

The Sexologist Albert Moll – between Sigmund Freud and Magnus Hirschfeld

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Abstract: Albert Moll was one of the most influential sexologists during the first three decades of the twentieth century. In contrast to his rivals Sigmund Freud and Magnus Hirschfeld, his achievements have not yet been recognised adequately. The author gives a comparative account of the work of these three protagonists. This shows that Moll formed some ideas which are regarded as psychoanalytical today before Freud, and that he, in contrast to Hirschfeld, was able to reflect critically on contemporary discourses, such as the debates on racial improvement through eugenics. As scientific theories, Freud's psychoanalysis represented the unconscious, fantasy, experience and latency, while Moll's sexology represented consciousness, ontological reality, behaviour and manifestation. Moll's major disagreement with Hirschfeld's sexology was his advocacy of apolitical and impartial science, whereas Hirschfeld's aim was to achieve sexual reforms politically. Added to these differences were strong personal animosities. Freud called Moll a 'beast' and 'pettifogger'; and Moll complained about Hirschfeld's 'problematic' character. When Hirschfeld escaped the Nazi terror and went to Paris, Moll denounced him in order to prevent him rebuilding a new existence in exile.

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Introduction

Albert Moll (1862–1939), Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) and Magnus Hirschfeld (1868–1935) were among the most influential sexologists of the twentieth century. After the death of the pioneer sexologists, the Italian physician, anthropologist and writer Paolo Mantegazza (1831–1912) and the German–Austrian psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing (1840–1902), the *Geheimer Sanitätsrat* [German Privy Councillor of Health] Albert Moll was regarded by many as the most competent specialist on sexual disorders in Europe. Today, however, he and his work are largely forgotten and overshadowed by Freud and

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Hirschfeld: Freud is remembered as the founder of psychoanalysis and father of the psychoanalytical movement; while Hirschfeld is considered to be the mastermind of the first German homosexual movement and the *Weltliga für Sexualreform* [World League for Sexual Reform] as well as the founder of the world's first institute for sexology. While elements of Freudian psychoanalysis became part of common speech, some kind of Hirschfeld-renaissance can be observed in Germany and elsewhere. As a result, his views are discussed relatively widely, for example in the context of the debate on what is natural, social, epistemic, predisposed, essential or constructed with regard to gender and sexuality; the transactions of the *Magnus Hirschfeld Society*, published since 1983, are but one example.¹ Hitherto, only a small number of historians of medicine and sexologists have studied Moll and his work. This is even more astonishing if one considers his wide-ranging ideas, interests and activities, as well as the sharpness of his criticism in academic debates.

Moll as Scientific Pioneer

Moll had received global recognition with his first book, *Der Hypnotismus* [*Hypnotism*].² William James described it as 'extraordinarily complete and judicious'.³ Moll regarded himself as the pioneer of the Nancy school of Liébeault and Bernheim, and claimed to have introduced hypnotic and psychotherapeutic ideas into Germany. He was indeed one of the first in the medical profession who tried to amalgamate psychology and scientific medicine. Unlike Hirschfeld, he repeatedly objected to the somatic and causal thinking in medicine and sexology, for example with regard to eugenics or the transplantation of the testicles from heterosexual men to homosexuals as a cure for homosexuality. Moll's aim was to establish a 'medical psychology', on which he published a journal with the publishing company Ferdinand Enke between 1909 and 1924.⁴ He also encouraged health insurance companies to extend cover to psychotherapy for the very first time in 1919.⁵ It would probably not be an exaggeration to call Moll the founder of medical psychology in Germany,⁶ an achievement unknown to most medical psychologists today.

In 1891, before Hirschfeld, Moll produced a monograph on 'sexual inversion' [*Conträre Sexualempfindung*],⁷ the contemporary term used for homosexuality, and in 1897, before Freud, he published one of the first substantial scientific works on what is termed today as 'heterosexuality'.⁸ His still-readable *Ärztliche Ethik* [*Medical Ethics*] was published

¹ See Ralf Dose and Hans-Günter Klein (eds), *Mitteilungen der Magnus-Hirschfeld-Gesellschaft*, 2nd edn, 2 vols (Hamburg: von Bockel, 1992).

² Albert Moll, *Der Hypnotismus* (Berlin: Fischer's Medicinische Buchhandlung, 1889); first English edition: Albert Moll, *Hypnotism* (London: Scribner & Welford, 1890).

³ William James, *The Principles of Psychology*, 2 vols, Vol. 2 (New York: Holt, 1890), 615.

⁴ Albert Moll, 'Vorwort', *Zeitschrift für Psychotherapie und medizinische Psychologie*, 1 (1909), 1–5.

⁵ Albert Moll, *Ein Leben als Arzt der Seele: Erinnerungen* (Dresden: Reissner, 1936), 221.

⁶ 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; Dorothea Cario, 'Albert Moll (1862–1939): Leben, Werk und Bedeutung für die Medizinische Psychologie' (unpublished MD thesis: University of Mainz, 1999).

⁷ Albert Moll, *Die Conträre Sexualempfindung: Mit Benutzung amtlichen Materials: Mit einem Vorwort von R. v. Krafft-Ebing* (Berlin: Fischer's Medicinische Buchhandlung, 1891); first English edition: Albert Moll, *Perversions of the Sex Instinct: A Study of Sexual Inversion Based on Clinical Data and Official Reports* (Newark: Julian Press, 1931).

⁸ Albert Moll, *Untersuchungen über die Libido sexualis*, Vol. 1 in 2 parts (no further volumes were published) (Berlin: Fischer's Medicinische Buchhandlung, 1897); first English edition: Albert Moll, *Libido sexualis: Studies*

in 1902 and his *Handbuch der Sexualwissenschaften* [*Handbook of Sexual Sciences*] in 1912.⁹ Given the task of editing Richard von Krafft-Ebing's famous *Psychopathia sexualis*, he completely overhauled the work.¹⁰ Together with the philosopher Max Dessoir (1867–1947) he fought the occult sciences and their protagonists, often as a much-dreaded expert witness in court – see also the papers by Heather Wolfram and Andreas Sommer in this issue.¹¹ The British sexologist Henry Havelock Ellis (1859–1939), who, unlike Moll and Freud, did not exhibit vanity and become involved in rivalries, cited Moll more often than any other expert, including Krafft-Ebing, the sexologist Iwan Bloch (1872–1922), Freud or Hirschfeld.¹² Yet despite this high profile, Moll lost out to his rivals.

It is debateable who would have represented an enlightened scientific position more convincingly if one looks at their responses to key issues at the time: concepts of the *libido sexualis* and infant sexuality; the relationship between normal and abnormal sexuality; problems of the aetiology of sexual pathologies, including degeneration; the question of homosexuality, including paragraph 175 of the German Penal Code; and the seduction hypothesis; questions of women's rights, including the practical aspects of the protection of mothers; psychotherapeutic versus somatic treatment of sexual dysfunction; the relationship between medicine and psychology; medical ethics; issues of applied eugenics, etc. Often Moll was – prematurely and unread – labelled as a reactionary, even though he had commented on these issues very early and usually in a fairly differentiated manner, indeed often more independently and far-sightedly than Hirschfeld.

In 1902, for example, Moll published his work on medical ethics – see also the paper by Andreas-Holger Maehle in this issue.¹³ There, he defined the doctor–patient relationship as a contract with the goal to maintain or restore the patient's health. The publication was initiated by the scandals caused by human experimentation at the time.¹⁴ Moll mentioned, for example, cases where doctors had allegedly infected prostitutes with syphilis. He criticised such behaviour and also appealed to doctors to stop the vain fighting

in the Psychosexual Laws of Love: Verified by Clinical Case Histories (New York: American Ethnological Press, 1933).

⁹ Albert Moll, *Ärztliche Ethik: Die Pflichten des Arztes in allen Beziehungen seiner Thätigkeit* (Stuttgart: Enke, 1902); Albert Moll (ed.), *Handbuch der Sexualwissenschaften: Mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der kulturgeschichtlichen Beziehungen* (Leipzig: Vogel, 1912).

¹⁰ Richard von Krafft-Ebing, 'Psychopathia sexualis', *Mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der konträren Sexualempfindung: Eine medizinisch-gerichtliche Studie für Ärzte und Juristen*, 16th and 17th edn (Stuttgart: Enke, 1924).

¹¹ Max Dessoir, *Vom Jenseits der Seele: Die Geheimwissenschaften in kritischer Betrachtung* (Stuttgart: Enke, 1917); Max Dessoir, *Buch der Erinnerung*, 2nd edn (Stuttgart: Enke, 1947); Heather Wolfram, *The Stepchildren of Science: Psychical Research and Parapsychology in Germany, c. 1870–1939* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009); Barbara Wolf-Braun, *Medizin, Okkultismus und Parapsychologie im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert* (Wetzlar: GWAB-Verlag, 2009); 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).

