

# Policing Epistemic Deviance: Albert von Schrenck-Notzing and Albert Moll<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** Shortly after the death of Albert von Schrenck-Notzing (1862–1929), the doyen of early twentieth century German para psychology, his former colleague in hypnotism and sexology Albert Moll (1862–1939) published a treatise on the psychology and pathology of parapsychologists, with Schrenck-Notzing serving as a prototype of a scientist suffering from an ‘occult complex’. Moll’s analysis concluded that parapsychologists vouching for the reality of supernormal phenomena, such as telepathy, clairvoyance, telekinesis and materialisations, suffered from a morbid will to believe, which paralysed their critical faculties and made them cover obvious mediumistic fraud. Using Moll’s treatment of Schrenck-Notzing as an historical case study of boundary disputes in science and medicine, this essay traces the career of Schrenck-Notzing as a researcher in hypnotism, sexology and parapsychology; discusses the relationship between Moll and Schrenck-Notzing; and problematises the pathologisation and defamation strategies of deviant epistemologies by authors such as Moll.

**Keywords:** Academic Freedom, Boundary Work, Epistemic Deviance, Hypnotism, Parapsychology, Psychical Research

## Albert von Schrenck-Notzing: From *Psychopathia sexualis* to the Materialisation of Dreams

Baron Albert von Schrenck-Notzing was born in Oldenburg, Germany, on 18 May 1862. After entering Munich University in 1883 to train as a physician, he studied hypnotism under Hippolyte Bernheim in Nancy, together with Sigmund Freud, in the late 1880s. Schrenck-Notzing’s secretary and biographer, the philosopher Gerda Walther – a pupil of the phenomenologist Edmund Husserl – related how his interest in hypnotism was triggered while he was still a medical student. According to Walther, he jokingly

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<sup>1</sup> The present article was largely inspired by Heather Wolfram, ‘Parapsychology on the Couch: The Psychology of Occult Belief in Germany, c. 1870–1939’, *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, 42 (2006), 237–60. See also Wolfram, *The Stepchildren of Science: Psychical Research and Parapsychology in Germany, c. 1870–1939* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009), ch. 6.

‘mesmerised’ some of his fellow students, three of whom, to the surprise of the young Schrenck-Notzing, fell into a ‘sommnambolic’ trance.<sup>2</sup>

In 1888, Schrenck-Notzing obtained his MD with a thesis on the therapeutic application of hypnotism, in which he reported the cure of one of Jean-Martin Charcot’s patients from chorea minor.<sup>3</sup> Inspired by the works of Richard von Krafft-Ebing in ‘sexual pathology’ and August Forel in hypnotherapy, he began practising as a private physician in Munich, specialising in the hypnotic treatment of sexual deviations, which had recently been transformed from a criminal into a pathological problem by Krafft-Ebing.<sup>4</sup> Together with other important authors on hypnotism – such as the French neurologist Hippolyte Bernheim, the Belgian mathematician and psychologist Joseph Delbœuf, the German philosopher–psychologist Max Dessoir, the Swiss psychiatrist August Forel, the French physician Ambroise Liébeault, Sigmund Freud and Albert Moll – Schrenck-Notzing joined the editorial board of the newly founded *Zeitschrift für Hypnotismus* [*Journal for Hypnotism*] in 1892, to which he became a regular contributor. In the same year, he published an internationally acclaimed book on hypnotism as a treatment of *Psychopathia sexualis*, which he dedicated to August Forel ‘in respect and gratitude’.<sup>5</sup> Schrenck-Notzing also published on the psychology of dissociation,<sup>6</sup> he became an expert in the forensic problems of hypnotism.<sup>7</sup> His works were widely cited by authors such as Krafft-Ebing, August Forel, Havelock Ellis and Morton Prince.<sup>8</sup>

Schrenck-Notzing’s prime interest, however, was in studying and understanding phenomena resisting scientific explanation. While still a medical student in 1886, he became a founding member of the *Münchener psychologische Gesellschaft* [*Munich Psychological Society*], whose research programme was modelled on that of the (British) Society for Psychical Research (SPR), the first major organisation scientifically to scrutinise alleged ‘supernormal’ phenomena.<sup>9</sup> In Germany, Schrenck-Notzing was among

<sup>2</sup> Gerda Walther, ‘Dr med. Albert Freiherr von Schrenck-Notzing: Leben und Werk’ [‘Dr Albert von Schrenck-Notzing, MD: Life and Work’], in G. Walther (ed.), *Grundfragen der Parapsychologie* [*Foundations of Parapsychology*] (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1962), 11–31: 11.

<sup>3</sup> Schrenck-Notzing’s thesis was published as *Ein Beitrag zur therapeutischen Verwerthung des Hypnotismus* [*A Contribution to the Therapeutic Utilisation of Hypnotism*] (Leipzig: Vogel, 1888).

<sup>4</sup> On Krafft-Ebing, see Harry Oosterhuis, *Stepchildren of Nature: Krafft-Ebing, Psychiatry, and the Making of Sexual Identity* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000). See also Oosterhuis’s contribution to this special issue.

<sup>5</sup> Albert von Schrenck-Notzing, *Die Suggestions-Therapie bei krankhaften Erscheinungen des Geschlechtssinns, mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der conträren Sexualempfindung* [*Suggestion Therapy in Pathological Phenomena of the Sexual Sense, with Especial Reference to Contrary Sexual Instinct*] (Stuttgart: Enke, 1892). The book was translated by Charles G. Chaddock (who also rendered Krafft-Ebing’s *Psychopathia sexualis* into English), as Albert von Schrenck-Notzing, *Therapeutic Suggestion in Psychopathia Sexualis* (*Pathological Manifestations of the Sexual Sense*), with *Especial Reference to Contrary Sexual Instinct* (Philadelphia, PA: Davis, 1901).

<sup>6</sup> Albert von Schrenck-Notzing, *Ueber Spaltung der Persönlichkeit (Sogenanntes Doppel-Ich)* [*On Split Personality (So-called Double-Ego)*] (Vienna: Hölder, 1896).

<sup>7</sup> Albert von Schrenck-Notzing, *Kriminal-psychologische und psychopathologische Studien: Gesammelte Aufsätze aus den Gebieten der Psychopathia sexualis, der gerichtlichen Psychiatrie und der Suggestionslehre* [*Studies in Forensic Psychology and Psychopathology: Collected Essays from the Areas of Psychopathia Sexualis, Forensic Psychiatry and Suggestion*] (Leipzig: Barth, 1902).

<sup>8</sup> For more recent appraisals of Schrenck-Notzing’s importance in the history of hypnotism, see Alan Gauld, *A History of Hypnotism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); and Henri F. Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious: The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry* (New York: Basic Books, 1970), 290–301.

<sup>9</sup> For a history of the SPR, see Alan Gauld, *The Founders of Psychical Research* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968). On the Munich and Berlin Psychological Societies, see Adolf Kurzweg, ‘Die Geschichte der Berliner “Gesellschaft für Experimentale-Psychologie” mit besonderer Berücksichtigung ihrer Ausgangssituation und des Wirkens von Max Dessoir’ [‘The History of the Berlin “Society for Experimental Psychology”

the first to argue for the occurrence of telepathy in the waking state and in hypnotic trance, an epistemological and political bone of contention among early international researchers.<sup>10</sup>

Schrenck-Notzing also became interested in the even more controversial phenomenon of spiritualism, which had divided German academia since the public debate on the scientific legitimacy of research into spiritualism between astrophysicist Friedrich Zöllner and the founding father of German academic psychology, Wilhelm Wundt.<sup>11</sup> Through his marriage to Gabriele Siegle, daughter and heir of the Swabian industrialist Gustav Siegle, in 1892 Schrenck-Notzing gained the financial independence to build a laboratory, reimburse mediums and travel to find suitable subjects in Germany and abroad. Mainly in co-operation with his friend Charles Richet, who in 1913 was to become Nobel laureate in physiology for his studies in anaphylaxis, he began investigating ‘physical’ mediums – i.e. persons purported to produce ‘telekinetic’ phenomena, materialisations of ‘spirit forms’ and other incredible feats.<sup>12</sup> The life-long friendship between Schrenck-Notzing and Charles Richet began in 1888, when Schrenck-Notzing had asked Richet for permission to translate one of Richet’s experimental studies in hypnotic clairvoyance and telepathy into German.<sup>13</sup> In the early 1890s, Richet invited Schrenck-Notzing to attend sittings with

with Special Consideration of its Initial Situation and the Work of Max Dessoir’] (unpublished PhD thesis: Freie Universität Berlin, 1976); Tomas Kaiser, ‘Zwischen Philosophie und Spiritismus: (Bildwissenschaftliche) Quellen zum Leben und Werk des Carl du Prel’ [‘Between Philosophy and Spiritism: (Pictorial-Scientific) Sources regarding the Life and Work of Carl du Prel’] (unpublished PhD thesis: University of Lüneburg, 2008); Corinna Treitel, *A Science for the Soul: Occultism and the Genesis of the German Modern* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004); Wolfram, *The Stepchildren of Science*, *op. cit.* (note 1), and Andreas Sommer, ‘Normalizing the supernatural: The formation of the ‘Gesellschaft für psychologische Forschung’, c. 1886–1890’, *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* (forthcoming).

<sup>10</sup> Examples of Schrenck-Notzing’s early parapsychological studies are Albert von Schrenck-Notzing, ‘Übersinnliche Willens-Übertragung mit und ohne Hypnose’ [‘Supersensuous Transference of the Will With and Without Hypnosis’], *Sphinx*, 2 (1886), 179–81; Albert von Schrenck-Notzing, *Telepathische Experimente des Sonderausschusses der Psychologischen Gesellschaft zu München* [Telepathic Experiment of the Committee of the Munich Psychological Society] (Leipzig: Griebens, 1887); Albert von Schrenck-Notzing, ‘Experimental Studies in Thought-Transference’, *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, 7 (1891), 3–22. For an account of the Munich Society’s work in telepathic hypnotism, see L. Moser, ‘Hypnotism in Germany’, in Eric J. Dingwall (ed.), *Abnormal Hypnotic Phenomena: A Survey of Nineteenth Century Cases*, Vol. 2 (London: Churchill, 1967), 103–99.

<sup>11</sup> See Barbara Wolf-Braun, ‘Zur Rezeptionsgeschichte der Parapsychologie im Rahmen der akademischen Psychologie: Die Stellungnahmen von Wilhelm Wundt (1832–1916) und Hugo Münsterberg (1863–1916)’ [‘On the Historical Reception of Parapsychology in Academic Psychology: The Responses of Wilhelm Wundt (1832–1916) and Hugo Münsterberg (1863–1916)’], in J. Jahnke *et al.* (eds), *Psychologiegeschichte – Beziehungen zu Philosophie und Grenzgebieten* [History of Psychology – Relations to Philosophy and Border Areas] (Munich: Profil, 1998), 405–19; Nikola B. Kohls and Andreas Sommer, ‘Die akademische Psychologie am Scheideweg: Positivistische Experimentalpsychologie und die Nemesis der Transzendenz’ [‘Academic psychology at the crossroad: Positivist experimental psychology and the nemesis of the transcendental’], in A. Büssing *et al.* (eds), *Spiritualität, Krankheit und Heilung – Bedeutung und Ausdrucksformen der Spiritualität in der Medizin* [Spirituality, Disease and Healing – Meaning and Forms of Expression of Spirituality in Medicine] (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag für Akademische Schriften, 2006), 183–217; Klaus B. Stauber, ‘Tying the Knot: Skill, Judgement and Authority in the 1870s Leipzig Spiritistic Experiments’, *British Journal for the History of Science*, 34 (2001), 67–79.

