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PHILOSOPHY AS INVOLUNTARY SELF-CONFESSION: THE NIETZSCHE OF LOU ANDREAS-SALOMÉ

Filosofia como autoconfissão involuntária: o Nietzsche de Lou Andreas-Salomé

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Abstract: This article explores Lou Andreas-Salomé's (1992) interpretation of Friedrich Nietzsche's work in her "Friedrich Nietzsche in His Works," focusing on her psychological and existential reading of Nietzsche's central concepts. Salomé proposes a profound connection between life and work, arguing that Nietzsche developed his philosophy as a personal response to the crisis of Western values. The article examines Salomé's three main interpretative axes: a) the relationship between Nietzsche's personal experiences and his philosophy, seen as a kind of "involuntary self-confession"; b) Nietzsche's multifaceted writing style, revealing a fragmented spirit resulting from the conflict and attempted reconciliation of various distinct identities (the musician, the poet, the philosopher, the philologist, the religious), in perpetual metamorphosis and self-overcoming; c) the mystical dimension of Nietzsche's final "system," exposing a divine ideal of transcendence projected in concepts like Eternal Recurrence, Overman, and Will to Power. Ultimately, these analyses are situated within the broader Nietzschean interpretive community, drawing panoramic comparisons with commentators like Walter Kaufmann, Martin Heidegger, Karl Jaspers, Gilles Deleuze, Michel Foucault, Gianni Vattimo, and Alexander Nehamas, revealing the originality and influence of Salomé's perspective in Nietzschean studies.

Keywords: Lou Andreas-Salomé; Friedrich Nietzsche; Eternal Recurrence; Overman; Will to Power.

Resumo: Este artigo explora a interpretação da obra de Friedrich Nietzsche realizada por Lou Andreas-Salomé (1992) em seu "Nietzsche em suas Obras", com foco na leitura psicológica e existencial feita por ela dos principais conceitos nietzschianos. Salomé propõe uma ligação profunda entre vida e obra, argumentando que Nietzsche desenvolve sua filosofia como uma resposta pessoal à crise de valores do ocidente. O artigo analisa os três principais eixos interpretativos de Lou Salomé: a) a relação entre as experiências pessoais de Nietzsche e sua filosofia, vista como uma espécie de "autoconfissão involuntária"; b) o estilo multifário da obra nietzschiana, que revela um espírito fragmentado resultante do conflito e tentativa de conciliação entre várias identidades distintas (o músico, o poeta, o filósofo, o filólogo, o religioso), em permanente metamorfose e busca de autossuperação; c) a dimensão mística do "sistema" final de Nietzsche, que denuncia um ideal divino de transcendência projetado em conceitos como Eterno Retorno, Além-do-homem e Vontade de Potência. Essas análises são, ao fim, situadas na comunidade de intérpretes de Nietzsche e panoramicamente cotejadas com as interpretações de comentadores como Walter Kaufmann, Martin Heidegger, Karl Jaspers, Gilles Deleuze, Michel Foucault, Gianni Vattimo e Alexander Nehamas, revelando a originalidade e influência da perspectiva de Salomé no campo dos estudos nietzschianos.

Palavras-chave: Lou Andreas-Salomé; Friedrich Nietzsche; Eterno Retorno; Além-do-homem; Vontade de Potência.

1. Introduction

"Friedrich Nietzsche in His Works," by Lou Andreas-Salomé (1992), represents one of the first efforts to systematically interpret Friedrich Nietzsche's thought, offered by a figure who had an intimate relationship, both personally and intellectually, with the philosopher. The work stands out not only for the depth with which it approaches Nietzsche's central ideas but also for its innovative approach,

which combines psychology, philosophy, and a unique existential perspective. Salomé's reading has the merit of being one of the first to capture the complex connection between Nietzsche's life and the development of his philosophy, something that would profoundly mark the later interpretation of his work.

Lou Andreas-Salomé was a prominent figure in the European intellectual scene of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. A writer, philosopher, and later one of the pioneers of psychoanalysis, Salomé actively participated in the cultural and philosophical debates of her time, maintaining close relationships with personalities such as Sigmund Freud and Rainer Maria Rilke. However, it was her involvement with Nietzsche, in 1882, that resulted in one of the most impactful connections of her intellectual life. The mutual admiration between Nietzsche and Salomé gave rise to a brief but intense period of intellectual exchange that shaped Salomé's interpretation of the philosopher. When Nietzsche met the young Russian, he was deeply impressed by her intelligence, to the point of proposing marriage, a proposal she declined, preserving a relationship based on mutual intellectual admiration.

This context of personal and intellectual closeness allowed Lou Salomé to be one of the few people to whom Nietzsche opened up completely, both about his philosophical ideas and his most intimate feelings. It was during this period that Salomé began to outline her understanding of Nietzsche's work, which would later result in the publication of "Nietzsche in His Works." The fact that Nietzsche reviewed and commented on the drafts of the first two parts of this work grants it a unique legitimacy (ANDREAS-SALOMÉ, 1992, p. 29-30).

Even more striking is the fact that Salomé's work predates the publication of Ecce Homo (NIETZSCHE, 2008), a kind of intellectual autobiography in which the author seems to develop exactly the same project she undertook: demonstrating the indissoluble intertwining between his personal life and his philosophical work. Lou-Salomé began writing her book on Nietzsche in 1882 and published it in 1894, while the philosopher's autobiographical work, written in 1888, would only be published by his sister posthumously in 1908. If there was influence between one and the other, it would thus have been in reverse: could Nietzsche's reading of Lou Salomé's drafts about him have influenced his interpretation of himself in Ecce Homo?

Like Ecce Homo, Salomé's book stands out for its ability to connect Nietzsche's life and work, with a philosophy she describes as a kind of "involuntary self-confession." For Lou Salomé (1992), Nietzsche's philosophy cannot be understood separately from his personal experiences. She argues that, more than any other philosopher, Nietzsche constructs his work as a deeply personal response to the crisis of values he identified in the West, as well as to the physiological and existential crises that afflicted his health and spirit. Nietzschean philosophy, according to Salomé, is an attempt to transcend nihilism and to create new values through a radical affirmation of life, even in its most painful forms. This perspective positions Salomé as one of the earliest interpreters to emphasize the existential and psychological dimensions of Nietzsche's philosophy, a reading that would profoundly influence the reception of the philosopher in the 20th century.

Salomé also seems to inaugurate a practice that would become commonplace among Nietzsche commentators: classifying his work into three "periods." The first period is one in which he was "a disciple of Wagner" and influenced "by the metaphysics of Schopenhauer"; the second consists of "Nietzsche's works that still rest on positivist foundations"; and the third consists of his mature production, which, according to her, characterizes a "new philosophy oriented toward the mystical" (ANDREAS-SALOMÉ, 1992, p. 34).