¹² See Frank J. Sulloway, *Freud: Biologist of the Mind: Beyond the Psychoanalytic Legend* (New York: Basic Books, 1979), 416.

¹³ Moll, *Handbuch, op. cit.* (note 9); Julius H. Schultz, *Albert Molls Ärztliche Ethik* (Zürich: Juris, 1986); Andreas-Holger Maehle, 'Zwischen medizinischem Paternalismus und Patientenautonomie: Albert Molls Ärztliche Ethik 1902 im historischen Kontext', in Andreas Frewer and Josef N. Neumann (eds), *Medizingeschichte und Medizinethik. Kontroversen und Begründungsansätze 1900–1950* (Frankfurt: Campus, 2001), 44–56.

¹⁴ Barbara Elkeles, *Der moralische Diskurs über das medizinische Menschenexperiment im 19. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Fischer, 1996).

for priorities. He urged for self-constraint, as well as the appreciation of achievements in other nations. Animals should be treated as carefully as possible during experiments. Doctors should decline commissioned reports: if the documentation was insufficient; in cases where only a formal reply but no substantial and therefore truthful response could be given; if 'one's own expertise was insufficient'; or if the report 'was supposed to serve immoral ends'.¹⁵ With regard to medical journals, he pointed to the problematic influence of commercial interest. Thus, Moll discussed ethical issues in medicine more than one hundred years ago, and those that are still relevant today.

His attitudes towards eugenics and so-called racial hygiene were also remarkable, when it is taken into account how many scientists, especially sexologists of all political convictions, could not resist the promise of 'breeding' and 'improving' humankind. A few years before Hitler came to power, Moll wrote:

The fact that we find so many valuable people, despite the hereditary burden, is caused by regeneration in countless cases, not progressive degeneration. . . . [T]his explains that we can hardly ever say something about the condition of offspring with any certainty at all. . . . Beethoven was the son of a drinker and a tuberculous mother. . . . It is necessary to point out such things, because our amateur eugenicists today are already sprawling too much.

Moll also argued that the problem of inadequate parenting and education had not received sufficient attention: 'Provide me with ten random people from the street and I will diagnose in nine of them the same degeneration as in a culprit. . . . If we ask us now which options we have for practical eugenics, it will primarily be prevention. . . . Castration has today generally been abandoned.' Moll did not advocate practical eugenics as a way to 'make humankind better' and instead favoured social mobility. Members of the middle and working classes should be allowed to 'add fresh blood from below' to the upper classes, which were 'partially degenerated'. If this was accomplished, 'a lot more would be gained for the improvement of our people than if a few thousand individuals were robbed of their fertility, even though actually no one knows why'.¹⁶

In his handbook of sexology, Moll expressed the hope that plans for sterilisation programmes in Germany would 'not be implemented and that our race-improvers do not get too much influence on our legislation'.¹⁷ When they had obtained such influence and

¹⁵ Moll, *Handbuch*, *op. cit.* (note 9), 455, 459.

¹⁶ 'Die Tatsache, daß wir trotz der erblichen Belastung so viele wertvolle Menschen finden, ist darauf zurückzuführen, daß in zahllosen Fällen eine *Regeneration* stattgefunden hat, nicht eine fortschreitende Degeneration. . . und so erklärt es sich auch, daß wir kaum je in der Lage sind, auch nur mit einiger Wahrscheinlichkeit etwas über die Beschaffenheit der Nachkommenschaft zu sagen. . . . Beethoven war der Sohn eines Trinkers und einer tuberkulösen Mutter. . . . Es ist notwendig, auf diese Dinge hinzuweisen; denn unsere Eugenik-Dilettanten machen sich heute schon allzu breit.' – 'Bringen Sie mir zehn beliebige Menschen von der Straße, und bei neun will ich Ihnen feststellen, daß dieselbe Degeneration bei ihnen besteht' wie bei einem Angeklagten. . . . Fragen wir uns nun, welche Wege für die praktische Eugenik offen stehen, so kommt in erster Linie der Präventivverkehr in Frage. . . . Die Kastration ist heute im wesentlichen aufgegeben.' – 'für eine Besserung unseres Volkes viel mehr gewonnen, als wenn einige tausend Menschen ihrer Zeugungsfähigkeit beraubt werden, wobei man in Wirklichkeit gar nicht weiß, weshalb, wieso und warum'; Albert Moll, Über die Indikationen der praktischen Eugenik', in Max Marcuse (ed.), *Verhandlungen des I. Internationalen Kongresses für Sexualforschung, Berlin vom 10. bis 16. Oktober 1926, veranstaltet von der Internationalen Gesellschaft für Sexualforschung*, 5 vols, Vol. 4 (Berlin: Marcus & Webers, 1928), 146–55: 147–9, 151–5; see also Albert Moll, 'Sexuelle Hygiene', in *idem*, *Handbuch*, *op. cit.* (note 9), 877–922; *idem*, 'Die Verhütung unwerten Lebens: Referat einer Aussprache mit Entgegnung auf Dr Boeters', *Berliner Aerzte-Correspondenz*, 30 (1925), 74–6; *idem*, 'Sexuelle Hygiene', in *idem* (ed.), *Handbuch der Sexualwissenschaften*, 3rd edn, 2 vols, Vol. 2 (Leipzig: Vogel, 1926), 1067–163; *idem*, 'Sterilisierung und Verbrechen', *Kriminalistische Monatshefte*, 3 (1929), 121–6.

¹⁷ Moll, *op. cit.* (note 9), 918; see also the paper by Thomas Bryant in this issue.

had begun legally to sanction compulsory sterilisation, especially of habitual offenders, he stated ‘that we have no scientific indication whatsoever’.¹⁸ On the other hand, the already exiled Hirschfeld wrote in August 1933: ‘One has to see Hitler’s experiments before commenting on them. . . . For once it is not certain at all that the National Socialists act solely on eugenic motives. One has to fear that they will use sterilisation not so much to “breed the race”, but to destroy their enemies.’¹⁹

The Fight for Priorities

One of the great rivalries Moll encountered in his academic life was his relationship with Sigmund Freud. Freud entered the stage as a sexologist in 1905 with his *Drei Abhandlungen zur Sexualtheorie* [*Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*], a work of just eighty-three pages, but still discussed today. In broad strokes he dismissed most of what sexology had hitherto accumulated in experimental and empirical data, terminology and theories. The first footnote of his epochal work read:

The accounts in the first treatise are extracted from the known publications by v. Krafft-Ebing, Moll, Moebius, Havelock Ellis, Näcke, v. Schrenk-Notzing [correctly: Schrenck-Notzing] Löwenfeld – Eulenburg, J. Bloch [correctly: I. Bloch] as well as the works in the *Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen* [*Yearbook for Sexual Intermediate Stages*], published by M. Hirschfeld. Since in these all the other literature on the topic is listed comprehensively, I could spare myself detailed references.²⁰

Through this arrogant but genial move, Freud avoided all previous debates and terminology in the field: *phantasia morbose*, *fisiologia della donna*, *dégénéresence*, *sense génésiques*, *zones érogènes*, auto-erotism, erotic symbolism, *anthropologia sexualis*, libido, *Kontrektationstrieb* [contractation drive] and *Detumeszenztrieb* [detumescence drive], *psychopathia sexualis*, *konträre Sexualempfindung* [sexual inversion], *neurasthenia sexualis*, aphrodisia and anaphrodisia, *Mutterschutz* [protection of mothers] and ‘*freie Liebe*’ [‘free love’], frigidity, clitoridectomy, prostitution, venereal diseases, Malthusianism, etc. He did not mention any of the works of his predecessors – neither the medical thesis produced the physician Hermann Joseph Löwenstein in 1823, nor the monograph by the physician Joseph Häussler published in 1826.²¹ He also did

¹⁸ [D]aß wir keinerlei wissenschaftlich irgendwie begründete Indikationen haben’; Moll, ‘Sterilisierung und Verbrechen’, *op. cit.* (note 16), 126.