<sup>12</sup> A comprehensive account of Richet’s work in psychical research is Charles Richet, *Thirty Years of Psychical Research: Being a Treatise on Metapsychics*, S. De Brath (trans.) (New York: Macmillan, 1923). For a biography of Richet, see S. Wolf, *Brain, Mind, and Medicine: Charles Richet and the Origins of Physiological Psychology* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1993). An important forerunner in the investigation of physical mediumship was the Victorian chemical physicist William Crookes (see, for example, his *Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism*, London: Burns, 1874).

<sup>13</sup> Charles Richet, *Experimentelle Studien auf dem Gebiete der Gedankenübertragung und des sogenannten Hellsehens* [Experimental Studies in Thought-Transference and So-Called Clairvoyance], A.v. Schrenck-Notzing

the notorious Italian medium Eusapia Paladino, who converted previous sceptics, such as Cesare Lombroso, Enrico Morselli and Pierre Curie, to a belief in supernormal physical phenomena.<sup>14</sup>

Like Richet and many other investigators of physical mediumship, Schrenck-Notzing rejected spiritistic explanations of the observed phenomena and favoured a psychodynamic approach. He considered the results obtained in sittings with Paladino and other physical mediums as experimentally induced variants of alleged ‘poltergeist’ phenomena – which involved spontaneous anomalous movements and sudden appearances and disappearances of diverse objects and materials, mysterious loud noises, fire outbreaks and other puzzling phenomena – usually causing a stir in the press and occasionally attracting legal attention.<sup>15</sup>

Schrenck-Notzing held that ‘poltergeist’ phenomena usually centred around and were unconsciously effected by an emotionally unstable person, usually an adolescent, and were to be understood as psychodynamic discharges, or externalised hysteria, acted out ‘telekinetically’ by these unwitting physical mediums:

In certain cases, emotionally charged complexes of representation, which have become autonomous and dissociated, seem to automatically and compulsively press for discharge and realisation through haunting phenomena. . . . Hence, the so-called haunting occurs in place of a neurosis.<sup>16</sup>

Schrenck-Notzing found that several physical mediums, such as Stanisława Tomczyk, the main subject of his study *Physikalische Phänomene des Mediumismus* [*Physical Phenomena of Mediumship*], had started their careers as focus persons in poltergeist cases.<sup>17</sup> Hence, he aimed at identifying focus persons of poltergeist outbreaks to transform them into mediums available for controlled experiments.

It seems that Schrenck-Notzing’s attitude to physical mediumship co-developed with that of his friend Charles Richet. By 1898, neither Richet nor Schrenck-

(trans.) (Stuttgart: Enke, 1891). On the friendship between the two men, see Richet’s obituary of Schrenck-Notzing, ‘Albert von Schrenck-Notzing’, *Zeitschrift für Parapsychologie*, 4 (1929), 242–5.

<sup>14</sup> On Marie and Pierre Curie’s sittings with Paladino, see Jules Courtier, ‘Rapport sur les séances d’Eusapia Palladino’ [‘Report on the Sittings with Eusapia Palladino’], *Bulletin de l’Institut Général Psychologique*, 8 (1908), 407–578; and Charles Richet, *Thirty Years of Psychological Research*, 413, 496–7.

<sup>15</sup> Scholarly discussions of alleged haunting and poltergeist phenomena are Fanny Moser, *Spuk: Irrglaube oder Wahrglaube? Eine Frage der Menschheit* [*Haunting Phenomena: False or True? A Question of Humanity*], Vol. 1 (all published) (Baden: Gyr-Verlag, 1950), which includes a contribution by Carl G. Jung on an alleged haunting witnessed by himself (253–260); and Alan Gauld and Anthony D. Cornell, *Poltergeists* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979).

<sup>16</sup> ‘Die autonom gewordenen, abgespaltenen Vorstellungskomplexe scheinen automatisch und zwangsartig in gewissen Fällen zur Abfuhr und Realisierung durch Spukerscheinungen zu drängen. . . . Der sogenannte Spuk tritt also an Stelle einer Neurose’. Albert von Schrenck-Notzing, ‘Richtlinien zur Beurteilung medialer Spukvorgänge’ [‘Guidelines for the Assessment of Mediumistic Haunting’], *Zeitschrift für Parapsychologie*, 3 (1928), 513–21: 518. (Unless stated otherwise, all translations are the author’s own.) For Schrenck-Notzing’s reports of poltergeist-type cases, see Albert von Schrenck-Notzing, ‘Der Spuk in Hopfgarten: Eine gerichtliche Feststellung telekinetischer Phänomene’ [‘The Hopfgarten Haunting: A Forensic Ascertainment of Telekinetic Phenomena’], *Psychische Studien*, 48 (1921), 529–52; *idem*, ‘Der Spuk von Ylöjärvi (Finnland)’ [‘The Ylöjärvi Haunting (Finland)’], *Psychische Studien*, 49 (1922), 177–98; *idem*, ‘Der Spuk von Neuried in Oberbayern’ [‘The Neuried Haunting in Upper Bavaria’], *Zeitschrift für Parapsychologie*, 1 (1926), 32–7. Schrenck-Notzing refers to psychodynamic accounts of poltergeist and mediumistic phenomena proposed, eg., by the psychoanalyst Alfred von Winterstein. See A. von Winterstein, ‘Psychoanalytische Bemerkungen zum Thema Spuk’ [‘Psychoanalytical Remarks on Hauntings’], *Zeitschrift für Parapsychologie*, 1 (1926), 548–53; and *idem*, ‘Die Bedeutung der Psychoanalyse für die Parapsychologie’ [‘The Significance of Psychoanalysis for Parapsychology’], *Zeitschrift für Parapsychologie*, 5 (1930), 421–36.

<sup>17</sup> Albert von Schrenck-Notzing, *Physikalische Phänomene des Mediumismus: Studien zur Erforschung der telekinetischen Vorgänge* [*Physical Phenomena of Mediumship: Studies on Researches in Telekinetic Processes*] (Munich: Reinhardt, 1920).

Notzing had publicly given a positive verdict regarding the reality of the physical phenomena of mediumship,<sup>18</sup> and it was only after Richet won the Nobel Prize in 1913 that Schrenck-Notzing, supported by his eminent friend, published *Materialisations-Phaenome* [*Materialisation Phenomena*].<sup>19</sup> The book describes Schrenck-Notzing's experimental séances with the French medium Eva C. (pseudonym for Marthe Béraud), who had been studied previously by Richet and Juliette Bisson (widow of the French dramatist Alexandre Bisson). Bisson had published the results of her investigations of Marthe in French simultaneously with Schrenck-Notzing; Richet, being an occasional co-investigator, vouched for both authors' methodological competence and personal credibility.<sup>20</sup>

The phenomena observed and described by the authors were reported usually to commence with the emergence of an initially gauze-like white, grey or dark substance from the medium's orifices, usually from her mouth, but also from her breasts, navel, fingertips, vagina, and the crest of her head. This substance was called 'teleplasm' by Schrenck-Notzing and 'ectoplasm' by the Polish philosopher-psychologist Julian Ochorowicz, Richet and his French colleague Gustave Geley (a respected Lyonnais physician). It was photographed by Schrenck-Notzing – who also filmed the emergence of teleplasm – Geley, Bisson, and other researchers, employing stereoscopy and, sometimes, up to nine cameras. Schrenck-Notzing also took probes of the 'teleplasm', whose microscopic and physical-chemical analyses suggested that the substance was composed of epithelial cells, isolated fat droplets and mucus, as well as cell detritus that was unlikely to stem from the medium's saliva, vaginal secretions, or other body fluids.<sup>21</sup>

As described by the investigators, the teleplasm moved in an autonomous animate manner, responding to touch and, particularly, exposure to light, with the entranced medium displaying signs of pain and physical shock. The substance was reported to develop into rudimentary limb-like forms, often assuming a two-dimensional form first. Occasionally, full human limbs and heads were reported to form, appearing lifelike and responsive to the environment. Finally, the forms would either gradually dissolve, with the teleplasm being reabsorbed by the medium, or suddenly vanish into thin air.

The hypothesis put forth by Schrenck-Notzing to account for these bizarre observations was that of 'ideoplasty'. Teleplastic processes, he believed, had their origin in the unconscious mind of the entranced medium in terms of 'materialised dream-images', that is, ephemeral, externalised precipitates from the medium's psychical impressions, imagination and memories;<sup>22</sup> for instance, certain ostensible materialisations were identified as imperfectly reproduced photographs from magazines and other sources the

<sup>18</sup> See, for example, Schrenck-Notzing's rather sceptical statement 'Antwort von Dr Albert Freiherr von Schrenck-Notzing' ['Reply from Dr Albert Baron von Schrenck-Notzing'], in F. Maack (ed.), *Okkultismus: Was ist er? Was will er? Wie erreicht er sein Ziel? Eine unparteiische Rundfrage* [*Occultism: What is It? What is its Purpose? How does it Fulfil its Aim? An Impartial Survey*] (Zehlendorf: Zillmann, 1898), 39–40.

<sup>19</sup> Albert von Schrenck-Notzing, *Materialisations-Phaenome: Ein Beitrag zur Erforschung der mediumistischen Teleplastie* ['*Phenomena of Materialisation: A Contribution to the Investigation of Mediumistic Teleplasties*'] (Munich: Reinhardt, 1914). I am using the enlarged English edition, E. Fournier d'Albe (trans.) *Phenomena of Materialisation: A Contribution to the Investigation of Mediumistic Teleplasties* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1920).

<sup>20</sup> J. Alexandre-Bisson, *Les phénomènes dits de la matérialisation: Étude expérimentale* [*Phenomena of Materialisation: Experimental Studies*] (Paris: Alcan, 1914).

<sup>21</sup> Schrenck-Notzing, *Phenomena of Materialisation*, *op. cit.* (note 19), 246–50. The original of one analysis (conducted by the Biological Institute of Munich University, dated 26 June 1916) can be inspected in the Schrenck-Notzing papers [not indexed], Institut für Grenzgebiete der Psychologie und Psychohygiene, Freiburg.