Salomé's work (1992) on Nietzsche is organized into three chapters, each of which develops a central thesis. In the first chapter, titled "His Essence," the central thesis is that Nietzsche's philosophical work is inseparable from his personal life, being a kind of "involuntary self-confession," where his existential crises and suffering directly shape his ideas. The second chapter, titled "Metamorphoses," presents the

thesis that Nietzsche's thought develops through a series of internal transformations reflecting his struggle to reconcile his various facets (masks) — the musician, the poet, the philosopher, the religious thinker — and his quest for self-overcoming. The final chapter, called "The Nietzsche System," articulates the thesis that, despite his efforts to construct a philosophical system, Nietzsche's thought remains fragmented, and concepts like Will to Power, Eternal Recurrence, and Overman reveal a philosophy directed toward the creation of new values and the continuous surpassing of limits, but also a mystical ideal of transcendence.

The first thesis is Lou Andreas-Salomé's premise: Nietzsche's philosophy is inseparably linked to his life, being a direct expression of his personal experiences and crises. Thus, Salomé proposes that the fundamental concepts of Nietzschean thought cannot be understood solely in abstract philosophical terms; rather, they must be seen as manifestations of Nietzsche's own internal struggles, which characterize his multifaceted spirit. From this perspective, the Eternal Recurrence, for example, is seen as the ultimate test of Nietzsche's capacity to affirm life in all its contradictions, a concept that reflects his personal need to overcome nihilism and decadence. The Overman, on the other hand, is understood as the projection of a divine ideal that Nietzsche would aspire to reach through his philosophy, while the Will to Power is interpreted as the creative and transgressive force driving the philosopher to transcend traditional moral boundaries and create new values.

Lou Andreas-Salomé's reading contrasts with other interpretations of Nietzsche, especially those that focused more on the destructive aspect of his philosophy. Renowned commentators such as Heidegger and Deleuze, for example, emphasized the metaphysical and ontological character of Nietzschean concepts, with Heidegger (2007) focusing on the Eternal Recurrence as the ultimate expression of being in time, and Deleuze (2007) reading the Will to Power as an affirmative principle of differentiation and multiplicity. Walter Kaufmann (2013), in his classic interpretation of Nietzsche, approached the philosopher as a critic of Western rationalism and a champion of individual freedom. While these commentators offer powerful and influential readings, Salomé's interpretation stands out for its capacity to reveal the emotional and psychological depth permeating Nietzsche's philosophy.

The present article aims to present Lou Andreas-Salomé's unique interpretation of Nietzsche's work, comparing it, in the end, with the readings of other well-known interpreters of the philosopher, such as Walter Kaufmann, Martin Heidegger, Karl Jaspers, Gilles Deleuze, Michel Foucault, Gianni Vattimo, and Alexander Nehamas, situating it within the broader context of Nietzsche studies. Initially, I provide an overview of the personal and intellectual relationship between Nietzsche and Salomé, shedding light on how their life stories intertwined. Next, I examine Salomé's first thesis about Nietzsche: that his philosophy and personal life are inseparable, such that his philosophical project could be described as a true exercise in self-confession. Subsequently, I observe, through Salomé, the relationship between the fragmentary nature of Nietzschean philosophy and the multiplicity of identities and masks that characterize the philosopher-filologist-poet-musician-mystic spirit. Finally, I address Lou Andreas-Salomé's concluding thesis: that concepts of Nietzsche's mature philosophy, such as Will to Power, Eternal Recurrence, and Overman, project a mystical ideal of transcendence and a "divinization of the human." As a conclusion, I situate this reading within the context of the community of Nietzsche interpreters, briefly positioning it within the general panorama of Nietzschean studies.

With this, I intend to take a step toward reviving this pioneering reading of Nietzschean philosophy, surprisingly rendered invisible, which presents the philosopher from a privileged discursive space. It is an interpretation carried out by someone who lived with Nietzsche, heard his explanations of his philosophical project, and even submitted much of what she had written about him to his review. Salomé's reading, therefore, offers an original and deeply personal perspective on Nietzsche's philosophy. By connecting life and work, she anticipated many of the psychological

and existential readings that would become central in later interpretations throughout the 20th century, while also providing underexplored interpretive keys to Nietzschean thought.

2. Encounters, Disencounters, Reencounters: Nietzsche and Lou Andreas-Salomé

The relationship between Friedrich Nietzsche and Lou Salomé is one of the most fascinating and complex in the history of philosophy, involving both a profound intellectual exchange and a personal dimension that significantly shaped Nietzsche's view of life and his works. They met in 1882, when Nietzsche, then 37, was already a relatively well-known philosopher, and Lou Salomé, just 21, was emerging as a young woman of notable intelligence and charm, whose philosophical insight quickly caught the attention of the intellectuals of her time.

Their first contact was mediated by Paul Rée, Nietzsche's close friend, who had already been captivated by Salomé's sagacity and independence. Nietzsche, who was seeking high-level intellectual partners, became fascinated by the young woman's philosophical depth and freedom of thought. In a short time, the three—Nietzsche, Rée, and Salomé—formed an intellectual trio that planned to live together in a platonic arrangement dedicated to philosophical study and creation. Although this plan never materialized, it symbolizes Nietzsche's desire to find in Salomé not just a friend and confidante but also an intellectual partner.

Nietzsche and Salomé even experienced moments of creative symbiosis, such as the song "Hymn to Life" (Hymnus an das Leben), with music composed by Nietzsche and lyrics written by Lou Salomé, inspired by Nietzsche's philosophy, especially his ideas on self-overcoming and life affirmation (ANDREAS-SALOMÉ, 1992, p. 193-194). According to Scarlett Marton (2022, p. 32), "in Nietzsche, the 'young Russian' finds a brilliant man who could help her further her education; in Lou, he hopes to have 'a disciple,' 'an heir' who would continue his thought."

However, their relationship took on dimensions more complex than mere intellectual camaraderie. Nietzsche quickly fell in love with Salomé, whose beauty and charisma attracted him as much as her brilliant mind. In May 1882, Nietzsche went so far as to propose marriage in a rather unusual scene. During a carriage ride with Rée and Salomé, Nietzsche, unable to express his feelings directly, asked Paul Rée to present his marriage proposal to the young woman (YOUNG, 2010, p. 237). Salomé, however, declined the offer, saying she had no intention of marrying, which left Nietzsche deeply disappointed. This rejection was one of the factors that led to a gradual separation between Nietzsche and Salomé, although their intellectual admiration remained mutual.

For Nietzsche, the rejection, devastating on a personal level, also impacted his philosophical work. From this episode, scholars suggest that he began to develop a bitter critique of romantic love, submission to affective desires, and the role of women in society. In her study of the relationship between Nietzsche and Salomé, Daniela Siegel (2004, p. 302-325) discusses how Salomé's romantic rejection impacted Nietzsche's views on women and love. Siegel argues that Nietzsche's later philosophy, especially in Thus Spoke Zarathustra (2018), reflects a growing bitterness toward the role of women in society, influenced in part by his personal disappointment with Salomé. In his biography Nietzsche: A Philosophical Biography, Rüdiger Safranski (2003) examines the devastating impact of Salomé's rejection on Nietzsche, highlighting that his frustration with love transformed his view on personal relationships. Safranski explores how this disillusionment is evident in the later phase of his philosophy, marked by a critique of love and marriage, which Nietzsche came to see as forms of emotional enslavement.

