with the Schreber material as a kind of monstrous parody of Moritz Schreber. Klotz has Faitel strapped into a series of orthopedic apparatuses designed to "Aryanize" his physique; his bones are broken and reset; he is subjected to a series of violent and "neck-breaking exercises"(55); to prevent his body from bobbing up and down "a barbed wire belt similar to a collar was placed around his hips on his bare skin (as they do with dogs) so that he was immediately spiked when he tended to move up and down or from side to side" (56); he relearns high German "like a totally new, foreign language"(56); he takes a mysterious drug to change the color of his skin so that it would "yield to a fine, pastel lead tint" (57); and finally, in order to be sure that his soul, too, was German, he receives blood transfusions from seven robust women from the Black Forest, "since it was possible to assert to a certain degree that the abode of the soul could be located in the blood"(60).

The story culminates in the scene of Faitel's wedding banquet when, under the influence of alcohol and, it is suggested, anxieties about exposing his circumcised penis to his Christian bride, Othilia Schnack, Faitel's body and soul regress back to their preoperative Jewish condition. The advent of the breakdown is signaled by the return of the repressed linguistic repetition compulsion: "Those people who had a good ear could already hear now a few 'Deradángs! Deradángs!'"(71). Eventually Faitel's entire "assimilation" comes undone:

> Those people who remained behind watched with horror as Faitel's blond strands of hair began to curl during the last few scenes. Then the curly locks turned from red to dirty brown to blue-black. . . . His arms and legs, which had been stretched and bent in numerous operations, could no longer perform the recently learned movements, nor the old ones. . . . Everyone looked with dread at the crazy circular movements of the Jew. . . . Klotz's work of art lay before him crumpled and quivering, a convoluted Asiatic image in wedding dress, a counterfeit of human flesh, Itzig Faitel Stern. (74)

Both Gilman and Geller suggest that Schreber's transformation into an unmanned Wandering Jew needs to be understood as a kind of mirror image of the process undergone by Faitel Stern. To repeat Gilman's earlier thesis, "Schreber senses himself being transmuted from a 'beautiful,' masculine Aryan to an 'ugly,' feminized Jew." The claim is that when, at the end of the nineteenth century, a German man belonging to an elite (such as the judiciary) comes, for whatever reasons, to feel his identification with his status disturbed, he will automatically find himself in the symbolic position of the marginal figures of that culture—in this instance women and Jews—and begin, unconsciously and conflictually, to elaborate the consequences of his new set of identifications using whatever images and fantasies are ready to hand in the cultural "archive." Here one might recall Bourdieu's remarks on the "wasting away" of elites:

> That is . . . the function of all magical boundaries (whether the boundary between masculine and feminine, or between those selected and those rejected by the educational system): to stop those who are inside, on the right side of the line, from leaving, demeaning or down-grading themselves. Pareto used to say that elites are destined to "waste away" when they cease to believe in themselves . . . and begin to cross the line in the wrong direction. This is also one of the functions of the act of institution: to discourage permanently any attempt to cross the line, to transgress, desert, or *quit*.[22]

It would appear, then, that once Schreber's investiture as *Senatspräsident* began wasting away, Schreber crossed the lines that had heretofore separated him from his "others," namely women and Jews. Once one admits the cogency and force of this reading, Freud's own failure so much as to mention the Jewish dimension of Schreber's delusions—what we might refer to as Schreber's *Jewish transvestitism*—itself takes on the status of a symptom. Both Gilman and Geller maintain that this failure was a result of Freud's profound—and historically quite understandable—anxiety about being caught on the wrong side of both of these lines. Each critic argues that Freud strategically misread (i.e., ignored) the Jewish dimension of Schreber's psychotic universe and that such a misreading was part of a larger defensive formation that determined the shape and intellectual direction of psychoanalysis for years to come. Offered as a partial answer to the difficult question of the "Jewishness" of psychoanalysis, the thesis is that the founding concepts and terms of this peculiar institution were in large part determined by a kind of extended "masculine protest"—by the struggle of a male, Jewish scientist-physician with a scientific and medical culture for which Jews embodied a condition of effeminate degeneration and abjection. Freud's paradoxical situation was, in a word, this: How could someone who occupied the structural position of the symptom offer authoritative knowledge about the cure? Gilman and Geller argue that in the context of the Schreber study, the pressures of this paradox prevented Freud from acknowledging the Jewish question in the Schreber material:

> The Jew within had to be repressed in the now neutralized discourse of science. This was achieved through a creative repression of the overt link between mental illness and Schreber's internalization of his anxiety about becoming a Jew. As with Freud's reading of the life histories of his hysterics, Schreber came to represent his own anxieties about his identity as a physician and male Jew in the culture of fin-de-siècle Vienna.[23]

III

This reading of Schreber—and of Freud on Schreber—has been taken up by a number of scholars within what might be called the new Jewish cultural studies, scholarly efforts to bring recent innovations in the study of gender and sexuality to bear on readings of canonical Jewish texts. In a series of essays on Jewish culture at the margins of empire—both Roman and Hapsburg—Daniel Boyarin has, for example, persuasively argued that the "representation of the . . . male Jew as female . . .

was not only an external one, one that originated in the fantasies of anti-Semites, but also an internal one that represented a genuine Jewish cultural difference."[24] What Boyarin has in mind here is above all the image of the pale, studious, and sedentary *Yeshiva Bokhur*—an ideal of manhood in Eastern European Jewish culture—whose attributes in many ways corresponded to common descriptions of the male hysteric in nineteenth-century medical literature. Freud's failure to read Schreber's hybrid identity as unmanned Wandering Jew, Boyarin insists, was a failure or refusal to recognize himself, a former *Ostjude* like so many Viennese Jews, in that figure; it was thus of a piece with Freud's more general strategy of self-fashioning, elaborated within the terms of an aggressively heterosexual psychoanalytic theory, as a man fully at home in his German (i.e., Occidental) masculinity. Freud's compulsive elaboration, in the Schreber essay and elsewhere, of the so-called positive Oedipus complex as the model of psychic health and maturity thus comes to resemble the ordeal undergone by Faitel Stern to transform himself into "the equivalent of an Occidental human being."[25] The goal was to demonstrate to oneself and to others that one had, as it were, purified oneself of any traces of the Eastern Jew whose perverse, effeminate carnality would most certainly have disqualified him from the world of Western science and *Bildung*. Boyarin's crucial point is that, like Faitel Stern, Freud engaged in a sort of colonial mimicry that not only distorted the theoretical edifice he was in the midst of constructing; it furthermore prevented him from embracing the resources of *alternative models of gender and sexual organization* that might have become available to him within Jewish culture. For Boyarin, then, the "Jewishness" of psychoanalysis is legible only as so many traces of refusals and disavowals. Freud's failure to hear Schreber's Jewish question has, in this reading, the status of an eminently phobic gesture generated by a culturally overdetermined counter-transference: "*I'm not that!*"

Boyarin's readings of rabbinic literature indeed suggest that Schreber gets something right about masculinity as constructed within traditional Jewish culture, that he discovers the theological resources of an alternative masculinity authorized by canonical Jewish texts. Commenting, for example, on a midrashic text on Song of Songs in which the (circumcised) men of Israel are addressed as the Daughters of Zion,[26] Boyarin suggests that the text enacts a blurring of gender familiar from mystical texts in which the adept is figured as the female partner in an encounter with the divine: "Circumcision is understood by the midrash as feminizing the male, thus making him open to receive the divine speech and vision of God." And apropos of the verse of Ezekiel (16:6) in which Israel is figured as a female child along with other rabbinic interpretations suggesting that the Torah feminizes its devotees, Boyarin concludes that in Judaism

> circumcision was understood somehow as rendering the male somewhat feminine, thus making it possible for the male Israelite to have communion with a male deity. In direct contrast to Roman accusations that circumcision was a mutilation of the body that made men ugly, the Rabbinic texts emphasize over and over that the operation removes something ugly from the male body.[27]

According to Boyarin, then, in the context of rabbinic Judaism a man comes to have a body that matters, a body whose "matter" is holy, a body inscribed by the divine Word, *by way of feminization*.[28]

In an essay on Jewish (male) masochism, Boyarin has amplified this claim by suggesting that in rabbinic Judaism a man comes to have a body that matters precisely through a kind of couvade, a mimesis of the feminine prerogative of childbirth.[29] Citing talmudic narratives in which rabbis undergo Schreber-like mortifications of the body, mortifications that involve, as with Schreber, a mimesis of femininity, Boyarin concludes:

> In the Greco-Roman world, the deeds that would render a man a suitable erotic object would have been phallic deeds par excellence, deeds of valor of one sort or another, while for the Rabbi these deeds are precisely antiphallic, masochistic challenges to the coherence and impermeability of the male body. Paradoxically, it is the penetrated, violated, bleeding body that constructs the penile ideal. Where the "Roman" had to show that he had a phallus to win a woman, the Rabbi has to show he has none. . . . This male subject . . . is called upon and learns to recognize himself . . . not through an image of "unimpaired masculinity," rather through an image of masculinity as impairment, as what would be interpreted in another culture as castration.[30]

The affirmation of phallic ruination—not castration—is mobilized through a series of mimetic performances of childbirth. What distinguishes this rabbinic masculinity from the masculinity of Christian saints is, Boyarin finally claims, the paradox that for the rabbis the destruction or wasting away of the "phallus" performed in talmudic couvade narratives is understood as passage toward procreative manhood rather than sexual asceticism.[31]

If I might rephrase Boyarin's point in Winnicottian terms, we might say that Jewish masculinity is, at least on a certain reading of rabbinic literature, *good enough masculinity*. It is a masculinity that has undergone a destruction and survival via a symbolic ordeal resembling couvade, a masculinity that has, so to speak, allowed its (phantasmatic) phallus to waste away in order to survive with a penis. To be a man, in Judaism, means, according to this reading, to know, in a profound and *embodied* way, that one's being is defined by a lack that only subordination to God and his commandments—a subordination itself imagined as feminizing—can ever "make good." To bring these views to a point, we might say that traditional Jewish masculinity is defined by a fundamental paradox: *that men be initiated into manhood through a mimesis of femininity*.

A number of these arguments have been articulated apropos of biblical literature by Howard Eilberg-Schwartz.[32] Eilberg-Schwartz, too, associates Jewish masculinity with the fundamental paradox he sees Schreber struggling with: "Whatever the cause of Schreber's fantasies of being unmanned and sexually desired by God, his writings took him to the heart of . . . the dilemma of monotheism" (137). According to Eilberg-Schwartz, masculinity in ancient Israelite religion is effectively traversed by the same double bind that Sedgwick has located at the heart of male elites in modern Western cultures, namely of homosocial desire "as at once the most compulsory and the most prohibited of social bonds."[33] Jewish men, who are otherwise enjoined to maintain strictly heterosexual unions, are expected to strive for intimacy with a God figured as masculine and, even more radically, as bridegroom to his people. According to Eilberg-Schwartz, the primary strategies for circumventing the homoerotic implications of such intimacy was, first, "a prohibition against depicting God (veiling the body of God)" and, second, "the feminization of men" (3). In this way, a male-male relation could become "intelligible" as a variation of a heterosexual union. Circumcision is one of the key elements in this difficult cultural and theological negotiation:

> Circumcision was for the ancient Israelites a symbol of male submission. Because it is partially emasculating, it was a recognition of a power greater than man. The symbolism of submission to God is obviously related to the images of feminization of Israelite men in the Hebrew Bible. Both were symptoms of the same phenomenon. God was acknowledged as the ultimate male and in his presence human masculinity was seen to be compromised and put at risk. (161–62)

No doubt the figure in the Hebrew scriptures who was most forcefully exposed to these double binds of Jewish masculinity was Moses. Eilberg-Schwartz discusses several biblical passages suggesting a partial gender reversal or at least a mode of transvestitism on Moses' part. One such passage, Exodus 34:29–35, describes the transfiguration of Moses' skin when he comes down from Mount Sinai. Because of an ambiguity of the verb used to signify this transfiguration, the passage became the basis of the tradition picturing Moses with horns. Whatever the exact meaning of the passage, the change in Moses' face was disturbing enough that he had to wear a veil, which in turn suggests a degree of feminization:

> Veils do carry associations of femininity. Although the veil was not standard attire of women in ancient Israel, it is viewed as feminine attire. . . . Moses is the only Israelite male to be described as covering his face. . . . In addition to hiding his transfiguration, the veiling of Moses partially feminizes him. It points to his transformation into the intimate of God. (144)

Eilberg-Schwartz suggests that the tradition endowing Moses with horns could be understood as a sort of "masculine protest" evoked by the feminizing implications of the events described: "Moses is imagined with his face covered like a woman, but with horns like a proud bull. He is caught between genders—a man as a leader of Israel, a woman as the wife of God" (145). Finally, Eilberg-Schwartz suggests that the inevitable tensions generated by a masculinity constructed under these inconsistent, even contradictory demands, came to be displaced onto women and figured as *female impurity*.[34]

To return to Freud, Eilberg-Schwartz makes the now familiar argument that under the social and political pressures of his historical moment, Freud was unable to acknowledge any proximity to femininity, and especially to a Judaism "stained" by effeminacy. He then follows the trace of this inability or, perhaps, more accurately, this refusal, from Freud's essay on Schreber, in which the Jewish dimension of Schreber's unmanning is, as it were, made inert, to Freud's "historical novel" about the nature and origins of the Jewish national character, *Moses and Monotheism*. Eilberg-Schwartz sees both texts as structured around the avoidance of a femininity that within Jewish culture is the implicit risk of proximity to the divine; what Freud fails to understand is, in a word, the *theological necessity* of Jewish transvestitism.

Moses and Monotheism does indeed construct an image of Judaism as a sort of hypermasculine, neo-Kantian religion of reason, as if Freud were arguing, in the spirit of Jewish rationalist philosophers such as Hermann Cohen, against the specter of Weininger's claim that the (masculine/Christian) point of view of Kantian critical philosophy was as foreign to the (feminized) Jewish psychic and moral constitution as was Wagner's *Parsifal* to the Jewish aesthetic sensibility.[35] The conception of Jewish spirituality and intellectuality proffered by Freud suggests a posture of severe self-control grounded in an endless series of instinctual renunciations. For Eilberg-Schwartz, Freud's insistence on instinctual renunciation and a concomitant privileging of intellectual and moral reasoning—all of which are figured as masculine in Freud's culture and text—as the core tendencies of Judaism must be understood as elements of a defensive, even phobic gesture. By locating the essence of Jewish spiritual and moral development in a triumphant transcendence of sensuousness and sensuality, Freud avoids the homoerotic and potentially feminizing implications of a man's intimacy with God-the-Father, that is, of a theological version of the *negative* Oedipus complex. That is why, Eilberg-Schwartz suggests, Freud's entire conception of Jewish spirituality comes to be centered on the prohibition on images, i.e., on representing the *body of God*, why *that* renunciation becomes Freud's model for all further acts of renunciation/sublimation of instinctual urges.

In his own reading of *Moses and Monotheism*, Boyarin has taken a step beyond this interpretation. Not only was the avoidance of homoeroticism a dynamic cause of Freud's transformation of a God who, at privileged moments in the Hebrew scriptures, is indeed figured as visible and present to his people into a sublime abstraction;[36] rather, Freud's own argument is riddled by a fundamental inconsistency: "Renunciation of the fulfillment of desire, which is encoded in Freud's text as masculine, is occasioned by a submissiveness vis-à-vis a male other, whether it be the 'great man' Moses or the deity. But that very submissiveness, the mark of the religious person, *is itself feminizing* in the terms of nineteenth-century culture."[37]

Although I think that Boyarin is quite right about this inconsistency, I think he misses an important dimension of its significance. His misreading, if I might call it that, is, I believe, based on an error he shares with all readings that locate that which is "abjected" from a symbolic identity—in this instance "queerness" and "femininity"—at *the same ontological level* as the identity that is thereby constructed. A closer look at *Moses and Monotheism* will suggest, however, how we might think the ontological *asymmetry* of a symbolic identity and its abject "others," those who figure the "submissiveness" internal to that symbolic identity.

IV

Several years before beginning his work on *Moses*, Freud wrote in a new preface prepared for the Hebrew edition of *Totem and Taboo*—the edition appeared years later, in 1939—that although he is "completely estranged from the religion of his fathers . . . and . . . cannot take a share in nationalist ideals," he nevertheless feels that "he is in his essential nature a Jew." He added that "he could not now express that essence in words; but some day, no doubt, it will become accessible to the scientific mind."[38] *Moses and Monotheism* is at least in part Freud's effort to make this, his own "essential nature" as a Jew, an essence that somehow persists despite his alienation from all embodied, ritual practices—from what we might call the "carnality" of Judaism—accessible to the "science" of psychoanalysis. But beyond that, this curious book was also Freud's most extended response to and analysis of anti-Semitism. In effect, Freud will attempt to explain anti-Semitism as a refusal to mourn the losses and dislocations that found modern subjectivity and that had, in a sense, been rehearsed over the course of the mournful history of Jewish monotheism.

In a series of highly speculative gestures, Freud links the core *structural* features of Jewish monotheism, imposed on the Jews, according to Freud's story, by an Egyptian Moses, and the *historical* condition of diaspora, which begins with the destruction of the Temple and the subsequent reorganization of communal life around the study of Torah in dispersed centers of learning and worship. For Freud, the ethically oriented monotheism of the Jews and the historical condition of diaspora are linked by a series of traumatic cuts: of the deity from plastic representation; of spirituality from magic, animism, and sexual excess; of the passions from their violent enactments; of the people from a territory conceived as proper to them. These various modalities of loss, separation, and departure, which Freud views as so many forms of the instinctual renunciation (*Triebverzicht*) that undergirds the rule of law in the most general sense, procure for the Jews what he calls "their secret treasure," namely a sense of self-confidence and superiority with regard to pagan cultures whose spirituality has remained, as he puts it, "under the spell of sensuality" (*SE* 23:115). It is no doubt this "secret treasure" that Freud was thinking of when he spoke of his essential nature as a Jew that persists as a core identity despite estrangement from all cultic and cultural practices.

However, in the midst of his reconstruction of Jewish cultural identity, Freud encounters the impasse of the utter illegitimacy of what he has characterized as the "secret treasure" of the Jews. "It is not obvious and not immediately understandable," he writes, "why an advance in intellectuality [*Geistigkeit*], a set-back to sensuality, should raise the self-regard both of an individual and of a people. It seems to presuppose the existence of a definite standard of value and of some other person or agency which maintains it" (*SE* 23:116). After some brief reflections on the superego, Freud returns to this impasse:

> Moreover, in the case of some advances in intellectuality . . . we cannot point to the authority which lays down the standard which is to be regarded as higher. . . . Thus we are faced by the phenomenon that in the

> course of the development of humanity sensuality is gradually overpowered by intellectuality and that men feel proud and exalted by every such advance. *But we are unable to say why this should be so.* (*SE* 23:118; my emphasis)

In Freud's reading of Jewish spiritual development, this unnerving gap in knowledge apropos of what Nietzsche referred to as the *value of values*, is filled, in the end, by the infamous myth of the primal father and murder whose archetypal pattern is, Freud maintains, played out once more on the person of Moses. This myth helps Freud to account for what might be called *Jewish transference*, the unconscious transmission of the cultural patterns and values—of *essence*—that make a Jew a Jew. By transference I mean here the condition of finding oneself obsessively engaged in the effort to interpret, to translate into the language of reason, valuational speech acts whose ultimate authority remains grounded in the performative force of their enunciation. What is ultimately untranslatable—we might even say nonmetabolizable—about such utterances, is this dimension of pure performativity that coconstitutes their authority. To be in transference in the sense I am using the term here means, in other words, to be caught up in an interminable translation project. Freud's myth of the primal father is in the last resort an attempt to put a human face on the dimension of symbolic authority that is *nonsymbolizable*, or, as he puts it, "in a mystical fashion, so self-evident." It is, in short, the myth of the emergence of the superego dimension of ethical thought and feeling:

> Going back to ethics, we may say in conclusion that a part of its precepts are justified rationally by the necessity for delimiting the rights of society as against the individual, the rights of the individual as against society and those of individuals as against one another. But what seems to us so grandiose about ethics, so mysterious and, in a mystical fashion, so self-evident, owes these characteristics to its connection with religion, its origin from the will of the father. (*SE* 23:122)[39]

Earlier, Freud had linked this superego dimension of ethical feeling to a peculiar form of pleasure: "But whereas instinctual renunciation, when it is for external reasons, is *only* unpleasurable, when it is for internal reasons, in obedience to the super-ego, it has a different economic effect. In addition to the inevitable unpleasurable consequences it also brings the ego a yield of pleasure—a substitutive satisfaction, as it were" (*SE* 23:116–17). But it is in the final pages of the book that Freud really lays his cards on the table and suggests that the ethical genius of the Jews derives from a kind of perverse capacity for this sublime pleasure-in-pain: "In a fresh rapture of moral asceticism [*In* *einem neuen Rausch moralischer Askese*] they imposed more and more instinctual renunciations on themselves and in that way reached—in doctrine and precept, at least—ethical heights which had remained inaccessible to the other peoples of antiquity" (*SE* 23:134). The word Freud uses here, "rapture" or *Rausch*, bears distinctly Dionysian connotations of sensual excess and intoxication. The path of Jewish spiritual development traced by Freud turns out to have been shaped like a Moebius band: in their attempt to structure a relationship to the mystically self-evident, nonsymbolizable dimension of their ethical commandments the Jews rediscover, *on a different level of experience and imagination*, the "pagan" excesses which Judaism had ostensibly evacuated from the religious experience. The "secret treasure" of the Jews turns out to be dependent on an uncanny secretion of jouissance within the precincts of the moral law. It is this "pagan" intoxication, this "carnal" excess at the very core of what Freud characterizes as Jewish *Geistigkeit*—the spiritual/intellectual genius built around loss, instinctual renunciation, deterritorialization—that represents, I think, the deeper layer of what Boyarin has identified as a crucial inconsistency in Freud's argument. What Freud discovers as a paradoxical kernel of jouissance within the domain of an otherwise austere, Kantian moral universe is, as Boyarin has rightly noted, occasioned, *in Freud's narrative*, by submissiveness to a "great man." But that narrative construction was itself generated by an impasse in his argument apropos of the Jewish valuation of *Geistigkeit*. Freud was unable to imagine a resolution of that impasse—the impossibility of accounting for the value of this value—outside the terms of the "father complex." Freud's "great man" fills a gap, a missing link in his argumentation about the emergence of a new cultural value. But to follow Freud here, as I think Boyarin does, is to miss, once more, the encounter with this missing link. To interpret Freud's failure as the avoidance of a homoeroticism implied by his own narrative domesticates the impasse on which Freud's interpretation founders, the impasse that called his narrative into being in the first place. And it repeats the error Freud made in his reading of Schreber.

Schreber's crisis was a crisis of investiture. He discovered that his own symbolic power and authority as judge—and German man—was founded, at least in part, by the performative magic of the rites of institution, that his symbolic function was sustained by an imperative to produce a regulated series of repeat performances. It was this idiotic repetition compulsion at the heart of his symbolic function that Schreber experienced as profoundly sexualizing, as a demand to cultivate jouissance. That he experienced this sexualization as feminizing and

"Jewifying" suggests that at the advent of European modernity, "knowledge" of jouissance was ascribed to women and Jews, meaning that women and Jews were *cursed* with the task of holding the place of that which could not be directly acknowledged: that symbolic identities, are, in the final analysis, sustained by *drive*, by performativity-as-repetition-compulsion. I would like to elaborate these points further by returning, briefly, to Panizza's "Operated Jew." I will then turn to another famous case of bodily transformation and mutation, that of Kafka's Gregor Samsa. In each instance we shall see that abjection, the experience of something rotten within, signifies a cursed knowledge of jouissance, which only by way of a kind of secondary revision becomes legible as "homosexuality," "femininity," or "Jewishness"—what Schreber condenses by means of the name *Luder*.

V

A hint on how we might revise our initial impression of Panizza's text as little more than a grotesque, anti-Semitic story of an impossible Jewish assimilation, comes from an unexpected source. In a 1930 essay written for the radio, Walter Benjamin suggested that one might rehabilitate the work of Panizza by placing him alongside another master of the fantastic: E.T.A. Hoffmann. Benjamin asserts that Panizza shared Hoffmann's profound enmity toward the good burgher or *Alltagsmensch* who comes to appear, in all of his virtues and positive attributes, "as the product of a nefarious artificial mechanism whose inner parts were ruled by Satan."[40] Noting the profound connections between paranoia and theology—Benjamin was, we recall, himself well versed in Schreber's writings[41]—Benjamin suggests that it was above all Panizza's theological disposition that made him so sensitive to the contaminations of human life and spirit by mechanical and mechanistic forces.

