

Introduction

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'A scientifically and personally decent man',¹ 'an original who lived a full and useful life',² 'the founder of hypnotic treatment and psychotherapy in Germany',³ – these were some characterisations of the Berlin physician Albert Moll (1862–1939) by reviewers of his memoirs, *Ein Leben als Arzt der Seele* [*A Life as a Doctor of the Soul*], which had appeared in 1936.⁴ Three years after the National Socialists came to power, publication of this book by Carl Reissner Verlag in Dresden had been difficult. Moll was of Jewish origin – the fact that he had converted to Protestantism in 1895 counted for nothing in Nazi Germany – but he still had enough personal support, even in the Reich office for censorship, to make himself heard for the last time.⁵ Throughout his life he had been a prolific author. Among others, he had published monographs on hypnotism (1889 and 1892),⁶ homosexuality (1891),⁷ the human sexual drive (1897/8),⁸ medical ethics (1902),⁹ sexuality in children (1908/9),¹⁰ spiritualism (1924),¹¹ and the psychology of occultists (1929),¹² and had edited a comprehensive handbook of sexology (1912).¹³ Many of his books had seen multiple editions and been translated into several languages. Through articles in general magazines and Berlin newspapers, he had also communicated his medical and psychological knowledge to a wider reading public.

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The authors gratefully acknowledge the support of their project on Albert Moll by the Wellcome Trust as part of the Strategic Award 'Knowledge, Ethics and Representation of Medicine and Health: Historical Perspectives' (grant 082800). We would also like to thank the anonymous referees for their helpful suggestions and Dr Sebastian Pranghofer, Dr Stephanie Eichberg, Rachel Simpson and Mike Laycock for editorial assistance.

¹ '[E]in wissenschaftlich und menschlich sauberer Mann'; Johannes Harms in *Die Bücherei, Zeitschrift der Reichsstelle für volkstümliches Büchereiwesen*, 4 (1937), 437.

² Anon, *Journal of Mental and Nervous Diseases*, 90 (1939), 821–2: 822.

³ 'Lebenserinnerungen des Begründers der hypnotischen Behandlung und der Psychotherapie in Deutschland'; Haberling in *Mitteilungen zur Geschichte der Medizin, der Naturwissenschaften und der Technik*, 36 (1937), 102.

⁴ Albert Moll, *Ein Leben als Arzt der Seele: Erinnerungen* (Dresden: Carl Reissner Verlag, 1936).

⁵ See Bundesarchiv Berlin, R56-V/305 Reichsschrifttumskammer, Überwachung und Verbot von Schrifttum, Verlag Carl Reissner Dresden, 24. August 1935 bis 7. Juli 1937.

⁶ Albert Moll, *Der Hypnotismus* (Berlin: Fischer's medicinische Buchhandlung, 1889); *idem*, *Der Rapport in der Hypnose: Untersuchungen über den thierischen Magnetismus* (Leipzig: Verlag von Ambr. Abel, 1892) (= Schriften der Gesellschaft für Psychologische Forschung, Heft 3–4).

⁷ Albert Moll, *Die conträre Sexualempfindung* (Berlin: Fischer's medicinische Buchhandlung, 1891).

⁸ Albert Moll, *Untersuchungen über die Libido sexualis*, Vol. 1, Part 1 and Part 2 (Berlin: Fischer's medicinische Buchhandlung, 1897/8). No second volume was published.

⁹ Albert Moll, *Ärztliche Ethik: Die Pflichten des Arztes in allen Beziehungen seiner Thätigkeit* (Stuttgart: Ferdinand Enke, 1902).

¹⁰ Albert Moll, *Das Sexualleben des Kindes* (Leipzig: Vogel, 1908, and Berlin: Walther, 1909).

¹¹ Albert Moll, *Der Spiritismus* (Stuttgart: Franckh'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1924).

¹² Albert Moll, *Psychologie und Charakterologie der Okkultisten* (Stuttgart: Ferdinand Enke, 1929).

¹³ Albert Moll (ed.), *Handbuch der Sexualwissenschaften: Mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der kulturgeschichtlichen Beziehungen* (Leipzig: F.C.W. Vogel, 1912).

