

CHAPTER 1

THE BADEN HOME IN THE MIDDLE OF THE 19TH CENTURY

If the biographical appreciation of an important person is to succeed, it seems indispensable to first portray the zeitgeist in which that person grew up in.

The middle of the last century in Europe was marked by a series of profound and momentous changes, such as the industrial revolution, population growth and increasing social problems. From a political point of view, historians refer to 1848 – Wundt was already 16 years old this year – as the year of the European revolution.



Figure 1: Karl Marx (1818–1890), philosopher, economist and publicist

The teachings of Karl Marx on the „dictatorship of the proletariat and classless society“ were in full bloom at this time and became almost a „doctrine of salvation“ or „substitute religion“.

At the beginning of his autobiography, Wundt (1920) reports on a „village revolution in Heidelberg“ after describing his earliest childhood memories:

„I was sitting on the stairs of my father's house on the day I had just finished my first year of elementary school, around 1838-1840, when a colourful procession of people moved across the marketplace in front of me, their leaders dragging a huge tree, which they erected in the middle of the square and which I was told was a „freedom tree“. Even though I could not associate a clear meaning with this word, I gradually began to understand its meaning roughly, when at dusk a large crowd gathered in front of the house of the mayor living across the street under a lot of shouting and screaming, and suddenly a bright fire flared up in front of the building. I can still see the serious figure of the neighbourhood magistrate walking up and down in my parents' room, followed by a squadron of dragoons riding across the square, in front of which the crowd scattered to all winds.“ (Wundt, 1920, p. 3)

This quite vivid memory of the approx. 6-7 year old Wundt, illustrates quite impressively and vividly the atmosphere of political unrest that prevailed in the Duchy of Baden at that time. This village revolution in Heidelberg (Wundt lived here from 1836 to 1844) cost the life of a young prisoner, according to Bringmann et al. (1980), and brought heavy prison sentences and fines to 40



Figure 2: Contemporary engraving of entry of National Assembly into the Paulskirche in Frankfurt 1848

imprisoned village people. According to Wundt's own statement, the Baden revolution of the summer of 1849 mainly took place in this area. It should be noted here that according to Bringmann et al. (1980) Baden was at that time considered one of the more liberal principalities in Germany, both in terms of administration and intellectual climate (see also Gall, 1968).

The entry of the National Assembly into the Paulskirche in Frankfurt/Main on 18 May 1848 (see Fig. 2) was now a significant event in the direction of democratising the German state, as this represented the first form of parliament. The dissolution of the Paulskirche in March 1849, on the other hand, triggered uprisings of the radicals in Saxony, the Palatinate and Baden, which were bloodily crushed by the Prussian troops, whereby „with the fall of the last revolutionary Baden bastion, the fortress Rastatt, the Baden Republic ended and the Prussian reaction triumphed“, as Meischner & Eschler (1979) put it in their Wundt-Biography.

But the first decades of the 19th century were also an epoch of the rise of science and technology. After the invention of the steam engine in England, the era of industrialisation also began in Germany and already in December 1835 – 3 years after Wundt's birth – the first German railway line was opened between Nuremberg and Fürth.

In 1839 – the young Wundt was just going to the old Heidelberg elementary school – the first German railway – interurban connection from Leipzig to Dresden, about 100 km away, was put into operation. These years, in which Wundt grew up, were the years of industrialisation of Germany, whereby the initially more advanced development of England was soon caught up with.

According to Günther (1987), the „machine age“ also changed the human perception of time and space and thus the human psyche. A very vivid example of the effects of the industrialization of Germany, and especially of Baden, on the people affected can again be found in Wundt's autobiography (1920), when he reports on hikes with his maternal grandfather Zacharias Arnold in the Heidelberg area and both follow the construction of the first railway station or railway line: (see Fig. 3)

„Among these walks, the „Pariser Weg“, a narrow alley outside the city at the site of the present complex or Leopoldstraße, played a special role. For this path led to the railway station that my grandfather and I followed from its first creation to its completion. I still clearly remember the first act of this genesis. It consisted in the extermination of a large vineyard located here outside the city, which was carried out by several women, crying in indignation and quarrelling about the expropriation they were being subjected to. Then when the first small railway station was built, I see us both among a large number of people who gathered here to see the first train leave Heidelberg for Mannheim“ (Wundt, 1920, p. 36).