It is, of course, Hoffmann's "The Sandman," a text to which we have already referred, that most famously and poignantly addresses the complications of such contaminations. The doomed protagonist of that story, Nathanael, falls in love with Olympia, a mechanical doll constructed with the aid of his demonic nemesis, Coppola/Coppelius. A fellow student of Nathanael's tells his friend that because of her stiff and mechanical comportment Olympia makes an impression of utter soullessness: "Her step is peculiarly measured; all of her movements seem to stem from some kind of clockwork. . . . We found Olympia to be rather uncanny [*unheimlich*], and we wanted to have nothing to do with her. She seems to us to be playing the part of a human being."[42]

Nathanael, for his part, suffers his major breakdown when he can no longer deny Olympia's true status as automaton. This occurs when he stumbles upon Coppola and Spalanzani struggling for possession of her lifeless body:

> The professor was grasping a female figure by the shoulders, the Italian Coppola had her by the feet, and they were twisting and tugging her this way and that. . . . Coppola threw the figure over his shoulder and with a horrible, shrill laugh, ran quickly down the stairs, the figure's grotesquely dangling feet bumping and rattling woodenly on every step. Nathanael stood transfixed; he had only too clearly seen that in the deathly pale waxen face of Olympia there were no eyes, but merely black holes. She was a lifeless doll.

Spalanzani picks up the missing eyes from the ground and flings them at Nathanael, pushing him into an abyss of insanity: "Then madness racked Nathanael with scorching claws, ripping to shreds his mind and senses."[43]

Freud's own notoriously complex reading of the story begins with a critique of a previous study of the "Psychology of the Uncanny" written by E. Jentsch in 1906. Jentsch had argued that the effect of uncanniness is produced, as in Hoffmann's story, whenever uncertainty is created as to a thing's life or lifelessness: "one of the most successful devices for easily creating uncanny effects is to leave the reader in uncertainty whether a particular figure . . . is a human being or an automaton."[44] Freud criticizes this view in favor of one attuned to the castration imagery repeatedly evoked in conjunction with the figure of Coppelius/Coppola. What Freud failed to see was the connection between Jentsch's notion of intellectual uncertainty and his own conception of repetition compulsion, which at a formal level is the distinguishing feature of the uncanny effect. Repetition compulsion is at work when one's actions appear to be controlled by a demonic force, lending those actions a mechanical, automatic quality.[45] One will recall that Olympia's "expressivity"—what lured Nathanael into believing in her depth of feeling and soulfulness—was more or less confined to the repeated production of the interjection "Ach, Ach!" What Freud failed to notice was, in other words, that in the story Olympia herself serves as a primary figuration of repetition compulsion. Nathanael falls into madness not over the grotesque deidealization of his beloved but rather because she is suddenly no longer there to protect him from his own "knowledge" of repetition, from his own subjection to the demonic/mechanistic forces embodied by Coppelius/Coppola. Once Olympia collapses into a grotesque assemblage of lifeless parts, the knowledge of repetition *falls into him*, a knowledge figured by the eyes Spalanzani throws at him.[46]

Panizza's "Operated Jew" would remain a purely anti-Semitic text if it did not include or imply a comparable moment when the forces materialized by the repulsive, though doubtlessly fascinating, presence of Faitel Stern did not, as it were, fall into the non-Jew, who is in this case not another figure in the story but rather an implied non-Jewish reader. The failed transformation of Faitel Stern into a specimen of ideal masculine *Germanentum* functions as a narrative lure; along the way, the non-Jewish German reader is confronted with the knowledge that he, too, has doubtlessly failed at being fully "assimilated" to the Germanness that is ostensibly his natural element. What is at stake here, then, is not simply Panizza's ridicule of German vulgarity and stupidity, which is no doubt also present in the text, but rather his suggestion that, in a sense, "the German" does not exist.

Panizza indicates the imposture of the German at several points in his text. When, for example, Faitel decides to obtain a German soul—"the chaste, undefined Germanic soul, which shrouded the possessor like an aroma"—he is advised to go to England, "where the purest effusion of this Germanic soul was to be found" (59).[47] This plan is abandoned due to language difficulties. After his next plan, infusion with German blood, fails to obtain the desired results, Faitel, who had by now changed his name to Siegfried Freudenstern, makes a Pascalian wager: "he began reciting pathetic and sentimental passages by poets, especially in the social gatherings of the ladies' salons, and he astutely observed the position of the mouths, breath, twinkle of the eyes, gestures, and certain sighs that emanated so passionately and strenuously from German breasts satiated with feelings" (61). In time he had "learned to inhale and exhale superbly. And one time he had the satisfaction of hearing from a student in the ladies' salons that Siegfried Freudenstern was a man with soul through and through" (62).

Before the story culminates in Faitel's disastrous wedding night, the narrator addresses the reader directly with a curious series of remarks suggesting the difficulty, even impossibility, of attaining complete certainty as to the state of another person's or even one's own soul.[48] Invoking a "trivial" metaphor of coats trimmed with fur to suggest the presence of more luxuriant inner linings hidden from view, the narrator admonishes his *male* readers to resist such dissimulation: "Do you also wear a coat like this? Oh, then throw it away if you're a man" (67). He then goes on to elucidate his own metaphor's hidden lining:

> Still, haven't you seen people, my dear reader, who wear such furs around their souls in order to conceal their porous and shabby constitution? And then they act as though they had a noble soul clad in the finest of fabrics. . . . Perhaps you yourself, my reader, possess such wrappings for your soul? Oh, then throw this book in a corner if you're a man and spew everything out! This is not for you. Only a woman may lie and cloak herself in false wrappings. (67)

The narrator concludes this curious digression with a retelling of the myth of Prometheus, who receives permission from God to make human beings only on the condition that they be cursed by a quality which makes them morally inferior to animals whose communications are unclouded by dissimulation:

> It was the lie. Oh, base contract that allowed us all to be born under the same sign of the lie! And were you perhaps the cause for that lying tower of Babel forcing people to separate because they no longer understand each other in spite of the coughing and gesticulating? And, even if the German nations were the last to be created, received the least repercussions from all this because so much of the lying substance [*Lügensubstanz*] had already been used up by the previous Asiatic and Latin races, there is still enough there.—Oh, reader, if you can, spit out this dirt like rotten slime, and show your lips, your tongue, and your teeth just as they are! (68)[49]

Although Faitel is described as a man who secretes unusual amounts of this slime, the narrator's crucial point is that no one, not even the purest exemplar of Germanic masculinity, will ever be able to purify himself of this *Lügensubstanz*. This abject substance would seem to be a form of that putrescent matter that Schreber refers to as *Leichengift* or the "poison of corpses" and which figured, in the context of the *Memoirs*, the repetition compulsion at the heart of symbolic function.

When, at the end of the story, Faitel's "true" Jewish condition returns—a return signaled by a linguistic repetition compulsion: "Deradáng! Deradáng!"—the reader may no longer be as firmly at home in the social fantasy he has traversed over the course of this story, namely, that it is the Jew who embodies the contamination of the human soul by *Lügensubstanz*. He may still try to respond to the "counterfeit of human flesh" to which Faitel Stern is reduced at the end of the story with the phobic gesture: "That's not me!" He has, however, been informed that such a gesture can never fully succeed, that there will always be a residue of this strange substance that he can never quite spit out and that marks him, too, as counterfeit, as a subject driven by the imperatives of performativity-as-repetition-compulsion.

VI

Much like Schreber's *Memoirs* and Panizza's "Operated Jew," the story of Gregor Samsa is an initiation into a universe of abjection.[50] Not only is Gregor transformed into a species of repulsive vermin, not only is he fed garbage, but his family gradually turns his room into a dumping grounds for all sorts of refuse—for what is refused from the family. Gregor's desiccated body is also finally expelled as so much trash, as if he had come to embody the waste products of the very family he had previously nourished with care and dedication. Although Kafka does not offer the reader anything like a causal account of Gregor's transformation, he does suggest a number of possible systemic or structural features that help make sense of it. In other words, Gregor's fall into abjection can be approached as a *symptom* whose fascinating presence serves as a displaced condensation of larger and more diffuse disturbances within the social field marked out by the text.

The story begins with a community—the Samsa family—in disarray. A strange, even miraculous, physical transformation, and indeed one not unlike Schreber's mutation into a *Luder*, has made it impossible for Gregor to perform the duties that had heretofore been the lifeblood of the family. The reader first encounters the members of this microcommunity as a series of *voices* recalling Gregor to his "official" responsibilities. Among the voices imploring Gregor to do his duty, the father's voice doubtlessly distinguishes itself as the most urgent and insistent one. This quasi-operatic mise-en-scène, whereby characters are introduced as voices with distinctive vocal registers, may be, on Kafka's part, an allusion not merely to the world of opera in general but rather to a particular work whose cultural significance would not have escaped him: Wagner's final opera, *Parsifal.*

In *Parsifal*, too, we find a community—the Grail Society—in disarray; there too the communal state of emergency is called forth by a son's inability to perform his official duties because of a bodily mutation or mutilation. Amfortas, the Fisher King, is unable to officiate over the Grail miracle. Seduced by Kundry—embodiment of Woman and Wandering Jew—and wounded by the evil wizard Klingsor, Amfortas now longs only for the death that would put an end to his suffering. The gaping wound in his thigh materializes his liminal state between symbolic death—he is unable to assume his symbolic identity as king of the Grail Society—and the real death he so powerfully desires.[51] Finally, as in the early pages of *Metamorphosis*, the paternal voice—here, the voice of Titurel—assumes a special status and urgency. Žižek has noted a more general analogy between *Parsifal* and the world of Kafka's fiction:

> At first sight, Wagner and Kafka are as far apart as they can be: on one hand, we have the late-Romantic revival of a medieval legend; on the other, the description of the fate of the individual in contemporary totalitarian bureaucracy . . . but if we look closely we perceive that the fundamental problem of *Parsifal* is eminently a *bureaucratic* one: the incapacity, the incompetence of Amfortas in performing his ritual-bureaucratic duty. The terrifying voice of Amfortas's father Titurel, this superego-injunction of the living dead, addresses his impotent son in the first act with the words: "Mein Sohn Amfortas, bist du am Amt?", to which we have to give all bureaucratic weight: Are you at your post? Are you ready to officiate?[52]

In *Metamorphosis*, the paternal injunction recalling the son to his post is, however, marked by a peculiar ambiguity. In Kafka's story, we are never quite certain about the status of the father as a source of social power and authority, never sure of the degree of *imposture* informing that authority. Already in the short prose text "The Judgment," written months before *Metamorphosis*, Kafka had already placed this uncertainty apropos of the father's potency in the foreground of his fictional universe. No doubt the most breathtaking scene of that story involves the father's sudden mutation from frail and childlike dependent to death-bringing tyrant. With regard to that metamorphosis, Stanley Corngold has remarked that its surreality "suggests the loss of even fictional coherence; we are entering a world of sheer hypothesis."[53] A careful reading of *Metamorphosis* suggests that the hypothesis in question refers to a change in the nature of patriarchal authority that infects its stability, dependability, and consistency with radical uncertainty.

The first indication of this uncertainty concerns not the father but the other paternal master in Gregor's life, his boss. Reminding himself that were it not for the family's outstanding, though curiously unspecified, debt to his boss, he would have long given notice, Gregor muses about this master's ultimate imposture: "He would have fallen off the desk! It is funny, too, the way he sits on the desk and talks down from the heights to the employees, especially when they have to come right up close on account of the boss's being hard of hearing" (4). This curious uncertainty about the force of institutional power and authority is, so to speak, transferred to Gregor's father several pages later, in a single sentence: "But their little exchange had made the rest of the family aware that, contrary to expectations, Gregor was still in the house, and already his father was knocking on one of the side doors, *feebly but with his fist*" (6; my emphasis). In each instance a male figure of authority seems to reveal a double aspect: a master's force and power are shown to contain an impotent, even laughable dimension. One of the most uncanny features of Kafka's literary universe is the way in which such impotence can suddenly reverse itself into awesome power or, better, the way in which impotence reveals itself to be one of the most disturbing attributes of power.

The inconsistencies and uncertainties informing patriarchal power get played out in *Metamorphosis* above all through the apparent and otherwise inexplicable reinvigoration of the father in the wake of Gregor's transformation. For the previous five years, since the collapse of the father's business, Gregor had lived a life of sacrifice and self-denial, becoming the sole means of support for his family and even securing its present lodgings. In the course of his early morning musings made possible by the forced interruption of normal activities, Gregor makes abundantly clear just how much he has suffered under the burdens of this sacrificial existence, burdens that have been, as noted earlier, aggravated by the parents' debt:

> "Oh God," he thought, "what a grueling job I've picked! Day in, day out—on the road. . . . I've got the torture of traveling, worrying about changing trains, eating miserable food at all hours, constantly seeing new faces, no relationships that last or get more intimate. . . . If I didn't hold back for my parents' sake, I would have quit long ago." (4)

This sacrificial logic is reiterated and given a turn of the screw in the direction of middle-class sentimentality in the second part of the story:

> In those days Gregor's sole concern had been to do everything in his power to make the family forget as quickly as possible the business disaster which had plunged everyone into a state of total despair. And so he had begun to work with special ardor and had risen almost overnight from stock clerk to traveling salesman. (27)

Soon it is only Grete, Gregor's sister, who seems not to take Gregor's sacrifices completely for granted: "Only his sister had remained close to Gregor, and it was his secret plan that she, who, unlike him, loved music and could play the violin movingly, should be sent next year to the Conservatory, regardless of the great expense involved" (27).

After his transformation, however, Gregor quickly learns that his family's financial situation was not nearly as grave as he had previously assumed. On the very first day of his new condition, he overhears his father opening a strongbox containing monies rescued from the failed business: "He had always believed that his father had not been able to save a penny from the business, at least his father had never told him anything to the contrary, and Gregor, for his part, had never asked him any questions" (27). Although Gregor seems to be pleasantly surprised by this discovery, noting that his father had even managed to stash away some of Gregor's own salary, he also realizes that his father's "unexpected foresight and thrift" has also postponed the day on which the family debt could be paid off and he, Gregor, could quit his job and be free. But now, he concludes, "things were undoubtedly better the way his father had arranged them"(28).

Just as Gregor has been mistaken about the state of his family's financial health, he appears to be equally deluded about his sister's warm and seemingly nonexploitative regard for him. It is hardly possible, for example, to take at face value Gregor's assumptions about his sister's motives when she locks the door behind her after bringing Gregor an assortment of half-rotten leftovers: "And out of a sense of delicacy, since she knew that Gregor would not eat in front of her, she left hurriedly and turned the key, just so that Gregor should know that he might make himself as comfortable as he wanted" (24). How, then, are we to make sense of Gregor's apparent confusion and ignorance as to how things really stand in the family? And how is Gregor's original "innocence" and progressive initiation into the family's secrets related to his physical transformation and the father's (and family's) renewal and regeneration upon his death and decay?

It would seem that Gregor's new knowledge about the family is related to the rupture in the sacrificial logic by which he had previously organized his life. No longer able to live the life of the long-suffering son, he is compelled to perform what might be called the *sacrifice of sacrifice*. This radical act of sacrifice, of the very sacrificial logic that had given his life its doubtlessly bleak consistency, makes possible Gregor's discovery that the necessity of his former life, its apparent fatefulness, had been an artificial construction. His life of self-abnegation had been, it now appears, a kind of social game he had actively worked to perpetuate through a kind of self-inflicted "law-preserving violence" (one will recall that Gregor never asked about the father's finances, never asked what was in the strongbox). In this light, Gregor's condition anticipates that of the man from the country in the parable from *The Trial* who, after a lifetime of waiting at the gates of the Law, learns that its entrance had been designed for him all along and that his exclusion had been staged with his own complicitous participation. Gregor's metamorphosis might thus be understood as a sign of his abjuration of just such complicity, in this case with the "plot" imposing on him a life of self-sacrifice. His abjection would indicate his new position outside that plot—outside the narrative frame that had given his life meaning and value. This reading is, it turns out, supported by the etymological resonances of the words Kafka uses—*ungeheuere(s) Ungeziefer* ("monstrous vermin")—to introduce Gregor's transformation in the famous first sentence of the story. "'*Ungeheuer*'," as Stanley Corngold has emphasized, "connotes the creature who has no place in the family; '*Ungeziefer*,' the unclean animal unsuited for sacrifice, the creature without a place in God's order" (xix).[54]

To bring these findings to a point, I am arguing that Gregor's fall into abjection be understood as a by-product of his encounter with the ultimate *uncertainty* as to his place in the community of which his father is the nominal master. Gregor's mutation into an *Ungeziefer*, a creature without a place in God's order, points, in other words, not to Gregor's unsuitability for sacrifice due to some positive, pathological attribute but rather to a disturbance *within the divine order itself*. Gregor discovers one of the central paradoxes of modern experience: uncertainty as to what, to use Lacan's term, the "big Other" of the symbolic order really wants from us can be far more disturbing than subordination to an agency or structure whose demands—even for self-sacrifice—are experienced as stable and consistent. The failure to live up to such demands still guarantees a sense of place, meaning, and recognition; but the subject who is uncertain as to the very existence of an Other whose demands might or might not be placated loses the ground from under his feet.[55] The mythic order of fate where one's lot is determined behind one's back—in Kafka's story, as in ancient tragedy, the force of fate corresponds to a familial debt or guilt—is displaced by a postmythic order in which the individual can no longer find his place in the texture of fate. This distance from the mythic force of fate, this interruption of the transference of a debt from generation to generation, introduces into the world a new and more radical kind of guilt.[56] In *Metamorphosis*, the interruption of those entanglements we call fate opens up a space within which monstrosities can appear. This interruption is figured in the story by means of a series of ambiguities pertaining to patriarchal power and authority.

Significantly, as in *Parsifal*, a crisis in the domain of patriarchal authority is registered at the level of voice and staging. At the end of the first part of the story, Gregor's father chases his son back into his room, producing a strange and disturbing hissing noise: "Pitilessly his father came on, hissing like a wild man" (19). Gregor struggles to comply but is distracted and unnerved by this curious vocalization: "If only his father did not keep making this intolerable hissing sound! It made Gregor lose his head completely. He had almost finished the turn when—his mind continually on this hissing—he made a mistake and even started turning back around to his original position" (19). During the final moments of this ordeal, the father's hissing achieves an intensity such that "*the voice behind Gregor did not sound like that of only a single father*; now this was really no joke anymore" (19; my emphasis). It is as if the father's voice had assumed the quality of an uncanny chorus, signaling the dimension of an implacable and horrific paternal force exceeding that of any single individual. Our perplexity about this weird amplification and distortion of the father's voice is heightened in the third and final part of the story. At a moment when the family's rejuvenation is well underway, Kafka indicates that the father's reinvigoration may be nothing more than a pathetic imposture: "Sometimes his father woke up, and as if he had absolutely no idea that he had been asleep, said to his mother, 'Look how long you're sewing again today!' and went right back to sleep, while mother and sister smiled wearily at each other" (41). In the next sentence the question of imposture is placed directly into the foreground: "With a kind of perverse obstinacy his father refused to take off his official uniform even in the house; and while his robe hung uselessly on the clothes hook, his father dozed, completely dressed, in his chair, as if he were always ready for duty and were waiting even here for the voice of his superior" (41). The ambiguity of Kafka's diction makes possible the reading that the father has refused to remove his uniform not just at home but in public as well; his recent "investiture" with a kind of official status and authority, low though it is, might, in other words, be a sham. Be that as it may, the father's clinging to the outward appearance—to the vestments—of institutional authority suggests just how precarious and uncertain this authority really is. Gregor's father achieves his new patriarchal authority, restores his damaged masculinity, by means of a kind of cross-dressing.

In a diary entry of September 23, 1912, Kafka registered the miraculous composition of "The Judgment" in the course of a single night's labor, one he would, the following year, characterize as a kind of couvade in which his story emerged covered with the "filth and mucus" of birth. In the entry of September 23, he recollects various associations that passed through his mind during the composition of the story and notes, "naturally, thoughts of Freud."[57] The year before the composition of "The Judgment" and *Metamorphosis*, Freud had, of course, published his study of Schreber. There is no direct evidence that Kafka read Freud's essay on Schreber or Schreber's own text; the parallels between Kafka's story of bodily metamorphosis and Schreber's are, however, quite stunning.[58] As with Gregor, Schreber's demise is correlated with a form of vocational failure: an inability to heed an official call, to assume a symbolic mandate, in this case as presiding judge in the Saxon Court of Appeals. After his mental collapse and forced withdrawal from his position in the courts, Schreber begins to suffer from what eventually becomes one of his core symptoms: the hearing of voices. These voices, which torment Schreber for most of the rest of his life, embody the excess of demands that made the administration of his office insupportable. In a sense, they represent these demands purified of any instrumental value or meaning-content, a kind of pure and nonsensical "You must!" abstracted from the use value of any particular activity. At this zero level of meaning, the voices eventually come to be heard by Schreber as a steady hissing sound, the sound which for Gregor was that of a kind of wild and perverse paternal chorus: "But the slowing down has recently become still more marked and the voices . . . degenerated into an indistinct hissing" (226). The vocalizations tormenting Schreber became, as we know, particularly concentrated one day, manifesting themselves in the form of a singular, revelatory enunciation, the meaning and force of which effectuated Schreber's "conversion" to *Ludertum*. But how might we correlate the particular connotations of Schreber's status as *Luder*—whore, rottenness, Jew—with the details of Gregor Samsa's "conversion" to verminousness?

Amid the wealth of striking details that have preoccupied readers of Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, the one that situates Kafka's text most firmly within fin-de-siècle obsessions with gender and sexuality is the brief indication of Gregor's erotic life suggested by a bit of interior decorating he had engaged in shortly before his verminous transformation: "Over the table . . . hung the picture which he had recently cut out of a glossy magazine and lodged in a pretty gilt frame. It showed a lady done up in a fur hat and a fur boa, sitting upright and raising up against the viewer a heavy fur muff in which her whole forearm had disappeared" (3). The importance of this peculiar detail, alluding, very likely, to Leopold von Sacher-Masoch's infamous novella, *Venus in Furs* (1870),[59] is underlined by its placement in the text: it appears in the second paragraph following immediately upon the famous inaugural sentences announcing Gregor's metamorphosis and is introduced as if in answer to the question with which the paragraph begins: "What's happened to me?" The picture, most likely part of an advertisement, figures once more, in the second part of the story, when Gregor is struggling to save some piece of his former life from the efforts of his mother and sister to clear his room:

> And so he broke out—the women were just leaning against the desk in the next room to catch their breath for a minute—changed his course four times, he really didn't know what to salvage first, then he saw hanging conspicuously on the wall, which was otherwise bare already, the picture

> of the lady all dressed in furs, hurriedly crawled up on it and pressed himself against the glass, which gave a good surface to stick to and soothed his hot belly. At least no one would take away this picture, while Gregor completely covered it up. (35)

The importance of this possession is further emphasized by Gregor's willingness to attack his otherwise beloved sister rather than part with his picture: "He squatted on his picture and would not give it up. He would rather fly in Grete's face" (36).

Gregor's peculiar attachment to this piece of pornographic kitsch is obviously central to the text. Indeed, the entire story seems to crystallize around it as an elaborate punishment scenario called forth by guilt-ridden sexual obsessions. The indications of putrescence that proliferate in the course of the story suggest fantasies of the consequences of a young man's autoerotic activities. In this perspective, many hitherto unintelligible details take on importance. When, for example, the maid announces at the end of the story that she has removed the insect's corpse from Gregor's room, the word she uses—*das Zeug* ("the stuff")—evokes what is allegedly cut short by compulsive autoeroticism, namely the capacity for *Zeugen*, the generation of offspring. The final sentences of the story, which circle around Grete's sexual coming-of-age and prospects of imminent union with "a good husband," constitute the closure made possible by the elimination of the perverse (i.e., nonreproductive) sexuality embodied in Gregor's abject, putrescent condition.