<sup>22</sup> For a similar proposal see Enrico Morselli, *Psicologia E 'Spiritismo': Impressioni E Note Critiche Sui Fenomeni Medianici Di Eusapia Paladino* [*Psychology and 'Spiritism': Critical Impressions and Notes on the Mediumistic Phenomena of Eusapia Paladino*], 2 vols (Milan: Bocca, 1908).

medium had previously been exposed to. Researchers such as Richet and the Swiss psychologist Théodore Flournoy had reported experiments indicating that memories of forgotten impressions were sometimes restored in altered states of consciousness, such as dreams, and hypnotic and mediumistic trances. Schrenck-Notzing himself referred to Carl Gustav Jung's treatment of cryptomnesia – ie. the emergence of forgotten or not consciously recorded sensory impressions – in Jung's doctoral thesis on the psychology and psychopathology of mediumship.<sup>23</sup>

In 1920, Schrenck-Notzing published his second comprehensive parapsychological monograph, *Physikalische Phaenomene des Mediumismus*.<sup>24</sup> The main focus of the study is on the alleged telekinetic phenomena of the Polish medium Stanislaw Tomczyk, who was discovered by Julian Ochorowicz. Maintaining his theory of ideoplasty, Schrenck-Notzing viewed telekinesis – ie. the supernormal movement or influence of objects – and the phenomena of materialisation as different in degree rather than in kind. The achievement of the telekinetic movement, he suggested, was anticipated by the entranced medium in her dream-like state, whereupon her creative imagination evolved thread-like ideoplastic structures and 'pseudopodia', which finally produced the effect mechanically. Schrenck-Notzing believed that 'the lively wish of lifting an object from a distance leads to the associated idea of a thread, by which the experiment might be performed; the objective phantom of a thread is brought into being by a hallucination that realises itself in matter'.<sup>25</sup> The book – also for the first time containing the records of his early experimental sittings with Paladino in the 1890s, as well as observations of phenomena associated with anonymous private mediums and Willy Schneider (see below) – displays photographs of the 'ideoplastic threads' allegedly produced by Tomczyk and plates showing their magnified structures, which Schrenck-Notzing argued differed from any known natural fibre.

Schrenck-Notzing's next book was a collection of records of experimental sittings with the Austrian medium Willy (or Willi) Schneider, held at the Psychological Institute at Munich University and the baron's private laboratory.<sup>26</sup> Alleged phenomena observed were levitations, 'telekinetic' writings on a typewriter, manipulations of objects in sealed containers, and rudimentary materialisations. Among the fifty-six witnesses vouching for the reality of the phenomena in an appendix of the book were the neurologist Johannes (Jaroslaw) Marcinowski, the physicist Leo Graetz, the philosopher Erich Becher, the physiologist Hans Winterstein, the mathematician Ferdinand von Lindemann, the Nobel Laureate in chemistry (in 1915) Richard Willstätter, zoologists Karl Zimmer and Karl Gruber, psychiatrists Oskar Fischer and Erich Kindborg, the handwriting analyst Ludwig Klages, the biologist and philosopher Hans Driesch, and the writers Gustav Meyrink and Thomas Mann.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Carl Gustav Jung, *Zur Psychologie und Pathologie sogenannter occulter Phänomene: Eine psychiatrische Studie* [*On the Psychology and Pathology of So-Called Occult Phenomena: A Psychiatric Study*] (Leipzig: Mutze, 1902); Albert von Schrenck-Notzing, *Der Kampf um die Materialisationsphänomene: Eine Verteidigungsschrift* [*The Battle regarding the Phenomena of Materialisation: A Defence*] (Munich: Reinhardt, 1914), 116. The classic study of conservatory and mythopoetic functions of the unconscious is Théodore Flournoy, *From India to the Planet Mars: A Study of a Case of Somnambulism with Glossolalia*, D.B. Vermilye (trans.) (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1900).

<sup>24</sup> Schrenck-Notzing, *op. cit.* (note 17).

<sup>25</sup> 'Der lebhafteste Wunsch, einen Gegenstand aus der Entfernung zu heben, führt zu der Ideenassoziation eines Fadens, mit dem das Experiment ausgeführt werden könne; das objektive Phantom eines Fadens wird durch eine sich materiell realisierende Halluzination zustande gebracht'. Schrenck-Notzing, *ibid.* 3.

<sup>26</sup> Albert von Schrenck-Notzing, *Experimente der Fernbewegung* [*Experiments in Distant Motion*] (Stuttgart: Union Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1924).

<sup>27</sup> Thomas Mann detailed his experiences with Willy and Rudi Schneider in 'Okkulte Erlebnisse' ['Occult Experiences'], *Neue Rundschau*, 35 (1924), 193–224, and exploited them in his novel *Der Zauberberg* [*The Magic Mountain*]. On Driesch's involvement in parapsychology, see Heather Wolfram, 'Supernormal Biology:

The final phase of Schrenck-Notzing's work focused on his experiments with Willy Schneider's brother, Rudi. Sitters such as Driesch, Eugen Bleuler and C.G. Jung confirmed Schrenck-Notzing's reports of movements of objects and other phenomena previously observed with Rudi's predecessors.<sup>28</sup> The publication of a monograph on Rudi was thwarted by Schrenck-Notzing's death on 12 February 1929 by cardiac arrest following appendicitis surgery. Records of the sittings with Rudi were compiled by Gerda Walther after Schrenck-Notzing's death and published, with a foreword by Eugen Bleuler, by his widow.<sup>29</sup>

### 'We Were Companions': Schrenck-Notzing as Albert Moll's Comrade-in-Arms and Nemesis

Following the death of Schrenck-Notzing in 1929, Albert Moll published a treatise on the psychology and pathology of parapsychologists, with Schrenck-Notzing serving as a personality prototype and representative specimen for analysis. In an attempt to justify the delicate timing of this vehement attack shortly after the death of Schrenck-Notzing, Moll wrote: 'A man who accepted carnival jokes as science, who wanted to impose on the world the carnival masquerade of hysterical shrews and other mediums as transfiguration or teleplasm and as the product of the unconscious, must be truthfully scrutinised even after his death.'<sup>30</sup>

Preceding his assaults on Schrenck-Notzing as a deluded traitor of science in the remainder of his book, Moll referred to Schrenck-Notzing's pioneering work in hypnotism and sexology: 'In younger years, we were companions, and he had done much to introduce hypnotism as a therapy'; Moll even graciously identified Schrenck-Notzing as the very first medical psychotherapist in southern Germany,<sup>31</sup> concluding his sketch of Schrenck-Notzing: 'He who wants to name the personalities who rendered pioneering services to psychotherapy in Germany under greatest struggles, must not forget to name Baron von Schrenck-Notzing with gratitude.'<sup>32</sup>

Here, Moll paid tribute to Schrenck-Notzing as an important figure in the introduction of hypnotism into late nineteenth-century German medicine. In fact, the men had frequently cited one another in their works on hypnotism and sexology, defended each other against attacks on hypnotism by the scientific and medical orthodoxy, and their initial

Vitalism, Parapsychology and the German Crisis of Modernity, c. 1890–1933', *The European Legacy*, 8 (2003), 149–63.

<sup>28</sup> On Bleuler's and Jung's respective involvement in parapsychology, see Christian Scharfetter, 'Eugen Bleuler und das Okkulte' ['Eugen Bleuler and the occult'], in D. Hell, C. Scharfetter and A. Möller (eds), *Eugen Bleuler – Leben und Werk [Eugen Bleuler – Life and Work]* (Bern: Huber, 2001), 131–9; and A. Jaffé, *Aus Leben und Werkstatt von C.G. Jung. Parapsychologie, Alchemie, Nationalsozialismus, Erinnerungen aus den letzten Jahren [From the Life and Work of C.G. Jung. Parapsychology, Alchemy, National Socialism, Memories of the Final Years]* (Zurich: Rascher, 1968).

<sup>29</sup> Albert von Schrenck-Notzing, *Die Phänomene des Mediums Rudi Schneider [The Phenomena of the Medium Rudi Schneider]*, G. von Schrenck-Notzing (ed.) (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1933).

<sup>30</sup> 'Ein Mann, der Fastnachtsscherze als Wissenschaft hinnahm, der die Faschingsvermummungen hysterischer Weiber und anderer Medien als Transfiguration oder Teleplasma und als Produkt des Unbewußten der Welt aufoktroieren wollte, muß auch nach dem Tode wahrheitsgemäß beleuchtet werden'. Albert Moll, *Psychologie und Charakterologie der Okkultisten (Abhandlungen aus dem Gebiete der Psychotherapie und medizinischen Psychologie*, 11. Heft) [*Psychology and Characterology of the Occultists*], A. Moll (ed.) (Stuttgart: Enke, 1929), 4.

<sup>31</sup> 'Wir waren in jungen Jahren Weggenossen, und er hat vieles getan, um den Hypnotismus als Heilmittel einzuführen', *ibid.* 18.

<sup>32</sup> 'Wer die Persönlichkeiten nennen will, die unter schwersten Kämpfen der Psychotherapie in Deutschland Pionierdienste geleistet haben, darf nicht vergessen, den Namen des Freiherrn von Schrenck-Notzing mit Dank zu nennen', *ibid.* 21.

relationship was marked by respect and esteem. Moll, for example, relied heavily on Schrenck-Notzing's work in all five editions of his celebrated survey of hypnotism.<sup>33</sup> Also, Moll reviewed Schrenck-Notzing's work in the *Zeitschrift für Hypnotismus* and gratefully acknowledged that Schrenck had identified his lecture at the *Berliner medizinische Gesellschaft* [Berlin Medical Society] on 26 October 1887 as an event catalyzing wider interest in hypnotism in Germany.<sup>34</sup> Moll went on to praise Schrenck-Notzing's scientific standards: 'The whole way of presentation, which nowhere shows a glossed-over portrayal of the successes, is marked by a remarkable conscientiousness and critical spirit.'<sup>35</sup> In the same report, Moll posited Schrenck-Notzing and himself, both of whom published unsuccessful treatments as well as successful ones, as prime examples of intellectual integrity, while complaining that other authors, especially propagandists of new forms of therapy other than hypnosis, inflated therapeutic effects by selectively publishing successfully treated cases only.<sup>36</sup>

In an attempt to understand Moll's transformation of Schrenck-Notzing from an exemplary scientist and previous comrade-in-arms into a charlatan and personal nemesis, let us sketch the nature of Moll's own involvement in parapsychology, as well as the history of conflicts between the men. While Schrenck-Notzing was a founding member of the '*Münchener Psychologische Gesellschaft*' [Munich Psychological Society, hereafter MPG] in 1886, Moll was among the early members of a similar organisation founded in Berlin by Max Dessoir and Friedrich Karl Goeler von Ravensburg in 1888, the *Gesellschaft für Experimental-Psychologie* [Society for Experimental Psychology].<sup>37</sup> Its programme was published in the publication organ of the MPG, the journal *Sphinx*.<sup>38</sup> After internal conflicts in the MPG, which resulted in the formation of a separate organisation with a philosophical rather than experimental focus around the work of the philosopher Carl du Prel in 1889, Schrenck-Notzing's old Munich society fused with Dessoir's Berlin group under the name of *Gesellschaft für psychologische Forschung* [Society for Psychological Research] in 1890.

The Berlin section under Dessoir and Moll maintained its previous name, but its research programme started centring mainly around hypnotism and dissociation rather than the question of the reality of supernormal phenomena proper. Both the Munich and Berlin sections published their findings in the *Schriften der Gesellschaft für Psychologische Forschung* [Transactions of the Society for Psychological Research], which contained writings by early German-language psychologists such as Hugo

<sup>33</sup> Compare, for example, Albert Moll, '*Der Hypnotismus*' ['Hypnotism'] (Berlin: Fischer, 1889); and Albert Moll, *Hypnotism: Including a Study of the Chief Points of Psycho-Therapeutics and Occultism*, A.F. Hopkirk (trans.), 4th edn (London: Scott, 1911).

