

Saulo de Freitas Araujo

Wundt and the Philosophical Foundations of Psychology

A Reappraisal

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With Foreword by Annette Mülberger

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*Pois é possível que Eu, causa do Mundo,
Quanto mais em mim mesma me aprofundo
Menos interiormente me conheça?!*

(Augusto dos Anjos, Natureza Íntima)

Foreword

Why another book on Wundt? If we look at the twentieth-century literature in the field of the history of psychology, we can soon see the prominent role that has been attributed to this historical figure, often referred to as the “founding father of scientific psychology.” When and why did he ascend to these heights in psychology’s history? It had already happened during his lifetime, when his laboratory became a “mecca” for scholars interested in what was called a “new” and “scientific” psychology. A number of external factors certainly helped, such as the attractiveness of German university studies for North-American students and the prestige of Leipzig University at the time, but Wundt also clearly managed to “sell” his research as a monumental and innovative project, while converting his laboratory into an extremely productive scientific institution.

The fact that many of the psychologists who would afterwards obtain influential and prominent positions in foreign universities (such as S. Hall, E. B. Titchener, and J. M. Cattell) had been trained in Leipzig undoubtedly contributed to Wundt’s prestige inside and outside the country. It was also in the interest of his students to praise the quality of their training, paying homage to their mentor. Thus, the historical role of Leipzig as the “cradle of the new science” was being constantly re-affirmed and celebrated. Apart from a particular reverence for the master, what these visitors often grasped and took with them was only a very vague and distorted idea about his thinking, together with a fascination about psychology as a science based on precise measurement and experimentation.

Even in his own lifetime, then, Wundt was an author who often was neither fully read nor fully understood by those invoking his name. He was a typical German *Universitätsgelehrter* or *Mandarin*, who spent his life absorbed by his ambitious intellectual endeavor of constructing a coherent *Weltanschauung* (worldview). The outcome is an impressive, voluminous, and complex opus of more than 50,000 pages. A complete understanding requires an enormous amount of patience, a thorough expertise in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century psychology and philosophy, and a good knowledge of the German language. Many students and visitors lacked this and had only a very limited knowledge of Wundt’s project through reviews or a superficial reading of his famous *Grundzüge der physiologischen Psychologie*.

As a result, Wundt became one of the most cited authors while at the same time an essential part of his thinking was ignored, misunderstood, and sometimes even rejected. Immediately, simpler (in the sense of less philosophical, ambitious, and complex) and more positivist approaches to psychology were adopted, such as those found in the textbooks of Ebbinghaus, Külpe, and Titchener. Histories written before Boring's, such as the biographies of the six "founding fathers" of "modern psychology" written by G. Stanley Hall (1912), dedicated twice as much space to Wundt than to any of the other founding fathers. Boring's book on the history of experimental psychology would soon become a landmark in the field, offering a richness of biographical data clothed in a comprehensive narrative, elaborating on the interplay between the "great men" and the *Zeitgeist* of their time. In his account, Helmholtz and Fechner played the role of immediate forerunners, while the work developed in Wundt's laboratory, founded in 1879, was described as the starting point of psychology as an institutionally autonomous and truly experimental science.

The historical research on Wundt initiated by Blumenthal and Danziger at the centennial celebration of the foundation of his laboratory pointed out the shortcomings, distortions, and even "mystifications" in Boring's work and tried to offer alternative accounts. Aspects of his work such as his epistemology, *Völkerpsychologie*, his journal (*Philosophische Studien*), and the activities in his institute were thus re-examined. In this process of demystification, Wundt's approach was redefined as old-fashioned, conservative, and idealistic. He was presented as an elitist scholar who defended a conceptual framework that was rarely accepted or followed by others. In addition, his political engagement in the First World War against the allies and the cultural arrogance of his *Elements of Völkerpsychologie* were studied. Moreover, his life-long dedication to philosophy was noted, casting into doubt the role he had been given in ending the philosophical era of the history of psychology, and his rejection of what would become the dominant trend, namely applied psychology, made him appear incomprehensible for most psychologists of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Thus, it comes as no surprise that, after an enthusiastic reappraisal of Wundt at the centennial celebration, the interest in this historical figure soon declined. Apart from his rather negative reputation, the value of his psychology was questioned in similar terms to Titchener's structuralism. What can such a psychology, based on an analysis of the content of consciousness of an abstract human mind, offer that could be of interest?

