**Dilthey, Wilhelm (1833-1911)**

Born in Biebrich, Rhineland (now Hesse, Germany), the German philosopher and psychologist Wilhelm Christian Ludwig Dilthey founded the German school of philosophy called *Lebensphilosophie* (philosophy of life). He studied theology, history and philosophy in Heidelberg and Berlin and in 1864 he was awarded a doctorate for his dissertation on the ethics of Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834). After holding professorships in Basel, Kiel and Breslau, he became a professor of philosophy at the University of Berlin in 1882. In his *Einleitung in die Geisteswissenschaften* (vol. 1, 1883; *Introduction to the Human Sciences*), he defined the common method of the humanties. Dilthey attempted to establish a theoretical and methodological foundation for the human sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*), distinct from, but following the scientific model of the natural sciences (*Naturwissenschaften*). He argued that in natural sciences we seek to explain phenomena in terms of cause and effect (*Erklärung,* explanation), whereas in the humanities we seek to understand or interpret *(Verstehen*, understanding). On the basis of Schleiermacher’s hermeneutics, Dilthey developed his typology of life, in which individual experience is necessarily tied to its social-historical contexts. Dilthey’s hermeneutics had a strong impact on Martin Heidegger and Hans-Georg Gadamer and his analyses of the human consciousness influenced Edmund Husserl. He died October 1, 1911, in Seis am Schlern, South Tyrol.

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**List of works**

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**References and further reading**

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