Emotional Expression and the Construction of Heterosexuality: Hugo Bettauer's Viennese Advice Columns

BRITTA MCEWEN
Creighton University

How can we access the inner lives of historical actors? Historians have drawn upon diaries, letters, and even self-portraiture to access the dominant feeling states of individuals. Exciting work has studied the scripts of expression open to men and women across time, be they embedded in court testimonies or novels. One popular approach is to explore the prescriptive writing in any given time, such as the explosion of self-help guides, etiquette manuals, fashion magazines, and medical tips in the popular literature of the modern period. Such sources offer us a glimpse of how people were asked to feel about their lives, their manners, their appearances, and other parts of their lives. Although they do not document reality (but rather an idealized norm to be met or rejected at the reader's will), these sources were designed to elicit certain responses and activate forms of self-knowledge. Advice columns of the early twentieth century therefore represent a particularly rich avenue of inquiry into the emotions of individuals, especially those columns that focused on the romantic lives of readers. This essay explores one such column in interwar Vienna, highlighting its author's attempt to construct "healthy," heterosexual relationships through the pages of a successful women's weekly. In the interplay of letters and responses, Hugo Bettauer's Probleme des Lebens (Life's problems) column in his newspaper *Bettauers Wochenshrift* (Bettauer's weekly) created an alternative emotional community that encouraged Viennese men and women to leave behind nineteenth-century mores and embrace a modern world of (hetero)sexual fulfillment.[1] In this community, readers shared

All translations in this article are the author's own.

[1] I take the concept of "emotional communities" from Barbara Rosenwein. These are groups in which people express and value similar emotions at a given time or place. See Barbara Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 35. The community of readers created by Bettauer's publications, especially

Journal of the History of Sexuality, Vol. 25, No. 1, January 2016

DOI: 10.7560/JHS25105

attitudes and even feelings about sexuality that reflected the chaotic era they inhabited.

One of the thorniest methodological problems in working with an advice column stems from a simple question: What if the letters to the editor are not real? The call and response of the genre, the pleasure that comes from reading a conversation, could well be a fiction fabricated by a single employee of the paper. The letters might be fictional, which means that we can only read them as a didactic opportunity for the editor to "respond" with canned platitudes about whatever issues he or she deems appropriate. This is indeed the situation I face in this essay. My source material stems largely from an advice column that ran in a women's weekly edited by a famously melodramatic author with a strong interest in sex reform. The letters that Hugo Bettauer claimed to have received and reprinted in his column read suspiciously like the novels, essays, and film scripts that had made him famous in 1920s Vienna. I propose that we accept this possibility and use the column as an indicator of a particular emotional community promoted by Bettauer. Life's Problems modeled for its readers a way to think and, more interestingly, to feel about heterosexuality.

Bettauer made his living in the 1920s by exposing the raw emotions that underpinned his society, and his personal story is far more famous than his advice columns. His popular success began with his *Sittenromane*, his moralistic melodramas set in contemporary Vienna in which economic collapse, political wrangling, and rapid changes to urban culture served as backdrops to wronged women.[2] Like many of Vienna's most famous producers of culture, Bettauer was a Jewish outsider looking in to Catholic Viennese society and provoking storms of protest by reporting on what he saw.[3] In 1924 he published a short-lived erotic magazine entitled *Er und Sie: Wochenschrift für Lebenskulture und Erotik* (He and she: Weekly newspaper for lifestyle and the erotic) that incited furious and at times

---

those readers who sought his help, are certainly different from the examples Rosenwein gives from the sixth and seventh centuries. For this reason, I have also found William Reddy's description of nineteenth-century "emotional regimes"—ways in which people are asked to feel about certain topics or events—helpful. See William Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 125–26.

[2] Between the end of World War I and his death seven years later, Bettauer produced twenty-three such stories, nine of which were filmed. These were dismissed as "light fare" by critics yet were extremely popular with his local audience. See Melanie Hacker, *"Er und Sie: Wochenschrift für Lebenskulture und Erotik": Hugo Bettauers Zeitschrift und die Sexualmoral der 1920s Jahre* (Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag Dr. Müller, 2009), 18.

[3] Lisa Silverman argues that Jews remained the "ultimate Other" in interwar Austria and emphasizes that while all peoples of the empire experienced loss upon its demise, Jews in many ways had the most to lose, as they were without a new nation to claim. See Lisa Silverman, *Becoming Austrians: Jews and Culture between the World Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

openly anti-Semitic debates in city hall. What enraged censors was the fact that the magazine published information about sex for nonprofessional audiences.[4] There were columns written by a psychologist, a gynecologist, and a midwife caught up in an abortion attempt, as well as reprinted case studies authored by famous sexologists and an initial advice column that addressed sexual and romantic problems. Bettauer and his coeditor were brought up on pornography charges in 1924 but were acquitted in a trial that was widely covered by the press.

In 1925 Bettauer was assassinated, ostensibly for polluting German youth with his writings, by a young, out-of-work dental hygienist and member of the Nazi Party. Today, he is most often remembered for his cautionary fable *Die Stadt ohne Juden* (The city without Jews), which imagined Vienna's Jewish population being sent off on trains, only to leave the city a cultural wasteland where music, art, and journalism die off and men and women are reduced to wearing *Trachten* (traditional folk costumes) in the downtown streets.[5] Bettauer rejected the idea that Jews were somehow essentially different from other Viennese and indeed praised interfaith couples in his singles and advice columns.[6] In the realm of letters and advice that he created, love trumped religion. Yet his contemporaries found it difficult to separate Bettauer's "Jewishness" from his style of journalism. Even those sympathetic to Bettauer referred to his urbaneness and "intellectual nature" as rooted in a religious tradition that valued education and learning.[7] Much of his life and memory was marred by anti-Semitism, although that will not be the focus of this article.

Bettauer's wild success in serialized stories came after a colorful life of gymnasium education (university-stream high school) with his boyhood friend Karl Kraus (who went on to great fame as a satirical author and publisher of the most influential Viennese magazine of the fin de siècle), conversion to Protestantism, service and desertion in the Imperial Army, marriage and divorce, sojourns to Berlin and New York, work with a relief organization in postwar Vienna, and spells during which he styled himself as

[4] For an analysis of *He and She* and the politics surrounding pornography in interwar Vienna, see Britta McEwen, *Sexual Knowledge: Feeling, Fact, and Social Reform in Vienna, 1900–1934* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012), 145–54. I argue that it was his position within the sex reform movement that drew fire; Bettauer's biographer and most subsequent historians have argued that it was not the content of the magazine that shook Vienna but rather Bettauer's Jewishness that drew the ire of city censors. See Murray Hall, *Der Fall Bettauer* (Vienna: Löcker Verlag, 1978).

[5] These predictions come perilously close to reality for many of us who love the city of Vienna today. In Bettauer's tale, the Jews are invited back, and Viennese culture and politics are restored. For tensions between this fantasy and the Austrian reality, see Andrew Barker, *Fictions from an Orphan State: Literary Reflections of Austria between Habsburg and Hitler* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2012), 9.

[6] See Silverman, *Becoming Austrians*, 73.