The present book clearly shows that this attitude is unjustified. Wundt's psychology stands out as one of the most sophisticated philosophical conceptions of psychological knowledge, offering insights into essential methodological and conceptual problems of research on thinking, feeling, and perception. His unjustly neglected work can still serve as an example and inspiration for the development of current studies on the human mind.

Of course, under the impact of still-growing social concerns and the presence of Foulcauldian historiography, it is not fashionable to write about Wundt, especially about Wundt as a philosopher of psychology. Nevertheless, a renewed interest in this figure has arisen in Brazil. In 2005, Saulo de Freitas Araujo arrived from the University of Juiz de Fora (in the Region of Minas Gerais) as a doctoral student

at Leipzig. He was determined to dedicate himself to reaching an understanding of Wundt's huge intellectual endeavor. It would take him years of hard work. The outcome of this effort is the present volume. Already honored by the American Psychological Association (Division 26), which awarded Araujo the *2013 Early Career Award*, it is clearly not just "another book" or one more celebration of the Wundtian myth. On the contrary, it constitutes a piece of serious scholarly work, offering a well-constructed analysis. The book thereby serves excellently as an introduction to Wundt's psychology and thinking. His argumentation is easy to follow, voicing accurately the point of view of the Leipzig scholar.

At the same time, it offers a new historical interpretation. Focusing on the close link established by Wundt between his psychological work and his philosophical thinking, Araujo offers an insightful view of his intellectual development and the quest for conceptual coherence. How is his experimental psychology linked to his *Völkerpsychologie*? Why did Wundt at a certain point reject the unconscious? Can he be classified as a Neo-Kantian? How are his principles (psychological laws) connected to his experimental findings and philosophical thinking? Araujo's comprehensive study offers clearly understandable and novel answers to these questions.

This book is a piece of intellectual history, exemplifying one way to connect the history and philosophy of science. It stands in clear contrast to previous sociological analyses. The author starts with a thorough work on the primary sources and thus avoids the consequences of imposing a previously assumed scheme. Without attempting to offer a final and complete picture of Wundt's thinking, Araujo's research clearly leads to a major advancement in Wundt scholarship.

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Preface

This book has a long history, which dates back to 2001, when I entered the PhD program in philosophy at the State University of Campinas (UNICAMP) in Brazil. After interrupting my studies for almost 2 years due to health problems, I resumed them in 2004. I then spent the years 2005 and 2006 in Leipzig, Germany, where I had access to the Wundt Estate (*Wundt Nachlass*) at the University Archives, as well as the different editions of his works in the *Wundt-Zimmer* at the Psychological Institute. In 2007, I finally defended my PhD dissertation, which was published in Portuguese with minor modifications in 2010.

This English edition is not a translation of the Portuguese edition. It is a substantively revised, enlarged, and updated text. It is, in fact, another book. Although the general thesis remains the same, there is much new material, including primary and secondary sources, especially with regard to the literature after 2007. I have also added a new introduction to the book, new sections in each chapter, and new clarifications regarding the intellectual context of the nineteenth century in Germany, in order to make my arguments clearer and stronger. By the end, I hope to have better explained some difficult passages of the previous edition, thus rendering the book more suitable not only to specialists but also to anyone interested in the history and philosophy of psychology. Thinking of a broader audience, I have added footnotes, concerning the general context of some passages, which would not be necessary if the book had been written only for specialists.

Portions of the second chapter originally appeared in Araujo, S. F. (2012). Why did Wundt abandon his early theory of the unconscious? Towards a new interpretation of Wundt's psychological project. *History of Psychology*, 15(1), 33–49. Copyright © 2012 by the American Psychological Association. Adapted with permission.

Citations and Translations

Throughout the book, I use APA style, according to the sixth edition of its *Publication Manual*. There are some exceptions, though. Since there is no official edition of Wundt's works, I created abbreviations for each of his published books, articles, and book chapters that I use here (see list of abbreviations). Accordingly, the references are given by the corresponding abbreviation, followed by the corresponding volume number (when applicable) in Roman numerals and page numbers in Arabic. Regarding Kant, I followed the standard practice among Kant scholars, adopting the Academy Edition (*Akademie-Ausgabe*) of his writings (*Kants gesammelte Schriften* in 29 volumes), edited by de Gruyter. Thus, the references take the abbreviation AA, followed by the corresponding volume number in Roman numerals and page numbers in Arabic. The only exception, as usual, is the *Critique of Pure Reason* (CPR), which is referenced in accordance with the first (A) or second (B) original edition, followed by the corresponding page numbers. As for the archival funds, I followed the original abbreviations of each fund, adding the necessary specifications in each reference (e.g., letter and page number). Finally, in the specific cases of Wolff, Herbart, and Schopenhauer, I gave the corresponding paragraph numbers instead of page numbers, as is usual among their interpreters.