¹⁹ ‘Man muß die Hitlerschen Experimente abwarten, ehe man sich darüber äußert. Nicht nur aus wissenschaftlichen Gründen. Denn es ist keineswegs sicher, daß die Nationalsozialisten einzig und allein aus eugenischen Zwecken handeln. Man muß vielmehr befürchten, daß sie sich der Sterilisation bedienen werden, weniger um die ‘Rasse aufzuzüchten’, als um ihre Feinde zu vernichten.’ Magnus Hirschfeld, ‘Zur Sterilisation’, *Die Wahrheit* (Prag), 12 (19 August 1933), 16; Rainer Herr, ‘“Phantom Rasse: Ein Hirngespinnst als Weltgefahr”: Anmerkungen zu einem Aufsatz Magnus Hirschfelds’, *Mitteilungen der Magnus-Hirschfeld-Gesellschaft*, 18 (1993), 53–62; Volkmar Sigusch, ‘Eugenisches Denken in der Sexuologie’ and Volkmar Sigusch, ‘War Magnus Hirschfeld ein “geistiger Vorläufer des Faschismus”?’’, in Andreas Seeck (ed.), *Durch Wissenschaft zur Gerechtigkeit?: Textsammlung zur kritischen Rezeption des Schaffens von Magnus Hirschfeld* (Münster: LIT-Verlag, 2003), 57–61, 125–7; Volkmar Sigusch, *Geschichte der Sexualwissenschaft* (Frankfurt: Campus, 2008), 382–7.

²⁰ ‘Die in der ersten Abhandlung enthaltenen Angaben sind aus den bekannten Publikationen von v. Krafft-Ebing, Moll, Moebius, Havelock Ellis, Näcke, v. Schrenk-Notzing [richtig: Schrenck-Notzing], Löwenfeld, Eulenburg, J. Bloch [richtig: I. Bloch] und aus den Arbeiten in dem von M. Hirschfeld herausgegebenen “Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen” geschöpft. Da an diesen Stellen auch die übrige Literatur des Themas in erschöpfender Weise aufgeführt ist, habe ich mir detaillierte Nachweise ersparen können’. Sigmund Freud, *Drei Abhandlungen zur Sexualtheorie* (Leipzig: Deuticke, 1905), 80.

²¹ Hermann J. Löwenstein, ‘De mentis aberrationibus ex partium sexualium conditione abnormi oriundis’ (MD thesis: Bonn, 1823); for an English translation see Philipp Gutmann (trans.), ‘Hermann Joseph Löwenstein’s

not mention the first *Psychopathia sexualis* by the Austrian physician Heinrich Kaan (1816–93), who came up with a theory that linked a functional-hydraulic idea of the sexual drive called *nisus* with fantasy, especially a furious *phantasia morbosa*, which predisposed humans to sexual excess.²² Freud also did not mention the works by the French psychiatrist Paul Moreau de Tours (1844–1908) and the Russian physician Benjamin Tarnowsky (1837–1906).²³ Strangely enough, even landmark publications such as Paolo Mantegazza's *Gli amori degli uomini* [*The Sexual Relations of Mankind*] as well as *Auto-erotism* and *The Sexual Impulse in Women* by Havelock Ellis remained unacknowledged.²⁴

If not any of these works, Freud should at least have had to discuss one: Moll's *Libido sexualis*, published in 1897.²⁵ At a theoretical level, Moll went far beyond what Krafft-Ebing and other sexual pathologists, who had been influenced by Augustin Morel's (1809–1873) hypothesis of degeneration, had conceptualised.²⁶ Furthermore, he anticipated many of the sexual theories later claimed by Freud and psychoanalysts to be their inventions. He explicitly discussed – like Havelock Ellis shortly after – the 'normal sexual drive', on which hitherto 'hardly any in-depth studies have been published'.²⁷ He did not regard hereditary heterosexuality and inherited 'meaningful drives' as self-evident,²⁸ and assumed a latent homosexuality of normal individuals as well as a latent heterosexuality of homosexuals,²⁹ and he argued for the abolition of paragraph 175 of the German Penal Code, which criminalised homosexual acts.³⁰ According to Moll, the sexual drive, both normal and perverse,³¹ was a combination of two elements: a 'detumescence drive', which was 'to be understood as an organic urge to release secretion',³² and a 'contractation drive', which induced 'physical and spiritual attraction'.³³ Moll thought that a natural drive to procreation in humans was 'not very noticeable anymore'.³⁴ In general,

Dissertation: *De Mentis Aberrationibus Ex Partium Sexualium Conditione Abnormi Oriundis* (1823)', *History of Psychiatry*, 15 (2004), 455–65; Philipp Gutmann, 'About "Confusions of the Mind due to Abnormal Conditions of the Sexual Organs" by Hermann Joseph Löwenstein', *History of Psychiatry*, 17 (2006), 107–33; Joseph Häussler, *Ueber die Beziehungen des Sexualsystemes zur Psyche überhaupt und zum Cretinismus ins Besondere* (Würzburg: Becker, 1826); Philipp Gutmann, 'On the Way to a *Scientia Sexualis*: "On the Relation of the Sexual System to the Psyche in General and to Cretinism in Particular" (1826) by Joseph Häussler', *History of Psychiatry*, 17 (2006), 45–53.

²² Heinrich Kaan, *Psychopathia sexualis* (Leipzig: Voss, 1844); cf. Volkmar Sigusch, 'Heinrich Kaan: der Verfasser der ersten "Psychopathia sexualis": Eine biographische Skizze', *Zeitschrift für Sexualforschung*, 16 (2003), 116–42.

²³ Paul Moreau (de Tours), *Des aberrations du sens génésique* (Paris: Asselin, 1880); Benjamin Tarnowsky, *Die krankhaften Erscheinungen des Geschlechtssinnes* (Berlin: Hirschwald, 1886).

²⁴ Paolo Mantegazza, *Gli amori degli uomini: Saggio di una etnologia dell'amore*, 2 vols (Milan: Paolo Mantegazza Editore, 1886); H. Havelock Ellis, 'Auto-erotism: A Psychological Study', *Alienist and Neurologist*, 19 (1898), 260–99; H. Havelock Ellis 'The Sexual Impulse in Women', *American Journal of Dermatology and Genito-Urinary Diseases*, 6 (1902), 46–57.

²⁵ Moll, *Untersuchungen*, *op. cit.* (note 8).

²⁶ See Bénédict-Auguste Morel, *Traité des dégénérescences physiques, intellectuelles et morales de l'espèce humaine et des causes qui produisent ces variétés malades* (Paris: Baillière, 1857).

²⁷ Moll, *Untersuchungen*, *op. cit.* (note 8), v.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 100.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 326–8.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 841.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 521–2.

³² *Ibid.*, 94.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

human drives should be best understood in evolutionary terms;³⁵ for example, he discussed in great detail the degeneration of the sense of smell in humans,³⁶ a question which also preoccupied Freud as ‘*organic suppression*’ [*organische Verdrängung*] and ‘*abandoned erogenous zones*’ [*aufgelassene erogene Zonen*].³⁷ It is worthwhile noting that Moll, like Ernest Chambard (1851–1900) and other French authors, such as the physician Charles Féré (1852–1907) and the psychologist Alfred Binet (1857–1911), had already used the term erogenous centres, or zones [*zones érogènes*].³⁸

In addition, Moll was aware of and gave considerable clinical–empirical attention to sexual responses, voluptuousness and emotions of love in children, and gave a sketchy description of what was later to become the Oedipus complex: ‘Attraction to the other sex with all signs of voluptuousness appears long before puberty. I know of cases, where attraction to the other sex, undeniably caused by the sexual drive, could be observed at the age of five or six.’³⁹

While ‘the sexual contraction drive can appear before the genitals are mature’,⁴⁰ so can the detumescence drive, which was also attributed to the female sex, even though there was no secretion equal to male semen. The sensation was ‘a kind of voluptuous feeling, a kind of tickle’⁴¹ at the genitalia; erections appeared ‘a long time before puberty’,⁴² masturbation was observed in children as young as one or two years of age.⁴³ With regard to ‘healthy’ sexuality, it was most remarkable that Moll not only made theoretical assumptions, but also sought to prove every claim by case studies. Thus, it does not come as a surprise that Moll had a significant influence on Freud’s theories of sexuality and his terminology: from the phylogenetic and ontogenetic dynamics of the *libido sexualis* – which was previously thought to be static – the nexus of heredity and acquired traits; the inextricably linked homosexuality and heterosexuality; the in-no-way monolithic sexual drive; to the pre-pubertal sexuality of boys and girls. This has plausibly been demonstrated by Sulloway with Freud’s heavily annotated copy of Moll’s *Libido sexualis*.⁴⁴

At least since 1905, Freud and Moll had been engaged in a dispute about priority. Moll, for example, claimed: ‘Freud’s unconscious is, in the early works, according to Steyerthal, nothing but the subconscious of Dessoir and Moll.’⁴⁵ Meanwhile, Freud was less than impressed by Moll after he had convinced himself that Moll had plagiarised him and disputed his ‘priority on childhood sexuality’, which, after all, ‘even if it might

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 522.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 133–4, 376–8 and 513.

³⁷ Sigmund Freud, ‘Bemerkungen über einen Fall von Zwangsneurose (1909)’, in *idem*, *Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. 7 (London: Imago, 1941), 381–463: 462.