[7] Béla Balázs quoted in June J. Hwang, "Alone in the City: Hugo Bettauer's 'Er und Sie,'" *Seminar: A Journal of Germanic Studies* 47, no. 5 (November 2011): 559–77, 564.

an aristocrat. Quite simply, Bettauer's larger-than-life presence might easily overwhelm the story I want to tell.[8] He was a polarizing figure in interwar Vienna, committed to a kind of society-wide economic and political reform that was highly critical of "bourgeois morality" and what he perceived as Catholic hypocrisy, and yet he did not fit within the ideological boundaries of the Social Democratic Party that challenged these traditions in the years between the wars. Instead of focusing on his dramatic life or engaging personality, I want to foreground the work he did in providing advice to lonely hearts and in simultaneously creating a recurring, influential social script of how his readers should feel about heterosexuality. In his advice column, Bettauer both broke taboos and reinforced stereotypes as he promoted a worldview where love was the organizing principle of society. He provided a sympathetic ear to those suffering from confusion in romance or simply confusion about the tumultuous era they inhabited.

Before I turn to the letters in *Bettauer's Weekly*, it is necessary to contextualize the remarkable environment in which readers of (and correspondents to) the magazine lived. The Austro-Hungarian Empire collapsed as a consequence of the Great War; Vienna in the immediate postwar years was swollen with people from former Habsburg territories and struggling to house and feed its diverse population. These years were marked by what the Viennese referred to as the *Hungerkatastrophe*, an urban famine requiring significant outside aide to overcome, and by serious financial crisis.[9] Almost a third of the citizens of the new rump state lived in the capital, sized to rule an empire of fifty-five million but now the imbalanced center of six million Austrians. Vienna's prewar reality had not entirely faded away in cultural terms; it was cosmopolitan, corrupt, riven by anti-Semitism, yet still possessing the paradoxically tolerant, muddle-through attitude made famous during the last days of the empire. Art and science flourished there. Politically, the city was controlled by the Social Democratic Workers' Party (Sozialdemokratische Arbeiterpartei, or SDAP), which used a steeply graduated tax code to build a number of new municipal houses, sports facilities, and swimming pools during the interwar period.[10] It attempted to replace the somewhat louche culture of fin de siècle Vienna with a new spirit of cooperation, health, and vitality, and it proclaimed the dawn of a new era

[8] I take the phrase "larger-than-life" from Beth Noveck's excellent essay on Bettauer, which highlights the reactions to his trial and murder across the spectrum of Viennese papers. She stresses that his early years are shrouded in myths created later as he grew (in) famous. See "Hugo Bettauer and the Political Culture of the First Republic," *Contemporary Austrian Studies* 3 (1995): 138–69.

[9] On the food shortage and financial crisis of the immediate postwar years, see Patricia Clavin, "The Austrian Hunger Crisis and the Genesis of International Organization after the First World War," *International Affairs* 90, no. 2 (2014): 265–78.

[10] For an overview of everyday life in the new housing estates and sports centers of Vienna, see Reinhard Sieder, "Housing Policy, Social Welfare, and Family Life in 'Red Vienna,' 1919–1934," *Oral History* 13, no. 2 (Autumn 1985): 35–48.

in which "new people" (*neue Menschen*) would remake the city.[11] Yet the SDAP did not have free rein in its attempts to create a new socialist citadel. It was matched in strength by the Christian Social Party (Christlichsoziale Partei, CSP), which was closely aligned with the Catholic Church and took a much dimmer view of the rapid changes in Austria's capital.[12] Its openly anti-Semitic platform attacked the Jewish members of city hall and any "foreign" influence on Austrian tradition. The CSP was very strong in the provinces. These two political parties pulled members deep into cultures that embraced them from the cradle to the grave, with separate systems of education, recreation, social support, and military self-defense. Members of these parties lived in the same city, but they lived very different lives and believed very different things about the changes afoot in the interwar period.

One of the most obvious changes in Viennese culture during this time revolved around gender and sexuality. Women had begun the process of fighting to become full citizens during the Great War; they supported the army, worked on the homefront, and navigated bread lines as they maintained their families without male support.[13] Women had also become much more present on the streets of Vienna: they sported shorter hair and skirts, they worked in factories and offices, they went to university, they voted, and they enjoyed publicly visible leisure-time activities. They also read in the bourgeoning field of sexual advice, which made public questions about pleasure, disease, and the new morality of the twentieth century.[14] This new visibility of women challenged those with more conservative views of female roles. In addition, men and women increasingly insisted on companionate relationships, eschewing the arranged marriages typical of the bourgeoisie before the war and instead meeting each other in clubs, at sports events, and through singles ads. These relationships were precisely the ones that were featured in the pages of *Bettauer's Weekly*, the second publication

[11] The best source for the cultural program of the SDAP remains Helmut Gruber's *Red Vienna: Experiment in Working-Class Culture 1919–1934* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991). Like the Sieder article above, Gruber emphasizes the heavy-handedness of city officials in policing worker families in the realms of hygiene and orderliness.

[12] Janek Wasserman has recently complicated the vision of a First Republic split between Red Vienna and a conservative countryside by usefully charting the extensive antidemocratic and anti-Semitic ideologies popular within Viennese circles. See Janek Wasserman, *Black Vienna: The Radical Right in the Red City, 1918–1938* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014).

[13] See chapter 4 of Maureen Healy's *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday Life in World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[14] Sexual advice came from all sides in the early twentieth century; doctors, reformers, religious leaders, and state authorities all competed for the attention of readers. For the Viennese context of these forms of public sexual knowledge and an exploration of their diversity, see McEwen, *Sexual Knowledge*. For the more general contours of (progressive) sex advice in the German-speaking world, see Atina Grossman, *Reforming Sex: The German Movement for Birth Control and Abortion Reform, 1920–1950* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

Bettauer edited after *He and She* was shut down. This new paper was intended for a left-leaning, progressive, female audience, although it stopped short of explicitly endorsing the SDAP. Like other publications of its kind, the authors in *Bettauer's Weekly* railed against the Republic of Austria's outmoded divorce laws (which required church dispensation for any Catholics who wished to divorce) and retrograde attitudes toward children born out of wedlock. But it was not a deeply political paper: film schedules, fashion tips, and serialized romances dominated. *Bettauer's Weekly* was aimed at the modern woman who had modern attitudes about love and sexuality. These attitudes were expressed and reinforced in the advice column, which was entirely devoted to heterosexual problems. These problems were often expressed in melodramatic language that used emotion to convey their import to readers.