Except when otherwise indicated, all the translations of the original German, French, and Latin passages are mine. For Kant's works, I used whenever possible the translations of the *Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*, indicating the exact reference of each translation. As for Wundt, I tried to preserve as much as possible his original style. His writing is very elegant but extremely complex, following the typical nineteenth-century style of German philosophy, with long paragraphs composed of many subordinate clauses. Sometimes, it was not easy to find an adequate translation in English, but I tried to be as accurate as possible. Whenever I had to choose between accuracy and beauty, I opted for the former. Not being a native speaker of either German or English has made things more difficult. In any case, I hope to have been faithful to Wundt's thought. The extent to which I have succeeded I leave for every reader to judge for him/herself.

Juiz de Fora, Brazil

Saulo de Freitas Araujo

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During all these years, I have been in the unpayable debt of many people. First, to my PhD supervisor in Brazil, Prof. Dr. Luiz Roberto Monzani, with whom I have learned to respect and admire the history of philosophy. I am equally grateful to Prof. Dr. Ortrun Riha and all the members of the *Karl-Sudhoff-Institut für Geschichte der Medizin und der Naturwissenschaften* at Leipzig University, where I found an excellent environment to develop my research. Dr. Anneros Meischner-Metge, responsible for the *Wundt-Zimmer*, gave me invaluable help and information regarding Wundt's work and the history of psychology in Leipzig. Dr. Jens Blecher, Sandy Muhl, and Michael Natho at the University Archives in Leipzig made my archival research much easier. Dr. Werner Moritz at the University Archives in Heidelberg saved me much time during my visit there.

Regarding this English edition, it was mostly prepared during my sabbatical leave at the Autonomous University of Barcelona (Spain), where I spent the period 2013/2014 as guest scholar in the Philosophy Department, whose members I thank for their generous reception. I am especially grateful to Thomas Sturm and Annette Mülberger for reading and commenting on the manuscript and for the inspiring intellectual exchanges we have had in recent years. Their rigorous and critical reading and our lively debates have been invaluable to me. I am also grateful to the members of CEHIC (Centre for the History of Science), who invited me to present the plan and the main ideas of the book, followed by a general discussion: Augustí Nieto Galan, Fernando Vidal, Massimiliano Badino, Lino Camprubí, Oliver Hochadel, and Xavier Roqué.

Since the publication of the Portuguese edition, I have had the opportunity to present and discuss ideas with many scholars in North America and Europe. I would like to thank Wade Pickren and Alexandra Rutherford for their generosity and keen interest in making a North-American audience aware of my scholarship. I also thank the members of the Cheiron Society and the Society for the History of Psychology (APA's Division 26) for their comments and suggestions: William Woodward, David Robinson, Rand Evans, Christopher Green, Andrew Winston, Thomas Teo,

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Last but not least, I am grateful to DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service), CNPq (National Council for Scientific and Technological Development), CAPES (Brazilian Federal Agency for Support and Evaluation of Graduate Education), and PROPG (Pro-rectorate for Graduate Studies) at the UFJF for financial support.

Juiz de Fora, Brazil

Saulo de Freitas Araujo

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Abbreviations

Archival Funds

- UAH, H-III-111 Universitätsarchiv Heidelberg, *Akten der medizinischen Fakultät*
UAH, PA Universitätsarchiv Heidelberg, *Personalakte*
UAL, NW Universitätsarchiv Leipzig, *Nachlass Wundt*

Kant's Works

- AA Akademie-Ausgabe. *Kants gesammelte Schriften* (29 Vols.), 1900ff.
CPR Critique of Pure Reason, First Edition (A) and Second Edition (B)

Wundt's Works (in alphabetical order)¹

- AEP Die Aufgaben der experimentellen Psychologie (1882)
BBA Berichtigende Bemerkung zu dem Aufsätze des Herrn B. Erdmann (1880)
BTS Beiträge zur Theorie der Sinneswahrnehmung (1862)
CIC Central innervation and consciousness (1876)
DTP Die Thierpsychologie (1885)
DGG Die Geschwindigkeit des Gedankens (1862)
EB Eine Berichtigung (1915)
EDW₁ Die Entwicklung des Willens (1885)
EDW₂ Die Entwicklung des Willens (1906)

¹The chronological order of these works is presented as part of the sources at the end of the book.