<sup>34</sup> Moll's lecture introducing the Nancy school of hypnotism to leading Berlin medics was an important event in the German history of hypnotism. The talk was well visited and received broad coverage in the media and the German-reading medical world. See Albert Moll, 'Der Hypnotismus in der Therapie. Teil 1' ['Hypnotism in Therapy. Part 1'], *Verhandlungen der Berliner medizinischen Gesellschaft*, 18 (1888), 159–65. For a report and appraisal of Moll's talk, see A. Forel, 'Einige Bemerkungen über den gegenwärtigen Stand der Frage des Hypnotismus nebst eigenen Erfahrungen' ['Some Remarks on the Present State of the Question of Hypnotism, with Personal Experiences'], *Münchener medizinische Wochenschrift*, 35 (1888), 71–6, 213–16.

<sup>35</sup> 'Eine bemerkenswerte Gewissenhaftigkeit und Kritik spricht aus der ganzen Art der Darstellung, die nirgends eine schönfärberische Schilderung der Erfolge zeigt'. Albert Moll, 'Literaturbericht' ['Literature Review'], *Zeitschrift für Hypnotismus*, 1 (1892/3), 101–4, 135–7, 171–3, 344–7, 411–13: 285.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* 149, 382.

<sup>37</sup> In his memoirs, Moll claimed that he had been a founding member of the Berlin Society, although this seems unlikely. See Kurzweg, *op. cit.* (note 9), 136.

<sup>38</sup> Friedrich Karl Goeler von Ravensburg and Max Dessoir, 'Programm der Gesellschaft für Experimental-Psychologie zu Berlin' ['Programme of the Berlin Society for Experimental Psychology'], *Sphinx*, 5 (1888), 296–300.

Münsterberg, Theodor Lipps, Arthur Wreschner, Paul Möller, William Stern and August Forel. Owing to the work of some of its members, such as Schrenck-Notzing and Max Dessoir in hypnotism and the psychology of dissociation, the Society became a small but significant hub of international psychology. This is documented, for instance, in its organisation of the Third International Congress of Psychology, held in Munich in 1896, with Schrenck-Notzing serving as General Secretary.<sup>39</sup>

Moll's initial involvement in parapsychology can be framed as an exercise in 'boundary work' to establish hypnotism as a legitimate scientific and medical problem. In order to facilitate acceptance of hypnotism by orthodox science and medicine, Moll, in accordance with co-pioneers of hypnotism such as Oskar Vogt, August Forel and Leopold Loewenfeld, sought to purge hypnotism from its 'occult' ballast. Also in line with Moll's attempts to professionalise hypnotism, a related focus of his work was on the repudiation of lay healers, particularly practitioners of animal magnetism.<sup>40</sup> Between 1888 and 1892, Moll's activities focused on the demarcation between clinical hypnotism and its 'forerunner', mesmerism, resulting in his 1892 study *Der Rapport in der Hypnose [The Rapport in Hypnotism]*.<sup>41</sup> The study aimed to settle the question of whether in hypnotism there existed any influence beyond conventional sensory impressions, suggestion and imagination, centring around the notion of a 'mesmeric' rapport, that is, the alleged psychic connection between mesmerist and subject. It was based on an unspecified number of experiments over the course of four years which Moll had conducted with Max Dessoir and other researchers.<sup>42</sup> Moll's overall conclusion was that it was legitimate to propose a psychological rapport between hypnotist and subject in terms of a subject's fixation on the hypnotist as a result of suggestion, but that there was no evidence for the involvement of telepathy or 'animal magnetism' in the phenomena of hypnotism. While Moll's study was mute regarding Schrenck-Notzing's published experiments in telepathic hypnotism, he included and gratefully acknowledged experimental findings privately provided by Schrenck-Notzing regarding the transference of the hypnotic rapport from the hypnotist to a third person, and on failed or inconclusive experiments on the supernormal identification of 'magnetised' water as well as the transmission of pains.<sup>43</sup>

The first open conflict between the men arose the year after Moll published his findings on hypnotic rapport. Rather than regarding parapsychological matters, the dispute concerned sexological and hypnotherapeutic questions, ie. the aetiology of homosexuality. Moll (along with Richard von Krafft-Ebing) held that homosexuality was usually a congenital 'condition', while Schrenck-Notzing maintained that it was the result of a pathological weakness of the will to resist sexually deviant urges, which in themselves were acquired rather than congenital. Schrenck-Notzing had reported cases of allegedly successfully 'treated' homosexuality and argued that if it was inbred and genetically determined, it would not be possible to 'cure' homosexuals through hypnotherapy. Without

<sup>39</sup> *Dritter Internationaler Congress für Psychologie [Third International Congress of Psychology]* (Munich: Lehmann, 1897). For an assessment of the importance of the Psychologische Gesellschaft in the history of psychology, see Sommer, 'Normalizing the supernormal' (note 9).

<sup>40</sup> See also, for example, Barbara Wolf-Braun (ed.), *Medizin, Okkultismus und Parapsychologie im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert [Medicine, Occultism and Parapsychology in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century]* (Wetzlar: GWAB, 2009).

<sup>41</sup> Albert Moll, 'Der Rapport in der Hypnose: Untersuchungen über den thierischen Magnetismus' (1892) ['The hypnotic rapport: Studies in animal magnetism'], in *Schriften der Gesellschaft für psychologische Forschung. I. Sammlung* (Leipzig: Abel/Meiner, 1893), 273–514.

<sup>42</sup> On the history of the 'magnetic rapport' in mesmerism, see, for example, Adam Crabtree, *From Mesmer to Freud: Magnetic Sleep and the Roots of Psychological Healing* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993); Gauld, *op. cit.* (note 8).

<sup>43</sup> Moll, *op. cit.* (note 41), 427, 470, 483–4, 491.

providing any support for his suspicion, Moll accused Schrenck-Notzing of having published the successes only and concealing therapeutic failures which would surely invalidate the overall success rate. Moreover, he held that Schrenck-Notzing was in no position to claim lasting effects as he had not observed his patients sufficiently long to conclude that they were permanently cured.<sup>44</sup> Schrenck-Notzing's somewhat irritated reply followed, containing an overall positive follow-up report of the successful cases.<sup>45</sup>

Moll's second attack on Schrenck-Notzing occurred when the latter arranged public performances of the French 'dream dancer' Magdeleine G. in Munich in 1904. In hypnotic trance, Magdeleine, who maintained never to have received any choreographic training, delivered celebrated performances marked by an unusually high degree of emotional expression and artistic perfection.<sup>46</sup> In what appeared a thoroughly calculated publicity strategy to influence public opinion in favour of the still-controversial problems of hypnotism, Schrenck-Notzing was aiming to show that hypnotism not only had clinical, but also aesthetic implications. Moll vehemently attacked Schrenck-Notzing on the basis of the latter's acceptance of Magdeleine's claim to have received no training in dance, and he held that these performances had no scientific value whatsoever.<sup>47</sup>

From about 1904 until after Schrenck-Notzing's death in 1929, Moll steadily secured his leading position as a debunker of 'pseudo-scientists' and medical 'quacks' alike, wasting no opportunity to attack what he viewed as enemies of reason and civilisation in countless newspaper articles and other popular channels of information. Increasingly, the weapon of choice became *ad hominem* attacks and the pathologisation of opponents, with Schrenck-Notzing, who had abandoned sexology and hypnotism research in favour of parapsychological studies around 1911, as only one among many targets. In 1908, for example, Moll published an analysis of lay hypnotists and practitioners of animal magnetism, most of whom he sweepingly 'diagnosed' as psychopaths. If the public were informed about his findings that charlatanry was usually equivalent with mental abnormality, he stated, this would prevent patients from consulting such individuals much more effectively than legal prohibition.<sup>48</sup>

Among Moll's activities eliciting outrage and protest by parapsychologists was his lecture '*Über Denkfehler in der Methodik der Okkultismusforschung*' ['*On Errors of Reasoning in the Methodology of Occultism Research*'] in April 1921. After stating that mediums were either frauds or hysterics, he concluded that researchers

<sup>44</sup> Albert Moll, *Die conträre Sexualempfindung: Mit Benutzung amtlichen Materials* [*The Contrary Sexual Instinct: Including the Utilisation of Official Material*], 2nd enlarged edn (Berlin: Fischer's Medicinische Buchhandlung, 1893).

<sup>45</sup> Albert von Schrenck-Notzing, *Ein Beitrag zur Aetiologie der conträren Sexualempfindung* [*A Contribution to the Aetiology of the Contrary Sexual Instinct*] (Vienna: Hölder, 1895).

<sup>46</sup> Albert von Schrenck-Notzing, *Die Traumtänzerin Magdeleine G. Eine psychologische Studie über Hypnose und dramatische Kunst: Unter Mitwirkung des F.E. Otto Schultze* [*The Dream Dancer Magdeleine G. A Psychological Study of Hypnosis and Dramatic Art: In Collaboration with F. E. Otto Schultze*] (Stuttgart: Enke, 1904).

<sup>47</sup> Albert Moll, 'Von einer Schlaf­tänzerin' ['On a Sleep Dancer'], *Zeitschrift für ärztliche Fortbildung*, 1 (1904), 240. On this conflict between Moll and Schrenck-Notzing, see Wolfram, *Stepchildren*, *op. cit.* (note 1), 112, 118–19.

<sup>48</sup> Albert Moll, 'Ueber Heilmagnetismus und Heilmagnetiseure in forensischer Beziehung' ['On Magnetic Healing and Magnetisers in the Context of Forensics'], *Vierteljahrsschrift für gerichtliche Medizin und öffentliches Sanitätswesen*, 35 (1908), 1–21. On the reception of mesmerism and lay therapies in Imperial Germany; 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' [*The Charlatan Does Not Seek the Truth, He Requests Money Only*]: *On the Conflict between Natural-Scientific and Lay Medicine in Imperial Germany. The Example of Hypnotism and Magnetic Healing*] (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2002).

like Schrenck-Notzing, who vouched for the reality of mediumistic phenomena, were a case for either the prosecutor or the alienist. In Moll's words, Schrenck-Notzing and colleagues were 'psychologically deranged persons' [*seelisch entgleiste Existenzen*'] who would usually entertain sexual relationships with their mediums and, afraid of being publicly regarded as 'dimwits' [*Dummköpfe*'], preferred, by deliberately covering up obvious fraud, to be 'swines' [*Schweinehunde*'] instead.<sup>49</sup> Signalling the end of his willingness to consider Moll a serious critic, Schrenck-Notzing replied: 'With this abandonment of any parliamentary sense of decency, Moll has rendered judgement on himself.'<sup>50</sup>

In February 1924, Moll gave a talk entitled '*Zur Psychologie der Okkultisten*' [*On the Psychology of the Occultists*'], which anticipated the basic arguments of his book *Psychologie und Charakterologie der Okkultisten* [*Psychology and Characterology of Occultists*], published shortly after Schrenck-Notzing's death in 1929.<sup>51</sup> In July 1925, Moll was charged with defaming the Berlin medium Maria Vollhardt (aka Rudloff) as a fraud, after Moll, who was not present at the séances, claimed that the phenomena reported by the spiritualist Friedrich Schwab were due to conjuring tricks.<sup>52</sup> In the course of the trial, one of Moll's defendants, the district court judge and fierce opponent of parapsychology Albert Hellwig, proposed that rather than deciding the ontological status of alleged supernormal phenomena, it would be more sensible to scrutinise the mental state of those claiming their reality, a strategy that became the basis of both Hellwig's and Moll's rejection of parapsychology.<sup>53</sup>

### Asymmetries in Moll's Debunking Arguments

While it is needless to stress that as an historian I am neither interested nor competent to make ontological claims regarding controversial scientific questions, it is worthwhile briefly to analyse recurring patterns in Moll's polemics in relation to the argumentative consistency in his own contributions to parapsychology and hypnotism. To begin with, let us consider one of the few diagnostic criteria Moll provided to judge the mental state of 'the' parapsychologists. According to Moll, a reliable indicator to diagnose pathological deviance was the general opposition to official science in fields other than parapsychology.<sup>54</sup> Many occultists, Moll cautioned, were proponents of homeopathy

<sup>49</sup> Walther Kröner, 'Über Denkfehler in der Methodik der Okkultismusforschung: Kritisches Referat über den gleichnamigen Vortrag Albert Molls in der Berliner Psychologischen Gesellschaft am 28. April 1921' [*On Errors of Reasoning in the Methodology of Occultism Research: Critical Review of the Talk of the Same Title by Albert Moll at the Berlin Psychological Society on 28 April 1921*], *Psychische Studien*, 48 (1921), 440–4: 442.