Who was this prolific physician, sexologist, psychologist and ethicist, Albert Moll (Figure 1), and why does it make sense, more than seventy years after his death, to explore his work and context? In traditional medical historiography, the notion of ‘the forgotten Albert Moll’, who was overshadowed by his great rivals Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) and Magnus Hirschfeld (1868–1935), still has some currency.¹⁴ However, the research project behind this special issue was not primarily guided by the intention to do belated justice to a doctor and scientist who is considered to be a founder of medical psychology and sexology.¹⁵ Rather, the contributions to this issue attempt to capture, through discussion of aspects of Moll’s life and writings, some important facets of medical and scientific culture in Imperial and Weimar Germany: discourses on normal and deviant sexualities, on ethical issues in medicine, and on the demarcation of psychology from parapsychology. While relatively few biographical details about Moll are known, his engagement in those areas makes him a rewarding subject for historical investigation.

The main facts of Moll’s life are quickly told. Born on 4 May 1862 in Lissa (Prussia) as the son of a Jewish merchant, Moll went to the Catholic Gymnasium in the Silesian town of Glogau, before he studied, from 1879, medicine in Breslau, Freiburg/Breisgau, Jena, and Berlin, where he passed his final exams in 1884. An early influence on him was Ottomar Rosenbach (1851–1907), lecturer in internal medicine in Breslau, who, in 1896, moved to Berlin and became known for his advocacy of psychological treatments and his criticisms of orthodox bacteriology.¹⁶ In Jena, Moll belonged to the circle of students and staff around the professor of special pathology and therapeutics, Hermann Nothnagel (1841–1905). In 1885, Moll was promoted MD with a thesis on the effects of long-term immobilisation of joints in experimental animals, under the supervision of the Berlin orthopaedic surgeon Julius Wolff (1836–1902).¹⁷ During a subsequent grand tour he visited the clinics of Vienna – where Nothnagel had become head of the First Medical Clinic – Budapest, London, Paris, and Nancy.¹⁸ Like Freud and many others, he witnessed the famous demonstrations of hysteria and hypnosis by Jean-Martin Charcot (1825–93) at the Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris. However, he became an adherent of the so-called Nancy school of hypnotism of Ambroise-Auguste Liébeault (1823–1904) and Hippolyte Bernheim (1840–1919), who understood hypnosis as a psychological phenomenon, caused by suggestion, not a physiological one as Charcot had done.¹⁹ Returning to Berlin in 1887, Moll opened a private practice for nervous diseases, in which he worked until

¹⁴ Otto Winkelmann, ‘Der vergessene Albert Moll (1862–1939) und sein “Leben als Arzt der Seele”’, in Nora Goldenbogen *et al.* (eds), *Medizinische Wissenschaften und Judentum* (Dresden: Verein für regionale Politik und Geschichte, 1996), 46–52; Christina Schröder, ‘Ein Lebenswerk im Schatten der Psychoanalyse? Zum 50. Todestag des Sexualwissenschaftlers, Psychotherapeuten und Medizinethikers Albert Moll (1862–1939)’, *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Karl-Marx-Universität Leipzig, Math.-nat.wiss. Reihe*, 38 (1989), 434–44; Susanne Hahn and Christina Schröder, ‘Arzt der Seele: Albert Moll (1862–1939)’, *Zeitschrift für ärztliche Fortbildung*, 83 (1989), 933–5; Heinz Goerke, *Berliner Ärzte*, 2nd edn (Berlin: Berlin Verlag, 1984), 249–55.

¹⁵ Sören Wendelborn, ‘Die Entwicklung der Klinischen Psychologie im Berlin des ausgehenden 19. Jahrhunderts – dargestellt am Beispiel Albert Moll (1862–1939)’, *Psychologie und Geschichte*, 6 (1994), 303–12; Dorothea Cario, ‘Albert Moll (1862–1939). Leben, Werk und Bedeutung für die medizinische Psychologie’ (unpublished MD thesis: University of Mainz, 1999); Otto Winkelmann, ‘Albert Moll als Sexualwissenschaftler und Sexualpolitiker’, in Rolf Gindorf and Erwin J. Haeberle (eds), *Sexualwissenschaft und Sexualpolitik: Spannungsverhältnisse in Europa, Amerika und Asien* (Berlin: Walther de Gruyter, 1992), 65–71.

¹⁶ See Joel Engel, *Ottomar Rosenbach* (Zurich: Juris-Verlag, 1965).

¹⁷ Albert Moll, *Experimentelle Untersuchungen über den anatomischen Zustand der Gelenke bei andauernder Immobilisation derselben* (Berlin: H.S. Hermann, 1885).

¹⁸ Moll, *op. cit.* (note 4), 20–30.