³⁸ Ernest Chambard, *Du somnambulisme en général: Analogies, signification nosologique et étiologie* (Paris: Parent, 1881), 65; Alfred Binet and Charles Féré, *Le magnétisme animal* (Paris: Alcan, 1887), 112.

³⁹ ‘Neigung zum anderen Geschlecht mit allen Zeichen einer Liebesleidenschaft (kommt) bereits lange Zeit vor der Pubertät (vor). Es sind mir Fälle bekannt, wo im 5. oder 6. Jahre unzweifelhaft, vom Geschlechtstrieb herrührende Neigungen zum anderen Geschlecht auftraten’; Moll, *Untersuchungen*, *op. cit.* (note 8), 93.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 44.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 13–16 and 43–6: 44; see also, Moll, *Conträre Sexualempfindung*, *op. cit.* (note 7); *idem*, *Das Sexuelleben des Kindes* (Berlin: Walther, 1909); first English edition, *idem*, *The Sexual Life of the Child* (New York: Macmillan, 1912).

⁴⁴ Sulloway, *op. cit.* (note 12).

⁴⁵ ‘Das Unbewußte Freuds ist in den ersten Arbeiten, wie Steyerthal sagt, nichts anderes als das Unterbewußte von Dessoir und Moll’; Moll, *op. cit.* (note 5), 71.

sound strange, was discovered by him, Freud'.⁴⁶ However, this did not just sound strange but was plainly wrong. As Freud knew, but would not acknowledge publicly, Moll had already, in 1897, discussed 'normal' child sexuality, not only in passing, but effectively 'discovering' it in a systematic way, 'proving' it empirically, and developing a theoretical framework for it – see also the contribution by Lutz Sauerteig in this volume. When the *Wiener psychoanalytische Vereinigung* [Viennese Psychoanalytical Society] 'discussed' Moll's book *Das Sexualleben des Kindes* [*The Sexual Life of the Child*], his allegedly bad character was frequently referred to. According to the minutes of the meeting, Freud had said: 'Moll's character is known all too well. Hirschfeld has already complained about him bitterly. He is a pedantic, malicious, narrow-minded character. He does not utter one clear opinion.'⁴⁷ The meeting was so hostile that not a single one of Moll's ideas received any form of acclaim. Yet Freud's claim that Moll had no 'clear opinion' was made up out of thin air. In his retrospective reflection on his own life, Moll was even more derogatory about Freud and psychoanalysis than before.⁴⁸ This is how he described a visit to Freud in 1909, whose 'great pettiness' Moll regarded as displeasing:

I sent in my card. However, Freud received me with the words: 'Attacks like yours no one has ever directed against me so far. You accuse us of forging patient records.' To prove this he took out a copy of my book on the 'Sexual Life of the Child' and quite agitated showed me the section in the book.⁴⁹

After this visit by Moll, Freud wrote a letter to Jung, dated 16 May 1909: 'In short, he is a beast, basically not a doctor; he has the intellectual and moral constitution of a pettifogger. . . . He has polluted my room like the devil himself, and I have not. . . put him in his place firmly enough. Now, of course, we have to expect the nastiest attacks from him.'⁵⁰

Yet the disciplinary differences between sexology on the one hand and psychoanalysis on the other reached beyond personal rivalries and animosities.⁵¹ Historically, psychoanalysis has separated itself from sexology along the lines of the differentiations of unconscious and conscious, internal fantasy and external reality, structure and symptom, experience and behaviour, latency and manifestation. To put it bluntly: affirmative psychoanalysts are more than happy if the polymorph–perverse disposition remains

⁴⁶ Hermann Nunberg and Ernst Federn (eds), *Protokolle der Wiener Psychoanalytischen Vereinigung, 1908–1910*, Vol. 2 (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1977), 44.

⁴⁷ 'Molls Charakter sei zu bekannt. Hirschfeld hat sich schon bitter über ihn beklagt. Er ist ein kleinlicher, gehässiger, beschränkter Charakter. Er gibt nicht eine entschiedene Meinung von sich'; *ibid.*, 44–5.

⁴⁸ Moll, *op. cit.* (note 5).

⁴⁹ 'Ich schickte meine Karte hinein. Freud empfing mich aber mit den Worten: "Angriffe wie Sie hat noch keiner gegen mich gerichtet. Sie werfen uns Fälschung von Krankengeschichten vor." Um dies zu beweisen, holte er mein Buch über das "Sexualleben des Kindes" und zeigte mir erregt eine Stelle des Buches (S. 172)'. *ibid.*, 54–5.

⁵⁰ 'Er ist kurz gesagt, ein Biest, eigentlich kein Arzt, sondern hat die intellektuelle und moralische Konstitution eines Winkeladvokaten. . . . Er hatte mir das Zimmer verstunken wie der Gottseibeius, und ich hatte ihn. . . nicht genug verhauen. Natürlich sind von ihm jetzt die ärgsten Schweinereien zu erwarten'; Sigmund Freud and C.G. Jung, *Briefwechsel*, W. McGuire and W. Sauerländer (eds) (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1974), 246; see also Sigmund Freud and Karl Abraham, *Briefe 1907 bis 1926*, H.C. Abraham and E.L. Freud (eds), (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1965), 85.

⁵¹ Volkmar Sigusch, 'Freuds Drei Abhandlungen zur Sexualtheorie und die Sexualwissenschaft seiner Zeit', in Ilka Quindeau and Volkmar Sigusch (eds), *Freud und das Sexuelle: Neue psychoanalytische und sexualwissenschaftliche Perspektiven* (Frankfurt: Campus, 2005), 15–35; Volkmar Sigusch, 'Anfänge der modernen Sexualwissenschaft', in Hans-Martin Lohmann and Joachim Pfeiffer (eds), *Freud-Handbuch: Leben – Werk – Wirkung* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2006), 39–48; Sigusch, *Geschichte der Sexualwissenschaft, op. cit.* (note 19), 261–84.

an abstraction, while affirmative sexologists are fascinated when perversions manifest themselves in manifold ways. Most sexologists could not accept that subjects were denied their own reason, the noble goal of the bourgeoisie; it was incommensurable, according to the elaborate teachings of Freud. Early on, Freud saw the ‘inhibited intentions’ contained in a twilight zone, where they were leading an ‘unimagined existence’ – ‘until they emerge as a spook’.⁵² This ‘spook’ was, by Freud, set against the noble ideals, the free will and self-conscious reason, which were essential to sexologists such as Iwan Bloch or Albert Moll. According to Freud, the successful behaviour of the bourgeoisie was not only based on the renunciation of basic drives, which was also called for by the leading sexologists at the time, but equally on the repression of desires and inhibition of thoughts. It is well known that Freud claimed ‘that the ego was not the master of its own house’.⁵³ He called it the ‘third mortification of self-love’, which had followed as the psychological mortification after the cosmological mortification at the hands of Copernicus and the biological mortification by Darwin. Neither the old sexologists nor Freud could foresee that Theodor W. Adorno (1903–1969) would add a fourth mortification when he found that the transcendental subject was unconscious (*bewusstlos*),⁵⁴ and that with his archaeology, Michel Foucault (1926–1984) would at the same time bet all his money ‘that man vanishes like a face in the sand at the shore of the sea’.⁵⁵

Sexology or Sexual Reform

The relationship between Hirschfeld and Moll was also poisoned and controversial in professional matters early on. Yet they had a lot in common. Moll came from a family of merchants in Lissa/Posen, Hirschfeld from a family of doctors in Kolberg/Pomerania. Both belonged to the same generation, grew up as Jews in similar socio-economic circumstances. Both studied medicine and travelled the world. Both distanced themselves from Judaism; in doing so Moll converted to Lutheran Protestantism, was baptised in 1895 and left the Jewish congregation in 1896.⁵⁶ According to their writings, both identified with and felt part of German culture. Neither of them married and neither had, as far as we know, any children. Both published their first sexological work on homosexuality;⁵⁷ spent their most productive years in Berlin; worked successfully outside the institutional setting of the university; were unsympathetic to Freud’s psychoanalysis; and held on to their patriotism and scientific worldview to the bitter end. Moll died, humiliated by the Nazis, in 1939 in Berlin, Hirschfeld died, exiled by the Nazis, in 1935 in Nizza. Both belonged, without doubt, to the most influential sexologists of the past century.⁵⁸ However, this is where the similarities end.

⁵² Sigmund Freud, ‘(1892/3), Ein Fall von hypnotischer Heilung’, in *idem, Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. 1 (London: Imago, 1952), 1–17: 15.

⁵³ ‘daß das Ich nicht Herr sei in seinem eigenen Haus’; Sigmund Freud 1917, ‘Eine Schwierigkeit der Psychoanalyse’, in *idem, Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. 12 (London: Imago, 1947), 1–12: 11.

⁵⁴ Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialektik* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1966).

