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# Whining and Winning: Male Narratives of Love, Marriage, and Divorce in the Shadow of the Third Reich

*Elissa Mailänder*

Abstract. This article analyzes the social realities that Austrian and German heterosexual men, all in their reproductive age, confronted in the aftermath of World War II; the kind of sexual and gendered configurations produced under Nazism and during the postwar period; and the ways in which these social and emotional realities were publically and privately dealt with after the war. It draws on reports in and letters-to-the-editor of the journal *Liebe und Ehe* from 1949 to 1951, as well as on a sample of fourteen private letters written by an Austrian policeman in 1951 about his love relationship with a nurse. Such early postwar narratives not only point at issues and conflicts between the sexes, but also suggest the rehabilitation of traditional gender roles in West Germany and Austria. Men struggled to conform to new guidelines of heterosexual domesticity, a development that hints not only at traumatic war experiences, but also at the ideological residuals of Nazism.

Dieser Beitrag untersucht die geschlechterspezifischen Probleme, mit denen sich deutsche und österreichische heterosexuelle Männer im zeugungsfähigen Alter nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg konfrontiert sahen. Der Nationalsozialismus und die Nachkriegszeit schufen jeweils spezifische gesellschaftliche und sexualitätspolitische Realitäten, die nach dem Krieg, emotional aufgeladen, privat wie öffentlich ausgehandelt wurden. Als Quellengrundlage dienen Berichte und Leserbriefe der Zeitschrift "Liebe und Ehe" aus den Jahren 1949 bis 1951 sowie eine Reihe privater Briefe eines österreichischen Polizisten über seine Liebesbeziehung mit einer Krankenschwester aus dem Jahr 1951. Diese Texte aus der frühen Nachkriegszeit weisen nicht nur auf Probleme und Konflikte zwischen den Geschlechtern hin, sie zeigen auch, wie es in Westdeutschland und Österreich zu einer Rehabilitierung traditioneller Geschlechterrollen kam. Männer hatten Schwierigkeiten, sich an die neuen Richtlinien heterosexueller Häuslichkeit anzupassen, was sich zum einen mit ihren traumatischen Kriegserfahrungen, aber auch mit ideologischen Rückständen des Nationalsozialismus erklärt.

In January 1950, an anonymous reader sought legal advice from a magazine called *Liebe und Ehe. Eine aktuelle Zeitschrift für Mann und Frau* (*Love and Marriage. A Contemporary Magazine for Men and Women*). His wife had abruptly abandoned him after eleven years of marriage. The couple had married in 1938 and, two years later, the *Wehrmacht* called up the husband for military service. "From October 1940 until the war's end, I had to play soldier," he flippantly described his five-year deployment in a war of unprecedented aggression and destruction. The couple's first years of marriage were so blissful that outsiders referred to them as a paragon of married life, but the husband's wartime exploits led to their

I wish to thank all those who read earlier versions of this article—first of all, to Jennifer L. Rodgers, who did an amazing job editing this article, and to the Direction Scientifique de Sciences Po for its generous funding. Many thanks to Thomas Kühne and Andrew Port for their constructive support, to Cyrille Jean for sharing his knowledge, and to the two anonymous peer reviewers who gave very useful feedback.

eventual estrangement. When the husband returned home from captivity in July 1945, his wife appeared surprised and even disappointed, welcoming him with the words: "Oh, you are back already?" The anonymous writer complained that there was "no greeting, no embrace, no kiss."[1] The couple never recovered their prewar bliss and eventually divorced in 1948 after a decade of marriage.

In general, stories of sex and crime attract a wide readership. Recognizing this, the editorial board of *Liebe und Ehe* likely selected this and other extraordinary, sensational, or dramatic stories to satisfy their readers' curiosity, or even to spark vivid discussions among them.[2] Yet, the fate of the aforementioned marriage—or of this man—was hardly singular. Millions of German and Austrian couples struggled with wartime separation and became estranged over the course of the conflict. Divorce rates soared in the early postwar era, particularly in war-torn Hamburg and Berlin. Historians estimate that the number of divorces reached its peak in 1948, with a total of 88,374 for the Western zones of occupation, only stabilizing following the currency reform in the same year.[3] Elizabeth Heineman further acknowledges that almost half the divorce cases settled in the Western Allied territory affected couples that had married during or immediately prior to the war, similar to the anonymous writer and his wife in *Liebe und Ehe*.[4] Whereas Heineman and Robert G. Moeller have shed a light on "incomplete families" and rising divorce rates, Hester Vaizey has argued that the postwar situation did not lead to a marriage crisis. Only a fraction of marriages broke down—16 percent at best—whereas the majority did not.[5] In fact, according to Vaizey, most marriages proved resilient to Nazism, war, and defeat. Yet, as this article demonstrates, this did not necessarily translate into happy families or accomplished relationships.

World War II had an undeniably profound and protracted impact not only on gender relations, but also on the sexual habits of Austrian and West German men and women. As the reader's letter, discussion forums, and reports in magazines and newspapers suggest, many couples struggled. Scholars of the history of gender and sexuality have extensively examined public discourse in German-speaking women's magazines: Elizabeth Heineman has analyzed intrafamilial conflict in magazines like *Constanze*, *Sie*, and *Die Frau von heute*, whereas Dagmar Herzog has identified sexuality and relationship problems as key topics.[6] Yet, by concentrating on public debates, these pivotal contributions have overlooked the specifically gendered nature of male postwar experiences.

[1] *Liebe und Ehe. Eine aktuelle Zeitschrift für Mann und Frau* (henceforth *Liebe und Ehe*) 1 (1950): 33.

[2] Philipp Müller, *Auf der Suche nach dem Täter. Die öffentliche Dramatisierung von Verbrechen im Berlin des Kaiserreichs* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus 2005), 13–32.

[3] Robert G. Moeller, *Protecting Motherhood: Women and the Family in the Politics of Postwar Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 8–37; Merith Niehuss, *Familie, Frau und Gesellschaft. Studien zur Strukturgeschichte in Westdeutschland 1945–1950* (Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 2001), 38–41.

[4] These figures exclude Berlin, which had the highest divorce rates. See Elizabeth D. Heineman, *What Difference Does a Husband Make? Women and Marital Status in Nazi and Postwar Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1999), 122–23 (see also Appendix, fig. A.3, p. ?). For Berlin, see Annette F. Timm, *The Politics of Fertility in Twentieth-Century Berlin New York* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 227–56.

[5] Hester Vaizey, *Surviving Hitler's War: Family Life in Germany, 1939–48* (Houndsmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 1–35, 85.

[6] Heineman, *What Difference does a Husband Make*, 108–75, 327–28; Dagmar Herzog, *Sex After Fascism: Memory and Morality in Tweniteh-Century Germany* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 65–100.

Drawing upon the pages of *Liebe und Ehe* and a sample of fourteen love letters written by an Austrian policeman in 1951 to a nurse, this article explores the social realities and emotional economies that heterosexual men in Austria and West Germany confronted after World War II. Early postwar narratives of former soldiers not only reveal shifting relations and conflicts between the sexes, but they also hint at the restoration of traditional gender roles in West Germany and Austria, as Frank Biess and Svenja Goltermann have shown for returning soldiers and POWs.[7] The reestablishment of Austrian and West German manhood was based to a great extent on the promotion of the industrious breadwinner and head of household.[8] Indeed, in the war's aftermath, a shift occurred within what sociologist Raewyn Connell has called "hegemonic masculinities," which are culturally shared and the socially most accepted and valorized forms of masculinities.[9] Yet, the cases detailed on the pages of *Liebe und* Ehe complicate this picture, showing how reluctantly certain men conformed to these new guidelines of heterosexual domesticity. Probing the contours of emergent postwar masculinities further reveals the long-term impact of Nazi gender norms. Hence, a close reading of the candid discussions of male heteronormative sexuality in *Liebe und Ehe,* as well as the correspondence between lovers, shines new light on the ways in which defeat and postwar reconstruction concurrently jeopardized *and* corroborated male gender identities in Austria and West Germany.

Seldom did a print medium so openly embrace the contingency of heterosexual masculinity as *Liebe und Ehe* did. The publisher, F. Decker Verlag, which specialized in nonfiction works about sex and sexuality, launched *Liebe und Ehe* as a monthly magazine in December 1949 and ceased its publication at the beginning of 1951.[10] *Liebe und Ehe* was available across Germany for purchase or subscription to adults (sale to minors was explicitly prohibited) for one deutschmark (DM).[11] Already in the first volume, the magazine invited its readers, who were married couples, lovers, and "healthy abstinents" (*gesund Verzichtende*), to share their experiences freely. "Love and marriage problems will not be resolved by silencing them," the editors emphasized, "but instead by confronting them with courage and candor."[12] This declaration aptly reflected the magazine's mission of tackling contemporary relationship problems through unbiased discussions about sexuality. The goal was to increase the quality of life of postwar couples. Direct contact with the readers was thus a top priority of the magazine. Columns including "Your Worries—Our Advice," "Our Legal Advisor Says," "The Talk," and "Beauty and Health" allowed individuals to direct their questions, sorrows, and

[7]Frank Biess, *Homecomings: Returning POWs and the Legacies of Defeat in Postwar Germany* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 2006), 85–152. See also Svenja Goltermann, *Die Gesellschaft der Überlebenden. Deutsche Kriegsheimkehrer und ihre Gewalterfahrungen im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Munich: DVA, 2009), 47–94.

[8]Ernst Hanisch was one of the first to establish a typology of (Austrian) masculinities conceptualizing the *Berufsmensch*, or *Homo Faber*. See Ernst Hanisch, *Männlichkeiten. Eine andere Geschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2005), 353–84; see also Robert G. Moeller, "Heimkehr ins Vaterland: Die Remaskulinisierung Westdeutschlands in den fünfziger Jahren," *Militärgeschichtliche Zeitschrift* 60, no. 2 (2001): 403–36.

[9]R. W. Connell, "The Social Organization of Masculinity," in *Masculinities*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 67–86 [originally published in 1995].

[10]The Decker Verlag published the German edition of the Kinsey Report. See C. Kallwitz, *Das Sexualleben des Mannes, nach den Ergebnissen des Kinsey-Reports* (Regensburg: F. Decker Verlag für Sexual-Literatur, 1951).