Figure 3: Contemporary engraving of the old Heidelberg train station 1847

Fig. 3 shows the first Heidelberg station in a contemporary engraving. In his Freud biography Günther (1987) speaks of a time of so-called „founding years“, of an epoch of new beginnings and the discovery of the new. In many fields there were „founding fathers“ at that time, who gained new historical insights, developed and built new industries or founded new sciences.

This is how the English natural scientist Charles Robert Darwin (1809 – 1882) founded the theory of selection and evolution (see Fig. 4). With his work „On the Origins of Species by Means of Natural Selection“ published in 1859, Darwin triggered a shock in the second half of the 19th century for the hitherto rather orthodox people and the idea of his „theory of evolution“ led to a challenge of the old thinking. The physicist Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen (1845 – 1923), for example, discovered the X-rays that were named after him. The already mentioned Karl Marx (1818 – 1883), philosopher, social and economic scientist, founded the Marxist social doctrine and was considered the creator of scientific socialism.

Finally, as a last example, the Austrian neurologist Sigmund Freud (1856 – 1939), who founded psychoanalysis and is wrongly considered by many to be the founder of psychology. Possible personal and substantive connections between Wundt and Freud will be discussed later.



Figure 4: Charles Robert Darwin (1809-1882), naturalist and founder of the evolution theory about 1860

CHAPTER 2

THE ANCESTORS AND THE PARENTAL HOME

In a letter to Sophie Mau, his later wife, Wundt himself gives references to his ancestors in 1872, when he writes of the Protestant theologians of the paternal line and of the medical and natural scientists of the maternal line.

In the "Ahnentafeln berühmter Deutscher", which the "Zentralstelle für Deutsche Personen- und Familiengeschichte" in Leipzig published from 1929 to 1932, the physician Dr. Gottfried Roesler from Breslau published a genealogical table of Wilhelm Wundt, which lists 58 male and 44 female ancestors. The 4th generation with 8 names is still complete, the 5th generation with 13 of 16 names almost complete and only with the 6th generation (15 of 32 names) the picture becomes incomplete. In the 12th generation only 2 names of 2048 can be identified.

The following overview shows the first 7 generations of the male line pedigree processed by Roesler.

1. Generation	Wilhelm Wundt	* 16.08.1832 in Neckarau	† 31.08.1920 in Großbothen/ Leipzig
	Married with: Sophie Mau	* 23.01.1844 in Kiel	† 15.04.1912 in Leipzig
2. Generation	Maximilian Wundt	* 13.08.1787 in Kaiserslautern	† 03.07.1846 in Heidelberg
	Married with: Marie Friederike Arnold	* 16.06.1797 in Edenkoben	† 30.12.1868 in Heidelberg
3. Generation	Friedrich Peter Wundt	* 16.08.1745 in Kaiserslautern	† 13.03.1805 in Wieblingen
	Married with: Magdalena Fliesen	* 1760 in Kaiserslautern	† 1798 in Wieblingen
4. Generation	Johann Jakob Wundt	* 12.09.1700 in Monzingen	† 02.09.1771 in Heidelberg
	Married with: Maria Modesta Mieg	* 16.02.1714 in Heidelberg	† 1767
5. Generation	Johannes Adam Wundt	* 17.09.1676 in Kreuznach	† 02.09.1757 in Kreuznach
	Married with: Maria Dorothea Fuchs	* 15.09.1679 in Monzingen	† 24.10.1723 in Kreuznach
6. Generation	Adolf Nikolaus Wundt	* 1639 in Kreuznach	† 09.06.1697 in Kreuznach
	Married with: Martha Juliane Achenbacher		
7. Generation	Andreas Wundt	* in Kärnten/Steiermark	† in Stralsund (nicht vor 1643)
	Zuletzt tätig als königlicher schwedischer Stallmeister		

The genealogical table shows that the Wundt family comes from Carinthia. The brothers Balthasar, Andreas and Adam, "the Wundegggers from and to Wundegg", ennobled by Ferdinand II on 27.11.1628 because of their father's merits in the Turkish wars, fled as Protestants to Strasbourg shortly afterwards (Roesler, 1933). Balthasar and Adam later resumed the Catholic faith, returned to Styria and founded a respected and prosperous family in Graz.

