

C15

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## Lou Salomé on Life, Religion, Self-Development, and Psychoanalysis

### The Spinozistic Background

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- C15P1 Menschenleben – ach! Leben überhaupt – *ist* Dichtung.  
 C15P2 Uns selber unbewusst leben *wir* es, Tag um Tag wie Stück um Stück,  
 C15P3 in seiner unantastbaren Ganzheit aber lebt es,  
 C15P4 dichtet es *uns!*  
 C15P5 *Mein Dank an Freud* (AuE IV 178)  
 C15P6 ... human life—ah! Life in general—*is* poetry.  
 C15P7 Unaware of ourselves, *we* live it, day by day, like piece by piece,  
 C15P8 but in its inviolable wholeness it lives,  
 C15P9 it poetizes *us!*  
 C15P10 *My Thanks to Freud*  
 C15P11 (translation amended)

C15P12 In the 1920s, some intellectuals began to recognize the philosophy of Baruch Spinoza (1632–77) as a theoretical foundation for the psychoanalytic framework of Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), and to analyze more closely the similarities between the two systems of thought.<sup>1</sup> None of them, however, addressed the fact that Lou Andreas-Salomé (1861–1937) had already noticed such parallels shortly after her first encounter with Freud in 1911, and that she occasionally referred to Spinoza in her own writings on psychoanalysis. Indeed for Salomé, Spinoza is “the philosopher of psychoanalysis” (FJ 75 | EB XIV 52).<sup>2</sup> Her own thinking was strongly influenced by Spinoza following her first studies in philosophy with her teacher Hendrik Gillot (1836–1916). Spinoza’s philosophy seems important to her early work that consists mainly of novels and novellas and only a few

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Smith 1924, Alexander 1927, and, later, Bernard 1946.

<sup>2</sup> I utilize the following abbreviations of writings by Salomé in this chapter: TF = *My Thanks to Freud*; FJ = *Freud Journal*; G = *God*; N = *The Dual Orientation of Narcissism*; R = *Ruth*; EW = *On Early Worship*. I cite Salomé’s collected works (AuE = *Aufsätze und Essays*; EB = *Einzelbände*) by volume and page number, e.g., AuE II 3. In the cases of “The Dual Orientation of Narcissism” and “My Thanks to Freud,” I partly use my own translation.

theoretical writings. Salomé herself makes her indebtedness to Spinoza explicit only in her later texts on psychoanalysis, after she begins to study psychoanalysis with Freud and eventually practices as a psychoanalyst herself. In her posthumously published *Freud Journal (In der Schule bei Freud)*, she calls Spinoza “the only thinker with whom [she] possessed a foreboding and almost worshipful inner relationship almost as a child” (FJ 75, translation amended | EB XIV 52). And she states: “Think far enough, correctly enough on any point at all and you hit upon him [i.e., Spinoza]; you meet him waiting for you, standing ready at the side of the road” (FJ 75-76 | EB XIV 52).

C15P13 This chapter explores the influence of Spinoza’s philosophy both on Salomé’s early philosophy of life, before her encounter with psychoanalysis, and on her later work in psychoanalysis. It highlights how the Spinozistic elements of her thought mark a continuity throughout her work, despite shifts in terminology.<sup>3</sup> More broadly, Salomé’s Spinozism could even be seen as a connecting link between the two movements to which she was closest, namely *Lebensphilosophie* and psychoanalysis.<sup>4</sup> After a brief biographical sketch of her early encounter with Spinoza’s philosophy and her later turn to psychoanalysis in Section 15.1 of the chapter, Section 15.2 examines three Spinozistic themes in Salomé’s thought: first, her conception of the primordial ground (*Urgrund*) of life as the all-unity (*All-Einheit*), which is compared with Spinoza’s divine substance and the psychoanalytic concept of the unconscious (Sections 15.2.1 and 15.2.2); second, her psychosomatic parallelism as two ways of representing life, which can be seen as building upon Spinoza’s account of mind and body (Section 15.2.3); and third, her account of the ethical dimension of human life, which has echoes of Spinoza’s theory of the affects and perfection (Section 15.2.4). Salomé brings these three Spinozistic elements to bear in different areas of her work, such as in her accounts of God and religion, of eroticism and sexuality, of women and gender, and of human creativity and artistic productivity. Her most original contribution to the philosophical foundations of psychoanalysis is to replace Freud’s dualism on several levels with monism in the Spinozist sense, leading her to an original account of human self-development based on the assumption of a non-pathological primary narcissism and the parallelism of mind and body.

## C15S1 15.1. Biographical Details and Encounter with Spinoza’s Philosophy

C15P14 Salomé was one of the most provocative and unconventional women writers in Germany at the turn of the twentieth century, producing both literary works and

<sup>3</sup> The account of Salomé’s early philosophy of life follows my account in Kraus (forthcoming), and some sections overlap in both chapters.

<sup>4</sup> That Salomé paves the way from *Lebensphilosophie* to psychoanalysis, or represents the missing link between the two, is also a main line of argument in Brinker-Gabler 2012, although she does not emphasize Salomé’s Spinozism as the connecting factor. See also Klemann 2019: 176.

essays on topics of religion, philosophy, sexuality, and psychoanalysis. She was born in St. Petersburg, Russia, as the youngest of six siblings, and as the only daughter of a Protestant German-speaking family. Although in her early childhood she was sustained by a deeply religious belief in God, she turned away from a theistic worldview and from institutionalized religion after an event that she herself describes as a loss of God in her memoirs. She even refused to participate in confirmation, which was common in Russia at the time, indeed required to attain social rank.<sup>5</sup> Her teenage years were marked by an intellectual curiosity, wrenching struggles of faith, and a flourishing imagination, which eventually led her to meet Hendrik Gillot.

C15P15 Gillot was a Dutch pastor and highly educated intellectual, who was known as an opponent of orthodox Protestantism. Salomé felt a spiritual connection from their first meeting in 1868 and began taking private lessons from him on subjects of religion, philosophy, and literature. Under Gillot's tutelage, Salomé systematically studied the works of great philosophers such as Immanuel Kant, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Arthur Schopenhauer, and especially Baruch Spinoza.<sup>6</sup> It was Gillot, then, who first sparked in Salomé a fascination with Spinoza's philosophy and introduced her to the idea of a Spinozistic all-embracing primordial substance. As Salomé revered Gillot like a "god-man," Gillot developed romantic feelings for her and eventually proposed marriage, even though he was married and had two children of Salomé's age.<sup>7</sup> Salomé was greatly distressed by this event and eventually distanced herself from him, although she remained in contact throughout her life. She later elaborated on this relationship in her autobiographical novel *Ruth* (1895).

C15P16 Salomé decided to leave Russia and study philosophy, theology, and art history at the University of Zurich, one of the few universities that admitted women at the time. She had to abandon her studies for health reasons, but then traveled extensively within Europe, where she cultivated friendships and intellectual exchanges with several thinkers, including Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900), Paul Rée (1849–1901), and Malwida von Meysenbug (1816–1903). Despite expressions of romantic interest by both Rée and Nietzsche, Salomé rejected any traditional marriage. In 1887, she wed the philologist and orientalist Friedrich Carl Andreas (1846–1930), without, however, entering into a sexual relationship with him. Another central life event for Salomé was her meeting with the young poet Rainer

<sup>5</sup> See Salomé 1995: 12–21.