[11]Initiated by the Americans and concomitantly introduced by the Western allies, the currency reform replaced the reichsmark with the deutschmark on June 20, 1948.

[12]*Liebe und Ehe* 1 (1949): 1.

concerns to experts who, in turn, offered legal, medical, and sociological advice. As a result, the columns in *Liebe und Ehe* provide rich insight into the intimate experiences of the German and Austrian publics.

Yet, as a source, *Liebe und Ehe* presents several challenges for historians. Scholars cannot always verify the authenticity of published testimonies or journalistic accounts. It is therefore often hard to tell if the columns in *Liebe und Ehe* reflected lived experience or pulp fiction. Historians of the early modern period have long challenged the assumption that a source's value can be determined only through an analysis of its factuality.[13] After examining pardon tales in sixteenth-century France, Natalie Zemon Davis concluded that the heuristic interest lay precisely not in truth telling per se, but rather in the "truth status" a narrative enjoyed in a larger society.[14] Similarly, a discourse analysis and thorough contexualization of colums published in *Liebe und Ehe* may lay bare a flurry of fantasy and considerable self-stylization in the reader's letters. Yet, if the readership engaged in discussion about what they read there, they,may have found the stories selected by the editors sufficiently credible and authentic to be able to relate to and identify with them.

Similar to other media that published private experiences, *Liebe und Ehe* demanded of its readers what Philippe Lejeune calls an "autobiographical pact," i.e., a socially negotiated and mostly implicit agreement between the writers of autobiographical letters-to-the-editor and their readers. Following Lejeune, if the readers of an autobiographical report believe the writer is a credible living person and the problems discussed plausible, they attribute truthfulness to the story.[15] The perceived authenticity of autobiographical narratives is thus the lifeblood of a magazine: it is only under these circumstances that an editorial staff can sell such stories to a wider audience.[16] To that end, the columns of *Liebe und Ehe* reflect a collective social consciousness of shared (post)war experiences.

## To Have and to Hold? Narratives of Divorce and Breakups

Let us return to the unhappy husband from *Liebe und Ehe*. The separation from his wife was long and painful. It began with his homecoming in July 1945 and only ended on a May evening in 1947, when he found the apartment they shared partially cleared out by his wife. "Before she left me, I noticed that I had been abnormally tired for several evenings," he confessed to the magazine, "She pretended to be worried and said: 'Don't bother, why don't you lie down and get some rest?'"[17] A neighbor later told the man that his wife had planned her coup in an unusual manner: she had slipped sleeping pills into his supper in order to pack up unnoticed. Soon after her departure, the wife filed for divorce. This pattern of abandonment and subsequent divorce was common across (West) Germany and Austria.

[13] Most prominently, grievances, petitions of pardon, but also commercial or political reports that aim to be rational and objectif. See Ann Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 15–53.

[14] Natalie Zemon Davis, *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and Their Tellers in 16th-Century France* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987), 5.

[15] Philippe Leujeune, "Le pacte autobiographique," *Poétique*, no. 14 (1973): 137–62.

[16] Peter-Paul Bänziger, *Sex als Problem. Körper und Intimbeziehungen in Briefen an die "Liebe Marta"* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 2010), 103.

[17] *Liebe und Ehe* 1 (1950): 33.

Separate lives and divergent war experiences had loosened the emotional bond between wives and husbands, thus challenging many relationships, as the Protestant magazine *Die Innere Mission* pointed out in 1950.[18] In addition, the realities of defeat and occupation complicated married life considerably. What neither mental health practitioners nor couples anticipated were the interpersonal struggles that developed after the collapse of the Third Reich. As men returned home from war, domestic conflict became the order of the day: "While men's absence had not shattered the ideals of marriage and the nuclear family, a man's presence frequently did," Elizabeth Heineman posits.[19] It is thus little wonder that the men's return to married life spurred a deep crisis that resulted in a veritable tsunami of divorce.[20] Women were not only keen to split from their husbands, but they were also prepared to assume full responsibility for themselves.

The divorce of the abandoned husband from *Liebe und Ehe* is an excellent example of women's willingness to accept responsibility for their well-being, as well as for that of their families. In this case, "malicious abandonment" (*böswilliges Verlassen)* allowed the wife to obtain the divorce she desperately wanted, even if it meant accepting her own culpability in the outcome.[21] Other divorce cases from the Western zones of occupation in 1948 confirm this trend, showing that courts assigned sole guilt for a marriage breakup to men at a decreased rate of 31.1 percent, whereas the burden given to women rose to 23.9 percent.[22] These figures suggest that, for some women, divorce without alimony appeared preferable to marriage. Yet, as the case from *Liebe und Ehe* also shows, some women were financially better off than their husbands and thus perfectly able to support themselves. In fact, this particular woman's lawyer even managed to exculpate her by offering the estranged husband a deal: the wife would not petition for any financial support under the condition that he declare sole responsibility for the divorce. The abandoned husband accepted these provisions. But it was precisely the humiliating feeling of having been "paid off" that later caused the husband considerable anguish. "She runs a business [Praxis] under my family name," he explained in his January 1950 letter to *Liebe und Ehe*, "I eventually plan to remarry and I do not like the fact that two women will bear the same name."[23]

Two years after the divorce, the abandoned husband wrote to *Liebe und Ehe* to inquire whether there were legal grounds for suing his former wife. In the opinion of the magazine's legal advisor, it was too late. The verdict had been legally valid for several years and marriage laws granted the former wife the right to bear her husband's family name for as long as she wished.[24] This response was sobering for the man, especially because the magazine's expert essentially validated the husband's feeling that he had received no justice. Yet, the columnist of *Liebe und Ehe* further argued that the husband should not have accepted the unfavorable deal in the first place because alimony payments were not always required in a no-contest divorce. By stating that such misleading divorce arrangements were quite common, the

[18]Deutsches Zentralinstitut für Soziale Fragen (DZI) 20809, *Die Innere Mission* 3 (1950), quoted by Vaizey, *Surviving Hitler's War*, 83.
[19]Heineman, *What Difference Does a Husband Make*, 108.
[20]Ibid., 119.
[21]"Unser Rechtsberater sagt," *Liebe und Ehe* 1 (1950): 33.
[22]For both figures, see Heineman, *What Difference Does a Husband Make,* 122–23, 291.
[23]*Liebe und Ehe* 1 (1950): 33.
[24]"Ihre Sorge—unser Rat," *Liebe und Ehe* 1 (1950): 34.

legal advisor tried to soften the blow of his evaluation. This was likely little consolation to the inquirer, who left the marriage with nothing.

Another divorce case from 1949 involving a middle-aged university professor, Otto M., revealed a much more self-confident side of wartime and postwar masculinity. Accused of polygamy by his employer, the University of Kiel, the professor faced a disciplinary trial at the district court in Schleswig-Holstein. The case garnered nationwide attention, and sparked vivid interest of *Liebe und Ehe*—and other magazines—because it concerned a *ménage à trois*.[25] Otto M.'s story started in 1928 when he was a twenty-four-year-old doctoral student in biology and became romantically involved with a female colleague. In 1933, the young academics married with an agreement that he could pursue extramarital relations with other women. After five years of marriage and the birth of two children, Otto M., now a professor, started to date his research assistant, Fräulein D. The liaison became serious and he and his wife invited the young woman to join their household. It appears that, "as a biologist," Otto M.'s spouse fully supported her husband's polygamous desires.[26] Pregnant for the third time, the professor's wife even took Fräulein D. to a fertility specialist when she had difficulty conceiving.

The wife's approval for what she framed as her husband's biological "needs" read like an example *par excellence* of Nazi fertility politics, which extoled polygamy in combination with fecundity. Indeed, the journalist in *Liebe und Ehe* emphasized that the couple's intimate social circle admired Otto M.'s first wife for her selflessness: "All three of them lived in a harmonious marriage triangle."[27] When the professor's mistress finally gave birth to their first child in November 1941, Otto M. immediately took legal steps to recognize the baby as his legitimate child. He insisted on adding explicitly to the birth certificate that the child was of a different mother who shared the same household with him and his legal wife, in what they called a "communal marriage" (*Gemeinschaftsehe*).[28] At the registry office, the professor told the authorities that his primary motivation was to father many healthy "Aryan" children for the state. By the time *Liebe und* Ehe ran its story in January 1950, the birth of his ninth child was imminent.[29]

The professor's polygamous relationship serves as an interesting example of the German private and public reception of Nazi sexual politics. Initially his behavior caused little problem under the Nazi legal code, which officially prohibited polygamy (§8 of the marriage code).[30] After all, the regime's relatively liberal and heterosexual-friendly politics marked a decisive distinction from the Christian bourgeois *Weltanschauung* of the German empire and the Weimar Republic, as Dagmar Herzog has pointed out.[31] Although his views on marriage were not especially common, Otto M.'s position on procreation perfectly conformed to

[25] Helmut Meißner, "Das Problem der Dreiecksehe," *Liebe und Ehe* 1 (1950): 6; idem, "Das Problem der Dreiecksehe," *Liebe und Ehe* 7 (1950): 16. See also "Professor Moritz versuchte die Ehe zu Dritt," and "Zwischen Tragödie und Komödie. Walter von Hollander zum Fall Professor Moritz," *Stern*, Nov. 29, 1949; "Fräulein Duggen ausziehen," *Der Spiegel*, Nov. 3, 1949.

[26] *Liebe und Ehe* 1 (1950): 6.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Landesarchiv Schleswig, Personalakten Professor Dr. Otto M, Abt. 47 Acc. 16/08, Nr. 102/2.

[30] *Gesetz zur Vereinheitlichung des Rechts der Eheschließung und der Ehescheidung im Landes Österreichs und im übrigen Reichsgebiet,* 6.7.1938, RGBl. I, 807.

[31] Herzog, *Sex after Fascism,* 80.

