Three Perspectives on Jung, Wells, and Schreber

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Abstract. A single sentence in C. G. Jung's "Commentary on *The Secret of the Golden Flower*" links H. G. Wells's *Christina Alberta's Father* and Daniel Paul Schreber's *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness* as illustrations of the principle that repression leads to insanity. The essay demonstrates the following points: Jung (as previously noted) inspired the creation of Wells's novel; comments on Schreber illuminate the course of the Freud-Jung friendship; the books illustrate Jung's theory that repression leads to insanity; and projecting interiority onto God and believing the intrapsychic to be extrapsychic are problematic tendencies in both texts. Although Wells's main character, Edward Albert Preemby, and Schreber himself make some progress toward psychological wholeness, Preemby dies before he can enjoy his new perspective, and Schreber returns to the asylum for his final years.

Keywords: C. G. Jung, H. G. Wells, Daniel Paul Schreber, *Christina Alberta's Father*, *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*, Sigmund Freud, repression, insanity, God.

Introduction

Our starting point for this article is a key sentence in paragraph 53 of C. G. Jung's "Commentary on *The Secret of the Golden Flower*" (*Alchemical Studies*, *CW* 13). However, there is helpful context in the preceding paragraph where Jung states that if we deny "autonomous systems"—if we repress contents into the shadow and do not assimilate them—they continue to influence us below the level of conscious awareness via shadow projection, both personal and collective, resulting in "destructive mass psychoses" such as war (par. 52). What is repressed within manifests without. The next paragraph, our central concern, mentions two books written on opposite ends of World War I, a collective-shadow event, that illustrate Jung's point:

> Insanity is possession by an unconscious content that, as such, is not assimilated to consciousness, nor can it be assimilated since the very existence of such contents is denied. This attitude is equivalent to saying: "We no longer have any fear of God and believe that everything is to be judged by human standards." This hybris [sic] or narrowness of consciousness is always the shortest way to the insane asylum. I recommend the excellent account of this problem in H. G. Wells's novel *Christina Alberta's Father*, and Schreber's *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*. (par. 53)

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Mental illness stems from possession by repressed content, and Jung thinks that Wells's 1925 novel and Daniel Paul Schreber's 1903 personal account illustrate this principle. The sentence about God is a bit obscure but is best understood as an analogy: it is as problematic to deny repressed content as it is to deny God, and as problematic to project unconscious content as to think that the human frame of reference is the *sine qua non*. Since the insane do not acknowledge interiority as the provenance of their illness, causality is projected onto God, and the divine becomes a reflection of one's own disavowed psychic contents. Blaming God for one's condition—elevating one's own issues to the level of divine causation—is hubris indeed.

Jung's view that insanity results from the refusal to acknowledge repressed content is illustrated in two texts that have not previously been considered together: an obscure novel by Wells about a minimus named Edward Albert Preemby and Schreber's nonfictional account of his own tutelage—"guardianship by the courts" (Goodrich and Trüstedt 69)—in asylums at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries.[1] A further reason to consider the two texts together is that Preemby and Schreber share a common goal. Dr. G. Weber, one of Schreber's doctors, makes a statement in his evaluation that characterizes Preemby equally well: the patient believes that "he is called to redeem the world and to bring back to mankind the lost state of Blessedness" (qtd. in Schreber 333; cf. Freud 16). Whereas Preemby feels an impetus to save modern civilization, Schreber believes that if he transforms into a woman, he will become pregnant by God's rays and create a new race: "my unmanning will be accomplished with the result that by divine fertilization offspring will issue from my lap" (258). Moreover, both works comment on God from the point of view of the insane and problematically attribute symptoms of mental illness to divine agency. As these details suggest, Jung's insight that insanity arises from repression is only the beginning of what may be gained from studying the two texts together.

Whereas *Christina Alberta's Father* has received virtually no significant analysis by literary critics (Jungian or otherwise), *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness* has inspired extensive commentary. Rosemary Dinnage's statement that "Schreber's *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness* must be the most written-about document in all psychiatric literature" (xi) is demonstrated, for example, by the thirty-eight-page bibliography in Zvi Lothane's *In Defense of Schreber: Soul Murder and Psychiatry* (485–523). *Memoirs* is also "one of the most challenging texts of the century" in which "the reader is easily lost" (Crapanzano 739, 742) because "the *Memoirs* are extraordinarily difficult to read" (Butler 187). Therefore, the "book cannot be simply read: it must be studied" (Lothane 378).

My purpose here is not to overlook the many fine studies of Schreber's work but to draw attention to the linkage of the two texts in Jung's key sentence. The nexus gives rise to various questions that serve as an outline for what follows. What is Jung's relationship to the two texts? Is he correct that the two books illustrate his principle that insanity arises from repression of non-assimilated content? Do Wells and Schreber portray the human relationship to God in the hubristic way that Jung mentions? This essay uses a Jungian matrix to unfold meaning in both texts, shows the centrality of *Memoirs* to Jung's

[1] Schreber was in various asylums in 1884, 1893–1902, and 1907 until his death in 1911. *Memoirs* deals principally with his long middle stay. Franz Baumeyer's work with Schreber's medical records is particularly helpful in establishing a chronology, as is Freud's overview in *Psycho-Analytic Notes* (6–7).

relationship with Freud, demonstrates that the two books illustrate Jung's understanding of repression and insanity, and analyzes the authors' respective psychologizing of God. In support of these points, I will utilize three perspectives: Jung's friendships with Wells and Freud, the view that repression leads to insanity, and the works' respective comments on God.