Emotions remain unusual in our field. Establishing, contextualizing, and problematizing sexual acts and identities have dominated the way the history of sexuality has been practiced thus far. Very little work has attempted to combine the history of emotions with the history of sexuality; we rarely ask how our historical actors *felt* about the sexual cultures in which they participated.[15] Bettauer's second advice column from his much tamer

[15] Two recent interviews with historians of emotion on the state of the field leave out sexuality entirely: Jan Plamper, "The History of Emotions: An Interview with William Reddy, Barbara Rosenwein, and Peter Stearns," *History and Theory* 49 (May 2010): 237–65; and Nicole Eustace et al., "AHR Conversation: The Historical Study of Emotions," *American Historical Review* 117, no. 5 (December 2012): 1487–1531. Within the history of sexuality, Dagmar Herzog has challenged historians to think about the relationship of love and sex. See "Syncopated Sex: Transforming European Sexual Cultures," *American Historical Review* 114, no. 5 (December 2009): 1287–1308, 1306. More specifically, within the modern German history of sexuality, Edward R. Dickinson and Richard F. Wetzell have decried the "striking absence" in the current literature of any serious consideration of emotion and sex in combination. See Edward R. Dickinson and Richard F. Wetzell, "The Historiography of Sexuality in Modern Germany," *German History* 23, no. 3 (2005): 291–305, 303. In a recent collection of German histories of sexuality, only Marti M. Lybeck includes a discussion of emotions, relying on Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's theories about shame to explore lesbian experiences of love. See Marti M. Lybeck, "Writing Love, Feeling Shame: Rethinking Respectability in the Weimar Homosexual Women's Movement," in *After the History of Sexuality: German Genealogies with and beyond Foucault*, ed. Scott Spector, Helmut Puff, and Dagmar Herzog (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012), 156–68. In a forthcoming essay Annette Timm will comment on the way emotion and pleasure have been avoided in the historiography of the Third Reich. See Annette Timm, "Mothers, Whores or Sentimental Dupes? Emotion and Race in Historiographical Debates about Women in the Third Reich," in *Beyond the Racial State*, ed. Mark Roseman, Devin Pendas, and Richard F. Wetzell (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, forthcoming). In Austrian history, neither literary studies nor scholars of the history of sexuality have focused much attention on a history of emotions, concentrating instead upon a broader exploration of the history of gender and homosexuality. See Clemens Ruthner and Raleigh Whitinger, eds., *Contested Passions: Sexuality, Eroticism, and Gender in Modern Austrian Literature and Culture* (New York: Peter Lang, 2011); or Günter Bischof, Anton Pelinka, and Dagmar Herzog, eds., *Sexuality in Austria* (London: Transaction Publishers, 2007). Neither collection has anything to say about the history of emotions. Christa Hämmerle's recent work on gender and World War I sensitively explores emotion using love letters, but not in the context of sexuality. See Christa Hämmerle,

Bettauer's Weekly did not engage in questions of who did what to whom, how, and why; instead, it explored the feeling states attached to heterosexuality. In many ways, this means that doing the history of emotions alongside the history of sexuality allows us to question the ways people made meaning from sexual behavior by exploring how they framed the feelings attached to their actions.[16] Bettauer's second advice column in *Bettauer's Weekly* does just this. By excluding homosexuality and, by implication, all other forms of "perversion," Bettauer sidestepped the Viennese censors and turned away from sexological popular education and the scientific tradition of the fin de siècle. Instead, he explored the contours of the norm: straight relationships that may or may not have had a sexual component to them but that certainly induced deep and at times confusing feelings. Yet even these norms were changing in the 1920s. As we will see, the letters and their responses assumed that self-fulfillment was to be found in a companionate relationship/marriage and that, in the absence of such a connection, readers should find a new partner so that they might enjoy a romantic and sexual relationship with a member of the opposite sex. This worldview was at odds with both the reigning Catholic divorce laws and the Viennese SDAP vision of clean-living men and women devoting their energies to society. Each political party, the SDAP and the CSP, sought to establish a culture for the new state that would guide citizens to right living and, by extension, right loving. The CSP took its attitudes from the Catholic Church itself, stressing traditional gender roles, chastity, and fidelity. The SDAP created a new socialist ideal that was clean, pure, strong, and upright. Both parties attacked Bettauer's first, erotic newspaper, and both parties were criticized in his second publication, *Bettauer's Weekly*. Although they cooperated during the early years of the republic, these parties increasingly found themselves constructing competing realities during the politically and socially tumultuous interwar period.[17]

Heimat/Front: Geschlechtergeschichte/n des Ersten Weltkriegs in Österreich-Ungarn (Vienna: Böhlau, 2014), esp. chaps. 2 and 5.

[16] These subjects have been explored in more detail by anthropologists and sociologists. For an analysis of expressions of emotion and sexuality, see Jeannette Marie Mageo, *Theorizing Self in Samoa: Emotions, Genders, and Sexualities* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998); and Lila Abu-Lughod, *Veiled Sentiments: Honor and Poetry in a Bedouin Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986). For the role of emotion in social movements, see Francesca Polletta, James M. Jasper, and Jeff Goodwin, *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); and especially Deborah B. Gould, *Moving Politics: Emotion and Act Up's Fight against AIDS* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009). On a philosophical level, leaving out sexuality, Martha Nussbaum explores the strengths and dangers of cultures of emotion in the public sphere in her latest work. See *Political Emotions: Why Love Matters for Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).

[17] Anton Pelinka has described the political culture of this time as a *Lager System*, in which each party sought to bind its members to itself, resulting in a "centrifugal democracy"

Bettauer's Weekly first hit the stands on 15 May 1924, and it quickly became one of the most successful periodicals in interwar Austria.[18] The magazine featured fashion layouts, beauty tips, short fiction, calisthenics routines, and singles ads, as well as more weighty front-page editorials by Bettauer himself, which usually focused on a current cultural crisis. In addition to the weekly publication, Bettauer also published *Bettauer's Almanac for 1925*, which featured an extensive section called "Where Can I Find Help?" and was comprised of twenty-six densely packed pages of referrals for things like childcare, clinics, maternity services, educational opportunities, vocational training, and emergency services in Vienna and the surrounding province of Lower Austria. Unlike such directories put out by the city administration, "Where Can I Find Help?" listed municipal, Catholic, and private organizations side by side. Clearly Bettauer took his position as counselor to the people seriously. At the offices in the Langegasse, just outside the inner city, plans were made in early 1925 to expand *Bettauer's Weekly* from twenty-four to thirty-two pages a week and to begin using better quality paper to support the many images within.[19] Finally, on Tuesdays and Fridays, Bettauer held public office hours during which his readers could approach him personally with their deepest problems and concerns. It was on one of these days that his assassin, Otto Rothstock, approached him on 10 March 1925, shooting him multiple times. Bettauer died of his wounds some weeks later.

In the pages of *Bettauer's Weekly*, the editor provided both support and challenges to current social norms about heterosexuality. Love was the highest calling for men and women, he emphasized, yet pleasure, even when fleeting, was a worthwhile goal in and of itself. Desire was confusing, pitting mind and body and sometimes even self and society against each other. Drawing on the themes of his own Sittenromane, Bettauer argued that women were often the victims of male lust, callousness, and double-crossing. Although generally critical of male behavior when it restricted the happiness or freedom of women, in some ways Bettauer replicated stereotypical gender patterns in his column. Women suffered; men strayed. But at other times Bettauer reversed the roles, introducing men who pined for true love and women who just wanted to have fun. The flux and uncertainty of readers' letters were reflected back onto the society at large, where so much was changing so quickly. Bettauer took emotions very seriously as warning signals that something important was at stake for his readers. If we think of heterosexuality as woven cloth, emotional expression in these letters is the catch in the otherwise too-smooth weave; it snags us as we pass over

---

that was ultimately ungovernable. See Anton Pelinka, *Austria: Out of the Shadow of the Past* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), 15.