<sup>6</sup> On the relationship with Gillot, see esp. Welsch and Wiesner 1988: 20–9, and the commentary on Salomé's memoirs by editor Ernst Pfeiffer (Salomé/Pfeiffer 1951: 222ff.). Wendt 2010: 51 additionally mentions her study of works by Descartes, Pascal, Leibniz, Rousseau, Voltaire, Kierkegaard, and others. In his commentary, Pfeiffer notes that Gillot had translated and published works by Otto Pfeleiderer, and that one of Salomé's workbooks was Pfeleiderer's *Religions-Philosophie auf geschichtlicher Grundlage* of 1878, in which the author extensively discusses Spinoza's philosophy of religion. On the encounter with Spinozism, see also Wawrytko 1996: 73 and nn. 33–7.

<sup>7</sup> Welsch and Wiesner 1988: 27.

Maria Rilke (1875–1926) in Munich in 1897. Later, the two began an intense love affair that lasted several years and was to prove extremely fruitful for both sides in intellectual and artistic respects.

C15P17 Two main phases can be distinguished in Salomé's systematic and literary writings. The first period extends roughly from the beginnings of her career as a writer in the 1880s to the early 1900s. During this period, she produced many literary works portraying the life of female characters, such as the novel *Ruth* (1895) or the two novellas *Fenitschka* (1898) and *A Deviation* (*Eine Ausschweifung*, 1898), or exploring themes of faith and doubt, such as *The Struggle Over God* (*Im Kampf um Gott*, 1883) and *The Hour Without God* (*Die Stunde ohne Gott*, 1921). In her systematic writings of these years, she developed her philosophical views on religion, human sexuality and eroticism, femininity, and gender, as well as her own original philosophy of life.<sup>8</sup> Her most important philosophical work from this period is *The Erotic* (*Die Erotik*, 1910), in which she conceives of the erotic as a comprehensive category encompassing physical, psychic, and social aspects of human beings. The erotic thus proves to be key to understanding human embodiment, individuality, and creative productivity in relation to the totality of nature and the religious feeling of a common destiny for all beings.<sup>9</sup>

C15P18 The second period begins with her turn to psychoanalysis and her encounter with Sigmund Freud, whom she met in 1911 at the International Congress in Weimar, and lasts until her death in 1937. Soon after meeting Freud, she went for long trips to Vienna to study psychoanalysis with him, became a regular member of the Wednesday meetings of the Psychoanalytic Society, and started fruitful exchanges with several leading psychoanalysts, including Viktor Tausk (1879–1919), who shared her fascination with Spinoza's philosophy. She became one of Freud's first female students and the first female practitioner of psychoanalysis in Germany. While she turned away almost entirely from literary works during this period, she made important theoretical contributions to psychoanalysis, including an important study of narcissism in her *The Dual Orientation of Narcissism* (*Narzißmus als Doppelrichtung*, 1921) and the first gendered accounts of psychoanalysis, such as *Of the Female Type* (*Zum Typus Weib*, 1914). Salomé herself describes her encounter with psychoanalysis as if her previous life had been "waiting for [entgegengewartet]" it.<sup>10</sup> She regards psychoanalysis as an important complement to her previous philosophy, which was influenced by Nietzsche and embedded in the context of the nineteenth-century traditions of German Idealism, Romanticism, and *Lebensphilosophie*.<sup>11</sup> She values psychoanalysis specifically for its scientific precision and recognizes its superiority over speculative philosophies such as those of Nietzsche and the German Idealists. Freud, in turn, acknowledges

<sup>8</sup> On Salomé's philosophy of life, see Kraus (forthcoming).

<sup>9</sup> See Nassar and Gjesdal 2021: 180–3. <sup>10</sup> Salomé AuE IV: 155.

<sup>11</sup> There are, of course, also affinities between Nietzsche and Spinoza; see, for example, Yonover 2021.

Salomé's anticipations of many of the results of psychoanalysis in works such as *The Erotic*.

C15P19 In what follows, I trace Spinoza's influence on Salomé's writings and show that the Spinozistic elements of her thought reveal a continuity between these two creative periods. Finally, I suggest that by bringing out these Spinozistic elements, Salomé may have forged a missing link between late nineteenth-century philosophy of life and the philosophical underpinnings of psychoanalysis.<sup>12</sup>

## C15S2 15.2. Spinozistic Elements in Salomé's Early Philosophy of Life and in Her Late Psychoanalytic Theory

### C15S3 15.2.1. Salomé's Primordial Ground and Spinoza's Divine Substance

C15P20 A prevailing theme of Salomé's theoretical treatises is captured by the notions the *whole of life* (*Lebensganze*) and the *all-unity* (*All-Einheit*) of life, which she understands to denote both the *primordial ground* (*Urgrund*) from which all life emerges and the final goal toward which all life ultimately strives. Life, for Salomé, is an experiential concept that captures both a mode of being and a mode of consciousness, rather than a biological term that concerns only organic life. We find the basic motif of a primordial ground both in Spinoza, in the concept of a divine substance, and in the psychoanalytic tradition, in the concept of the unconscious, although Freud himself did not adhere to it. Salomé's intellectual biography suggests that she took up this theme with her early fascination with Spinozistic monism, articulating it most fully and precisely in her account of narcissism, which builds on but also partially revises Freud's. In what follows, I trace this theme in Salomé's writings throughout the two main periods of her thought, focusing on the unpublished manuscript *God* (*Der Gott*, 1911) and on her psychoanalytic study "The Dual Orientation of Narcissism" one decade later. I relate her account to the corresponding concepts in Spinoza and Freud. *God* can be seen as the culminating work summarizing Salomé's thoughts on matters of life and faith from her earlier period, completed shortly before Salomé turns to psychoanalysis. The fact that it remained unpublished in her lifetime may indicate that Salomé lost interest in it upon her encounter with Freud later in 1911, when her thoughts were swept away by the fascinating new conceptual framework and methods of psychoanalysis. Nonetheless, I will argue that there is a continuity between her earlier and her later thoughts on life, God, and religion that is deeply rooted in her own Spinozist outlook.

<sup>12</sup> Spinozism was an important strand of thought in nineteenth-century German philosophy, as recent volumes such as Förster and Melamed 2012 and the present one demonstrate. For a discussion of its influence on women philosophers and writers, see especially Yonover (forthcoming).