Heinrich Himmler's pronatalist and antibourgeois ideology.[32] Already in 1935, the chief of the police and SS had begun to promote extramaterial relations by creating *Lebensborn*, a. program that encompassed SS-run maternity wards and mother-and-child homes for unwed mothers, many of whom were the mistresses of SS commanders.[33] Soon after the invasion of Poland in September 1939, Himmler publically called for children born out of wedlock, to serve the purposes of Nazi population policies.[34] The professor's case reveals that Himmler's reproductive ideologies were not merely theoretical, but also practiced in everyday life—and that they were appealing, at least temporarily, to Otto M. and the two women. More important, this example further suggests, that the capacity to father and bear healthy children was highly valorizing and motivational for Otto M. After all, meeting the National Socialism's eugenic and racial criteria was a tangible way to experience the empowerment of inclusionary racism.[35]

Yet, Otto M.'s case also shows that this ideology did not have universal or even widespread support. When the professor, his legal wife, and his common-law wife approached Nazi health authorities again in 1943 to have a second child born out of wedlock legally recognized, officials only reluctantly agreed. In 1944, the university formally asked the professor to leave one of the two women and lead a more conventional monogamous lifestyle. Otto M. chose to stay with Fräulein D. and filed for divorce from his first wife, only to get trapped in legal red tape. He likely expected the court render a quick decision on his divorce case, thus allowing him to profit from recent legislation on the dissolution of marriages: in July 1938, the Nazis had liberalized the divorce law in Germany and the *Reich* at large by introducing the "principle of irretrievable breakdown" (*Ehezerrüttungsprinzip*) as grounds for marriage dissolution.[36] In particular, they established §55 to permit divorces to "undesirable" couples or unsatisfactory marriages, especially if one of the spouses was likely to start a new family or have more "racially healthy" children.

It appears, however, that the regional court of appeals did not accept the justification of estrangement as sufficient grounds for divorce, especially because the professor's legal wife had requested the reestablishment of their monogamous marriage. Otto M. refused. He wanted to keep his word to his second wife and argued, further, that it was impossible to chase her from their domicile in times of "great housing and food shortage."[37] The struggles

[32] Heinrich Himmler started a serious relationship with his secretary Hedwig Potthast in December 1938, and deliberately decided in 1940 to have children with what he called his "second wife." Rudolf Heß also put pronatalism before marriage. See Peter Longerich, *Akten der Partei-Kanzlei der NSDAP. Rekonstruktion eines verlorengegangenen Bestandes*, Bd. 3: *Akten der Partei-Kanzlei der NSDAP* (Berlin: De Gruyter/Saur, 2015), 206; idem, *Heinrich Himmler Biographie* (Munich: Siedler, 2008), 346, 365–95. See also Katrin Himmler, Michael Wildt, eds., *The Private Heinrich Himmler: Letters of a Mass Murderer* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2016), 10–11.

[33] Timm, *Politics of Fertility*, 80–117; Georg Lilienthal, *Der „Lebensborn e.V." Ein Instrument nationalsozialistischer Rassenpolitik* (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer, 2008), 131–59.

[34] In his *Kinderzeugungsbefehl* ("edict to procreate"), Himmler called on SS men to enter into a second marriage and have children—without dissolving the first marriage and with the first wife keeping all her legal rights. See the *SS-Befehl für die gesamte SS und Polizei, Berlin* (Oct. 28, 1939), in Heinrich Himmler, *Geheimreden 1933 bis 1945 und andere Ansprachen,* ed. Agnes F. Peterson and Bradley F. Smith (Berlin: Propyläen, 1974), 116.

[35] Timm, *Politics of Fertility,* 14–21.

[36] *Gesetz zur Vereinheitlichung des Rechts der Eheschließung und der Ehescheidung im Lande Österreich und im übrigen Reichsgebiet,* 6.7.1938, RGBl. I (1938), 807–23.

[37] *Liebe und Ehe* 1 (1950): 6.

of the civilian population in northern Germany in the wake of Western Allied bombing raids in 1944 did not change the court's mind, however.[38] As Michelle Mouton has pointed out, Nazi civil law was, by no means, applied uniformly. Instead, the outcome of a divorce trial depended heavily on the perceptions and moods of the judges, the views of whom often floated between Nazi ideology and traditional Christian values.[39] Clearly, the jury that evaluated the evidence in the professor's divorce case seemed to have held on to conventional family values.

Consequently, the trio and their five children continued to live under the same roof, which was now split into two separate households. Otto M. nevertheless stubbornly clung to what he perceived to be his legal right. On January 24, 1945, he even submitted a formal request to the Reich Security Main Office to allow him to maintain the status quo.[40] The outcome of Otto M.'s petition is unknown, likely because it got caught up in the turbulence of the final phase of the war. But this was not the end of Otto M.'s legal troubles.

In 1946, the University of Kiel filed another lawsuit against its obstinate professor, which led to a reexamination of the previous court case against him. The jury rebuked the professor's behavior. In their opinion, not only had Otto M. placed both women in a situation of severe moral and psychological strain, but he had also violated Art. 6 of the Basic Law protecting marriage and the family. His living situation thus transgressed the essential obligations of a high-ranking civil servant. As a result, the professor was temporarily suspended from his position, and his pension reduced by 60 percent for two years. His defense counsel, a "renowned female lawyer from Hamburg," interpreted the details of the case differently from the way the court did, and filed an appeal.[41] One of her main arguments was that, as a scientist, the professor had carried out on himself an "experiment that required considerable personal responsibility." She stated, furthermore, that he could not be accused of licentiousness since he openly did what others did secretly. On the contrary, she concluded, the professor had tried to "work constructively on a solution to the problem of the surplus of women."[42]

The professor's lawyer cleverly drew here upon a popular and very controversial contemporary debate on demography. The first issue of *Liebe und Ehe* conducted a survey that asked readers: "What is your opinion about the surplus of women?" According to the magazine, West Germany had 21 percent more women than men at the end of 1949, which correlated to approximately six million "surplus" women.[43] Postwar demography was of little concern to the professor, however: his lifestyle and his understanding of marriage were influenced instead more by political beliefs and justified by Nazi ideology. It thus comes as little surprise

[38] On the experiences of bombing raids in Germany, see Dietmar Süß, *Tod aus der Luft. Kriegsgesellschaft und Luftkrieg in Deutschland und England* (Munich: Sielder, 2011), 319–482.

[39] Michelle Mouton, *From Nurturing the Nation to Purifying the Volk: Weimar and Nazi Family Policy, 1918–1945* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 86–87.

[40] Landesarchiv Schleswig, Abt. 47 Nr. 6864, Schreiben SS-Hauptsturmführer Dr. Fischer, Berlin, Jan. 24, 1945.

[41] *Liebe und Ehe* 1 (1950): 6

[42] Ibid.

[43] "Was halten sie vom Frauenüberschuss?," *Liebe und Ehe* 1 (1949): 13; see also *Liebe und Ehe* 1 (1950): 30; *Liebe und Ehe* 2 (1950): 10. Atina Grossmann refers to a 1945 census that reported an overall population of 2,600,000, of which 60 percent were women. See Atina Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies. Close Encounters in Occupied Germany* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 2.

that he was reluctant to give up his patriarchal authority and sexual privileges. The seventh issue of *Liebe und Ehe* in 1950 includes a short postscript to Otto M.'s legal case. By July 1950, the professor had successfully divorced his first wife, and was about to marry Fräulein D.[44] Although the professor ultimately complied with state law and bourgeois moral standards, he was not willing to accede quietly. Instead, he filed a lawsuit against the University of Kiel, hoping to return immediately to his position. This particular lawsuit was ultimately successful, and the university reinstated Otto M. to his professorship in July 1951.[45]

The divorce cases of the abandoned husband and polygamous professor reveal the multifaceted and unpredictable nature of gendered (post)war power relations. On the one hand, the abandoned husband should, statistically, have profited from the numerically favorable position of German men in light of the "surplus" of women. Instead, he found himself in a weak and disadvantaged position. On the other hand, the professor's case shines a light on Nazi Germany's laissez-faire politics in matters of "Aryan" and heterosexual sex—with regard to adultery, illegitimate children, or polygamy—and on the ways in which German authorities rejected these attitudes after 1945. Among the extant issues of *Liebe und Ehe,* there are few responses to the professor's story. The fact that it did not provoke much reaction or discussion on the part of the magazine's readership is thus equally significant because it suggests that Otto M.'s situation might not have been that extraordinary or novel after all. Reading through the pages *of Liebe and Ehe* suggests that more intimate accounts, such as first-hand experiences about sensitive topics like sexual dysfunction garnered more attention from the magazine's readers.

## Homecomings/Shortcomings: Addressing Male Sexual Dysfunction

Male sterility and childlessness featured prominently on the pages of *Liebe und Ehe*, which was remarkable given that medical science and public understanding rarely conceptualized infertility as a man's problem at the time.[46] Following Peter-Paul Bänziger, "Sexual potency, whatever people concretely understand by it, was and still is regarded as the essential property of manhood."[47] Men's careful attention to the proper functioning of their genitals and virile performance—sometimes with the assistance of doctors or drugs—is a crucial part of their gender identity and at the core of their "care of self," to use Michel Foucault terminology.[48] Far from being rational or fully individualistic, these individual practices are products of their larger cultural and social contexts, for these men generally aim to attain a state of well-being and perfection defined by gender norms, politics, and society.

[44] *Liebe und Ehe* 7 (1950): 16.

[45] Landesarchiv Schleswig, Abt. 47 Nr. 6864, Abschrift Urteil Dienstkammerstrafverfahren gegen Otto M, July 20, 1951.

[46] Atina Grossmann, *Reforming Sex: The German Movement for Birth Control and Abortion Reform, 1920–1950* (Oxford: Oxford Univerity Press, 1995), 46–77, 189–216; Timm, *Politics of Fertility*, 80–156, 227–56.

[47] Drawing upon reader's letters addressed to the popular sexual consultant and columnist Marta Emmenegger, the Swiss historian concluded that, in the 1980s and 1990s, male and female readers still disproportionately mentioned problems related to the sexual health of women more often than male sexual health issues. See Bänziger, *Sex als Problem,* 130.

[48] Ibid., 129; Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 3: *The Care of Self,* trans. Robert Hureley (London: Penguin 1988); idem, *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, ed. Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman, and Patrick H. Hutton (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 16–49.