<sup>50</sup> 'Mit diesem Verzicht auf jedes parlamentarische Anstandsgefühl hat Moll sich selbst gerichtet'. Albert von Schrenck-Notzing, 'Die neuere Okkultismusforschung im Lichte der Gegner' [*Recent occultism research in the light of the opponents*], in Gustave Geley, *Materialisations-Experimente mit M. Franek Kluski* [*Materialisation Experiments with M. Franek Kluski*] (Leipzig: Mutze, 1922), 79–113: 108.

<sup>51</sup> Kurzweg, *op. cit.* (note 9), 304.

<sup>52</sup> Albert Moll, *Der Spiritismus* [*Spiritism*] (Stuttgart: Francksche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1925); F. Schwab, *Teleplasma und Telekinese: Ergebnisse meiner zweijährigen Experimentalsitzungen mit dem Berliner Medium Maria Vollhardt* [*Teleplasm and Telekinesis: Results of My Two Years of Experimental Sitzings with the Berlin Medium Maria Vollhardt*] (Berlin: Pyramidenverlag, 1923). On the Moll–Rudloff trial, see Heather Wolfram's article in this issue and Chapter Five of her book, *The Stepchildren of Science*, *op. cit.* (note 1).

<sup>53</sup> An example of Albert Hellwig's battle against parapsychology is his *Okkultismus und Verbrechen: Eine Einführung in die kriminalistischen Probleme des Okkultismus für Polizeibeamte, Richter, Staatsanwälte, Psychiater und Sachverständige* [*Occultism and Crime: An Introduction to the Criminological Problems of Occultism for Police Officials, Lawyers, Prosecutors, Psychiatrists and Legal Experts*] (Berlin: Langenscheidt, 1929). On Hellwig, see Wolfram, 'Parapsychology on the Couch', *op. cit.* (note 1) and *The Stepchildren of Science*, *op. cit.* (note 1).

<sup>54</sup> Moll, *op. cit.* (note 30), 109.

and animal magnetism, as well as vegetarians and critics of vivisection.<sup>55</sup> He predicted that in the very moment official science acknowledged the reality of clairvoyance and homeopathy, the former proponents would immediately turn into the harshest opponents of the doctrines they had previously defended.<sup>56</sup> According to Moll, questioning current paradigms of established science was a suspicious feature, if not a clear-cut diagnostic criterion, to identify and professionally disqualify parapsychologists and other deviant scientists.

An apparently strictly methodological argument Moll frequently put forth for the intrinsically unscientific nature of Schrenck-Notzing's work concerned insufficient documentation. Criticising Schrenck-Notzing's records of the Willy Schneider sittings,<sup>57</sup> for example, Moll complained that the minutes provided in the book were scientifically useless, the signatures of the dozens of scientifically trained witnesses notwithstanding. In order to qualify as valid, he demanded, the book should have contained the complete stenographic records of all sittings. Moll's verdict, his past praise of Schrenck-Notzing as a hypnotism researcher notwithstanding, was therefore: 'Unfortunately, the publication is again as haplessly unscientific as one is accustomed elsewhere with regard to Schrenck-Notzing.'<sup>58</sup> However, looking at Moll's own work in parapsychology, one is struck by a nearly complete absence of scientific documentation.<sup>59</sup> The report of his experiments on the 'mesmeric rapport', for instance, is marked by a grave lack of transparency. The results and procedures presented were rarely based on numerical information, let alone statistics, but on vague statements such as 'in many experiments', the 'overwhelming majority of subjects', etc. For example, the reader is left in a state of ignorance about the actual number of subjects involved in the study, referred to as 'X', 'Y' and 'Z', although Moll indicated that there were more than three participants.<sup>60</sup> Moll excused the absence of detailed documentation of individual experiments thus: 'Of the experiments conducted under these conditions, of course I absolutely do not want to describe each individually, as this may be too tiring.'<sup>61</sup>

Among Moll's projects to bring scientific enlightenment to the masses was a survey on 'occult' experiences in the general public conducted in 1907. The introductory text, published with the questionnaire, is dominated by Moll's concerns about the rising number of occult clubs and lay healers, and the grave moral and medical dangers for society emerging from such developments. As in previous and later writings, however, he also assured the reader that despite overwhelmingly negative results he had obtained in his own experiments so far, he was not dismissing the existence of 'occult' phenomena out of hand.<sup>62</sup> According to Moll, who presented his findings at a meeting of the Berlin Psychological Society, the survey generated 291 replies, with 62 participants stating no psychic experiences whatsoever, while 11 replies left Moll with no doubts about

<sup>55</sup> On countermovements to scientific medicine in Imperial Germany, see Martin Dinges (ed.), *Medizinkritische Bewegungen im Deutschen Reich (ca. 1870–ca. 1933)* [*Medicine Criticism Movements in the German Empire (ca. 1870–ca. 1933)*] (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1996).

<sup>56</sup> Moll, *op. cit.* (note 30), 110.

<sup>57</sup> Schrenck-Notzing, *op. cit.* (note 26).

<sup>58</sup> 'Leider ist die Veröffentlichung aber wiederum so unglücklich wissenschaftslos ausgefallen, wie man es bei Schrenck-Notzing auch sonst gewohnt ist'. Moll, *op. cit.* (note 52), 64.

<sup>59</sup> See also Kurzweg, *op. cit.* (note 9), 195.

<sup>60</sup> Preface in Moll, *op. cit.* (note 41), unpaginated.

<sup>61</sup> 'Von den unter diesen Versuchsbedingungen angestellten Experimenten will ich natürlich hier durchaus nicht alle einzeln anführen, da es zu sehr ermüden könnte'. Moll, *ibid.* 466. For a rebuttal of Moll's criticism of Schrenck-Notzing's alleged lack of documentation, see Schrenck-Notzing, *op. cit.* (note 50), 105–6.

<sup>62</sup> Albert Moll, 'Einleitender Vortrag zu einer Umfrage über Okkultismus' ['Introductory Lecture Regarding a Survey on Occultism'], *Zeitschrift für Religionspsychologie*, 1 (1907), 353–60.

the psychopathology of their authors. The remaining 218 replies, claiming ‘psychic’ experiences, allowed no conclusion, Moll held, since not all possible sources of error were excluded by the participants.<sup>63</sup> One looks in vain for details or examples of an obvious psychopathology or sources of errors the participants neglected to rule out. Again, Moll offered the reader no evidence for his scientific claims other than his authority.

Successful telepathic experiments reported by others – such as the work of the SPR in England – Moll would either ignore or sweepingly explain away in terms of muscle-reading, involuntary whispering, codes communicated by breathing patterns and other normal channels of communication, notwithstanding that many of those studies had been designed to rule out any kind of conventional – including extremely subtle – communication.<sup>64</sup> Overall, a careful reading of Moll’s criticisms and of the original studies he purported to criticise reveals that he regularly failed to acknowledge controls reported by researchers that disqualified his sweeping counter-explanations, and that his reconstructions of apparently successful parapsychological experiments usually focused on and blew out of proportion weak points and minor errors only.<sup>65</sup> Likewise, Moll was selective in his criticisms of the controls of physical mediums employed by Schrenck-Notzing, involving their observation by detectives outside the sittings, thorough body – including full cavity – searches and administration of emetics and chemical analysis of vomit to rule out hidden props, the net tunics Schrenck-Notzing’s mediums were sewn into, the isolation of mediums or ‘telekinetic’ targets in sealed containers, and later, increasingly automated electrical controls of mediums, experimenters and sitters alike.<sup>66</sup> Rather than examining assumed weaknesses of the applied controls in detail, Moll simply argued that the occurrence of ‘phenomena’, proved beyond any reasonable doubt that controls were absent or lax, and that Schrenck-Notzing and colleagues, reporting independent replications of the phenomena, were ‘in the trick’ with their mediums.<sup>67</sup>

When Moll was among the first to address the clinical importance of hypnotism in Germany, he bitterly complained about resistance and unfair treatment on the side of scientific orthodoxy. Among the most controversial phenomena claimed by several

<sup>63</sup> Westmann [no first name given], ‘Psychologische Gesellschaft zu Berlin: Protokoll der Sitzung vom Donnerstag, den 5. November 1908’ [‘Psychological Society of Berlin: Minutes of the session on Thursday, 5 November 1908’], *Zeitschrift für Psychotherapie und medizinische Psychologie*, 1 (1909), 317–18.

<sup>64</sup> See, for example, Edmund Gurney, *Telepathy: Eine Erwiderung auf die Kritik des Herrn Prof. W. Preyer* [Telepathy: A Reply to the Critique of Prof. W. Preyer] (Leipzig: Friedrich, 1887); Karl Krall, ‘Über “Unwillkürliches Flüstern: Eine kritische und experimentelle Nachprüfung der Hansen-Lehmann’schen Versuche”’ [‘On “Involuntary Whispering”: A Critical and Experimental Reassessment of the Hansen-Lehmann Experiments’], *Zeitschrift für Parapsychologie*, 1 (1926), 321–54, 385–405; Henry Sidgwick, ‘Experiments in Involuntary Whispering, and their Bearing on Alleged Cases of Thought-Transference’, *Dritter Internationaler Congress für Psychologie* (Munich: Lehmann, 1897), 404–7.

<sup>65</sup> Examples are Albert Moll, ‘Spiritistische Wahngelbilde’ [‘Spiritistic Hallucinations’], *Zeitschrift für Pädagogische Psychologie, Pathologie und Hygiene*, 5 (1903), 374–9; *idem, op. cit.* (note 52); *idem, Prophezeien und Hellsehen [Prophecy and Clairvoyance]* (Stuttgart: Franckh’sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1922), and the 1911 edition of his *Hypnotism* (note 33). For detailed criticisms of Moll’s omissions and distortions, see, for example, Carl Bruck, ‘Ein Protokoll’ [‘Some Minutes’], *Psychische Studien*, 51 (1924), 481–7; Walther Kröner, ‘Epilog zur Moll-Polemik’ [‘Epilogue to the Moll polemics’], *Zeitschrift für Parapsychologie*, 1 (1926), 160–9; Albert von Schrenck-Notzing, ‘Der Okkultismus im Lichte gegnerischer Kritik’ [‘Occultism in the Light of Opponents’ Criticisms’], *Psychische Studien*, 52 (1925), 305–11; Christoph Schröder, ‘Pseudo-Entlarvungen: Ein kritischer Beitrag zur “Medien”-Entlarvungs-Taktik’ [‘Pseudo-exposures: A Critical Contribution to the Tactical Exposure of “Mediums”’], *Psychische Studien*, 51 (1924), 487–99, 546–59, 606–16.