Andreas, on the other hand, became stable master at the court of Duke Johann II of Zweibrücken, called himself Wundt, later entered Swedish service and died in Stralsund. In the evaluation of the pedigree Roesler (1933) writes conclusively:

"We find the pedigree of the test person quite evenly composed of theologians, practical as well as learned, other academics, as well as higher officials in city or state service, all in the relatively narrow sphere of the Electoral Palatinate and Heidelberg in the 17th and 18th century. On the father's side, i.e. with the emphasis on professional tradition, the large number of theology professors is to be emphasized. From a social point of view, this genealogical table can thus be regarded as "stable" or at least as evenly mixed: it shows a highly developed middle class, active and in part leading in scientific and political life in a spatially and historically limited area, even if the sources for this have flowed together from the south and north..... The personality of Wundts, as it was drawn at the beginning, thus appears as a harmonious further development and formation of a predominantly self-contained, ancestral heritage that is solidly rooted in tradition.

All in all, the genealogical analyses of Wundt's pedigree particularly emphasize the accumulation of so many intellectually active people (Kessler, 1933).

In a newspaper article in the *Heidelberger Neuesten Nachrichten* of October 18, 1928, the Heidelberg parish priest D. Neu deals mainly with Wundt's grandfather, Friedrich Peter Wundt (1742-1805), who taught geography and Palatinate history in addition to his parish office as professor at the University of Heidelberg. In this article Neu (1928) describes in great detail how "Pastor Wundt saw evil days in Wieblingen during the time of the French Revolution".

"When the French flooded the left bank of the Rhine in the Palatinate in 1795, enormous masses of troops were drawn together on the right side, and Wieblingen, too, always had a rich share in the quartering....., and like the whole town, the vicarage was particularly badly affected.

As the French found the doors and shutters closed, they smashed them, to make themselves comfortable inside, and to take what they found....., the parish family took refuge in the Catholic parsonage, especially as the parish priest's wife was seriously ill. But Wundt left his son with a citizen to protect the house in the rectory. The next day, several fires broke out in the village, so Wundt, like most Wieblingen citizens, went to Heidelberg....., and so Wundt could not return to the completely demolished parsonage, especially since there were always troops in the house. No service could be held

on two Sundays,..... and finally Wundt ordered that fixed shops be set up at the parsonage and high walls erected around the house and garden.

It is clear from the article that Wundt's grandfather Peter earned great recognition and merits for the promotion of Palatinate history and wrote this down in numerous publications. Neu (1928) concludes his newspaper article with great respect for the Wundt family:

"Today the name has disappeared in Heidelberg, but through the philosopher Wundt it has become a name of which the whole of Germany is proud. He therefore deserves to be remembered and to be recorded in some way, and this would be best done in the district of Wieblingen, because that is where the bearer of the name, who was so well known for the history of the Palatinate and Heidelberg, lived, and that is where the father of the famous philosopher grew up.

Peter Wundt died on March 13, 1808 as a result of the "Stock- and Katharfluss" and left behind his second wife with five children from his first marriage.

The oldest of the children, Maximilian, studied theology from Wieblingen in Heidelberg, where he was enrolled in 1806. He later became a pastor in Neckarau, where his famous son was born (see Fig. 5).



Figure 5: Former evangelical church in Neckarau before the turn of the century

THE PARENTAL HOME

Wundt's father, Maximilian Wundt, born in Kaiserslautern on 13.8.1787, was later a pastor in Heidelberg in Baden. He was known for his kindness and lavish generosity (Roesler, 1933). The no less sociable mother, Maria Friederike Arnold, who was his actual educator after the early death of his father (Wundt was just 14 years old), is described, on the other hand, as cheerful, sociable, thrifty and economical, traits which, according to Kessler's description of Wundt's ancestral heir (1933), all recurred in the son.

Wundt's parents had four children, of whom only he himself and his brother Ludwig (1824-1902), who worked as councillor of the district court in Mannheim and later in Heidelberg, survived childhood.

According to Bringmann et al. (1980) the child, who died 3 years before Wundt's birth, was also named Wilhelm.