EE	Erlebtes und Erkanntes (1920)
EMP	Über empirische und metaphysische Psychologie (1904)
EPhi	Einleitung in die Philosophie (1918)
EPsy	Einführung in die Psychologie (1911)
Eth	Ethik (1886)
EVP	Elemente der Völkerpsychologie (1912)
GDP	Grundriss der Psychologie (1896)
GPP ₁	Grundzüge der Physiologischen Psychologie (1874)
GPP ₂	Grundzüge der Physiologischen Psychologie. 2nd ed. 2 vols. (1880)
GPP ₃	Grundzüge der Physiologischen Psychologie. 3rd ed. 2 vols. (1887)
GPP ₄	Grundzüge der Physiologischen Psychologie. 4th ed. 2 vols. (1893)
GPP ₅	Grundzüge der Physiologischen Psychologie. 5th ed. 3 vols (1902–1903)
GPP ₆	Grundzüge der Physiologischen Psychologie. 6th ed. 3 vols. (1908–1911)
GUS	Gehirn und Seele (1880)
GWL	Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1913)
HMP	Handbuch der medicinischen Physik (1867)
IEP	Das Institut für experimentelle Psychologie (1909)
KNA	Kritische Nachlese zur Ausfragemethode (1908)
L ₁	Logik, 2 vols. (1880–1883)
L ₂	Logik. 2nd ed. Vol. II.2 (1895)
L ₃	Logik. 3rd ed. Vol. I (1906)
L ₄	Logik. 4th ed. Vol. III (1921)
LEI	Leibniz. Zu seinem 200 jährigen Todestag (1917)
LHA	Lectures on human and animal psychology (1912)
LMB	Die Lehre von der Muskelbewegung (1858)
LPM ₁	Lehrbuch der Physiologie des Menschen (1865)
LPM ₂	Lehrbuch der Physiologie des Menschen. 2nd ed. (1868)
LPM ₃	Lehrbuch der Physiologie des Menschen. 3rd ed. (1873)
LPM ₄	Lehrbuch der Physiologie des Menschen. 4th ed. (1878)
LUP	Logik und Psychologie (1910)
MVG	Die Metaphysik in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart (1902)
NKR ₁	Ueber naiven und kritischen Realismus. Erster Artikel (1896)
NKR ₂	Ueber naiven und kritischen Realismus. Zweiter Artikel (1898)
NKR ₃	Ueber naiven und kritischen Realismus. Dritter Artikel (1898)
NLG	Neuere Leistungen auf dem Gebiete der physiologischen Psychologie (1867)
NWP ₁	Naturwissenschaft und Psychologie (1903)
NWP ₂	Naturwissenschaft und Psychologie. 2nd ed. (1911)
PAC	Die Physikalischen Axiome und Ihre Beziehung zum Causalprincip (1866)
PIG	Philosophy in Germany (1877)
PKD	Die Psychologie im Kampf ums Dasein (1913)
PMN	Die Prinzipien der mechanischen Naturlehre (1910)
PUL	Psychologismus und Logizismus (1910)
RCor	Rezension von Cornelius' Grundzüge einer Molecularphysik (1866)
RGer	Rezension von Gerbers Die Sprache und das Erkennen (1886)