One: Jung's Friendships

That the two texts have remained virtually unnoticed by Jungian critics is evident in the omission of both from Sonu Shamdasani's *Jung: A Biography in Books*. There is similarly no Jungian criticism on *Christina Alberta's Father* and very little on *Memoirs*; Karen Bryce Funt's "From Memoir to Case History: Schreber, Freud and Jung" is the only substantial Jungian study that could be found. Yet, as Michael Eigen states, although "Jungians did not explore the Schreber case to the extent Freudians did . . . Schreber's basic movement from a male position to death and rebirth through the feminine seems made for Jungian analysis" (qtd. in Lothane 355; cf. Eigen 254). However, Jungian critics *have* registered the friendship between Jung and Wells. Deidre Bair notes that Wells visited Jung in Zurich on several occasions (402), and E. A. Bennet states that Jung had dinner with Wells at his house in Regent's Park. That night, when asked about the genesis of schizophrenia, Jung stated that projection accounts for a person's delusions (Bennet 93). Ronald Hayman rightly observes that a main point of the evening's conversation—"the psychotic projected his own ideas onto other people and events"—prefigures and influences both *Christina Alberta's Father* and the appearance of a fictional Dr. Jung in Wells's 1926 novel *The World of William Clissold* (Hayman 261) where the conversation concerns the "super-mind of the species" rather than schizophrenia (Wells, vol. 1, 86). Apparently, Jung's association with Wells lasted beyond the publication of *Christina Alberta's Father* in 1925, for Jung's letter to Walter Robert Corti, dated September 12, 1929, mentions that Wells had recently visited his house (Jung, *Letters*, vol. 1, 69).

Much as Wells's novels reflect his friendship with Jung, Schreber's *Memoirs* informs Jung's friendship with Freud. Jung himself mentions Schreber as early as 1907 in *The Psychology of Dementia Praecox* (*CW* 3), which likely is one way that he called Freud's attention to *Memoirs*. Freud then wrote his treatise, *Psycho-Analytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia (Dementia Paranoides)* in 1911, the year of Schreber's death. Because Freud believed that "a printed case history can take the place of personal acquaintance with the patient" (9), he never met Schreber or interviewed any of his doctors. Consequently, Funt asserts that "Freud and Jung functioned as readers, not psychoanalysts" and that *Memoirs* "is a text and not a 'case'" (99–100). These distinctions are obviously black-and-white thinking; *Memoirs* is a text about a case, and the two men operated as both readers and psychoanalysts. Nevertheless, critics agree that Freud read Schreber's book as a literary text (Lothane 324, Crapanzano 738), meaning that Freud treated Schreber like a literary character and regarded *Memoirs* as a New Critical artifact whose content is complete and ready to be unlocked through agile reading. Although there is a falseness to *Psycho-Analytic Notes* because it is once removed from the man at the heart of *Memoirs*, Freud presents a psychological analysis as though he were dealing with an in-person interview.

Freud's main points are easy to adumbrate. In general, "what was abolished internally [repressed content] returns from without [is projected]" (71), and (predictably)

"the roots of every nervous and mental disorder are chiefly to be found in the patient's sexual life" (30). Accordingly, Schreber moves from sexual ascetism to voluptuousness (erotic feeling) and to the belief that he is transforming into a woman. Schreber's "outburst of a homosexual impulse" is Freud's central point (45): his long-repressed desire for his father and brother gets transferred first to his doctor (Dr. Paul Flechsig) and then to God. The upper God, Ormuzd, corresponds to the father and the lower God, Ahriman, to the brother. Even Schreber's relationship to God—"religious paranoia" (Freud 18)—may reflect desire for closeness with male figures. (As Vincent Crapanzano observes, Ormudz represents maleness, Ariman femaleness [763], a point that Jungians need to emphasize because it may be that Schreber's talk of dual Gods equals mythological projection of animus and anima.)

This brief summary of Freud's views serves as a basis for understanding the interactions he and Jung had in their correspondence regarding Schreber's *Memoirs*. William McGuire's edition of *The Freud/Jung Letters* includes twenty-one mentions of Schreber, including eight references to *Memoirs*. The correspondence tracks the progress of Freud's composition of *Psycho-Analytic Notes* and registers the genuine enthusiasm Freud and Jung have for Schreber's text. Freud gushes about "the wonderful Schreber, who ought to have been made a professor of psychiatry and director of a mental hospital" (Letter 187F, 22 Apr. 1910, 311). Later that year, Jung replies, "I was touched and overjoyed to learn how much you appreciate the greatness of Schreber's mind and the liberating [holy words] of the basic language [archaic German]" (Letter 213J, 29 Sept. 1910, 356). (Schreber himself calls the basic language "a somewhat antiquated but nevertheless powerful German, characterized particularly by a wealth of euphemisms" [26].) The next month, Freud mentions reducing the case "to its nuclear complex," which is that Dr. Flechsig is a father figure for whom Schreber has homosexual feelings. He states that he shares Jung's enthusiasm for Schreber and that he plans to introduce the basic language "as a serious technical term—meaning the original wording of a delusional idea which the patient's consciousness . . . experiences only in distorted form" (Letter 214F, 1 Oct. 1910, 358). Two months later, Freud declares that he is fully engaged: "I am all Schreber and will make a point of bringing the manuscript to Munich for you. I am not pleased with it, but it is for others to judge. All the same, a few points come out very clearly" (Letter 223F, 3 Dec. 2010, 377). Jung's next letter also mentions a meeting with Freud and Paul Eugen Blueler in Munich: "I am greatly looking forward to Munich, where the Schreber will play a not unimportant role" (Letter 224J, 13 Dec. 1910, 378).

Freud finished his treatise later that month: "My Schreber is finished. . . . I'll give you the whole thing to read when I see you. The piece is formally imperfect, fleetingly improvised [like the figures Schreber sees when he believes that he is the last person alive on Earth], I had neither time nor strength to do more. Still, there are a few good things in it . . ." (Letter 225F, 18 Dec. 2010, 379–80).[2] Jung offers a high compliment a few months later and wishes that he had done more with Schreber prior to Freud's efforts.

[2] Freud quotes Schreber as stating that fleeting-improvised men are "'human shapes set down for a short time by divine miracles only to be dissolved again'" (Letter 212F, 24 Sept. 1910, 354, n. 3). In Macalpine and Hunter's translation, they are "transitorily put into human shape by miracles" (Schreber 61). Jung, in *The Psychology of Dementia Praecox*, mentions "'fleeting-improvised men'" and "'fleetingly deposited men'" (CW 3, par. 150 and n. 7). In addition, "a (miniscule) *Freudian* soul" is an "[a]llusion to the 'little men' (souls) who tormented Schreber by 'nerve contact'" (Letter 215J, 20 Oct. 1910, 360 and n. 8).