⁵⁵ ‘daß der Mensch verschwindet wie am Meeresufer ein Gesicht im Sand’; Michel Foucault, *Les mots et les choses: Une archéologie des sciences humaines* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966), 462.

⁵⁶ See documents in Sigusch, *Geschichte der Sexualwissenschaft*, *op. cit.* (note 19), 202–3.

⁵⁷ Moll, *Conträre Sexualempfindung*, *op. cit.* (note 7); Magnus Hirschfeld (under the pseudonym T. Ramien), *Sappho und Sokrates, oder Wie erklärt sich die Liebe der Männer und Frauen zu Personen des eigenen Geschlechts?* (Leipzig: Spohr, 1896).

⁵⁸ See Sigusch, *Geschichte der Sexualwissenschaft*, *op. cit.* (note 19), 199–233, 345–70; *idem* and Günter Grau (eds), *Personenlexikon der Sexualforschung* (Frankfurt: Campus, 2009), 284–94, 511–21.

Moll held the title of a *Geheimer Sanitätsrat* [privy councillor of health] and saw himself as an ‘objective truth-finder’, who was in pursuit of pure science, without any presuppositions or political interests.⁵⁹ He acted as a resolute advocate and hero of reason. Hirschfeld, however, was a straightforward, hands-on and not-so-privy councillor of health [*Sanitätsrat*]. On the one hand, he also regarded science as the ultimate form of reason and source of justice – Hirschfeld’s motto was ‘*per scientiam ad iustitiam*’ [through science to justice], yet on the other hand, he was pragmatic, mediating, had the common touch, was able to bend the rules of the medical profession, and directly to link science with everyday life. In other words: Moll wanted to be a scholar and representative of pure science. Hirschfeld was a reformer and representative of the ‘scientific–humanitarian’ [*wissenschaftlich-humanitär*] worldview, especially the first homosexual movement. Hirschfeld never wrote about his own sexual orientation, probably to avoid giving ammunition to his enemies which they could use to destroy his existence.⁶⁰ In public, he was frequently labelled ‘homosexual’; a crude simplification which ignores subtleties and personal preferences, though it was also used by his friend Karl Giese in private conversations.⁶¹ However, such simplifications are necessary in order to acknowledge Hirschfeld’s scientific–political position today – in this case, in relation to the bachelor Moll, whose sexual orientation can only be guessed at. As a scholar, Moll took sides with the ‘first’ and, occasionally, the ‘second’ gender, while the reformer Hirschfeld mainly fought for the ‘third’ gender.

Time and again, Moll alleged that Hirschfeld had a ‘problematic nature’ and accused him of political agitation. Although we can only speculate about personal animosities and rivalries, it is quite likely that Moll rejected Hirschfeld because the latter was ‘abnormal’, and hence speaking out of self-interest when he took the stage and barricades for the third, fourth and fifth gender. How should such a person, unmanly, soft, effeminate, and an object of science himself, become the protagonist of sincere and objective research, treat patients in an unprejudiced manner and impartially examine sex offenders? In Moll’s view, this was made impossible by Hirschfeld’s condition. The personal involvement and subjectivity of the latter might well have disgusted the pure privy councillor. On top of all this, Hirschfeld – like Freud before him – challenged Moll’s leadership and expertise in a specific area, in particular, as an expert witness in court, despite the fact that Moll had published ‘the first modern monograph on homosexuality’.⁶²

It was not until 1905 that it became more than obvious how irreconcilable Moll’s and Hirschfeld’s personalities and scientific positions were.⁶³ Previously, Moll had been one of

⁵⁹ Albert Moll, ‘Der reaktionäre Kongreß für Sexualforschung’, *Zeitschrift für Sexualwissenschaft*, 13 (1926/7), 321–31: 323.

⁶⁰ Ralf Dose, ‘Magnus Hirschfeld als Arzt’, in Ulrich Gooß and Herbert Gschwind (eds), *Homosexualität und Gesundheit* (Berlin: Rosa Winkel, 1989), 75.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² Max Hodann, *History of Modern Morals* (London: Heinemann, 1937), 37.

⁶³ See Moll’s changing views in Albert Moll, ‘Sexuelle Zwischenstufen’, *Die Zukunft*, 10 (1902), 425–33; *idem*, ‘Sexuelle Zwischenstufen’, *Zeitschrift für ärztliche Fortbildung*, 1 (1904), 706–9; *idem*, ‘Paragraph 175’, *Die Zukunft*, 51 (1905), 315–20; *idem*, ‘Zur Klärung des homosexuellen Problems. II.’, *Europa*, 1 (1905), 1099–101; *idem*, [reply to Benedikt Friedlaender], *Die Zukunft*, 51 (1905), 412–13; *idem*, ‘Geschlechtstrieb’, in Albert Eulenburg (ed.), *Real-Encyclopädie der gesamten Heilkunde: Medicinisch-chirurgisches Handwörterbuch für praktische Ärzte*, 3rd edn, Vol. 30 (Berlin: Urban und Schwarzenberg, 1906), 229–39; Albert Moll, ‘Inwieweit ist die Agitation zur Aufhebung des § 175 berechtigt?’, *Deutsche medizinische Wochenschrift*, 33 (1907), 1910–12; *idem*, ‘Inwieweit ist die Agitation zur Aufhebung des § 175 berechtigt?’, *Die Umschau*, 11 (1907), 985–7 as well as the reply by Magnus Hirschfeld, ‘Zur Klärung des homosexuellen Problems. I.’ *Europa*, 1 (1905), 1094–9; Benedikt Friedlaender, ‘Paragraph 175’, *Die Zukunft*, 51 (1905), 405–12; Ernst Burchard, ‘II.’ (reply to Albert

the first to sign the petition by Hirschfeld and the *Wissenschaftlich-humanitäres Komitee* [Scientific–Humanitarian Committee] to the German parliament, which envisaged legal equality of homo- and heterosexual acts between persons over the age of sixteen.⁶⁴ Before the turn of the century, Moll had emphasised the changes in customs and legislation ‘over the course of time’ and had accused the advocates of legislation against homosexuality of hypocrisy and encouragement of blackmail, and particularly of arbitrariness and irrationality:

Either one punishes by change of legislation homosexual acts between women, as well as all kinds of obscene activities between men, which are today not covered by the term unnatural fornication, and also all unnatural forms of satisfaction between man and woman, or one allows adult men to do sexually to each other whatever they want within their own walls, as long as they do not violate the rights of a third party.⁶⁵

A year later Moll had a paper published in Hirschfeld’s *Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen* [Yearbook for Sexual Intermediate Stages], in which he tried to argue factually against the Committee: objectivity was a rarity; people did not tend to perceive their own actions as pathological and reprehensible. When homosexuals claimed that they had always felt as they did, it had to be pointed out that everyone preferred to ‘remember what was of particular interest to him’. Something natural was not necessarily healthy. Something acquired did not necessarily make them guilty. From a medical point of view, guilt or antipathy were equally negligible, as was the question whether homosexuality was hereditary or acquired. Treatment of homosexuality was necessary because in adults it was ‘a definitely pathological phenomenon’. It was compared to malformations such as the cleft palate, therefore not to be described as morbid, but as abnormal and pathological. For the ‘conversion of the homosexual sex drive’ psychological treatments such as self-education and suggestion were most favourable. Visits to brothels should be advised against: ‘I have to admit that to me homosexuality still appears to be the lesser evil compared to an infection with syphilis.’ There was no established treatment, and in many cases it was advisable to refrain from the treatment of homosexuality, but not the homosexual, who was ‘often enough not a healthy person in general’. In conclusion, Moll advised ‘the decently thinking homosexual’ to ‘occlude himself to the praises that some exalted homosexuals sang on homosexuality’. Then they could count on ‘getting sympathy from among the heterosexuals and on destroying prejudices. However, this cannot be achieved if homosexuals represent their disposition as the virtually perfect, which is neither of concern to the doctor nor to the judge’.⁶⁶

Moll, *Deutscher Kampf*, 8 (1905), 32–6; see also Numa Praetorius (ie. Eugen Wilhelm), ‘Die Bibliographie der Homosexualität für das Jahr 1905’, *Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen*, 8 (1906), 701–886.

⁶⁴ Magnus Hirschfeld (ed.), §175 des Reichsstrafgesetzbuchs: *Die homosexuelle Frage im Urteile der Zeitgenossen* (Leipzig: Spohr, 1898), 12.

⁶⁵ ‘Entweder bestrafe man durch eine Abänderung des Paragraphen auch homosexuelle Akte zwischen Weibern, desgleichen allerlei unzüchtige Handlungen zwischen Männern, die heute nicht unter den Begriff der widernatürlichen Unzucht fallen, und auch alle unnatürlichen Befriedigungsarten zwischen Mann und Weib, oder man gestatte erwachsenen Männern, in ihren vier Wänden geschlechtlich miteinander zu thun, was sie wollen, so lange sie nicht die Rechte dritter Personen verletzen.’; Albert Moll, ‘Die widernatürliche Unzucht im Strafgesetzbuch’, *Die Gesellschaft*, 15 (1899), 1–11: 1, 11.