[18] Hall, *Der Fall Bettauer*, 80.

[19] Ibid.

the norms and practices that shaped readers' sexual cultures and draws our attention to what was truly remarkable about the times they lived in. Such rough patches are invitations for us as historians to unravel heterosexuality enough to get a better look at the stitches that bind it together.

The advice that Bettauer dispensed in his advice column between May 1924 and March 1925 presents us with striking evidence of how the emotional language of such publications can serve to support or create states of feeling in a given society. The opening lines of the column are telling:

> This column shall be an advisor through the confusions of life. It shall be there to help, comfort, reconcile, and take energetic action, even where the lawyer, the doctor, or the sensible businessman can't help—where the last word belongs to the *Seelenarzt* [soul-doctor], who is kind, understanding, and tolerant. In Life's Problems, everyone who has a burden pressing on his heart will get a chance to speak and receive an answer to his question from the editor's office and also from the readers. The fact that already days before the appearance of our magazine we were receiving letters to the editor proves how urgently necessary this column is and that it arises from compelling needs.[20]

The use of the term *Seelenarzt* and the imagery of burdens "pressing on the hearts" of readers hints that this column, although welcoming a variety of problems, was actually about romance. Indeed, questions of love and sexual behavior dominate the column. Several "types" of problems appear again and again, particularly the problems of loneliness, duplicity, (misplaced) fidelity, and confusion, especially that which brings with it physical symptoms.

Loneliness

By far the most common complaint in Life's Problems is that the magazine's readers were having trouble finding companionship. Bettauer wrote about this in a lead article that bemoaned the "tens of thousands" of lonely people in the big city: "Every mail delivery brings me ten, twenty, a hundred letters that all contain the same melancholy question: *I am lonely and alone—where can I find my companion?*"[21] The editor recalled that when he created a lonely-hearts column in *He and She* he was accused of pimping his readers to one another. Surely there must be some way for lonely people to meet in public safely and properly? Indeed, a few issues later Bettauer began running singles ads again, this time "with strict guidelines."[22]

One reader wrote in to say that at thirty he still could not find the right woman. Either the women are "only housewives, sweet, good, and everything, but intellectual duds," or they are intellectual at the cost of their

[20] "Probleme des Lebens," *Bettauers Wochenshrift,* 15 May 1924, 13.
[21] "Probleme des Lebens," *Bettauers Wochenshrift,* 12 June 1924, 1.
[22] "Probleme des Lebens," *Bettauers Wochenshrift,* 26 June 1924, 12.

disposition.[23] Bettauer came to the defense of Viennese women: "We think you are unfair. The girls of today—well, certainly they are not all deep. However, in the majority, they have the sincere desire to build themselves up intellectually, to live, and to be active."[24] The editor turned the tables, challenging the male reader to look deep inside himself to find what was holding him back, and ending with a warning that thirty is a late age to be having such problems. The theme of loneliness was reinforced by a forty-year-old man who wrote in to say that he remained alone and that his "horror of love for sale" even prevented him from having sex with prostitutes.[25] A third man, who wrote in under the pen name "Bad Luck," was driven to thoughts of suicide because no woman would have him; an accident had knocked out his teeth, and he was crippled with a terrible smile. "Go to a dentist," wrote Bettauer, "and thank God that you will never again have grounds for taking your own life."[26]

Bettauer also received letters from lonely women. He advised "Little Soul," a newcomer to Vienna, to "just go dancing or to enroll in a club. There are surely unending possibilities in a big city to find society. Good luck!"[27] One woman, who wrote in under the pen name "Blond Seeker of Joy," complained that the men she met only reacted to her looks and never sought her soul. "Are they all really like this," she asked, "that they only see girls as playthings?"[28] "I only wish to beg you, Mr. Bettauer, to tell me how it can be that I as a nineteen-year-old girl seem only to awaken erotic feelings [in men], and not more lasting ones?"[29] She described girlfriends who had found satisfaction as the companions of rich men, and she worried that this might be her fate. Bettauer responded with an economic justification for the men's behavior that was also meant to reassure the woman that this was a temporary situation. He explained that in these times of inflation "many, many men who would dearly love to be married simply turn off those feelings because they cannot afford a house, a wife, and certainly not children."[30] Bettauer also reminded his reader that she was only nineteen and was sure to find a man with an "honest" interest in her. A second lonely woman, this one a mere seventeen years old, complained that "all men want is one thing: a girlfriend. Each man today sees in a woman only an object of satisfaction. They all want the rights of a husband but none of the responsibilities."[31] Enraged, this correspondent scoffed at the idea

[23] "Probleme des Lebens," *Bettauers Wochenshrift*, 23 May 1924, 12.
[24] Ibid.
[25] "Probleme des Lebens," *Bettauers Wochenshrift*, 26 June 1924, 14.
[26] "Probleme des Lebens," *Bettauers Wochenshrift*, 2 October 1924, 20.
[27] "Probleme des Lebens," *Bettauers Wochenshrift*, 25 September 1924, 21.
[28] "Probleme des Lebens," *Bettauers Wochenshrift*, issue 4, 1925, 14. Some issues of the magazine were undated. In these cases, I have provided the issue number.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid.
[31] "Probleme des Lebens," *Bettauers Wochenshrift*, issue 1, 1925, 17.

that there was a "modern" idea of sexual freedom for women in her society and insisted that neither law nor custom had really changed. Bettauer's response again highlighted the youth of the advice-seeker and then went on to remind her that her "depressing" logic implied that the world was bereft of any healthy relationships and that marriage was only forged in duty rather than in lasting love. On the subject of women's sexual freedom, Bettauer defended the right of women to autonomy and self-determination but reminded his readers that this was not meant to "drive them where they didn't want to go."[32] *Bettauer's Weekly* did not intend to make women into martyrs for modernity but rather attempted to act as a mouthpiece for their needs and desires.

Some lonely people were unable to express themselves sexually. One woman wrote in to say that she suffered from frigidity: "As passionate as my desire for tenderness is, as great as my wish is for sensuality . . . in the arms of a man, precisely when the big moment nears, I become cold and colder, and remain numb."[33] This young woman, who was consumed with anxiety about growing old without ever having known pleasure, reported "nervous conditions" of all sorts, ranging from stomachaches and sleeplessness to "unspeakable torments." She was seeing a psychiatrist but wanted to know if hypnosis, which her doctor refused to try, might help. Bettauer responded that he had deep compassion for the woman and that he would have indeed recommended psychoanalysis to her if she had not already been seeing a doctor. Displaying familiarity with psychiatry's rejection of hypnosis as an honest form of therapy, he wrote: "I know of no hypnotist who appears serious enough for so earnest an undertaking."[34] Some men also complained of not being able to express themselves sexually, although for different reasons. In response to a twenty-seven-year-old virgin who complained that he was too poor to attract women, who he felt were only interested in material things, Bettauer tersely answered: "Surely this is not true. Seek society."[35]

In some cases, even the married found themselves suffering from loneliness. One letter came from a wife whose intellectual interests were more sophisticated than those of her husband, who was not "a spiritual partner to her."[36] She was counseled that solidarity and equality are important in a marriage, and she was told to "have patience and more love [for her husband]." A girl who described herself as "thirty years old and independent . . . not pretty and with a mannish intelligence" described a situation in which a younger man wanted to marry her. [37] She was unsure she could