Wundt himself describes his father in his autobiography (1920) as a magnanimous and emotional person, who often underlined his affection for his son with nicknames:

"By the way, I have vivid memories of my father's idiosyncrasy from many individual traits. He was always in the mood for jokes and telling amusing anecdotes. But he was generous to a large extent..... Sometimes I was taken along when my parents went shopping in the neighbouring town. It was the general custom in such transactions for the buyer to lower the price a little, and my mother made ample use of this custom. It happened that my father took the side of the merchant in this dispute, so that the merchant, who was an honest man, occasionally took his mother's side and replied: It is alright, Father, that I will lower the price a little." (Wundt, 1920, p. 34)

According to Bringmann et al. (1980), this description of Wundt's father is relatively consistent with the assessment of the church superiors of the time, who regarded him as a mild but not submissive person who was peace-loving and sought favours. With regard to his professional view, a progressive theological view is reported, as well as a practical general sense in his sermons and a deep strength of faith.

His mother describes Wundt (1920, p. 33) as strong-willed and hard-working, whereby he states

"My earliest upbringing was mainly in the hands of my mother, who treated me with infinite kindness, but who did not let it lack a severe physical punishment if necessary....".

According to Bringmann et al. (1980) on Wundt's childhood, a great concern of the parents for his health is evident – possibly intensified by the loss of the



Figure 6: Oil portrait of Maximilian Wundt (1787-1846)

previously born son – which, after a malaria disease in the first year of life, led to a move from Neckarau (near a former swamp area at the mouth of the Neckar river) to Leutershausen am Odenwald. According to Bringmann et al. (1980), the proximity of Leutershausen to Heidelberg facilitated Wundt's contact with his maternal grandfather, Zacharias Arnold (1767-1840), who had worked as a landowner and administrator of large estates of the University of Heidelberg before his retirement.

Wundt himself described this grandfather "as a man of extreme precision", who insisted that everyone should follow his own rigorous timetable and who treated his grown sons and daughters like children. He was the grandfather with whom Wundt went on long walks in the surroundings of Heidelberg as a child, during which they could also observe the construction of the first railway station in Heidelberg (see quotation from chapter 1).

In the summer of 1836, about 3 years after the move from Neckarau, Wundt's father of 11 applicants was appointed as pastor in the small town of Heildesheim in central Baden, where the family remained until 1844. It was in this place that the "village revolution" described by Wundt in great detail took place (see Chapter 1). The following illustration shows the half-timbered house in Heildesheim, where the Wundt family lived at that time, from today's perspective.



Figure 7: Evangelical rectory in Heidelberg/Baden from today's perspective

During the Heidelberg period, young Wundt started school (see Chapter 3), which took place shortly after the suppression of the village revolution. In the autumn of 1840 Wundt's father suffered a stroke at the age of 53, which is why he had to employ a young vicar as his assistant. The new vicar, Friedrich Müller (1814-1871), played a very important role in the life of the young Wilhelm Wundt (see chapter 3). He entered the Wundt family at a time when the death of the grandfather Zacharias Arnold, the further absence of his brother Ludwig as well as the strain on the mother by the paralyzed father had to be overcome (Bringmann et al., 1980). The father's state of health deteriorated more and more after that, whereby he could hardly speak or write anymore and his memory also deteriorated considerably.

During the Christmas holidays of 1844, the father suffered another serious stroke, and he now had to hand over the remaining professional duties to young assistants (Bringmann et al., 1980).

In the following period the father, who was obviously in need of care, had to take care of the payments of his pension together with Wundt's mother. After changing schools to the Lyceum in Heidelberg, which Brother Ludwig had also attended, the family was reunited in a small Heidelberg apartment in the spring of 1846. However, just 3 months later Wundt's father died at the age of 59.

While we find hardly any usable clues about Wundt's reaction to his father's death or about the psychological processing of this life event, Wundt's corre-

spondence with his later wife Sophie Mau on June 15, 1872 gives a more concrete account of the significance of his mother's death:

".... My good mother died in the autumn of the same year we last saw each other. Her life was one of care and sacrifice, and since it seemed that she still had a happy old age, she died. For three months I sat in her bed of pain almost without interruption, and I have never seen anyone suffer more terribly than my poor mother. Now my brother, unmarried and several years older than me, is the only one of my closest relatives I have.... left."

