



## *Liberated Woman* in Lou Andreas-Salomé (1861–1937)

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Andreas-Salomé saw women as captives of personality, family and society. In her book *Ibsen's Heroines* she used the image of the wild duck as a metaphor for this captivity. However the critical axis of her idea of the liberated woman was the first of these. The world will not be liberated by women and men at the levels of family and society if those doing the liberation are stuck at the levels of unanalysed ego, the modern equivalent of the Socratic unexamined life. Andreas-Salomé paralleled what Freud later said about Marxist Leninism: unconscious personalities will not set the world to rights. Such liberationists will damage the cause of women, not further it, Andreas-Salomé thought. This view from the Ibsen book (1892) she held her whole life: "we are necessarily limited to the purely personal," she reiterated at the end of her life (Andreas-Salomé, 1995: 132).

In Ibsen's play *The Doll's House*, the central female character Nora rejects what bourgeois marriage, family, society and religion tell her she should do and be as a woman, but Andreas-Salomé comments, this leaves her not liberated but "at the entrance into the unknown vastness of life, which opens darkly" (Andreas-Salomé, 1985: 54). Her remark is of the final symbolic scene, where Nora opens the front door to leave her husband, children, and all of their and everybody else's beliefs about her behind. The end is inconclusive. "Andreas-Salomé's narratives do not prescribe what is necessary for a fulfilled life as a woman but show instead that achieving fulfilment amounts to an endless negotiation of positions, ideals, and convictions." (Cormicon, 2009: 167). The model for this was shown her by psychoanalysis.

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