



Lebensphilosophie in Lou Andreas-Salomé (1861–1937)

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Lebensphilosophie in the 19th century heralded the 20th century existentialism of the French school of Sartre, Marcel and Camus more than the German existentialism of Heidegger and Jaspers, because of its more psychological and social emphasis on life-style, rather than metaphysics. *Lebensphilosophie* in its modern iteration had been initiated largely by Goethe's Wilhelm Meister cycle of novels. Wilhelm is looking for the right way to live from within himself, the definition of *Lebensphilosophie*. This was why the novel was called a *Bildungsroman*.

Lebensphilosophie developed among artists and thinkers in line with Goethe, as something of intrinsic worth that was missing from abstract analytical and critical thinking and from positivistic scientific method and industrial culture.

Lebensphilosophie for Andreas-Salomé was not a concept it was a pre-supposition. She left Russia as a young woman seeking a true way to live, true to herself, and after her own "years of wandering" (Goethe, 1995b, *passim*) intellectually and geographically she came upon psychoanalysis in Vienna with Freud.

Lebensphilosophie as a presupposition, rather than a concept, meant that it operated tacitly in all her writing and activity and it abounded in her cultural, intellectual and personal interests and pursuits. It was with Freud's psychoanalysis, that she stopped the search and started the training; to help others who, in their own life's journey, had reached an impasse and needed, in Nietzsche's phrase "to go under in order to cross over." (Nietzsche: 1978: 15). Freud trained her personally one-to-one from 1912 and she became the first female psychoanalyst. *Lebensphilosophie* was life-experience and for her always "religious in nature – understood in the broadest sense as the experience of being guided by some basic source." (Andreas-Salomé, 1995: 141).

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