Potency and male fertility are powerful tools in the negotiation of a distinctly male and hegemonic position, as the autobiographical account of a fifty-three-year-old former captain of the *Luftwaffe* vividly suggests. *Liebe und Ehe* published his story in the column "A Man Asks the Doctors" in the February 1950 issue. When the war started, the captain had a comfortable life. Married since 1929 to a twenty-nine-year-old woman, he was a father of two and worked as a sales representative for a big German company. "For many years my income was never under 4000 reichsmarks per month," he proudly stated, "My marriage was happy and harmonic."[49] This came to a sudden end when the captain's plane crashed in September 1939 during the invasion of Poland, making him lose both of his testicles. Although he physically recovered from his injuries—his penis had remained intact—this man, who considered himself to be a "totally sensual being," struggled to accept his new condition.[50]

Once the captain was finally able to enjoy leave at his family home, he instantly informed his spouse about his physical situation. "At the time, this did not bother her," he explained, "she was, in any case, a much more modest erotic being than I was." His wife's understanding came, however, as little relief to the injured captain, who still worried about his sexual performance as a result of the two missing testicles. To his utter surprise, sexual intercourse was still possible without any difficulties. "I still fully had my old sensation," he happily realized. Ever the realist, however, the captain wanted to forestall potential future difficulties and proposed divorce: "[I] did not want to bind my fairly young wife to myself, since I considered myself to be the living dead."[51] Once again, she stood by him and declined the offer. Yet, despite having a sympathetic wife and a relatively normal marital sex life, this man in his forties—which he implicitly considered "his best years"—nevertheless considered himself to be an "incomplete man."[52]

Constitutional medicine in the 1920s, with its holistic approach, had indeed emphasized that the body, particularly sex glands, influenced the mind and thus formed the quintessence of manhood. According to April Trask, sexual prowess constituted the new ideal embodiment of a healthy patriarchal German masculinity.[53]German interwar discourses heavily praised endocrine procedures, glandular therapies, and testicular surgery as adequate solutions to redefine and revitalize war-weary men. By emphasizing gonads so much—historian Chandak Sengoopta has referred to the 1920s as the "decade of the testicle"—politicians and sexual scientists codified a new, hypersexualized gender norm.[54]

Yet, in order to understand better the captain's emotional despair, one must situate him within his broader professional context. The captain, as readers later learned, had already served as a volunteer in the *Fliegertruppe,* the nascent German air force, during World War I.[55] Assignment to the *Luftwaffe* in 1939 represented another promotion for the

[49] *Liebe und Ehe* 2 (1950): 4–6.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid.
[53] April Trask, "Remaking Men: Masculinity, Homosexuality and Constitutional Medicine in Germany, 1914–1933," *German History* vol. 36, no. 2 (2018): 181–206, 182.
[54] Chandak Sengoopta, *The Most Secret Quintessence of Life: Sex, Glands, and Hormones, 1850–1950* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 85.
[55] *Liebe und Ehe* 7 (1950): 27; Peter Fritzsche, *A Nation of Fliers: German Aviation and the Popular Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992).

captain because it was considered to be Nazi Germany's most prestigious branch of the military. Pilots in dapper uniforms were the new heroes, stylized by Nazi propaganda as a sort of German "incarnation of the Nazi superman."[56] Being removed so early from action during an extremely successful campaign must have been hard for him to bear. The accident was even more unfortunate, for the German public had met the campaign in Poland and the *Blitz* on Western Europe with general euphoria, a sentiment upon which the regime had capitalized.[57] Yet, the captain's injury and situation likely made it difficult for him to share such sentiments.

Instead, the injured man was introspective and plagued by one concern: how to hide the consequences of his accident. After returning to duty behind the front, the captain witnessed the suicide of a twenty-one-year-old pilot who suffered from injuries similar to his. The mental stress caused by "relentless teasing" from fellow soldiers factored into the young man's decision to take his own life. Yet, whereas the young lieutenant's disability was well-known, the captain somehow managed to keep his own testicular injury a secret—going to great lengths to ensure that his impairment remained invisible to his comrades: "I had silver replacement testicles implanted so that my handicap would not be noticed by unauthorized eyes during sports, showering, and medical visits."[58]

It is significant that the captain's very first surgical measure did not involve increasing his sexual prowess but was instead purely cosmetic in nature, in an effort to preserve his "manly" identity and self-esteem. The captain suspected that his deficiency could expose and considerably weaken his social position within the homosocial space of the German army. It was therefore vital to hide his disability and to maintain a sexually intact appearance in front of his comrades. The plastic surgery was thus purely a reaction to peer pressure and addressed to a male audience. The surgical intervention did not spare him psychological strain, however: assigned to a noncombatant unit in rural occupied France, the captain fell into a deep depression, which was followed by divorce and several suicide attempts.[59] Already during the Great War, the Viennese physiologist Eugen Steinach, a staunch endocronologist, had diagnosed heavy psychological disturbances on the part of soldiers who had lost both testicles.[60] But there was also a more social and political explanation for the captain's state of mind. Since the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, soldiers struggled with the relative idleness of the occupation in France. Many of them felt excluded and frustrated since the "real" war was being fought in the East.[61]

Yet, the war that had caused the captain such anguish also lifted him out of his darkness, for an "enemy" woman played a significant role in getting the life of the forty-three-year-old

[56] Matthias Rogg, "Die Luftwaffe im NS-Propagandafilm," in *Krieg und Militär im Film des 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Bernhard Chiari, Matthias Rogg, and Wolfgang Schmidt (Oldenbourg: De Gruyter 2003), 343–48; see also Stefanie Schüler-Springorum, "Flying and Killing: Military Masculinity in German Pilot Literature, 1914–1939," in *Home/Front: The Military, War and Gender in Twentieth-Century Germany*, ed. Karen Hagemann and Stefanie Schüler-Springorum (Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 2002), 205–32.

[57] See, e.g., the 1941 action movie and blockbuster *STUKAS*, an UFA production by Karl Ritter.

[58] *Liebe und Ehe* 2 (1950): 4.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Eugen Steinach, *Sex and Life: Forty Years of Biological and Medical Experiments* (New York: Viking Press, 1940), 75. See Trask, "Remaking Men," 4–6.

[61] Frank Werner, "Es ist alles verkehrt in der Welt." Agnes und Albert Neuhaus: Eine Ehe als Leistungsgemeinschaft im Krieg," in *Geschlechterbeziehungen und "Volksgemeinschaft,"* ed. Klaus Latzel, Elissa Mailänder, and Franka Maubach (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2018), 175–96.

former pilot back on track. Raymonde, a well-connected, wealthy, thirty-four-year-old French widow taught him to enjoy life again—first as a friend, then as a lover. "This splendid woman gave me back my *joie de vivre*, my courage and optimism," he rhapsodized.[62] The renewed confidence in his virility also bolstered the captain's professional and personal life, with his career taking off again as his relationship with the French mistress became ever more fulfilling. But this may not have been the only explanation: what really seemed to have made the difference for his well-being was another testicular surgery. Raymonde introduced the captain to a surgeon, who implanted living testicles in him with positive results. "Now everything really fell into place, as I even managed to ejaculate," he happily reported.[63] Just as in Germany, French sexual scientists had developed endocrine experimentation, and already before the Great War, Dr. Serge Voronoff had been well known in Paris for his hormonal treatments, as well for the transplants he performed on animals and later on humans.[64]

This second surgery demonstrates that the captain's concerns were no longer just a question of virile "looks," but instead a genuine desire to enhance his sexual performance. The purpose of this testicular surgical intervention was clearly not procreation, since it did not reverse the captain's sterility. This was likely of little consequence to the captain's mistress, however: the French mothers of children born to German fathers were effectively social pariahs during and after the war.[65] But the fact that the captain put such emphasis on his reacquired ability to ejaculate demonstrates the extent to which this man desired what he perceived to be a "normal" sex life—an attitude that reflected the gendered penis-vagina penetrative sex script, whereby a man's sexual prowess relies on his orgasm, visually confirmed by ejaculation.[66] Since it was Raymonde who had initiated this "improvement," it seems that this normative sex script was equally important to her. Yet, the positive effects of a surgical intervention that made him feel "more complete" disappeared within less than a year: his body subsequently rejected the implants, and the captain lamented once again that "sexual intercourse was still possible, but, like before, without ejaculation."[67] In addition, the sexual performance demanded a tremendous effort of "concentrated will" from his side, a price he was willing to pay in order not to deceive this woman he had grown very fond of.[68] It seems that the captain's "care of self" was not only meant to comply with heteronormative ideals of virility, but also, in part, to gratify his lover.

This "heterosexual matrix" (Judith Butler) has a particular Nazi twist, however: National Socialism conceived of German soldiers as hypersexualized warriors and conquerors.[69]

[62] *Liebe und Ehe* 2 (1950): 5.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Serge Voronoff, *Vivre: étude des moyens de relever l'énergie vitale et de prolonger la vie* (Paris: Grasset, 1920); see also Serge Voronoff, *La Greffe testiculaire du singe à l'homme. Technique opératoire, manifestations physiologiques, évolution histologique, statistique* (Paris: Doin, 1930), 69–80. I thank Cyrille Jean for having brought Voronoff's work to my attention.

[65] Fabrice Virgili, *Naître ennemi. Les enfants de couples franco-allemands nés pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale* (Paris: Payot, 2009), 98–142, 171–90, 249–316.

[66] Bänziger, *Sex als Problem*, 196; Seila M. Rothman and David J. Rothman, *The Pursuit of Perfection: The Promise and Perils of Medical Enhancement* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2003).

[67] *Liebe und Ehe* 2 (1950): 5.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 2007), 9–10, 30–31; Mühlhäuser, *Eroberungen*, 30–47; Thomas Kühne, *The Rise and Fall of Comradeship: Hitler's Soldiers, Male Bonding and Mass Violence in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2017), 1–14.

During World War II, German military experts hypostasized male heterosexual activity as the basis for physical vigor and combat spirit.[70] Unlike its other European or American counterparts, the *Wehrmacht* attempted to accommodate the alleged hyperlibidinous male. From the outset of the war, *Wehrmacht* officials sought to make sex "safe" for German soldiers through military-run brothels and prophylactic measures that included postcoital sanitary stations (*Sanierungsstationen*) and the distribution of free condoms.[71] Regina Mühlhäuser has suggested that the military authorities thereby *created* an environment of licentiousness toward sexual violence.[72].From this viewpoint, the captain's affair was perfectly in line with the regime's sexual policies and with the behavior of his fellow comrades.