¹⁹ Alan Gauld, *A History of Hypnotism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

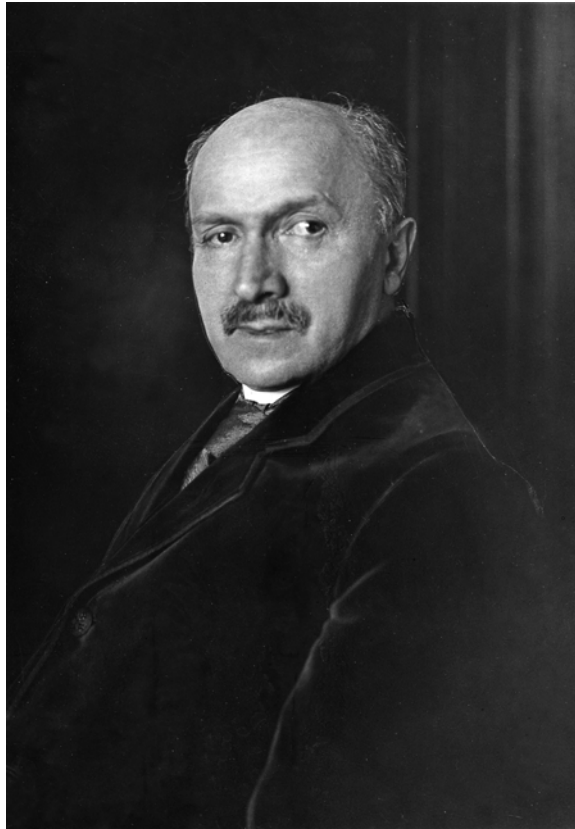


Figure 1: Albert Moll in 1932. Ullstein Bild, Berlin.

the National Socialist state withdrew his medical licence to practise in 1938 because of his Jewish origin. Apart from hypnosis and suggestion, Moll used ‘association therapy’ – a kind of psychological training – for patients with nervous complaints or deviant sexual behaviour.²⁰ In the early 1920s, he also opened, together with a colleague, Kurt Piorkowski, a private Institute for Practical Psychology, which carried out psychological tests and provided career advice.²¹ Moreover, Moll frequently served as an expert witness in court, particularly in cases involving sexual offences.²² He died unmarried in Berlin on 23 September 1939.

During his time as a practising neurologist and psychotherapist, Moll not only developed an extensive publishing activity – see his bibliography appended to this issue – but showed his commitment to a variety of medical, professional and scientific causes. As a young doctor, he tried to promote hypnosis and suggestion as widely applicable therapeutic methods, against the initial resistance of medical luminaries in Berlin such as the internist Karl Anton Ewald (1845–1915) and the psychiatrist Emanuel

²⁰ Moll, *op. cit.* (note 4), 57–9.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 272–3; Albert Moll, *Berufswahl: Ein Wegweiser* (Berlin: Dürr & Weber, 1924).

²² See the contribution by Conn in this issue.

Mendel (1839–1907).²³ In 1888, Moll was one of the early members of the Berlin Society for Experimental Psychology.²⁴ Together with the psychologist and philosopher Max Dessoir (1867–1947), who became a close friend, Moll investigated the rapport between hypnotist and subject,²⁵ as well as the phenomena produced by spiritualist mediums. In the 1920s, Moll's comments on the claims of occultists and mediums became increasingly hostile: in 1925/26 he was a defendant in a widely publicised libel trial. He was acquitted, having used the trial as a platform for his severe criticisms of parapsychology.²⁶

In the late 1890s and early 1900s, Moll was among the vociferous critics in the public debate on unethical human trials in hospitals, which had been triggered by the experiments on syphilis performed by a professor of dermatology in Breslau, Albert Neisser (1855–1916).²⁷ The politics of the medical profession became another important occupation. In 1908, Moll was elected into the Berlin doctors' chamber as a representative; and although he had only private patients, from 1909 to 1918 he chaired its important contract commission, the committee that led negotiations with the health insurance organisations.²⁸ In 1913, he founded the International Society for Sexual Research, and planned an international conference on this theme, but because of the outbreak of the First World War this plan had to be abandoned temporarily. However, in 1926, Moll organised and chaired the week-long International Congress for Sexology in Berlin, apparently the first international scientific congress in Germany since the war.²⁹ During the war, Moll had organised medical replacement services in Berlin, and worked in a public health commission on the population's nutrition. On a visit to the sick bays for the Western front towards the end of 1914, he advised the Chief of the Sanitary Corps, Otto von Schjerning (1853–1921), on organisational matters. While Moll had been a member of the *Deutsche Fortschrittspartei* [German Progressive Party] around 1900, in 1917 he joined the nationalist *Deutsche Vaterlandspartei* [German Fatherland's Party]. In the immediate post-war period, he served the revolutionary Workers and Soldiers Council as a delegate to the sanitary department of the Ministry of War.³⁰