Although their romantic relationship did not prosper, an analysis of Nietzsche's letters (1999) makes it clear that the intellectual dimension of the friendship between him and Lou Salomé marked his life. Nietzsche even discussed

with Salomé passages from her book drafts about him, expressing admiration and enthusiasm for the project (SALOMÉ, 1988, p. 30; MARTON, 2022, p. 32). Their relationship was thus marked by a duality: on the one hand, a profound admiration for the young woman's intelligence and philosophical potential; on the other, a personal disappointment that brought suffering to the philosopher. Nevertheless, Lou Salomé was able to capture Nietzsche's complexity like few others, distinguishing herself as one of the first major interpreters of his work and offering a reading that would influence future generations of scholars.

In addition to revealing the connection between life and work in Nietzsche, Lou Salomé, guided by the peculiar idea that the "'religious instinct' always governed the 'essence' and the 'thought' of Nietzsche" (MARTON, 2022, p. 33), presents, as we shall see, an innovative and unsettling reading of some of the central concepts of what she called the "Nietzsche System."

3. Involuntary Self-Confession: an "Essence" of Nietzsche's Philosophy?

In the first chapter of Nietzsche in His Works, titled "His Essence," Lou Andreas-Salomé (1992) presents her central thesis that Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophical work is inseparable from his biography and personality. Salomé argues that, unlike other philosophers who construct abstract and impersonal theoretical systems, Nietzsche builds his philosophy as an "involuntary self-confession," in which his life experiences—particularly his suffering, isolation, and solitude—are reflected in his concepts. For Salomé, life and thought are intimately intertwined in Nietzsche, to the point that his philosophy could be described as a kind of dialogue with himself:

> "Mihi ipst scripsi!" Nietzsche repeatedly exclaims in his letters after completing a work. (...) These are revealing words for those who know how to read Nietzsche's writings: they suggest that, at heart, he thought and wrote only for himself, converting his own self into thoughts (ANDREAS-SALOMÉ, 1992, p. 29).

Salomé highlights the peculiarity of Nietzsche's philosophy, which, according to her, does not rest on its theoretical originality but on the "inner force" with which the philosopher expresses his inner life (ANDREAS-SALOMÉ, 1992, p. 30). She argues that Nietzsche did not experience significant external events that could shape his work; instead, his real life unfolded in the realm of thought and introspection, making his philosophy profoundly personal and subjective. From this perspective, Lou Salomé (1992, p. 30) contends that Nietzsche's entire philosophy is a "sum of monologues (...) grounded in the image of his spirit."

Salomé emphasizes Nietzsche's solitude as a fundamental element in both his life and his philosophy. She argues that the philosopher progressively isolated himself from the outside world, deepening his relationship with himself and developing an increasingly solitary worldview. This isolation, according to Salomé, led Nietzsche to adopt "masks" to protect his innermost essence, a way to hide the vulnerability of his philosophical sensitivity (ANDREAS-SALOMÉ, 1992, p. 36). In this sense, the author suggests that solitude was not only a trait of his personality but also a central characteristic of his philosophy.

For Salomé, these masks, used by Nietzsche as a form of protection and concealment, served as barriers to shield his vulnerability, his sensitivity, and his inner suffering, allowing him to maintain a distance from the world and others while preserving what, to her, would be his innermost essence (ANDREAS-SALOMÉ, 1992, p. 36-37). The various personae, with their multiplicity of voices and figures, would thus express both the internal complexity of Nietzsche and his attempt to avoid exposing himself completely. By creating characters such as Zarathustra or by writing

in the form of aphorisms and fragments, Nietzsche hid behind philosophical masks, preventing direct access to his true self.

In Section 40 of Beyond Good and Evil, Nietzsche (1999, KSA 5, p. 57) states that "all that is profound loves the Mask" ("Alles, was tief ist, liebt die Maske"). For Nietzsche, the mask is necessary because those with a deep and complex soul must hide parts of themselves to protect against the superficiality of the outside world. This concealment is not merely a defense mechanism but also a way to preserve the integrity of his inner depth.

At the same time, it is also possible to interpret Nietzsche's use of masks as a way of confronting reality. The strategic use of masks is also related to his concept of perspectivism: each mask represents a partial view of reality, and Nietzsche, by using different personae and perspectives, challenges the essentialist notion of a single truth. The philosopher thus turns the multiplicity of perspectives into a fundamental element of his philosophy, in which truth is always viewed from different angles and is never presented unequivocally (NIETZSCHE, 2008).

Gianni Vattimo (2017), in The Subject and the Mask: Nietzsche and the Problem of Liberation, also explores the question of masks in Nietzsche, emphasizing the plural and fragmented nature of subjectivity. Vattimo's main thesis is that masks in Nietzsche are not only a means of concealment or protection, as in Lou Andreas-Salomé's interpretation, but represent the dissolution of the "self" as a fixed, substantial entity. For Vattimo, the mask symbolizes the multiplicity and lack of unity of the subject, reflecting Nietzsche's critique of Western metaphysics and the idea of a stable and permanent essence of being.

Vattimo argues that by using masks, Nietzsche is proposing a critique of the traditional notion of the subject, which would be stable and coherent. Instead, for Nietzsche (and Vattimo), the subject is constituted by a plurality of perspectives and is essentially a play of masks. The use of masks is therefore not only a defense of vulnerability but also an affirmation that the "self" is an unstable construct, shaped by the cultural and historical forces surrounding it (VATTIMO, 2000, p. 45-47). Vattimo suggests that the mask is the very condition of the subject in modernity, whose essence is no longer something that can be revealed but always staged and reconfigured.

Nietzsche's various masks are also reflected in the multiplicity of styles that pervades his work. Salomé introduces the practice, which would become commonplace among commentators, of dividing Nietzsche's work into three "phases," corresponding to the development of his thought. The first phase, marked by an artist's metaphysics, is characterized by his involvement with Richard Wagner and Schopenhauerian metaphysics, a period in which Nietzsche still nourished hope for a cultural renaissance based on Greek art and philosophy. However, over time, Nietzsche grew disillusioned with Wagner, marking his transition to a positivist and critical phase, which inaugurates the rejection of traditional metaphysics and the exploration of concepts such as nihilism. Finally, Nietzsche's last phase is characterized, according to Lou Salomé (1992, p. 34), by a mystical and transgressive thought, from which emerge the central concepts of his mature philosophy, such as the Will to Power and the Eternal Recurrence.