This reading is supported by a wide array of medical treatises and popular literature concerning the dangers of masturbation circulating in fin-de-siècle Europe; it presupposes, however, that the woman in furs must be understood as an object of heterosexual desire. But if we are to take the comparison with Schreber seriously, a different, more "perverse," reading becomes possible, namely, one in which the woman in furs is not an object of desire but rather one of (unconscious) *identification*. In other words, Gregor's picture of the woman in furs represents the unconscious "truth" of the other picture described in the story, the photograph of Gregor from his "army days, in a lieutenant's uniform, his hand on his sword, a carefree smile on his lips, demanding respect for his bearing and his rank" (15). Gregor's metamorphosis now becomes legible as a kind of feminization; his verminous state suggests the mode of appearance of a femininity disavowed under the pressures of a misogynist and homophobic cultural imperative shared by Kafka's Austria-Hungary and Schreber's Germany.[60]

This reading is supported by a detail pertaining, once again, to the voice. After missing the train on the first morning of his new condition, Gregor's mother calls to him from the other side of his locked door to remind him of the time. After noting the softness of his mother's voice, he notices a new quality in his own voice:

> Gregor was shocked to hear his own voice answering, unmistakably his own voice, true, but in which, as if from below, an insistent distressed chirping [*ein nicht zu unterdrückendes, schmerzliches Piepsen*] intruded, which left the clarity of his words intact only for a moment really, before so badly garbling them as they carried that no one could be sure if he had heard right. (5)

Gregor's *Piepsen* suggests the mutation of the male voice in the direction of the feminine. The importance of this birdlike vocalization could be confirmed, once more, by an important detail from Schreber's text we have already encountered. At various moments, the voices that tormented Schreber miraculously took the form of little birds—*gewunderte Vögel*—who were understood by Schreber to be made up of residues of departed human souls that had, in his delusional cosmology, previously made up the so-called forecourts of heaven. Schreber characterizes their chirpings as a series of mechanically repeated turns of phrase. As we know, thanks to their purely repetitive and meaningless nature—their *deadness*—Schreber associates these vocalizations with putrescence or what he calls *Leichengift*, the poison of corpses. Freud, one will recall, heard them as the voices of young girls: "In a carping mood people often compare them to geese, ungallantly accuse them of having 'the brains of a bird' and declare that they can say nothing but phrases learnt by rote and they betray their lack of education by confusing foreign words that sound alike" (*SE* 12:36).

But Gregor's *Piepsen* points also in the direction indicated by Schreber's other pole of identification: that of the Wandering Jew. Central to the preoccupations of fin-de-siècle culture with the peculiarities of Jewish physical and mental constitution was, as became stunningly clear in Panizza's text, an obsession with the Jewish voice and Jewish language production. This obsession, already important in premodern Europe, was recoded in the nineteenth century in the idiom of racial biology and conjoined with fantasies about Jewish sexuality and the impaired masculinity of Jewish men, in particular. At the end of the nineteenth century, the faulty command of discourse attributed to Jews and condensed in the term *mauscheln*, meaning to speak (German) like Moses, was thus coupled with femininity and, hence, homosexuality. To return to *Metamorphosis*, we might say that the Jew's *Mauscheln* was recoded as a kind of feminized, queer *Piepsen*.[61]

Kafka's text, however, is more than a literary version of a kind of Jewish self-hatred, more than the narrative and poetic elaboration of a series of internalized anti-Semitic prejudices. For though Kafka is a writer whose work is at times burdened by negative conceptions about Jews, Judaism, and Jewishness, *Metamorphosis* is a text that indicates Kafka's profound awareness of the ideological role such conceptions played within the larger culture. In *Metamorphosis*, the cultural fantasies positioning the Jew, along with everything feminine, at the place of abjection, are led back to the deeper cultural crises and anxieties fueling them. These anxieties arise, as we have seen, from a fundamental crisis or dysfunctionality at the core of patriarchal power and authority. Kafka's story suggests, in other words, that at least in the modern period the domain of the abject and monstrous, or, to use the term that would prove so fateful and fatal during the Nazi period, the "degenerate," is linked to a chronic uncertainty haunting the institutions of power. The "redemption" of the Samsa family at the conclusion of Kafka's story thus represents the ultimate ideological fantasy, not unlike the conclusion of Wagner's *Parsifal*, where the restoration of the Grail Society is linked to Kundry's demise. With the destruction of Gregor *qua* feminized Wandering Jew, the family can thrive, perhaps now for the very first time.[62]

VII

These reflections compel us to revise the perspective apropos of the Jewish question in Freud and Schreber proposed by Gilman, Geller, Boyarin, and Eilberg-Schwartz. These scholars all argue that Freud's reading of the Schreber case was produced under pressures to disavow those "feminine" tendencies, strivings, and desires that in the cultural climate of fin-de-siècle Central Europe had increasingly come to be associated by racialist anti-Semitism with an ostensibly Jewish pathological disposition. It was, according to this reading, this unique historical formation that led Freud to miss a crucial interpretive possibility opened by the Schreber case, namely that homophobia, rather than homosexuality per se, produces paranoia.[63] As evidence of Freud's own defensive posturings with regard to femininity and homosexuality, one cites Freud's correspondence with members of his circle—above all Jung and Ferenczi—around the time of his work on Schreber. I have argued that the references to homosexuality and its "overcoming" (by way of the work on Schreber) found in these documents should be read against a backdrop of issues concerning originality and influence anxiety. I suggested that these issues were particularly acute for Freud and his circle because of the tenuous status of psychoanalysis as a science and institution, a tenuousness that has never ceased to haunt psychoanalysis. I have furthermore proposed that Freud's attraction to the Schreber material was ultimately a function of his identification not with Schreber's ostensible homosexuality, but rather with the latter's struggle with a crisis of investiture, a breakdown in the *transfer* of symbolic capital that would have allowed him to assume his mandate within the institution of the courts. It was *this breakdown and its hallucinatory repair* that Freud misread as Schreber's homosexual longings for paternal substitutes, figures bearing phallic attributes and prerogatives.

My point, once again, is not that homosexual desire and its repression (under the pressures of a compulsory and compulsive heterosexuality) played no role in Schreber's delusional system or in Freud's relations with Fliess and various members of his inner circle; I have focused rather on the paths whereby a crisis of symbolic power and its transfer comes to be sexualized, or perhaps better, comes to be experienced *as sexuality*, as the very "matter" of sexuality.[64] In any case, Schreber's *Memoirs* makes quite clear that where there is such a crisis, the irreducible dependency of symbolic function—the production of credible symbolic identities—on the performative magic of (repeated) rites of institution becomes impossible to repress. Once it emerges from the individual and "political" unconscious, this dependency is experienced as *decadence*, as a chronic *wasting away* of one's symbolic power and authority. The decay and rottenness produced thereby are figured by the work of individual and social fantasy as *contaminations*, as a leakage of toxins—and transgressive intoxications—emanating always from the *other* side of a social boundary. Within the terms of Schreber's "own private Germany," a fantasy space shared, to a large extent, by Freud, Panizza, Kafka, and a host of others, the "other side" was above all the side of women, Jews, homosexuals (and to some extent Catholics), the key representatives of Schreber's *Ludertum*.[65] At this point I would like to return, briefly, to the influential work of Otto Weininger whose *Geschlecht und Charakter* is doubtlessly the single most important "philosophical" elaboration of this fantasy space.

In Weininger's neo-Kantian "theory" of gender, sexuality, and race, dependency on the rites of institution and all that they imply is denoted by the term *heteronomy*. From the perspective of Kant's conception of practical reason—a perspective that, as we have seen, was crucial for Moritz Schreber—heteronomy signifies a merely mimetic relation to morality resulting from a failure to be oneself the legislator of the moral law. The capacity for self-legislation, or rather for speaking from the place of the moral law, is achieved by way of purifying oneself of all external, and so "pathological," influences and determinations.[66] Heteronomy results, in other words, from the subject's failure to identify fully and without remainder with the transcendental locus of the moral law beyond all empirical, social, even human, benefits and considerations, from the failure to assume, to put it in Freudian terms, an ethical position *beyond the pleasure principle.* And for Weininger, femininity and Jewishness are ultimately the names for this condition of failing to (cor)respond to the moral law, they are the names for the residues, the "refuse," of heteronomy that endangers the (Enlightenment) project of Kantian ethics, the conception of which Weininger characterized as the most sublime event of world history.

Put somewhat differently, Weininger proposes an ideal of masculinity that would be immune to that psychic disorder—and for Weininger, that ultimately means an *ethical* and *logical* disorder—produced by heteronomy and that, in the view of a great deal of nineteenth-century medicine, typically plagued women and Jews: hysteria. For Weininger, hysteria is ultimately the condition of being unable *to void* oneself of—or, to use Panizza's terms, to spit out—all "pathological" determinations of the will in the name of the moral law. The avoidance of this void that is the Kantian moral subject, the expectation that someone else—some master—will tell me who I am and what I ought to value and desire, *is* hysteria, in Weininger's view. The inability to occupy this place of the subject conceived as the void of all heteronomous determinations, left women and Jews in a condition of dispersal, adrift amid flows of impressions, empirical causations and influences, but without the pure ego-centering force of self-legislation. At best, women and Jews could *mime* ethical action, but the moral law would always be experienced as an external imposition occupying the place of simply another cause or influence within the domain of *phenomenal experience* to which one had to *assimilate*, but never as a call, a categorical imperative issued from, or better, *as* the noumenal dimension of one's own subjectivity: "Man becomes free only when he himself becomes the law: only in this way does he escape heteronomy, determination through outside forces or persons, which is ineluctably tied to [the other's] caprice" (246).[67]

For Weininger, one of the "faces" of heteronomy is the particular way in which *value* is determined in capitalist social relations—the mediation of desire in accordance with the law of exchange value. In a discussion of feminine vanity, Weininger argues, in effect, that women lack an inborn—an *urwüchsigen*—standard of value, that they feel no absolute value in themselves, "which scorns everything but itself" (263). From Weininger's "Kantian" perspective, woman's allegedly extreme dependence on others for the mediation of her own value—in essence, her *market value*—"is equivalent with the lack of a transcendental ego [*intelligibles Ich*], that which is always and absolutely posited as having value; it derives from the lack of a proper value [*Eigenwert*].

Since they lack a proper value for themselves and before themselves, they strive to become an object of value for others" (260). For Weininger, a (Protestant) man is by definition that being who is absolutely sure of his value, a being who is in no way dependent on others for the mediation of his proper value. Paradoxically, the religious formation that Max Weber would characterize as being deeply compatible with capitalist social relations is for Weininger the one that lays claim to a kind of immunity to the social and psychic imbalances generated by one of capitalism's most fundamental laws, that of the transmutation of all value into exchange value. For Weininger, it is precisely this immunity to the derangements of capitalism—above all, to the forces of commodification—that determines whether one has a soul and so *exists* in an emphatic sense; in Weininger's view, women have no soul—defined as the capacity for a radical disidentification with the community and its modalities of valuation—and so *do not exist*: "Women have neither existence nor essence; they *are* not, they are *nothing*" (383).[68] Heteronomy would seem to be, then, Weininger's name for social mediation of any kind, for the subject's dependency on tradition in the widest possible sense, on the transmission of symbolic power from the outside—from institutions, authorities, and ancestors—in a word, the subject's irreducible dependency on procedures of *investiture*. It is this dependency, along with the multiple layers of *transference* that it implies, that psychoanalysis has theorized under the sign of symbolic castration and that Weininger—and here he is exemplary for fin-de-siècle "theorists" of gender and sexuality—wants to exclude from the domain of masculinity proper. This (phantasmatic) construction of masculinity as a mode of subjectivity beyond all heteronomy (and the transferential relations generated thereby) breaks down, however, in a number of different ways in Weininger's text. Perhaps the most telling example of such a breakdown occurs in Weininger's discussion of a topic that was also an object of some concern to Schreber: the status of proper names and the relation one has to one's name.

After arguing that women in general have no sense for property or property rights,[69] Weininger broaches the subject of proper names [*Eigennamen*]: "Even more than property, the name, and a heartfelt relation to one's name, is a necessary dimension of human personhood" (267). About women's relation to names, he says the following:

> Women . . . have no real bonds with their names. Telling in this regard is already the fact that they give up their names and take on [the name] of the man they marry, and that they don't even experience this name change as significant or as a loss to be mourned. . . . The name, however, is conceived as a symbol of individuality; only among the most primitive races of the earth . . . is there apparently no such thing as proper names because of

> insufficient development of the natural need among human beings to make distinctions among themselves. Woman is essentially nameless and is so because she, by definition [*seiner Idee nach*], lacks personhood. (267)[70]

However, in a discussion of the family in the chapter on Judaism, Weininger writes of the rage [*Zorn*] that every real man consciously or unconsciously feels toward his father "who, without asking him, forced him into life and at birth gave him the name that seemed appropriate [to the father]" (416). Because one is *forced* to choose life, *forced* into a relation with one's name, the autonomy of even the most masculine of men is stained by heteronomy, realizes itself as a purely formal affirmation of an already given state of affairs. By virtue of being named, through "subjection" to this minimal procedure of initiatory investiture—which, one might add, places the son in a passive-receptive relation to his progenitor—no man, apparently, completely escapes from transference. The rage Weininger associates with the residues of heteronomy that resist conversion into autonomy—the feat that both Weininger and Moritz Schreber associate with authentic, "Kantian" masculinity—becomes, within the cultural codes of the fin de siècle, a rage against women and Jews and *one's own transgressions* into their domains. It is, in a word, a rage against the fact that one has always already crossed the line in the wrong direction, that one has secretly "converted" to *Ludertum* and its disturbing jouissance.[71] It is the knowledge of such crossings, of this transgressive traffic, that Schreber elaborates in his *Memoirs*.

VIII

Weininger's most important precursor text apropos of the "problem" of Jewish creativity was, as I have indicated, Wagner's notorious essay "Das Judentum in der Musik." That essay, which at one point associates Jewish productivity in the arts with worms consuming the flesh of a corpse—an image that calls to mind Schreber's neologism for what is rotten in the order of the law: *Leichengift*—concludes with a call for the overcoming/destruction, the *Untergang*, of Ahasver. That destruction is most powerfully figured in Wagner's last opera, *Parsifal*, as the death of Kundry, whom we might characterize as Wagner's pendant to Schreber's unmanned Wandering Jew.[72]

I have already noted that Schreber was quite "fluent" in the idiom of Wagnerian opera and that the text of his *Memoirs* contains numerous references and allusions to Wagner's work.[73] Although there is no evidence of any direct knowledge on Schreber's part of *Parsifal*, which premiered in Bayreuth in 1882, there are numerous structural similarities between Wagner's last opera and Schreber's theological system. The state of emergency in which Schreber's universe finds itself is not unlike that of the Grail Society in which the blessings of eternal life provided by the Grail miracle have been suspended. Indeed, what Schreber says apropos of his own cosmic circumstances could equally apply to the crisis with which *Parsifal* begins: "the state of *Blessedness* is so to speak suspended and all human beings who have since died or will die *can for the time being not attain to it*" (60–61). In Schreber's case, that cosmic disturbance was, as we know, the ultimate consequence of a prior and more mundane one, one I have characterized as an *investiture crisis*, namely, the breakdown of Schreber's capacity to assume his mandate as *Senatspräsident* of the Saxon Supreme Court. Schreber's incapacity to fulfill his duties in the administration of the law and his subsequent condition of chronic, though largely phantasmatic, woundedness, closely parallel the condition of the Fisher King, Amfortas, whose own wounded body attests to his inability to officiate over the Grail Society and whom we have already compared with another failed bureaucrat/employee, Gregor Samsa.

In *Parsifal*, the institutional domain in crisis—the Grail Society—is redeemed when a pure and innocent fool heals Amfortas by touching his wound with the reclaimed spear of Longinus. As Parsifal declaims: "Nur eine Waffe taugt: / die Wunde schliesst / der Speer nur, der sie schlug" ("One weapon alone can do it: / the wound is healed / solely by the spear that made it"). Parsifal comes into possession of the spear and, eventually, the throne of the Grail Society, after rejecting the lures of Kundry, an action that prefigures her final overcoming/destruction in and through the restitution of the Grail miracle. Parsifal's rejection of Kundry at the moment of her kiss is mediated in its turn by his recollection of Amfortas's suffering. It is, perhaps, in this "primal scene" of compassion or *Mitleid* that the difference between Wagner and Schreber becomes most palpable. The two universes are, we might say, structured around fundamentally different readings of this woundedness, different renderings of the "institutional" and, ultimately, political knowledge secreted therein. In the opera, Parsifal's initiatory investiture as king of the Grail Society makes use of Amfortas's suffering and, indeed, depends upon it. In the end, Parsifal interprets Amfortas's wound as a coded message, blesses his suffering as that which has taught him, Parsifal, that he must assume his place as administrator of the Grail miracle. The wound merely confirms what he was already chosen to be and thereby becomes the means for the restitution of the collectivity, but one, of course, which has eliminated all traces of the feminine (and the Jewish).

Schreber's chosenness is of a completely different order and, indeed, nothing could be further from the pattern of repair, restitution, and healing exhibited in Schreber's *Memoirs* than Parsifal's final act as, we might say, *Senatspräsident* of the Grail Society. Rather than reclaiming the phallic emblem and the symbolic authority attached to it, Schreber reiterates its "miraculous" ruination. By becoming the unmanned Wandering Jew, Schreber, in effect, *identifies with the symptom* that for Wagner—and for German culture more generally—materialized the blockage in the smooth functioning of the social body. The lure of Wagner's opera—one resisted in the Schreberian fantasy scenario—is to see in Amfortas's wound, this embodiment of social crisis, of a chronic malfunction in the administration of symbolic power and authority, the work of Kundry, Woman and Wandering Jew. One of the many reasons for Schreber's appeal—for his remarkable "attractiveness," as he would put it—and his belated canonization as a compelling modernist writer, is that he offers the prospect of new strategies of sapping the force of social fantasies that might otherwise lend support to the totalitarian temptation. To traverse, with Schreber, the fantasy space of *his* own private Germany (rather than, say, Wagner's) is to encounter European modernity from the perspective of those figures in whom modern European society "secreted" its disavowed knowledge of chronic structural crisis and disequilibrium. Schreberian compassion or *Mitleid*, in contrast to the Wagnerian variety, is a way of refusing to refuse the knowledge of the impasses and dilemmas of symbolic power and authority. At some level, Schreber was saying, indeed screaming, to those figures who were, whether they were fully conscious of it or not, cursed with the role of embodying these impasses: "That is me!" "I am Kundry!" Of course, Schreber's fate as a psychotic suggests that one should not, as they say, try this at home; it is, in other words, genuinely maddening to find oneself occupying the place of abjection in the absence of some minimal form of human solidarity. What ultimately saved Schreber from psychological death, at least for a short while, was no doubt his residual need and capacity to *communicate and transfer* his "discoveries," to inaugurate a new *tradition* constructed out of and upon the inconsistencies and impasses of the one he had known and which he had been called upon to represent. (The proliferation of books, articles, conferences, and seminars dedicated to Schreber, which shows no signs of abating, testifies to the revelatory force and productivity of his transmission.)

Schreber's legacy concerns the crucial value of fantasy, the passions, and even the so-called perversions as sources of knowledge about the state of those symbolic resources that human societies depend upon to assure their members that they are "legitimate." The rites and procedures of investiture whereby an individual is endowed with a socially intelligible status and filled with symbolic mandates corresponding to that status function not only as compelling reassurances for those individuals but for the society as well. The smooth functioning of these procedures reassures the community that it, too, *exists*, that there is something "real" about the social facts and values—names, titles, currency, genders, and the like—that it consecrates and produces. Schreber's delusions figure a crisis pertaining to these rites and procedures, a fundamental and disorienting shift in the subject's relation to them. His "secret history of modernity" suggests that we cross the threshold of that era where and when those symbolic resources no longer address the subject where he or she most profoundly "lives," which is, beginning at least with the European Enlightenment, the negative space hollowed out by the will to autonomy and self-reflexivity. Once those values have established their hegemony, individuals are, so to speak, chronically out of joint, called to order by a community whose very existence as a meaning-giving, symbolic whole can no longer—and perhaps never again—be experienced as fully trustworthy or of ultimate value. (At this point, the symbolic causation on which all acts of symbolic investiture depend undergoes a kind of literalization into a more mechanical, more "disciplinary" mode of causation.) Schreber's cultivation of an ensemble of "perverse" practices, identifications, and fantasies allows him not only to *act out*, but also to *work through* what may very well be the central paradox of modernity: that the subject is solicited by a will to autonomy in the name of the very community that is thereby undermined, whose very substance thereby passes over into the subject. Schreber's phantasmatic elaboration of that paradox allows him to find his way back into a context of human solidarity without having to disavow this fundamental breach of trust, without having to heal it with a "final" and definitively redemptive solution.

NOTES

PREFACE

1. I cite the reprint of the 1955 English translation of Schreber's text prepared by Ida Macalpine and Richard A. Hunter (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988). References to the German text are taken from a recent reprint edited by Peter Heiligenthal and Reinhard Volk (Frankfurt: Syndikat, 1985). References to the English edition will be given parenthetically in the text. Regarding other sources, translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

2. Elias Canetti, *Crowds and Power*, trans. Carol Stewart (New York: Seabury Press, 1978).

3. Ibid., 447, 443, 448.

4. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guatarri, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 279, 364.

5. See William Niederland, *The Schreber Case: Psychoanalytic Profile of a Paranoid Personality* (Hillsdale, N.J.: Analytic Press, 1984).

6. Morton Schatzman, *Soul Murder: Persecution in the Family* (New York: Random House, 1973), 170, 171. Building on Schatzman's work, Alice Miller offers a psychobiography of Hitler in which the "poisonous pedagogy" codified in Moritz Schreber's writings is made largely responsible for Hitler's own paranoid hatred of Jews and other "enemies." See Miller, *For Your Own Good: Hidden Cruelty in Child-Rearing and the Roots of Violence* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1984).

7. It is perhaps no accident that Max Weber "became who he was," i.e., the father of modern sociology in Germany and great theorist of historical forms of symbolic authority and leadership, only in the course of recovering from a psychotic breakdown not unlike Schreber's. Weber's recovery is usually dated with the year 1903, the year Schreber published his *Memoirs*.

8. Schreber is not always so modest. He later asserts, for example, that he had become "for God the only human being, or simply the human being around whom everything turns" (197), and at the end of his *Memoirs* he writes that "the spread of my religious ideas and the weight of proof of their truth will lead to a fundamental revolution in mankind's religious views unequalled in history" (215).

9. Clifford Geertz, "Centers, Kings, and Charisma: Reflections on the Symbolics of Power," in *Local Knoweldge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 123, 124; my emphasis.

10. As to the transferential short-circuit between a contemporary "moment of danger" and an object of scholarly/historical interest, see Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1969), 255.

11. See Umberto Eco's provocative reflections on the contemporaneity of the fascist danger in "Ur-Fascism," *New York Review of Books*, June 22, 1995, 12–15.

INTRODUCTION

1. The *Landgericht* or District Court occupies the middle level of jurisdiction between the *Amtsgericht* or County Court and the *Oberlandesgericht*, the highest or Supreme Court of Appeals in Saxony.

2. The blurb on the original 1903 edition included these words: "The work includes a great many stimulating ideas and will therefore be found worthwhile by *theologians, philosophers, physicians, jurists*, particularly *psychiatrists*, and in general all *educated persons interested in questions relating to the hereafter*" (cited in Zvi Lothane, *In Defense of Schreber: Soul Murder and Psychiatry* [Hillsdale, N.J.: Analytic Press, 1992], 319).

3. This according to Niederland who interviewed her in 1972. See William Niederland, *The Schreber Case: Psychoanalytic Profile of a Paranoid Personality* (Hillsdale, N.J.: Analytic Press, 1984), 31.

4. Cited in Schreber's hospital chart from the Leipzig-Dösen Asylum discovered by Franz Baumeyer and published as part of an essay, "Der Fall Schreber," which has been reprinted in the German edition of Schreber, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, 341–63. See also Lothane, *In Defense of Schreber*, for a translation of the chart.

5. On December 1, 1907, he mumbled about the "odor of corpses" and "rotting" (*Leichengeruch, Verwesung*); shortly thereafter he is reported to have claimed that his body had begun to rot while his head continued to live (cited in Baumeyer, "Der Fall Schreber," 347).

6. The 1895 English translation of Nordau's work has been reissued by the University of Nebraska Press (Lincoln, 1993). In his use of the term, Nordau was following the French psychiatrist B. A. Morel for whom it meant "*a morbid deviation from an original type*" (cited in Nordau, *Degeneration*, 16). References will be given parenthetically in the text.

7. This language recalls Marx and Engel's description in *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) of the negative energies released by capitalist modes of production. See Marshall Berman's fine discussion of that "definitive vision of the modern environment" in his *All That Is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982).