These 'markers' in Moll's biography indicate the wide spectrum of his intellectual, professional and social commitments. The articles of this special issue examine and contextualise several of these commitments and elucidate his personal networks. The first four articles are devoted to different aspects of Moll's work in sexology. Harry Oosterhuis argues that the modern notion of sexuality took shape in the late nineteenth century in the works of Moll and Richard von Krafft-Ebing (1840–1902), especially

²³ See Jens-Uwe Teichler, 'Der Charlatan strebt nicht nach Wahrheit, er verlangt nur nach Geld'. Zur Auseinandersetzung zwischen naturwissenschaftlicher Medizin und Laienmedizin im deutschen Kaiserreich am Beispiel von Hypnotismus und Heilmagnetismus (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2002); Barbara Wolf-Braun, "'Was jeder Schäferknecht macht, ist eines Arztes unwürdig": Zur Geschichte der Hypnose im wilhelminischen Kaiserreich und in der Weimarer Republik (1888–1932)', *Hypnose und Kognition*, 17 (2000), 135–52; Otto Winkelmann, 'Albert Moll (1862–1939) als Wegbereiter der Schule von Nancy in Deutschland', *Praxis der Psychotherapie*, 10 (1965), 1–7.

²⁴ Adolf Kurzweg, 'Die Geschichte der Berliner "Gesellschaft für Experimental-Psychologie" mit besonderer Berücksichtigung ihrer Ausgangssituation und des Wirkens von Max Dessoir' (unpublished MD thesis: FU Berlin, 1976); Moll, *op. cit.* (note 4), 128–43.

²⁵ Moll, *Rapport, op. cit.* (note 6).

²⁶ See the contribution by Wolfram in this issue.

²⁷ See Barbara Elkeles, *Der moralische Diskurs über das medizinische Menschenexperiment im 19. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Gustav Fischer, 1996), 180–217.

²⁸ Moll, *op. cit.* (note 4), 179–88.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 189, 228–35.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 190–202, 217–19.

through their medical recognition of sexual diversity. So-called ‘perversions’, which had previously been understood as episodic symptoms of more fundamental mental disorders, were interpreted by them as parts of an autonomous and continuous sexual instinct. Moll had first met Krafft-Ebing in 1886 in Graz, before the latter became professor of psychiatry in Vienna. He corresponded with him, and in 1924 edited the posthumous sixteenth and seventeenth editions of Krafft-Ebing’s bestseller *Psychopathia sexualis* (first edition 1886).³¹ While Krafft-Ebing’s focus in this work was on case histories of ‘perverse’ behaviours and their classification, Moll provided in his *Studien über die Libido sexualis* [*Studies on Libido sexualis*] (1897/8), and subsequent publications, a theoretical framework for understanding human sexuality more generally. Moll’s case histories were subservient to his theoretical aims, but importantly, Moll, as well as Krafft-Ebing, allowed their bourgeois readers, who went beyond medical or legal professionals, new insights into the varieties of human sexuality, and provided, through case histories, consolation for sufferers that they were not alone in their unusual desires.³² Collectively, Oosterhuis suggests, both authors propagated a modern concept of sexuality, which interpreted it as an ‘inevitable, natural force’ that could find expression in a wide variety of forms, and did not only serve procreation, but contributed to human relationships, emotional fulfilment and personal identity.³³

Lutz Sauerteig’s article focuses on the discourse, which took place around 1900, on childhood sexuality as a normal aspect of human development – a discourse that has traditionally been seen as being dominated by Freud, especially his *Drei Abhandlungen zur Sexualtheorie* [*Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*] of 1905.³⁴ Alongside Dessoir and the British sexologist Henry Havelock Ellis (1859–1939), Moll challenged Freud’s earlier conviction that sexual phenomena in children, such as masturbation, were the product of seduction by an adult and that they predisposed to deviant sexual behaviour later in life. Moll reported in 1891, for example, the case of epidemic mutual masturbation in a Berlin boarding school. To his knowledge none of the boys involved had become homosexuals in their adult life. In his *Studies on Libido sexualis*, Moll then more fully developed his view that sexuality in children was normal and did not necessarily result in ‘perversions’ during adulthood. Extending Dessoir’s notion of an ‘undifferentiated sexual feeling’ in boys and girls during early puberty back into earlier childhood, Moll regarded homosexual tendencies in children as unproblematic, because they would usually give way to ‘normal’ heterosexual behaviour in later puberty. In his opinion, the two basic components of the human sexual drive, the *Kontrektationstrieb* – urge to touch another person – and the *Detumescenztrieb* – urge to release internal pressure by manipulating one’s genitals – were already developed in childhood. Contrary to Frank Sulloway’s assessment, Sauerteig concludes that Moll’s thinking on these matters was ‘quite revolutionary’.³⁵ Both Ellis and Freud, who abandoned his seduction theory in autumn 1897, were influenced by