Lou Andreas-Salomé also insists on the relationship between Nietzsche's health and his philosophy, dedicating a significant part of her analysis to the impact of physical and mental suffering on his work. She suggests that Nietzsche's chronic illness—which accompanied him for much of his life—not only affected his psychological state but also played a crucial role in the construction of his concepts. The Eternal Recurrence, for example, can be interpreted, according to Salomé, as Nietzsche's attempt to give meaning to his experience of suffering, endowing it with an affirmative character (ANDREAS-SALOMÉ, 1992, p. 44-45). For her, Nietzsche was driven to philosophize based on his experience of marginalization. His philosophy is an attempt to create a space of affirmation for himself in a world that seemed hostile to him.

This view would later be corroborated by Walter Kaufmann, one of the most influential interpreters of Nietzsche in the 20th century, who also recognized the importance of Nietzsche's personal experiences in the development of his thought. Kaufmann argues that Nietzsche is, in a way, a "psychologist of himself," using his own life as a laboratory to test his concepts. For Kaufmann (2013, p. 19), Nietzsche turned personal suffering into fuel for his philosophical work, making him a unique thinker whose philosophy directly reflects his lived experiences. However, Kaufmann differs from Salomé in viewing Nietzsche's work more as a cultural and philosophical critique of Western rationalism than as an expression of his inner conflicts. While Kaufmann emphasizes the critical and rational aspect of Nietzschean philosophy, Salomé highlights the importance of subjectivity and personal experience.

The defining characteristic of Nietzsche's personality, and consequently of his work, is, according to Lou Salomé (1992, p. 52), his "religious genius." In Nietzsche, the contrast between atheism and religious passion allows for the union of opposites that makes his study a "psychological study of religion." Nietzsche's true quest, after all, would be of a mystical and transcendental nature: "the possibility of finding, among the most varied forms of self-deification, a substitute for the lost God" (ANDREAS-SALOMÉ, 1992, p. 54). Here lies what Lou Andreas-Salomé (1992, p. 56-57) attributes to Nietzsche's spirit: "all the struggle and terrible fire of a free spirit with a religious gift."

Thus, for Salomé, Nietzsche's philosophy is ultimately a way of overcoming his own crises and creating new values in a world devoid of meaning. From the first chapter of her work, she constructs an interpretation that distances itself from purely theoretical or abstract readings of Nietzsche, offering a deeply psychological and biographical approach. This reading, pioneering in her time, anticipated the existentialist and psychoanalytic interpretations of Nietzsche, emphasizing the human and personal aspect of his work.

Salomé's approach differs from other notable commentators on Nietzsche, such as Martin Heidegger, who saw in Nietzsche's philosophy an ontological critique of the Western metaphysical tradition. For Heidegger (2007, p. 35), Nietzsche was the last of the great metaphysicians, and the concept of "Will to Power" would be the metaphysics' last attempt to understand being. Although Heidegger recognizes the depth of Nietzsche's thought, his reading is more concerned with the philosophical and metaphysical implications of his ideas than with their existential and psychological dimension. Salomé, on the other hand, is one of the first to recognize that, for Nietzsche, philosophy and life are inseparable. Instead of viewing Nietzsche as a metaphysician, Salomé sees him as someone who makes philosophy a tool to give his own existence meaning.

Through this reading, Lou Salomé pioneers an innovative approach to understanding Nietzsche, focusing on the indissoluble link between life and work. This reading anticipates existential and psychological approaches that influenced later thinkers such as Karl Jaspers (1965) and Paul Tillich (2014), and it also opens space for interpretations that see Nietzsche as a precursor to psychoanalysis, given his interest in human psychology and the unconscious drives that shape behavior and thought. By insisting that Nietzsche's philosophy is a personal response to his suffering and isolation, Salomé reveals a facet of Nietzsche's work that would be fundamental to future studies on the philosopher.

4. Nietzsche's Metamorphoses

Lou Andreas-Salomé deepens her analysis of Nietzsche's philosophy by discussing what she calls Nietzsche's "metamorphoses." She argues that the development of the philosopher from Röcken's thought unfolds through a series of internal transformations, in which he revisits and reformulates his ideas in response to personal crises and challenges. Far from following a linear trajectory, Nietzsche's thought is marked by constant ruptures and reinterpretations of his own concepts. For

Salomé, these metamorphoses reflect not only the evolution of Nietzsche's philosophical thinking but also his internal struggle to find a balance between his various intellectual and emotional inclinations (ANDREAS-SALOMÉ, 1992, p. 121).

Salomé emphasizes that Nietzsche was a multifaceted figure, in whom coexisted the artist, the musician, the poet, the philologist, the philosopher, and the religious thinker. These different dimensions of his personality often came into conflict, resulting in a kind of "internal war" that manifested in his philosophical work. Examining how Nietzsche dealt with the tension between the contradictory impulses inhabiting his mind, she distinguishes two main types of individuals: those whose emotions and impulses are in harmony and those who live in constant internal conflict. Nietzsche, according to Salomé, belongs to the latter group. He lived in a state of "war of all against all," in which his different facets competed with one another, without a unifying force to completely control them (ANDREAS-SALOMÉ, 1992, p. 44).

Lou Salomé opens the second chapter of her work by quoting aphorism 573 of Dawn: "The snake that cannot shed its skin must die. As well, the minds which are prevented from changing their opinions; they cease to be minds" (NIETZSCHE, 1999, KSA 3, p. 330). The metaphor of the snake, needing to shed its skin to survive, would be the synthesis of Nietzsche's philosophy on the necessity of constant renewal. For Nietzsche, the ability to abandon the old and transform oneself was essential for the health of the spirit, which risked dying or stagnating if it remained attached to fixed ideas.

The first great metamorphosis and change of skin in Nietzsche's life, highlighted by Lou Salomé (1992, p. 64-66), is his break with Christian faith during his youth. Initially comfortable within the religious tenets, Nietzsche began to perceive that Christian beliefs no longer matched his emotional and intellectual needs. The philosopher, upon recognizing that Christianity, which "clung to his inner essence smooth and healthy as a healthy skin" (ANDREAS-SALOMÉ, 1992, p. 63), could no longer satisfy him, chose to distance himself from faith, marking the beginning of his philosophical journey.

Lou Salomé (1992, p. 95-97) also highlights Nietzsche's ability to transform thoughts and emotions into creative force, comparing his intellectual process to that of a musician who converts feelings into melody. For Nietzsche, his often dark and painful ideas were "transformed into life," infusing them with new and creative energy. This musical metaphor is central to understanding Nietzsche's creative process, which, according to Salomé (1992, p. 95), transformed even the most unpleasant thoughts into grand and new melodies. The philosopher, a musician at heart, had the capacity to give shape and life to his ideas, even those born from pain and suffering.

The importance of suffering in Nietzsche's processes of transformation is another crucial point in Lou Salomé's reading (1992, p. 100-103), as she explores how pain was fundamental to the philosopher's metamorphoses. For Nietzsche, physical and mental suffering was necessary to break with the past and open up new perspectives. Salomé argues that Nietzsche saw suffering as a motor for philosophical creation, a force that compelled him to separate from his old ideas and make room for new forms of thought.