> Only now that I have the galleys can I enjoy your Schreber. It is not only uproariously funny but brilliantly written as well. If I were an altruist I would now be saying how glad I am that you have taken Schreber under your wing and shown psychiatry what treasures are heaped up there. But, as it is, I must content myself with the invidious role of wishing I had got in first, though that's not much of a consolation. (Letter 243J, 19 Mar. 1911, 407)

Sounding more neutral, Jung writes three months later, "It seems that in Dem. praec. you have at all costs to bring to light the inner world produced by the introversion of libido, which in paranoiacs suddenly appears in distorted form as a delusional system (Schreber) . . ." (Letter 259J, 12 June 1911, 426–27). Introversion would soon become a centerpiece of Jung's reading of Schreber's mental illness.

At least twelve times in their letters, Freud and Jung playfully use Schreber's terminology almost like a secret language. The phrase "fleetingly improvised," which Freud uses to characterize his treatise in Letter 225F, appears again in Letter 212F (354). The basic language, which McGuire refers to as "Schreber's jargon" (421, n. 4), appears in Letters 197F and 254J (327, 421). The word "miracles," Schreber's term for the symptoms he experiences, appears in Letters 186J and 333J (307, 531). Nerve contact appears in Letter 204J (342), and Letter 275J has "'a bird loaded with corpse poison'" in quotation marks (449), a recollection of Schreber's emphasis on the significance of birds and insistence that God deals only with corpses.

It is clear that Freud and Jung enjoyed their correspondence about Schreber and their use of Schreberisms, but that positivity soon became toxic. Comments on the *Memoirs* serve also to illustrate the rift between the two psychologists. For example, Jung writes: "That passage in your Schreber analysis where you ran into the libido problem (loss of libido = loss of reality) is one of the points where our mental paths cross [diverge]. In my view the concept of libido as set forth in the *Three Essays* needs to be supplemented by the genetic factor to make it applicable to Dem. praec." (Letter 282J, 14 Nov. 1911, 461). Jung is critical here of Freud's insistence that libido is purely sexual; libido, Jung believes, has other dimensions, and sexual libido is not automatically applicable to schizophrenia. Jung hammers away at the limitation of Freud's libido theory a month later:

> As for the libido problem, I must confess that your remark in the Schreber analysis . . . has set off booming reverberations. This remark, or rather the doubt expressed therein, has resuscitated all the difficulties that have beset me throughout the years in my attempt to apply the libido theory to Dem. praec. The loss of the reality function in D. Pr. cannot be reduced to repression of libido (defined as sexual hunger). Not by me, at any rate. Your doubt shows me that in your eyes as well the problem cannot be solved in this way. (Letter 287J, 11 Dec. 1911, 471)

Freud addresses their disagreement in his reply, suggesting that "there is no reason to suppose that this scientific difference will detract from our personal relations" (Letter 319F, 13 June 1912, 510). He thinks that their relationship can endure a divergence of opinion on libido theory, but that was of course not the case.

That Jung's reactions to Freud's Schreber text reflect the two men's initial alignment and friendship, but later register their falling out, has not escaped the critics.

Jung's opinion of Schreber's case emphasizes schizophrenia over paranoia as far back as the 1907 publication of *The Psychology of Dementia Praecox*, an interpretation he shared with Bleuler (Lothane 322–24), and builds upon Jung's definition of libido as broader than pathology or sexuality (Funt 107–08).There may be a slight contradiction, however, in Funt's comments on Jung's disagreement with Freud. On the one hand, "Jung seemed to have no basic disagreement with Freud's description, although he took great issue with the theoretical implications" (103). But then: "The rift between Jung and Freud became increasingly evident after Freud published his Schreber" (106). In other words, *Memoirs* became a focal point for a disagreement that had preceded all the letters about Schreber. As Lothane writes, "Small wonder Jung pounced to use the Schreber analysis to dynamite the libido theory" (339).

Jung offers two bluntly critical statements on Freud's approach. The first, a general critique that uses Schreber as an example, appears in "On Psychological Understanding." Jung argues that Freud has reduced "the fantasy-structure to its simple, fundamental elements. This is what Freud has done. But it is only half of the work. The other half is the constructive understanding of Schreber's system. The question is: what is the goal the patient tried to reach through the creation of his system?" (*CW* 3, par. 408). In other words, Freud's emphasis on Schreber's pathology does not consider the teleology of his mental illness. In *Symbols of Transformation*, Jung states, "The case was written up at the time by Freud in a very unsatisfactory way after I had drawn his attention to the book" (*CW* 5, par. 458, n. 65). And Jung emphasizes that "Schreber's case, which Freud is here discussing, is not a pure paranoia" (*Symbols*, *CW* 5, par. 192, n. 8). What, then, does Jung himself make of the Schreber case? The answer is a series of alternative interpretations.

Jung thought that Schreber was schizophrenic, probably because the madman states that "the senseless twaddle of voices in my head causes an absolutely unbearable mental martyrdom" (183; cf. 128, n. 63). Jung writes that Schreber's case involves schizophrenia ("Conscious," *CW* 9i, par. 494, n. 4), that the so-called bellowing miracle arises from schizophrenia (*Symbol*s, *CW* 5, par. 144), and that Schreber provides "[e]xcellent examples" of schizophrenics' "uncertain perception of their surroundings" (*The Psychology*, *CW* 3, par. 171 and n. 31). A second possibility is that withdrawal of libido from the outer world makes it appear unreal and leads the patient to create a substitute inner world that he considers objectively real. Jung confirms the first step, the withdrawal of libido, as follows: "The philosophical view conceives the world as an emanation of libido. When therefore the insane Schreber brought about the end of the world through his introversion, he was withdrawing libido [generally defined] from the world about him, thereby making it unreal" (*Symbols*, *CW* 5, par. 591; cf. *Freud & Psychoanalysis*, *CW* 4, par. 272–73, and Lothane 347). The new world that Schreber then creates is an elaborate projection, as Jung suggests: "There are patients who elaborate their delusions with scientific thoroughness, often dragging in an immense amount of comparative material by way of proof. Schreber belongs to this class" ("On Psychological Understanding," *CW* 3, par. 410).