C15P21 In her early work, Salomé often treats the subject of life in terms of the stages of human development, anticipating a kind of explanation later used in psychoanalysis. In *God*, she offers a comprehensive study of religious experience, which she derives from an analysis of the different stages from childhood through adolescence to adulthood. Childhood and adolescence are two special stages because they both still carry something of the original unity of life, but at the same time they already encounter the “double character of life” (G 9). The latter results from the initially shocking experience of an increasing separation between the inner world of desires and fantasies, and the outer world of natural and social realities. This split leads to a “double experience of life” (G 13), as opposed to the fullness and “wholeness of lived experience” (G 11)—a goal to which any living being naturally aspires.<sup>13</sup> In adolescence, the desire to return to this fullness and wholeness, to approach the “all-connectedness [*Allzusammenhang*]” of life reawakens; and in healthy cases, this promotes personal growth and development into an independent and free personality (G 26). Life in its fullness is thus, according to Salomé, a creative act of self-constitution: the primordial unity is reclaimed at a higher level of articulation through an “intellectual organization” (G 29), resulting in “intellectual-creative states” (G 32) and in “an intellectual experience of being” (G 38).<sup>14</sup> Life as a creative act always aims at restoring the original unity inherent in life itself.<sup>15</sup>

C15P22 The idea of a natural, original ground of life, which is common to all human beings—indeed to all living things—and which is increasingly diminished or even lost in the course of life, is also found in Salomé’s literary writings. For example, in *Ruth*, which reflects Salomé’s discipleship and friendship with Gillot, she describes an encounter between the adolescent title character and her teacher Erik:

C15P23 The same urge to life slumbers strongly and joyfully in both of them [Ruth and Erik]. Only that in her, from an unconscious, untouched natural ground, bursts forth what in him had been conscious decision, understanding and will. The urge to life in her still burned with pure flame, while that in him had already mixed with cinders and ashes by the contact with life. (R 97)

C15P24 Here Salomé conceives of a “natural ground” as a kind of unconscious drive or impulse that is opposed to a conscious, controllable choice, and hence anticipates

<sup>13</sup> In her first psychoanalytic treatment of faith and religion, we find a similar analysis of the “double experience” that begins in early childhood, and of the desire to strive toward “full existence” and “whole experience” (AuE I 150; AuE IV 12; AuE IV 25).

<sup>14</sup> In my own translations of *God*, I render *geistig* as *intellectual*, rather than *mental*, since *mental* in English also includes emotional and affective states, whereas the German *geistig* is usually reserved for activities or states of the higher intellectual faculties, such as the understanding and reason.

<sup>15</sup> This analysis of childhood and the double experience of life reappears in many of Salomé’s psychoanalytic writings, for instance in her “On Early Worship [*Vom frühen Gottesdienst*]” (see esp. AuE I 152f.). See Kraus (forthcoming: 197–9).

her later identification of the primordial ground with the unconscious according to Freud.<sup>16</sup>

C15P25 The idea of the primordial ground of life is closely connected to some of the most crucial themes relating to life in Salomé—to God, faith, and religious experience. The separation from one’s original ground that develops from childhood onwards is for Salomé the source of religious experience. The practice of traditional religion aims at remedying this split and comforting humans in their suffering. According to Salomé’s critique of the Abrahamic religions, however, their religious practice does not help to restore this original unity, but in fact consists in a projection of a transcendent God as a unifying and healing power external to the world. This projection is merely an illusion, the “God illusion,” that eventually deepens the duality between the world and God, which leads humans even further away from their original unity (G 30).<sup>17</sup>

C15P26 Salomé’s own, positive account therefore implies that the final end of life is the “devotion to the One,” accompanied by the desire to “become whole” again, as the following passage in *God* indicates:

C15P27 For as the whole [*Ganze*] is born in the One [*im Einen*] (instead of the One [*Eine*] in the many [*Vielen*]), and as it again begets in the child the new egoistic, self-ascending world center, so its devotion to the One also has an effect on itself as a wanting to become whole. (G 81)

C15P28 Similarly, in her short text on “*Erleben*,” Salomé describes the goal of life as follows:

C15P29 Therein lies already unlocked where “life” wants to go, where it stretches itself beyond the individual living being, but through [such being] itself, through its own highest enhancement in that its sensitive contact with that what affects it simultaneously releases its creative power. (AuE II 22)

C15P30 Each individual life ultimately strives beyond itself to the wholeness and oneness of all being, which Salomé captures with terms such as “all-unity [*All-Einheit*]” (G 126) and “oneness of all [*Einssein aller*]” (G 78). These allusions to the “One” as the ultimate reality of being clearly indicate Salomé’s indebtedness

<sup>16</sup> Even prior to her encounter with Freud, Salomé should have been familiar with the idea of the unconscious, for example through Eduard von Hartmann’s *Philosophy of the Unconscious* (*Philosophie des Unbewußten*, 1869). Hartmann tries to synthesize ideas of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, Schopenhauer, and G. W. F. Hegel in his conception of the unconscious, in which opposites such as the logical and the illogical, the representation and the blind will are united and grounded; and he also points out a possible connection of this conception with Spinoza’s monism. See also Welsch and Wiesner 1988: 278f.

<sup>17</sup> A more detailed analysis of this critique can be found in Kraus (forthcoming: 197–202).

to Spinoza.<sup>18</sup> According to Spinoza's monism, reality consists of only one unique, infinite substance, namely the divine substance or simply God (see E1p14).<sup>19</sup> According to Spinoza, God should not be conceived of as a transcendent being, who is detached from his creation. Rather, for Spinoza, God and nature are in some fundamental sense one and the same (see E4pref). Spinoza distinguishes between two conceptions of nature. As *natura naturans*, nature is identified with the active, creative, infinite substance, with "God considered as a free cause" (E1p29s). As *natura naturata*, nature is understood as the unity of all created things, that is "everything that follows from the necessity of the nature of God" (E1p29s). Everything that exists thus depends in some way or other on (or is necessitated by) the ultimate reality of God: all "individual things [*res singulares*] can neither be, nor be conceived, without God, and, nevertheless, God does not belong to their [finite] essence" (E2p10s2).<sup>20</sup> A crucial consequence of Spinoza's conception of "God, or Nature [*Deus sive natura*]" is that even human beings are considered merely as modes of God's attributes (i.e., thought and extension), rather than as distinct substances in their own right and with genuine agency—as the Aristotelian-scholastic tradition, and other early modern philosophers such as Descartes and Leibniz, would have it. According to Spinoza, then, "[S]ubstance does not constitute the form (i.e. essence) of man" (E2p10) but, rather, "the essence of man is constituted by certain modifications of the attributes of God" (E2p10c).<sup>21</sup>

C15P31

Like Spinoza, Salomé rejects a fundamental dualism between a transcendent God and the world as his creation, and replaces it by a fundamental monism of life itself. The ultimate reality, for Salomé, is the primordial ground of all life, from which all living creatures emerge and in which they always participate, despite the increasing split and separation they experience in their conscious life. Becoming conscious of something is in fact only possible as a result of a certain separation from this original ground. The original ground in its wholeness and unity is and will always remain unconscious. As far as I am aware, Salomé does not provide a more detailed analysis of the relation of dependence, identity, or participation that she sees at work between this primordial ground and its (finite) products,

<sup>18</sup> Note that Salomé's invocation of "One" and "All" is reminiscent of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's phrase *hen kai pan* (one-and-all), with which he refers to his Spinozistic pantheism. Whether Lessing himself in fact endorses a version of Spinozism with this phrase is disputed; see Yasukata 2003: 130–3.

<sup>19</sup> I use the following standard system of reference in citing Spinoza's *Ethics* [*E*]: c = corollary, d = definition, p = proposition, pref = preface, and s = scholium.

<sup>20</sup> There is a debate about whether God is identified only with *natura naturans* or also with *natura naturata*. The latter reading, which was dominant in the reception of Spinoza in German Idealism and Romanticism, would imply that "the infinite and finite modes are not just effects of God or Nature's power but actually inhere in and express that infinite substance" and thus make Spinoza appear as a pantheist (Nadler 2020). Salomé's own metaphysical stance also seems closer to the latter interpretation (see esp. FJ 75 | EB XIV 52 and G 109).