Nietzsche's relationship with philology also undergoes a significant transformation over the course of his intellectual life, though not as an abrupt break. Salomé describes how Nietzsche began his career as a classical philologist, applying his training to the study of ancient Greece, particularly in his works on Greek art and religion. These studies provided Nietzsche with his first contact with a "worldview" that would underlie his future philosophy.

According to Lou Salomé (1992, p. 69), already in his works of philological criticism, one can perceive a quality that marks much of Nietzsche's genius: "the inclination to investigate the hidden and secret, to bring the concealed to light; a gaze directed toward the obscure," a characteristic intimately related to his high artistic

talent. Nietzsche's involvement with his work on "The Sources of Diogenes Laertius" would have motivated his investigation into the lives of ancient philosophers and the life of the Greeks as a whole, marking the beginning of his transition from philology to philosophy.

Nietzsche then "entered philosophy through a deep conception of the philosophical life in its most intimate meaning" (ANDREAS-SALOMÉ, 1999, p. 70). This "transition from philologist to philosopher," however, occurred gradually. Initially, Nietzsche followed traditional philological methods in works like "Homer and Classical Philology," but even in this work, he began to signal his intent to expand philology. Nietzsche suggested that philology should not be limited to the study of fragments of ancient texts but should instead be permeated by a broad philosophical vision, which allowed for the transcendence of technical and formal study. The true transformation, however, occurred when Nietzsche began to apply a more integrated philosophical perspective to his philological work, particularly under the influence of Richard Wagner and Arthur Schopenhauer. In this phase, Nietzsche believed that "philosophy should emerge from philology," an inversion of the traditional precept that philology should be guided by philosophy. Nietzsche viewed philology as a starting point for something greater, rather than an end in itself (ANDREAS-SALOMÉ, 1992, p. 71).

Thus, initially, Nietzsche was deeply influenced by both Richard Wagner and the metaphysics of Arthur Schopenhauer, especially in how both articulated an artistic and philosophical worldview. Wagner, in particular, provided Nietzsche with a "spiritual homeland," offering an ideal of Germanic artistic civilization that Nietzsche saw as equivalent to what ancient Greek civilization had represented for him in his philological studies (ANDREAS-SALOMÉ, 1992, p. 86-87).

However, this period of close proximity between Nietzsche and Wagner did not last. Salomé mentions that the definitive break with Wagner occurred when Wagner began to lean towards Catholic tendencies in his work Parsifal, just as Nietzsche began to incline toward English and French positivist philosophy. For Nietzsche, this change in direction by Wagner was intolerable, and his estrangement from the composer represented not only an intellectual separation but also an emotional and spiritual one. Nietzsche describes the break with Wagner as a "painful liberation," seeing it as necessary for his own philosophical evolution, even though the process was painful, akin to "self-inflicted wounds." Lou Salomé reproduces in her work a letter written by Nietzsche himself, in which he addresses his break with Wagner (ANDREAS-SALOMÉ, 1992, p. 88-92).

Similarly, Salomé identifies another metamorphosis in Nietzsche's detachment from Schopenhauer's philosophy. Initially, Schopenhauer was a central figure in Nietzsche's philosophical formation, especially regarding the role of art as a redeemer of human suffering. However, as Nietzsche developed his own philosophy, he began to criticize Schopenhauer's reliance on a metaphysics that provided nothing beyond an elevation of the Greek ideal "towards the mystical, the inscrutable transcendental" (ANDREAS-SALOMÉ, 1992, p. 72). He then opted for an affirmative view of life, culminating in his concept of the "Will to Power."

After breaking away from Wagner and Schopenhauer, Nietzsche embraced empirical sciences and rational knowledge as guides for his intellectual quest. Salomé notes that Nietzsche, upon abandoning Schopenhauerian metaphysics, turned to positivism, finding in it a more "practical" and empirical path to understanding the world. However, he soon became disillusioned with this perspective as well (ANDREAS-SALOMÉ, 1992, p. 131). This shift coincided with the worsening of Nietzsche's health, which left him "seven-eighths blind" and unable to read for more than a quarter of an hour. According to Lou Salomé (1999, p. 94-96), Nietzsche's physical decline prevented him from "expanding outwardly and from grounding his thought scientifically," thereby impeding the large-scale historical-philosophical projects to which he aspired. This was also why he was forced to adopt an aphoristic

writing style and develop his philosophical conception introspectively. As Salomé suggests (1999, p. 95), Nietzsche passed "by the wayside of a greatness that was reserved for him."

His adherence to positivism, however, was temporary, although his disillusionment with it did not happen abruptly, as with his separation from Wagner. Instead, Salomé describes this shift as a gradual process, a "slow evaporation." Nietzsche did not immediately reject empirical sciences, but his spirit sought something beyond the limitations of positivist thought, which he came to view as restrictive in its approach to knowledge and truth. Nietzsche yearned for a new ideal of knowledge that could transcend the limits of empiricism and scientific reason, leading him to develop broader philosophical concepts, such as the "Will to Power" (ANDREAS-SALOMÉ, 1992, p. 132).

As Salomé highlights, positivism offered Nietzsche a certain freedom of thought, but it could not satisfy his deeper philosophical needs, leading him to abandon this current in search of new perspectives that addressed ultimate and supreme questions—something he believed positivism was incapable of doing. Thus, according to Salomé, there was a "drift toward the mystical" and a "dramatic return to himself" (ANDREAS-SALOMÉ, 1992, p. 128-136).

Another fundamental factor for understanding Nietzsche's transformations and his brief flirtation with positivism and utilitarianism was his relationship with Paul Rée. Nietzsche allowed himself to be influenced by Rée to the point of playfully calling himself a follower of "Réealism" (ANDREAS-SALOMÉ, 1992, p. 117-118). Although Nietzsche admired his friend's rigorous logic, he distanced himself from Rée as it became clear that their intellectual styles and philosophical natures were incompatible. In his letters, Nietzsche expressed the difference between them, stating: "I am increasingly impressed by how well-armed your exposition is according to logic. Now, I am incapable of that; at best, I can sigh or sing a little" (ANDREAS-SALOMÉ, 1992, p. 121). This distancing reflects a change in Nietzsche, who sought a path of his own, one based not only on reason and logic but on a philosophy that integrated passion, intuition, and creativity. A philosophy that, according to Salomé (1992, p. 135), would reconcile him with himself and his religious genius, finding in the "monstrous apotheosis of the self" a substitute for the lost God.

The metamorphoses that led Nietzsche to break away first from metaphysics and later from positivism would ultimately bring him, according to Lou Salomé (1992, p. 137), to his ultimate philosophy, which recovers "the religious instinct that has always governed his essence and his thought." Nietzsche's various philosophies would serve as substitutes for God, intended to help him navigate life without a divine ideal beyond himself. This mystical-transcendental conception of Nietzschean philosophy is reflected in concepts such as Will to Power, Eternal Recurrence, and Overman, which coalesce around a fragmentary philosophical project that Salomé called the "Nietzsche System."