What Schreber creates is a *Weltanschauung*, a schizophrenic's projection of "a new-world system . . . that will enable them to assimilate unknown psychic phenomena and so adapt themselves to their own world" ("On Psychological Understanding," *CW* 3, par. 416). That adaptation aligns with Schreber's claim that he has a *nervous* illness but not a *mental* illness (237); he believes that what he perceives has objective reality as well as

scientific and theological value. But he is stuck in a psychological trap because of his mental rigidity, which Jung neatly characterizes: "The fossilization of the man shrouds itself in a smoke-screen of moods, ridiculous irritability, feelings of distrust and resentment, which are meant to justify his rigid attitude. A perfect example of this type of psychology is Schreber's account of his own psychosis, *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*" (*Symbols*, *CW* 5, par. 458).

On yet a different tack, Jung turns his attention to the archetypal background of Schreber's symptoms: "In the case of an anima-possession, for instance, the patient will want to change himself into a woman through self-castration, or he is afraid that something of the sort will be done to him by force. The best-known example of this is Schreber's *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*" ("Archetypes," *CW* 9i, par. 82). Closely aligned with the possibility of anima possession is Jung's suggestion that the syzygy (the archetypal pairing of anima and animus) intertwines with Schreber's schizophrenia: "For the syzygy does indeed represent the psychic contents that irrupt into consciousness in the psychosis (most clearly of all in the paranoid forms of schizophrenia." "A classic case . . . is Schreber's *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*" (*Aion*, *CW* 9ii, par. 62 and n. 12). Finally, continuing with the feminine motif, Jung mentions that "[t]he 'imaginary' child is common among women with mental disorders and is usually interpreted in a Christian sense. Homunculi also appear, as in the famous Schreber case, where they come in swarms and plague the sufferer" ("The Psychology of the Child Archetype," *CW* 9i, par. 270).

In summary, friendship highlights the way that Jung's association with Wells led to *Christina Alberta's Father* and the way that Schreber's *Memoirs* initially strengthened Jung's bond with Freud but eventually provided a context for divergence. Whereas Freud views Schreber as a paranoic whose sexual libido manifests as homosexual urges, Jung sees him as a schizophrenic whose libido, more generally defined, relates to a panoply of possible approaches to the case. Given the narrow application of Freud's libido theory versus the multi-directional alternatives in Jung's writings, it is no wonder that the case of the mad judge contributed to the rift between Freud and Jung but did not disrupt Jung's more casual friendship with Wells. The Schreber case is more subtle and diffuse than, for example, Freud and Jung's difference of opinion on Jung's dream of a multi-story house (Jung, *MDR* 158–59); but the account of their interaction in letters and other sources both reflects and contributes to their intellectual falling-out.

Two: Repression and Insanity

A deeper psychological interpretation of the two books under consideration affirms Jung's belief that insanity arises from repression of non-assimilated content. A partial plot summary of *Christina Alberta's Father* provides a helpful starting point.

After Albert Edward Preemby loses his wife Chris Hossett in 1920, he sells their business (really her family's business), the Limpid Steam Laundry in the parish of Saint Simon Unawares in east London (fitting place names for a character who but limply knows himself). He and their daughter Christina Alberta move to a boarding house where, during a séance, he is told that he is the reincarnation of an ancient Sumerian named Sargon, King of Kings. Primed by years of daydreams, vivid imagination, and interest in esoteric topics such as pyramids, Atlantis, astrology, and eschatology, he remembers his past life as Sargon and begins to assume his former personality, aiming to take over the world and right its ills by ending war, the exploitation of women, and the unjust distribution of wealth.

After secretly moving to a new boarding house, Preemby sets out to recruit disciples but manages to get himself arrested at the Rubicon Restaurant (no turning back) and committed to an asylum. Robert Roothing, a sympathetic friend from his new residence, rescues him from that dire situation. Dr. Wilfred Devizes—"'a nervous and mental specialist'" (206), a reader of Freud and Jung (119), and Christina Alberta's biological father—teaches him to see that Sargon is a symbol of human potential and unity, that in truth everybody is Sargon (301). Preemby returns to sanity but dies before he can act on his intention to visit the planet's most interesting places.

Devizes expresses a diagnosis of Preemby that departs markedly from Freud's emphasis on paranoia and Jung's on schizophrenia in Schreber. "'A stupid doctor might mistake his imaginations for the splendour of paranoia or take his abstraction in reverie for dementia praecox or think he was a masked epileptic'" (220). Devizes believes instead that Preemby is one of the "borderland cases" (224), which of course resonates with Jerome S. Bernstein's argument that people like his client Hannah who feels animals' emotions are border*land* cases rather than border*line* cases (7–14). Here "borderland" indicates a nonpathological condition of ego permeability in which an individual experiences the suffering of the surrounding non-human environment. Like Devizes, the novel's critics shy away from such terminology as schizophrenia, but how *do* they diagnose Preemby's mental condition?

Some of the previous interpretations of Preemby are in sync with Jung's theory about how the insane create a "new-world system." Preemby, via the imagination (James 158), experiences "dual consciousness" by living in "two worlds (Batchelor 107), one of which is fantastic (Kemp 186). Another vein of interpretation coincides with Jung's point about the withdrawal of libido—"the individual consciousness respond[s] to the disordered outside world by withdrawing into insanity" (Batchelor 134); however, this interpretation does not accurately characterize Preemby who actively attempts to engage with the world. A better reading is that Preemby and Devizes are different aspects of Wells: the author as he fears to be seen (Preemby) and as he wishes to be seen (Devizes); the latter is "a tough-minded progressive thinker meriting trust and admiration" (Sherborne 271), whose rational call brings the little man back to normalcy.