<sup>66</sup> For a summary of employed controls, see Andreas Sommer, ‘Tackling Taboos: From *Psychopathia Sexualis* to the Materialisation of Dreams: Albert von Schrenck-Notzing (1862–1929)’, *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, 23 (2009), 299–322.

<sup>67</sup> See, particularly, Moll, *op. cit.* (note 52); and Moll, *op. cit.* (note 30).

hypnotists, and accepted by Moll as real, were the hypnotic induction of blisters and other vasomotor effects, in the absence of an understanding of physiological mechanisms explaining these phenomena.<sup>68</sup> In his memoirs, Moll described his frustration when, as a young physician, he had turned to Emil du Bois-Reymond to investigate these effects in the latter's institute, only to be rejected by the great physiologist.<sup>69</sup> He also recalled how he was laughed at when discussing hypnotically induced blisters at his 1887 lecture at the *Berliner medizinische Gesellschaft* [Berlin Medical Society]. Underscoring his role as a pioneer, he wrote: 'Only one knew that he would be right in the end; and that was me.'<sup>70</sup> However, Moll had initially admitted that the hypnotic subjects in these experiments were not observed long and closely enough to rule out that they had produced the said lesions manually, and he wrote:

In such experiments one is faced with a certain dilemma regarding control; too strong mistrust is capable of thwarting the results of suggestion, while on the other hand we can only consider the production of organic lesions through suggestion as objectively proven if all possible precautions have been taken.<sup>71</sup>

Yet, although the scientific control in these experiments was, according to Moll's own standards as applied to parapsychology, insufficient, he was fully convinced of the reality of hypnotically induced lesions.

One of the few hypnotists criticising the early experiments in hypnotic blistering and related phenomena had been Schrenck-Notzing. After attempting to replicate these effects, he found, much to the dismay of distinguished colleagues such as Moll and Forel, that his subject, who had been closely observed in two sessions lasting twenty-four hours each, had probably induced a mark using a hairpin in a brief unobserved moment. Schrenck-Notzing held that, in order to realise the hypnotic suggestion, the fraud was the result of the hypnotised subject's compulsion to produce the effect no matter how.<sup>72</sup> Later, this idea of trickery as an unconscious acting out of suggestion was also at the heart of Schrenck-Notzing's and other mediumship researchers' observations that many mediums had the tendency to cheat when given the opportunity, especially when no 'genuine' phenomena would come forth. Schrenck-Notzing and colleagues such as Julian Ochorowicz and Enrico Morselli held that in response to external pressure, such as experimenters' and sitters' expectations, the entranced medium, deprived of the faculty of volitional control, would be compelled to produce phenomena using the path of least resistance. Schrenck-Notzing and his supporters, the Swiss psychiatrist Eugen Bleuler

<sup>68</sup> Well-known examples are Henri Beaunis, *Le somnambulisme provoqué: Études physiologiques et psychologiques* [Induced Somnambulism: Physiological and Psychological Studies] (Paris: Baillière, 1886); Richard von Krafft-Ebing, *Eine experimentelle Studie auf dem Gebiet des Hypnotismus* [An Experimental Study in the Area of Hypnotism] (Stuttgart: Enke, 1888).

<sup>69</sup> Albert Moll, *Ein Leben als Arzt der Seele: Erinnerungen* [A Life as A Physician of the Soul: Memories] (Dresden: Reissner, 1936), 130.

<sup>70</sup> 'Nur einer wußte, daß er recht behalten würde: das war ich', *ibid.* 31.

<sup>71</sup> 'Man steht bei solchen Experimenten, was die Ueberwachung betrifft, allerdings vor einem gewissen Dilemma: allzugrosses Misstrauen ist im Stande, die Resultate der Suggestionen zu vereiteln, andererseits können wir die Hervorbringung von organischen Läsionen durch Suggestionen nur dann objektiv als bewiesen betrachten, wenn sämtliche Vorsichtsregeln getroffen sind'. Moll, *op. cit.* (note 35), 150.

<sup>72</sup> Albert von Schrenck-Notzing, 'Ein experimenteller und kritischer Beitrag zur Frage der suggestiven Hervorrufung circumscripiter vasomotorischer Veränderungen auf der äusseren Haut' ['An Experimental and Critical Contribution to the Question of the Suggestive Induction of Circumscriptive Vasomotor Changes in the Epidermis'] *Zeitschrift für Hypnotismus*, 4 (1896), 209–28. A discussion between August Forel and Schrenck-Notzing followed: August Forel, 'Ueber suggestive Hauterscheinungen' ['On Suggestive Skin Phenomena'], *Zeitschrift für Hypnotismus*, 7 (1898), 137–9; Albert von Schrenck-Notzing, 'Zur Frage der suggestiven Hauterscheinungen: Eine Erwiderung an Herrn Prof. Dr A. Forel' ['On the Question of Suggestive Skin Phenomena: A Reply to Prof. A. Forel'], *Zeitschrift für Hypnotismus*, 7 (1898), 247–9.

among them, maintained that many exposures of allegedly fraudulent mediums were to be explained in this manner, and that a thorough knowledge of the psychology of mediumistic trance was required to appreciate and control ‘unconscious’ as well as deliberate fraud.<sup>73</sup> Schrenck-Notzing and other mediumship researchers considered mediums as highly sensitive psychobiological instruments rather than machines generating effects on demand and in any setting, for the phenomena of physical mediumship had

their origin in the life of the unconscious mind and arise from an instinctive impulse in the medium, who for her part can yield herself up completely to this impulse only upon the condition that her conscious attention is not brought into play by psychological resistances, or by doubt of her honesty on the part of the observers,

and Schrenck-Notzing concluded: ‘The frequent ignoring of this most important consideration, especially in scientific investigations, is a cause of negative sittings even in the case of mediums who in other circumstances give good results.’<sup>74</sup>

On the other hand, Moll and other critics such as Albert Hellwig, rather than considering the peculiar psychological state of mediums as a potentially crucial item of methodological knowledge, accused Schrenck-Notzing of employing self-immunisation by psychologising and thus trivialising mediumistic fraud, which the sceptics believed was always deliberate and carefully planned. Taking suspicious factors as definite proof of fraud, and disregarding his earlier observation regarding the detrimental effect of doubt in hypnotic blistering, Moll now stated that ‘a process that fails to occur in the presence of sceptics has ceased to have anything to do with science or at least a scientific test.’<sup>75</sup>

Of all things, Moll also presented the irritated and often aggressive responses by Schrenck-Notzing and other researchers to his accusations of blatant fraud, scientific incompetence and insanity as evidence for the very accusations he raised. In the early days, Moll had protested against the polemic tone of certain critics of hypnotism, such as Emanuel Mendel, who sweepingly accused hypnotism researchers of being mentally unsound pseudo-scientists.<sup>76</sup> When Moll himself had been the target of the same type of accusations he would later level against parapsychologists and practitioners of lay medicine, he had protested that the pathologisation of opponents and the aggressive tone of certain criticisms were inherently unscientific.<sup>77</sup> Years later, he accused Schrenck-Notzing of being largely responsible for the aggressive tone of parapsychologists in reply to what Moll now held were legitimate scientific criticisms: ‘He who has not read their works and periodicals once in a while... doesn’t know the psyche of the occultists. I am very sorry, but even the fresh tomb of Baron Schrenck-Notzing cannot prevent me

<sup>73</sup> See, for example, Bleuler’s spirited defence of physical mediums and Schrenck-Notzing in Eugen Bleuler, ‘Vom Okkultismus und seinen Kritiken’ [‘On Occultism and its Critiques’], *Zeitschrift für Parapsychologie*, 5 (1930), 654–80.

<sup>74</sup> Albert von Schrenck-Notzing, ‘Concerning the Possibility of Deception in Sittings with Eva C.’, *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, 33 (1923), 665–72: 672. However, Schrenck-Notzing also published exposures of mediumistic fraud discovered by himself; see, for example, Schrenck-Notzing, ‘Das Käfig-Experiment der Lucia Sordi’ [‘The Cage Experiment of Lucia Sordi’], *Psychische Studien*, 38 (1911), 393–402; and *idem*, ‘Die Phänomene des Mediums Linda Gazerra’ [‘The Phenomena of the Medium Linda Gazerra’], *Psychische Studien*, 39 (1912), 133–73.

<sup>75</sup> ‘Denn ein Vorgang, der in Gegenwart von Skeptikern nicht stattfindet, hat nichts mehr mit Wissenschaft zu tun oder wenigstens nicht mit einer wissenschaftlichen Prüfung’. Moll, *op. cit.* (note 62), 357.

<sup>76</sup> Emanuel Mendel, *Der Hypnotismus* [Hypnotism] (Hamburg: Verlagsanstalt A.-G., 1889).

<sup>77</sup> Albert Moll, ‘Literaturbericht’ [‘Literature Review’], *Zeitschrift für Hypnotismus*, 3 (1894/5), 28–31, 94–6: 29.

from saying here how grave his guilt was in this respect.’<sup>78</sup> Moll challenged the reader to present ‘any work of myself or scientific anti-occultists that corresponds, in such a rude tone, to the mindless scolding of the occultists’, and he conceded: ‘It is an advantage at least that the occultists thus reveal themselves; for only he who is not sure about his cause becomes rude.’<sup>79</sup> As the height of such ‘mindless scolding’ and ‘rudeness’ he cited a protest by Schrenck-Notzing against Moll’s treatment of parapsychologists, where Schrenck-Notzing describes Moll’s accusations as ‘inventions made up of thin air’ [‘aus der Luft gegriffene Erfindung’] and ‘grotesque products of fantasy’ [‘groteske Fantasieprodukte’].<sup>80</sup> Readers unfamiliar with the article Moll criticised could not know that therein Schrenck-Notzing had also protested against Moll’s use of words like ‘dimwits’ and ‘swines’, and his unfounded allegations that Schrenck-Notzing and his colleagues maintained sexual relations with their mediums. Revealingly, Moll failed to acknowledge, let alone attempt to rebuke, Schrenck-Notzing’s complaint in his own protest against what he felt was Schrenck-Notzing’s unduly aggressive tone.<sup>81</sup>

While Moll still emphasised the importance of Schrenck-Notzing as a pioneer of hypnotism and sexology in his *Psychology and Characterology of Occultists* in 1929, later writings would neglect the historical importance of his nemesis altogether. In a chapter on hypnotism in Moll’s 1936 memoirs, somewhat immodestly headed ‘Einführung der hypnotischen Behandlung und der Psychotherapie in Deutschland durch Moll’ [‘Introduction of Hypnotic Treatment and Psychotherapy to Germany by Moll’],<sup>82</sup> no mention is made of Schrenck-Notzing’s pioneering work in hypnotism, nor is he referred to in a chapter on sexology in the same book. Moll affirms that the widespread opinion of Schrenck-Notzing as the great doyen of psychical research in Germany was a ‘fairy tale’ [‘Märchen’], and he epitomised in what respect Schrenck-Notzing’s work would have to be remembered: ‘He employed methods in the evaluation of occultism that bestowed upon him the antagonism of all sober-minded.’<sup>83</sup>

### Policing Epistemological Deviance: Past and Present

Eight years after Moll’s death, Max Dessoir, Moll’s friend and former colleague at the Berlin section of the Psychological Society, left an unflattering portrayal of the

<sup>78</sup> ‘Wer ihre Arbeiten und ihre Zeitschriften... nicht öfter gelesen hat, kennt die Psyche der Okkultisten nicht. So leid es mir tut, auch das frische Grab des Freiherrn von Schrenck-Notzing kann mich nicht hindern, hier zu sagen, wie schwer seine Verschuldung hierbei gewesen ist’. Moll, *op. cit.* (note 30), 59.