5. The Double Resonance of a Laughter: The "Nietzsche System"

As a culmination of her interpretive framework, Lou Andreas-Salomé proposes a comprehensive analysis of the underlying structure of Nietzsche's philosophical thought. Although Nietzsche repeatedly declared himself opposed to systematization, Salomé argues that it is possible to identify an internal coherence in his ideas, organized around four central concepts: Will to Power, Transvaluation of All Values, Eternal Recurrence, and Overman. Throughout this chapter, she details how these concepts form the basis of a new philosophical system, even though Nietzsche rejects the very idea of a closed philosophical system.

Salomé begins by highlighting Nietzsche's break with the ideal of the "free spirit," highly valued by the philosopher during his positivist phase. She cites a letter from Nietzsche expressing the transition of his philosophy: "Examine this phase in

which I have lived for years. Look back! Don't be deceived by me. Don't believe that the 'free spirit' is my ideal" (ANDREAS-SALOMÉ, 1992, p. 145). This passage marks the turning point in which Nietzsche abandons the belief in the supremacy of rational knowledge and begins to build a philosophy grounded in vital forces and psychic drives, distancing himself from theoretical rigor and logic as the foundations of truth.

The author then explores what she describes as Nietzsche's "return" to the aesthetic metaphysics he had embraced in his early phase under the influence of Schopenhauer and Wagner. However, Salomé explains that this return is marked by a new ethic, centered on life and drives, rather than Schopenhauer's negation of the will (ANDREAS-SALOMÉ, 1992, p. 145). Nietzsche does not simply return to aesthetic metaphysics but transforms it, merging it with his new ideas on the overcoming of morality and the creation of new values.

Lou Salomé presents the Will to Power as the unifying philosophical principle of Nietzsche's work, asserting that this concept replaces traditional metaphysical doctrines, providing Nietzsche with a foundation for his theory of life. She describes the Will to Power as a creative and affirmative force that allows for the transcendence of inherited values and underpins the "apotheosis of the self" (ANDREAS-SALOMÉ, 1992, p. 164-166). For Nietzsche, this will is not merely a desire for power in the usual sense but a vital force that drives human beings to transcend their limitations and create new values: "for the first time the philosopher would be born as the creator (...) in the form of the one who has will to power, in the form of humanity's genius, one who understands life itself" (ANDREAS-SALOMÉ, 1992, p. 167).

Based on this principle arises the idea of the Transvaluation of All Values, which Salomé (1992, p. 175-176) identifies as a direct consequence of the Will to Power, seen as a declaration of war on all asceticism. Nietzsche proposes a complete reevaluation of traditional morality, especially Christian morality, which he considers responsible for spreading values of weakness and submission. Salomé observes that Nietzsche saw this transvaluation as essential for the emergence of the Overman, a being capable of transcending conventional moral categories and affirming life in all its fullness. The Overman, however, according to Lou Salomé (1992, p. 179), also implies a renunciation of self, for one must abandon the human to make way for his arrival.

According to Lou Salomé, Nietzsche did not conceive of the Overman as a mere extension of current human capacities but as a total rupture with the human, a "super-species" that must transcend the common traits of humanity. She notes that Nietzsche did not view the development of the Overman as a gradual improvement of existing human qualities but rather as an entirely new creation that radically surpasses the natural and moral human (ANDREAS-SALOMÉ, 1992, p. 178).

Salomé explains that, for Nietzsche, the path to the Overman does not consist of moral ascent but in the overcoming of limitations imposed by traditional morality. She points out that humanity, in its current form, is condemned to extinction or transcendence, and that creating the Overman requires a profound struggle against moral and social forces that suppress vital instincts. Salomé explains that Nietzsche saw this process as a kind of "jungle of self-indulgence," an intense journey of will-strengthening where the overcoming of the common man is both a destruction and a creation (ANDREAS-SALOMÉ, 1992, p. 179).

When discussing the figure of the Overman, Salomé refutes interpretations she considers mistaken, which associate this figure with an inhuman or tyrannical model, such as Cesare Borgia. She clarifies that Nietzsche did not endorse brutality or cruelty as ultimate goals but considered them necessary stages for forging the character of the Overman, who would ultimately represent a deeply creative and spiritual figure, distinct from any previous human ideal (ANDREAS-SALOMÉ, 1992, p. 180).

Thus, Salomé's interpretation highlights the dual character of Nietzschean ethics, involving both a profound asceticism and a radical rejection of traditional asceticism. There is a "double face to Nietzschean morality, with its efforts filled with

tyrannical cruelty and ascetic renunciation" (ANDREAS-SALOMÉ, 1992, p. 179). Nietzsche's aim is not merely to purify or ennoble man but to extinguish him in favor of a new creation, a total transformation leading to the emergence of the Overman as a creator and redeemer of life (ANDREAS-SALOMÉ, 1992, p. 181).

At the heart of this philosophical system, Salomé (1992, p. 191) places the doctrine of Eternal Recurrence, which she describes as constituting "both the foundation and the crowning" of Nietzschean thought and as his "most joyful doctrine" (ANDREAS-SALOMÉ, 1992, p. 191). For Nietzsche, Eternal Recurrence is not merely a metaphysical concept but an existential experience that tests an individual's capacity to affirm life in its infinite repetition. This concept challenges the individual to live as if every moment of life were to be repeated eternally, forcing them to confront the consequences of their choices and the necessity of affirmative living. She explains that Eternal Recurrence is not only a theoretical idea but a deeply existential and mystical concept that requires an inner transformation and a full acceptance of life as it is, including all its pains and sufferings. Salomé recounts the moment when Nietzsche first revealed to her the thought of Eternal Recurrence:

> The moment when he revealed it to me for the first time as a secret, as something whose confirmation reserved an unspeakable horror for him, is unforgettable; he spoke of it only in whispers and with all signs of the deepest terror. Indeed, he suffered so deeply from his own life that the certainty of eternal recurrence should have had for him a certain dread. The quintessence of the doctrine of eternal recurrence, the radiant apotheosis of life later established by Nietzsche, is so deeply antagonistic to his torturous feeling for life that it seems to us like a sinister mask. (ANDREAS-SALOMÉ, 1992, p. 193).

Salomé states that Nietzsche conceived of Eternal Recurrence as an "inevitable fate," but philosophically found in it a way to give absolute meaning to life. The concept challenges the individual to live as if each moment would be eternally repeated, demanding a total affirmation of life in all its facets, without regrets. For Nietzsche, this idea appeared as a "nightmare" but also as a possibility for redemption, a supreme test of love for life (ANDREAS-SALOMÉ, 1992, p. 193).

Additionally, Salomé describes Eternal Recurrence as the pinnacle of Nietzschean philosophy. She explains that the doctrine not only crowns the ethics and logic developed by Nietzsche but also presents itself as a mystical revelation that goes beyond rational thought. Accepting Eternal Recurrence requires an ability to transcend the human condition and identify with the "philosopher-creator" Nietzsche idealizes in his work (ANDREAS-SALOMÉ, 1992, p. 201).