At this point, a possible Jungian interpretation arises. Bennet notes that Jung considered Preemby to be a "literary example" of "a classical type of compensation" (93), and this characterization is true to what Jung says about the character in *The Collected Works*. For example, he describes compensation as "those subtle inner processes which invade the conscious mind with such suggestive force"; then he adds that "[a] most excellent account—taken from life, so to speak—of such an inner transformation is to be found in H. G. Wells' *Christina Alberta's Father*" (*The Relations, CW* 7, par. 270). That is, the unconscious compensates by invading consciousness. A bit further on, Jung makes his longest statement on Preemby and compensation:

> Mr. Preemby, a midget personality, discovers that he is really a reincarnation of Sargon, King of Kings. Happily, the genius of the author rescues poor old Sargon from pathological absurdity, and even gives the reader a chance to appreciate the tragic and eternal meaning of this lamentable affray. Mr. Preemby, a complete nonentity, recognizes himself as the point of intersection of all ages past and future. This knowledge is not too dearly bought at the cost of a little madness, provided that Preemby is

> not in the end devoured by that monster of a primordial image—which is in fact what nearly happens to him. (par. 284)

In other words, the midget personality, who compensates by fancying himself a titanic personality at the meeting point of all times, barely escapes possession by an archetype—"that monster of a primordial image." The "tragic and eternal meaning" of Preemby's evolution will be discussed in due course, but it is, in brief, a more inclusive definition of what it means to be Sargon.

There is also plenty of evidence that Preemby illustrates Jung's theory that repression fuels insanity. To begin with a commonplace, Jung believes that a man explores his masculine side during the first half of life and his feminine side (anima) in later life. Preemby's wife Chris thwarts the proper progression by assuming the masculine role and forcing him to repress his masculine side. As a result, he assumes the submissive, feminine role in their marriage while cultivating his imagination and escaping from reality via the study of esoterica. His lifelong interests prime the pump, and after Chris passes away the séance prompts him to embrace a compensatory masculine identity, the King of Kings. Preemby is making up for lost time.

There is plenty of evidence in the novel of repression in Preemby's home life. In the Preembys' marriage, Chris plays the "Cave Man," causing him to repress his masculine side (15). "He did little except what he was told to do. He was carried over his marriage as a man might be carried over a weir" (16). Chris is "his masterful and capable wife," as a key passage illustrates:

> She was, he had discovered on his marriage, three years his senior . . . [she feels a] proprietary affection; she chose all his clothes for him, she cultivated his manners and bearing and upheld him against all other people. She dressed him rather more like a golf champion than he would have done himself if he had had any say in the matter. She would not have let him have a bicycle for many years, she was a little exacting about his ways of keeping the laundry accounts, she fixed his pocket-money at ten shillings a week, and she was disposed to restrict his opportunities for conversation with feminine members of the laundry staff. (17–18)

Thus, although Chris wants *men* to rule the world (27), she rules in the home with various results: obedience ("Long years of exercise had made him almost constitutionally acquiescent" [38]); female authority ("'Beware of women; they take the sceptre out of the hands of the king'" [103]); and prohibition (Chris "for the most part had been a concentrated incarnate 'Don't'" [228]). Moreover, she squashes Preemby's interest in psychic phenomena, as he tells Christina: "'And when your dear mother said a thing was Nonsense, then it was Nonsense. It only made things disagreeable if you argued it was anything else'" (95). Consequently, he is like a seed, as Christina realizes: "Mother had kept him dried up for nearly twenty years, but now he was germinating and nobody could tell what sort of thing he might become" (39; cf. "the germination of a seed" on 75). Nevertheless, he admits that because of spousal domination he has until now allowed his life to slip away.

After lifelong repression of his masculine side, Preemby is primed and ready for compensation in the form of a massive inflationary enantiodromia: not just a swing from a feminine stance to a more masculine orientation but also a swing to a completely different

personality and the potential for power and prestige. The transition is clearly present in honorifics such as "the Lord and Restorer of the Whole Earth" and "Sargon the First, the Magnificent One, King of all Kings, the Inheritor of the Earth . . . Lord of the Whole World" (138, 134). Although Wells is a good enough writer that the reader never fully discounts the possibility that Preemby really is Sargon's reincarnation, it makes more sense to conclude that Sargon is Preemby's imaginative departure from reality. Read in this light, the whole Sargon episode is the unconscious compensation for years of repression by his wife. Along the way, we have hints that the unconscious is on the move. For example, Preemby reads a book "called *Fantasia of the Unconscious* about the Lost Atlantis and similar things" (69; italics added). Given the phrase "the great change in his mind" (76), Preemby's transformation via the unconscious resembles a *metanoia*.

In the ways just described, Preemby's situation illustrates Jung's theory that repression leads to insanity. When his wife's overactive animus drives his masculine agency into the unconscious, he becomes the midget personality Jung recognizes. After she dies, the repressed masculine energy overcompensates by creating the fantasy that Preemby is an ancient ruler reincarnated to address modern ills. Repression leads to insanity via compensation.

A similar process, we may suggest, is at work in Schreber who, like Preemby, believes that he is reincarnated and that in previous lifetimes he was a Hyperborian woman, Jesuit Novice, Burgomaster, Alsatian girl, and a Mongolian Prince (that is, Genghis Khan, a direct parallel to Preemby's fantasy of being Sargon) (Schreber 88). Along with the reincarnation parallel, there is a need to address Freud's theory that homosexual feelings drive Schreber's paranoia—a theory based on Schreber's statement "that it really must be rather pleasant to be a woman succumbing to intercourse" (46). On that possibility Schreber's critics are wholly negative: the homosexual theory is a great mistake (Canetti 449); Freud projected his own homosexual feelings for Wilhelm Fleiss onto Schreber (Funt 105); Schreber was at most a cross-dresser and a pseudohomosexual (Lothane 333); and "he was surely representing his own life's devastation rather than expressing a homosexual wish" (Dinnage xiv). A much more likely theory appears in Simon Pummell's film, *Shock Head Soul: The Story of Daniel Paul Schreber*, which suggests that the fantasy of turning into a woman so that he can repopulate the world compensates for his wife Sabine's six miscarriages over a fifteen-year period.