8. The prospect of a sort of ergonomic bankruptcy is opened, for Nordau, above all by the traumatic speed of social change in modern society: "We know that our organs acquire by exercise an ever greater functional capacity, that they develop by their own activity, and can respond to nearly every demand made upon them; but only under one condition—that this occurs gradually, that time be allowed them. It they are obliged to fulfil, without transition, a multiple of their usual task, they soon give out entirely. No time was left to our fathers. Between one day and the next, as it were, without preparation, with murderous suddenness, they were obliged to change the comfortable creeping gait of their former existence for the stormy stride of modern life, and their heart and lungs could not bear it" (*Degeneration*, 40). Nordau adds that the resulting fatigue and exhaustion "showed themselves in the first generation, under the form of acquired hysteria; in the second, as hereditary hysteria" (40).

9. Anson Rabinbach, *The Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue and the Origins of Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 6. Mindful of the specific national inflections of these anxieties, Rabinbach notes that in Wilhelminne Germany the "fatigue mania . . . grew out of a society less fearful of imminent disintegration than of its dizzying ascent to industrialization and economic triumph" (22).

10. In her study, *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle* (New York: Viking, 1990), Elaine Showalter discusses the primarily masculine iconography of syphilis in the Victorian imagination: "With its dramatic inscriptions on the male body, the hideous ravages of syphilis, from an enormous and Miltonic list of skin disorders—macules, papules, tubercules, pustules, blebs, tumors, lesions, scales, crusts, ulcers, chancres, gummas, fissures, and scars—to cardiovascular disturbances, locomotor ataxia, tabes, blindness, and dementia, made the disease a powerful deterrent in theological and moral reform campaigns to control male sexuality, seen as one of the main causes of degeneration" (192–93).

11. Cited in Andreas Hill, "'May the Doctor Advise Extramarital Intercourse?': Medical Debates on Sexual Abstinence in Germany, c. 1900," in *Sexual Knowledge, Sexual Science: The History of Attitudes to Sexuality*, ed. Roy Porter and Mikulás Teich (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 287–88.

12. Benjamin writes briefly about Schreber's text in "Bücher von Geisteskranken. Aus meiner Sammlung," in *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, Hermann Schweppenhäuser, and Tillman Rexroth, vol. 11 (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1980), 615–16. In his biography of Benjamin, Gershom Scholem recalls his friend's participation in a seminar on Freud during his years in Bern for which Benjamin read Schreber's *Memoirs* and wrote a paper about Freud's theory of drives. Scholem remembers that Schreber's book made a more powerful impression on Benjamin than Freud's case study. Benjamin also managed to persuade Scholem to read the *Memoirs*. See Gershom Scholem, *Walter Benjamin. Die Geschichte einer Freundschaft* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1976), 75.

13. Benjamin, "Zur Kritik der Gewalt," in *Gesammelte Schriften*, 4:179–203. The essay appears in English as "The Critique of Violence" in *Reflections. Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*, ed. Peter Demetz, trans. Edmund Jephcott (New York: Schocken, 1986), 277–300. *Gewalt* denotes not only violence but also the more ambiguous concept of force. The work on this essay also likely began in Bern when in 1919 Benjamin was introduced to Georges Sorel's *Réflexions sur la violence* through conversations with Hugo Ball and Ernst Bloch. See Scholem, *Walter Benjamin*, 109.

14. Benjamin, "Critique," 286; my emphasis.

15. Much of Slavoj Žižek's work has been dedicated to the elaboration of this dimension of tautology or vicious circularity normally subject to what Freud called "primordial repression." Compare, for example, the following formulation from *For They Know Not What They Do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor* (London: Verso, 1991): "'At the beginning' of the law, there is a certain 'outlaw', a certain Real of violence which coincides with the act itself of the establishment of the reign of law: the ultimate truth about the reign of law is that of an usurpation, and all classical politico-philosophical thought rests on

the disavowal of this violent act of foundation. The illegitimate violence by which the law sustains itself must be concealed at any price, because this concealment is the positive condition of the functioning of law: it functions in so far as its subjects are deceived, in so far as they experience the authority of law as 'authentic and eternal' and overlook 'the truth about the usurpation'" (204). For a highly nuanced discussion of the political dangers of an overvaluation of this "truth about the usurpation," see Dominick LaCapra's discussion of Benjamin's essay in "Violence, Justice, and the Force of Law," *Cardozo Law Review* 11 (July–August 1990): 1065–78.

16. Benjamin, "Critique," 286–87 (my emphasis), 287, 287. For a study of the police function as the "open secret" of modern societies and its characteristic literary form, the novel, see D. A. Miller, *The Novel and the Police* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

17. Jacques Derrida, "Force of Law: The 'Mystical Foundation of Authority,'" in *Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice*, ed. Drucilla Cornell, Michel Rosenfeld, and David Gray Carlson (New York: Routledge, 1992), 3–67.

18. Much of what Benjamin argues in extremely compact and hermetic prose has been elaborated in a more experience-near idiom by Elaine Scarry in her book *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985). Scarry's book explores the ways in which, above all in the practices of torture and war, human pain, the "obscenely . . . alive tissue" (31) of the human body, is enlisted as a source of verification and substantiation of the symbolic authority of institutions and the social facts they sponsor. This bottoming out of symbolic function on the body in pain becomes urgent, Scarry argues, when there is a crisis of belief or legitimation in a society: "at particular moments when there is within society a crisis of belief—that is, when some central idea or ideology or cultural construct has ceased to elicit a population's belief either because it is manifestly fictitious or because it has for some reason been divested of ordinary forms of substantiation—the sheer material factualness of the human body will be borrowed to lend that cultural construct the aura of 'realness' and 'certainty'" (14). One might say that the wounded body is where a society "secretes" what is rotten in law. Speaking more specifically of the structure of war, Scarry argues that "injuring is relied on as a form of legitimation because, though it lacks interior connections to the issues, wounding is able to open up a source of reality that can give the issue force and holding power. That is, the outcome of war has its substantiation not in an absolute inability of the defeated to contest the outcome but in a process of perception that allows extreme attributes of the body to be translated into another language, to be broken away from the body and relocated elsewhere at the very moment that the body itself is disowned"(124). This conception of the injured body as an unspeakable piece of the real that provides the ultimate support of a symbolic order, that (unconsciously) helps to make social facts—governments, money, marriage, social titles, etc.—feel real rather than fictional, allows Scarry, in effect, to recast the psychoanalytic concept of *transference* in more social and political terms. It comes to signify, for Scarry, the "intricacies of the process of transfer that make it possible for the *incontestable reality of the physical body to now become an attribute of an issue that at that moment has no*

independent reality of its own" (124–25). What becomes painfully manifest in both war and torture "is the process by which a made world of culture acquires the characteristics of 'reality,' the process of perception that allows invented ideas, beliefs, and made objects to be accepted and entered into as though they had the same ontological status as the naturally given world" (125). We might add that the often spectacular, even theatrical quality of both torture and war underlines the connection to performativity.

19. Benjamin, "Critique," 286.

20. Derrida, "Force," 38.

21. Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991), 122. This characterization of the rites of institution might be read as a commentary on Benjamin's otherwise enigmatic use of the terms "fate" and "mythic violence" in his "Critique of Violence." In his difficult essay on "The Economic Problem of Masochism," Freud links the "dark power of fate" to the series of symbolic and ethical mandates individuals are called upon to introject and naturalize, beginning with the demands structuring the oedipal pact. He suggests that masochism is one of the ways in which a subject comes to terms with the surplus of force or violence that compels—one might say *drives*—this labor of naturalization. Freud links this surplus to what he calls the *decomposition* of the drives. He furthermore suggests that this surplus of drive force is borne by the superego: "this super-ego is as much a representative of the id as of the external world. It came into being through the introjection into the ego of the first objects of the id's libidinal impulses—namely, the two parents. In this process the relation to those objects was desexualized. . . . Only in this way was it possible for the Oedipus complex to be surmounted. The super-ego retained essential features of the introjected persons—their strength, their severity, their inclination to supervise and to punish. . . . [I]t is easily conceivable that, thanks to the drive-decomposition which occurs along with this introduction into the ego [*durch die Triebentmischung, welche mit einer solchen Einführung ins Ich einhergeht*], the severity was increased. The super-ego—the conscience at work in the ego—may then become harsh, cruel and inexorable against the ego which is in its charge" (*The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, 24 vols., ed. and trans. James Strachey [London: Hogarth, 1953–74], 19:167; I have slightly modified the translation). Alluding to the work that no doubt forms a crucial point of reference for Benjamin's "Critique," Freud adds that "Kant's Categorical Imperative is thus the direct heir of the Oedipus complex" (167). Regarding this conception of the superego as the bearer of an ultimately unjustifiable call to order, see Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 1989), 37–38: "'External' obedience to the Law is . . . not submission to external pressure, to so-called non-ideological 'brute force,' but obedience to the Command in so far as it is 'incomprehensible,' not understood; in so far as it retains a 'traumatic,' 'irrational' character: far from hiding its full authority, this traumatic, non-integrated character of the Law is *a positive condition of it*. This is the fundamental feature of the psychoanalytic concept of the *superego*: an injunction which is experienced as traumatic, 'senseless'—that is, which cannot be integrated into the symbolic universe of the subject. But for

the Law to function 'normally,' this traumatic fact that 'custom is the whole of equity for the sole reason that it is accepted'—the dependence of the Law on its process of enunciation . . . must be repressed into the unconscious, through the ideological, imaginary experience of the 'meaning' of the Law, of its foundation in Justice, Truth. . . ."

22. Bourdieu, *Language*, 123.

23. Ibid., 122. Bourdieu adds that it is "the function of all magical boundaries (whether the boundary between masculine and feminine, or between those selected and those rejected by the educational system) . . . to stop those who are inside, on the right side of the line, from leaving, demeaning or down-grading themselves" (122).

24. Franz Kafka, *The Trial*, trans. Willa Muir and Edwin Muir (New York: Schocken, 1984), 220.

25. Franz Kafka, "The Great Wall of China," trans. Willa Muir and Edwin Muir, in *The Complete Stories*, ed. Nahum N. Glatzer (New York: Schocken, 1971), 242.

26. Nietzsche was born in 1844, two years after Schreber. His own mental breakdown occurred in 1889, four years before Schreber's second illness; he died in 1900, the year Schreber finished the composition of his *Memoirs*. Max Nordau devotes an entire chapter to Nietzsche in *Degeneration*, arguing that his writings exhibit "a series of constantly reiterated delirious ideas, having their source in illusions of sense and diseased organic processes," and indeed compares his work with the manuscripts of the mentally ill which the psychiatrist must read "not for his pleasure, but that he may prescribe the confinement of the author in an asylum" (416, 417).

27. Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1969), 76.

28. Ibid. These reflections inform Carl Schmitt's theory of sovereignty which in turn exerted a powerful influence on Benjamin. On the Schmitt-Benjamin connection, see, for example, Sam Weber, "Taking Exception to Decision: Walter Benjamin and Carl Schmitt," *Diacritics* (Fall–Winter 1992): 5–18.

29. Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, 77–78. Nietzsche, of course, had a great deal to say about the body as a repository of cultural memory. Much of the second essay in the *Genealogy* addresses the often cruel mnemotechnics devised by man to insure that he would not forget his promises, contractual agreements, and social position.

30. Michael John, *Politics and the Law in Late Nineteenth-Century Germany: The Origins of the Civil Code* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 86.

31. Ibid., 104. See also Konrad Zweigert and Hein Kötz, *Introduction to Comparative Law*, trans. Tony Weir (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987): "the draftsmen of the BGB [Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch or Civil Code] seem to have taken no notice of the great social change which was occuring in Germany during the final decades of the nineteenth century; commerce and industry were becoming much more important economically than farming, and urban populations were expanding rapidly, especially with industrial workers. Yet for the BGB the typical citizen is not the small artisan or the factory worker but rather the moneyed entrepreneur, the landed proprietor, and the official, people who can

be expected to have business experience and sound judgment, capable of succeeding in a bourgeois society with freedom of contract, freedom of establishment, and freedom of competition, and able to take steps to protect themselves from harm" (150).

32. It was above all this social antagonism that led, after Bismarck's resignation, to what Hans-Ulrich Wehler has referred to as a "permanent state crisis." See Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Das Deutsche Kaiserreich: 1871–1918* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1988), 63–72.

33. See, for example, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's use of Freud's essay for the analysis of what she refers to as the "paranoid Gothic," in her *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 186–87.

CHAPTER ONE

FREUD, SCHREBER, AND THE PASSIONS OF PSYCHOANALYSIS

1. Citations of Freud's work in English will be taken from *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, 24 vols., ed and trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1953–74). References to this edition will be made parenthetically in the text (*SE* with volume and page). Citations of the German text of Freud's works will be taken from the *Studienausgabe*, 12 vols., ed. Alexander Mitscherlich et al. (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1982).

2. Cited in Peter Gay, *Freud: A Life for Our Time* (New York: Norton, 1988), 275, 274, 275. In his monumental study of the Schreber case, Zvi Lothane suggests that Freud had wanted Ferenczi to collaborate on the Schreber essay and that the latter politely refused when it became clear that Freud really wanted him to serve as a kind of personal secretary. See Zvi Lothane, *In Defense of Schreber: Soul Murder and Psychiatry* (Hillsdale, N.J.: Analytic Press, 1992), 362.

3. Gay, *Freud*, 279. Zvi Lothane suggests more radically that Freud's focus on homosexuality in his reading of Schreber was entirely a product of a transferential dynamic on Freud's part and without a counterpart in Schreber's life or text: "scientific formulations about paranoia aside, latent homosexuality played a role in Freud and in the relations among the pioneers [of psychoanalysis] themselves: it was both an overt and a covert current in the early days of the history of the psychoanalytic movement, when it was an exclusively male club and a mutual admiration—and interpretation—society. The earliest personal linkage between paranoia and homosexuality was made by Freud himself in relation to Fliess. . . . In addition, homosexual concerns repeatedly came up as countertransference in the psychotherapy of male patients. Thus, Freud's attribution of homosexuality to Schreber is, among other motives, a projection onto Schreber of his own sexual conflicts and emotions" (Lothane, *In Defense of Schreber*, 338–39).

4. Freud's witness is Sandor Ferenczi.

5. Freud notes in the first section of his essay that Schreber associates mental illness with disturbances in the domain of sexual function "as though he shared our prejudice" (*SE* 12:31). Even earlier, in the preface to his essay, Freud explicitly cites Schreber's justification of publishing what might appear to the reader

as indiscretions or even libelous speech about his first psychiatrist, Dr. Paul Flechsig, as a moral cover for his own publication of the case study: "He urges upon Dr. Flechsig . . . the same considerations that I am now urging upon him" (*SE* 12:10).

6. Freud's relationship with Fliess was, of course, in its own way overdetermined by a preoccupation with influence and originality with regard to theoretical insights about the nature of human sexuality. The correspondence between Freud and Fliess ended in a dispute over Fliess's claim that Freud had passed along his own unpublished theories on bisexuality to Otto Weininger (perhaps by way of Hermann Swoboda, a patient of Freud's and friend of Weininger), who then published them in his notorious volume *Sex and Character* in 1903. In his discussion of this affair, Gay defends Freud's forthrightness in matters of intellectual property: "Intellectual robbery is after all easily done, but, he [Freud] protested, he had always acknowledged the work of others, never appropriated anything that belonged to anyone else. This was not the best place or time for Freud to assert his innocence in the contentious arena of ideas competing for priority. But to forestall further disputes, he offered Fliess a look at the manuscript of his still-unfinished *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, so that Fliess might study the passages on bisexuality and have any offending ones revised. Freud even offered to postpone publishing the *Three Essays* until Fliess had brought out his own book. These were decent gestures, but Fliess chose not to take them up. . . . This was the end of the Freud-Fliess correspondence" (Gay, *Freud*, 155). For a brilliant reading of yet another chapter in Freud's intense preoccupation with questions of originality and influence, see Neil Hertz, "Freud and the Sandman," in his *The End of the Line: Essays on Psychoanalysis and the Sublime* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 97–121.

7. Lothane has noted even more striking parallels between Schreber's delusional sexology and Freud's earlier *Project for a Scientific Psychology*. See Lothane, *In Defense of Schreber*, 366 n. 32.

8. My understanding of "influence anxiety" has been enriched not only through Harold Bloom's programmatic presentation of that notion in *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), but also through his extensions and elaborations of the concept in *Kabbalah and Criticism* (New York: Continuum, 1983) and *Ruin the Sacred Truths: Poetry and Belief from the Bible to the Present* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987). The classic text in the psychoanalytic literature on influence anxiety and mental illness is, of course, Victor Tausk's famous essay on the influence machines of schizophrenics, "Über die Entstehung des 'Beeinflussungsapparates' in der Schizophrenie," first published in the *Internationale Zeitschrift für Ärztliche Psychoanalyse* 5 (1919): 1–33.

9. See C. G. Jung, *The Psychology of Dementia Praecox* (1907), in *The Psychogenesis of Mental Illness*, trans. R.F.C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989).

10. In his postscript to the Schreber case in which Freud ventures on the Jungian terrain that would occupy him more centrally in *Totem and Taboo*, Freud refers in a footnote to another work of Jung's as well as an essay by

Sabina Spielrein, both of which deal to some extent with Schreber and both of which appeared, thanks to a "freundlicher Zufall," a "happy coincidence," as Freud put it, in the same issue of the *Jahrbuch für psychoanalytische und psychopathologische Forschungen* (3, no. 1 [1911]) as Freud's Schreber text.

11. In an earlier footnote, Freud anticipates this larger hermeneutic claim concerning the proper interpretation of footnotes and other such material: "It not infrequently happens in the *Denkwürdigkeiten* that an incidental note upon some piece of delusional theory gives us the desired indication of the genesis of the delusion and so of its meaning" (*SE* 12:22).

12. In a letter to Abraham, Freud even joked that "I have of course to plagiarise you very extensively in this paper" (cited in Lothane, *In Defense of Schreber*, 337).

13. Maeder, a close associate of Jung's, is known for his racialist interpretation of the break between the Viennese and Swiss schools, which he expressed in a letter to Ferenczi in 1913. Freud's advice to Ferenczi on how to respond to Maeder's insistence on fundamental differences between the Jewish and Aryan spirit is particularly interesting when seen against the background of Schreber's preoccupations with these very racial differences, a matter that Freud left unaddressed in his Schreber study: "Certainly there are great differences between the Jewish and the Aryan spirit. We can observe that every day. Hence there would be here and there differences in outlook on life and art. But there should not be such a thing as Aryan or Jewish science. Results in science must be identical, though the presentation of them may vary. If these differences mirror themselves in the apprehension of objective relationships in science there must be something wrong." Cited in Ernest Jones, *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud*, ed. Lionel Trilling and Steven Marcus (New York: Basic Books, 1961), 325.

14. Lothane sees this lapse as part of a larger failure on Freud's part to integrate research that shifted the analytic focus from sexual etiologies to other dynamic factors such as rage, frustration, and contemporary conflicts. See Lothane, *In Defense of Schreber*, 341–42.

15. See Gay, *Freud*, 221–22. Jacques Le Rider turns Adler's phrase into a central organizing metaphor of his recent study of crises of gender, national, and ethnic identity in fin-de-siècle Austrian literature: *Modernity and Crises of Identity: Culture and Society in Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*, trans. Rosemary Morris (New York: Continuum, 1993). There Le Rider characterizes Schreber's *Memoirs* as a "disturbing parody of the literary presentations of depersonalization and mystic or narcissistic reconstruction of the deeper self," which he analyzes in the works of Hofmannsthal, Rilke, and Lou Andreas-Salomé (81). Friedrich Kittler reverses this relation of original and parody when he claims, for example, that Rilke's *Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge* might be profitably reexamined under the heading *Memoirs of My Simulations of Nervous Illness*. See Kittler, *Discourse Networks. 1800/1900*, trans. Michael Metteer and Chris Cullens (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1990), 329.

16. The existence of Jungian and Adlerian schools of psychoanalysis testifies to the success of these contestations. That these schools bear the name of their founders suggests the continued efficacy of the founding utterances. The

"truth" of the Jungian, Adlerian, or Freudian position continues, in other words, to be at least in part dependent on the force of the master's speech and the pupil's transferential relation to it.

17. What Pierre Bourdieu has argued apropos of the "political capital" of institutions applies, in other words, in an emphatic way to psychoanalysis. It is, he suggests, "a form of symbolic capital, *credit* founded on *credence* or belief and *recognition* or, more precisely, on the innumerable operations of credit by which agents confer on a person (or on an object) the very powers that they recognize in him (or it). This is the ambiguity of the *fides* . . . : an objective power which can be objectified in things (and in particular in everything that constitutes the symbolic nature of power—thrones, sceptres and crowns), it is the product of subjective acts of recognition and, in so far as it is credit and credibility, exists only in and through representation, in and through trust, belief and obedience. Symbolic power is a power which the person submitting to *grants* to the person who exercises it, a credit with which he credits him, a *fides*, and *auctoritas*, with which he entrusts him by placing his trust in him. It is a power which exists because the person who submits to it believes that it exists. *Credo*, says Benveniste, 'is *literally* "to place one's *kred*," that is "magical powers," in a person from whom one expects protection thanks to "believing" in him.' The *kred*, the credit, the charisma, that '*je ne sais quoi*' with which one keeps hold over those from whom one holds it, is this product of the *credo*, of belief, of obedience, which seems to produce the *credo*, the belief, the obedience" (*Language and Symbolic Power*, trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991], 192).

18. Regarding the transferential mechanism that supports the symbolic authority of the "classical master," Žižek writes: "The transubstantiated body of the classical Master is an effect of the performative mechanism already described by la Boétie, Pascal and Marx: we, the subjects, think that we treat the king as a king because he is in himself a king, but in reality a king is a king because we treat him like one. And this fact that the charismatic power of a king is an effect of the symbolic ritual performed by his subjects must remain hidden: as subjects, we are necessarily victims of the illusion that the king is already in himself a king. That is why the classical Master must legitimize his rule with a reference to some non-social, external authority (God, nature, some mythical past event . . .)—as soon as the performative mechanism which gives him his charismatic authority is demasked, the Master loses his power" (*The Sublime Object of Ideology* [London: Verso, 1989], 146). Adam Phillips has offered a rather more straightforward account of the problematic—and exemplary—nature of psychoanalytic authority: "Psychoanalysis began . . . as a kind of virtuoso improvisation within the science of medicine; and free association—the heart of psychoanalytic treatment—is itself ritualized improvisation. But Freud was determined to keep psychoanalysis officially in the realm of scientific rigour, partly, I think, because improvisation is difficult to legitimate—and to sell—outside of a cult of genius. With the invention of psychoanalysis . . . Freud glimpsed a daunting prospect: a profession of improvisers." But precisely because of this problematic status of psychoanalytic knowledge and authority, Phillips adds that "psychoanalysis can be good at showing the ways in which

certain points of view become invested with authority" (*On Kissing, Tickling and Being Bored: Psychoanalytic Essays on the Unexamined Life* [London: Faber and Faber, 1993], xv, xvi).

19. Bourdieu, *Language*, 109.

20. "An *investiture* . . . consists of sanctioning and sanctifying a difference . . . by making it *known* and *recognized*; it consists of making it exist as a social difference, known and recognized as such by the agent invested and everyone else" (Ibid., 119).

21. That Lacan was, in the end, more aware than Freud of these parallels between Schreber's psychosis and problems internal to the rites of institution of psychoanalysis itself is indicated by a persistent emphasis in his work on the problem of investiture. In his seminar on the psychoses, noting the importance of Schreber's nomination/election as *Senatspräsident*, he writes: "But where the psychoses are concerned, things are different. It's not a question of the subject's relation to a link signified within existing signifying structures, but of his encounter *under elective conditions* with the signifier as such, which marks the onset of psychosis" (Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan. Book III: The Psychoses, 1955–1956*, trans. Russell Grigg [New York: Norton, 1993], 320). We might compare this remark with a much later pronouncement of Lacan's apropos of the "magical" procedure instituted by the Lacanian School—*la passe*—marking the symbolic election of the analyst: "Now that I think about it, psychoanalysis is untransmittable. What a nuisance that each analyst is forced . . . to reinvent psychoanalysis. . . . I must say that in the 'pass' nothing attests to the subject's [that is, the candidate-analyst's] knowing how to cure a neurosis. I am still waiting for someone to enlighten me on this. I would really love to know, from someone who would testify in the 'pass,' that a subject . . . is capable of doing more than what I would call plain old chattering. . . . How does it happen that, through the workings of the signifier, there are people who can cure? Despite everything I may have said on the topic, I know nothing about it. It's a question of trickery [*truquage*]" (cited in Mikkel Borch-Jakobsen, *Lacan: The Absolute Master*, trans. Douglas Brick [Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1991], 158).