This doctrine, according to Salomé, is both liberating and terrifying. She argues that Nietzsche wrestled profoundly with the idea, vacillating between horror at the eternal repetition of life and an exalted acceptance of this condition as a divinization of existence itself (ANDREAS-SALOMÉ, 1992, p. 194). Salomé suggests that Nietzsche's philosophy, especially through this conception, is marked by a profound paradox between the radical pessimism of an infinitely repeated life and the triumphant optimism of a life fully affirmed in every recurrence.

Salomé also examines Nietzsche's critique of Christianity, which he identifies as the principal expression of "slave morality." This morality, according to Nietzsche, promotes values of weakness and resentment, denying life and inhibiting the development of the "noble man." Salomé explains that, for Nietzsche, Christian morality prevents the necessary transcendence for humans to reach their full potential, perpetuating a cycle of life-denial (ANDREAS-SALOMÉ, 1992, p. 170-171).

For Salomé, in developing these concepts, Nietzsche was formulating a new system of values based on a dynamic balance between creation and destruction. This new philosophical system would reject the need for a transcendental truth, proposing instead a philosophy that affirms life in its continuous flow. In this system, the

destruction of old values is essential for the creation of new ones, and it is through this process that humanity can evolve (ANDREAS-SALOMÉ, 1992, p. 169).

Lou Andreas-Salomé concludes her biographical-philosophical analysis of Nietzsche by addressing his plunge into madness as an intrinsic part of his philosophical and creative experience. She reflects on the significance of madness for Nietzsche, not just as a clinical condition, but as a phenomenon with broader philosophical implications. Salomé notes that, even in his earlier writings, Nietzsche explored the concept of madness as a potential source of knowledge, linking it to states of ecstasy and breaks from rationality. She cites a passage from Dawn in which Nietzsche questions why new ideas often seem inseparable from madness, which in almost all cases has paved the way for undoing respected customs and superstitions (ANDREAS-SALOMÉ, 1992, p. 208).

Salomé also examines how Nietzsche reflected on the idea that madness could be a sign of election, something that separated the creative genius from other men. For him, men who broke with established norms of morality, religion, and society were often considered mad, and Nietzsche saw himself on a similar threshold. The relationship between philosophical creation and madness is viewed by Salomé as part of Nietzsche's continual struggle to affirm his own philosophy and transcendence in the face of a culture that rejected his new conceptions of life and morality (ANDREAS-SALOMÉ, 1992, p. 209).

Additionally, Salomé suggests that Nietzsche's madness is associated with the intensity of his intellectual and emotional life, which reached a saturation point over the course of his journey. As Nietzsche distanced himself from external influences and became increasingly immersed in his own philosophical vision, his ability to cope with the tensions of his internal and creative life began to deteriorate. This process culminated in his mental illness, which Salomé interprets as a direct consequence of the psychic and creative overload that marked his final work. She sees this madness as part of his "inner night," a period during which he continued to create, even if it meant advancing while groping through darkness (ANDREAS-SALOMÉ, 1992, p. 213).

Lou Salomé states that Nietzsche was aware of the shipwreck into madness, but that his greatness lay precisely in his bidding farewell "with a smiling mouth, crowned with roses, forgiving, justifying, and transfiguring life." Thus he concluded his life as a work of art, saying goodbye to us as a "double mystical being." Even today, however, we hear, through his immortal work, the double resonance of his laughter: "the laugh of a madman and the smile of a victor" (ANDREAS-SALOMÉ, 1992, p. 220).

6. A "Scholarly Coquette" in Male Territory: Lou Salomé and the Community of Nietzsche Interpreters

In a scathing article originally published in Brazil in 1942, titled "Lou Salomé – The Woman Nietzsche Loved," French lawyer and writer Anatole de Monzie (2016) explores Lou Andreas-Salomé, focusing on her relationship with Nietzsche and the way she portrayed him in her work. Monzie ruthlessly describes her as a "studious coquette" and a "calculating siren," suggesting that she manipulated Nietzsche for her own intellectual and literary purposes. According to the author, Salomé took advantage of Nietzsche's emotional vulnerability, abandoning the relationship after obtaining what she wanted in terms of inspiration and material. Salomé's work, published when the philosopher was already in a state of madness, is seen by Monzie as a "testamentary interpretation," revealing more about Salomé's ambitious and cold personality than about Nietzsche.

This is just one of several examples demonstrating how Lou Andreas-Salomé has been unfairly treated within the Nietzschean interpretative community. When not minimized due to gender prejudice—after all, it was her right to reject the philosopher's romantic advances—Salomé's pioneering and original reading of

Nietzsche is often overlooked. Her influence on subsequent interpretations is rarely acknowledged or mentioned.

The fact remains that the "studious coquette" offers a remarkably original interpretation of Nietzsche, especially for the time it was written, focusing on the psychological, existential, and mystical-religious dimensions of his thought. This interpretation still stands apart from those of other prominent commentators. Comparing these approaches reveals different ways of understanding key Nietzschean concepts such as Will to Power, Eternal Recurrence, Transvaluation of All Values, and the Overman.

In Nietzsche in His Works (1992), Salomé emphasizes the importance of Nietzsche's emotional and personal experiences in the development of his philosophy. She argues that Nietzsche's work is inseparable from his internal transformation processes and existential crises, placing emphasis on the affective and psychological dimensions of the philosopher. Her reading contrasts, for example, with that of Martin Heidegger, who sees Nietzsche as the last great metaphysician of the Western tradition. For Heidegger, Will to Power and Eternal Recurrence are expressions of a continuity in the metaphysics of subjectivity that began with Plato and culminates in nihilism, marked by the "death of God." Heidegger interprets Nietzsche as one who, in attempting to overcome metaphysics, ultimately reaffirms it through his emphasis on power and repetition (HEIDEGGER, 2007).

Walter Kaufmann, on the other hand, sees Nietzsche as an affirmer of life, someone who rejects the inherited values of Christianity and conventional morality in favor of an ethic of authenticity and freedom. For Kaufmann, Nietzsche is not a destructive nihilist but a thinker who celebrates life and seeks to create new values. His interpretation highlights the Transvaluation of All Values as a process of liberation and creation, aligning closely with the tragic optimism Nietzsche proposes (KAUFMANN, 2013). Although Salomé also values the creation of new values in her interpretation, she emphasizes the psychological dimension of this process, viewing Nietzsche as someone who personally recreates himself through his work.

Michel Foucault (1977; 2005) approaches Nietzsche by using genealogy as a method to critically analyze the power relations that shape normative behavioral matrices and truth discourses. The French philosopher sees Nietzsche as a precursor to his own investigations into how power operates within social and epistemic relationships. Foucault interprets the concept of Will to Power as a key to understanding power relations and governmentality, a reading that diverges from Lou Salomé's, who focuses on the existential and transformative aspect of this will.