⁶⁶ ‘Ich muss gestehen, dass mir die Homosexualität immer noch ein geringeres Uebel zu sein scheint als eine Infektion mit Syphilis’ – ‘Sympathien in den Kreisen der Heterosexuellen zu erwerben und die Vorurteile der Letzteren zu zerstören. Sicherlich kann dies aber nicht gelingen, wenn Homosexuelle ihre Anlage gewissermassen als das Vollkommene hinstellen, das weder den Arzt noch den Richter etwas angehe’; Albert Moll, ‘Die Behandlung der Homosexualität’, *Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen*, 2 (1900), 1–29: 3, 16–7, 18, 21, 25, 29.

Two years later Moll wrote – and this was cited by Hirschfeld with satisfaction when he was vilified in public:⁶⁷

Particularly agreeable is the matter-of-fact manner in which the objections of the opponents are fought. No scolding like it can sometimes be found even in scientific journals. . . . Everyone who wants to support the movement for the abolition of paragraph 175 of the Imperial Penal Code can only be advised to continue on the current path. Sometimes. . . the homosexuals are accused of too much agitation. But what shall they do? If they do not agitate they will never reach their goals. Otherwise their only other option would be: they would have to try to reach their goals over a mountain of corpses.⁶⁸

Although this option was objectionable – Hirschfeld was, by the way, always opposed to what is today called ‘outing’⁶⁹ – some senior civil servant or influential politician, who thoroughly disdained homosexuals as ‘the most sordid scum in the world’, might be surprised because suddenly his son or his friend, ‘such a good and marvellous person’, was found to be among those engaged in same-sex relationships. Quick success was ‘more than likely’ on this path. Therefore, Moll regarded it as even more laudable that the homosexuals had decided to ‘agitate factually’. This agitation had already led to successes, which he applauded. In conclusion, he stated that everyone who worked on homosexuality ‘not only had to know, but also study thoroughly’ the *Yearbook*.⁷⁰ Moll’s ‘period of involution’ [*Involutionsperiode*], as Hirschfeld phrased it in his autobiographical reflections on the homosexual movement, which were published in the early 1920s, thus had ‘then not yet set in’.⁷¹

Later, Moll attacked Hirschfeld time and again with increasing ferocity, especially with regard to issues of homosexuality. He called Hirschfeld’s teachings ‘poison’ for every homosexual who was interested in ‘cure’, and was worried about the seduction of young men. He thought the ‘danger of breeding homosexuality. . . much higher’ than at the time when he had signed the petition of the Scientific–Humanitarian Committee.⁷² Hence, he criticised, in Albert Eulenburg’s – a German physician and sexologist (1840–1917) – *Enzyklopädie* that ‘pure scientific discussions were joined by *fomenting interests*, which are mainly represented by the so-called Scientific–Humanitarian Committee, whose mastermind is Magnus Hirschfeld.’ Allegedly, this committee had not only set itself the task of scientific research into the *sexual intermediate stages* [*sexuelle Zwischenstufen*], but also the abolition of Paragraph 175:

Thereby members of the committee were led to emphasise agitation and interpret or manipulate the findings of science according to their interest. One could justifiably argue that the committee has recently caused offence in wide circles and occasionally given the impression as if the glorification of homosexuality was essential.⁷³

⁶⁷ Magnus Hirschfeld, *Zur Abwehr!* (Charlottenburg: Ernst Broditz, 1907).

⁶⁸ ‘Besonders angenehm berührt die sachliche Art, womit die Einwände der Gegner bekämpft werden. Kein Schimpfen, wie man es manchmal selbst in sogenannten wissenschaftlichen Zeitschriften findet. . . Jedem, der die Bewegung zur Aufhebung des Paragraph 175 fördern will, kann nur gerathen werden, auf dem beschrittenen Wege fortzufahren. Den Homosexuellen wird manchmal. . . der Vorwurf gemacht, sie agitirten zu viel. Was aber sollen sie thun? Wenn sie nicht agitiren, erreichen sie ihr Ziel niemals. Sie hätten dann höchstens noch einen anderen Weg: sie müßten suchen. . . über einen Berg von Leichen ans Ziel zu kommen’; Moll, ‘Sexuelle Zwischenstufen’, (1902) *op. cit.* (note 63), 431–3.

⁶⁹ See Magnus Hirschfeld, *Von einst bis jetzt: Geschichte einer homosexuellen Bewegung 1897–1922*, in Manfred Herzer and James Steakley (eds) (first published in *Die Freundschaft*, 1922/3) (Berlin: Rosa Winkel, 1986), 89.

⁷⁰ Moll, (1902) *op. cit.* (note 63), 433.

⁷¹ Hirschfeld, *op. cit.* (note 69), 89.

⁷² Moll, ‘Zur Klärung des homosexuellen Problems’, (1905) *op. cit.* (note 63), 1100–1.

⁷³ ‘[Z]u den rein wissenschaftlichen Diskussionen auch *agitatorische Interessen* gesellen, die wesentlich von dem sogenannten wissenschaftlich-humanitären Komitee, dessen Spiritus rector Magnus Hirschfeld ist, vertreten

Such developments had to be opposed as well as the assumption that something hereditary could not be influenced. Even if one felt ‘greatest pity’ with the ‘victims of the paragraph 175’, ‘science – could not allow itself – to be dominated by this’. How much effort was made to ‘manipulate the facts’ Moll discussed in detail, with the help of a ‘statistic’ Hirschfeld had used to identify ‘the percentage of homosexuals’.⁷⁴ Yet, subsequently, he emphasised again that thorough scientific studies had been published in the *Yearbook for Sexual Intermediate Stages*.

Years later Moll claimed that the ‘1. Internationaler Kongreß für Sexualforschung’ [‘First International Conference for Sex Research’], which he organised from 10 to 16 October 1926 in Berlin, was sabotaged ‘from a certain direction’ both domestically and abroad.⁷⁵ ‘The intellectual initiator I know’, wrote Moll:

It is the same figure who one day pushed into my consulting room to ask me ‘to be good again’. At the time I explained to him unmistakably that it was not a matter of ‘being good again’, but serious concerns I had about his character. . . . Attempts to disrupt the conference failed, but continued even during the conference, and also afterwards this figure still tried to debase the conference: the conference which was the first international scientific conference since the start of the war on German soil, but also the very first international scientific conference for sex research.⁷⁶

In the following paragraph ‘Mr Magnus Hirschfeld’ was mentioned; no doubt, he was ‘the same figure’.

Moll alluded to Hirschfeld’s ‘character’ and ‘its problematic nature’.⁷⁷ Whether this referred to professional, commercial or sexual ‘misconduct’ remained unclear. The other reason, something ‘factual’, can be seen in the following sentence: ‘Who does not understand the difference [between] a conference for sexual reform and a conference for sex research, is lost to science.’⁷⁸ In Moll’s eyes, Hirschfeld was an agitator who was ‘dangerous to public safety’.⁷⁹ Therefore, Moll was also convinced that he had organised the very first scientific conference for sex research. This conference was supported by the *Internationale Gesellschaft für Sexualforschung* [International Society for Sexual Research, hereafter INGESE], which had been founded at the end of 1913 and was dominated by the German economist Julius Wolf (1862–1937), Moll, and the German sexologist Max Marcuse (1877–1963). INGESE distanced itself from the

werden’ – ‘Hierdurch sind Mitglieder dieses Komitees veranlaßt worden, das Agitatorische in den Vordergrund zu stellen und Resultate der Wissenschaft in ihrem Sinne zu deuten bzw. zu färben. Ja, man kann wohl sagen, daß in neuerer Zeit die Agitation dieses Komitees in weiten Kreisen Ärgernis erregt und mitunter den Anschein erweckt, als ob eine Verherrlichung der Homosexualität das Wesentliche sei.’ Moll, (1906) *op. cit.* (note 63), 235.

⁷⁴ Magnus Hirschfeld, *Das Ergebnis der statistischen Untersuchungen über den Prozentsatz der Homosexuellen* (Leipzig: Spohr, 1904).

⁷⁵ Moll, *op. cit.* (note 59); see also Albert Moll, ‘Zum Kongreß’, *Zeitschrift für Sexualwissenschaft*, 13 (1926/7), 193–5.