RHae	Rezension von Haeckels Generelle Morphologie der Organismen (1867)
RHar	Rezension von Harms' Philisopische Einleitung in die Encyclopädie der Physik (1870)
RHel	Rezension von Helmholtz' Handbuch der physiologischen Optik (1867)
RHer	Rezension von Hermanns Die Sprachwissenschaft nach ihrem Zusammenhang mit Logik, menschlicher Geistesbildung und Philosophie (1876)
RSpe ₁	Rezension von Spencers Grundlagen der Philosophie (1875)
RSpe ₂	Rezension von Spencers Einleitung in das Studium der Sociologie (1876)
RSpe ₃	Rezension von Spencers System der synthetischen Philosophie, II: Die Principien der Biologie, Band 1 (1877)
RSpe ₄	Rezension von Spencers System der synthetischen Philosophie, II: Die Principien der Biologie, Band 2 (1878)
SDS	Das Sittliche in der Sprache (1886)
SGS	Sprachgeschichte und Sprachpsychologie (1901)
SIW	Selbstbeobachtung und innere Wahrnehmung (1888)
SP ₁	System der Philosophie (1889)
SP ₂	System der Philosophie. 2nd ed. (1897)
SP ₄	System der Philosophie. 4th ed. (1919)
SUD	Die Sprache und das Denken (1885)
SÜW	Sinnliche und Übersinnliche Welt (1914)
UAE	Über Ausfrageexperimente und über die Methoden zur Psychologie des Denkens (1907)
UAP	Ueber die Aufgabe der Philosophie in der Gegenwart (1874)
UBG	Ueber den Begriff des Gesetzes, mit Rücksicht auf die Frage der Ausnahmslosigkeit der Lautgesetze (1886)
UDP	Über die Definition der Psychologie (1896)
UEG	Über die Entstehung räumlicher Gesichtswahrnehmungen (1869)
UEP	Über den Einfluss der Philosophie auf die Erfahrungswissenschaften (1876)
UEW	Ueber die Eintheilung der Wissenschaften (1889)
UHK	Ueber Dr. Hering's Kritik meiner Theorie des binocularen Sehens (1863)
UPA	Über die physikalischen Axiome (1886)
UPC	Ueber psychische Causalität und das Princip des psychophysischen Parallelismus (1894)
UPK	Über psychische Kausalität (1911)
UPM	Über psychologische Methoden (1883)
UVE	Über das Verhältnis des Einzelnen zur Gemeinschaft (1891/1913)
UZW	Ueber Ziele und Wege der Völkerpsychologie (1888)
VEP	Völkerpsychologie und Entwicklungspsychologie (1916)
VMT ₁	Vorlesungen über die Menschen- und Thierseele (1863)
VMT ₂	Vorlesungen über die Menschen- und Thierseele. 2nd ed. (1892)
VPK	Völkerpsychologie. Kultur und Geschichte (1920)
VPS	Völkerpsychologie. Die Sprache (1900)
WSK	Was soll uns Kant nicht sein? (1892)

ZFL	Zur Frage der Localisation der Grosshirnfunctionen (1891)
ZKS	Zur Kritik des Seelenbegriffs (1885)
ZLG	Zur Lehre von den Gemüthsbewegungen (1891)
ZLW	Zur Lehre vom Willen (1883)
ZWV	Ziele und Wege der Völkerpsychologie (1911)

Chapter 1

Introduction

This book is intended to be a *philosophical* history of psychology, that is, a history of psychology guided by specific philosophical questions, the most important of which is the general relationship between psychology and philosophy. At the same time, the book's subject matter can be considered a case study in the History and Philosophy of Science. By placing Wundt's psychological project in its historical context, I want to demonstrate how his project is intertwined with his philosophical assumptions and interests. Thus, the book offers an example of the relationship between psychology and philosophy in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Furthermore, by focusing my analysis on Wundt's intellectual development and by showing the formation of his philosophical program, I offer a new interpretation of his conception of scientific psychology that tries to be faithful to the systematic character of his thought, in contrast to much of the traditional historiography of psychology, which presents a rather fragmented, sometimes unilateral treatment of his ideas. It is, so to speak, 'a view from above'; that is, I see Wundt's psychology as part of his highest epistemic ideals, which are philosophical in their essence. From the beginning, it must be clear that throughout the book, the term 'psychology' will be understood as a science, the aim of which is to obtain theoretical knowledge. For Wundt, psychology was never intended to solve individual, social, or cultural problems. The justification for all these claims is given in the following sections, which serve as a general introduction to the book.

1.1 German Psychology Before Wundt: An Overview

Before beginning the presentation and discussion of Wundt's psychological project, I would like to offer a very brief description of the historical background that favored its emergence and development. More specifically, I want to focus this brief contextualization on the emergence of different conceptions of scientific psychology

within the German tradition up to the first half of the nineteenth century.¹ Other, more specific aspects will be discussed throughout the book, according to their pertinence to specific questions raised in each chapter.