<sup>21</sup> For a discussion of Spinoza's view of human beings and its reception among German idealists, especially Kant and Schleiermacher, see Ameriks 2012.



nor does she cash out this relation in the traditional terms of substance and inherence. Yet she frequently describes the relation in terms of wholeness and partiality, as well as (infinite) fullness and (finite) limitation of reality.

C15P32 Prior to her study of psychoanalysis, Salomé draws mainly on concepts found in the then-contemporary philosophy of life to articulate her theory of the primordial ground of life. She most likely adopts the term *Erleben*, which often translates as ‘lived experience,’ from Wilhelm Dilthey, as she was personally acquainted with his research assistant Helene Stöcker (1869–1943).<sup>22</sup> Dilthey uses the notion to emphasize the psychological character of the inner activity characteristic of a subject living through some situation and consciously taking up mental contents into her own inner world (as opposed to the notion of *Erfahrung*, or mere ‘experience,’ which is primarily concerned with representational content and its epistemic status, rather than with an authentic expression of self-activity).<sup>23</sup> Salomé construes *lived experience* in active terms as an “act of life” (G 60, 64, 69) or a “life process” (G 96, 99, 132) in which we experience our feeling, willing, and thinking as an unfragmented, “uncut” wholeness of life (G 69). Lived experience is then both a mode of consciousness and a mode of being (e.g., “*Seinserlebnis*,” G 38). As a mode of being, lived experience can have various degrees of “fullness.” With the frequent use of superlatives such as “fullest of life” (G 100) and “fullest of all life” (G 128), Salomé indicates that the primordial unity of being is achieved only in the highest degree or fullness of life. Only through what she calls “immediate lived experience” (G 59) can we get a sense of this fullness, regain some of our wholeness within the partiality of single life events, and hence restore some of our primordial unity. However, not every act of lived experience provides access to this highest level of being. Rather, there are also kinds that, lacking “inner humanity,” are “outwardly directed,” such as the experience of death, various types of religious practices, and the adherence to social-moral conventions (see G 105 and 91).<sup>24</sup>

C15P33 When Salomé turns to psychoanalysis, she does not reject this analysis of the concept of life but fuses it with Freud’s theory of the unconscious. In the latter, she finds a notion that can supplement the philosophy of life, with its otherwise more narrow focus on acts of lived experience, expression, and understanding that are still directly accessible to consciousness.<sup>25</sup> Salomé’s own transition from

<sup>22</sup> Stöcker’s own philosophy was not only influenced by Dilthey and Nietzsche, but also deeply rooted in Spinozism and its reception in Romanticism (see Matysik 2008: esp. 55–95). Stöcker is mentioned in Salomé’s *Freud Journal* as a frequent guest in the Freud circle (e.g., AuE IV 91). On her relationship to Salomé, see Welsch and Wiesner 1988: 133.

<sup>23</sup> See, for example, Dilthey’s *Introduction to the Human Sciences* (see Dilthey 1883 and 1880–1893), as well as Makkreel 1992 and Kinzel 2018: 347–75. To distinguish between the German terms *erfahren* (*Erfahrung*) and *erleben* (*Erlebnis*), I translate the former as ‘experience’ and the latter as ‘lived experience.’

<sup>24</sup> For further discussion of lived experience, see Kraus (forthcoming: 202–7).

<sup>25</sup> Dilthey introduces the triad of (i) lived experience (*Erleben*) that we can (ii) express directly in verbal or non-verbal language and then (iii) understand conceptually. This triad forms the basic methodology of the *Geisteswissenschaften*, as he sets out in his *Introduction to the Human Sciences* (Dilthey 1883).

her earlier account of life to her later work on psychoanalysis, to which I now turn, can thus be seen as forging a direct link between *Lebensphilosophie* and psychoanalysis—a link that is rarely explored head-on.<sup>26</sup>

#### C15S4 15.2.2. Salomé’s Study of Narcissism and the Reconceptualization of Freud’s Unconscious

C15P34 Freud’s theory of the unconscious, which is embedded in a scientific method of empirical observation and systematic evaluation of case studies, provides Salomé with a more precise terminology and methodology to capture her often metaphorical account of the primordial ground of life. In turn, Salomé is one of the first to offer a philosophical foundation for Freud’s psychoanalysis, while Freud himself (like many other psychoanalysts) was initially suspicious of philosophy and only showed some interest in more philosophical issues late in his life.<sup>27</sup> From an early conversation with Freud, Salomé casually reports what would later become a central insight of her most important contribution to psychoanalysis: her non-pathological theory of narcissism. In her *Freud Journal*, she diagnoses “the need peculiar to thinkers for an ultimate unity in things” and that “this striving for unity has its ultimate source in narcissism” (FJ 104 | EB XIV 87). She will later identify primary narcissism as the bidirectional principle of self-development, involving both a striving for greater individualization and for a reunion with what she has previously called the primordial ground of life. She therefore criticizes Freud precisely because he rejects this natural striving for the original unity, since for him—on Salomé’s account—it is only “the product of a profoundly anthropomorphic root and custom,” and therefore “a possible hindrance or distraction in the detailed research of positive science” (FJ 104 | EB XIV 87). A comparison between Freud’s and Salomé’s accounts of narcissism is therefore instructive.

C15P35 Freud in general favors a dualistic foundation for psychoanalysis, which manifests itself in a set of opposites such as the conscious *ego* (*Ich*) and the unconscious (later also called *id*, *Es*), or the instinctual drives like the ego-libido and the object-libido, or also later the death drive and the life drive. In his *Introduction to Narcissism* (1914), Freud introduces the concept of “primary narcissism” to capture the phenomenon that newborns and infants exhibit a natural ego-centeredness that often leads to sexual fantasies. Freud explains the fact that they direct all their energy to their own ego by assuming two competing drives, the ego-libido (or self-preservation instinct), which feeds and maintains the

<sup>26</sup> An exception is Rattner 2012. Salomé’s role in linking these two movements is also suggested in Welsch and Wiesner 1988: 283f.; Brinker-Gabler 2012: 8–13; and Klemann 2019: 176.

<sup>27</sup> In her *Freud Journal*, Salomé reports on conversations with Freud that testify to Freud’s initial “resistance to pure philosophy” (FJ 104 | EB XIV 87, also FJ 114 | EB XIV 97f., FJ 127 | EB XIV 109).

individual's personality, and the object-libido (or sexual drive), by which an individual directs her energies toward an object. In infants, both drives are still centered exclusively on their own ego. Secondary narcissism is then the individual's pathological regression to this primary narcissism of their early childhood, which is often developed when confronted with traumatic experiences. It typically results in excessive self-absorption, feelings of grandiosity, and megalomaniacal tendencies.<sup>28</sup> However, as has been noted, Freud's conception of primary narcissism remains ambivalent and incomplete, if not inherently inconsistent. To mention just a few problems: first, Freud does not provide an explanation for his postulation of two conflicting instinctual drives as the foundational ontological structure driving the formation of the ego; second, primary narcissism is not clearly distinguished from other developmental stages such as the bodily-directed state of autoerotism; and third, if the ego emerges only in the course of infantile development, as Freud claims, then it is unclear how these two drives can initially be focused on the ego at all.<sup>29</sup>