³¹ Richard von Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia sexualis: Mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der konträren Sexualempfindung: Eine medizinisch-gerichtliche Studie für Ärzte und Juristen*, 16th and 17th edn, Albert Moll (ed.) (Stuttgart: Ferdinand Enke, 1924).

³² On narratives in contemporary sexual pathology see also Philippe Weber, *Der Trieb zum Erzählen: Sexualpathologie und Homosexualität, 1852–1914* (Bielefeld: Transkript Verlag, 2008).

³³ See also Harry Oosterhuis, *Stepchildren of Nature: Krafft-Ebing, Psychiatry, and the Making of Sexual Identity* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

³⁴ Sigmund Freud, ‘Drei Abhandlungen zur Sexualtheorie (1905)’, in *idem, Gesammelte Werke: Chronologisch geordnet*, Vol. 5: *Werke aus den Jahren 1904–1905*, 6th edn (Frankfurt/Main: S. Fischer, 1981), 27–145.

³⁵ Frank J. Sulloway, *Freud, Biologist of the Mind: Beyond the Psychoanalytic Legend* (New York: Basic Books, 1979), 430.

Moll's views on sexuality in childhood. However, when Moll published his monograph *Das Sexualleben des Kindes* [*The Sexual Life of the Child*] in 1908/9, he stood in the shadow of Freud, who by that time had discussed infantile sexuality in detail as part of his *Three Essays* and therefore claimed priority over Moll. Furthermore, the emerging discipline of child and adolescent psychiatry – see work by William Stern and Charlotte Bühler – introduced a new understanding of childhood sexuality that, in contrast to both Moll and Freud, rejected any form of homology with adult sexuality and recognised a distinct sexual experience for children.

Volkmar Sigusch critically reviews Moll's contributions to sexology in comparison to Freud's and Hirschfeld's achievements. As mentioned, Moll conceptualised important parts of sexual theory before Freud, especially regarding the human sexual drive (*libido sexualis*) and the development of sexuality in childhood; and prior to Hirschfeld he accomplished, in 1891, the publication of a substantial monograph on homosexuality. On a personal level, bitter animosity existed between Freud and Moll. It was fuelled by issues of priority in sexual theory, but also by the fact that Freud believed he had been accused by Moll of having forged case histories to fit his theories – a matter of animated discussion between the two men when Moll visited Freud in Vienna in 1909.³⁶ On the theoretical level, there was a significant difference between Freud's notion of a weak ego that acted under the influence of the unconscious, and Moll's emphasis on an individual's free will and conscious self-control. Equally problematic was, as Sigusch shows, Moll's relationship to his Berlin colleague Magnus Hirschfeld, the director of the world's first institute for sexology. Although both agreed that the criminalisation of homosexual acts in the German Penal Code (Section 175) was obsolete and required reform, Moll, regarding himself as an objective scientist, strongly disagreed with Hirschfeld's political campaigning for the rights of homosexuals. In Moll's view, homosexuality in adults was a pathological phenomenon that required psychological treatment. He also had serious misgivings about Hirschfeld's personal (sexual) and professional conduct. In 1934, when Hirschfeld went into exile in France to escape the Nazi persecutions of Jews and political adversaries, Moll denounced him to the dean of the Paris medical faculty and the German Foreign Secretary.³⁷

Practical applications of sexological knowledge are the theme of Matthew Conn's paper, which discusses Moll's role as an expert witness in court cases during the 1920s. In court, different concepts of the aetiology of sexual behaviours, in particular of homosexuality, were publicised and challenged. At the same time, experts such as Moll had to assert their professional authority and the scientific standing of the young field of sexology. In the German legal system judges were not bound to precedent, but were entitled to 'free evaluation of evidence' in their conclusions about a defendant's sexual and moral character and whether particular sexual acts were punishable under the rather general rules of the Penal Code. The public was well aware that the choice of a sexological expert could significantly influence the outcome of a trial – for example, Hirschfeld's political engagement for homosexuals was widely known. Moll stated in his memoirs that

³⁶ See both their accounts of the hostile atmosphere of their encounter, Moll, *op. cit.* (note 4), 54–5; Sigmund Freud, '[Letter 141F to Jung, 16 May 1909]', in William McGuire (ed.), *The Freud/Jung Letters: The Correspondence between Sigmund Freud and C.G. Jung*, Ralph Manheim and R.F.C. Hull (trans.), abridged by Alan McGlashan (London: Penguin, 1991), 147–8: 148.