Schreber's behavior in the asylum surely indicates that repressed material is manifesting in fits of inflation and grandiosity. Although he characterizes his experiences as divine miracles, the simple fact is that repressed content is manifesting. Grimaces, bellowing, rage, and sexual stimulation all suggest the release of repressed content (Lothane 386ff.), making Schreber "like an infant calling for his mother" (Baumeyer 71). If repression of the feminine may also stem from Schreber's "imbalanced masculine perspective" as a superior court judge (Funt 111), then he overcompensates by fantasizing about turning into a woman. The stronger the repression, the stronger the compensation must be: Schreber does not just cultivate his feminine side; he believes that he is transforming physiologically into the opposite sex—an absurd exaggeration of Jung's idea that in the second half of life a man embraces his feminine side.

Various factors ratchet up the compensatory element of Schreber's delusions. First, his statement that "*everything that happens is in reference to me*" (233) shows his inflationary grandiosity. Second, he considers himself a singular historical figure because

the "marvelous concatenation of events" that happened to him has "probably never before happened in the history of the world" (41). Third, he believes that his religious revelations—which are objectively real "supernatural matters" (191) and exceed what science and intellect could achieve in thousands of years (68)—will lead to "the overthrow of all existing religious systems" (258). Ironically, though, he undermines his own position. "I have no doubt whatever that my early ideas were not simply 'delusions' and 'hallucinations,'" and he asserts that "*there is something rotten in the state of Denmark*—that is to say in the relationship between God and mankind" (186). But in applying Shakespeare's language to his own situation, Schreber misses an important difference between himself and Hamlet: namely, Hamlet acknowledges the Ghost's objective reality because others see it, whereas no one else experiences what Schreber sees, hears, and feels.

The next interpretation aligns with Han Israëls's belief that the provenance of Schreber's disorder is the pressure of his being president of a senate of the Higher Regional Court in Dresden (173). When overwork ("mental overstrain" [Schreber 44]), the pressure of working with more experienced senior colleagues, lack of a social life, and insomnia thinned the veil that normally separates consciousness from the unconscious, repressed material springs forth in compensation for years of repression. But what exactly is the thing that is repressed? Schreber himself gives us one answer: "Whoever knew me intimately in my earlier life will bear witness that I had been a person of calm nature, without passion, clear-thinking and sober, whose individual gift lay much more in the direction of cool intellectual criticism than in the creative activity of an unbounded imagination" (69). Reason dominates passion and squelches imagination. He also attributes to himself "two qualities . . . without reservation, namely *absolute truthfulness* and *more than usually keen powers of observation*; no one who knew me in my days of health or witnessed my behavior now would dispute this" (221). He adds, "Few people have been brought up according to such strict moral principles as I, and have throughout life practiced such moderation especially in matters of sex, as I venture to claim for myself" (249). Because of the earlier repression of the body, Schreber experiences phenomena related to changes in his body. As William G. Niederland points out, his father, Dr. Daniel Gottlieb Moritz Schreber, was a medical school instructor who published books on child rearing techniques that he apparently applied to his own son—techniques that involved severe repression of emotion and actual physical restraints to correct children's posture (50−56). In fact, there is general agreement in the criticism of *Memoirs* that the father lies in many respects at the root of Schreber's nervous illness. Since "[s]uppression, control, [and] total obedience are the keynotes" of Schreber's upbringing (Dinnage xvi) and harsh discipline the norm (Schatzman 50), the roots of Schreber's paranoia lie in the enactment of his father's repressive system on the son's body (Kohut 256). If Niederland is correct that Schreber was subjected to his father's gadgets, then, for example, "the so-called *compression-of-the-chest-miracle*" (Schreber 143) probably has its roots in Dr. Schreber's use of orthopedic restraints. Similarly, if the father's child-rearing system forbade complaints, the repressed emotions festered in the unconscious for decades and then manifested as the bellowing miracle when stress and insomnia thinned the veil, allowing the unconscious to compensate. In other words, Schreber's nervous illness compensates for both physical and emotional repression, much as Jung supposes in his statement in "Commentary on *The Secret of the Golden Flower*."

Many more examples could be given, for *Memoirs* is chock-full of details. But even this brief discussion confirms that Jung is right to suggest that the two texts illustrate the idea that repression leads to insanity. The present analysis has taken the parallel further than Jung did by identifying a contrast: Preemby's repression-in-marriage results in the fantasy of being a person of great masculine authority, but Schreber's repression of everything in childhood produces an exaggerated version of embracing the feminine during the second half of life. The two figures—Preemby and Schreber—are opposites in that respect. The analysis also reveals compensatory projection to be an enthymeme in Jung's repression-insanity dyad.

Three: About God

Wells registers his theological opinions in his short book *God the Invisible King*, which was published in 1917, eight years before *Christina Alberta's Father*. According to Wells, there is a living God who is personal and intimate. God resides primarily in the human heart, is finite, and is a single spirit, though possessing two aspects: the God of Nature (Creator) and the God of the Heart (Redeemer). Wells opposes the Trinity, doctrine, and creeds, favoring instead direct contact between humans and the Divine. As summarized by R. Thurston Hopkins, *God the Invisible King* suggests that God is not only finite, singular, and handicapped but also militant and adventurous (60−67).

There is great divergence among Wells's treatise on God, his treatment of God in the novel, and Schreber's statements about God in his *Memoirs*. But we begin with the foundational piece—Devizes's description of the psyche. There is good Jungian psychology here, and it helps inform the novel's statements on God. One suspects that the fictional character not only reads Jung but also echoes his psychology because the terminology in the novel matches Jung's ideas quite precisely. The primary self (shadow) is "the old instinctive individual, fearful, greedy, lustful, jealous, self-assertive." The social self (persona) involves deeper "social instincts and dispositions arising out of family life" (Wells 242). Devizes further juxtaposes ego ("'individual egotistical men'") and individuation ("'synthesis and co-operation . . . common aims'") (325). Devizes/Wells builds on the unity implied by synthesis and cooperation, and unity characterizes the theological position on which the novel eventually comes to rest.