C15P36 Salomé revises Freud's explanation of primary narcissism and presents what is in my view a more plausible version of it. Building on Freud's study of narcissism (especially in *Introduction to Narcissism*, 1914), her "The Dual Orientation of Narcissism" offers a more comprehensive theory of how it can be interpreted not only in a pathological sense but in a non-pathological sense as arising naturally from the unconscious and promoting healthy self-development. Unlike for Freud, for Salomé the unconscious (which she abbreviates simply "Ubw." from the German *Unbewusstes*) is not merely a repository of abandoned objects and experiences of an individual's life but the monistic ground that encompasses Freud's pairs of opposites and that is the common root of all life expressions. In the concept of the unconscious, we "think conclusively about the relative," which "almost amounts to thinking of the absolute as did Spinoza" (FJ 147 | EB XIV 139 on "monism," and see also FJ 127 | EB XIV 109). With this concept, Salomé thus finds a way to articulate her thoughts about the primordial ground of life and refine her earlier accounts of childhood and creative expression, as the following passage shows:

C15P37 The sharply ascending line of consciousness loses some of its significance on considering the all-enclosing ring of the unconscious [Ubw.], infinitely rounded at all points and in its omnipresence without 'above' or 'below.' Not only what we call 'infantile,' and hence pathological in the sense of fixation and regression, is comprised in it forever, but also what we call more simply 'childlike,' meaning

<sup>28</sup> For discussion, see Cratsley 2016: 336.

<sup>29</sup> To address these conceptual problems, Freud refines his theory of narcissism in later works such as "Mourning and Melancholia" (1917) and *The Ego and The Id* (1923). For a discussion of critiques of Freud's primary narcissism and of further developments in Freud, see Cratsley 2016: 335–42.

the perpetually primordial and hence creative [*Schöpferischen*]*—without which life itself has no life. (FJ 115 | EB XIV 98)*

- C15P38 Salomé frequently identifies the unconscious with the “primordial [*Ursprüngliche*]” and the “all-encompassing [*Allesumfassende*]” (FJ 110 | EB XIV 93).<sup>30</sup> Continuing her earlier analysis from *God*, she argues that childhood is the stage of life in which we still have some access to our original unity, and yet we are increasingly separated from our original unconscious by gradually becoming aware of the external world as a reality distinct from, and often in conflict with, our inner world of desires and drives. The child still expresses aspects of the original being (*Urwesen*) as it stems from the unconscious, but in order to survive has to adapt more and more to the reality of the external world through education, cultural appropriations, and sublimation. Following Freud’s distinction of drives, primary narcissism is understood as the earliest stage of human development in which the ego preservation and self-assertion drive (i.e., Freud’s ego-libido) and the libido (or what Freud calls more specifically sex drive or object-libido) have not yet come apart, as in later stages, but are still united in an original state of being.<sup>31</sup>
- C15P39 In “The Dual Orientation of Narcissism,” Salomé explains her novel idea of the dual orientation of an original narcissistic libido as follows:
- C15P40 If self-preservative and self-assertive drives should be conceptually separated from libidinal drives, then libido must constitute the connecting link between the desire for individuality and the contrary movement toward conjugation and fusion. In this dual orientation of narcissism the relations of the libido would be expressed in our being rooted in our original state; we remain embedded in it, for all our development, as plants remain in the earth, despite their contrary growth toward the light. (N 4 | AuE IV 118)<sup>32</sup>
- C15P41 With her theory of narcissism, Salomé advances a more subtle developmental theory of the self as it arises from the primordial ground of life, the unconscious.

<sup>30</sup> Salomé’s conception of the unconscious bears similarities to the idea proposed by Carl Jung (1875–1961) of a collective unconscious based on shared mythologies that contain a “resurgent fullness and primitiveness...[of] primordial desires and images,” as Salomé notes in EB XIV 160. However, Salomé is critical of Jung’s teleological conception of libido as a general psychic energy that drives human self-development (N 4 | AuE IV 119 and 119n2). In her “Anal’ und ‘Sexual’” (1916), she critically discusses Jung’s reconceptualization of libido and narcissism, and rejects his monistic foundation because it invites a new form of dualism between ego formation and sexual expression (see esp. AuE IV 72–5).

<sup>31</sup> See especially AuE IV 117–25. Welsch and Wiesner 1988: 292f. argue that Salomé’s account of childhood should not be understood as concerning a real period of life but, rather, as presenting a symbolic expression of both the phylogenetic and the ontogenetic state of nature or “primordial state,” as Salomé herself puts it (e.g., AuE IV 118, 182). The theme of childhood plays a role in several of her psychoanalytic texts, such as “On Early Worship” (AuE IV esp. 11–17) and “My Thanks to Freud” (AuE IV esp. 242–55).

<sup>32</sup> For this text, I mainly use my own translation.

The self (or, in Freud's terminology, ego, *Ich*) emerges precisely from the oscillating movement in two opposite directions: the striving for more and more individuality and singularity of the individual being, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the adherence to the original unity of life shared among all living beings (indeed, all being in general) and that points beyond one's own individuality to the unifying ground of all being. This double orientation of a narcissistic libido remains active in one's self-development throughout life. Narcissism in later stages of development is therefore not exclusively identified with a pathological regression toward a self-absorbed sense of grandiosity but still retains something of its primary meaning, understood as an originally healthy form of self-love (or libido directed toward oneself). This self-love, if kept in balance, drives us to approach both a higher degree of individuality with healthy confidence in our own lives and an increasing reunification with the ultimate and universally shared ground.<sup>33</sup>

C15P42 In "My Thanks to Freud," Salomé now describes this dialectical movement of the self as follows:

C15P43 Our full individualization and consciousness of ourselves would not only be a surplus, an addition, an increase of—so to speak—ready-to-hand existence [*Vorhandenheit*], but at the same time also a loss, a lessening of the indivisibly real [*Wirklichem*]. To be set apart as something separate, to be one's own always means ambiguously: to set apart and to set aside. (translation modified; TF 23 | AuE IV 182)

C15P44 Cultivating a healthy narcissism in our self-development thus proves to be a dynamical balancing act between increasing individualization and the self-dissolving return to the common ground. For Salomé, in contrast to Freud with his pathological focus, primary narcissism is a principally lifelong, positive state of "resting in a still supporting primordial fullness" of life (TF 116 | AuE IV 243). It is the most important source of creative productivity and the main drive toward a "re-melting with everything," which for her is the "positive basic goal of libido" (N 4 | AuE IV 119). Hence, all human self-development concerns the balancing of one's "ego boundary," which is necessarily "narcissistically conditioned"; hence, "in all self-assertion [there is] at the same time re-dissolution work on the self" (N 11 | AuE IV 126, translation amended). A pathological form of narcissism occurs when a person holds a "'fixation' on infanthood" that causes a "regressive tendency" toward earlier stages of life and prevents the "release of the creative vitality in the same [primary] narcissism" (TF 24 | AuE IV 183). The person then

<sup>33</sup> Salomé mentions this primary notion of narcissism already in her *Freud Journal* in terms of a "self-recognizer [*Selbsterkennner*], who is focused on himself in a discovering way" (FJ 111 | EB XIV 94, translation amended).

engages in destructive, self-absorbed, and megalomaniacal tendencies without exercising the creative power that lies in her original narcissism.<sup>34</sup>