22. These reports were submitted as documents to the courts adjudicating the question of Schreber's guardianship and confinement. Schreber included them as appendixes to his memoirs, adding the following note: "The comparison with the corresponding accounts in the Memoirs and in my grounds for appeal will show immediately that the reports contain some *factual* mistakes, inexactitudes and misconceptions. But I have no doubt that the reason lies to some extent in unreliable reports furnished by third persons (attendants, etc.)" (267).

23. In the German, the temporal structure of reinterpretation described by Freud takes on an added dimension. In the penultimate sentence of the quoted passage where we read "later on," we find, in the original, the word "nachträglich," which carries with it the association not only of "Nachtrag," meaning addendum, addition, or supplementary revision, but also of the verb "nachtragen," which means to bear a grudge against someone for a past injury.

24. This aspect of Freud's reading has, as might be expected, come under attack from a number of different quarters. Perhaps the most controversial aspect of Freud's claims thus far is his equation of feminization with emasculation, i.e., castration, an equation that forces Freud to marginalize those aspects of Schreber's feminine identification which do not accord with the sense of radical loss and mutilation one associates with castration. See, for example, Ida Macalpine and Richard A. Hunter's analysis of the case in the appendix to their translation of Schreber's *Memoirs* and, more recently, Lothane, *In Defense of Schreber*, as well as Jay Geller, "Freud v. Freud: Freud's Reading of Daniel Paul Schreber's *Denkwürdigkeiten eines Nervenkranken*," in *Reading Freud's Reading*, ed. Sander Gilman, Jutta Birmele, Jay Geller, and Valerie Greenberg (New York: New York University Press, 1994), 180–210.

25. For Schreber as for Otto Weininger, who was developing his notorious theories of sexuality, gender, and race more or less contemporaneously with Schreber, sexual pleasure that escapes genital localization is *by definition* feminine. Schreber notes his willingness to offer his body to medical examination "for ascertaining whether my assertion is correct, that my whole body is filled with nerves of voluptuousness from the top of my head to the soles of my feet, such as is the case only in the adult female body, whereas in the case of a man, as far as I know, nerves of voluptuousness are only found in and immediately around the sexual organs" (204). See also Otto Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter. Eine prinzipielle Untersuchung* (Munich: Matthes & Seitz, 1980).

26. "It is my duty to provide Him with it [enjoyment] in the form of highly developed soul-voluptuousness, as far as this is possible in the circumstances contrary to the Order of the World. If I can get a little sensuous pleasure in the process, I feel I am entitled to it as a small compensation for the excess of suffering and privation that has been mine for many years past" (209). The original German endows this surplus enjoyment with the status of refuse or waste product: "soweit dabei für mich etwas von sinnlichem Genusse *abfällt* . . ." (*Denkwürdigkeiten*, 194).

27. Schreber gives a brief list of examples of the birds' susceptibility to homophony: "It has already been said that the sounds need not be completely identical; a similarity suffices, as in any case the birds do not understand the *sense* of the words; therefore it matters little to them—in order to give some examples—whether one speaks of

> 'Santiago' or 'Cathargo'
> 'Chinesentum' or 'Jesum Christum'
> 'Abendroth' or 'Athemnoth'
> 'Ariman' or 'Ackermann'
> 'Briefbeschwerer' or 'Herr Prüfer schwört' " (168–69).

28. He notes, for example, that "in a carping mood people often compare them [young girls] to geese, ungallantly accuse them of having 'the brains of a bird' and declare that they can say nothing but phrases learnt by rote and they betray their lack of education by confusing foreign words that sound alike" (36).

29. Schreber writes that "To a large number of the other bird-souls I jokingly gave girls' names in order to distinguish them, because all of them can best be compared to little girls in their curiosity, their inclination to voluptuousness, etc. These girls' names were then taken up by God's rays and used for the respective bird-souls concerned" (171; cf. *SE* 12:36).

30. One will recall that in a later metapsychological study, Freud posits *moral masochism*, the analysis of which follows an account of *feminine masochism*, as one of the typical products of the drive-decomposition that normally accompanies the introduction into the ego of foreign matter, i.e., the symbolic and ethical mandates of parents and other social authorities (see "The Economic Problem of Masochism," *SE* 19:159–70). It is not out of the question that Schreber's experience of the talking birds was suggested to him by his knowledge, attested to at several points in the *Memoirs*, of Wagnerian opera. One will recall that in the third opera of the *Ring*, Siegfried, upon slaying Fafner, is able to understand the language of birds. We recall that after attaining his release from the Sonnenstein asylum, Schreber had the *Siegfried*-motif inscribed above the entrance to his new home in Dresden. A more noxious Wagnerian association, one to which we will return later, is the one the composer made in his essay on "Judaism in Music" between the meaningless repetitions of parrots and Jewish discourse.

31. Based on interviews with a descendant of the Jung family into which Schreber's sister Anna had married, Lothane reports that it might have been Carl Jung, Anna's husband, who was responsible for the deletion of the third chapter from the *Memoirs* and for the efforts to buy up and destroy the printed copies of the text. See Lothane, *In Defense of Schreber*, 26.

32. Lothane writes that Flechsig turned his discovery of myelination, made in 1872 while dissecting the brain of a five-week old boy named Martin Luther, "into the foundation of his research methodology and his entire neuroanatomical as well as psychiatric system. Flechsig was able to demonstrate that myelination of nerve fibers was a lawful and sequential process in the development of the nervous system of man, reflecting the maturation of various neural systems" (*In Defense of Schreber*, 203). Freud's neurological writings contain numerous references to Flechsig's work and in a letter to his bride, Martha, he even refers to Flechsig as his "competitor" (cf. ibid., 241).

33. Freud seems to want to turn this self-imposed methodological asceticism into a boast about his hermeneutic prowess when he brags that apart from some biographical information about Schreber passed on to him by the Dresden psychiatrist Dr. Arnold Georg Stegmann, "I have made use of no material in this paper that is not derived from the actual text of the *Denkwürdigkeiten*" (*SE* 12:46). Included in the material that Stegmann passed along was the October 1908 issue of *Der Freund der Schrebervereine* (Friend of the Schreber Associations), the offical organ of the Schreber Associations, which, as we shall see, Freud uses to piece together an ultimately positive appraisal of the role of Schreber's father in the life of his psychotic son.

34. In a certain sense, Freud begins his own case study with a kind of confession that is the mirror image of Schreber's accusation against Flechsig. Freud begins his opening remarks by noting that because he is not attached to a public

institution and because paranoia rarely offers the prospect of therapeutic success, it is, Freud admits, "only in exceptional circumstances . . . that I succeed in getting more than a superficial view of the structure of paranoia—when, for instance, the diagnosis . . . is uncertain enough to justify an attempt at influencing the patient, or when, in spite of an assured diagnosis, I yield to the entreaties of the patient's relatives and undertake to treat him for a time" (*SE* 12:9). It is, of course, uncertain whether this sort of "transgression" of the purely therapeutic mandate would count for Schreber as an instance of malpractice.

35. Žižek has described this correlation in terms of a Lacanian understanding of the superego: "It is this very exteriority which, according to Lacan, defines the status of the superego: the superego is a Law in so far as it is not integrated into the subject's symbolic universe, in so far as it functions as an incomprehensible, nonsensical, traumatic injunction . . . bearing witness to a kind of 'malevalent neutrality' directed towards the subject, indifferent to his empathies and fears. At this precise point, as the subject confronts the 'agency of the letter' in its original and radical *exteriority*, the signifier's nonsense at its purest, he encounter's the superego command 'Enjoy!' which addresses the most *intimate* kernel of his being" (*The Metastases of Enjoyment: Six Essays on Woman and Causality* [London: Verso, 1994], 20).

36. Freud's equation of the delusion of being transformed into a woman with male homosexuality is, of course, problematic and has been challenged by critical readers, most notably by the English translators of Schreber's *Memoirs*. See Ida Macalpine and Richard Hunter, "Translators' Analysis of the Case," in Daniel Paul Schreber, *Memoirs*, 369–411.

37. Freud uses the word "Geschwisterinzest" which could also signify an instance of homosexual incest.

38. In one sense, Freud is teasing out an ambiguity in Schreber's own language. Schreber's phrase for "communication with supernatural forces" (*Memoirs*, 68) is "Verkehr mit übersinnlichen Kräften." "Verkehr" could be translated as "commerce," "traffic," or "intercourse," and, given a certain literalizing tendency typical of psychotic disorders, "übersinnlich" might suggest not so much the dimension of the supersensible as an excess or surplus of the "sinnlich," of the sensuous and sensual. These ambiguities are familiar to anyone who has struggled with the translation and interpretation of the final lines of Kafka's short prose text, "The Judgment," in which a similarly overdetermined "Verkehr" figures in a crucial way.

39. Dr. Weber's report of December 9, 1899, cited by Freud, recalls Schreber's main symptoms during his stay in Flechsig's asylum. Weber notes that among the central delusions, Schreber "thought he was dead and rotten, suffering from the plague" (appendix to *Memoirs*, 267). One also recalls in this context Schreber's own characterization of the conspiracy against him: "in this way a plot was laid against me (perhaps March or April 1894), the purpose of which was to hand me over to another human being after my nervous illness had been recognized as, or assumed to be, incurable, in such a way that my soul was handed to him, but my body—transformed into a female body . . . was then left to that human being for sexual misuse and simply 'forsaken,' in other words left to rot" (*Memoirs*, 75).

40. One really begins to appreciate Freud's confusion upon reading his quite unexpected appeal to a biological contingency—the possibility that Schreber was experiencing the effects of male menopause—to explain the timing of the outburst of homosexual libido (cf. *SE* 12:46).

41. Bourdieu, *Language*, 105–6; my emphasis.

42. Apropos of this epiphany, Lacan notes that "Insults are very frequent in the divine partner's relations with Schreber, as in an erotic relationship that one initially refuses to take part in and resists. This is the other face, the counterpart, of the imaginary world. The annihilating insult is a culminating point, it is one of the peaks of the speech act. . . . Around this peak all the mountain chains of the verbal field are laid out . . . in a masterly perspective by Schreber. Everything that a linguist could imagine as decompositions of the function of language is encountered in what Schreber experiences, which he differentiates with a lightness of touch, in nuances that leave nothing to be desired as to their information" (*Seminar. Book III*, 100). Taking Lacan's reading as his point of departure, Philippe Despoix has noted not only the importance of insults in the Israelite God's relation to the prophets—as in, for example, Hos. 1:8—but also the fact that it was Max Weber who, in his *Sociology of Religion*, written in the years of great productivity following his own psychotic breakdown and recovery, underlined this feature of Old Testament rhetoric. See Despoix, "Buch und Wahn: Die sprachliche Struktur im 'Psychotischen' Diskurs—Schreber mit Lacan," in *Die Spur des Unbewußten in der Psychiatrie*, ed. Stefan Priebe, Martin Heinze, and Gerhard Danzer (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1995), 45–69.

43. Lacan introduced the notion of the master signifier as *point de capiton* or "quilting point" in his seminar on the psychoses. There, perhaps playing on the crucial role in Schreber's *Memoirs* of the signifiers *Fürchtegott* and *gottesfürchtig*, Lacan writes apropos of Jehoiada's pronouncement, in Racine's *Athalie*, that the fear of God is his only fear: "The fear of God isn't a signifier that is found everywhere. Someone had to invent it and propose it to men, as the remedy for a world made up of manifold terrors, that they fear a being who is, after all, only able to exercise his cruelty through the evils that are there, multifariously present in human life. To have replaced these innumerable fears by the fear of a unique being who has no other means of manifesting his power than through what is feared behind these innumerable fears, is quite an accomplishment. . . . To invent a thing like this you have to be a poet or a prophet, and it's precisely insofar as this Jehoiada is one to some extent . . . that he can use as he does this major and primordial signifier. . . . This famous fear of God completes the sleight of hand that transforms, from one minute to the next, all fears into perfect courage. All fears . . . are exchanged for what is called the fear of God, which, however constraining it may be, is the opposite of fear. . . . The power of the signifier, the effectiveness of this word *fear*, has been to transform the *zeal* at the beginning . . . into the *faithfulness* of the end. The transmutation is of the order of the signifier as such. No accumulation, no superimposition, no summation of meanings, is sufficient to justify it. . . . The quilting point is the word *fear*. . . . Everything radiates out from and is organized around this signifier, similar to these little lines of force that an upholstery button forms on the sur-

face of material. It's the point of convergence that enables everything that happens in this discourse to be situated retroactively and prospectively" (*Seminar. Book III*, 266–68). See also Lacan's more condensed essay on Schreber, "On a Question Preliminary to Any Possible Treatment of Psychosis," in Lacan's *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1977), 179–225.

44. Michel de Certeau, "The Institution of Rot," in *Psychosis and Sexual Identity: Toward a Post-Analytic View of the Schreber Case*, ed. David Allison, Prado de Oliveira, Mark Roberts, and Allen Weiss (Albany: SUNY Press, 1988), 91–92.

45. Ibid., 92.

46. Ibid. As we have already noted, Friedrich Nietzsche, whose own breakdown occurred almost simultaneously with Schreber's, dedicated much of his life to the philosophical elaboration of precisely this insulting secret.

47. As Certeau puts it, the "goal of torture, in effect, is to produce acceptance of a State discourse, through the confession of putrescence. What the torturer in the end wants to extort from the victim he tortures is to reduce him to being no more than *that* [*ça*], rottenness, which is what the torturer himself is and knows that he is, but without avowing it. The victim must be the *voice* of the filth, everywhere denied, that everywhere supports the *representation* of the regime's 'omnipotence,' in other words, the 'glorious image' of themselves the regime provides for its adherents through its recognition of them. The victim must therefore assume the position of the subject upon whom the theater of identifying power is performed" (Ibid., 93). In this context, see once more Elaine Scarry's lucid reflections on torture and symbolic power in *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985). The ethical and political dimension of Scarry's project lies in her efforts to demonstrate "that it is part of the original and ongoing project of civilization to diminish the reliance on (and to find substitutes for) this process of substantiation, and that this project comes in the west to be associated with an increased pressure toward material culture, or material self-expression" (14).

48. One might note a further cluster of meanings evoked by the divine nomination *Luder*. Schreber may well have known that Martin Luther's family name had been "Luder" before he himself changed it to "Luther" in 1517, the year of his famous ninety-five theses. Before settling on "Luther," he also used a Hellenized form, "Eleutherius," meaning "one who is free." While early enemies of the Reformation made use, in their polemics, of the connotations of putrescence in the name *Luder*, Luther's supporters produced etymologies according to which his name signified "Herr" of the "Leute" ("the people's master") or was derived from the adjective *lauter*, meaning pure, undefiled, genuine. (For a comprehensive discussion of Luther's names, see Bernd Moeller and Karl Stackmann, "Luder—Luther—Eleutherius. Erwägungen zu Luthers Namen," *Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen. Philologisch-Historische Klasse* 11 [1981]: 171–203; I am grateful to Peter Schöttler for this reference and to Werner Hamacher for alerting me to the possible significance of Luther's names in the first place.) An unconscious identification with the great theological reformer, whose own change of name dotted the "i," so to speak, on his radical reshaping of the Christian subject's relation to religious and secular authority, might thus have been operative in Schreber's own expe-

rience of spiritual chosenness. In this context one will also recall the bizarre coincidence that the patient on whom Flechsig made some of his first neuroanatomical discoveries was a baby named Martin Luther, thereby offering another layer to the overdeterminations of Schreber's "wretched" nomination; to identify with Luther/Luder in this sense would mean to be the "privileged" object of Flechsig's direct and intrusive powers.

49. Cf. Žižek's perspicacious remarks on this experience of overproximity in Kafka's work in *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991), 146.

50. I am following here Sedgwick's discussion of homosexual panic in *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

51. One might recall, in this context, Freud's remarks on the decomposition of drives that serves to amplify the force of the superego to the level of "moral masochism." Freud seems to suggest that the interest of Kant's formalist ethics for psychoanalysis is that the categorical imperative, too, offers a glimpse of this drive dimension purified of empirical, ideological contents ("The Economic Problem of Masochism," in *SE* 19:167).

52. Schreber's older brother Gustav, whose own story has yet to be told, committed suicide in 1877 shortly after his own appointment as appeals judge of the District Court in Bautzen.

53. On this tendency of paranoia to divide the persecutor into constituent "demons," see Angus Fletcher's psychoanalytically informed analysis of this tendency in allegorical works of fiction, *Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1964). Fletcher suggests that an "almost analytic purpose, pseudoscientific if not protoscientific, follows from the very idea of daemon itself. Coming from the term that means 'to divide,' *daemon* implies an endless series of divisions of all important aspects of the world into separate elements for study and control. The daemon of a man is his fate, his Moira, his fortune, his lot, whatever is specifically divided up and allotted to *him*. Through the working of destiny he is narrowed to the function represented by his daemon. It follows that if nature is a composite system all parts and aspects of which are daemonically controlled, and if man acts only within such a system, the allegorical agent—whose paradigm is daemonic man—is always a division of some larger power" (59–60).

54. The English translators of Schreber have retained the grammatical gender of *Sonne* in the English.

55. To return to the matter of Freud's preoccupation with priority and originality, we might note that in this postscript Freud has entered a domain already staked out by Jung whose own "dazzling" work in the study of the psychoses Freud set out to supersede in his own study of Schreber. Freud both acknowledges and denies Jung's priority in the direction of thought sketched out in the postscript: "This short postscript to my analysis of a paranoid patient may serve to show that Jung had excellent grounds for his assertion that the mythopoeic forces of mankind are not extinct, but that to this very day they give rise in the neuroses to the same psychological products as in the remotest past ages. I should like to take up a suggestion *that I myself made some time ago*, and add that the same holds good of the forces that construct religions" (*SE*

12:82; my emphasis). Freud's preoccupation with originality stands here in stark contrast with the *theme* of these reflections, namely rites of initiatory investiture that by definition *devalue* originality. In this context, see Jean-Joseph Goux's fine discussion of the problem of initiatory investiture in the discourse of philosophy and psychoanalysis, *Oedipus, Philosopher*, trans. Catherine Porter (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1993).

56. Many of these motifs are found in the work of another key figure from German cultural history whose struggle for a position of existential and social legitimacy pushed him to the edge of mental breakdown: Friedrich Hölderlin. Indeed, the breakdown is prefigured in the fragmentary poem that most directly and consistently deploys the metaphorics of ordeal discussed by Freud, "Wie wenn am Feiertage . . ." (As on a holiday . . .). The poem seems to collapse under the weight of uncertainty apropos of the mythic lineage it sets out to celebrate:

> . . . So once, the poets tell, when she desired to see
> The god in person, visible, did his lightning fall
> On Semele's house, and the divinely struck gave birth to
> The thunderstorm's fruit, to holy Bacchus.
>
> And hence it is that without danger now
> The sons of Earth drink heavenly fire.
> Yet, fellow poets, us it behoves to stand
> Bare-headed beneath God's thunderstorms,
> To grasp the Father's ray, no less, with our own two hands
> And, wrapping in song the heavenly gift,
> To offer it to the people.
> For if only we are pure in heart,
> Like children, and our hands are guiltless,
> The Father's ray, the pure, will not sear our hearts
> And, deeply convulsed, and sharing his sufferings
> Who is stronger than we are, yet in the far-flung down-rushing
> storms of
> The God, when he draws near, will the heart stand fast.
> But, oh, my shame! when of
>
> My shame!
>
> That I approached to see the Heavenly,
> And they themselves cast me down, deep down
> Below the living, into the dark cast down
> The false priest that I am, to sing,
> For those who have ears to hear, the warning song.
> There

In *Friedrich Hölderlin: "Hyperion" and Selected Poems*, ed. Eric L. Santner, trans. Michael Hamburger (New York: Continuum, 1990), 195–97). Although this poem was written some hundred years before Schreber's *Memoirs*, a certain "contemporaneity" of Hölderlin and Schreber is suggested, first, by the fact that Schreber dates the beginnings of the disturbance in the Order of the

World associated with the phenomenon of "soul murder" in the eighteenth century and, second, by the great renaissance of interest in Hölderlin in the first decades of the twentieth century. It might also be noted that the most fully developed psychoanalytic study of Hölderlin's life and writings, Jean Laplanche's *Hölderlin et la question du père* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1961), is grounded in Jacques Lacan's theoretical reflections apropos of the Schreber case.

57. Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 62; my emphasis.

58. The "presence" of Moritz Schreber is indicated not only by the family name whose quasi-autonomous power Schreber emphasizes, but also by the phrase "miraculous structure" which Schreber glosses in a footnote: "Again an expression which I did not invent. I had spoken—in the thought—or nerve-language . . . of *miraculous organization* whereupon the expression 'miraculous structure' was suggested to me from outside" (54). This phrase—*wundervoller Aufbau*—is, as William Niederland has pointed out, very likely an allusion to the title of one of Moritz Schreber's books: *Anthropos: Der Wunderbau des menschlichen Organismus* (see Niederland, *The Schreber Case: Psychoanalytic Profile of a Paranoid Personality* [Hillsdale, N.J.: Analytic Press, 1984], 99).

59. *Studienausgabe*, 7:182.

60. See once more Lacan's introduction of the concept of the master signifier as "quilting point" apropos of the notion of "fear of God" in Racine's *Athalie* in his *Seminar. Book III*.

61. In his analysis of symbolic power, Bourdieu provides an interesting example of a crisis of liturgical discourse and authority which suggests how a state of emergency of symbolic power can manifest itself as sexual transgression (his example is interesting in part because of its seeming triviality at a historical moment when news of sexual transgressions on the part of priests has become a staple of the media). "For ritual to function and operate," Bourdieu argues, "it must first of all present itself and be perceived as legitimate, with stereotyped symbols serving precisely to show that the agent does not act in his own name and on his own authority, but in his capacity as a delegate." Bourdieu cites an anonymous text attesting to a breach of this law of delegation: "'Two years ago an old lady who was a neighbor of mine lay dying, and asked me to fetch the priest. He arrived but without being able to give communion, and, after administering the last rites, kissed her. If, in my last moments on earth, I ask for a priest, it isn't so that he can kiss me, but so that he can bring me what I need to make the journey to eternity. That kiss was an act of paternalism and not of the sacred Ministry.'" Bourdieu summarizes the larger implications of such a transgression in terms which resonate strongly with the Schreber material: "The crisis over the liturgy points to the crisis in the priesthood . . . which itself points to a general crisis of religious belief. It reveals, through a kind of quasi-experimental dismantling, the 'conditions of felicity' which allow a set of agents engaged in a rite to accomplish it *felicitously*; it also shows retrospectively that this objective and subjective felicity is based on a total lack of awareness of these conditions, a lack of awareness which, in

so far as it defines the doxic relation to social rituals, constitutes the most indispensable condition for their effective accomplishment. The performative magic of ritual functions fully only as long as the religious official who is responsible for carrying it out in the name of the group acts as a kind of *medium* between the group and itself: it is the group which, through its intermediary, exercises on itself the magical efficacy contained in the performative utterance" (*Language*, 115–16).

62. Schreber's paternal great grandfather was named Daniel *Gottfried* Schreber, and was a jurist and economics professor; his grandfather, a lawyer, was named Johann *Gotthilf* Daniel Schreber. It was doubtlessly important to Daniel Paul Schreber that he lacked a reference to God in his middle name.

63. It was, of course, D. W. Winnicott who, with his theory of the intermediate area and transitional objects, did more than any other post-Freudian thinker to articulate the kinds of preparations and psychic labors a child must accomplish in order to "posit" the world, and the ways in which the responses of the child's immediate environment to these labors affect the ultimate success or failure of this process by which the child discovers/makes the world. See especially *Playing and Reality* (London: Tavistock, 1971).

64. Freud summarizes his transformational grammar of paranoia as follows: "Delusions of jealousy contradict the subject, delusions of persecution contradict the verb, and erotomania contradicts the object." A fourth possibility, that of contradicting the entire proposition, generates megalomania, the "psychological equivalent of the proposition: 'I love only myself'" (*SE* 12:64–65).

65. Sedgwick, *Epistemology*, 187.

66. Ibid., 186.

67. See, for example, Schreber, *Memoirs*, 49, 71, 85, 92. I will address these matters, especially Schreber's delusions concerning Catholics and Jews, in Chapter 3.