Gilles Deleuze (2006), in turn, presents a reading that in many respects complements Salomé's, though with a more pronounced conceptual and philosophical focus. For Deleuze, Nietzsche is the philosopher of difference and affirmation, a thinker who celebrates the active and creative forces of life. Deleuze sees the Eternal Recurrence as the repetition of the new, a celebration of difference, while Salomé treats the concept in more existential and personal terms, as an affirmation of one's own life in the face of suffering. While both view Nietzsche as an affirmative thinker, Deleuze focuses on philosophical forces, while Salomé prioritizes personal transformation.

Karl Jaspers (1965) considers Nietzsche one of the foremost examples of an existential philosopher, whose thought reflects a deep experience of his concepts. Jaspers interprets Nietzsche as a thinker who intensely lives his ideas, seeking to overcome the limits imposed by traditional morality and transcending established conventions. This existential approach by Jaspers finds its first precursor in Salomé, although she emphasizes more the emotional and psychological aspects of Nietzsche's crises, while Jaspers focuses on the transcendental effort of his philosophy.

Gianni Vattimo (1990; 2002; 2014), in turn, sees Nietzsche as a precursor of postmodern thought, inaugurating a radical critique of dogmatic truth and promoting the hermeneutic plurality that arises from the culmination of nihilism. Vattimo

interprets the Will to Power as an expression of this radical pluralism, which destabilizes notions of truth and universality. This reading places Nietzsche at the center of the weakening and surpassing of metaphysics, while Salomé focuses on how these ideas reflect Nietzsche's personal and existential search to free himself from rigid systems and personal anguish.

Alexander Nehamas (2002) interprets Nietzsche as a philosophical stylist, interested less in constructing a system of philosophical truths and more in experimenting with the creation of a new way of life and thought through art. For Nehamas, Nietzsche aims to transform life into a work of art, rejecting dogmatism and embracing the continuous creation of oneself. This contemporary reading also aligns with Salomé's, who sees Nietzsche as a subject in constant transformation, although Nehamas focuses on the aesthetic aspect, while Salomé emphasizes emotional and psychological transformation.

These comparisons illustrate how each interpreter of Nietzsche emphasizes different aspects of his work. Salomé, who wrote decades before all the other commentators mentioned, highlights Nietzsche's psychological-existential dimension and his mystical-religious genius, interpreting his concepts as forms of personal self-overcoming and transcendence. Heidegger, on the other hand, views Nietzsche as part of the metaphysical tradition he was attempting to overcome. Kaufmann sees Nietzsche as an affirmer of life and freedom, while Foucault finds in him a critic of power mechanisms. Deleuze values the philosophy of difference and the creation of new values, Jaspers focuses on existential effort and transcendence, Vattimo highlights hermeneutic pluralism, and Nehamas emphasizes life as a work of art. Thus, among each approach that provides a unique perspective on the complexity of Nietzsche's work, the pioneering reading of Lou Andreas-Salomé, though rarely highlighted, remains one of the most sensitive and existentially oriented.

7. Final Considerations

In this article, I sought to investigate the relationship between Friedrich Nietzsche and Lou Andreas-Salomé, as well as the relevance of the philosopher and writer's interpretation of Nietzsche's work. I presented the context of her analysis and the importance of revisiting Salomé's reading in a field dominated by predominantly male commentators, highlighting the impact she had on Nietzsche and the depth of her philosophical understanding.

The personal relationship between the two thinkers was marked by intense moments of intellectual collaboration, emotional misunderstandings, and ultimately, a definitive separation. The connection between Salomé and Nietzsche transcended the romantic sphere, being marked by mutual respect for each other's intellectual capacity, with Salomé playing a crucial role in influencing aspects of Nietzsche's work.

Lou Salomé's central thesis is that Nietzsche's work should be understood as a kind of "involuntary self-confession" directed toward the "monstrous apotheosis of himself." Salomé suggests that Nietzsche projected his personal conflicts and anxieties into his philosophy, so that his philosophical production directly reflected his suffering and isolation. This interpretation places Salomé as a precursor to the psychological approaches that would later be applied to the study of Nietzsche.

In her reading, Salomé emphasizes Nietzsche's constant intellectual transformations. She argues that the philosopher did not follow a linear path but went through continuous changes, revisiting and reformulating his ideas as he faced personal crises. According to Salomé, Nietzsche saw change and rupture as essential processes for the renewal of his philosophical concepts and for the transcendence of inherited values.

Although Nietzsche himself rejected the idea of constructing a closed philosophical system, Lou Salomé recognized that his central concepts, such as Will to Power, Eternal Recurrence, Overman, and Transvaluation of All Values, coherently

organize around a unifying vision of life, which she called the "Nietzsche System." This interpretation highlights the creative and affirmative character of Nietzschean philosophy, which constantly seeks self-overcoming and renewal. It also emphasizes that all Nietzschean philosophy derives from his "religious genius" and that his final thought is a mystical adventure of transcendence, seeking in his concepts substitutes for the "lost God."

For Lou Salomé, Nietzsche's life and work are intertwined and mutually reinforcing. The influence of the paternal figure relates to the "religious genius" that led Nietzsche to begin his studies in theology. The inspiring figure of Professor Ritschl conditioned his migration from theology to classical philology. His break with Christianity and relationship with Wagner redirected him from philology to philosophy, with a particular metaphysical and aesthetic interest. The break with Wagner and the intense friendship with Paul Rée distanced him from Schopenhauerian metaphysics and immersed him in positivism. Chronic illness, which prevented him from reading, lecturing, and pursuing the scientific investigations he had planned, forced him to adopt an aphoristic, fragmentary, and personal style of writing. The break with positivism also marked the cooling of his friendship with Paul Rée. The worsening of internal and external suffering and the approach of madness led him back to himself and to the search for transcendence through self-deification, which characterizes his final system. For Salomé, all of Nietzschean philosophy is this constant exercise of self-confession of personal life through conceptual categories.

Often viewed with disdain or superficiality by her contemporaries, situating Lou Salomé within the predominantly male intellectual context of the Nietzsche interpretative community remains a necessary challenge. Her interpretation of Nietzsche is pioneering, offering a vision that anticipated many of the psychological and existential readings of Nietzsche's work, influencing later interpreters. Her unique reading, which connects personal life and philosophical production, reveals emotional and existential facets of Nietzsche that remain worthy of exploration. Placing Salomé in dialogue with the interpretative tradition of Nietzsche makes her importance clear as a pioneer who offered a psychological reading that reveals a philosopher whose ideas are born from profound personal and internal struggles, carried out within his multifaceted personality.

Salomé's thesis remains original in positing that Nietzsche's entire philosophical construction is rooted in his religious genius and that his true search, after all, was mystical and transcendental in nature: an attempt to find in philosophy a substitute for the lost God. We may not fully agree with Lou Salomé's interpretation, but it is impossible to deny her pioneering role and relevance.

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