C15P45 Hence, Salomé's revised, positive account of primary narcissism differs from Freud's in that it assumes a fundamental monism in the Spinozistic sense. All instinctual drives are assumed to be ultimately rooted in the same primordial ground, the original unconscious, although they have an essential dual orientation that drives the self-development of human beings in their oscillation between individualization and remelting with this primordial ground. With this account, Salomé precedes subsequent developments in the history of psychoanalysis, as she in some ways anticipates the later, de-pathologizing theory of narcissism proposed by Heinz Kohut (1913–81). Kohut, too, assumes a “double axis” of narcissism that oscillates between the “narcissistic self” with its grandiose-exhibitionist tendencies and the “idealized parent imago” (also the “ego ideal”; Kohut 1966: 246). With normal development, this dual axis paves precisely the way for a creative transformation of narcissism that leads to cultural, artistic, and scientific productivity, empathy, humor, and wisdom in light of the human conditions of finitude and suffering. Similar to Salomé, Kohut explains this possibility of creative transformation by invoking a “cosmic narcissism” that transcends the bounds of the individual and that causes “oceanic feelings” that indicate our connectedness to something greater than ourselves (Kohut 1966: 266).<sup>35</sup>

C15P46 In this context, it is therefore not surprising that Salomé returns to the theme of God and religion during her psychoanalytic phase. Her psychoanalytic studies discuss various religious issues about faith and devotion, and one of her first psychoanalytic works, “On Early Worship,” is entirely devoted to this topic. In this and other psychoanalytic writings, she renews her previous argument that traditional belief in God (in monotheistic religions) is based on projection. Using psychoanalytic language, she is now able to explain this projection more specifically as a “projection” of desire due to inner drives (TF 85 | AuE IV 220; see also EW | AuE IV 17). Salomé agrees with Freud's own analysis that faith in God springs from a psychological infantilism, through which the believer seeks to fulfill his need for protection in the projection of a father who provides power and comfort, but ultimately remains dependent on God like a child on its father.<sup>36</sup> She then shares Freud's “unease... concerning the phenomenon of religion in so far as it hinders, contrary to its own desires, the ways we have of coping with existence”

<sup>34</sup> In later works, such as *The Ego and the Id*, Freud is more open to a positive interpretation of the narcissistic libido, acknowledging that it can have non-pathological functions in creative sublimation and the formation of character (see Cratsley 2016: 340–2).

<sup>35</sup> For a comparison with Freud's view, see Cratsley 2016: 342–55.

<sup>36</sup> Salomé explicitly refers to Freud's analysis in *The Future of an Illusion* (1927). In “The Dual Orientation of Narcissism,” Salomé shows how the idea of God stems from the “overestimation urge” of humans in sublimating their basic narcissistic drive (AuE IV 133f.). In “My Thanks to Freud,” she shows herself open-minded to Freud's analysis of belief in a supernatural power as an “obsessive thought [*Zwangsvorstellung*]” and of the religious practice of this belief as an obsessive neurosis (TF 69 | AuE IV 215).

(TF 96 | AuE IV 232), which is in line with her own earlier critique of the traditional theism as a life-negating force that has to be overcome (e.g., G 33, 73).

C15P47 Nevertheless, Salomé should not be seen as fundamentally rejecting a religious attitude; rather, for her, there are human beings who have “remained sound in [their] beliefs” (TF 133 | AuE IV 254) who do not fall prey to the illusion of a transcendent God opposed to the world, but who reflect on their own life forces and from this develop a confidence in life. In *God*, Salomé conceives of a healthy “faith in life” itself, devoted to the fullness and oneness of all life (G 73). To live according to this faith thus requires the “negation” of theistic beliefs so that “life can free itself to itself and to the divinity that is inherent in it” (G 33). By following the faith of life, we grow beyond ourselves, become truly creative and “greater” than ourselves (G 73). In her psychoanalytic writings, she repeatedly uses the term “confidence in life,” which can be understood as a kind of religious recollection of the primordial ground, that is, the original unconscious.<sup>37</sup> In her *Freud Journal*, she alludes to this recollection as the “eternal” or “sublime calm” that she finds in Spinoza’s philosophy, since Spinoza—according to Salomé—“gave the same meaning to ‘nature’ and ‘God,’ yet without supernaturalizing nature or reducing the name of his God to the level of things” (FJ 75 | EB XIV 52; cf. E4Pref). In this sense, Salomé finds her faith in life expressed in Spinoza’s conception of the divine as identical with both *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*.

C15P48 Salomé’s idea of the desire for an ultimate reunion with the primordial ground seems to bear similarities with the idea of a *unio mystica*, that is, according to Christian mystics, the highest religious experience of the union with God. Although we find references in her writings to Christian mystics such as Meister Eckhart von Hochheim (c.1260–c.1328)—who was read widely at the turn of the century, and whom she cites with reference to the phrase “there is only one worthiness, God” (TF 131 | AuE IV 253)—she does not recognize these mystics as allies of her faith in life. Rather, in a way rather alien to the idea of a transcendent God, she emphasizes that “we could not avoid encountering the corporeal and the divine everywhere at the same time,” both of which have a necessary connection to erotic love (TF 43 | AuE IV 196; translation amended). Therefore, none of her theories about the self, life, and creativity can do without a reference to the body. That brings us to the second central Spinozistic element of her thought, the parallelism of body and soul (or mind).

### C15S5 15.2.3. Psychosomatic Processes as Two Ways of Expressing the Primordial Ground of Life

C15P49 Neither in her early work nor in her later contributions to psychoanalysis does Salomé fail to emphasize the bodily dimension of life and to consider the

<sup>37</sup> E.g., EW | AuE IV 25; TF | AuE IV 212.

relationship between bodily and mental phenomena. She is, however, skeptical of the dualism of body and soul that she finds in Freud's psychoanalysis. One of her most original contributions to the philosophical foundation of psychoanalysis is therefore to replace this dualism with a monism in the Spinozistic sense: the physical and the mental spheres are not considered as two distinct but causally interacting substances but rather as two modes of a common substance or, more precisely, as two ways of expressing the same underlying primordial ground.

C15P50 Spinoza famously argues that God can be conceived of under (at least) two different attributes, namely thought and extension, and that "a mode of extension and the idea of that mode is one and the same thing, but expressed in two ways" (E2p7s). That is, both bodies (as extended things) and ideas (as produced by a finite, human or infinite, divine mind) are simply two ways of expressing one and the same underlying substance that caused them. Since both bodies and ideas necessarily depend on the same ground, the Cartesian mind-body problem does not obtain for Spinoza; he does not need to provide an explanation of why or how mental and extended substances causally interact with one another. Rather, since bodies and finite minds (and their ideas) are ultimately determined by God, they are mutually in correspondence; and therefore, "if the object of the idea which constitutes the human mind be a body, nothing can take place in that body which is not perceived by the mind" (E2p12). From this, it follows that "man *consists of mind and body*, and that the human body, such as we feel it, exists" (E2p12c). As part of nature, human beings exist, for Spinoza, within the same deterministic causal nexuses as any other extended thing or any finite mind (E2p7).

