

Nietzsche (1844-1900) was the son of a Lutheran pastor. He was a linguistics scholar who benefitted from the interest in the origins of European language in 'Indo-European' (of which Sanskrit was an early derivative) begun by Grimm by being appointed Professor of Philology at the University of Basel at the age of 24. Nietzsche's philosophy has been repeatedly linked to his personal life, especially his unfulfilled love for Andreas Lou-Salome who somehow managed to fascinate many of the great artists and intellectuals of her time, his apparent lack of sexual relationship except for one legendary visit to a brothel, the equally uncertain possibility that this led to infection with syphilis (the most likely explanation of his breakdown is that he had a stroke), and at the end of his life, his dominance by his sister who espoused a pan-German ideology that was the antecedent of National Socialism. However, it is possible to place Nietzsche into the current of German romanticism and to see in his work the origins of existentialism, psycho-analysis (he is often said to have invented the Freudian unconscious before Freud), and the re-discovery of the pre-Socratic use of aphorism and poetry as the proper expression of philosophy.