<sup>79</sup> ‘Aber man zeige irgendeine Arbeit von mir oder von wissenschaftlichen Antiokkultisten, die in dieser groben Tonart den geistlosen Schimpfereien der Okkultisten gleich käme. Daß sich damit die Okkultisten selbst verraten, ist wenigstens ein Gewinn; denn grob wird nur, wer sich seiner Sache nicht sicher fühlt’, *ibid.* 59–60.

<sup>80</sup> Schrenck-Notzing, *op. cit.* (note 50), cited in Moll, *op. cit.* (note 30), 61.

<sup>81</sup> Moll extended his *ad hominem* attacks to supporters of Schrenck-Notzing; for example, the scientific credibility of Hans Driesch he sought to discredit thus: ‘His teacher Haeckel commented on his importance as a researcher as derogatorily as hardly any teacher has ever commented on a student’. Moll, *ibid.* 22. Also, Richet, whom Moll called the ‘French pope of occultism’ (Albert Moll, ‘How Mediums are Exposed in Germany’, *Science and Invention*, (August 1928), 312–13, 372–5: 312) was disqualified as a scientist since ‘in France, the majority views Richet as duped, just as Schrenck-Notzing is viewed as duped by us’. Moll, *op. cit.* (note 52), 20. Moll published a criticism of Charles Richet’s experiments with a clairvoyant: Albert Moll, ‘Der Helleseher Ludwig Kahn’ [‘The Clairvoyant Ludwig Kahn’], *Zeitschrift für kritischen Okkultismus*, 1 (1926), 161–79. Richet replied in ‘Une critique inopérante: M. Albert Moll et la cryptesthésie de Kahn’ [‘An Ineffective Critique: Albert Moll and the Cryptesthesia of Kahn’], *Revue Métapsychique*, 3 (1926), 215–18.

<sup>82</sup> Moll, *op. cit.* (note 69), 30.

<sup>83</sup> ‘Er hat Methoden bei der Prüfung des Okkultismus angewendet, die ihm die Gegnerschaft wohl aller Besonnenen zuzog’, *ibid.* 116.

noted hypnotist, sexologist, and enemy of parapsychology. In his autobiography, Dessoir characterised the late Albert Moll thus:

His ambition and vanity found fulfilment... because he had two important factors at his disposal: he was economically quite independent and possessed an alarming recklessness... Moll treated his patients with toughness, never with kindness. [...] Dealing with him was difficult, for nothing in the world could make him behave like a gentleman. The slightest dissent made him erupt and talk over the opponent ruthlessly. [...] Recurrently addicted to morphine, in his final ten or twelve years he became downright malicious: only to maintain dominion, he frightened and tantalised people whose sore points he knew. [...] His talks at the *Gesellschaft für Psychologie und Charakterologie* [*Society for Psychology and Characterology* (the successor of the Berlin Psychological Society)], which was run by him highhandedly, were nothing but repetitions, and became increasingly shallow.<sup>84</sup>

Complaining about the overwhelming bias against parapsychology and its proponents in the press and the scientific community at large, the parapsychological researcher and homeopathic physician Walther Kröner, a contemporary of Schrenck-Notzing and Moll, had remarked that parapsychologists ‘have been portrayed as idiots and criminals first, and thus driven into assuming a defensive position. And in this situation [Moll] takes the greatest share’.<sup>85</sup> One is tempted to seek the basis of Moll’s argumentative asymmetry and the unprofessional emotionality of his criticisms in his alleged morphine addiction and apparently generally unpleasant personality, as claimed by Dessoir. However, Moll’s argumentative style was hardly unique. At the forefront of those aggressively and systematically debunking and defaming parapsychologists such as Schrenck-Notzing and their mediums was, apart from Moll and Hellwig, the young psychiatrist Mathilde Kemnitz (a student of Emil Kraepelin). Immediately after the publication of *Materialisations-Phaenomene* in 1914, Kemnitz launched a vehement attack on Schrenck-Notzing by publishing *Moderne Medienforschung* [*Modern Mediumship Research*], a brochure containing ad hoc minutes of an informal sitting with the medium Stanislaw Popielska – not to be confused with Stanislaw Tomczyk – which Schrenck-Notzing had invited her to, and general criticisms of his book.<sup>86</sup> Kemnitz claimed that the phenomena were clearly fraudulent and that Schrenck-Notzing was duped by Eva C. and Stanislaw Popielska. Like Moll, she considered the work of Schrenck-Notzing inherently unscientific and raised concerns about the social and cultural threat she saw posed by such grotesque publications.<sup>87</sup> As in Moll, it is doubtful that Kemnitz’s aggressive opposition to parapsychology was motivated by a dispassionate scientific spirit, for in the 1930s, while married to General Erich Ludendorff, together with her influential husband she headed a religious cult involving an odd mixture of anti-Semitism and *völkisch* occultism. In 1937, she republished her attack on

<sup>84</sup> ‘Sein Ehrgeiz und seine Eitelkeit fanden Erfüllung..., da er über zwei wichtige Mittel verfügte: er war wirtschaftlich ganz unabhängig und besaß eine erschreckende Rücksichtslosigkeit. ...Seine Kranken behandelte Moll mit Härte, nie mit Güte... 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. In den letzten zehn oder zwölf Lebensjahren immer wieder dem Morphinum verfallen, wurde er geradezu böseartig: er ängstigte und quälte Menschen, deren Schmerzpunkte er kannte, nur um sich ein Herrschaftsgebiet zu erhalten. ...Seine Vorträge in der von ihm willkürlich geleiteten ‘Gesellschaft für Psychologie und Charakterologie’ waren nichts als Wiederholungen, die immer flacher wurden’. Max Dessoir, *Buch der Erinnerung* [*Book of Memories*] (Stuttgart: Enke, 1947), 128–9.

<sup>85</sup> ‘Man hat sie zuerst als Idioten und Verbrecher hingestellt und dadurch in Abwehrstellung getrieben. Und an dieser Situation hat er das größte Verdienst’. Kröner, *op. cit.* (note 65), 167.

<sup>86</sup> Mathilde von Kemnitz, *Moderne Mediumforschung: Kritische Betrachtungen zu Dr von Schrenck-Notzing’s ‘Materialisationsphaenomene’* [*Modern Mediumship Research: Critical Considerations Regarding Dr von Schrenck-Notzing’s ‘Phenomena of Materialisation’*] (Munich: Lehmann, 1914).

<sup>87</sup> Schrenck-Notzing’s reply to Kemnitz was Schrenck-Notzing, *op. cit.* (note 23).

Schrenck-Notzing, along with other pamphlets defaming Catholicism and Semitism, and propagating her and her husband's occult 'philosophy'.<sup>88</sup> With the support of General Ludendorff, she became instrumental in the Nazis' abolishment of parapsychology in 1941.<sup>89</sup>

However, authors such as Moll, Hellwig and Kemnitz did not create the market for debunking publications, which was already firmly in place. For example, two of Moll's most popular anti-parapsychology pamphlets, *Der Spiritismus* [*Spiritism*] and *Prophezeien und Hellsehen* [*Prophecy and Clairvoyance*], appeared in a book series with the title 'Wege zur Erkenntnis' ['*Ways to Knowledge*'] (see Figure 1). An advertisement for the series warned, in bold letters, against 'ignorance and collusiveness' as 'cancers of the present time, which to an incredible extent poison our people and paralyse the will'. The book series promised to 'bring serious enlightenment, which is urgently needed', and the reader was assured that 'any one-sided position is prevented', which would consequently yield 'a genuine revelation to many'. Books published in this series 'shall and will be the guide and counsellor to the masses', and the advertisement concludes with the battle cry: 'War against the rubbish.'<sup>90</sup>

Although the overall public response to Schrenck-Notzing's work was largely congruent with the readily absorbed writings of authors such as Moll, Hellwig and Kemnitz, not all reactions were strictly hostile. Sigmund Freud, for example, in reply to a survey on the first book of his former fellow student of hypnotism at Nancy, merely stated his indifference to the problem of alleged materialisations: 'I have paid no particular attention to the work of v. Schrenck-Notzing.'<sup>91</sup> Other noted intellectuals, such as Charles Richet, Hans Driesch and Eugen Bleuler, continued to vouch for Schrenck-Notzing's scientific competence and integrity after his death. Richet, in his obituary of Schrenck-Notzing, graciously stated that the only criticism he had to raise against the deceased friend and colleague was that, by employing ethically questionable measures, such as hiring detectives, conducting rectal and gynaecological examinations, or administering emetics prior to the sittings to rule out fraud, Schrenck-Notzing had been too eager to satisfy even the dogmatic pseudo-sceptic.<sup>92</sup> In his 1932 methodology of parapsychology, Driesch referred to Schrenck-Notzing as an exemplary researcher,<sup>93</sup> and in his preface to Schrenck-Notzing's posthumous book on Rudi Schneider, Eugen Bleuler, who had been among the first Swiss clinicians to defend and employ hypnotism in therapy, announced that Schrenck-Notzing's experimental design was now so fraud-proof that even dogmatic deniers must give in.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>88</sup> Mathilde Ludendorff, *Ein Blick in die Dunkelkammer der Geisterseher: Moderne Medium-, Forschung': Kritische Betrachtungen zu Dr von Schrenck-Notzing's 'Materialisationsphaenomene'* [A Look into the Darkroom of the Ghost Seers: Modern Mediumship 'Research': Critical Considerations regarding Dr von Schrenck-Notzing's 'Phenomena of Materialisation'] (Munich: Ludendorff, 1937) [= 2nd edn of Kemnitz, *op. cit.* (note 86)].

<sup>89</sup> On the Ludendorffs' ideological background and role in the abolishment of parapsychology in Nazi Germany, see Treitel, *op. cit.* (note 9), 219–20.

<sup>90</sup> Text of an advertisement in Moll, *Prophecy and Clairvoyance* (note 65). See Figure 1.

<sup>91</sup> 'Ich habe dem Werke von v. Schrenck-Notzing keine besondere Aufmerksamkeit geschenkt'. Quoted in F. Maier, 'Materialisations-Phänomene: Eine Umfrage über Schrenck-Notzing' ['Phenomena of materialisation: A survey regarding Schrenck-Notzing'], *Psychische Studien*, 41 (1914), 410–25: 416. Incidentally, Freud was another nemesis of Moll (see the contributions by Sigusch and Sauerteig in this volume). However, Moll never gave Freud the honour of a comprehensive analysis.

<sup>92</sup> Richet, *op. cit.* (note 13), 244.

<sup>93</sup> Hans Driesch, *Parapsychologie: Die Wissenschaft von den, okkulten' Erscheinungen: Methodik und Theorie* [*Parapsychology: The Science of 'Occult' Phenomena: Methodology and Theory*] (Munich: Bruckmann, 1932).

<sup>94</sup> Eugen Bleuler, 'Vorwort' ['Preface'], in Schrenck-Notzing, *Die Phänomene des Mediums Rudi Schneider*, III–V.