[32] Ibid., 18.
[33] Ibid., 16.
[34] Ibid.
[35] "Probleme des Lebens," *Bettauers Wochenshrift*, 13 November 1924, 20.
[36] "Probleme des Lebens," *Bettauers Wochenshrift*, 15 May 1924, 15.
[37] "Probleme des Lebens," *Bettauers Wochenshrift*, 3 July 1924, 14.

make him happy, but Bettauer warned: "The marriage might be a risk, but joyless loneliness is certain unhappiness."[38] Lest she be impractical, though, he counseled her to make a marriage contract (at city hall) and thus agree to a marriage that could be separated, suggesting that she avoid a Catholic ceremony and the attendant legal woes that went with one in interwar Vienna. Divorce, although a common refrain in Bettauer's letters and advice, was actually very difficult to achieve for Austrian Catholics, as there was no civil marriage beyond an emergency one designed for interfaith couples in the late imperial period. Instead, marriage was a confessional matter. In Bettauer's day, the city of Vienna often granted appeals for legal separation, but this did not always ease second marriage possibilities for Catholics.[39]

Duplicity

For all those who could not find companionship, there was an equal number of letters from people involved with more than one lover at once. Some of these letters were humorous, while others came from readers who were clearly distraught. Again and again Bettauer counseled honesty, despite the difficulties that this might create. A man who identified himself as "At the Crossroads" admitted that he had been carrying on an affair with two women, both of whom were now pressuring him to marry them. He wrote: "My confusion is boundless! For days I have debated whether I should consider submitting my case for public discussion [in your column]. . . . I do it with the knowledge that at least you will be an understanding counselor. Help me!"[40] Bettauer responded with sympathy and recommended classical examples for solutions, reminding the reader of Solomon's ruling between two mothers. The one who truly loved him would reveal herself, while at least "letting the truth out will be a relief."[41] Bettauer also counseled a woman to tell the truth who was happily married for five years but who had met a man who had such an effect on her that "it was like a physical compulsion—I succumbed."[42] Here Bettauer challenged nineteenth-century norms of passionless women and revealed that they, too, could be swept up in infidelities.

In a particularly emotionally dramatic letter, a woman described herself as engaged but deeply in love with a different, married man. She detailed her plight dramatically: "I suffer, I torture myself day and night. . . . I feel that I can no longer go on like this, life disgusts me, I torment myself daily, even hourly with reproach . . . and I ask you, is it really so great a sin, that . . .

[38] Ibid.

[39] For a more precise account of the contours of Austrian divorce laws, see Ulrike Harmat, *Ehe auf Widerruf? Der Konflikt um das Eherecht in Österreich 1918–1938* (Vienna: Klostermann, 1999).

[40] "Probleme des Lebens," *Bettauers Wochenshrift*, 22 May 1924, 14.

[41] Ibid.

[42] "Probleme des Lebens," *Bettauers Wochenshrift*, 4 December 1924, 18.

indeed every fiber, every nerve, every cell in me desires him?"[43] Bettauer's response was terse but reassuring: the only sin in this situation was to lie. Another woman, this time married, described the cruelties of her husband as easier to bear now that she knew that a long-time friend had romantic feelings for her. She asked if she should continue the relationship with her friend now that his feelings were known. "Certainly your marriage will be destroyed," answered Bettauer, but perhaps this was the right path to take.[44] The editor counseled reflection and then decisive action. A third woman wrote in to describe her frustration with her married lover, who she had learned from friends was being unfaithful to both her and his wife. Bettauer admired the woman's honest portrayal of male desire, which he described as largely polygamous and largely a product of economic relationships. Bettauer counseled this woman to accept her lover as he was. Perhaps the future would be more monogamous, he wrote: "We strive and will strive for a different ideal—that of a two-sided, companionate relationship between a man and a woman."[45] Finally, Bettauer responded to a man who admitted to a wandering eye, even though he was married to a wonderful woman. Bettauer chided him that it would have been better to remain single, but now he had to get his urges under control: "We can hardly recommend to you that you suppress your urges, but do you know what 'sublimation' means? Throw yourself into your work and other distractions! You are young and have much to accomplish!"[46] This answer of Bettauer's, like those that counseled psychoanalysis, shows that he was well versed in the new science of psychiatry. However, Bettauer's outlook on sexuality—an unusual amalgam of scientific perspectives and melodrama—was much more positive than Freud's. Although confusing, sexual feelings for Bettauer were natural and healthy. Their presence (or lack thereof) did not lead him to pathologize women or homosexuals. In this sense, Bettauer's views were quite unique for his time.

One unusual letter came from a young man whose family had been separated during the war after his mother fell in with "bad company," took a lover, and remarried. His sense of shame and anger overwhelmed Bettauer, who asked the young man to not judge his mother so harshly:

> Children, like anyone else, have so little right to such cruelty. Try to also see things from your mother's point of view! As a result of the war she was alone for so long, separated from her husband, so that at this time [she] learned to know and love someone else. This is indeed humanly understandable and even foreseeable. We are in fact not composed of stone, nor do we possess heroic natures, but rather we are full

[43] "Probleme des Lebens," *Bettauers Wochenshrift*, 15 May 1924, 13.
[44] "Probleme des Lebens," *Bettauers Wochenshrift*, 22 May 1924, 13.
[45] "Probleme des Lebens," *Bettauers Wochenshrift*, 5 June 1924, 13.
[46] "Probleme des Lebens," *Bettauers Wochenshrift*, 26 June 1924, 13.

> of weaknesses. And no one among us has the right to such intolerance as you show to your own mother.[47]

Here Bettauer defended the "unfaithful," even reminding the son of Christ's lesson that "he without sin should cast the first stone." "Be more *Menschlich*!" he demanded of his readers, playing on that word's double meaning as human and humane.[48]

Fidelity

A number of Bettauer's correspondents wrote in to ask whether or not they should stay in unhappy relationships. With a few exceptions, Bettauer overwhelmingly answered in the negative. In the Letterbox section of his advice column, where Bettauer printed answers to questions without reproducing the letters themselves, divorce (although difficult in interwar Vienna for the majority of the population) was often counseled. In one issue, he told "Franz M." to "quickly seek a divorce from your unhappy marriage!" That same week, he replied to "Klaudel K.": "You have a mean wife and want a nice one. First divorce, and then go looking, is our opinion." To "Hanna" he wrote: "Your husband drinks and treats you poorly. . . . [I]f you can't improve him, then you must get a divorce."[49] Finally and emphatically, he told "New Life": "Divorce! Divorce at any price!"[50]

One woman wrote in with an unusual problem. She described her love for her husband as merely fraternal and said that he gave her complete freedom to find other lovers. She asked, "May I deceive such a person? I am dying of thirst for love!"[51] Although technically taking a lover in this case would be no deception, Bettauer responded with a warning: "It is so easily possible that you would destroy much more for yourself than you would gain."[52] Instead, he counseled the woman to reconcile herself with her lot. The love she enjoyed with her husband, even though it was platonic, was potentially more precious than what she might find with someone else. Similarly, Bettauer counseled caution to a man who was committed to both a wife and a lover, neither of whom would let him go. The correspondent wrote: "I have been married for six years and am the father of two children. My marriage is neither happy nor unhappy. It is a desolate, joyless gloaming."[53] His lover was completely enraptured with him, but his wife would not grant a divorce, and now he was thinking of breaking it