68. Recalling that Schreber had already alluded to the Wagnerian motif of a *Götterdämmerung* to characterize the end of the world, it is interesting to note that Freud reads Schreber's inner catastrophe as a variation of another Wagnerian scene of destruction and demise: "An 'end of the world' based upon other motives is to be found at the climax of the ecstasy of love (cf. Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*); in this case it is not the ego but the single love-object which absorbs all the cathexes directed upon the external world" (*SE* 12:69).

69. Compare Freud's formulation concerning the regression characteristic of melancholia: "Melancholia . . . borrows some of its features from mourning, and the others from the process of regression from narcissistic object-choice to narcissism" (*SE* 14:250).

70. Robert Jay Lifton, "The Image of the 'End of the World': A Psychohistorical View," in *Visions of Apocalypse: End or Rebirth?*, ed. Saul Friedländer, Gerald Holton, Leo Marx, and Eugene Skolnikoff (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1985), 157.

71. As Lothane puts it, "it is on the very pages of the Schreber case, as already noted by Strachey, that a major theoretical revision is taking shape: the revolution called ego psychology is blowing in the wind. It was Freud himself who showed the first cracks in the edifice of the libido theory." And regarding

the crucial role played by pressures exerted by Jung in this revolution, Lothane notes that in Jung's 1913 monograph, *The Theory of Psychoanalysis*, Jung continued the "challenge to Freud's libido theory and his formulations of Schreber. In the second section of his 1912 work ["Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido"], Jung had quoted an entire passage from the section 'The Mechanism of Paranoia' in Freud's essay on Schreber, to argue that Freud had himself broadened the concept of libido to mean interest in general . . . a harbinger of ego psychology" (*In Defense of Schreber*, 339, 346).

72. Lifton, "The Image of 'The End of the World,'" 163.

73. Žižek has compared Schreber's theology with that of Alfred Hitchcock. Apropos of the use of a "God's-view" perspective in *Psycho*, Žižek writes that "Hitchcock's explanation according to which the function of 'God's view' was to keep us, viewers, in ignorance . . . without arousing suspicion that the director is trying to hide something from us . . . imposes an unexpected yet unavoidable conclusion: if we are kept in ignorance by assuming God's view, then *a certain radical ignorance must pertain to the status of God Himself*, who clearly comes to epitomize a blind run of the symbolic machine. Hitchcock's God goes His own way, indifferent to our petty human affairs—-more precisely, He is *totally unable to understand us, living humans*, since His realm is that of the dead (i.e., since symbol is the murder of thing). On that account, he is like God from the memoirs of Daniel Paul Schreber." Žižek goes on to define Schreber's Order of the World as "the symbolic order which mortifies the living body and evacuates from it the substance of Enjoyment. That is to say, God as Name-of-the-Father, reduced to a figure of symbolic authority, is 'dead' (also) in the sense that *He does not know anything about enjoyment*, about life-substance: the symbolic order (the big Other) and enjoyment are radically incompatible" ("'In His Bold Gaze My Ruin Is Writ Large,'" in *Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Lacan But Were Afraid to Ask Hitchcock*, ed. Slavoj Žižek, [London: Verso, 1992], 250).

74. Melanie Klein's remarks on the Schreber case also focus on the role of splitting in the *Memoirs*. See the appendix to "Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms," in *The Selected Melanie Klein*, ed. Juliet Mitchell (New York: Free Press, 1986), 198–200. In contrast to Klein, I am suggesting that it is the father figure that splits.

CHAPTER TWO
THE FATHER WHO KNEW TOO MUCH

1. For a complete bibliography of Moritz Schreber's works addressing questions of orthopedics, pediatrics, physical education, and the importance of body culture for the health of the nation, see Zvi Lothane, *In Defense of Schreber: Soul Murder and Psychiatry* (Hillsdale, N.J.: Analytic Press, 1992), 513–15.

2. William Niederland, *The Schreber Case: Psychoanalytic Profile of a Paranoid Personality* (Hillsdale, N.J. Analytic Press, 1984), xvi; my emphasis.

3. Ibid., 72, 82, 77–78, 94, 99. Niederland reserves special scorn for Mortiz Schreber's ostensible participation in the campaign against masturbation, which became so virulent in the nineteenth century: "To the analytically

trained observer, it is obvious that Dr. Schreber's energetic crusade was really directed against masturbation and other 'dangerous, hidden aberrations,' which in his thinking led to physical and mental 'softness' in children. Indeed, at the time, this belief caused virtually all physicians and parents to dread masturbatory practices in their offspring. An arsenal of anti-masturbatory devices was therefore invented and applied not only by Dr. Schreber in Germany but also by others in various countries. That Dr. Schreber's use of violent, sadistically tinged methods in this fight prevented at least one of his children from establishing an identity for himself, particularly a sexual identity, is recorded throughout the *Memoirs*" (57). Lothane has criticized Niederland on this point, noting that Moritz Schreber's writings say nothing about antimasturbatory devices (see Lothane, *In Defense of Schreber*, 190).

4. Niederland, *The Schreber Case*, 74, 82.

5. See Freud, in *SE* 17:219–56.

6. With regard to the structural relation between Hoffmann's Coppelius and Moritz Schreber, one will recall that in Hoffmann's story, Coppelius's actions toward Nathanael are characterized in part as a sort of fantastic "orthopedic" intervention. Once discovered by Nathanael, Coppelius yields to the father's entreaties to spare the boy's eyes. "'Let the child keep his eyes and do his share of the world's weeping,' Coppelius shrieked with a shrill laugh, 'but now we must observe the mechanism of the hands and feet.' He thereupon seized me so violently that my joints cracked, unscrewed my hands and feet, then put them back, now this way, then another way" (*Tales of E. T. A. Hoffmann*, trans. Leonard J. Kent and Elizabeth C. Knight [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969], 98).

7. Niederland mistakenly dates the trauma in 1858 or 1859. As C. H. Schildbach, Moritz Schreber's friend and associate, put it in a biographical supplement to the obituary he wrote in 1862: "The brain congestions that filled the last ten years of life with bitterness, were supposedly due to an external wound, caused by a heavy object that fell on his head, half a year prior to the beginning of the illness" (cited in Lothane, *In Defense of Schreber*, 127). Lothane notes that "Although it resulted in a curtailment of his professional, familial, and social activities, the illness ushered in the most prolific period of writing on the subject of education" (127).

8. "Der Vater . . . litt an Zwangsvorstellungen mit Mordtrieb" (cited in appendix to Schreber, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, 343; cf. Niederland, *The Schreber Case*, 57–58).

9. This is Lothane's translation of *Geständniss eines wahnsinnig Gewesenen* (Lothane cites the entire text in his translation). Lothane rejects Niederland's more obvious translation—"Confessions of One Who Had Been Insane"—because of the clinical facts of the case: "the patient in the story was neither diagnosed as psychotic nor committed to an asylum; the clinical picture was predominantly melancholia, with an admixture of tormenting idées fixes, that is, obsessive-compulsive behaviour in the form of ruminations and horrific temptations, not delusions. . . . The patient had insight concerning the absurdity of his ruminations but fluctuated in his capacity to oppose them or master them or extinguish them completely" (*In Defense of Schreber*, 139).

10. For an interesting critique of Niederland, see Han Israëls, *Schreber: Father and Son* (New York: International Universities Press, 1989). Israëls focuses on Niederland's considerable influence anxiety vis-à-vis Freud, which prevents Niederland from appreciating the extent of his own critical distance from Freud's purely intrapsychic reading of Schreber. Morton Schatzman's contribution to the debates on Moritz Schreber's role, *Soul Murder*, is largely a radicalization and popularization of Niederland's work. Schatzman makes the important observation that Moritz Schreber's program of child rearing was organized around techniques that would secure, through *repetition*, the transmutation of (parental) *heteronomy* into (the child's) *autonomy*. I will return to these techniques later in this chapter.

11. Lothane, *In Defense of Schreber*, 205. Lothane cites one of Flechsig's supporters as claiming: "The psychiatrists know nothing about the psyche—at least Flechsig knew something about the brain!" (ibid., 242). Among Flechsig's competitors for the job were August Forel, who would become the director of the Burghölzli clinic in Zürich, and Bernhard von Gudden, Forel's teacher in Munich. Von Gudden became famous by drowning with his patient, King Ludwig II of Bavaria, in Lake Starnberg in 1886. As noted earlier, Flechsig's important first discovery of the sequential process by which nerve fibers acquired a myelin sheath was made in 1872 during the dissection of the brain of a five-week old boy with the name Martin Luther. In his autobiography, *Meine myelogenetische Hirnlehre mit biographischer Einleitung* (Berlin: Springer, 1927), Flechsig endows this infant Luther with the status of a great reformer in the field of neuroscience. The surgical procedure used by Flechsig came to be referred to, by Charcot and others, as the "Coup de Flechsig."

12. Paul Emil Flechsig, *Die körperlichen Grundlagen der Geistesstörungen* (The physical bases of mental disturbances, inaugural lecture at the Leipzig University, March 4, 1882), cited in Martin Stingelin, "Die Seele als Funktion des Körpers. Zur Seelenpolitik der Leipziger Universitätspsychiatrie unter Paul Emil Flechsig," in *Diskursanalysen 2. Institution Universität*, ed. Friedrich A. Kittler, Manfred Schneider and Samuel Weber (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1990), 105.

13. Paul Flechsig, *Gehirn und Seele* (Leipzig: Veit & Comp., 1896), 24. Here is Lothane's commentary on this passage: "In the association centers the impressions of the senses, the images of memory, and imagination were transformed into reason and understanding. Thus, a thoroughgoing and exact parallelism was postulated between the functioning of the brain and the functioning of the mind. The very term *association centers* harks back to the notion of association of ideas. The faculties of the psychologists and the metaphors of the metaphysicians have been neatly and concretely converted into myelinated fibers. . . . Correspondingly, disease in the sensory and association centers, that is, the functions of sense perception and judgment, leads to disorders of identity, and a variety of illusions, hallucinations, and delusions. . . . The point in all this is not, of course, to deny the fact that lesions in the brain cortex will cause disturbances in performance: this is a basic clinical fact; the correlation of structure and function is also a fact, although some localizations are more controversial than the effects of lesions. The point here is that Flechsig converted the facts

concerning lesions and localizations into an overriding philosophy that applied to *all* disorders of behavior and performance, including those he himself classified as functional, that is, disorders in which no focal, that is, specific, lesion could be demonstrated" (*In Defense of Schreber*, 216).

14. "Man is capable of entertaining the idea of the I, and in this he is *infinitely* above all the creatures upon the earth. . . . This I-ness . . . this faculty (that is, to think) is reason . . . the brain part to which the 'I'-idea is attached is *the one most developed in man* . . . one cannot imagine a more perfect agreement than that between introspective observation and biology. . . . I must say that of all my discoveries none has given me more joy than this apotheosis of our Kant . . . the frontal lobe is the seat of logic and the totality of all ideas" (cited in Lothane, *In Defense of Schreber*, 229).

15. Niederland, who otherwise placed his emphasis on the pathogenic role of Moritz Schreber, was the first to suggest this connection. See *The Schreber Case*, 104.

16. See, for example, Friedrich Kittler, *Discourse Networks. 1800/1900*, trans. Michael Metteer and Chris Cullens (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1990), especially 295–98. Kittler cites Flechsig's paper on the organic bases of mental illness (1882) in which the latter notes that the chemical and mechanical brain anomalies responsible for mental illness "can be detected in *the living* only through more or less composite inferences" (cited in Kittler, 295). Lothane has noted that in his admission policies, which we might call, with Schreber, his "Soul politics," Flechsig showed a special preference for sufferers from paresis, since such cases were most easily explained in terms of somatic anomalies. Once patients were admitted, Flechsig's therapeutic procedures included, as already noted, surgical interventions, but also a variety of less aggressive procedures: bed rest, tepid baths, moderate use of physical restraints, narcotic drugs. Apropos of the use of drugs, Lothane describes Flechsig's preferred treatment of epilepsy with opium and bromides as a kind of "chemical shock, which helped some patients but caused death in others." He concludes: "The striking fact in all this is that there is neither awareness nor interest on the part of Flechsig in anything remotely related to psychotherapy, that is, treatment of mental disorders by psychological means. In this regard Flechsig remained an organicist to the very end" (Lothane, *In Defense of Schreber*, 212–13).

17. Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, 296–97.

18. Ibid., 297 (I have changed the translation, which unfortunately negated the meaning of Kittler's sentence).

19. Following Kittler's lead, Martin Stingelin has put together an impressive concordance of passages from Schreber's *Memoirs* and Flechsig's monograph, "Brain and Soul," suggesting that Schreber's text could be read as kind of mad commentary on an already mad, death-driven science. See Stingelin, "Paul Emil Flechsig. Die Berechnung der menschlichen Seele," in *Wunderblock. Eine Geschichte der modernen Seele*, ed. J. Clair, C. Pichler, and W. Pichler (Vienna: Löcker, 1989), 297–307. For an intriguing novelistic treatment of the Flechsig-Schreber relation and the Schreber material more generally, see Roberto Calasso's *L'impuro folle* (Milan: Adelphi, 1974; the novel has been translated into French and German).

20. The German title of Kittler's study—*Aufschreibesysteme*—is an allusion to this Schreberism.

21. Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, 298. To support his contention that Schreber's "neurotheological" notation system is linked to new technologies of writing and communication, Kittler refers to a passage from one of the postscripts to the *Memoirs* in which Schreber compares the linguistic production of the divine rays with telephones: "It is presumably a phenomenon like telephoning; the filaments of rays spun out towards my head act like telephone wires; the weak sound . . . coming from an apparently vast distance is received *only by me* in the same way as telephonic communication can only be heard by a person who is on the telephone" (229). In this context, one should consider Avital Ronell's work on the relations between technology, psychopathology, and philosophy in *The Telephone Book: Technology, Schizophrenia, Electric Speech* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989).

22. In the Schreber essay Freud admits, as he does in a number of other writings, that analytic interpretation continues to be hampered by the lack of a well-grounded theory of the drives or instincts: "we have nothing of the kind at our disposal." He adds that "We regard instinct as being the concept on the frontier-line between the somatic and the mental, and see in it the psychical representative of organic forces" (*SE* 12:74). Freud's major breakthrough apropos of the drives will come with the theorization of repetition compulsion, a phenomenon that quite clearly dominates Schreber's universe.

23. The novels and short prose texts of Robert Walser are largely populated by figures whose proper domain is this sublime subaltern realm, which no doubt accounts for their strong appeal to a writer like Kafka.

24. In chapter 18 of the *Memoirs*, Schreber offers several examples of the productive side of compulsive thinking, i.e., how this sort of mental torture has forced him to assume a philosophical frame of mind, to contemplate the reasons for things being what and how they are. The main example he offers returns us to Schreber's preoccupation with names and titles: "I meet a person I know by the name of Schneider. Seeing him the thought automatically arises 'This man's name is Schneider' or 'This is Mr. Schneider.' With it 'But why' or 'Why because' also resounds in my nerves. In ordinary human contact the answer would probably be: 'Why! What a silly question, the man's name is simply Schneider.' But my nerves were unable or almost unable to behave like this. Their peace is disturbed once the question is put why this man should be Mr. Schneider or why he is called Mr. Schneider. This very peculiar question 'why' occupies my nerves automatically—particularly if the question is repeated several times—until their thinking is diverted in another direction. My nerves perhaps answer first: Well, the man's name is Schneider because his father was also called Schneider. But this trivial answer does not really pacify my nerves. Another chain of thought starts about why giving names was introduced at all among people, its various forms among different peoples at different times, and the various circumstances . . . which gave rise to them. Thus an extremely simple observation under the pressure of compulsive thinking becomes the starting point of a very considerable mental task, usually not without bearing fruit" (180). The potential for despair in the face of such mental tasks calls to

mind Kant's famous formulation of the hopelessness generated by the antinomies of pure reason: the "*euthanasia* of reason." Schreber's example of tracing a lineage across generations in search of an unconditioned origin of the chain is also one of Kant's examples of a mathematical antinomy. See *The Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), 452–53 [B541]). Schreber's reflections on Mr. Schneider might also have been inspired by an unconscious identification with Martin Luther, the possibility of which, mediated by the insulting nomination "Luder," was addressed earlier. In a *Tischgespräch* or table talk from 1539, Luther cites the case of a man named *Schneider* who changed his name to *Schnitter* (harvester or reaper) because he wanted his name to have agricultural connotations (cited in Bernd Moeller and Karl Stackmann, "Luder—Luther—Eleutherius. Erwägungen zu Luthers Namen," *Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Philologisch-Historische Klasse* 11 [1981]: 184–85). See, finally, Samuel Weber's Lacanian intepretation of this passage in his introductory essay on Schreber in the English edition of the *Memoirs*.

25. The following discussion of forensic psychiatry is indebted to Lothane's work. See *In Defense of Schreber*, especially chaps. 5 and 6.

26. Cited in ibid., 222–23.

27. Lothane discusses at length the case of Johann Andreas Rodig, a Leipzig shoemaker and contemporary of Schreber's who fought his incompetency ruling up to the very court in which Schreber had been a judge. In one of the two pamphelets Rodig published, *Without Rights in a Constitutional State: A Faithful Representation of the Legal Injustices and Errors by a Victim Thereof J.A.R. or How to Declare Someone Crazy Made Easy as ABC* (1897), he expressly thanks Flechsig for his empathic treatment: "Upon his return to Leipzig, Herr Professor Flechsig and Herr Dr. Teuscher continued to treat me for my nerves, and I have to thank these gentlemen for still having my wits with me" (cited in Lothane, *In Defense of Schreber*, 234).

28. Lothane suggests that Flechsig's initial diagnosis of Schreber—"sleeplessness"—might have been designed to protect his patient from the consequences of the stigmatization of the diagnosis "psychosis." Lothane offers a number of possible motivations for Flechsig's ultimate abandonment of Schreber including the rather sobering thought that a "patient who gets worse does not thereby endear himself to his doctor." Particularly traumatizing for Schreber must have been the alliance formed between his wife, Sabine, and Flechsig. As Lothane notes, "In Sabine, Flechsig had an ally with whom he could share his frustration over this difficult patient; moreover, as a patient in her own right, she proved herself to be responsive to Flechsig's therapeutic interventions, quite unlike the intractable husband." Lothane notes that Schreber had to some extent forced his wife's hand by denying her direct access to his salary while he was hospitalized. "Sabine was driven to consider her options, and among those options the determination of incompetency naturally loomed largest. The option would allow her to receive the funds she needed to maintain herself and the household without any further need for continuing negotiations with her difficult, manifestly ill husband, who was at that time finding fresh avenues for distancing himself and for violating the terms of their hitherto

shared sensibility. Necessarily, Sabine would have discussed the issue of incompetency with Flechsig, just as he would have discussed with her his plan to have Schreber transferred" (Lothane, *In Defense of Schreber*, 237–38). Sabine Schreber's request for a temporary incompetency ruling was granted in November 1894 after Schreber had already been transferred to Sonnenstein; a permanent incompetency ruling was issued the following year.

29. Lothane notes that Weber "made no original contribution to clinical psychiatry. However, as dean of the Saxon institutional psychiatrists, he achieved fame as a forensic expert whose opinion was frequently sought by the courts. His interests remained limited to psychiatric paradigms hardened into habit and dogma and to the interface between psychiatry and law. He also acted for the preservation of the power of the psychiatrist vis-à-vis other professionals, physicians and lawyers" (ibid., 271).

30. Cited in Schreber, *Memoirs*, 282–83. Schreber published the three reports submitted by Guido Weber to the County, District, and Supreme Courts, respectively, in the appendixes to the *Memoirs*.

31. Given the fact that Schreber had to struggle so long and so hard with his second psychiatrist, Guido Weber, one wonders why Weber never figures in any important way in the "plot" of the *Memoirs*. Lothane's speculations on this matter are persuasive: "It is . . . another striking fact that Schreber never accused Weber of being his persecutor, even as he never stopped railing at Flechsig. The paradox can be read of course as evidence for the fantastic nature of the charges against Flechsig, but it might be more illuminating to consider the difference in terms of the different relationships the two physicians established with Schreber. Confronting a frank, unequivocal adversary in the person of Weber, Schreber found a way to mobilize his resources and deal with the man both face to face and in the courts. But faced with Flechsig, who presented himself in the guise of medical rescuer and protector only to ultimately betray Schreber's interests, Schreber reacted quite differently" (*In Defense of Schreber*, 295–96).

32. Because of the rather striking affinities between Foucault's analyses of this will to knowledge and the rhetoric of Schreber's delusions, I will be quoting Foucault at some length. Indeed, Foucault's language is at times so thoroughly Schreberian that one is tempted to apply Freud's ironic statement at the conclusion of his study of Schreber to Foucault's work on institutions and power: "It remains for the future to decide whether there is more delusion in my theory than I should like to admit, or whether there is more truth in Schreber's delusion than other people are as yet prepared to believe" (*SE* 12:79).

33. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality. Volume 1: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1990). Further references will be made parenthetically in the text.

34. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1977), 194. Further references will be made parenthetically in the text.

35. Louis Sass has appropriated Foucault's notion of the panoptical regime to characterize Schreber's particular form of hyperconsciousness. He interprets Schreber's "rays of God" not as libidinal cathexes but rather as "symbolic rep-

resentations of aspects of Schreber's own consciousness, a consciousness both rent and joined by an inner panopticism. Whereas the nerves represent the part of the mind that is observed—self-as-object—the rays represent the part of the mind that *does* the observing—self-as-subject. Further, the God who lies behind the rays (for rays . . . are the nerves of God) corresponds to that invisible, potentially omniscient, only half-internalized Other who is the source and grounding of Schreber's particular kind of introversion" (*Madness and Modernism. Insanity in the Light of Modern Art, Literature, and Thought* [New York: Basic Books, 1992], 253–54). Sass has pursued his primarily phenomenological account of Schreber's delusions as a product of an internalized panopticism in his *The Paradoxes of Delusion: Wittgenstein, Schreber, and the Schizophrenic Mind* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1994). Here the impasses of inner panopticism are reinterpreted through Wittgenstein's analysis of metaphysical solipsism.

36. One will recall that in 1878–79, while working for the Reichsjustizamt in Berlin, Schreber was involved in the early phases of the codification of German laws that resulted, in 1900, in the Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch or Civil Code of the empire. In the long and heated debates and controversies about codification, the National Liberal Party was among the staunchest promoters of a legal philosophy emphasizing the rights (of contract and property) of autonomous legal subjects.

37. "The body of the king, with its strange material and physical presence, with the force that he himself deploys or transmits to some few others, is at the opposite extreme of this new physics of power represented by panopticism; the domain of panopticism is, on the contrary, that whole lower region, that region of irregular bodies, with their details, their multiple movements, their heterogeneous forces, their spatial relations; what are required are mechanisms that analyse distributions, gaps, series, combinations, and which use instruments that render visible, record, differentiate and compare: a physics of a relational and multiple power, which has its maximum intensity not in the person of the king, but in the bodies that can be individualized by these relations" (*Discipline*, 208).

38. One need only recall Schreber's insistence that the cultivation of voluptuousness "has been forced on me through God having placed Himself into a relationship with me which is contrary to the Order of the World" (209).

39. Both Schreber and Foucault locate the beginnings of this agonistic history in the eighteenth century: "Particularly from the eighteenth century onward, Western societies created and deployed a new apparatus which was superimposed on the previous one, and which, without completely supplanting the latter, helped to reduce its importance. I am speaking of the *deployment of sexuality*: like the *deployment of alliance*, it connects up with the circuit of sexual partners, but in a completely different way. The two systems can be contrasted term by term. The deployment of alliance is built around a system of rules defining the permitted and the forbidden, the licit and the illicit, whereas the deployment of sexuality operates according to mobile, polymorphous, and contingent techniques of power. The deployment of alliance has as one of its chief objectives to reproduce the interplay of relations and maintain the law that governs them; the deployment of sexuality, on the other hand, engenders

a continual extension of areas and forms of control. For the first, what is pertinent is the link between partners and definite statutes; the second is concerned with the sensations of the body, the quality of pleasures, and the nature of impressions, however tenuous or imperceptible these may be. Lastly, if the deployment of alliance is firmly tied to the economy due to the role it can play in the transmission or circulation of wealth, the deployment of sexuality is linked to the economy through numerous and subtle relays, the main one of which, however, is the body—the body that produces and consumes. In a word, the deployment of alliance is attuned to a homeostasis of the social body, which it has the function of maintaining; whence its privileged link with the law; whence too the fact that the important phase for it is 'reproduction.' The deployment of sexuality has its reason for being, not in reproducing itsef, but in proliferating, innovating, annexing, creating, and penetrating bodies in an increasingly detailed way, and in controlling populations in an increasingly comprehensive way" (*History*, 106–7). One will recall that at the beginning of the second chapter of the *Memoirs*, Schreber writes that the "leading role in the genesis of this development [i.e., the rent in the miraculous structure of the world], the first beginnings of which go back perhaps as far as the eighteenth century, were played on the one hand by the names of Flechsig and Schreber (probably not specifying any individual members of these families), and on the other by the concept of *soul murder*" (54).