C15P51 In her early philosophy of life, Salomé adopts such a Spinozistic view of mind and body in her conception of lived experience. Lived experience is, for Salomé, a holistic act of life that can only retrospectively be analyzed in terms of its components, such as passive-receptive physiological sensation, psychic-affective responses, and active "intellectual-creative processes" (G 69).<sup>38</sup> Salomé thus distinguishes three aspects of lived experience that manifest themselves together in an integrated life process: physiological receptivity, intellectual activity, and what she calls "psychic (*seelisch*)," which mediates between passive and active aspects of life. These distinctions show that, for Salomé, mental and bodily experience are not separate phenomena or really distinct states of human beings but complementary modes of one and the same life-act. Using the examples of aesthetic experience of natural beauty and music, Salomé discusses the complementarity of body and mind in terms of the "intellectuality of sensibility" and the "material experience" (G 91). For Salomé, "all intellectual materializes" and "all material [can also be viewed] in its intellectuality" (G 107).<sup>39</sup>

<sup>38</sup> As a translation of the German "*geistig*," I prefer the term "*intellectual*" to "*mental*" in order to emphasize the focus on the higher intellectual faculties, such as the understanding and reason. If I use *mental*, I usually refer to both *intellectual* and *psychic*.

<sup>39</sup> Salomé expands on this point in *The Erotic* (see esp. 12–15). See also Kraus (forthcoming): 207–11.



C15P52 Similarly, in her accounts of erotic love and gender, Salomé often assumes parallels between the corporeal, the psychic, and the intellectual. In her *The Erotic* (1910), she presents erotic love as a phenomenon expressed in physical, psychic, and social relations, none of which can be reduced to the other (see E 188). In her essay *The Human Being as Woman* (1899), Salomé develops an idealization of the “woman” (“das Weib”) (as opposed to real women, “Frauen”). The idealized woman is understood as a “total appearance” (AuE II 103, 107) or “whole being” (AuE II 97, 102), which expresses itself in the physiological, the psychic, and the intellectual sphere. For each of these spheres, Salomé describes what she sees as the idealization of the female expression of life—from the cell biology of the ovum, to what she assumes as typically female feelings of motherliness and attachment, to the intellectual qualities of a specifically female way of intuitive thinking. According to this holistic account, a woman can express herself most fully and entirely independently from men by following her gender-specific way of life (AuE II 97, also 102). At the same time, however, Salomé seems to question her own idealistic theory of femininity as an account of real women, as she demands the freedom to “break every artificial barrier and confinement” that is imposed by “preconceived and trimmed theories” (AuE II 116).<sup>40</sup>

C15P53 In her writings on psychoanalysis, Salomé first appears critical of the psycho-physical parallelism of her time, which consists in finding correlations between physical stimuli and sensational responses and “cerebral localization” for psychic phenomena (FJ 75 | EB XIV 51, also FJ 127 | EB XIV 109). I presume she has in mind the research programs of psychophysics as promoted in the nineteenth century, among others, by Gustav Theodor Fechner (1801–87) and Hermann von Helmholtz (1821–94). She rejects such psycho-physical localization as not feasible due to the difficulty and imprecision in correlating psychological phenomena with physiological events:

C15P54 Where our entire inner experience is at our disposal, we know very little about its bodily equivalents; and conversely, where physical processes are visibly apparent to us, or else can be easily extrapolated, our psychic accompaniment of these processes is not accessible. (FJ 54 | EB XIV 32)

C15P55 In the process of psychic experience, our bodily processes remain to some extent unknown to us, and our psychic processes are not easily located within the body, although they are often accompanied by a body-related phenomenology.

<sup>40</sup> Salomé was criticized by contemporary feminists such as Hedwig Dohm (1831–1919) for offering an overly essentialist and conservative account of femininity. Salomé herself seems to waver between offering a theory of gender and calling for the emancipation of women and, moreover, to be aware that the former may at times be in conflict with the latter (see Cormican 2009: 15–44). For further discussion of her gender theory, see Bidy 1991, Brinker-Gabler 2000, and Kraus (forthcoming): 211–6.

C15P56 In contrast to this scientific parallelism, which she believes can open the door to materialist reductionism, she finds the notion of “representations [*Repräsentanzen*]” offered by Viktor Tausk very illuminating.<sup>41</sup> She meets Tausk, at the time a student of Freud and a passionate advocate of Spinoza’s philosophy, in 1911 at the Psychoanalytic Wednesday Society in Vienna. Salomé frequently mentions Tausk’s specific views on psychoanalytic questions and his disagreements with Freud in her *Freud Journal*.<sup>42</sup> In Tausk’s concept of “representations,” she sees the important advantage that it does not give rise to either a materialistic or an idealistic reductionism: “[The] psychic and [the] physical stand for (“represent” T <ausk>) each other for us but neither *condition* nor *explain*, and hence cannot substitute for each other either” (FJ 111 | EB XIV 93, also FJ 75 | EB XIV 51). Since “the bodily processes equivalent to the psychic [*seelische*] processes are hidden to us,” it is not possible for us to relate one to the other “as cause to effect” (FJ 54 | EB XIV 32). Rather, their relationship and unity can be revealed “only for the eye of a God” and “only for the view of the philosopher, [but] never of the empiricist”; and in this sense, Salomé proposes to assume that the empirical science of psychoanalysis is ultimately based on a “Spinozistic, revealed . . . knowledge of the whole” (FJ 54 | EB XIV 32–3).<sup>43</sup> This holistic Spinozist account, she argues, gives philosophical underpinning to Freud’s own dualistic determinism, according to which each phenomenon can be fully deterministically explained at both the psychic and the physical level. With Spinoza, we can now see that this psycho-physical “overdetermination” is rooted in a single determinant cause, namely the Spinozistic substance interpreted as the unconscious ground of life, which finds parallel and not mutually reducible expressions in both the physiological and the psychic (FJ 75 | EB XIV 51–2). Proceeding from this insight, Salomé offers numerous subtle psychoanalytic discussions of psychosomatic processes involved in domains such as sexuality, erotic love, religious practice, and artistic creation.

C15S6 15.2.4. Salomé on the Ethical Life, Freud’s Sublimation, and Spinoza’s Affects

C15P57 A third Spinozistic element in Salomé’s thinking concerns the ethical dimension of human life. Salomé sees a connection between Freud’s theory of sublimation and Spinoza’s doctrine of the affects, which underpins her own theory of self-development. A central idea of her theory is that all life-inhibiting aspects in a person’s life should be dismantled such that life can eventually liberate itself to its

<sup>41</sup> On the rejection of materialism, see FJ 127 | EB XIV 109 and G 108f.

<sup>42</sup> On Salomé’s relationship to Tausk, see Welsch and Wiesner 1988: 241–54.

<sup>43</sup> See also “the bodily and mental expressions as representations of each other, which only has to be thought to the end to have Spinoza already” (FJ 75 | EB XIV 51).

fullest and return to its original primordial being. We have already seen how in *God* the central goal of life is defined as the “devotion to the One,” which, if followed, results in becoming “whole” again and reunited with the primordial ground from which one’s life once sprang (G 81, also 100). In this case, the immediate lived experience would give rise to a total experience (*Allerlebnis*) that transcends the individual in its singularity and aims at the totality of nature (G 78, 84, 94, 96, 106). This total experience can be approximated through an activity of co-living (*mitleben*) through which we empathize with the lives of our fellow creatures, thereby appreciate life in all its variations and multiplicity, and move towards *all-love* (*Allliebe*, G 83).<sup>44</sup> All-love transcends the human community and strives towards participation in the whole of life. It includes both the individual’s active striving toward this wholeness and the affective appreciation of that wholeness in all concrete fellow creatures. Although Salomé is highly critical of idealization in religion and ethics—as advocated, for example, by many Enlightenment philosophers in terms of a rational ideal toward which we ought to strive in all actions—her theory of development nevertheless includes a notion of perfection that alludes to the Spinozistic one.<sup>45</sup>

C15P58 In her psychoanalytic period, Salomé refines her earlier metaphorical depiction of the developmental goal of life using notions tied to Freud’s theory of sublimation, such as “super-ego” and “I ideal.” For Freud, the “super-ego” or “I ideal” results from a collective sublimation of drives, which is reflected in internalized, cultural rules and represents externally imposed standards of value, as expressed in the rational ideals of the Enlightenment or in the Christian moral doctrines. Since these cultural sublimations fail to satisfy the sublimated drives, they often lead to feelings of guilt and a need for punishment (see TF 131 | AuE IV 254). Salomé, by contrast, considers the sublimation process more positively than Freud. For her, it can unveil a person’s true creative potential and thus lead to independent, self-responsible value judgments, instead of adopted traditional value ideals. These value judgments reflect “man’s responsibility to his life—to the whole breadth of his being, and that includes all of life’s diversities and trivialities” (TF 132 | AuE IV 254).