³⁷ See also Volkmar Sigusch, 'Albert Moll und Magnus Hirschfeld: Über ein problematisches Verhältnis vor dem Hintergrund unveröffentlichter Briefe Molls aus dem Jahr 1934', *Zeitschrift für Sexualforschung*, 8 (1995), 122–59.

he preferred to serve as witness for the court or the prosecution, rather than for one of the involved parties, in order to maintain his reputation as an independent expert.³⁸ When, in the trial of a teacher for a sexual offence at a boys' school in 1925/6, the court asked Moll as well as Hirschfeld for an expert report, their different views on homosexuality, as a pathological condition versus inborn, non-culpable homosexuality, clashed. The trial also raised the issue of the reliability of testimony from minors, a topic that was controversially discussed subsequently by Moll and the Hamburg psychologist William Stern (1871–1938) at the 1926 International Congress for Sexology.³⁹ Significantly, Hirschfeld had not been invited by Moll to the congress. In general terms, as Conn argues, the public role of experts in sex offence trials in Weimar Germany reflected a democratisation of knowledge as well as an increasing 'scientification' of sexuality.

Another field of Moll's public engagement was the issue of medical ethics. Andreas-Holger Maehle's article examines Moll's concept of medical ethics, as well as his role in debates on medical scandals. The immediate reason for the production of Moll's book *Ärztliche Ethik [Medical Ethics]*, published in 1902, was the contemporary discussion in newspapers and in the Prussian parliament about dangerous scientific experiments performed without consent on hospital patients mostly of lower socio-economic status. Such conduct by doctors incensed Moll, because his ethical standpoint, as Maehle shows through several examples, was based on the notion of a tacit contract between doctor and patient. This contract implied a larger role for self-determination in patients than other writers on medical ethics granted at this time, and it obliged doctors always to act in the best interest of the individual patient.⁴⁰ In his *Medical Ethics*, as well as in articles, Moll tried to point to the general problem of unethical human experimentation without giving the names of individual researchers or specific hospitals. However, under pressure from the Prussian Ministry for Religious, Educational and Medical Affairs, which in 1900 had issued a directive on information and consent in human trials, Moll eventually revealed his collected information to ministerial officials. Similarly, Moll played a prominent role in exposing, in 1908–9, the practice of some prominent Berlin clinicians, among them his old critic Karl Anton Ewald, of making underhand payments to agents who brought them lucrative foreign patients. In court proceedings and disciplinary hearings Moll disclosed the names of those clinicians whom he knew were involved in this 'patient trade', as the newspapers called it.⁴¹ With his public engagement in sensitive professional issues such as these, Moll made no friends for himself among the medical elite in the university clinics. An academic career, which might well have been possible for Moll on the basis of his scientific contributions, did not materialise. His monograph on medical ethics was less successful than his books on hypnosis and sexuality.

Moll's position in contemporary debates on eugenic sterilisation is examined in a paper by Thomas Bryant. Even before the First World War, in his *Handbuch der*

³⁸ Moll, *op. cit.* (note 4), 166.

³⁹ Albert Hellwig, 'Kinderaussagen', in Max Marcuse (ed.), *Verhandlungen des 1. Internationalen Kongresses für Sexualforschung, Berlin vom 10. bis 16. Oktober 1926*, 5 vols, Vol. 3: *Psychologie, Pädagogik, Ethik, Ästhetik, Religion* (Berlin: A. Marcus and E. Weber, 1928), 64–7; William [Louis] Stern, 'Der Ernst-Spiel-Charakter der Jugend-Erotik und -Sexualität, [with discussion]', in Marcuse (ed.), *ibid.*, 174–80. See also William [Louis] Stern, *Jugendliche Zeugen in Sittlichkeitsprozessen: Ihre Behandlung und psychologische Begutachtung* (Leipzig: Quelle and Meyer, 1926).