40. *Kallipädie oder Erziehung zur Schönheit* (Leipzig: Friedrich Fleischer, 1858). Further references will be made parenthetically in the text. Lothane translates the full title of the book as *Callipedia, or Education towards Beauty by Means of the Natural and Even Promotion of Normal Body Growth, Life-Sustaining Health and Spiritual Cultivation and in Particular through the Optimal Use of Special Educational Aids: For Parents, Educators, and Teachers*.

41. Lothane situates Moritz Schreber in a lineage of Kantian and post-Kantian ethics, "dietetics," and psychiatry whose key representatives include Christoph Wilhelm Hufeland, Philipp Carl Hartmann, and J.C.A. Heinroth. (See *In Defense of Schreber*, 147–64.) In his most successful book, *Medical Indoor Gymnastics*, Moritz Schreber cites Horace's famous dictum, *sapere aude!* (Dare to be wise) as the central commandment of his "ethical life-philosophy" (*Ärztliche Zimmergymnastik* [Leipzig: Friedrich Fleischer, 1899], 32). That dictum had, of course, already been appropriated by Kant in 1784 in his famous response to the question, "What Is Enlightenment?" published in the *Berlinische Monatsschrift*.

42. For Moritz Schreber, habituation, or more accurately, the gradual naturalization of "good" habits through regulated repetition, is the key to proper development in both physical and mental realms. His recommended procedure for the correction of a snub-nose—repeated manual manipulation—closely parallels his recommendations for more spiritual forms of "corrections" (see *Kallipädie*, 110).

43. At one point in the *Memoirs*, Schreber actually characterizes Flechsig's malevolent influence as a bulky mass that can't be metabolized: "about that time I had Professor Flechsig's soul and most probably his *whole* soul temporarily in my body. It was a fairly bulky ball or bundle which I can perhaps best

compare with a corresponding volume of wadding or cobweb, which had been thrown into my belly by way of miracle. . . . In view of its size it would in any case probably have been impossible to retain this soul in my belly, *to digest it so to speak*" (91–92; my emphasis).

44. As indicated earlier, the most famous literary example of such a literalization is the writing/punishing machine in Kafka's "In the Penal Colony."

45. Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen's essay on the "The Oedipus Problem in Freud and Lacan" (*Critical Inquiry* 20 [Winter 1994]: 267–82) echoes in many ways Foucault's critique of psychoanalysis. Borch-Jacobsen's language suggests that the modern dissolution of what Foucault refers to as "deployment of alliance" almost necessarily produces men like Schreber: "What I really want to do is recall what Lacan himself emphasized in *Family Complexes*; that is, the '*complex* kinship structures' that define modern societies are accompanied by a 'deficiency' and a 'narcissistic bastardization' of the paternal figure. So how is it possible to prevent the identification with the symbolic father-phallus from being confounded with the rivalrous and homosexualizing imaginary father-phallus? How is it possible to prevent that outcome *in fact*? For it does absolutely no good whatsoever to invoke the *rightful* difference between the two identifications, since that difference, far from being a fundamental, a priori structure of every society, turns out actually to be bound solely to the '*elementary* structures of kinship.' Our societies, on the other hand, are defined by a general crisis of symbolic identifications—'deficiency' of the paternal function, 'foreclosure of the name-of-the-father,' perpetual questioning of the symbolic Law and pact, confusion of lineage and general competition of generations, battle of the sexes, and loss of family landmarks. . . . Let us not be fooled by Lacan's invocation of the symbolic Law: What he described as an a priori law of human desire is nothing but a convenient hypothesis of the 'elementary structures of kinship' in Lévi-Strauss's sense, and it cannot be applied to modern societies, where it simply does not apply *as a law*. . . . How is it possible to separate good from bad oedipal identification if the law that guarantees that difference is slowly being eroded in our societies?" (282). It is in this context that Jürgen Habermas's efforts, begun in the 1970s, to flesh out paradigms of "post-conventional" moral education, to adjust Enlightenment paradigms of subject formation to the complex conditions of industrial and postindustrial societies, again become interesting. See, for example, the two chapters on "Identity" in *Zur Rekonstruktion des Historischen Materialismus* (Frankfurt: Surhkamp, 1976).

46. Foucault's critique of psychoanalysis's fixation on oedipal relations is, of course, unambivalently prefigured in Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*, a work which makes some interesting use of Schreber as a resource of anti-oedipal productivity.

47. Kittler, *Discourse*, 301–2. What Kittler apparently did not know was that there may have been a more direct connection between Schreber's mimesis of the drive dimension of signification and the practices of the Zurich Dadaists. One of the first references to Schreber in the psychiatric literature appears in an essay by Otto Gross, "Über Bewusstseinszerfall" (On the disintegration of consciousness), published in 1904 (*Monatsschrift für Psychiatrie und Neurologie* 15,

no. 1: 45–51; I am grateful to Zvi Lothane for drawing my attention to this essay), the year, according to Ernest Jones, of Gross's first meeting with Freud. Gross, a remarkable figure in his own right and one whose life and thought exhibit certain parallels with those of Schreber, was a crucial mediator of psychoanalytic thought for the circle of artists, musicians, dancers, and writers who habituated the famous artists' colony in Ascona in the Tessine Alps, among them the Zurich Dadaists. Certainly one of the central preoccupations of members of this alternative community was the elaboration of a new physical culture, indeed a kind of *countercultural body* that could be viewed as an alternative to the body whose cultivation was the object of Moritz Schreber's life work. For a discussion of Gross, including interesting comparisons with the Schreber case, see Jacques Le Rider, *Modernity and Crises of Identity: Culture and Society in Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*, trans. Rosemary Morris (New York: Continuum, 1993). There Le Rider remarks, for example, that "Otto Gross's vision of the 'revolution of matriarchy' are strongly reminiscent of Schreber. In his last work, 'Three Studies of Mental Conflict,' Gross talks of the inner wealth of bisexuality in men and says that men should foster their latent homosexuality, rediscover and cultivate the buried feminine in themselves. We might say that Gross's theories are a 'ratiocinated' form of the message contained in the madness of Dr. Schreber" (137). See also Martin Green's study of the Ascona community, *The Mountain of Truth: The Counterculture Begins: Ascona, 1900–1920* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1986), as well as Peter Wollen's historical study of the countercultural body, "Tales of Total Art and Dreams of the Total Museum," in *Visual Display: Culture beyond Appearances*, ed. Peter Wollen and Lynne Cooke (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995), 155–77.

48. Compare Žižek's reading of a scene of mad mimesis from Terry Gilliam's film *Brazil*; the scene portrays a mode of defense nearly identical with Schreber's strategy of circumventing the torture of compulsive thinking: "Throughout the film, it seems that the idiotic, intrusive rhythm of 'Brazil' serves as a support for totalitarian enjoyment, i.e., that it condenses the fantasy frame of the 'crazy' totalitarian social order that the film depicts. But at the very end, when his resistance is apparently broken by the savage torture to which he has been subjected, the hero escapes his torturers by beginning to whistle 'Brazil!' Although functioning as a support for the totalitarian order, fantasy is then at the same time the leftover of the real that enables us to 'pull ourselves out,' to preserve a kind of distance from the socio-symbolic network. When we become crazed in our obsession with idiotic enjoyment, even totalitarian manipulation cannot reach us" (*Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture* [Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991], 128).

49. For a study of the surrealists' preoccupation with drive, repetition compulsion, and a phantasmatic femininity, see Hal Foster's *Compulsive Beauty* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993). There Foster emphasizes that women were seen or used within the historical avant-gardes to figure not only anxieties about machines and mechanization but also dread pertaining to the socioeconomic forces of *commodification*. Both series of anxieties could obviously meet in the figure of the prostitute, who no doubt also belongs within the semantic field of the word *Luder*.

50. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

51. Butler's arguments are anticipated by Bourdieu's remarks on the rites of institution: "How is what I would call the 'magical' consecration of a difference achieved, and what are its technical effects? Does the fact of socially instituting, through an act of *constitution*, a pre-existing difference—like the one separating the sexes—have only symbolic effects, in the sense that we give to this term when we speak of the symbolic gift, in other words, no effects at all?" His answer to these questions is very much in the spirit of Butler's work: "There is a Latin expression that means 'you're teaching fish to swim.' That is exactly what the ritual of institution does. It says: this man is a man—implying that he is a real man, which is not always immediately obvious. . . . To institute, in this case, is to consecrate, that is, to sanction and sanctify a particular state of things. . . . An *investiture* (of a knight, Deputy, President of the Republic, etc.) consists of sanctioning and sanctifying a difference (pre-existent or not) by making it *known* and *recognized*; it consists of making it exist as a social difference" (Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991], 119). Butler's important point is related to the one stressed by Derrida in his reading of Benjamin, namely that symbolic mandates, including those pertaining to gender identities, do not accomplish their performative magic once and for all. Rather they function as *mandates for being* that demand a *repetitive* labor of culturally coded performances.

52. Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 145.

53. *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 9.

54. Ibid., 188.

55. November 1895 was no doubt an overdetermined period for Schreber. Moritz Schreber died at the age of fifty-three on November 10, 1861. Schreber turned fifty-three in July of 1895.

56. That Schreber experiences masculinity as an insupportable habitus or even as a kind of masquerade is underlined by other formulations. He notes, for example, that "a distinction between masculine and feminine with respect to articles of clothing (the 'armamentarium' [*Rüstzeug*] as it was called in the basic language) is almost self-evident; boots appeared to the souls an especial symbol characteristic of manliness. To the souls, 'to take off boots' meant much the same as unmanning" (142).

57. As noted earlier, Schreber's language reiterates his association of femininity and abjection, an association canonized, as it were, by the title *Luder*. The sensuous pleasure he receives as compensation is characterized, namely, as a bit of surplus enjoyment that "falls off"—*abfällt*—in the manner of a *waste product*.

58. Schreber's awareness of this lack is expressed in countless ways. He notes, for example, that God is subject to "states of anxiety" (196), which is connected to a certain helplessness on God's part. In the later stages of his illness, Schreber notes that "God appears in almost everything that happens to me ridiculous or even childish. I am consequently often forced in self-defence

to *mock God* with a loud voice" (238). According to Schreber's medical reports, he would mock God with pronouncements such as: "The sun is a whore!" and "God is a whore!" (cited by Franz Baumayer in appendix to *Denkwürdigkeiten*, 345). Finally, Schreber notes that one of the phrases in the basic language used to signify the crisis in the Order of the World was, "O damn, it is extremely hard to say that God allows himself to be f . . . . .'" (159). Louise Kaplan has stressed that for Schreber the cultivation of feminine strivings by way of transvestitism—his "perverse strategy"—allows him to gain a minimal distance from a cruel and punishing superegoic agency: "A perversion is a strategy for placating God, lawgiving father, protecting mother, or conscience, that inner voice of authority that represents the power of the gods." She goes on to note the counterintuitive, paradoxical nature of the perverse strategy: "It is fairly easy to understand that a perversion provides a way to express all variety of forbidden and shameful desires and that it should have the power to bring relief to a tormented soul. What is much harder to appreciate is *that a perversion, as act that seems so directly to violate the laws of conscience, could also serve the function of appeasing, even pleasing, one's conscience"* (my emphasis). Her explanation of this paradox is that the pervert is ultimately working not for his own, but rather for another's enjoyment: "Judge Schreber figured out that his most sacred duty was to satisfy God's need for constant sexual enjoyment. If he could satisfy God in this way, he could rest assured that God would never abandon him or mutilate his body." The pervert's attempt to become the instrument of the other's enjoyment ultimately attests to the other's lack: "When he arrived at a state of feminine voluptuousness, Schreber could give to God every proof of *His* virility. . . . With madness, the almighty is inflicting on one's body and soul the full extent of his wrath. And the soul is constantly tormented with not being able to figure out what He wants. With perversion the person has found the ecstasy He desires" (Louise J. Kaplan, *Female Perversions: The Temptations of Emma Bovary* [New York: Doubleday, 1991], 481–83). I would only add to these astute remarks that Schreber's perversion lacks the dimension of fetishistic disavowal suggested by some of Kaplan's formulations.

59. For this reason I think that Canetti's reading of Schreber as the prototype of the totalitarian leader is deeply flawed.

CHAPTER THREE
SCHREBER'S JEWISH QUESTION

1. See Gordon A. Craig, *Germany: 1866–1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 75.

2. Apropos of the chosenness of the Germans, Schreber had already noted in conjunction with his claim that God's "basic language" consisted of a "somewhat antiquated but nevertheless powerful German" (50), that "the Germans were in modern times (possibly since the Reformation, perhaps ever since the migration of nations) *God's chosen people* whose language God preferred to use. In this sense God's chosen peoples in history—as the most moral at a given time—were in order the old Jews, the old Persians . . . the 'Greco-Romans' (perhaps in ancient Greece and Rome, perhaps also as the 'Franks' at

the time of the Crusades) and lastly the Germans" (50). In the context framed by these passages, an identification with Martin Luther/*Luder* certainly becomes more plausible.

3. Speaking of Treitschke's "superstitious abhorrence of Rome," Craig notes that the former "always saw the Church of Rome as a vampire draining the vital energies of *Deutschtum*" (Craig, *Germany*, 70–71).

4. The shift of focus from Jesuits to Jews, and in particular to the legendary figure of the Eternal or Wandering Jew, was perhaps in part mediated by the popularity of Eugène Sue's novel *Le juif errant* (1844–45) in which the Wandering Jew actually helps to uncover a Jesuit conspiracy. Han Israëls has noted that a play based on Sue's novel premiered in Leipzig in 1845.

5. William Niederland, *The Schreber Case: Psychoanalytic Profile of a Paranoid Personality* (Hillsdale, N.J.: Analytic Press, 1984), 88. In his effort to establish a parallel with Pasha, Niederland dates Moritz Schreber's head injury incorrectly.

6. Zvi Lothane, *In Defense of Schreber: Soul Murder and Psychiatry* (Hillsdale, N.J.: Analytic Press, 1992), 101, 235. Lothane notes that the Paasch case became important to the antipsychiatry movement of the late 1890s and that the case was cited as an example of psychiatric abuse in Reichstag debates on mental hygiene laws during the 1897 session.

7. Zvi Lothane, "In Defense of Schreber: Postscript 1993," unpublished paper. I am grateful to Zvi Lothane for making this paper available to me. There is, of course, a long history of Christian appropriations of Jewish mystical doctrine.

8. Ibid., 26.

9. Ibid., 25–26. In his book, Lothane notes the two other possible referents of this allusion. The first, L. O. Darkschewitsch, was a Russian pupil of Flechsig's who became a close friend of Freud's and even coauthored a paper with him in 1886. Another possible referent was the Polish-Jewish neurologist Albert Adamkiewicz who opposed Flechsig's theories of myelogenesis in scientific journals. See Lothane, *In Defense of Schreber*, 247.

10. Sander L. Gilman, *Freud, Race, and Gender* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993). Further references will be made parenthetically in the text.

11. In Weininger's *Sex and Character*, Ariman figures as the evil principle opposed to true genius (the prerogative of Aryan males). See *Geschlecht und Charakter. Eine prinzipielle Untersuchung* (Munich: Matthes & Seitz, 1980), 236.

12. Although Schreber was, during his first stay at Flechsig's clinic, treated with potassium iodide, a drug prescribed for syphilis, there were, as Lothane notes, no traces of the disease found at Schreber's autopsy. Lothane's assessment of the role of syphilophobia in Schreber's mental life makes no mention of a Jewish dimension of this piece of Schreber's decaying universe. He notes, however, that Schreber's description of the plague affecting his nerves "does not apply to either leprosy or bubonic plauge, because central nervous system disease is not a classical manifestation of either disease. It does . . . apply to syphilis, especially the mental disorders of tertiary syphilis, presumably the dual disease of his older brother and many other prominent persons of that

period. . . . Schreber is undoubtedly alluding to syphilis, or lues, when he says, 'the inner table of my skull was lined with a different membrane in order to extinguish the memory of my own ego.' Luetic meningitis, inflammation of the membranes (meninges) of the brain and spinal cord was a common complication of syphilis, while swings of depression and elation, with delusions and hallucinations, were the common mental manifestations." Lothane notes that "Luetic meningitis was also the topic of Flechsig's (1870) doctoral dissertation" (*In Defense of Schreber*, 55).

13. See above all, Geller, "The Unmanning of the Wandering Jew," *American Imago* 49 (Summer 1992): 227–62; "Freud v. Freud: Freud's Readings of Daniel Paul Schreber's *Denkwürdigkeiten eines Nervenkranken*," in *Reading Freud's Reading*, ed. Sander Gilman, Jutta Birmele, Jay Geller and Valerie Greenberg (New York: New York University Press, 1994), 180–211.

14. Geller, "Unmanning," 230, 244.

15. Cited in ibid., 231. An important source for Geller's work is Jan Goldstein's "The Wandering Jew and the Problem of Psychiatric Anti-Semitism in Fin-de-Siècle France," *Journal of Contemporary History* 20 (1985): 521–51. See also Gilman, *Freud*, 117.

16. This short monograph has been published in English as "The Wandering Jew in the Clinic: A Study of Neurotic Pathology," in a collection of essays on the figure of the Wandering Jew in history, *The Wandering Jew: Essays in the Interpretation of a Christian Legend*, ed. Galit Hasan-Rokem and Alan Dundes (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 190–94.

17. Cited in Meige, "The Wandering Jew," 191.

18. Ibid., 192, 194.

19. Jews were not the only group that had been associated with nervous illness. In *Degeneration* (1892; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), Max Nordau argued that it was the French who suffered from hysteria in disproportionate numbers. Nordau offers a variety of reasons: excessive loss of blood during the Napoleonic wars; the violent moral upheavals of the French Revolution; the loss to Germany in 1870. Prior to this defeat, Nordau writes, France "had, with a self-satisfaction which almost attained to megalomania, believed itself the first nation in the world; it now saw itself suddenly humiliated and crushed. All its convictions abruptly crumbled to pieces. Every single Frenchman suffered reverses of fortune, lost some members of his family, and felt himself personally robbed of his dearest conceptions, nay, even of his honor. . . . Thousands lost their reason. In Paris a veritable epidemic of mental diseases was observed. . . . And even those who did not at once succumb to mental derangement, suffered lasting injury to their nervous system. This explains why hysteria and neurasthenia are much more frequent in France, and appear under such a greater variety of forms, and why they can be studied far more closely in this country than anywhere else" (*Degeneration*, 42–43). As noted earlier, Nordau's more general argument apropos of the etiology of hysteria and degeneration concerned the mental fatigue caused by the dislocations associated with modernization, which included residence in urban centers, railroad travel, proliferation of print media, etc. For further variations of the national, gender, and cultural codings of nervous illness, see Tom Lutz,

American Nervousness, 1903: An Anecdotal History (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991).

20. Panizza left a short-lived medical practice in the 1880s to devote himself to writing poetry, fiction, and drama. In 1895, he was sentenced to a year in prison for blasphemy for a play—*Das Liebeskonzil* (The council of love)—that linked the origins of syphilis, which he had contracted some fifteen years earlier, to God and Maria. Panizza lived in Paris and Zurich before returning to Bavaria because of increasingly severe mental illness including auditory hallucinations. He was institutionalized in 1905 in an asylum near Bayreuth where he lived until his death in 1921. See Jack Zipes's essay on Panizza accompanying his translation of "The Operated Jew" as well as of Mynona's (Salomo Friedlaender) literary response, "The Operated Goy," in *The Operated Jew: Two Tales of Anti-Semitism*, trans. Jack Zipes (New York: Routledge, 1991). Further references will be made parenthetically in the text. Gilman discusses Panizza in both *Freud, Race, and Gender* as well *The Case of Sigmund Freud: Medicine and Identity at the Fin de Siècle* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

21. Geller, "Unmanning," 240.

22. Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991), 122.

23. Gilman, *Freud*, 167.

24. Daniel Boyarin, "Freud's Baby, Fliess's Maybe: Homophobia, Anti-Semitism, and the Invention of Oedipus," *GLQ* 2 (1995): 131. In this essay, Boyarin argues more generally that Freud's formulation of the so-called "positive" oedipal scenario for male children—the exemplary Oedipus on whose rock Schreber foundered—was essentially a product of Freud's panic in the face of a particularly toxic "discursive configuration imposed on him by three deeply intertwined cultural events: the racialization/gendering of anti-Semitism, the fin-de-siècle production of sexualities, including the 'homosexual,' and the sharp increase in contemporary Christian homophobic discourse" (129). Freud needed a normative and rigidly heterosexualizing Oedipus because contemporary anti-Semitic discourses had come to associate hysteria and homosexuality—two "tendencies" which Freud had, as it were, admitted to in his relationship with Fliess—with Jewishness. "These discourses," Boyarin continues, "produced a perfect and synergistic match between homophobia and anti-Semitism. By identifying himself as hysterical and as Fliess's *eromenos*, Freud had been putting himself in the very categories that the anti-Semitic discourse of the nineteenth century would put him in: feminized, pathic, queer—Jewish" (129). I agree with Boyarin's suggestion that the ultimate danger for Freud in both hysteria and homosexuality was that each condition positioned him in what was perceived, within his culture, as a *passive*, and thus *feminine*, attitude. Noting that even among homosexuals in Germany there was a tendency to ascribe effeminacy to Jewish homosexuals in particular, Boyarin writes that "it would not be entirely wrong to suggest that it was passivity and effeminacy that were more problematic at this period than homoeroticism itself—i.e. homophobia is, *at this time*, almost subsumed under misogyny, to which anti-Semitism bears then a strong family connection as well" (142). Finally, in his own reformulation of Gilman and Geller's central thesis about Schreber,

Boyarin writes that "for Freud, recognition of the positive attraction that femaleness and being transformed into a female held for Daniel Schreber would have involved the psychological necessity for him of facing again his own unresolved desires for femaleness, which in his own culturally conditioned eyes was equivalent to homosexuality. Both of these, feminization and homosexuality, were 'Jewish diseases' that Freud was anxious to overcome" (136). As was the case for Gilman and Geller, one of the keys, for Boyarin, to the fantasy of the male Jew's feminization was his circumcision: "the topos of Jewish men as a sort of women is a venerable one going back at least to the thirteenth century in Europe, where it was ubiquitously maintained that Jewish men menstruate. . . . As the fourteenth-century Italian astrologer Cecco d'Ascoli writes: 'After the death of Christ all Jewish men, like women, suffer menstruation.' . . . The explanation of this myth is to be found in the consistent representation of Jews as female in European culture, largely because of their being circumcised, which was interpreted as feminizing"(130).

25. Panizza, "Operated Jew," 57.

26. "The word *Zion* [Hebrew *Tsiyyon*] is taken as a noun derived from the root *ts/y/n* [to be marked], and accordingly the Daughters of Tsiyyon are read as the circumcised men of Israel" (Daniel Boyarin, "'This We Know to Be the Carnal Israel': Circumcision and the Erotic Life of God and Israel," *Critical Inquiry* 18 [Spring 1992]: 495).

27. Ibid., 495, 496–97.

28. In his essay, "Freud and Beyond," in *Ruin the Sacred Truths: Poetry and Belief from the Bible to the Present* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), Harold Bloom analyzes the relation between divine word and embodiment under the sign of the "bodily ego": "The difficult concept of the bodily ego, in which an imaginary object is introjected as though it were real, is uncannily similar to the prophetic concept of the placing of the Law in our inward parts" (165). Boyarin's reading of rabbinic literature suggests that the bodily ego is first and foremost a feminine one.