Christina Alberta's Father offers a variety of spiritual approaches in the following order of appearance. There is Christina's "explicitly irreligious" position. "She did not believe in respectability, Christian morality, the institution of the family, the capitalist system, or the British Empire" (48). As a Communist, she favors Bolshevism. A second view is the naïve New Age credibility (runaway imagination) that Preemby embraces when he is tricked by the séance into believing that he is Sargon. There is a sense that God is infinite (157) and that Providence is active (164), but there is also Preembyism or "infinite nothingness" (167). A fellow asylum inmate at the Gifford Street Infirmary espouses such nihilism by reciting a poem that makes the following points: God will take vengeance; atheism and theology are both wrong; God exists but has no face, so cannot show it; people think that he does not exist, but he is there; the speaker is "lost" but found God in the void "[u]nmasked and a little annoyed" (188). Other mad poems claim that life is about lust and pain, moves from dirt to dirt, and is meaningless (190, 192). (The idea that nature is filthy and that we are dirt anticipates Christina Alberta's statement: "'It's a dust-heap of a world'" [216]). Further on, the novel equates God and the Power, but there is dualism: Power and

Supreme Power versus Anti-Power, the latter pushing toward Preembyism and confusion (184, 190–91, 260). But even in the extremity of his incarceration, Preemby pushes back against the mad poetry by stating, "'All things are joined together and work together and continue for ever [sic]'" (193), a position that anticipates the unity that Devizes emphasizes.

Along with adumbrating some basic Jungian psychological concepts, the novel affirms the principle of unity. Devizes schools Preemby to affirm all life's connectedness and an "'increasing'" or "'immortal mind,'" "'a common mind of the race,'" somewhat akin to the *unus mundus* (241). Devizes emphasizes "[t]he deep-lying continuity of life" (242), that which lies below the shadow and the persona. Preemby comprehends the implication of this unity: "'I am Sargon, but in a rather different sense from what I had imagined. . . . I wasn't only Sargon, but all the men and women who have ever mattered on earth. I was God's Everlasting Servant'" (301). Sargon and kingship are just terms for the potential within everyone, and God manifests in human connection. What emerges in the novel, then, is a solution to Preemby's *psychomachia* (soul struggle). On the one hand, we find Sargon, God, Power, Providence, meaning, order, and belief; on the other, Preembyism, Anti-Power, nothingness, skepticism, and a dust-heap world. The extended binary—a projection of Preemby's interiority—is absurdly played out on the pretext of saving the world. With the help of Devizes, however, he arrives at a new third view: not Preemby *versus* Sargon but instead Peemby *as* Sargon in a more universal and psychologically wholesome fashion.

Projection is also a suitable way to begin examining Schreber's position on God, for Jung quotes Freud's use of that concept. "'Schreber's 'rays of god,' which are made up of a condensation of the sun's rays, of nerve-fibres 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'" (*Symbols*, *CW* 5, par. 184, n. 23; emphasis added; cf. Freud 78). Schreber interprets celestial, biological, and emotional phenomena as God's rays projected upon him, but once again Freud espouses his reductive sexual theory—libidinal cathexes are the patient's homosexual attraction to Dr. Flechsig. As before, whereas Freud stresses homosexuality, Jung stresses schizophrenia: "Schizophrenia . . . infuses new life into the old usage, as in the case of the 'bellowing miracle' described by Schreber, who in this way gave God, sadly uninformed about the affairs of humanity, notice of his existence" (*Symbols*, *CW* 5, par. 144). Similarly, Jung says of Schreber that "the extraordinary happenings going on all around him compel God to 'move nearer to the earth'" (*Flying Saucers*, *CW* 10, par. 690). Jung's reading here is in sync with Baumeyer's sense that the bellowing should compel God to draw near, as though Schreber were "an infant calling for his mother" (71). Alternatively, Lothane asserts that the bellowing reflects "pain and rage" disguised as a miracle (341)—a psychological reading that affirms Jung's sense that insanity arises from unintegrated shadow content. A romantic interpretation of the rays is also possible. In a section on the Cabala's "hieros-gamos fantasy," Jung notes a man's "'loving desire . . . for his wife'" and then in a note asserts "a parallel to this in the psychotic experiences of Schreber (*Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*), where the 'rays of God' longingly seek to enter him" (*Mysterium*, *CW* 14, par. 18 and n. 123).

These few comments by Jung go only a little way toward explicating Schreber's complex terminology in relation to God. Proper understanding of Schreber's theology

requires careful definition of terms, an area where many previous critics have left a deep imprint. Most fundamentally, Schreber speaks of the Order of the World, which seems to mean natural law: "'*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*" (67, n. 35). God is a prime mover, but he does not micromanage the physical world; nature progresses on its own. Thus, the Order of the World is the equilibrium of creation, a self-perpetuating system that follows its own rules apart from divine agency. Next, the soul or "acting center of the person" (Lothane 2) is contained in the body's nerves, but God's nerves are superior and can transform themselves into rays (Canetti 436). Nerves are physical, but rays are psychological (Lothane 392). Like the fleetingly improvised men, God's rays are attracted by Schreber's nerves, and he believes that he is the cynosure of God's attention. Regarding God himself, there are the two previously mentioned aspects: the lower Ahriman relates to Semites, unmanning, and brother Gustav; and the upper Ormuzd relates to Aryans, restored manliness, and Dr. Schreber (Freud 24; Niederland 67; Schreber 53 and 39, n. 19). These deities inhabit the posterior realm of God, whereas the anterior realm of God is known as the forecourts of heaven, a state of blessedness. The earthly state of voluptuousness—"a general sense of well-being of body and mind" (Lothane 403)—prefigures that heavenly blessedness. Death brings reunion with God when God enters the corpse and absorbs its nerves (Hendershot 23), but reincarnation is possible.