Horst Gundlach (2004a, 2004b, 2006) has introduced an important conceptual distinction to the historiography of psychology. According to him, the term ‘psychology’ can refer to both a field of knowledge or science (*Gebiet, Wissenschaft*) and to a discipline in the strict sense (*Fach, Disziplin*), that is, an institutionalized subject, the teaching of which is mandatory for a specific professional training.² Accordingly, in its first meaning, psychology is much older than in its second, although both meanings intersect in the nineteenth century.³ Thus, I want to make it clear that I am using the term ‘psychology’ in the primary way that Wundt understood it: as a science, a field of knowledge with a proper subject matter (the mind), a specific vocabulary, and specific methods of investigation, the central aim of which is to obtain theoretical knowledge.

It is no novelty that there was a long German psychological tradition before Wundt, as the literature shows (e.g., Bell, 2005; Carus, 1808; Dessoir, 1902; Laehr, 1900; Meischner-Metge, 2009; Sachs-Hombach, 1993; Sommer, 1892). The term ‘psychology’ appeared in German culture for the first time in the sixteenth century, mostly in relation to discussions about Aristotle’s *De Anima* or the immortality of the soul (Brozek, 1999; Lapointe, 1970, 1972; Luccio, 2013; Park & Kessler, 1988; Scheerer, 1989; Vidal, 2011). However, it is not enough to follow the history of the term, because it was not univocal; it was often intercalated with other terms, such as ‘pneumatology’ and ‘anthropology’ (Sturm, 2009; Vidal, 2011); and most important of all, it did not designate an independent or new field of knowledge.⁴

It seems that, as an autonomous science (*Wissenschaft*) of the mind—an organized and systematic field of knowledge with a proper subject matter (the mind), a specific vocabulary, and new methods of investigation—psychology first appeared in the eighteenth century, as recent literature suggests (e.g., Brauns, 2002; Fox, 1987;

¹This does not mean that British and French intellectual traditions are not relevant to Wundt’s project. As I will show in the following chapters, Wundt was well acquainted with British and French ideas (e.g., positivism). However, his motivation for establishing a new psychology grew out of his dissatisfaction with the German psychological tradition preceding him.

²For an alternative and broader understanding of the term ‘discipline,’ as well as its implications for the history of psychology, see Vidal (2011, pp. 3–8).

³This happened first in Germany, as a result of its significant educational reforms in the first decades of the nineteenth century. For a broader context of such reforms, see Nipperdey (1998) and Wehler (2008a, 2008b).

⁴According to Park and Kessler, “philosophers and scientists of the Renaissance did not treat psychology, the philosophical study of the soul, as an independent discipline. Following the medieval tradition, they placed it within the broader context of natural philosophy, and they approached it, like the other sub-divisions of natural philosophy, through the works of Aristotle, notably *De anima* and the *Parva naturalia*” (Park & Kessler, 1988, p. 455, emphasis in original). Vidal comes to the same conclusion: “The term *psychologia* may well have named certain discourses linked to new ways of thinking about the *scientia de anima* in sixteenth-century Protestant Germany, but it certainly was not conceptualized in terms of a radical break or presented as a new field of empirical knowledge” (Vidal, 2011, pp. 29–30, emphasis in original).

Gundlach, 2006; Hatfield, 1995; Sturm, 2006, 2009; Vidal, 2011).⁵ In this context, Christian Wolff (1679–1754) played a prominent role, giving psychology a new conceptual direction.⁶

For Wolff, psychology has a proper subject matter: the soul or mind (*Die Seele*). In order to approach this subject, one must adopt a twofold strategy. One must start from the most basic experience, from what one knows immediately (e.g., that I am conscious of myself). However, in order to find the ultimate justification for what is given in experience, it is necessary to go beyond experience and capture through reasoning the nature or essence of the mind. This difficult enterprise led Wolff to propose a division of labor for psychology, according to which the investigation of the mind should occur in two distinct and separate moments, one empirical and one metaphysical. This program was first carried out in his German writings (e.g., Wolff, 1751/2003, §§ 191–539 and §§ 727–927), but it was only in his Latin works that Wolff gave each part of psychology its proper name—empirical psychology and rational psychology, respectively (Wolff, 1740/1983, §§ 111–112)—and then its full elaboration and development (Wolff, 1738/1968, 1740/1972). For Wolff, as part of a broader and universal system of knowledge, empirical psychology and rational psychology should complement and never contradict each other. With his project, Wolff inaugurated a way to conceive of psychology that would serve as a reference for debates in the field for more than a century, at least in Germany.⁷

Eighteenth-century psychology was not restricted to Wolff's program, however. Besides this more 'armchair' style, psychology also developed in close relationship with natural science. There is now ample evidence of experiments on and attempts to measure mental phenomena, such as attention and visual perception, as one can see, for example, in the works of Johann Gottlob Krüger (1715–1759), Johann Georg Sulzer (1720–1779), and Johann Nicolas Tetens (1736–1807). Even if the phrase 'experimental psychology' (*experimentelle Psychologie*) still did not appear in a very clear way (Hatfield, 1995; Ramul, 1960; Sturm, 2006, 2009; Zelle, 2001), there cannot be any doubt that the experimental method was being applied to psychological phenomena in the eighteenth century.⁸

⁵Richards (1992) offers an alternative account. For him, "with the isolated exception of Tetens, experimental empirical Psychology was unknown in Enlightenment Germany" (Richards, 1992, p. 204).

⁶In recent years, the pioneering work of Jean École and collaborators on a new edition of Wolff's collected works (*Christian Wolff's Gesammelte Werke*) has stimulated a reevaluation of his intellectual legacy, including his psychological project (Araujo, 2012a; Araujo & Pereira, 2014; Bell, 2005; École, 1985; Gerlach, 2001; Marcolungo, 2007; Mei, 2011; Rudolph & Goubet, 2004; Schneiders, 1983; Sturm, 2009; Vidal, 2011).

⁷As I will show in Sect. 2.1, Wundt refers explicitly to Wolff's division of psychology in order to justify his new psychological program.

⁸Krüger (1756) called his investigation an "experimental theory of the mind" (*Experimental Seelenlehre*) and Sulzer (1759), after claiming that psychology should proceed according to physics, defined it as "the experimental physics of the mind" (Sulzer, 1759, p. 157). In the same way, Tetens (1760/2005, p. 13) refers to the *Experimental-Seelenlehre* as a necessary basis for metaphysics. It might be objected, however, that such phrases do not imply that people were doing truly psychological experiments, only that they were referring to what Wolff called empirical psychol-

Immanuel Kant's (1724–1804) classic critique of psychology should be understood within this context. Initially close to Wolff's program through one of his disciples, Alexander Baumgarten (1714–1762), Kant came to reject the very idea of a rational psychology, claiming that there is no such thing as a substantial soul or mind that could be an object of knowledge (CPR, A381–382). With regard to empirical psychology, he accepted the idea of an empirical investigation of the mind, but with certain restrictions. First, psychology could never become a proper science like physics was, because mathematics could not be applied to the phenomena of inner sense. Second, Kant criticized free introspection or self-observation—the psychological method *par excellence* for Wolff and his school—claiming that the act of observation changes the observed object (inner phenomena). Regarding the experimental tradition, Kant refused the possibility of the direct manipulation (arbitrary selection and separation) of psychological phenomena because they could not be objectively isolated, only in thought.⁹ On the basis of such arguments, Kant concluded that empirical psychology should be understood as a descriptive doctrine of the mind and never as a proper natural science (AA IV, 471).¹⁰ Not by accident, he ended up integrating empirical psychology into his pragmatic anthropology (AA VII, 127–282).¹¹

Kant's critique of psychology became a reference point for German psychologists in the nineteenth century. Many psychological projects were thought of as a sort of reply to Kant. Not by accident, there was an explosion of new projects for a scientific psychology (*Psychologie als Wissenschaft*) trying to prove Kant wrong. For them, psychology as a science was indeed possible. However, the term *Wissenschaft* should not be taken at face value, because underlying these programs were different conceptions of what a scientific psychology should be.

To form a general idea of this complex background in the first half of the nineteenth century, I will briefly mention only a few psychological projects that appeared in German culture before 1860.¹² First, and most influential, was Johann Friedrich Herbart's (1776–1841) mechanical and metaphysical psychology (Herbart, 1850a–1850c), further

ogy. Now, it is true that the adjectives 'experimental' and 'empirical' were used interchangeably during that period, but in many cases specific experiments were also being conducted, over and above the ambiguous terminology. Among others, Krüger's case leaves no doubt, as Hatfield (1995), Sturm (2006) and Zelle (2001) have convincingly shown. Similarly, Tetens described many experiments he had done to test his ideas (e.g., Tetens, 1777, pp. 123–124, 197–198). This evidence refutes Richards's general thesis about the absence of a scientific psychology in the eighteenth century (Richards, 1992).

⁹ Kant's discussion of the limits of the experimental method when applied to psychological matters is further evidence in favor of the existence of experimental psychology in the eighteenth century. If there had been no such experiments, how would he have been able to discuss the idea of an experimental doctrine of the mind?

¹⁰ There are many recent studies on the meaning of Kant's critique of psychology (e.g., Araujo, 2013a; Hatfield, 1992; Sturm, 2001, 2006).

¹¹ For recent accounts of the relationship between psychology and anthropology in Kant, see Leite and Araujo (2014), Frierson (2014), Sturm (2009), and Wilson (2006).

¹² Wundt launched his first program for a scientific psychology in 1862 (see Chap. 2).

developed by his disciples, despite important divergences among them, especially in relation to the acceptance of mathematical psychology (Bastian, 1860; Drobisch, 1842, 1850; Volkman, 1856; Waitz, 1846, 1849).¹³ In direct opposition to Herbart, Friedrich Eduard Beneke (1798–1854) established another direction for psychology. His main idea was to make empirical psychology the fundamental science upon which we should base all our knowledge, thereby rejecting any vestige of a transcendent metaphysics (Beneke, 1820, 1832, 1845).¹⁴ A third was the so-called romantic psychology, of which the programs of Carl Gustav Carus (1789–1869) and Carl August von Eschenmayer (1768–1852) are good examples. Under the influence of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832), Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling (1775–1854), and *Naturphilosophie*, the romantic psychologists rebelled against a mechanical conception of life and tried to establish a teleological model of the mind from the perspective of an ideal totality, in which there was no opposition between nature and mind (Carus, 1831, 1846; Eschenmayer, 1817).¹⁵ Still within the idealist tradition, one can detect a fourth current, the Hegelian school of psychology, mainly represented by Johann Karl Friedrich Rosenkranz (1805–1879), Carl Ludwig Michelet (1801–1893), and Johann Eduard Erdmann (1805–1892). Understanding science in the Hegelian sense of a philosophical apprehension of the whole of reality, they called psychology “the science or philosophy of the subjective spirit” (Erdmann, 1842; Michelet, 1840; Rosenkranz, 1837, 1850).¹⁶ A fifth direction emerged from the new physiology, finding one of its expressions in Rudolf Hermann Lotze’s (1817–1881) program for a medical or physiological psychology (Lotze, 1852).¹⁷ Finally, there was Gustav Theodor Fechner’s (1801–1887) psychophysics and his search for functional relationships between the physical and the mental (e.g., between stimulus and sensation), which appeared only 2 years before, and was explicitly referenced in, Wundt’s first programmatic essay (Fechner, 1860/1964).¹⁸

¹³As will become clear in the chapters that follow, Herbart remained a reference for Wundt throughout his career. Despite being a critic of Herbart’s psychological program, Wundt borrowed some of his concepts and ideas (e.g., the concept of *Verschmelzung*).

¹⁴Although it is certain that Wundt knew Beneke’s work, it is not clear how much of it he appropriated for his own purposes. As I will show in Chap. 2, there are certain similarities. However, a careful study of this topic remains to be carried out.

¹⁵Wundt shared with the romantic psychologists the genetic approach to mental life (see Chap. 2).

¹⁶It is not clear how much Wundt knew about such Hegelian psychological programs. This is another topic worthy of investigation.

¹⁷In connection with the new German physiology, one must add the names of Johannes Müller (1801–1858), Emil du Bois-Reymond (1818–1896), and Hermann Helmholtz (1821–1894), among others. Given its relevance for Wundt’s psychological project, I will discuss different aspects of this physiological tradition in a more detailed way in Chap. 2, showing Wundt’s debts to it.

¹⁸To my knowledge, there is no work covering all these conceptions of psychology, although some of them have been addressed (e.g., Bell, 2005; Brandt, 1895; Dunkel, 1970; Exner, 1842–1844; Gundlach, 1993; Heidelberger, 2004; Heinrich, 1895; Sachs-Hombach, 1993).