**Wundt,** **Wilhelm (1832-1920)**

Wilhelm Maximilian Wundt, born in Neckarau (now Mannheim, Baden-Württemberg), was a German scientist who pioneered the field of experimental psychology. His best known work, *Grundzüge der physiologischen Psychologie* (*Principles of Physiological Psychology*), published in two volumes (volume one in 1873 and volume two in 1874), is the first work to introduce the study of mental processes - psychology - as a new and distinct science. Moreover, Wundt was the first to build a laboratory for psychological research, launched at the University of Leipzig in 1879. Emphasizing the study of conscious experiences through a system of rigorous introspection, what he called ‘internal perception’ (*innere Wahrnehmung*), Wundt broke with existing early nineteenth-century means of understanding mental processes through his focus on experimental study and interest in the individual, parallel to modernist considerations of individual subjectivities and radical experimentation. Focussing on the primacy of perception, a prescient topic that is still the subject of active research in psychology (albeit employing different methods), Wundt argued that only human experiences that could be physically observed (such as the time taken to react to a presented stimulus) were relevant for research. At the same time, he argued for a cultural psychology that included the study of mythology and rituals, and he advanced the study of psycholinguistics, claiming the sentence as a mental unit of language. A prolific writer, with an estimated 53,000 pages of published work, Wundt moved psychology from its traditional position aligned with philosophy into a separate and empirical field of study with its own distinctly modern methods of investigating mental processes.

*Jill Dosso and Jean-Paul Boudreau, Ryerson University*

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**References and further reading**

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**Images**

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