⁴⁰ See also Andreas-Holger Maehle, *Doctors, Honour and the Law: Medical Ethics in Imperial Germany* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

⁴¹ See also Andreas-Holger Maehle, "'Patient Trade" in Germany: An Ethical Issue at the Practitioner–Clinician Interface in 1909 and 2009', *Medical Humanities*, 36 (2010), 84–7.

Sexualwissenschaften [*Handbook of Sexology*], Moll warned against the potential influence on legislation of those of his medical colleagues who demanded castration or sterilisation of epileptics, mentally ill patients, incurable alcoholics, habitual criminals and sex offenders in the name of racial hygiene and eugenics. For him, there was insufficient evidence of the hereditary nature of those conditions, so that a certain prognosis for the next generation was currently impossible to make – a point that he made again in 1926 in a paper presented to the International Congress for Sexology. Against those who pointed to the danger of degeneration, he held up cases of apparent *regeneration*. On these grounds Moll publicly objected to the proposals of eugenicist campaigners such as the medical officer of health in Saxony, Gustav Boeters (1869–1942), who argued in the 1920s for the legalisation of sterilisation for ‘idiots, the mentally ill, epileptics etc.’ with the consent of their legal representatives. Moll also foresaw the danger of coercive sterilisation, which eventually became reality with the National Socialist *Gesetz zur Verhütung erbkranken Nachwuchses* [Law for the Prevention of Hereditarily Diseased Offspring] in July 1933. However, throughout his comments, Moll never ruled out eugenic interventions *in principle* – his argument was that genetic science simply was not advanced enough to provide sufficiently clear-cut indications. In this sense, he failed to take an ethical stand on this issue.

Emphasis on objective scientific evidence also characterised Moll’s interest in the phenomenon of occultism and his criticism of parapsychologists. Andreas Sommer’s article focuses on Moll’s relationship with the work of the Munich physician Albert von Schrenck-Notzing (1862–1929), the doyen of parapsychology in early twentieth-century Germany. The similarity of the early interests of the two men is striking. Like Moll, Schrenck-Notzing had studied hypnotism with Bernheim in Nancy and, as in the case of Moll, his first publications, in the late 1880s and early 1890s, concerned hypnotic therapy. Influenced, like Moll, by Krafft-Ebing, he practised as a private physician in Munich, specialising in hypnotic treatment of sexual deviations. In 1886 he had been a founding member of the Munich Psychological Society – the equivalent of the later Berlin Society for Experimental Psychology – which investigated supernatural phenomena and the alleged capacities of mediums. Initially, Moll and Schrenck-Notzing held each other in high esteem. However, when Schrenck-Notzing gave up his work on hypnotism and sexology after 1910, in order to devote his time entirely to the experimental study of phenomena such as telepathy, telekinesis and the production of ‘ectoplasm’ by spiritualist mediums, Moll’s attitude became increasingly hostile. Over many years Moll had been making a name for himself as an expert in unmasking the tricks of such mediums.

To make his criticisms of parapsychology more widely known, Moll also used the platform of public court proceedings, as Heather Wolfram shows in her analysis of the 1925/26 libel trial in which Moll stood accused of having defamed the medium Maria Vollhardt – alias Rudloff – in sections of his book on spiritualism. In front of the judge, he demonstrated tricks commonly used by mediums. Experiments conducted with Mrs Vollhardt by the Berlin doctors and parapsychologists, Carl Bruck and Paul Süner, in 1923 lacked control measures to such an extent that, in Moll’s view, they were a ‘farce’. While Moll’s initial critique had been based on his knowledge of the psychology of deception, he increasingly turned to devastating criticisms of the mental state of researchers of occult phenomena. For Moll, Schrenck-Notzing and other occultists who believed in the reality of supernatural phenomena were ‘psychologically deranged’ as well as guilty of covering up fraud. They suffered from an ‘occult complex’. Even shortly after Schrenck-Notzing’s death in 1929, Moll made him the main target of his attacks

in his monograph *Psychologie und Charakterologie der Okkultisten* [*Psychology and Characterology of Occultists*]. As Sommer and Wolffram suggest, Moll's severe criticisms of parapsychology can be interpreted as a boundary conflict in science. Legitimate territories of medical psychology, such as hypnosis and suggestion, had to be separated from the murky waters of occultism.⁴² With his pathologisation of parapsychologists, Moll became a prototype of the scientific sceptic and dogmatist – a 'watchdog of science' or a 'scientific St George'.