The problem that Schreber confronts is believing that God and Dr. Flechsig conspire to commit soul murder on him. The term soul murder means the destruction of reason (Canetti 450) or, more broadly, "destroying the soul, or mind or spirit" (Lothane 416), perhaps to the point where one "gives up on life" (Butler 174). But imagining that he was being influenced from without probably helped Schreber cope with his inner demons, and in Lothane's view soul murder is an apt term for the physical and psychological mistreatment that he received in asylums (52). Moreover, soul murder is a criticism of Dr. Flechsig's view in *Die körperlichen Grundlagen der Geistesstörungen* (*The Physical Basis of Mental Disorders*) that "'there are no independent disorders of the soul without disorders of the body'" (qtd. in Kittler et al. 6; cf. Butler 175). When Schreber says that God does not really understand living persons because he deals only with corpses, there is a relevant parallel to the fact that Dr. Flechsig, a pathologist, tries to reduce human existence to biological mechanics. In that sense, soul murder is Schreber-speak for scientific materialism. In addition, as Lothane points out, God is Schreber's way of scorning "the omniscience and arrogance of doctors" (69). According to Niederland, it is also very likely that God's remoteness and vulnerability are Schreber's way of reflecting on his experiences in his father's home—Dr. Schreber was sadistic but later withdrew after a traumatic brain injury. Schreber's claim that God deals only with corpses is "a reproach addressed by the sick son to the father" (70, 106).

What, then, can be made of Schreber's claims of mystical experiences? They are intrapsychic events that he interprets as extrapsychic. Lothane, for example, rightly states that Schreber was "in a prolonged dream trance" (381) and that "God became the equivalent of the dynamic unconscious: not I but God in me" (382). There is a distinction to be made here related to John Keats's statement: "The imagination may be compared to Adam's dream. He awoke and found it truth" (1274). When Schreber awakes, he believes his experiences to be truth because the alternative—that he is insane—is too difficult for a learned professional man to accept; again, that is why he insists that he has a *nervous* illness

rather than a *mental* illness (237). Either way, Schreber's difficulties are instructive: *Memories of My Nervous Illness* equals what *The Red Book* would be if Jung had lost his connection to the external world.

Let us return to Jung's statement in the key paragraph of his "Commentary" and discern whether his God analogy is relevant to Wells and Schreber. "This attitude [denial of unassimilated content] is equivalent to saying: 'We no longer have any fear of God and believe that everything is to be judged by human standards.' This hybris or narrowness of consciousness is always the shortest way to the insane asylum" (*CW* 13, par. 53). Aside from the fact that "always" amounts to overgeneralization, the statement implies that insanity has spiritual implications that may apply to the religious references in Wells's novel and Schreber's *Memoirs*. Unassimilated content is characteristic of both Preemby and Schreber—suppressed masculine agency and childhood emotions, respectively. The character and the patient believe their intrapsychic perceptions to be extrapsychic and objectively real. But with respect to God, there is great divergence. Preemby corrects an inmate's nihilistic recitation, believes in a dualistic system of Powers, and embraces a holistic and unified view of Sargon. In contrast, Schreber has a highly developed understanding of what he *thinks* is God but what is instead an elaborate projection of his inner disorder. Applying a supernatural yardstick to psychological manifestations is an elaborate self-deception. Perhaps it is not until he eschews his tendency to theologize the unacknowledged content of the unconscious that he improves sufficiently to argue in court that he is capable of self-care. In an ironic twist, *Memoirs*, despite its elaborate fantastical machinery, becomes part of Schreber's argument that he can live independently. The act of writing helps ground him in reality, and the logical way he presents his experiences with God probably works in his favor.

Conclusion

When Jung mentions Wells's *Christina Alberta's Father* and Schreber's *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness* as illustrations, there is more afoot than meets the eye because the two texts are more important in Jung's writings than Jungian scholars have recognized. Regarding friendships, whereas Jung's insights on schizophrenia inspired Wells to write a psychological novel about Preemby's break with reality, Freud and Jung's relationship included many comments on Schreber's *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness* that both caused and reflected their break in relations. As regards Jung's suggestion that repression leads to insanity, Preemby exaggerates the repressed masculine by mistaking delusions of grandeur, inflation, megalomania, and runaway imagination for truth; Schreber projects his repressed feminine side and tries to justify himself by claiming that his experiences are objectively real and of scientific and theological value. Yet just as Preemby fancies himself an ancient king but mellows into a more inclusive understanding of Sargon, Schreber's blunt assertions of objective reality evolve toward a less literal understanding—not the loss of "the stars themselves," he says at one point, but only "the states of Blessedness accumulated under these stars" (90). He searches below a literal interpretation of his experiences and begins to discern their deeper meaning. As both Preemby and Schreber illustrate by undergoing in-depth psychological self-exploration, the recovery of well-being lies in modulating the literal into the figurative or, in Jungian terms, sign into symbol.

Finally, regarding theological matters, Jung's suggestion that God has been reduced to human standards holds true in each case, and it may be that Wells's point in *God the*

Invisible King, that God is within us, is also true in Schreber's *Memoirs*—true, that is, if much of what Schreber attributes to God is a projection of his own psychological dysfunction. In the end, his struggle with God is purposeful, as he suggests in chapter nine by including a poem his wife gave him that stresses the necessity of nigredo (blackness, chaos, the shadow). It states that for us to experience "true peace," God must strike, causing us to experience darkness, pain, defeat, loneliness, and wretchedness (119–20). The point resembles John Donne's assertion that for him to "rise and stand," God must first overthrow him ("Batter my heart," line 3). In that respect, Preemby and Schreber, though superficially very different, both successfully engage in psychological catabasis. Sadly, however, Preemby does not live long enough to enjoy his new perspective on Sargon; and Schreber, after being released from tutelage in 1902, returned to the asylum in 1907 to live out the last four years of his life.

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