

Retrieved from:

The European Journal of Psychoanalysis

Sep 28, 2022

<https://www.journal-psychoanalysis.eu/articles/solution-and-salvation-daniel-paul-schreibers-cultivation-of-femininity/>

Bernd Nitzschke

Solution and Salvation: Daniel Paul Schreber's “Cultivation of Femininity”

Summary:

Daniel Paul Schreber who was imprisoned as a “paranoic” in the Sonnenstein Asylum in Pirna/Saxony (1894-1902) describes in his “Memoirs of a Nervous Patient” the torments to which he was subjected while he “was completely filled by holy ideas about God and the Order of the World”. This book, originally written only for his wife, was first published 1903 in Germany and later translated into multiple languages and interpreted over and over again by psychiatrists, psychoanalysts and other authors of science and literature. Thus Schreber became the most famous patient in the history of psychiatry. In this paper Schreber’s unmaning – the central “miracle” which he experienced during his “holy time” — is interpreted as a wishful fantasy: Schreber had to become a woman, when he — after six miscarriages with his wife — wanted to fulfil his wish to have a child. Therefore he dedicated himself to the “cultivation of femininity” — not to fulfil a homosexual desire but to become a woman and by this transformation to become a father!