Gegen  
Unwissen  
und Geheimtuererei

diese Krebschäden der Gegenwart, die in unglaublichem Maße unser Volk vergiften und den Willen lähmen, erscheint in unserem Verlag eine Reihe von Bändchen unter dem Titel

# Wege zur Erkenntnis

Aus berufener

Jeder sollen hier sachliche Ausführungen auf wissenschaftlicher Grundlage von Männern der Wissenschaft die ernsthafteste Aufklärung bringen, die dringend not tut. Damit wird von vornherein jede einseitige Stellungnahme vermieden und die bisher erforschten und wissenschaftlich begründeten Tatsachen festgelegt, die vielen eine wahre Offenbarung sein werden. Unsere Bändchen sollen und werden der Masse Führer und Ratgeber sein. Es gilt auch hier den Kampf gegen den Schund.



Figure 1: Advertisement for the book series *Wege zur Erkenntnis* [Ways to Knowledge].

Boundary disputes using pathologisation of parapsychologists continued after Moll's death in 1939 and after the war. In 1961, the educator Wilhelm Gubisch, who had started his career as a defender of 'true science' in the 1930s, published a comprehensive debunking study of parapsychology, arguing that any belief in supernormal phenomena was entirely due to suggestion, cognitive malfunctions and psychopathology.<sup>95</sup> In the name of 'science' and 'civilisation' Gubisch's work provided one-sided and distorted

<sup>95</sup> Wilhelm Gubisch, *Hellseher, Scharlatane, Demagogen? Eine experimentelle Untersuchung zum Problem der außersinnlichen Wahrnehmung und der suggestiven Beeinflussung einzelner Menschen und Menschenmassen: Kritik an der Parapsychologie* [Clairvoyants, Charlatans, Demagogues? An Experimental Investigation regarding the Problem of Extra-Sensory Perception and the Suggestive Influencing of Individuals and Crowds: Criticism of Parapsychology] (Munich: Reinhardt, 1961).

portrayals of the work of parapsychologists, used *ad hominem* attacks, exclamations of outrage and innuendo, and he relied on the writings of Moll, Hellwig, Kemnitz, and other problematic authors. The book has not one, but three prefaces, by Professor Walter Gerlach (then director of the Institute of Physics at Munich University), Dr Rudolf Sieverts (then professor of forensics and criminology at the University of Hamburg), and Dr Johannes Wittmann (professor emeritus at the Psychological Institute at the University of Kiel). Through their forewords, these spokesmen of official science extended their authority to Gubisch's book, stressing its scientific importance, the author's intellectual integrity, and praising Gubisch for paying an important service to society by protecting the people from dangerous charlatans.

In 1976, the Austrian forensic doctor Otto Prokop and the lawyer Wolf Wimmer published a review of modern occult practices, alternative medicine and parapsychological researchers, arguing that the latter – using the Freiburg University parapsychologist Hans Bender as their main target – were irresponsible charlatans who either systematically deceived the public or, due to a desperate will to believe in an occult something, were the hapless victims of self-suggestion. In the preface, the authors frame the objective of their work: 'Professors have the ethical duty to convey clear ideas about the nature of this world to their students, in which they have to find orientation', and, surprisingly, admitting the lack of balance which characterises the whole book, they state: 'For reasons of mental hygiene, fairness has its limits.'<sup>96</sup>

### Conclusion

Paul Feyerabend, the great *enfant terrible* of the philosophy of science, once cautioned that western science, which is said to have started as a movement of liberation to overcome ideological suppression by religion, was turning into an institution with problematic power structures not unlike that of the mediaeval Church itself: 'The very same enterprise that once gave man the ideas and the strength to free himself from the fears and prejudices of a tyrannical religion now turns him into a slave of its interest.'<sup>97</sup> In support of Feyerabend's concern there is strong evidence that the pathologisation of 'paranormal belief', and the defamation of parapsychological researchers and other scientific heretics as intrinsically incompetent, fraudulent or otherwise intellectually or morally deficient, is a dominant academic tradition that still goes strong.<sup>98</sup> Like Moll, Hellwig, Kemnitz and other self-appointed secular inquisitors tirelessly submitting epistemic deviants to the flames in the name of 'science', 'culture' and 'civilisation', later authors such as Gubisch, Prokop and Wimmer have received positive coverage in the popular media as well as in academic reviews of their books, with the critical responses coming almost exclusively from parapsychological researchers; that is, the very targets of the witch hunts.<sup>99</sup>

The present case study of Moll and Schrenck-Notzing adds historical support to findings by sociologists of science working on mechanisms of rejection of modern experimental

<sup>96</sup> 'Hochschullehrer haben die sittliche Verpflichtung, ihren Schülern klare Bilder von der Welt zu vermitteln, in der sie sich zurechtfinden müssen'. 'Fairneß hat aus Gründen der Psychohygiene ihre Grenzen'. Preface to Otto Prokop and Wolf Wimmer, *Der moderne Okkultismus: Parapsychologie und Paramedizin: Magie und Wissenschaft im 20. Jahrhundert [Modern Occultism: Parapsychology and Paramedicine: Magic and Science in the Twentieth Century]* (Stuttgart: Fischer, 1976), no pagination (first page).

<sup>97</sup> Paul K. Feyerabend, *Science in a Free Society* (London: Verso, 1982), 75.

<sup>98</sup> Of course, this is not to say that scientific incompetence and intellectual dishonesty are absent in parapsychology or other deviant disciplines; but neither are they in established science and medicine, as self-styled guardians of science usually imply.

<sup>99</sup> One of the few critical academic discussions of Gubisch, Prokop and Wimmer is Eberhard Bauer, 'Kritik und Kontroversen der Parapsychologie' ['Criticism and Controversies of Parapsychology'], in Gion Condrau (ed.), *Die Psychologie des 20. Jahrhunderts [Twentieth Century Psychology]*, Vol. XV (Zürich: Kindler, 1979), 546–57.

parapsychology and other unorthodox disciplines.<sup>100</sup> These studies demonstrate not only a strong permeability of the boundaries of popular and supposedly strictly academic forums when the epistemological monopoly of western science is at stake, but also a complete reversal of scientific core values such as honesty and anti-dogmatism.<sup>101</sup> Nowadays, the heirs of Moll have institutionalised themselves into popular ‘sceptics’ organisations, several of whose activists make a comfortable living as self-appointed watchdogs of science. Typically eschewing rational and fair criticisms of parapsychology and other stereotypical ‘pseudo-sciences’, renowned scientists employing a deficit – or ‘empty head’ – model of the public understanding of science tend to delegate their intellectual responsibilities to such scientific laymen and professional debunkers, who propagate a naïve idealised image of scientific practice.<sup>102</sup> Analysing popular ‘sceptics’ organisations, several of whose activists have been shown to engage regularly in intellectual dishonesty in the name of ‘science’, ‘reason’ and ‘civilisation’, sociological studies raise concerns regarding the embracing and support of self-styled popular guardians of science by major scientists and philosophers.<sup>103</sup> Overall, by preferring as bedfellows popular extremists of scientism over trained scientists with research questions touching upon certain western taboos, academia shows an alarming indifference, or lack of internal control mechanisms, regarding standards of intellectual integrity.

Furthermore, while ‘sceptical’ extremists usually target unorthodox scientists or individuals investigated by them, it has become a standard procedure in psychology, psychiatry and the mind sciences at large to present certain types of deviant experience reported by the general public, and belief in ‘paranormal’ phenomena, as clear-cut clinical evidence for schizotypy and other pathological personality traits.<sup>104</sup> Rather than basing

<sup>100</sup> Obviously, episodes like the Moll–Schrenck–Notzing affair are not limited nationally. For similar chapters in the history of the origins of American psychology see, for example, Deborah J. Coon, ‘Testing the Limits of Sense and Science: American Experimental Psychologists Combat Spiritualism’, *American Psychologist*, 47 (1992), 143–51; and Andreas Sommer, ‘Psychical Research and the Origins of American Psychology: Hugo Münsterberg, William James and Eusapia Palladino’, *History of the Human Sciences*, 25 (in press).

<sup>101</sup> See, for example, Harry M. Collins and Trevor J. Pinch, ‘The Construction of the Paranormal: Nothing Unscientific is Happening’, in Roy Wallis (ed.), *On the Margins of Science: The Social Construction of Rejected Knowledge* (Keele: University of Keele, 1979), 237–70; James McClenon, *Deviant Science: The Case of Parapsychology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984).

<sup>102</sup> For a criticism of the ‘deficit’ or ‘empty head’ model of the popular understanding of science, see J. Gregory and S. Miller, ‘Caught in the crossfire? The public’s role in the science wars’, in J.A. Labinger and H.M. Collins (eds), *The One Culture? A Conversation About Science* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 61–72.

<sup>103</sup> On ‘sceptics’ organisations such as CSICOP/CSI, see T.J. Pinch and H.M. Collins, ‘Private Science and Public Knowledge: The Committee for the Scientific Investigation of the [sic] Claims of the Paranormal and its Use of the Literature’, *Social Studies of Science*, 14 (1984), 521–46; David J. Hess, *Science in the New Age: The Paranormal, Its Defenders and Debunkers, and American Culture* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993).

<sup>104</sup> See, for example, C. Klein, B. Andresen and T. Jahn, ‘Erfassung der schizotypen Persönlichkeit nach DSM III-R’ [‘Assessment of Schizotypal Personality According to the DSM III-R’], *Diagnostica*, 43 (1997), 347–69; C.A. Ross and S. Joshi, ‘Paranormal Experiences in the General Population’, *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 180 (1992), 357–61; A. Raine, ‘The SPQ: A Scale for the Assessment of Schizotypal Personality Based on the DSM-III-R Criteria’, *Schizophrenia Bulletin*, 17 (1991), 555–64; Leonard Zusne and W.H. Jones, *Anomalistic Psychology: A Study of Magical Thinking*, 2nd edn (Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc, 1989). For critiques of the axiomatic pathologisation of exceptional experiences, see David J. Hufford, ‘Commentary: Paranormal Experiences in the General Population’, *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 180 (1992), 362–8; Michael Schetsche, ‘Soziale Kontrolle durch Pathologisierung? Konstruktion und Dekonstruktion “außergewöhnlicher Erfahrungen” in der Psychologie’ [‘Social control through pathologisation? Construction and deconstruction of exceptional experiences in psychology’], in B. Menzel and K. Ratzke (eds), *Grenzenlose Konstruktivität? Standortbestimmung und Zukunftsperspektiven konstruktivistischer Theorien abweichenden Verhaltens* [Constructivity without Limits? Assessment of the State of the Art and Future Perspectives of Constructivist Theories of Deviant Behaviour] (Opladen: Leske & Budrich, 2003), 141–60.

itself on impartial empirical research, these diagnostic criteria are *a priori* and reflect the widespread assumption that science has conclusively refuted the ontological basis of such experiences and beliefs.

Stirred by the above observations, the aim of the present historical case study has been to show the historical and current relevance of certain forms of scientific dogmatism as a problem that deserves focused academic attention. For to tolerate its (very real) effects is not only to risk the destruction of careers of potential scientific innovators, it also threatens to undermine basic ideals and requirements for science to maintain and fulfil its role as an intrinsically progressive rather than ideologically regressive project: self-criticism, epistemic pluralism, and intellectual freedom.