29. Daniel Boyarin, "Jewish Masochism: Couvade, Castration, and Rabbis in Pain," *American Imago* 51 (Spring 1994) 3–36.

30. Ibid., 10.

31. "Two things that ought not to be combinable have conjoined in the figures of these rabbis; on the one hand a male subjectivity that refuses the dominant fiction, if you will, that refuses to be a representation of wholeness, coherence, and impenetrability; on the other, sexual and procreative competence. These men have no phallus, but their penises remain intact. It is this structure that I am referring to as Jewish masochism" (ibid., 22). Boyarin's terms are indebted to Kaja Silverman's *Male Subjectivity at the Margins* (New York: Routledge, 1992). Silverman's book addresses a variety of literary and cinematic performances of masculinity that masochistically chasten the phallic ideal, which in her view is maintained by a phantasmatic equation of phallus and penis. Such an equation is, she suggests, tantamount to conflating the differential structure of language, with which every human subject must (mournfully) come to terms, with a particular form of kinship structure. Such a conflation allows men to disavow the psychic traumas imposed by the "Law

of Language": "It is imperative that we understand that when the Name-of-the-Father organizes the rules determining marriage, reproduction, lineality, abode, and inheritance, the Law of Kinship Structure exists in a contradictory relationship to the Law of Language. The Law of Language dictates universal castration, whereas our Law of Kinship Structure equates the father with the Law, and hence exempts him from it. Our dominant fiction effects an imaginary resolution of this contradiction by radically reconceiving what it means to be castrated. . . . Our dominant fiction calls upon the male subject to see himself, and the female subject to recognize and desire him, only through the mediation of images of an unimpaired masculinity. It urges both the male and the female subject, that is, to deny all knowledge of male castration by believing in the commensurability of penis and phallus, actual and symbolic father" (42). Silverman's book is energized by the perhaps utopian cultural project of a more equitable distribution of the burdens of the sociosymbolic condition. Such a redistribution of psychosemiotic labor "would require that we collectively acknowledge, at the deepest levels of our psyches, that our desires and our identity come to us from the outside, and that they are founded upon a void. It would involve, as Julia Kristeva suggests, interiorizing '*the founding separation of the socio-symbolic contract*'—introducing 'its cutting edge into the very interior of every identity.' Renegotiating our relation to the Law of Language would thus seem to hinge first and foremost upon the confrontation of the male subject with the defining conditions of all subjectivity, conditions which the female subject is obliged compulsively to reenact, but upon the denial of which traditional masculinity is predicated: lack, specularity, and alterity. It would seem to necessitate, in other words, dismantling the images and undoing the projections and disavowals through which phallic identification is enabled" (50–51). Much of the book addresses the ways in which traumatic events such as war periodically shatter male patterns of fetishistic disavowal and serve, as it were, to refeminize the conditions of male subject formation, to make it impossible for men to project, thanks to fantasy scenarios of phallic mastery and entitlement, the impasses of subjectivity onto the "other," female, Jewish, or otherwise: "By 'historical trauma' . . . I mean any historical event . . . which brings a large group of male subjects into such an intimate relation with lack that they are at least for the moment unable to sustain an imaginary relation with the phallus, and so withdraw their belief from the dominant fiction. Suddenly the latter is radically de-realized, and the social formation finds itself without a mechanism for achieving consensus" (55). Boyarin's thesis is, in essence, that Jewish masculinity has never deeply participated in this consensus (his ultimate political claim is that Zionism represents Judaism's attempt to break with its traditional distance from this "dominant fiction"). Here I should note that for Silverman, too, a key exemplar of what could be called a masculinity beyond phallus is Daniel Paul Schreber.

32. Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, *God's Phallus: And Other Problems for Men and Monotheism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994). Further references will be made parenthetically in the text.

33. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 187.

34. "[O]n a heterosexual model of desire, an intimate of a male God should be female, so Moses can only insert himself into this equation through his own partial feminization and the exclusion of women. A hint of these tensions is evident in the myth of the Sinai revelation, the first revelation to the children of Israel after their departure from Egypt. This is the first time the impurity of women is referred to in the Hebrew Bible, and this myth may be one of the oldest sources of Israelite religion to refer to women's impurity" (146). And as he notes elsewhere: "The insistence on female impurity excluded women from competition with men for divine affections. Women's impurity, in other words, arose in part from attempts to shore up men's access to the sacred. If the conventional theory explains women's cultic impurity as a result of her otherness from God, we can also see it as motivated in part by her natural complementarity to a male deity and her symbolic threat to men's place in the religious system. Women's otherness from God is precisely what made them his expected partners. They had to be excluded from the cult because they challenged the male connection with God" (142).

35. Weininger, for whom Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason* was the "most sublime book on earth," argues that women and Jews lack transcendental subjectivity, the moral dimension of personhood necessary for true religious faith and genuine ethical and political responsibility. He argues that Zionism is doomed to failure because the idea of the state is foreign to Jews (as it is to women): "The state as a rational enterprise is the totality of all ends, which can only be realized through a union of rational beings. It is, however, this Kantian rationality, this Spirit, which above all appears to be lacking in the Jew and the woman" (*Geschlecht*, 196, 411).

36. See, for example, Daniel Boyarin, "The Eye in the Torah: Ocular Desire in Midrashic Hermeneutic," *Critical Inquiry* 16 (Spring 1990): 532–50.

37. Daniel Boyarin, "Bisexuality, Psychoanalysis, Zionism: Or, the Ambivalence of the Jewish Phallus," forthcoming in *Queer Diasporas*, ed. Cindy Patton (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press).

38. *SE* 13:xv. Though he never addresses the issues of gender and sexuality we have been discussing here, Yosef Yerushalmi's book, *Freud's Moses: Judaism Terminable and Interminable* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univerity Press, 1991), remains one of the best studies of Freud's relation to Judaism to date.

39. Jean Laplanche's gloss on the Jewish ethical imagination is quite interesting in the present context: "In the context of an extreme form of religion, namely the Judaic religion to which Levinas refers, God hands down the Law, and the Law does not have to be justified. Freud too raises the issue of the categorical aspect of moral imperatives by pointing out that the orders given by the super-ego are tyrannical and unjustifiable. Because of his mania for phylogenesis, Freud traces this arbitrariness back to the first two tenets of the Father of the Horde: he was himself invulnerable and his possession of women must not be challenged. . . . These are good grounds for looking very seriously into the notion that categorical imperative is born of the super-ego, and for dwelling on one specific aspect of it: categorical imperatives cannot be justified; they are certainly enigmatic the same way that other adult messages are enigmatic; but not only are they unjustified, it is possible that they are unjustifiable, or in other

words non-metabolizable. This means that they cannot be diluted, and cannot be replaced by anything else. They exist, and they are immutable and cannot be symbolized" (*New Foundations for Psychoanalysis*, trans. David Macey [Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1989], 138–39).

40. Walter Benjamin, "E.T.A. Hoffmann und Oskar Panizza," in *Gesammelte Schriften* ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser, vol. 5 (II/2) (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1980), 643–44.

41. See my introduction.

42. *Tales of E.T.A. Hoffmann*, trans. Leonard J. Kent and Elizabeth C. Knight (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 117 (I have changed the translation of *unheimlich* from "weird" to "uncanny").

43. Hoffmann, "The Sandman," 119, 120.

44. Cited in Freud, "The 'Uncanny,'" in *SE* 17:227.

45. As Freud puts it, "For it is possible to recognize the dominance in the unconscious mind of a 'compulsion to repeat' proceeding from the instinctual impulses and probably inherent in the very nature of the instincts—a compulsion powerful enough to overrule the pleasure principle, lending to certain aspects of the mind their daemonic character, and still very clearly expressed in the impulses of small children; a compulsion, too, which is responsible for a part of the course taken by the analyses of neurotic patients. All these considerations prepare us for the discovery *that whatever reminds us of this inner 'compulsion to repeat' is perceived as uncanny*" (*SE* 17:238; my emphasis). In his reading of "The Sandman," Freud downplays the formal dimension of repetition in favor of the return/repetition of a particular set of contents and images, namely those associated with castration.

46. That Nathanael's madness is triggered by his awareness that he suddenly occupies the place of Olympia is also indicated by the fact that Nathanael's limbs had previously been subjected to the twisting and tugging that he sees being performed on Olympia. Once pushed over the edge, Nathanael's speech becomes, at the level of form and content, dominated by repetition compulsion: "'Whirl, whirl whirl! Circle of fire! Circle of fire! Whirl round, circle of fire! Merrily, merrily! Aha, lovely wooden doll, whirl round!'" ("The Sandman," 120).

47. In this context, one might recall that Weininger, citing Wagner's own authority, suggests that of all Europeans the English have the most similarities to the Jews (see *Geschlecht*, 426).

48. One might compare this direct address with the narrator's address to the reader in "The Sandman." There, too, what is at stake is the impossibility of communicating in any direct or immediate fashion the ostensible contents of one's soul to another human being. The most penetrating reading of Hoffmann's story as well as of Freud's essay—including some very lucid remarks on Hoffmann's narrator—remains Neil Hertz's "Freud and the Sandman," in his *The End of the Line: Essays on Psychoanalysis and the Sublime* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 97–121. In his reading of these texts, Hertz addresses some of the major preoccupations of my reading of Schreber: questions of priority and influence anxiety; relations between (rhetorical) performativity, symbolic authority, and drive. At the end of his essay, Hertz

suggests that Freud's obsession with originality indicates a deeper level of preoccupation and distress: "Whatever anxiety Freud may be imagined to have felt about his own originality . . . may not be exactly illusory, but displaced. . . . [M]ore fundamental 'doubts' and 'uncertainties' . . . may be at work generating the anxiety that is then acted out in the register of literary priority. The specificity of that range of wishes and fears—the wish to be original, the fear of plagiarizing or of being plagiarized—would act to structure and render more manageable, in however melodramatic fashion, the more indeterminate affect associated with repetition, marking or coloring it, conferring 'visibility' on the forces of repetition and at the same time disguising the activity of those forces from the subject himself" (120).

49. I am grateful to Eric Patton who, in an inspiring seminar presentation, underlined the importance of these sentences.

50. Among the definitions of "abjection" offered by the Oxford English Dictionary are the condition or estate of one cast down; abasement, humiliation, degradation; rejection; that which is cast off or away; refuse, scum, dregs.

51. We should recall that Gregor, too, becomes the bearer of a wound that refuses to heal, the product of an apple thrown by his father.

52. Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 1989), 76–77.

53. Stanley Corngold, "Introduction," in *The Metamorphosis by Franz Kafka*, trans. and ed. Stanley Corngold (New York: Bantam, 1986), xv. References to this edition of the story will be made parenthetically in the text.

54. I am arguing, in effect, that we may observe two orders of abjection at work in Kafka's story. Abjection of the first order refers to Gregor's history prior to his metamorphosis, i.e., to his status as a sacrificial object *within* the family structure, and is thus linked to the introjection of the family debt or guilt. Abjection of the second order, a turn of the screw of the first, is the state of the metamorphosis: it signals precisely a radical separation from that family structure and the assumption of a position outside the texture of fate. From the perspective of this new position, what was concealed by the life of self-sacrifice, i.e., by the first order of abjection, becomes visible: the lack of a consistent and dependable master from whom one could expect a determination of one's identity, whose gaze could guarantee one's recognition, even as *an object worthy of sacrifice* (the metamorphosis might thus be conceived as indicating a transition from obsessional neurosis to psychosis). From a structural point of view, Gregor's verminousness *is* the becoming-visible of this very lack and that is why he provokes attempts not so much to sacrifice him as to *destroy* him. What must be destroyed is the object in which the inconsistency of the "master's discourse"—and so of the sacrificial order itself—has become visible. The inconsistency of Gregor's own physical attributes, which makes it impossible to form a coherent image of the insect, is no doubt a crucial aspect of his monstrousness, i.e., what makes it possible for him to embody the dysfunction of the master and his institutions. Kafka converted this impossibility into a prohibition when he stipulated to his publisher, Kurt Wolff, that no illustration of the insect adorn the title page of the 1916 edition of the story.

55. Thus the office manager's negative evaluation of Gregor's performance as a salesman represents the lure of a consistent Other whose demands one can

still struggle to satisfy. The failure to meet those demands does not yet produce the extreme form of abjection which marks Gregor's new condition.

56. As Žižek has elsewhere argued, "Therein consists the constitutive, fundamental guilt attested to by the neurotic symptoms which pertain to the very being of what we call 'the modern man': the fact that, ultimately, there is no agency in the eyes of which he can be guilty weighs upon him as a redoubled guilt. The 'death of God'—another name for this retreat of fate—makes our guilt absolute (Slavoj Žižek, *Enjoy Your Symptom! Jacques Lacan in Hollywood and Out* [New York: Routledge, 1992], 167). Žižek summarizes these two levels of guilt and sacrifice in terms that help to elucidate the experience of Gregor Samsa: "The first level is the symbolic pact: the subject identifies the kernel of his being with a symbolic feature to which he is prepared to subordinate his entire life, for the sake of which he is prepared to sacrifice everything—-in short, alienation in the symbolic mandate. The second level consists in sacrificing this sacrifice itself: in a most radical sense, we 'break the word,' we renounce the symbolic alliance which defines the very kernel of our being—the abyss, the void in which we find ourselves thereby, is what we call 'modern-age subjectivity' " (167).

57. Franz Kafka, *Tagebücher. 1910–1923* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1990), 217, 215.

58. A possible source of knowledge about Schreber on Kafka's part was Otto Gross's essay, "Über Bewusstseinszerfall" (On the disintegration of consciousness), published in 1904 and which, as noted earlier, includes one of the first discussions of Schreber in the psychiatric literature. Kafka met Gross for the first time only in 1917, but he may have had some familiarity with his work prior to that. Kafka had studied criminology with Gross's father, Hans Gross, at the University of Prague; the latter's tyrannical treatment of his son would eventually become a cause célèbre in intellectual circles in Central Europe.

59. One will recall that in Sacher-Masoch's story, the protagonist, Severin, receives a new name once he enters into his contract with his dominatrix Wanda: *Gregor*. See Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, *Venus im Pelz und andere Erzählungen*, ed. Helmut Struzmann (Vienna: Edition Christian Brandstätter, 1985).

60. Gregor expresses his envy vis-à-vis his colleagues at work by noting that they get to live like "harem women" (4).

61. Freud's characterization of the language of young girls matches, word for word, Wagner's characterization of *Jewish* discourse as a kind of parrotlike chatter in his notorious essay, "Judaism in Music" (1850), which Freud surely knew and which was the source of many of Weininger's positions on the Jewish relation to music and language (see *Richard Wagner: Stories and Essays*, ed. C. Osborne [London: Peter Owen, 1973]). For a compelling reading of Kafka's last story, "Josephine the Singer, or the Mouse Volk," through the prism of these cultural associations, see Mark Anderson's *Kafka's Clothes: Ornament and Aestheticism in the Habsburg* Fin de Siècle (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 194–215.

62. The "redemptive" closure of story and family around the death and removal of Gregor is given a Christological coloration when the Samsas are first brought by the cleaning woman to Gregor's corpse: " 'Well,' said Mr. Samsa,

'now we can thank God!' He crossed himself, and the three women followed his example" (55). This passage reads as a conversion scenario, as if with Gregor's self-nullification the Samsas can enter into a new covenant free of the obligations of the old.

63. For discussions of this displacement, see, once more, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's work, especially *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), as well as Kendall Thomas, "Corpus Juris (Hetero)Sexualis. Doctrine, Discourse, and Desire in *Bowers v. Hardwick*," *GLQ* 1 (1993): 34.

64. This thesis might be compared with Leo Bersani's claim that "sexuality would not be originally an exchange of intensities between individuals, but rather a condition of broken negotiations with the world, a condition in which others merely set off the self-shattering mechanisms of masochistic *jouissance*" (*The Freudian Body: Psychoanalysis and Art* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1986], 41). What makes Schreber so interesting is that he stages the production of sexuality in a kind of slow motion, which allows us to perceive connections and lines of derivation normally invisible.

65. If Schreber's identity as *Luder* is sustained in part by an identification with Martin Luther/Luder, his fantasies of contamination by the forces of Catholicism indicate, perhaps, that the confessional boundaries are, at least for Schreber, porous. Given Schreber's preoccupation with issues of power and authority, might it be that his anxieties vis-à-vis Catholics were triggered not merely at the level of historically specific social and political conflicts of interest—between, say, Saxony's mostly Lutheran population and its Catholic royal family—but at the level of *political theology*, i.e., the theological dimension of political and social authority? One of the key conflicts in the Kulturkampf concerned the doctrine of papal infallibility issued by Pope Pius IX in 1870. Perhaps no other doctrine so explicitly, literally, and even cynically affirms the performative dimension—and vicious circle—of symbolic authority as this decree, which means, in effect, that the truth is the truth not because it can be proved by a sufficient accumulation of evidence, but rather because the person occupying the place of authority says it. The papal infallibility doctrine concentrates into a formula a radical speech act theory of symbolic authority according to which the force of enunciation of a speech act, produced, of course, by the one vested with the appropriate emblems of power, grounds its own propositional content. The papal infallibility doctrine might thus be understood as a cynical absolutization of the performative magic on which all symbolic authority is to some extent dependent, a performativity that, in other words, also "stains" the Lutheran break with Catholicism.

66. Weininger refers to the decalogue as the paradigmatic example of a heteronomous ethics. See *Geschlecht*, 420. Further references will be made parenthetically in the text.

67. A major part of Weininger's book is a critique of Ernst Mach's highly influential conception of the ego as a concentrated bundle of sense impressions. Weininger views Mach's "empiricist" approach to psychology, which he associates with impressionism in the arts, as a kind of soul murder, for it ignores the "center of apperception," the transendental ego that was the centerpiece

of the Kantian revolution in epistemology, moral philosophy, and aesthetics. For Weininger, this revolution, forgotten in the Machian dissolution of the ego—in effect a return to the precritical position of Hume—implies a fundamental unity of logic and ethics, since both demand that the subject obey absolute laws in the name of a singular will to truth: “Logic and ethics . . . are fundamentally one and the same thing—duty to oneself. They celebrate their unity in truth as the highest value, which in the one case is opposed by error and in the other by lie; truth itself is however always singular. All ethics is only possible through the laws of logic, all logic is also ethical law” (207). Some of Weininger’s formulations suggest that the ego-centering force found in Kant’s critical-transcendental philosophy, which he opposes to the dispersive tendencies of Mach’s psychology (and the decadent aesthetic practices he associates with it), is ultimately that of an implacable superego, a kind of ruthless judge in the court of the subject’s thought processes: “The question is whether someone recognizes the logical axioms as criteria of the validity of his thinking, *as judge* over what he says. . . . A man feels guilty if he has neglected to provide grounds for a thought, whether he has expressed it or not, because he feels the obligation to follow the norms of logic which he has, for once and for all, posited as his law [*über sich gesetzt hat*]” (192). Or later: “It is, of course, possible for someone to maintain the external form of judgment without doing justice to its inner condition. This inner condition is the sincere recognition of the idea of truth as the highest judge over all statements, and the heartfelt desire to stand the test before this judge with every pronouncement one makes” (249). Weininger’s claim is, ultimately, that women and Jews have no intimate relation to this *inner judge*, a relation which serves to endow the subject with an awesome sublimity and grandeur: “Man [*Der Mensch*] is alone in the universe, in eternal, horrible loneliness. . . . He has no goal outside himself, nothing else for which he lives—he has flown far beyond all will to be a slave, capacity to be a slave, need to be a slave: far below him all human community has disappeared, as has all social morality; he is alone, *alone*” (210). Weininger calls this, the subject’s will to identify fully with the pure “ought” of the moral law, the cruel greatness [*das Grauenvoll-Große*] of his vocation and suggests that one see in this absolute subjection to and affirmation of the categorical imperative the *Dionysian* element of Kant’s philosophy (211). For Weininger, those who, as it were, lack this capacity for Kantian-Dionysian loneliness, are ideal subjects of hypnosis, which he characterizes as an extreme case of *heteronomy*, of influence by another will at the level of phenomenal causation. Indeed, Weininger goes so far as to characterize hypnosis as an “experimental confirmation of Kantian ethics” (364).

68. Weininger constructs a myth to correspond to this “philosophical” perspective on sexual difference: “Perhaps during the formation of the human race, through a metaphysical, atemporal act, man kept the soul, that which is godlike in humans, for himself alone. . . . Because he feels guilty for having robbed her of a soul, man now atones for this injustice against woman through the sufferings of love, in and through which he tries to give the soul he stole back to woman, to endow her with a soul. For it is precisely before the beloved woman . . . that man is most weighed down by a guilty conscience. The hope-

lessness of such reparation efforts through which man tries to expiate his guilt could well explain why a happy love does not exist" (341). These views anticipate in remarkable ways Lacan's notorious pronouncements apropos of the "nonexistence" of woman and the impossibility of the sexual relationship. What both thinkers share, of course, is the view that gender and sexuality are discursive formations arising out of structural dilemmas and crises introduced into organic existence through the intervention of "the signifier." On the connections between Weininger and Lacan, cf. Žižek, *The Metastases of Enjoyment: Six Essays on Women and Causality* (London: Verso, 1994), as well as *Enjoy Your Symptom*.

69. Among the "evidence" Weininger cites is the claim that cleptomania is a primarily feminine pathology and the observation that even women who could afford to own their own books often make use of public libraries! This latter "fact" suggests to Weininger that women lack an intimate and profound relation to objects of value and importance.

70. Weininger's "Platonism" is apparent here. "Woman," "Man," "Jew," etc. are for Weininger ideal types indicating structures or modes of existence, ultimately particular subject positions one assumes vis-à-vis the demands of logic and ethics. From each of these positions, Weininger maintains, flow a number of dispositions with regard to aesthetics, erotic relations, politics, etc. According to Weininger, these "types" are unevenly distributed in empirical human beings. It is clear, however, that Weininger wants to anchor his Platonism in a kind of biologism such that the distribution of dispositions is, as it were, passed along in the blood. Real Jews are thus biologically destined to manifest the idea of the Jew even though a Christian Aryan might not be completely free of "Jewishness," meaning a congeries of attitudes and inclinations about morality, beauty, commerce, marriage, etc. (see, for example, *Geschlecht*, 406).

71. In light of these remarks, we might say that circumcision becomes an object of such intense fascination and revulsion not because it mutilates the organ of procreation, but rather because it is a site of jouissance in the sense I have been elaborating in these pages. Circumcision is a rite of initiatory investiture that establishes, through the performative magic of the bodily inscription, the child's symbolic identity. What would have appalled Weininger, of course, is that this ritual leaves the mark of heteronomy on the body, "stains" the body with the mark of the forced choice that can never be converted into pure autonomy.

72. About Kundry, Weininger writes: "above [Wagner's] Kundry, the most profound female figure in art, hangs unmistakably the shadow of Ahasver" (429). Wagner is also the thinker who, according to Weininger, has most thoroughly thought through the problem of Judaism (428–29). We might also note the historical irony apropos of Weininger's claim that not only *Parsifal* but also the "Pilgerchor" and "Romfahrt" of *Tannhäuser* would always remain completely foreign to Jewish ears (*Geschlecht*, 408). It is well known that regular visits to the Paris production of *Tannhäuser* formed the "aesthetic" backdrop to Theodor Herzl's composition of the crucial manifesto of Zionism, *Der Judenstaat*, and that Herzl used portions of the opera, including the "Pilgerchor," as part of the musical mise-en-scène of the second Zionist Congress.

73. Let me briefly summarize the most obvious examples of the Wagnerian "intertext" in the *Memoirs*. In his initial presentation of his cosmology, Schreber refers to *Tannhäuser* to characterize the state of "Blessedness" reserved for souls: "Richard Wagner . . . as if with some insight into these things, makes Tannhäuser say in the ecstasy of love: 'Alas your love overwhelms me: *perpetual enjoyment is only for Gods*, I as a mortal am subject to change.'" (52). Schreber returns to *Tannhäuser* later in the *Memoirs* to describe his feelings upon playing the piano for the first time after an extended period in which he was denied access to music (143). A further Wagnerian motif particularly important in *Tannhäuser*, that of the redemption of man through a woman's sacrifice, is found in the following passage regarding Schreber's wife: "I repeatedly had the nerves belonging to my wife's soul in my body or felt them approaching my body from outside. . . . These soul parts were filled with the devoted love which my wife has always shown me; they were the only souls who showed willingness to renounce their own further existence and find their end in my body, expressing it in the basic language as 'let me.'" To this Schreber appends the note: "This expression could be rendered grammatically complete in the following words: 'Let me—you rays that are trying to pull me back—do let me follow the power of attraction of my husband's nerves: I am prepared to dissolve in my husband's body'" (116). Schreber's language apropos of the rent in the miraculous structure of the world (54) suggests an allusion to the Norns's cry "Es riß!" in *Götterdämmerung*, an allusion confirmed several pages later by a direct reference to the title of Wagner's opera: "The power of attraction, this even to me unfathomable law, according to which rays and nerves mutually attract one another, harbours a kernel of danger for the realms of God; this forms perhaps the basis of the Germanic saga of the Twilight of the Gods" (59). Schreber's father-in-law, Heinrich Behr, was an opera singer and successful producer of Wagner's works.

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