[47] "Probleme des Lebens," *Bettauers Wochenshrift*, issue 6 (1925): 11.
[48] Ibid.
[49] "Probleme des Lebens," *Bettauers Wochenshrift*, 4 September 1924, 19.
[50] "Probleme des Lebens," *Bettauers Wochenshrift*, 19 June 1924, 13.
[51] "Probleme des Lebens," *Bettauers Wochenshrift*, 29 May 1924, 14.
[52] Ibid.
[53] "Probleme des Lebens," *Bettauers Wochenshrift*, 19 June 1924, 12.

off with his mistress for her own good. Bettauer, concerned that the mistress might commit suicide, wrote that the man should go slowly with the breakup "to avoid a catastrophic end" and noted that perhaps his mistress's passion would subside in time.[54] Bettauer printed a letter from a man who steadfastly loved his wife, even though he described her as a "monster": "During these twenty-five years [of marriage] I have received no kind word, no kiss. Her appearance in the room blocks out the sun. Where she lingers, all is gloomy and sinister."[55] Now living in a hotel and feeling suicidal, the man refused to consider divorce. Bettauer's only answer to this example of extreme fidelity is to quietly ask whether it "would be possible to send your wife to a psychiatrist?"[56] In these last three cases, the fidelity that his correspondents describe is upheld by Bettauer, who so often counseled divorce. The uniting theme of all three seems to be the investment of the correspondent in the relationship. Time and care have carved permanent marks into these letter-writers, which Bettauer seems to value.

In many other instances, however, Bettauer's responses to readers were designed to remind them that they had many choices when it came to love. One advice-seeker, who identified herself as "Single Mother," wrote a long saga of suffering at the hands of a former boss, whose advances she tolerated because she needed the work. After she became pregnant, she was fired, and she was now being wooed by a man who offered her security but not love. Bettauer wrote that while these two men were "loveless and foolish," there were many more who would be happy to marry such a clever woman. He counseled that she "retain her freedom and independence" a little longer until the right man came along.[57] This letter, like many others, accepted the norm of unwelcome male advances yet challenged the idea that women needed to respond to any available source of male support. Another woman still pined for a man she had met on a ship between Budapest and Vienna five years previously. Bettauer sternly told her to move on: "Think no more of this man, because these thoughts are blocking the way to people who are actually attainable."[58] Bettauer similarly emphasized choice when he advised women that they did not have to put up with violence, even at the hands of a husband. He told "Susi" that she not only had a right to leave her abusive husband but that she even had a responsibility to leave him before a child entered the relationship and bound her further to such a man. She should seize her right to choose and "begin a new life at the side of a different man."[59]

As mentioned above, there were occasions when Bettauer applauded fidelity, especially when relationships were mature. In response to a middle-

[54] Ibid.
[55] "Probleme des Lebens," *Bettauers Wochenshrift*, 15 May 1924, 14.
[56] Ibid.
[57] "Probleme des Lebens," *Bettauers Wochenshrift*, 25 December 1924, 18.
[58] "Probleme des Lebens," *Bettauers Wochenshrift*, 18 September 1924, 21.
[59] "Probleme des Lebens," *Bettauers Wochenshrift*, 28 August 1924, 18.

aged man whose wife had struck up a suspicious relationship with a teenager, Bettauer reflected on the long years the couple had spent together and counseled the man to be understanding; the couple should look back on this "experience of the heart" as but one episode in their marriage that, like any other, could be lived through.[60] Bettauer wrote: "Be in good cheer! The ribbon of your marriage is far too strong and elastic for you not to be bound together more tightly soon."[61] In another situation, Bettauer told "Anny Sch." in no uncertain terms that she should stay faithful to the man who married her, adopted her illegitimate child, and became a tender father to this child and two new siblings. Anny was tempted to follow her heart, which led toward another, married man. But Bettauer argued: "You must repress all physical sensations and must with all your powers dedicate yourself to being a good wife to your honest husband and a good mother to your children."[62] "I appreciate your soulful suffering," he wrote, "but in any emphasis on personal freedom, we must also acknowledge a higher sense of duties."[63] This appeal to duty seems at odds with the value Bettauer typically placed on pleasure and independence. But it is in keeping with the social norms of his time, some of which he accepted and upheld. The thrill of new mores, after all, would not exist without the lingering power of old strictures and codes. Bettauer combined new attitudes toward companionship while at the same time continuing to believe in the old formula of true love.

Confusion

In many of the letters sent to Bettauer's magazine, the writers describe symptoms of romantic confusion that are almost physical. Clearly overwhelmed, these people turned to Bettauer for sympathy and guidance. Some of them described sexual urges that they found too strong to bear. One man described a relationship with someone he dearly loved but who refused to agree to any physical expression of their closeness. "I reproach myself," he wrote. "I am now at the end of my strength. Moreover, my weak nerves are already entirely without resistance. Every day I fear their breakdown, which I could not survive."[64] In this case, Bettauer simply asks why this young couple could not marry. In another letter, a teenage girl similarly described her love for an older man as all consuming: "I love him like crazy. He embodies the ideals of my youthful dreams. *One must love him.*"[65] Unfortunately, he treated her like a plaything, and "First Love"

[60] "Probleme des Lebens," *Bettauers Wochenshrift*, issue 9 (1925): 16.
[61] Ibid.
[62] "Probleme des Lebens," *Bettauers Wochenshrift*, 23 October 1924, 21.
[63] Ibid.
[64] "Probleme des Lebens," *Bettauers Wochenshrift*, 29 May 1924, 14.
[65] "Probleme des Lebens," *Bettauers Wochenshrift*, 17 July 1924, 12, emphasis in original.

was worried she should give him up. Bettauer responded with a surprising possibility: "Why do you want to give him up? Just enjoy this first love with all the happiness and suffering it brings you. If you are without an agenda or goal, this will likely remain a lovely memory for your entire life."[66] Such messages of immediate satisfaction, even with the knowledge that the affair would not last, were some of the most subversive adumbrations of heterosexuality that Bettauer offered.

A lonely reader who described himself as "heartsick" complained that "with every heartbeat I feel the pulse of blood and at the same time a parallel, slight vibration of light waves before my eyes. Further symptoms are nervousness, heightened weariness, and great sluggishness."[67] One woman wrote that she was "sleepless for hours at night and bit her lips blue with yearning for love and riches."[68] Other readers described themselves as suicidal, as the girl "who fell for a lump of a guy who left me once he saw [that I was pregnant]. What should I do? Should I die?"[69] Another young woman described the blood rising in her head, making her so nervous that her dearest wish was to take her own life whenever she thought of the two suitors available to her.[70] A woman whose husband's affections for her had cooled (and who suspected that he had taken a younger lover) described her "bitter tears and torment."[71] A woman who wrote about a man she mistakenly thought might have loved her "suffer[ed] embarrassment and pain."[72] An older woman being wooed by a married man and unsure if she should believe his promises "underwent many torments" and spent "many sleepless nights" thinking about him.[73] All of these correspondents turned to Bettauer for support, although he often was unable to do more than express his sympathy for their suffering. In many ways this was the guiding theme of the column—that somewhere there was a person who could listen to the myriad problems faced by people looking for love and respond with kindness.