Collectively the contributions to this special issue thus provide, through the example of Moll, a window on contested areas of medical and scientific culture in Imperial and Weimar Germany. The establishment of psychotherapy as a legitimate form of medical treatment and the development of sexology as a new (medical) science were major contexts for Moll's work.⁴³ He participated in and was, to some extent, a leader in two of the most contentious scientific debates – psychology versus psychoanalysis, and the modernisation of sexuality – during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Moreover, his role as an expert witness in the Eulenburg Affair, one of the notorious sex scandals of Imperial Germany, and many other occasions when he gave evidence in court proceedings, made Moll a public figure.⁴⁴ For Berlin physician and sexologist Otto Adler, Moll was therefore the one who 'in a way, woke up sexology from its long sleep of death' and succeeded in having sexology scientifically recognised.⁴⁵

More generally, Moll engaged with the increasingly important role of science in contemporary medicine and society, and with the ethical and epistemological standards of medical professionals and scientists. His criticisms were often sharp and relentless, and were expressed also with little regard for reactions and for potential consequences for himself. He was as much admired – for example by Krafft-Ebing and Ellis – as he was loathed, for instance by Freud who called him 'a brute' and a 'pettifogging lawyer'.⁴⁶ Even Moll's long-term friend Max Dessoir eventually turned his back on him, describing the older Moll as a 'vicious' man who was harsh to his patients and never treated them with kindness. 'Dealing with him was difficult as nothing on earth could make him behave like a gentleman. He flared up at the slightest disagreement and talked uninhibitedly, so that one was never safe of him... he frightened and tortured people when he knew how

⁴² See also on this topic Barbara Wolf-Braun, "'The higher order of the natural laws and the wrong world of hysterical mediums": Medicine and the occult "fringe" at the turn of the nineteenth century in Germany', in Robert Jütte, Motzi Eklöf and Marie C. Nelson (eds), *Historical Aspects of Unconventional Medicine: Approaches, Concepts, Case Studies* (Sheffield: EAHMH Publications, 2001), 227–45; Barbara Wolf-Braun (ed.), *Medizin, Okkultismus und Parapsychologie im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert* (Wetzlar: GWAB-Verlag, 2009); Corinna Treitel, *A Science for the Soul: Occultism and the Genesis of the German Modern* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004); Heather Wolffram, *The Stepchildren of Science: Psychical Research and Parapsychology in Germany, c. 1870–1939* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009); Heather Wolffram, "'An Object of Vulgar Curiosity": Legitimizing Medical Hypnosis in Imperial Germany', *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 67 (2012), 149–76.

⁴³ Edward Ross Dickinson, "'A Dark, Impenetrable Wall of Complete Incomprehension": The Impossibility of Heterosexual Love in Imperial Germany', *Central European History*, 40 (2007), 467–97.

⁴⁴ John C. G. Röhl, 'Graf Philipp zu Eulenburg – des Kaisers bester Freund', in *idem, Kaiser, Hof und Staat: Wilhelm II. und die deutsche Politik* (Munich: Beck, 1988), 35–77.

⁴⁵ Translated by the authors. 'Er hat gewissermaßen die ganze Sexualwissenschaft aus ihrem langen Todesschlaf aufgeweckt.' Otto Adler, '[Review of Moll's *Das Sexualleben des Kindes*]', *Geschlecht und Gesellschaft*, 4 (1909), 442–53: 442. Adler later became treasurer of Hirschfeld's Ärztliche Gesellschaft für Sexualwissenschaft und Eugenik [Medical Society for Sexual Science and Eugenics].

⁴⁶ Freud, *op. cit.* (note 36), 148.

to hurt them, only in order to maintain a territory for himself.⁴⁷ However, it is precisely this ruthless involvement in medical and social issues that made Moll relevant then – and continues to make him relevant today. A full scientific biography of Moll as a contribution to the cultural history of medicine clearly is a desideratum. We hope to have made a first step in this direction.

⁴⁷ Translated by the authors. ‘Der Verkehr mit ihm war schwierig, denn keine Macht der Welt konnte ihn dahin bringen, sich wie ein Gentleman zu benehmen. Bei der geringsten Meinungsverschiedenheit brauste er auf und redete hemmungslos, so daß man nie vor ihm sicher war... er ängstigte und quälte Menschen, deren Schmerzpunkt er kannte, nur um sich ein Herrschaftsgebiet zu erhalten.’ Max Dessoir, *Buch der Erinnerung* (Stuttgart: Ferdinand Enke, 1946), 128–9.