The strong attachment to the mother, who apparently had a strong influence on her son and with whom he had lived almost constantly (Bringmann et al. , 1980), is made abundantly clear in these lines.



Figure 8: Oil portrait of Marie Friederike Arnold (1797-1868)

For the sake of clarity, only the ancestors of the paternal line are listed in the genealogical table, so that for a complete overview, reference must be made to the description by Kessler (Leipzig, 1933). For example, besides Wundt's grandfather Friedrich Peter (1742-1805), according to Eleonore Wundt (1928), his brother Karl Kasimir is also worth mentioning:

"The W. family comes from Styria, from where it was expelled during the Counter-Reformation. An ancestor stood in Swedish military service, whose descendants lived in Kreuznach. W.'s great-grandfather, Johann Jacob W. was professor of reformed theology at the university and pastor at St. Peter's Church in Heidelberg. His three sons were also professors at the University of Heidelberg: Daniel Ludwig, teacher of ref. theology; Friedrich Peter, W.'s grandfather, professor of regional history and also pastor in Wieblingen; Karl Kasimir W., probably the most important of them, professor of eloquence and church history. Among other writings he published a paper in 1774:

"De arctissimo Philosophiae artisue medicae, Physiologiae imprimis atque Psychologiae connubio", a title in which one can probably see the program of his great-nephew's philosophy. Unfortunately, the writing seems lost."

Indeed, among the predominantly theological ancestors of the paternal line and the naturalists and physicians of the maternal line, the writing of Wundt's great uncle Karl Kasimir, quoted by Eleonore Wundt (1928), is unique, especially since the connection between physiology and philosophy is clearly addressed here. And it is precisely this connection that should give rise to Wundt's life's work, namely the foundation of psychology as an independent science (E. Wundt, 1928, p. 630).

CHAPTER 3

CHILDHOOD, YOUTH, SCHOOLDAYS

Wilhelm Maximilian Wundt was born on 16 August 1832 at about 2 o'clock in the afternoon in the village of Neckarau near Mannheim. He was the fourth and last child of Maximilian Wundt (1787-1846) and Marie Friedrike Arnold (1797-1868). According to Bringmann et al. (1980), only Wilhelm Wundt and his brother Ludwig (1824-1902) – who later worked as a county court councillor in Mannheim – survived childhood. (see also Wundt, 1920, p. 31) In the following illustration the text of the birth certificate.



Figure 9: Birth entry in the church book of Mannheim-Neckarau

According to Bringmann et al. (1980), when Wundt was less than a year old, the family moved to Leuterhausen on the edge of the Odenwald forest because of health concerns about young Wilhelm, who had contracted malaria in the swampy area of the Neckar estuary near Mannheim.

Whether Wundt's frequently quoted "fall down stairs" in this parsonage occurred as a small child, as Bringmann et al. (1980) claim, seems questionable due to the still very young age (crawling age) as well as the type of cellar stairs. This seems to have happened rather in the parsonage of Heidelberg (see Fig.

10), as personal inquiries with the parish priest there have shown (Engelfried, 1993).

EARLY CHILDHOOD MEMORIES

Nevertheless, Wundt's first childhood memory seems very impressive:

"Thus, when I have to give an account of my earliest experience, I too am left with an extremely embarrassing situation. I find myself rolling down the stairs of a cellar and still today I think I feel the bumps my head receives from the steps of the stairs, I find myself surrounded by the semi-darkness of the cellar and the idea that I was running after my father who had gone into the cellar is mixed with it" (Wundt, 1920, p. 1-2)



Figure 10: Basement stairs in the evangelical rectory of Heidelberg

The time in Leutershausen from 1833 to 1836 seems to have been only a transitional phase for the Wundt family, but for the young Wilhelm Wundt after the departure of his brother Ludwig to the Heidelberg Lyceum – he lived there with his maternal aunt – it was already associated with much loneliness. This leads us to the topic of the “daydreams” of the young Wilhelm Wundt, which will be discussed in detail later. According to Bringmann et al. (1980), the proximity to Heidelberg also favoured the contact of the young Wundt with his maternal grandfather Zacharias Arnold – who is also mentioned as the witness of baptism in the birth certificate.

In the summer of 1836 Wundt’s father was chosen by several applicants to be the pastor of the small parish of Heildesheim near Bruchsal. The young Wundt was just 4 years old at that time and spent his youth here until he was 12 years old.