C15P59 In this connection, Salomé invokes a claim of Spinoza’s, which she renders as “joy is perfection” (FJ 36 | EB XIV 17). This phrase alludes to Spinoza’s doctrine of affects in his *Ethics*. In his commentary, Salomé’s editor Ernst Pfeiffer (1893–1955) suggests that it hints at the following passage:

C15P60 We see therefore that the mind can undergo great changes, and pass at one time to a higher and at another to a lower degree of perfection; and these vicissitudes or passions explain to us the emotions of pleasure and pain [*laetitiae et tristitiae*]. By pleasure I shall understand in the following pages a passion whereby the

<sup>44</sup> A similar conception of social co-living can be found in *The Erotic* (esp. 37–40).

<sup>45</sup> On Salomé’s critique of Enlightenment rationality, see G 57–60 and Kraus (forthcoming: 206–7).

mind passes to a higher degree of perfection; by pain a passion whereby the mind passes to a lower degree of perfection. (E3p11s)

C15P61 Note that here joy (or pleasure) is not directly identified with perfection but with the transition to a higher degree of perfection. Since for Spinoza “reality and perfection [are] the same thing” (E2d6), joy is a passion that accompanies a person’s movement toward a higher degree of reality, that is, a higher degree of being in accord with one’s own nature or essence (see also E4pref). Spinoza’s doctrine of affects is based on the assumption that each mind possesses its own conatus in that it “strives [*conatur*] to persevere in its existence for an indefinite period, and is conscious of this effort [*conatus*]” (E3p9). Positive passions such as joy enhance and reinforce this conatus, whereas negative passions such as sadness hinder and impede it. The ethical theory that emerges for Spinoza from this account is embedded in a rationalist framework:

C15P62 Since reason requires nothing contrary to nature, it therefore requires that every man should love himself, should seek what is really useful to himself, should desire everything which really leads him to greater perfection; and, in general, that everyone should strive as far as possible to preserve his existence. All this is as necessarily true as that the whole is greater than a part. (E418s)

C15P63 Although Salomé does not share Spinoza’s account of reason, her own theory of human development bears similarities to Spinoza’s insofar as the highest goal is liberation to the fullness of life, the state “when life is wholly adequate to itself, i.e. creative,” involving “full existence” and “total experience” (EW | AuE IV 25). Thus, for Salomé as for Spinoza, perfection consists in a state of adequacy to one’s original nature and hence in a state of being real, rather than a state of conformity to values or ideals imposed from outside one’s own life. In her *Freud Journal*, she discusses the case of remorse as the pain and discord arising from an “instinctual repression” (FJ 141 | EB XIV 132). These feelings of remorse lead to a splitting off from the “most personal center” (FJ 141 | EB XIV 132, translation amended). They can only be overcome if one gets back in touch with the repressed drives and, instead of repressing them, takes them into the “conscious enclave of the ego [*Ich-Umfang*],” overcomes the discord, and then finds a “heightened unity of the self” (FJ 141 | EB XIV 132). Negative emotions, thus, usually indicate falling short of one’s genuine life, while positive emotions indicate the direction of one’s own path toward becoming fully oneself and realizing one’s full potential in life.

C15S7

### 15.3. Conclusion

C15P64 This chapter has shown that a certain kind of Spinozism is a constant undercurrent in Salomé’s philosophical work in both her creative periods: in her earlier

philosophy of life, as most clearly manifest in her unpublished manuscript *God*, as well as in her later contributions to psychoanalysis, exemplified here in her study on “The Dual Orientation of Narcissism,” her *Freud Journal*, and “My Thanks to Freud.” Although she rarely addresses Spinoza’s work explicitly or elaborates her own brand of Spinozism, she occasionally inserts references to Spinoza’s *Ethics* that indicate her strong affinities with Spinoza’s philosophy.

C15P65 Three Spinozist elements in Salomé’s thought have been elaborated. (1) Her conception of the primordial ground (*Urgrund*) of life considered as the all-unity (*All-Einheit*) is plausibly inspired by Spinoza’s divine eternal and infinite substance, which she later identifies with the original unconscious in psychoanalysis; (2) her psychosomatic parallelism, according to which the corporeal and mental spheres are two expressions of the same underlying life process, reflects Spinoza’s conception of extension and thought as two attributes of the same underlying substance; and finally (3) her ethical account of the realization of one’s life in all its fullness through genuine intellectual-creative acts (that is, her positive re-evaluation of Freud’s theory of sublimation and value assignment) bears similarities to Spinoza’s accounts of conatus (as the drive to self-preservation or simply to life), of perfection (as the realization of one’s true nature according to the determinations of the divine substance), and of the affects (as obstacles to or facilitators of this self-realization).

C15P66 These Spinozistic elements of Salomé’s thought led her to her most original contribution to the philosophical foundations of psychoanalysis, which consists in replacing Freud’s dualism on several levels with monism in the Spinozist sense. Salomé anticipated here later developments in psychoanalytic thought, such as Jung’s idea of a collective unconscious and Kohut’s account of cosmic narcissism. In her original study of narcissism, Salomé understood narcissism not, as Freud did, in a pathological sense as the result of a conflict between two competing drives, but in a positive, non-pathological sense as rooted in the primordial ground of life itself, as a necessary prerequisite for individual development and creative productivity. The fact that these Spinozistic elements appear in both Salomé’s earlier philosophical texts and her later psychoanalytic texts suggests that Salomé may have found in these elements a missing link between the philosophy of life of the late nineteenth century and the philosophical foundations of psychoanalysis. How Salomé brought these three Spinozist elements to bear not only on her accounts of religious faith and narcissism but also in the areas of eroticism and sexuality, women and gender, and human creativity and artistic productivity remains to be explored.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>46</sup> For extremely helpful feedback on earlier versions of this chapter, I thank the editors, Jason Maurice Yonover and Kristin Gjesdal, as well as Michael Brown and Fred Rush.

C15S8

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Katharina T. Kraus, *Lou Salomé on Life, Religion, Self-Development, and Psychoanalysis: The Spinozistic Background In: Spinoza in Germany: Political and Religious Thought Across the Long Nineteenth Century*. Edited by: Jason Maurice Yonover and Kristin Gjesdal, Oxford University Press. © Oxford University Press 2023. DOI: 10.1093/9780191953903.003.0016