In his responses, Bettauer most often counseled his readers to prioritize their personal happiness and minimize suffering. Even in the Letterbox column, in which readers' questions were left to the imagination and answers alone were printed, Bettauer often asked his correspondents to act in accordance with their needs, conserve their own happiness, and be brave in the face of love's trials. A couple needing legal advice so that they might remarry wrote a letter that cheered Bettauer, who responded, "It is always so beautiful to discover from people that they love each other, understand

[66] "Probleme des Lebens," *Bettauers Wochenshrift*, 17 July 1924, 12.
[67] "Probleme des Lebens," *Bettauers Wochenshrift*, 11 September 1924, 18.
[68] "Probleme des Lebens," *Bettauers Wochenshrift*, 2 October 1924, 7.
[69] "Probleme des Lebens," *Bettauers Wochenshrift*, 12 June 1924, 12.
[70] "Probleme des Lebens," *Bettauers Wochenshrift*, issue 9 (1925): 16.
[71] "Probleme des Lebens," *Bettauers Wochenshrift*, 26 June 1924, 13.
[72] "Probleme des Lebens," *Bettauers Wochenshrift*, 12 June 1924, 13.
[73] "Probleme des Lebens," *Bettauers Wochenshrift*, 31 July 1924, 18.

each other, and belong to each other. We are convinced that the hindrances that stand before you . . . can be overcome."[74] Even when delivering bad news, Bettauer usually managed to encourage his correspondents. Bettauer told "Lizi" to face facts: "If this man loved you, he would treat you differently. But one so young, so clever, so independent and educated as you, must not, believe me, give him much thought or worry. You will certainly be happy again."[75] That same week, he wrote to "Bonheur": "We find your doubt ungrounded, largely because it is actually never possible to give a guarantee for the duration of joy. Enjoy the moment and leave everything else to the future."[76] Again we see the suggestion that immediate pleasure and happiness are more important than future security and even monogamy. Likewise, he wrote to "Highlife," suggesting that she trust in her partner and stop second-guessing the love that had entered her life. "What you think is impossible is in fact highly possible, even likely. Don't burden yourself with useless thoughts but rather imbibe for yourself your joy."[77] Many responses in the Letterbox section ended with exhortations to pride and fortitude: "Do not worry yourself!" "Be strong!" "Independence is the highest good!" and "Hold your head up high!" all appeared in the same column in July 1924.[78]

Bettauer's messages about sexuality were embedded in emotional language and concerns. To tease out the new mores he recommends, we need to think about the emotions in which he packages them. Doing the history of emotions while writing about sexuality entails a few theoretical considerations. What are emotions? They are more than simply feelings that originate in individuals, as they can clearly be collectively organized by social forces such as family, medicine, and popular media. Some have theorized that emotions are locked in the body and cannot be communicated authentically. The fact that both the editor and the authors of the letters in *Bettauer's Weekly* "packaged" emotions in ways that made them legible to a wider audience does not make them less real. Following William Reddy, I proceed from the position that emotions are both bodily reactions and active framing mechanisms.[79] To feel anger and express it is an act of self-management but also an act that alters the social reality of the individual. We are taught to identify physical and mental indicators of anger within ourselves, just as we are taught what we should be angry about. Thus, emotions and their management are specific to times, cultures, and populations. In a column like Life's Problems, the public was exposed to emotions that

[74] "Probleme des Lebens," *Bettauers Wochenshrift*, 24 July 1924, 19.
[75] "Probleme des Lebens," *Bettauers Wochenshrift*, 28 August 1924, 19.
[76] "Probleme des Lebens," *Bettauers Wochenshrift*, 28 August 1924, 19.
[77] "Probleme des Lebens," *Bettauers Wochenshrift*, 14 August 1924, 18.
[78] "Probleme des Lebens," *Bettauers Wochenshrift*, 17 July 1924, 18.
[79] In his theory of the "double-anchored self," Reddy insisted that individuals can both modify behaviors by expressing feelings *and* modify feelings by changing behaviors. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling*, 115–16.

were portrayed by Bettauer as repetitions or reiterations of what happened just weeks ago. Because the emotions in this column are so often related to sexuality, they bear special weight in terms of both conceptions of the self and Viennese society. Sex certainly sells papers, but the sexual situations described in Life's Problems are more melodramatic than explicit. Reading about them is remarkably *un*titillating; although a few of the letters each week might be light-hearted or humorous, most were quite painful to read and described a world of confusion and disappointment. In these letters, the mind and body were very often at odds with each other, as were the desires of the individual with the needs and strictures of society.

These letters and the emotions they express might fruitfully be examined through the lens of the arguments in Monique Scheer's recent article, "Are Emotions a Kind of Practice?" Scheer sees in the theories of Pierre Bourdieu a way to bridge the dichotomies of mind/body, structure/agency, and expression/experience with "practice theory." She reassures us that emotions are both "something people experience *and* something they do," part of the social practices that make up our daily lives and interactions with others.[80] In perhaps her most interesting section, she muses on the repetition of emotions and the variations that come with repetition: "Since the habitus does not dictate the exact source of action in practice but rather provides a 'feel' for the appropriate movements, gestures, facial expressions, pitch of the voice and so on, it leaves space for behaviors not entirely and always predictable, which can also instigate change and resistance rather than preprogramed reproduction."[81] This Butlerian emphasis on performativity and the possibility of resistance within repetition is consonant with some of William Reddy's work on emotions, particularly his arguments about the space and contradictions *between* feelings and thoughts.[82] These moments of dissonance open up the possibility of change on both the personal and the social levels. The evidence I have presented from *Bettauer's Weekly* demonstrates that there was a constant repetition of messages about how heterosexuality should feel in 1920s Vienna, a repetition that calls to mind Judith Butler's early work on the public creation of gender through performativity.[83] Bettauer's readers performed heterosexuality through the letters they wrote. These letters were a conglomeration of the repeated messages, scripts, and scenarios readers read every week. The expression of emotions might vary, and sometimes new situations were introduced, but on the whole a seemingly repetitious set of stories about what it meant to love the opposite sex emerges. In advice literature like Bettauer's, heterosexuality

[80] Monique Scheer, "Are Emotions a Kind of Practice (and Is That What Makes Them Have a History)? A Bourdieuian Approach to Understanding Emotions," *History and Theory* 51 (May 2012): 193–220, 195, emphasis in the original.

[81] Scheer, "Are Emotions," 204.

[82] Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling*, esp. chap. 4, "Emotional Liberty."