The war eventually caught up with the captain and Raymonde when he was redeployed to Germany in early 1944. The couple postponed their wedding plans. They ultimately lost touch. In 1950, the captain, after several attempts to reach out to her, presumed his French fiancée to be dead.[73] It is much more plausible, though, that the violent reprisals against French women accused of having slept with German soldiers had forced this bourgeois woman to distance herself from a highly compromising lover.[74] The captain, too, was busy at the time getting his life back on track.

After returning to Germany, just in time to miss Operation Overlord, the captain again became absorbed with his health and sexual problems. He desperately craved "harmonious companionship with women."[75] A surgeon friend recommended hormonal injections, which the captain initially declined because he did not want "anything artificial."[76] By the end of 1944, however, he reconsidered that option. The now forty-seven-year-old captain started dating a twenty-five-year-old woman from northern Germany, supposedly from Hamburg. "For me she represented the ideal woman I had always longed for and dreamed of," he proudly explained in his letter to *Liebe und Ehe*: "She was an adorable, very feminine woman."[77] One might think that this "extremely shy" and sexually inexperienced woman, who was supposedly "totally inaccessible for erotic talk," could finally put an end to the captain's quest for impeccable sexual performance.[78] Yet, the reality was quite the

[70] See, e.g., Bundesarchiv Berlin Lichterfelde, NS7 – 267, Dr. Joachim Rost, "Sexuelle Probleme im Felde", *Medizinische Welt*, no. 15/16 (1944): 2–6.

[71] What the *Wehrmacht* was most concerned about were not moral issues such as adultery, but rather the medical safety of its soldiers and their families, as well as the prevention of unwanted pregnancies with enemy women judged to be racially "inferior." See Insa Meinen, *Wehrmacht und Prostitution während des Zweiten Weltkriegs im besetzten Frankreich* (Bremen: Edition Temmen, 2002); Mühlhäuser, *Eroberungen*, 175–239, 317–31; Maren Röger, *Kriegsbeziehungen: Intimität, Gewalt und Prostitution im besetzten Polen 1939 bis 1945* (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer, 2015), 27–58, 75–167.

[72] Regina Mühlhäuser, "Reframing Sexual Violence as a Weapon and Strategy of War: The Case of the German *Wehrmacht* during the War and Genocide in the Soviet Union, 1941–1944," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 26, no. 3 (2017): 366–401. Historians have calculated that two hundred thousand children were born from consensual or enforced relationships between French women and German men over the entire occupation period. See Dagmar Herzog, *Sexuality in Europe: A Twentieth-Century History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 90.

[73] *Liebe und Ehe* 2 (1950): 5.

[74] Fabrice Virgili, *Shorn Women: Gender and Punishment in Liberation France* (Oxford: Berg, 2002), 75–112.

[75] *Liebe und Ehe* 2 (1950): 5.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Ibid.

opposite: the young woman's beauty and youth not only reinvigorated the captain's self-esteem and manhood, but also revived his sexual prowess.

Yet, these needs became seemingly more pronounced because of the captain's precarious financial situation.. Formerly a successful businessman and officer, he was now destitute at almost age fifty. Taking stock, he summarized his situation in *Liebe und Ehe*: "For me, everything was over, my marriage broken up, the fruit of twenty years of successful work gone, my manhood lost. I was miserable, lonely, and without a living."[79] He started to work the black market, presumably in Hamburg. What sounded like another capricious, self-absorbed adventure was, in fact, a desperate attempt to survive amid postwar famine and denazification.[80] The only person who could cheer him up in this tricky situation was the "little woman" from northern Germany. And, as had been the case with his French mistress, the captain was eager to please her sexually.

It thus comes as little surprise that, even under economically difficult conditions, the captain's overriding concern was reigniting his sex life. He successfully enhanced once again his sexual performance with hormonal injections, regaining his confidence and some measure of agency. "Our love nights were very happy," the captain continued, "In my arms this lovely little woman grew into a conscious sensual being," he continued, further regaling the readers of *Liebe und Ehe* about their exploits with self-congratulatory statements.[81] Yet, aware that his braggadocio might exasperate some, the captain hastily added: "I only describe this so extensively in order to give an accurate account of the curative effect of the hormonal injections."[82] There is little doubt, however, that the captain used his letters to *Liebe und Ehe* as a way to bolster his self-esteem, not herald the benefits of hormonal injections.

What the captain nevertheless admitted to "his" readers in *Liebe und Ehe* was that he had failed to divulge his infertility to the "little woman." According to him, the memories of "the painful experience" with his former wife loomed large.[83] At almost fifty, the captain still likely saw his infertility a serious danger to his manhood, especially in relation to a woman in her twenties. The fact that her family and friends did not approve the relationship because of the age gap may have further encouraged him to withhold that information.[84] Yet, despite these obstacles, the couple seemed to enjoy a fairly happy life, with romantic trips and a full sex life, but no concrete plans for the future. This changed when the captain's "little woman" turned thirty and their considerable age difference started to concern her seriously as well, wanting to marry and have children with a younger man. But the age difference and family planning were not the only considerations hurting the relationship. Economic differences started to weigh heavily on the couple's happiness as well. As a result of the 1948 currency reform, the woman's family-run grocery store began to flourish. By contrast, the black market, where the captain was making his money, crashed, as formerly stockpiled merchandise suddenly filled shop windows.[85] The crash jeopardized the captain's hopes of

[79] Ibid.

[80] For a general overview, and a case study of Berlin, see Paul Steege, *Black Market, Cold War: Everyday Life in Berlin, 1946–1949* (New York: Cambridge University Press 2007).

[81] *Liebe und Ehe* 2 (1950): 5.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Ibid.

[85] Werner Abelshauser, *Deutsche Wirtschaftsgeschichte. Von 1945 bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2011), 126–29.

making enough money to become a serious suitor. In 1949, after four years together, the young women suddenly ended their relationship, along with his wedding plans. The breakup was hard to bear for the fifty-three-year-old. "Now everything is desolate," he bemoaned, "I feel lonelier now than I ever have in my life."[86] This was precisely the moment when he put pen to paper and sought the advice of *Liebe und Ehe*.

The captain's testimony garnered considerable attention and sympathy from female readers. "Does the search for a man, in whose economic advancement one can trust, show that you probably are 'the best man,' but not the right man, for this woman?" one reader asked.[87] Another female reader confessed to having been "utterly distressed" by the captain's report, because a friend's husband had suffered the same injuries. "Since then, I've known what this type of injury must mean to men," she sympathized. What she admired most was the captain's fighting spirit: "That is so beautiful and manly, a man through and through," she confessed, "I can only congratulate him on this."[88] The female readers encouraged the captain to undergo further hormonal treatments.

But not all of the reactions were empathetic or even sympathetic. In the column "The Talk," a certain Dr. Breschke castigated the captain. "What you told us about your life does not speak in your favor," Breschke vented, "Can't you retrieve deeper meaning from your life by educating your children from your first marriage to be honest and productive people?"[89] Unable to understand why the captain could not get any satisfaction from his family duties and work, Breschke provocatively asked: "Do you want anything else out of life besides pleasure."[90] The captain's obsession with his genitalia and with sexual pleasure clearly annoyed the doctor, who deemed him a "reckless go-getter" (*Draufgänger*) and "egoist par excellence" (*Egoist von reinstem Wasser*).[91]

In Breschke's eyes, the captain's lack of responsibility also disqualified the former pilot from honorable military manliness. What bothered him most was that the captain had led a fairly comfortable life in France during the war, while millions of German soldiers were dying on the Eastern Front. "Can't you see what grief, pain, and suffering people have to endure nowadays, how this crazy war brought indescribable internal and external distress?" he exhorted him with obvious rage. "And then you have the courage to fill two-and-a-half pages of a serious journal with your oh-so-awful fate!"[92]

The captain's black market activities were another point that greatly incensed Dr. Breschke. "You enjoyed life to the fullest," he scolded: "Until the outbreak of the war your income was higher than the salary of a minister; during the war you spent four years behind the frontlines, and after the war you earned money 'on the side.'"[93] For Breschke, the captain's selfish attitude had discredited him as unmanly, for he apparently lacked the key qualities of "true" manhood: responsibility, honesty, and hard work for the sake of the family and the general welfare of society. "Nowhere, not even between the lines, do you write about the noteworthy deeds you have accomplished in your life, something

[86] *Liebe und Ehe* 2 (1950): 6.
[87] *Liebe und Ehe* 7 (1950): 26–27.
[88] Ibid.
[89] *Liebe und Ehe* 5 (1950): 25.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Ibid.
[92] Ibid., 26.
[93] Ibid.

that could entitle you to public attention," Breschke concluded.[94] The captain's reaction to this attack was sheer indignation. "How abominable! You are an academic," he exclaimed in his counterattack: "I could only understand your letter if you were a priest by vocation, [or] if you were abstinent out of inner conviction."[95] In the captain's eyes, self-chosen celibacy was an easier cross to bear than his condition.

The heated debate between the captain and Dr. Breschke highlights the clash between two diametrically opposed definitions of masculinity, both of which claimed a hegemonic position in West German postwar society. The captain embodied military masculinity, even though his open hedonism and self-pity was a distortion of the martial, sexually active, but disciplined warrior-type propagated in Nazi Germany.[96] By contrast, his civilian and academic antagonist, Dr. Breschke, who had also very likely participated in the war, positioned himself as an active member of Germany's postwar reconstruction—and thus as a man of the future. Moreover, the 1950 dispute between Dr. Breschke and the captain illustrated how the hegemonic Nazi masculine norms suddenly had come under attack in public discourse. The oversexed former pilot embodied a predatory warrior masculinity, whereas the austere academic stood for a more pacified masculine type that personified steadiness and moral restraint.

For sure, the beginning of the 1950s marked a shift from the remarkably liberal sexual mores of the immediate postwar era to sexual conservatism.[97] Yet, the vivid support the captain's letter earned from the magazine's female readers also suggests that this type of hyperlibidinous masculinity lingered on even after the establishment of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949. Following sociologist Raewyn Connell, it is part of the game, for there always is "a contest for hegemony between rival versions of masculinities."[98] Rather than a seamless transition, the dialectic of the captain and Breschke exemplified the ways in which masculinities are not fixed entities, but rather shifting social configurations that are deeply rooted in their particular sociopolitical and historical settings.[99]

At closer look, however, the masculinity for which Breschke stood was not that new and it, too, fell directly in line with Nazi ideology. Over twelve years, the regime had heralded the sacrifices of the individual for the *Volksgemeinschaft* (people's community) and called for the protection of the family and the nation.[100] What was new, instead, was that, by positioning himself as a peaceful archetype of masculinity, Breschke implied that he and his fellow Germans had been victims of Adolf Hitler. His stance thus fits in with the rhetoric of

[94] Ibid., 25–26.
[95] Ibid., 27.
[96] Kühne, *Rise and Fall of Comradeship,* 124–28, 174–78.
[97] Herzog, *Sex After Fascism*, 101–7.
[98] R. W. Connell, "Swots and Wimps: The Interplay of Masculinity and Education," *Oxford Review of Education* 15, no. 3 (1989): 295.
[99] Raewyn Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic masculinity: rethinking the concept," *Gender and Society* 19, no. 6 (2005): 836.
[100] Geoff Eley, "The Return of Ideology: Everyday Life, the *Volksgemeinschaft,* and the Nazi Appeal," in *Nazism as Fascism: Violence, Ideology, and the Ground of Consent in Germany 1930–1945* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 59–130. For a general overview, see Bernhard Gotto and Martina Steber, eds., *Visions of Community in Nazi Germany: Social Engineering and Private Lives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Frank Bajohr and Michael Wildt, eds., *Volksgemeinschaft. Neue Forschungen zur Gesellschaft des Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 2009).

postwar German victimization narratives.[101] Moreover, Breschke's response hints at discourses in the 1950s that largely focused on the "amoral" sexual hedonism under Nazism. This was a powerful and convenient strategy, as Dagmar Herzog has convincingly demonstrated, aimed simultaneously at linking hedonism to genocide and divorcing themselves from the recent past.[102]

Yet, the captain's case also highlights the fact that male sexuality does not solely underpin male dominance over women. Although virility and sexual prowess are mechanisms through which male dominance are asserted, they simultaneously imply vulnerability. Heteronormative (self-)expectations expose heterosexual men to considerable pressure, as the case study of a lover's correspondence will show in the next section.

## What Do Men Want? Decoding a Lover's Correspondence

In the spring of 1951, twenty-seven-year-old Marianne began an affair with Hans. Marianne worked as a children's nurse in Klosterneuburg, Lower Austria; Hans served as a policeman in Steinhaus am Semmering, a Styrian village. At a time when telephones were scarce, the lovers relied on letters to bridge the distance that separated them. As a result, their seven-month relationship left material traces from early April and late October 1951, and Marianne's personal papers include fourteen letters from Hans.[103] Unfortunately, Marianne's replies are missing, a recurrent problem encountered in women's history, in part, because of the fact that, unlike men, women tend more often to hold on to correspondence from their husbands and lovers.[104] Marianne's missing voice is nevertheless discernable because she documented her personal life through a considerable trove of private letters, diaries, and photo albums, which cover the Nazi era until her death in 2008. Although fragmentary, Hans and Marianne's correspondence allows readers to probe how a couple negotiated questions of love and sex, and how the two viewed their mutual expectations for a relationship in the wake of war.

Hans and Marianne's relationship by correspondance began with an enthusiastic letter, in which a lovestruck Hans euphorically laid out his feelings for Marianne.[105] At the very end of the letter, he added an interesting postscript: "I will be back on May 1 and will write you again then. Do not worry about the hour of our exhilarating fulfillment, nothing could have happened! *Impossible with me!* [twice underlined by Hans]."[106] The couple, it seems, had had intimate relations and Hans wanted to reassure his sweetheart that there was no risk of getting pregnant.

[101] Robert G. Moeller, *War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 1–50; Biess, "Men of Reconstruction," 335–58; idem, *Homecomings,* 52–69.

[102] Dagmar Herzog, "Sexual Morality in 1960 West Germany," *German History* 23, no. 3 (2005): 371–84. For the link between violence and sexuality, see Mühlhäuser, *Eroberungen*, 28–58, 73–140; Röger, *Kriegsbeziehungen,* 9–26, 169–208.

[103] Institut für Zeitgeschichte (IfZ), Vienna, Sammlung Frauennachlässe (SFN), Nachlass (NL) 147 II.

[104] Ingrid Bauer and Christa Hämmerle, "Liebe und Paarbeziehungen im Zeitalter der Briefe—ein Forschungsprojekt im Kontext," in *Liebe schreiben. Paarkorrespondenzen des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Ingrid Bauer and Christa Hämmerle (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht), 9–47.

[105] It does not clear from the correspondence when and where the two had met.

[106] IfZ, Vienna, SFN, NL 147 II, letter from Hans to Marianne, Steinhaus, April 14, 1951.

After two months and three affectionate letters to his "*beloved little wench*" (*geliebtes Weibi*), Hans once again declared his unconditional love for Marianne. He revealed not only his feelings for her, but also his private situation: "Even though the man on the surface is chained—by social constraints, a piece of paper, and, among other things, moral considerations—my inner self is free," he professed, "it was you who gave me again the gift to love a woman! I am yours in this love, I am your man."[107] Marianne did not immediately reply to Hans's ecstatic declaration of love, but instead waited almost two weeks. Her letter had a pronounced impact on Hans, who enthusiastically shared his joy of being in love, as well as his sexual desire for her.[108] Yet, it appears that Marianne's letter also left lingering questions:

> I am truly happy about your honest words and I wish … that you are always going to be frank with me! … You fear that I expect more of your love for me than you are able to give me. At the same time, you say that you are in love with me, like it never happened before… You do not attach great value to marriage …but you want to love actively and be loved in return; you do not only mean by this physical love but rather a love that manifests and proves itself by the commitment of the whole self, by little and big sacrifices, and by a life together and for each other.[109]

Even though Marianne's letters are not extant, Hans's paraphrasing and interpretation provide the contours of the relationship. This woman, whom Hans calls mature, had a very modern understanding of relationships: her goal was not marriage. In fact, Marianne wanted to maintain her independence. What she desired was a "comradely" (*kameradschaftlich)* relationship between two independent individuals who not only needed love and lust, but who were also ready to face hardship and deprivation together. First promoted in Weimar Germany by both socialists and members of nationalist parties, such as the German National People's Party (Deutschnationale Volkspartei, or DNVP), the concept of companionate marriages and partnerships gained further traction in Nazi Germany because it bolstered a kind of female emancipation based on gender harmony, not conflict.[110] The idea of more equality between the sexes did not, however, completely disappear in Germany in 1933. Instead, suffused with Nordic mythology and antisemitism, it became racialized.[111]

Marianne was not a child of the liberal Weimar Republic, however, but had spent her adolescence under the conservative Austro-fascist regimes of Engelbert Dollfuß and Kurt Schuschnigg and later the Third Reich.[112] Born in 1924 in the small town of Klosterneuburg, Marianne grew up in a middle-class family. Her father worked as an electrical engineer and her mother as a clerk at city hall. Money issues arose for the family following her father's accidental death in 1927. In 1940, at the age of sixteen, Marianne left the *Gymnasium* to train as a midwife at a Lebensborn nursery in Wienerwald, an Austrian

[107] Ibid., letter from Hans to Marianne, Steinhaus, June 11, 1951.
[108] Ibid., letter from Hans to Marianne, Steinhaus, June 20, 1951.
[109] Ibid.
[110] Kühne, *Rise and Fall of Comradeship*, 84–87.
[111] Jennifer Meyer, "Mouvement *völkisch* et féminisme en Allemagne. Une approche intersectionnelle à partir de l'exemple de Sophie Rogge-Börner," in *Le premier féminisme allemand 1848–1933. Un mouvement social de dimension international,* ed. Patrick Farges and Anne-Marie Saint-Gille (Paris: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2013), 77–90. See also Renate Bitzan, *Selbstbilder rechter Frauen: Zwischen Antisexismus und völkischem Denken* (Tübingen: Diskord, 2000).
[112] Irene Brandhauer-Schöffmann, "Der 'Christliche Ständestaat' als Männerstaat? Frauen- und Geschlechterpolitik im Austrofaschismus," in *Austrofaschismus. Politik–Ökonomie–Kultur 1933–1938*, ed. Emmerich Tàlos and Wolfgang Neugebauer (Vienna: LIT, 2014), 254–80.

branch of the state-sponsored program that supported and assisted "racially valuable" single mothers in the Third Reich. The goals of this SS-run institution were to boost birthrates while removing the social stigma of unwed motherhood—as long as the mothers were good "Aryans."[113] After training at the *Lebensborn e.V. Heim Wienerwald,* Marianne took a job as a nurse in Cologne's renowned Lindenburg child clinic (*Kinderklinik in der Lindenburg*). Perfectly in line with the ideologies of natalism, it comes as little surprise that, in 1951, the now twenty-six-year-old Marianne held liberal views on premarital sex and on children born of single mothers.

Marianne apparently next turned to discussing children with Hans, broaching what turned out to be a delicate topic for him. "Tell me, my sweet little woman—oh, could you just be that for me," he replied, in a seemingly annoyed manner: "How can you have such a desire! Don't you have enough of these poor souls and the pain of their mothers at work? Darling, do you really want to make your, *our* life difficult?"[114] This mixture of deception and irritation was accompanied by a patronizing undertone: in Hans's eyes, motherhood and wage labor did not match. At first, it would seem that Hans's biggest concern was losing Marianne's love, for he envisioned their relationship as an exclusive codependent togetherness that could not be disturbed by a third person. "I would lose your love, which you would only give tp the child," he explained: "you would hate me for having planted a child in your lap."[115] Hans then lectured Marianne extensively on how offspring kill the exclusive bond and libidinal desire between two lovers. He finished his letter on a prophetic note: "I am simply happy, for the sake of our love, that no life will ever sprout from our love's desire and its most intimate fulfillment." Hans ended his soliloquy by dropping a bomb: "I won't ever be able to father you a child because of a testicular injury I suffered some time ago."[116] After three months of romantic reverie, Hans provided Marianne with a crucial bit of information that further explained his first letter's postscript and that shed new light on his emotional economy: clearly the problem was not solely Hans's fear of sharing Marianne's love with others, but also his infertility.

