



## *Feminism* in Andreas-Salomé, Lou (1861–1937)

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Salomé was stone-walled by classical feminism because she accentuated sexual difference, femininity and the importance of motherhood, as Julia Kristeva has done recently in post-modern Third Wave feminism. Classical feminism played down difference in the name of a political concept of equality. Salomé saw politics in terms of a symptomology of what is going on in the soul of individuals, society, culture, much as Freud did at the time. Political feminism for Salomé was to have the wrong end of the stick.

Each of us is bi-sexual within. Sexuality, here, refers to the skein of inner interconnectedness between all human beings without exception, and is largely unconscious. Our masculinity or femininity are distinct qualities of soul stamped upon us. There is a refusal, in Salomé, to move to metaphysical essentialism, idealism/ideology, or biological reductionism, but to retain a sense of symbolic form, as Cassirer would later call it, as we are symbolic symbol making beings. For us, a thing (*das Ding*) is not just like this or that, everything is symbolic - it points to an interiority.

Womanhood is marked most fundamentally and importantly by motherhood and motherhood leaves its trace on all masculinity. Woman is the *apriori* here. There can be no "equality" and the sexual difference is one of different levels of Being or woman's priority, and this is to do with her femaleness; this of course has bio-physical correlates, but is to do with the soul - the life of the body - not the body *per se*, let alone atomisation into mere body parts. The woman as maternal lover stands behind and above all eroticism, her love rules all men and makes them what they become, whatever that may be in different places at different times. Life is born of her.

### Primary Sources:

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