[83] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), esp. 112 and 136–41.

was constructed in a way that was legible and vital to the reading public. Readers could see Bettauer's sympathetic responses and learn to emulate his tolerant attitudes; likewise, they could find themselves either agreeing or disagreeing with his advice on the best course of action yet always sharing the assumption of heterosexuality in any problem. Emotion was central to this pattern, and the theoretical frameworks provided by Scheer, Bourdieu, Butler, and Reddy provide useful categories to help us interpret the historical processes at work. Bourdieu's theory of *habitus* reminds us of the importance of the mundane actions and interactions that are part of the practice of everyday life and inspires us to view the repetition within such seemingly banal artifacts as the advice column of a popular newspaper as revealing underlying norms and social structures. That Bettauer's responses slipped between answers displaying a clear reliance on these social norms and quite idiosyncratic emotional responses to individual stories reveals what Butler might have called the moment of liberty within our patterns.[84] And even though he does not explore sexual themes, Reddy's attention to the moments in which feelings and thoughts are at odds with each other offers historians of sexuality an opportunity to explore tensions and contradictions within the construction of heterosexuality.

These theoretical considerations allow us to look at Bettauer's letters in the light of practice and performance. For members of this emotional community, the repetition of concerns was a way of reassuring readers that they, too, understood the signs of romance or the woes of an affair gone wrong. The overwhelming majority of letters in Life's Problems asked for romantic advice; similarly, the stand-alone answers in the Letterbox section usually revolved around love and the search for companionship. Through the repetition of a few key emotions, Bettauer tried to teach his readers what love should feel like. I have identified feeling states that appear again and again in Bettauer's advice column—loneliness, duplicity, fidelity, and confusion—especially those emotions that included physical symptoms. Drawing inspiration from Scheer's theoretical definition of emotion, we can argue that these were things both that were happening to readers *and* that readers were doing. This leaves the question, however, of why Bettauer printed so many letters that registered only confusion. To leave so many emotions illegible, or unprocessed, as we might say today, reflects Bettauer's ability to discern just how disordered the world of romance could be for his readers.

If, as William Reddy suggests, emotions are neither merely description nor performance but rather a means of transforming both the self and society, then we can read the repetition of emotions in the pages of *Bettauer's Weekly* as powerful evaluative judgments about Viennese culture.[85] Bettauer's exchanges with the readers of his magazine reveal the degree to

[84] Ibid., 147.
[85] Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling*, 99.

which Viennese were struggling to come to terms with how the massive social, economic, and political changes of the interwar era were affecting sexual mores. The question-and-answer format of Bettauer's advice column served to reassure readers that their feelings were part of the matrix of healthy, heterosexual behavior. In repeating certain questions and descriptions of behavior, the editor created a continuity of message while providing enough variety from issue to issue to offer readers the chance to express what felt like personal and unique scripts of love, hope, suffering, and confusion. Surely this column is precisely the kind of space Scheer was referring to when she described "behaviors not entirely and always predictable" in which the frisson between the expression of emotion and the reception of it opens up the possibility of change, resistance, or growth. Finally, it seems to me important that the regular readers of this column were likely to have sensed these patterns of repetition within both the kinds of questions posed and the responses from the editor, Hugo Bettauer. What, then, kept the column fresh? As Scheer might say, it was the framing of emotions in real time, with all the slippage attendant to their expression.

What was the purpose of a column like Life's Problems? Certainly it created a sense of community and immediacy among the readers of *Bettauer's Weekly*. In these pages readers could see fellow city-dwellers defining their realities not by their labors but rather by their loves. Emotional expression was a sphere in which they saw themselves as actors capable of shaping their world. Readers embraced this format—the advice column—as a reality-shaping tool. The repetition of problems reassured readers that they had identified worthy questions in their own lives. The column portrayed the fraught search for companionship during an era of social upheaval as so important, so natural and automatic that it was worth the associated pain. The column also provided a space for readers to negotiate new boundaries of appropriate sexual behavior, the contours of which were judged not by church and state but rather by emotional effect. Emotions are not historically stable entities but rather managed sentiments that can be modeled and practiced. These letters helped readers to reconcile feelings of personal loneliness, sadness, and confusion with the demands of the quickly changing conditions of their everyday lives. Life in Vienna during this time demanded flexibility, fortitude, and hope, all emotions modeled by Bettauer for his readers.

The ability to feel defines humanity and creates meaning in individual and social life. In his Life's Problems column and in his other writing, Bettauer was deeply committed to (and wildly successful at) the process of airing society's ills and calling for a better tomorrow. Through a negotiation of the practice of heterosexual love, he provided his readers with a venue for exploring what was real and what was ideal. Attending to the patterns that emerge from Life's Problems allows us to distinguish between recommendations for living (which in Vienna at the time came from both

the Catholic Church and the Social Democratic Party) and actual patterns of living, and it provides evidence for the salience of particular emotions during this period. Lies, disappointments, and a feeling of increasing isolation were common in Austrian politics during the interwar period. Is it any surprise that Viennese citizens should struggle with these same problems and emotions in their personal lives? Bettauer's column taught his readers how to respond to such problems, and he created a community of feeling that validated their search for companionship and helped them to negotiate the shifting gender and sexual possibilities of interwar Vienna.

Unlike Bettauer's earlier publication, *He and She*, the problems presented in *Bettauer's Weekly* were entirely heterosexual. Although troubled and vexed, none of his readers faced questions of same-sex desire. Was this a decision by the editor designed to calm the censors, who had shut down *He and She*? Or was it perhaps a choice that reflected the paper's dedication to heteronormativity, as expressed by the subject matter its publishers deemed appropriate for its female audience (fashion, movies, serialized novels)? Interestingly, the emotional community suggested by the magazine failed to fit within either of the reigning political parties' ideals. Bettauer was too liberty loving for the socialists and far too progressive for the Austrian Catholics. He was an oppositional figure whose romantic advice was repugnant to both Left and Right. Instead, he created an anarchic realm where love, rather than politics or religion, was the determining factor in his readers' happiness. Bettauer simultaneously upheld and challenged the norms of heterosexuality for his era; he made it legible by upholding many accepted norms while still providing unpredictable advice that helped to create an alternative emotional community. That he broke taboos while still reinforcing many of the norms of heteronormativity is what made the column so explosive for his contemporary readers and fascinating for historians of sexuality and emotion. The pages of his column bear witness to his readers' confrontation with the interwar world of anxiety, joblessness, and material misery.

From the standpoint of emotions in everyday life, studying this mundane, commercially driven advice column offers historians a brief opening into the making of heterosexuality. Perhaps the most exciting opportunity here is to see how ordinary readers constructed themselves through managing, expressing, and publishing their feelings for a citywide audience. What could be more personal than one's experience of love? In an era of imperial collapse, radical political change, economic turbulence, and gender instability, a new relationship between the individual self and romantic behavior was forged. I am suggesting that these letters were an attempt to use the experience of love as a means of reclaiming autonomy from the social forces beyond their authors' control. These simple letters offer a concrete entry point into the complex mentalities, discourses, and cultural practices of the period, which historians have previously investigated primarily through investigations of

high culture. Just like the drama, music, theater, and art of the era, these letters helped to create the everyday world in which the men and women of Vienna lived and loved, and the question of whether they or the emotions expressed in them were authentic thus recedes in importance.

About the Author

Britta McEwen completed her PhD at the University of California, Los Angeles, in 2003. She teaches European history, as well as women and gender studies classes, at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska.