



## Gender in Lou Andreas-Salomé (1861–1937)

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Gender is sexed in Andreas-Salomé's thought. This is biological, natural, and signified by genitalia – the body itself, and by the significance of the extra-linguistic bodily encounter. Like Freud, for Andreas-Salomé, spoken language is sexed, which is to say that the speaker's gender is sexed and that makes a difference to fantasy and enunciation. Fantasy is a “fabricating agency” by which gender “can be appropriated by arbitrary individual interests, desires, or ideals.” (Ostmeier, 2000: 246).

Male-female are not a binary opposition. For Andreas-Salomé, the feminine holds precedence sexually and ontologically – women were socially repressed because the feminine was repressed in men, and men projected and acted this out.

Her belief in the pre-eminence of the feminine gender arose from the fact, as she saw it, that female sexual desire, arousal and experience can connect the female of the species with a sense of unity (or in Jungian terminology wholeness) of spiritual or religious intensity and significance in which sexual difference, and with it, gender, disappear and there is a Oneness of all life, and pleroma of presence in the present. Feminine gender is pre-eminent because from what she calls a feminine perspective all other sexual and other gendered interactions are “solely based on object cathexis, as undeveloped, dull, crippled and anal.” (Ostmeier, 2000: 246). Anal refers to parts of the self that cannot be integrated or sublimated, the male problem, the splitting of the self. This is why, she held that men, for all their outward show of dominance, are inwardly dependent upon women; while women are not inwardly dependent upon men. The feminine is fundamentally independent in that sense.

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