The way Hans handled this issue sheds light on the contours of postwar gendered power relations. First, he withheld the information, it seems, for as long as he could. Second, Hans framed his infertility neither as a confession nor as a handicap. Rather, he sold it to Marianne as a philosophy of life that rejects fatherhood as the condition for "true" love, while insinuating how frivolous she was for wanting a child by him. Embedded in sweet words and sex talk, Hans emphasized his social capital, which accrued to his sex, age, profession, and life experience. On several occasions, he mentioned his professional standing and how busy he was. This rhetorical tactic was a highly gendered performative act: by overstating his case, Hans exalted himself as the decision-maker, while subordinating Marianne's role in their relationship.

Beyond this deception, however, Hans may have also had lingering doubts, anxieties, and even remorse about his manhood. Not even twenty-four hours after sending his patronizing letter, he felt the need once again to explain himself to Marianne in a second letter that

[113] In 1942, 71 percent of the women who gave birth in Lebensborn maternity wards were unmarried. See Lilienthal, *Der "Lebensborn e. V.,"* 63. Annette F. Timm is currently working on a project titled *Lebensborn: Myth, Memory, and the Sexualization of the Nazi Past.*

[114] IfZ, Vienna, SFN, NL 147 II, letter from Hans to Marianne, Steinhaus, July 2, 1951.

[115] Ibid.

[116] Ibid.

revealed a much less confident side of Hans, in which he acknowled his inner doubts: "And then I start to get concerned, when I think about your letter, where you say that you love me but that you do not seek physical love."[117] More precisely, he wondered whether Marianne was avoiding and refusing sex "deliberately," or whether she simply had no physical need and desire for it. "It enters my mind," he confessed, "that, when we became man and woman, you lied to me when you answered in the affirmative my question about whether you had found sexual satisfaction."[118] Faking desire and pleasure flouted Hans's idealistic understanding of an amorous relationship, one in which both partners were sexually satisfied. Similar to the cases of the abandoned husband and professor from the pages of *Liebe und Ehe,* Hans clearly believed in frank pillow talk: "Don't be shy about it," he encouraged Marianne, "we are adults, human beings who love each other."[119]

Although Marianne may have been accustomed to, or at least confronted with, the pronatalist attitudes of the past, she clearly needed time to digest Hans's emotional outbursts and revelations. Once again, she did not respond to his letter for over a week. In the meantime, Hans grew concerned and anxiously awaited a response or some sign from her. Whereas he was already on his tenth letter, Marianne had only written him five, which, he confessed, he had read over and over again, hoping to find answers to his questions and concerns.

The reasons for his anxiety revealed themselves in another letter. Almost two and a half months after the couple had met, Hans finally put his cards on the table: "Well," he confessed, "to tell you the whole truth, Marianne, I am married … I have two children, a boy and a girl who will turn sixteen and twelve this year." He then immediately relativized the impact and meaning of this revelation: "don't ask me how it looked from the inside of this marriage after just a year … In all these years, I have nothing left of my life other than my responsibilities to my family."[120] Positioning himself as a victim, Hans then explained that he had lived separately from his wife since 1938. This timing might not have been a coincidence: Nazism had just brought a new liberal wind to conservative Austria, introducing new divorce legislation and civilian marriage for everybody.[121] Hans and his wife did not make use of these new opportunities, however. The outbreak of war in 1939 kept the spouses apart and may have thereby temporarily helped sort out Hans's marriage problems. The couple was still married in 1951, but living separately.

In his next letter to Marianne, Hans explained his specific role in what he referred to as a "community of interests:" once a week he stopped by the house to deal with his duties as father and breadwinner. His 1,000 schilling salary covered the rent and the education of his children, but did not leave much for himself. "You can imagine what comes out of that for me. All my wishes, desires, and hopes had to be buried and killed," he complained to Marianne, "Sacrifice and duty toward my own blood are everything."[122] Just like the testicleless captain, Hans considered himself to be among the living dead: "My core being has long been dead, dried, and burned out … But enough for today. I tread on dangerous ground here."[123] Indeed, Hans apparently lived a very frugal life determined by duty and

[117] IfZ, Vienna, SFN, NL 147 II, letter from Hans to Marianne, Steinhaus, July 3, 1951.
[118] Ibid.
[119] Ibid.
[120] IfZ, Vienna, SFN, NL 147 II, letter Hans to Marianne, Steinhaus, July 6, 1951.
[121] Hanisch, *Männlichkeiten*, 165–69.
[122] IfZ, Vienna, SFN, NL 147 II, letter Hans to Marianne, Steinhaus, 6.7.1951.
[123] Ibid.

sacrifice—until he fell in love with Marianne. Yet, to a young and independent single woman, it seems that this married man did not have much to offer, either financially or socially.

Soon after his confession, Hans received a letter from Marianne announcing an upcoming visit to Steinhaus with her mother. Excited about the prospect, Hans responded with suggestion for how to spend their leisure time together, which included hiking tours and a night at a chalet. The presence of Marianne's mother bothered him, however: "How are we going to be able to spend time together?"[124] His ideal scenario, it appears, was Marianne waiting for him, while he worked, in his room at the cheap guest house where he lived. Now that Marianne was staying in a hotel with her mother, Hans was greatly disappointed because it seemed now highly unlikely that they could spend much time together and become intimate.

What prompted Marianne's decision to bring along her mother? Did her close relationship with her play a role? Or was it an elegant attempt to slip out of a relationship that seemed to be getting ever more complicated and demanding? But why choose Steinhaus over a more neutral vacation destination, then? There is no textual evidence to answer these questions, but the idea of meeting Marianne's mother clearly distressed the otherwise self-assured Hans. "Does your mother know about me. I mean, does she know how we feel for each other and about my situation?" he anxiously inquired: "If so, I must say that it would be quite uncomfortable for me to meet her. You have to understand that, my little wench."[125] Yet, not meeting her would be equally humiliating: Marianne had put him in a veritable bind.

Then there was silence. "I got all of your letters …," Hans wrote three months later: "The fact that I did not write after our last reunion, that I did not reply to your letter—I do not have a convincing excuse …" The meeting in Steinhaus, as it turned out, had been a huge disappointment: "As much as I was looking forward to your visit …, I found our rendez-vous, after such a long separation, not fully satisfying." Hans then implicitly blames Marianne for the fiasco: "You know the reason and I think even you weren't truly satisfied. Were you?"[126] The letter further reveals that Marianne had been menstruating and that she had refused to have sexual intercourse. Hans took it personally and suspected her of deliberately choosing that particular time for her visit. The presence of another man apparently irritated him as well: "You come to my village and I already see you in the first hour with another man!" he protested furiously. Although Marianne had sent a him letters of explanation and apologies, Hans acted in a very irritated and insecure manner, compensating for his jealousy with a mixture of aggression and accusation:

> …. isn't it normal that thoughts torture my heart and soul, that they shake my core being? Isn't it normal that I feel humiliated as a man, that I feel rejected and cuckolded, when you give your love to someone else, when you belong to him and when you only write nice letters to me as a pastime, because you want to receive nice love letters, too—to have something entertaining to read, when you are bored with your life, about the silly fantasies of an old ass about a young woman, even a "free" gal who has another pretender and who can therefore make different claims about how she wants to be loved by someone under the "yoke" and who therefore can't offer much to a woman?[127]

[124] Ibid.
[125] Ibid.
[126] IfZ, Vienna, SFN, NL 147 II, letter from Hans to Marianne, Steinhaus, Oct. 3, 1951.
[127] Ibid.

Hans clearly could not handle the inner strain or social pressure. Marianne was single, financially independent, and open to a relationship. She could use her wages all for herself, whereas he had to support a family. Well aware that he could offer neither cohabitation nor an open relationship, Hans felt trapped and did not hesitate to reproach Marianne.[128] But having his back against the wall did not keep Hans from lecturing Marianne about the "true" love that she was not able to grant him. The age difference, Marianne's independence, and her alleged unwillingness to write him back as a form revenge—pointing to all this, Hans was obviously looking to find fault in her in order to rationalize his own desperate situation.

The correspondence and the relationship ended on October 24, 1951. Hans's last letter reads like a farewell. Having been transferred to another gendarme unit in a district even farther away from Marianne, he realized that "possible meetings would become even more hopeless."[129] He clearly preferred to end a relationship that had become unsatisfying and of little interest to both lovers—before being rejected himself. After this final letter, Hans's fate was unclear. Marianne, by contrast, never married, but instead focused on her professional life as a nurse. She also cultivated a very active social life, as well as friendships with her former Lebensborn and nurse maids in the National Socialist People's Welfare, (*Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt*, or NSV), with whom she regularly met until her death.[130] Marianne clearly enjoyed having a life of her own and, yet, she preserved Hans's correspondence until her death in 2008.

What can scholars learn from this quarrelsome lovers' correspondence? With regard to questions of sexuality, it is interesting to note that Marianne and Hans became intimate rather quickly. But because of their differing expectations for a relationship, they only had sex once in seven months.[131] Contraception was not the problem, given that Marianne wanted a child and could even envision herself as a single mother. Hans, by contrast, wanted first and foremost a fulfilling sex life. As in the case of the captain, Hans clearly identified with the gendered role of the accomplished lover. He took this role very seriously, constantly philosophizing about love and sex while ponderously describing his state of mind. Yet, Hans's constant patter was not so much a sign of care and respect for Marianne as an equal sexual partner, but rather just patronizing. Reading through his letter, one gains the impression that Hans used this rhetorical tactic to exert pressure and elicit feelings and desires from Marianne.

At the same time, however, the role of the "perfect" lover was a highly ambivalent and unstable one. Invigorating and empowering, it could put men such as Hans under considerable pressure themselves. Male fantasies of good and abundant sex coexisted with deeply rooted male fears about their own sexual prowess, as the cases of both Hans and the captain suggest.[132] Even though these men were selling "just sex" to their lovers as one of their assets, the fact that they could not father a child was clearly a major handicap for both of them. From the perspective of a twenty-seven-year-old woman like Marianne, Hans's infertility, in combination with his marital situation and economic hardship, were

[128] IfZ, Vienna, SFN, NL 147 II, letter from Hans to Marianne, Steinhaus, Oct. 24, 1951.
[129] IfZ, Vienna, SFN, NL 147 II, letter from Hans to Marianne, Steinhaus, Oct. 21, 1951.
[130] See also "Darf der Ehemann seiner Frau eine Berufsausübung verbieten?," *Liebe und Ehe* 1 (1949): 37.
[131] IfZ, Vienna, SFN, NL 147 II, letter from Hans to Marianne, Steinhaus, Oct. 21, 1951.
[132] For the lover, see also the typology by Hanisch, *Männlichkeiten*, 206; Werner, "Es ist alles verkehrt in der Welt,", 175–96.

likely reason enough not to engage seriously in the relationship. Yet, as Hans's letters also demonstrate, a clearly precarious financial, social, and health situation did not preclude him—or the captain, for that matter—from claiming a hegemonic position and dictating the conditions of relationships: sexual exclusivity, but no shared life together and no children.

Marianne, whose financial independence significantly increased her room for maneuver, did not agree with those terms. Professionally trained and socialized in Nazi Germany, she seemed to rely more on female comradeship. Marianne left among her personal papers a machine-typed, photocopied poem titled "Lady's Choice":

I really like men,
the wild and the tame,
but what I love the most,
an evening that only ladies host …[133]

Used as a skit at one of the annual women-only gatherings of the *Lebensborn* and NSV nurses, the poem reflected the gendered self-understanding of the highly politicized, self-assured, and independent female generation born between 1919 and 1925. Much like Marianne and her fellow nurses, *Wehrmacht* auxiliaries also organized annual gatherings and created civil spaces where they could together treasure their wartime experiences and nurture their camaraderie. As Franka Maubach, who has conducted interviews with such women, suggests, the most active among these professional servicewomen were unable and unwilling to comply with traditional marriage and motherhood.[134] Just like these women, Marianne might have deliberately chosen celibacy and wage labor over the life of a housewife.

## Conclusion

Reading the letters to *Liebe und Ehe* and the correspondence between Marianne and Hans, it seems evident that sex and, in particular, sexual prowess played a major role in the relationship and power dynamic of these two male-female couples. Male domination and its constantly renewed claims depend upon an idealized, essentialist perception of virility. Nazi policies on sex undoubtedly made the dictatorship particularly attractive to men and women still in a reproductive age.[135] Sexuality and Nazism were thus intrinsically linked and mutually reinforcing. Indeed, looked at from this perspective, the wartime, pleasure-seeking lifestyle of the captain and of Hans—and, to a certain extent, the professor's polygamous ideas about family-planning—contradicted the racial-ideological precepts of Nazism only on a superficial level. After all, from 1933 to 1945, Nazi society and politics honored the predatory warrior-soldier as the apotheosis of hegemonic masculinity.[136]

After defeat, however, these German men suddenly lost the social capital, sexual power, and racial privileges that Nazism had granted its loyal servants. After the chaotic postwar years, 1949 marked a watershed in the gender order. The reconstruction of the bourgeois nuclear

[133] IfZ, Vienna, SFN, NL 147 II, poem *Damenwahl.*

[134] Franka Maubach, *Die Stellung halten. Kriegserfahrungen und Lebensgeschichten von Wehrmachthelferinnen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009), 45–76, 299–308.

[135] Herzog, *Sex After Fascism*, 27–63; Regina Mühlhäuser, "Between 'Racial Awareness' and Fantasies of Potency: Nazi Sexual Politics in the Occupied Territories of the Soviet Union, 1942–1945," in *Brutality and Desire: War and Sexuality in Europe's Twentieth Century,* ed. Dagmar Herzog (Basingstoke: Palgrave Mcmillan, 2009), 197–220.

[136] Kühne, *Rise and Fall of Comradship,* 17–214.

family created a new breed of manhood that was no longer centered on war and sex. A new masculine archetype developed instead, and the former warrior was now, as the breadwinner, protector, and *paterfamilias*, expected to invest all his energy into his family.[137] Considerable scholarly attention has been paid to the effects of these policies on the bodies and professional prospects of German women. But there is a lacuna with respect to the impact that these shifting role models had on men.[138] As the case studies in this article show, the reinstatement of conservative sexual mores and Christian morality in the nascent Federal Republic of Germany and in the Republic of Austria also heavily affected men's lives. The self-confident and self-restrained family man—embodied by the pugnacious Dr. Breschke—best matched the new, socially accepted, and politically promoted masculine model(s) of the *homo economicus* and *paterfamilias*. By contrast, the polygamous professor, the captain, and Hans all found themselves at odds with this new order.

Of all these men, Otto M. managed the transition best. After his successful divorce from his first wife, he regained an honorable and valued position in society as an academic and head of a family. The extant archival evidence nevertheless suggest that providing for nine children by two different women was no easy task, and that it required the support of social welfare services, which must have been equally emasculating.[139] Hans and the captain, by contrast, struggled to comply with the reinstituted traditional order. These two fathers refused to abandon their respective perceptions about sexual prowess, and they continued to pursue sexual pleasure above all else. Both men desexualized their female partners while hypersexualizing their own male bodies, a rhetorical strategy that they used to empower themselves and claim dominance, respectively, over Marianne and the young women from northern Germany. It is ironic that, if they did not succeed, it was because wartime Nazism had offered young single women a certain economic and social independence. At the same time, it is significant that the captain and Hans both encountered an unexpected obstacle: their inability to procreate dramatically decreased their social value as men, especially given that women looking for husbands and potential fathers for their children largely outnumbered men at the time.[140] As the case studies in this article also clearly demonstrate, male infertility and an inability to "project" traces of oneself physically into the future—as a fantasy or in terms of very concrete family planning—were considerable sources of vulnerability and distress for postwar men.

Did German and Austrian men really feel damaged and superfluous in the late 1940s and early 1950s, as Elizabeth Heineman has suggested?[141] The foregoing case studies and the discussions in the pages of the magazine *Liebe und Ehe* certainly seem to confirm Heineman's argument, and they provide further insight into the everyday challenges that heterosexual men faced: impotence, infertility, divorce, and loneliness. Cases such as that of the abandoned

[137]Hanisch, *Männlichkeiten,* 225–26. See also Heineman, *What Difference Does a Husband Make*, 137; Herzog, *Sex after Fascism*, 86; Timm, *Politics of Fertility,* 248.

[138]Moeller, *Protecting Motherhood*, 38–209; Elizabeth Heineman, "'The Hour of the Woman': Memories of Germany's 'Crisis Years' and West German National Identity,'" *American Historical Review* 101, no. 2 (1996): 354–95.

[139]Landesarchiv Schleswig, Personalakten Professor Dr. Otto M., Akt Abt. 47 Nr. 6863.

[140]Robert G. Moeller, "Reconstructing the Family in Reconstruction Germany: Women and Social Policy in the Federal Republic, 1949–1955," *Feminist Studies* 15, no. 1 (1989): 137–69; Herzog, *Sex after Fascism*, 96–100.

[141]Heineman, *What Difference Does a Husband Make,* 122.

husband, the captain, Hans, and even the professor show how men struggled to keep their families together, to inhabit a privileged patriarchal position, and to position themselves as autonomous sexual beings against the backdrop of Nazism and defeat. In reality, however, only a minority of German and Austrian men embodied this idealized model. With an eye to the work of sociologists Raewyn Connell and James Messerschmidt, one can assume that the overwhelming majority of the male population in the Third Reich, as well as in postwar Austria and West Germany, felt pressure to comply with this dominant model, even at the risk of struggling or ultimately failing to achieve it.[142] The permanent attempt to appear "masculine"—to oneself, as well as to other men and women—was therefore intrinsically linked to the fear of being perceived as somehow "unmanly." Here Judith Butler's understanding of gender as a performative act rather than as a fixed identity helps us to understand that, while illusionary, masculinity as a social performance creates a social reality.[143] Although the captain, Hans, and, to a certain extent, the polygamous professor all failed to meet Nazi standards and, even more so, those of postwar society, as well as their own expectations, the very attempt to comply with the prolific virile trope suggested a kind of accomplishment. Yet, as we have seen, the gendered position of a man in society is never assured and can drastically change over his lifetime. The establishment of the new Federal Republic on May 23, 1949, reframed masculine role models—which was why the captain, Professor M., and Hans no longer pursued a masculine paradigm. Instead, they were chasing a ghost.

As gender historians, we must take seriously men's subjective experiences of emasculation and vulnerability on a micro-analytical level. Yet, there is little evidence of a loss of male dominance in postwar Austria and West Germany—and even less of a reversal of power relations between the sexes on a more structural level. Despite their undisputedly difficult situations, the captain, the professor, and Hans never stopped capitalizing on patriarchal dividends, as both countries found a way to integrate veterans into the new political systems: as citizens and ultimately also as family fathers.[144] Hegemonic masculinity is a social process that requires participation and negotiation by both men *and* women. To define itself, hegemonic masculinity needs countertypes, i.e., men who either comply with or reject the norm. In return, complicit and marginal masculinities construe and position themselves in relation to the dominant model, lending it both credibility and power. Patriarchy therefore not only presumes the subordination of nonhegemonic complicit masculinities, but it also relies on the compliance of a large part of the female population—or on what Connell and Messerschmidt call "emphasized femininities."[145] In contrast to previous studies, then, one needs to consider postwar women not solely as victims of patriarchal power relations but also as facilitators and legitimizers of male domination and supremacy. Seen from this perspective, it was not surprising, after all, that the newly founded Federal Republic of Germany and the Austrian Second Republic were both still a "man's world."

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[142] Connell and Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic masculinity," 832, 846. See also Werner, "Es ist alles verkehrt in der Welt.""

[143] Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," *Theatre Journal* 40, no. 4 (1988): 519–31.

[144] Biess, "Men of Reconstruction," 335–58; Hanisch, *Männlichkeiten*, 71–123.

[145] Connell and Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic masculinity," 848.