⁷⁶ ‘Es ist derselbe, der eines Tages sich in mein Sprechzimmer drängte, um mich zu bitten, “doch wieder gut zu sein”. Ich habe ihm damals in nicht mißzuverstehender Weise erklärt, es handle sich hier nicht um ein “Wiedergutsein”, sondern um die schweren Bedenken, die ich gegen seinen Charakter hätte. . . . Die Versuche, den Kongreß zu sprengen, mißlangen, wurden allerdings selbst während des Kongresses fortgesetzt; und auch nachher hat dieselbe Persönlichkeit es noch versucht, den Kongreß herabzusetzen: den Kongreß, der der erste internationale wissenschaftliche Kongreß war, der seit Beginn des Krieges auf deutschem Boden abgehalten wurde, aber auch der erste internationale wissenschaftliche Kongreß für Sexualforschung überhaupt.’ Moll, *op. cit.* (note 59), 321.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 323.

⁷⁸ ‘Wer den Unterschied [zwischen] einer Tagung für Sexual-Reform und einem Kongreß für Sexual-Forschung nicht begreift, der ist für die Wissenschaft verloren,’ *ibid.*, 322.

⁷⁹ Albert Moll, *Behandlung der Homosexualität: biochemisch oder psychisch?* (Bonn: Marcus & Webers Verlag, 1921) 64; *idem*, ‘Psychopathia sexualis’, in *idem*, *Handbuch, op. cit.* (note 16), Vol. 2, 737–840: 764, 813.

Ärztliche Gesellschaft für Sexualwissenschaft und Eugenik [Medical Society for Sexual Science and Eugenics], which had been founded in early 1913, in which Albert Eulenburg, Magnus Hirschfeld and Iwan Bloch dominated. The INGESE conference was indeed international and very ‘scientific’.⁸⁰ Yet Hirschfeld had already organised a big conference ‘on German soil’ five years earlier in 1921, the ‘1. Internationale Tagung für Sexualreform auf sexualwissenschaftlicher Grundlage’ [‘First International Conference for Sexual Reform on Sexological Basis’],⁸¹ which Moll neither recognised as ‘scientific’ nor as ‘international’, and probably out of resentment continuously postponed to 1922.⁸²

Moll fiercely rejected speculation that Hirschfeld had not been invited to the INGESE conference because he represented, in contrast to himself, ‘the more radical view’. If the accusers were right, ‘the conference (would) have been tendentious’; a terrible thought for the privy councillor of health. After all, thirty-five years ago, in 1891, he had ‘argued fiercely against paragraph 175’, when it was still ‘very much frowned upon to advocate the “liberation of homosexuals”’. When the *Bund für Mutterschutz* [Association for the Protection of Mothers] was founded he had been one of the first members; also, with regard to the question of women’s rights, he had ‘when it was not modern yet’ made his views ‘clear in the most definite way’. All these differences between himself and Hirschfeld, Moll claimed, were constructed.

Therefore a plainly spoken word: He was not invited because it had to be assumed after certain statements that important figures would not have attended the conference if Hirschfeld had received an invitation. Yet the reason is not that Mr Magnus Hirschfeld has a more radical view, but because many serious scientists do not regard him as an objective pursuer of truth, since... he does not approach science without presuppositions, but... confuses agitation with science. Additionally, another reason for not inviting Magnus Hirschfeld was his problematic nature, on this I have a lot of material, which I am not prepared to publish today and without compulsion.⁸³

Terrible End

When the Nazis came to power in Germany, Moll did not carry out his threat to publish this ‘material’, but did something more terrible. On 31 January 1934 he wrote a letter to Gustave Roussy (1874–1948), dean of the medical faculty in Paris, and sent a copy to the German foreign secretary. On 9 February 1934 the Nazi minister had his ‘most profound thanks’ sent to Moll for his ‘friendly note’. The acknowledgement was signed ‘Heil Hitler!’ For the new rulers, Moll’s ‘note’ to the foreign secretary might indeed have been ‘friendly’.⁸⁴ As a matter of fact it was a denunciation, which was intended to prevent Hirschfeld from building a new existence in his French exile.

⁸⁰ See the five volumes of conference proceedings edited by Max Marcuse, *op. cit.* (note 16).

⁸¹ Arthur Weil (ed.), *Sexualreform und Sexualwissenschaft, Vorträge gehalten auf der 1. Internationalen Tagung für Sexualreform auf sexualwissenschaftlicher Grundlage in Berlin* (Stuttgart: Püttmann, 1922).

⁸² Moll, *op. cit.* (note 59), 321.

⁸³ ‘Deshalb ein offenes Wort: Er wurde nicht eingeladen, weil nach bestimmten Äußerungen anzunehmen war, daß bedeutende Persönlichkeiten am Kongreß nicht teilgenommen hätten, wenn Magnus Hirschfeld eine Einladung erhalten hätte. Der Grund ist aber nicht etwa der, daß Herr Magnus Hirschfeld eine radikalere Anschauung vertritt, sondern, weil er von sehr vielen ersten Forschern nicht für einen objektiven Wahrheitssucher gehalten wird, da...er bekanntlich nicht voraussetzungslos an die Wissenschaft herantritt, sondern... Agitation und Wissenschaft verwechselt. Außerdem aber sprach gegen eine Einladung von Magnus Hirschfeld dessen problematische Natur, über die mir sehr viel Material vorliegt, das ich aber heute und ohne Zwang nicht veröffentlichen will’. *Ibid.*, 322–3.

⁸⁴ Albert Moll, letter to the Foreign Secretary, dated 5 February 1934, in Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Inland II A/B, Deutsche Emigrantentätigkeit im Ausland, Bd. 1, 106/1. My thanks go to Marcus Wawerzonnek who gave me the hint. The letters were first published in Sigusch, *op. cit.* (note 6).

In his letter to Gustave Roussy, Moll claimed that Hirschfeld did not have to leave Germany because of the persecution of the Jews or for other political reasons. ‘Certain misconduct’ had been decisive. Moll portrayed Hirschfeld as a doctor who had ‘always’ had such a bad reputation that he would not have been accepted, even in the professional body ‘where otherwise every untainted doctor finds admittance’.⁸⁵ Additionally, he described him as an opportunist who had his Social Democratic convictions ‘discovered only on 9 November 1918, the day of the revolution in Berlin, whereas he had been a strict militarist before’.⁸⁶ Now, however, he acted ‘as the persecuted martyr’. Moll wrote:

Under these circumstances I regard it as my duty... to make you aware of these facts, so that Dr Magnus Hirschfeld cannot present himself in respectable French scientific circles under the banner of the persecuted Israelite and Social Democrat, who had to leave Germany because of such persecution. As I am told, he has already made this attempt in France.

Moll did not forget to mention his life-long ‘love for French psychology’ and his contacts with eminent French politicians and scientists, from his ‘friend’ Pol Bouin (1870–1962), professor of histology in Strasbourg, who had advised him to write the letter, to the politician Édouard Herriot (1872–1957), and Jean-Martin Charcot (1825–93). He finished his letter with the invitation ‘to use these lines in any suitable way’.

So much malice, one can assume, was founded in hatred, disdain, patriotism, sense of honour, belief in science, or more general blindness. Otherwise it is not possible to understand that a man like Moll, whose ‘human–medical qualities’ have been celebrated by the medical historian Heinz Goerke because he had been a champion of high ethical standards in the medical profession,⁸⁷ would use denunciation. Apparently, Moll defended his highest values: patriotism, honour, science. For him, Hirschfeld not only discredited their shared scientific interests, which were struggling for acceptance anyway, he also damaged the reputation of the fatherland abroad, particularly in France, to whose scholars Moll owed so much, according to himself. In this situation, the impulse to divert damage from fatherland and science went hand-in-hand with ignorance about the political realities and certainly about the necessity to adapt to the new powers.

Moll had ‘always proved his German-nationalist patriotism in word and deed’ and joined the far-right *Deutsche Vaterlandspartei* [German Fatherland Party] in 1917.⁸⁸ According to a membership card which can be found in Moll’s papers, and which has been recovered by Winkelmann,⁸⁹ he was indeed a member of the party which was founded by Kapp and von Tirpitz in 1917 but disbanded in December 1918. In 1927, Moll emphasised: ‘I do not belong to any political party.’ When he had been invited by the *Deutsche Volkspartei* [German People’s Party] to join, he refused because this party had done nothing ‘to make the masses of workers national’.⁹⁰ In the German People’s Party, which was founded by the banker and politician Hjalmar Schacht (1877–1970), Gustav Stresemann (1878–1929) and others at the end of 1918, it was mainly followers of

⁸⁵ Moll, *ibid.*; see also Sigusch, *ibid.*, 149 (there: note 1).

⁸⁶ ‘Ich halte es unter diesen Umständen für meine Pflicht... Ihnen von diesem Tatbestand Mitteilung zu machen, damit sich Herr Dr Magnus Hirschfeld nicht in angesehenen französischen wissenschaftlichen Kreisen unter der Flagge eines verfolgten Israeliten oder Sozialdemokraten aufspielt, der wegen solcher Verfolgungen Deutschland verlassen hat. Den Versuch dazu hat er, wie mir berichtet wird, in Frankreich bereits gemacht’, *ibid.*, 149.

⁸⁷ Heinz Goerke (ed.), *Berliner Ärzte: Selbstzeugnisse* (Berlin: Berlin Verlag Spitz, 1965), 241.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 238–9; James Retallack, *Imperial Germany, 1871–1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 214–15, 253–4; Heinz Hagenlücke, *Die Deutsche Vaterlandspartei: Die nationale Rechte am Ende des Kaiserreichs* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1997).

⁸⁹ Otto Winkelmann, personal communication on 13 and 15 December 1994.

⁹⁰ Moll, *op. cit.* (note 59), 325.

the former *Nationalliberale Partei* [National Liberal Party] that came together.⁹¹ Moll stated that he did not join this party because he did not want to lose his academic freedom of speech and the ability to talk, for example, in front of the *Unabhängige Sozialdemokraten* [Independent Social Democrats], which he had done previously. In his autobiographical reflections he insisted that he had never been a Social Democrat, ‘not even a democrat’; his position had always rested ‘on the grounds of the old national liberal party of Benningsen’.⁹² To his fatherland, which had ‘given him so much when it was happy’, he of course remained faithful, especially ‘during unfortunate times’.⁹³

Hence, during the Great War he took care of the replacements for doctors who had been conscripted, the training of Red Cross assistants, the organisation of military hospitals, and the provisions for the civilian population. When two doctors, whom he had asked to join his *Kriegsausschuss für Volksernährung* [War Committee for People’s Nutrition], said that they first had to talk to their parties, he was disgusted.⁹⁴ Moll did not have to ask any party. Instead he was approached by the *Auswärtige Amt* [Foreign Office], the *Reichskolonialamt* [Imperial Colonial Office], *Oberkommando in den Marken* [the High Command of the *Marken*] and the *Großer Generalstab* [General Staff], for which he also worked on issues of psychological warfare. He was equally hostile to pacifism as he was to expert opinions given out of courtesy.⁹⁵ Apparently, when Scheidemann declared the republic, ‘even though he had been permanent secretary and therefore an imperial civil servant and given his oath of loyalty’,⁹⁶ Moll’s universe collapsed. Yet he stuck to his principles, be it as mediator between the *Arbeiter- und Soldatenrat* [Workers and Soldiers Council] and the War Ministry when he organised a militia [*Volkswehr*] against the Spartacists, or when he gave a man ‘asylum and protection, who played a prominent role in the November revolution’ but later feared ‘an arrest à la Liebknecht’.⁹⁷

This German nationalist and incorruptible man, who had founded and presided over the *Zentralverband der Kassenärzte von Groß-Berlin* [Association of Panel Doctors of Greater Berlin] and other organisations of the medical profession, who mingled with the ‘great’ in medicine such as Charcot and Rudolf Virchow (1821–1902), Ernst von Bergmann (1836–1907) as well as Robert Koch (1843–1910), and philosophers such as Eduard von Hartmann (1842–1906), Max Dessoir and Max Scheler (1874–1928), was treated by the Nazis like all the other ‘Jewish doctors’. In 1938, Moll lost his medical licence and was thereby banned from the medical profession. He had to adopt the middle name ‘Israel’. He saw the ‘*Kristallnacht*’ and the attack on Poland and died lonely and impoverished on the same day as his great rival Sigmund Freud. Access to the cemetery chapel was refused; the priest in charge refused to speak at Moll’s grave.⁹⁸ The scientific world, who had honoured him in 1932 with a *Festschrift*, remained silent.⁹⁹ There are even hints that towards the end

⁹¹ Hans Mommsen, *The Rise and Fall of Weimar Democracy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 38–9, 66–7.

⁹² Moll, *op. cit.* (note 5), 218.

⁹³ Moll, *op. cit.* (note 59), 325.

⁹⁴ Moll, *op. cit.* (note 5), 196.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 211–13, 231.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 213.

⁹⁷ Moll, *op. cit.* (note 59), 325.

⁹⁸ Schultz, *op. cit.* (note 13), 25.

⁹⁹ Robert W. Schulte (ed.), *Festschrift zum 70. Geburtstag von Albert Moll* (Berlin: Noffz & Zimmermann, 1932).

of his life his Catholic housekeeper had to hide him from the Nazis.¹⁰⁰ This housekeeper died, according to Schultz, in 1944 in the concentration camp Ravensbrück.¹⁰¹

Since the Eulenburg trial, Hirschfeld had been publicly attacked as a Jew and for corrupting morality.¹⁰² Libellous pamphlets, in which he was vilified as a pervert, especially as a disgusting boot-licker, had already circulated in the 1910s. The police kept secret dossiers on him, which were either full of denunciations or completely banal.¹⁰³ On 4 October 1920, Hirschfeld was beaten unconscious by young Nazis after a lecture in Munich. The media had already reported his death.¹⁰⁴ Shortly after Hitler had come to power, Hirschfeld's *Institut für Sexualforschung* [Institute for Sex Research] in Berlin was repeatedly harassed by the police and the *Sturmabteilung* until it was ravaged and ransacked by Nazi students on 6 May 1933.¹⁰⁵ Four days later, books, among them Hirschfeld's, were burnt in public and a bust of his was symbolically speared. In the Nazi inflammatory pamphlets, Hirschfeld was vilified, together with Freud and other prominent Jews. The caption under a photo of him, for example, read: 'protector and promoter of pathological sexual aberrations, also in his physical appearance probably the most disgusting of all Jewish monsters'.¹⁰⁶ For the Nazis, Hirschfeld represented the perfect example of degeneration: racially, sexually, morally and politically.

All this could not have escaped Moll. In 1932, Hirschfeld had still not returned to Germany from a trip around the world, which he had started in November 1930. Via Austria and Switzerland he arrived in France in 1933. In his letter to the German foreign secretary in early 1934 Moll was outraged:

[T]hat the previous local doctor, Mr Dr Magnus Hirschfeld, tells in Paris and also in Lyon, that he was forced to leave Germany because of the persecution of Jews and also for political reasons. . . . According to my information Magnus Hirschfeld has left Germany for completely different reasons, not because he is discriminated against as a Jew, also not because he is a Social Democrat, but because rumour has it that there had been misconduct in a totally different direction.¹⁰⁷

Magnus Hirschfeld died on 14 May 1935 in exile, weakened by diabetes mellitus and malaria. He had tried again, unsuccessfully, to found an institute for sex research in France. Albert Moll, deeply identifying with the German fatherland and its culture, apparently could not allow himself to see clearly the situation that Jews in Nazi Germany were in and what the situation of the Jew Hirschfeld was like in exile. Had he not disavowed this, he would have lost his foothold.

¹⁰⁰ Winkelmann, *op. cit.* (note 89).

¹⁰¹ Schultz, *op. cit.* (note 13), 25.

¹⁰² On the Eulenburg trial, see recently, Norman Dörmeier, *Der Eulenburg-Skandal: Eine politische Kulturgeschichte des Kaiserreichs* (Frankfurt: Campus, 2010).

¹⁰³ Sigusch, *op. cit.* (note 6), 150; Manfred Herzer, 'Die Polizei überwacht Hirschfelds Vorträge', *Mitteilungen der Magnus-Hirschfeld-Gesellschaft*, 14 (1989), 38–43.

¹⁰⁴ See facsimile in Sigusch, *Geschichte der Sexualwissenschaft*, *op. cit.* (note 19), 232.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 365–70; Manfred Herzer, 'Plünderung und Raub des Instituts für Sexualwissenschaft', *Zeitschrift für Sexualforschung*, 22 (2009), 151–62.

¹⁰⁶ 'Beschützer und Förderer krankhafter Geschlechtsverirrungen, auch äußerlich betrachtet wohl das widerlichste aller jüdischen Scheusalen'; Hans Diebow (ed.), *Der ewige Jude, 265 Bilddokumente* (Munich: Eher Nachf. 1937), 95.

¹⁰⁷ '[D]ass der frühere hiesige Arzt, Herr Dr Magnus Hirschfeld, in Paris und auch in Lyon verbreitet, er sei auf Grund von Judenverfolgungen, zum Teil wohl auch aus politischen Gründen, gezwungen worden Deutschland zu verlassen. . . . Magnus Hirschfeld ist nach meinen Informationen aus ganz anderen Gründen aus Deutschland weggegangen, nicht aber weil er als Jude verfolgt wird, auch nicht, weil er Sozialdemokrat sei, sondern weil ihm Verfehlungen nach ganz anderer Richtung nachgesagt wurden'. Moll, *op. cit.* (note 84); Sigusch, *op. cit.* (note 6), 145.