This small town was also the scene of the village revolution, which is often quoted in Wundt literature. In view of the importance that active politics had for Wundt (see Chapter 7), this childhood memory, which is described very clearly and vividly in his autobiography after the earliest memory of falling down the stairs and a slap in the face by his father during a school inspection as the third memory, already marks typical characteristics of an interested, politically open-minded and committed personality.

For the young Wundt, who was about seven years old and later described the political motive as the most effective in his life in the foreword to his autobiography, this “village revolution” was, in his own estimation, the first political experience, although this scene also later recalled itself particularly vividly in his memory. The ancestry of the meaning of the term “Tree of Liberty” as well as the description of the hostile relations of the citizens in the village of Heildesheim (the mayor’s supporters were the “Russians”, his opponents the “Poles”) with the comparison of the Polish uprising of 1830 reflects a lively interest in democratic and liberal processes (see also Chapter 7). Bringmann et al. (1980) write about these events that Wundt’s father apparently wrote a series of petitions for lenient treatment of the “rebels” and that the sympathies of the young Wundt lay with the democratic elements.

SCHOOL TIME

When the young Wundt, about 7 years old, in 1839 on the stairs of his father's house watched with obvious interest the erection of the "Tree of Liberty" on the market place in Heidelberg, he had, according to his own statement, "just finished his first year of elementary school happily" (Wundt, 1920, p. 3). However, according to all available sources one can hardly call Wundt's school time happy, rather marked by loneliness, daydreams and frustrations. One of Wundt's earliest childhood memories refers to an experience in his first year at school:

"Thus, from the abundance of such school experiences during the time of my visit to the lowest class of the elementary school, one scene in particular still clearly comes to mind. My father attended a lesson as a school inspector, without, incidentally, interfering in the lessons himself. He made only one exception to this rule. I was absent-minded, and instead of watching over the lessons I had been thinking about how this had been my regular quality until much later. Then I was suddenly wrested from this state of absent-mindedness by a slap in the face, which my father applied to me in an unusual way. I can still see the punishing face of my father, who here had apparently fallen from the role of attentive listener into that of domestic educator. (Wundt, 1920, p. 2)

The scene, described with relatively striking and dry humour, again addresses those states of absent-mindedness that will be discussed further below. Bringmann (1920) writes that the loneliness of the young Wundt was continued in his early years in Heidelberg. And this probably concerns first and foremost the growing up without his brother Ludwig.

"For I was destined, apart from those two earliest years of elementary school, which left many a memory but hardly any significant educational results in the child's soul, to live out my youth in my parents' home without siblings and without classmates" (Wundt, 1920, p. 31)

In his article on Wundt's formative years up to 1874, Bringmann (1980) speaks of a "bleak atmosphere of this elementary school", which is said to have even intensified Wundt's tendency to daydream. After his father suffered a stroke in the autumn of 1840 at the age of 53, it became necessary to employ an assistant clergyman, which was taken over by the vicar Friedrich Müller (1814-1871). Wundt's daughter Eleonore (1928) writes of this vicar Müller that her father had clung to him with great love as a child.

"I myself, on the other hand, stayed at home to be taught from the second year of school by a new vicar who shared his room with me. This still rather youthful assistant clergyman of my father's, named Friedrich Müller, was now my actual educator. I was united with him by a love that rarely exists between a teacher and his pupil. He was closer to me than my father and mother, and when he was appointed to a parish of

his own nearby in the village of Münzesheim after several years, I was seized by such unnameable homesickness that my parents decided, at his request, to let me move to him during the year I was to be kept away from the grammar school" (Wundt, 1920, p. 31).

There is nothing to add to this impressive description of his relationship with Vicar Müller, his new educator, it speaks for itself. This new vicar thus played a very important emotional role in the early life of the still young Wundt, and this at a time when – as Bringmann (1980) aptly remarks – the family was exposed to heavy burdens: the maternal grandfather Zacharias Arnold had just died, the mother had to care for the sick father and brother Ludwig continued to attend the Gymnasium in Heidelberg.

According to Bringmann (1980) the new vicar for the lonely young Wundt fulfilled the roles of tutor, older brother and friend in equal measure. Although, according to Bringmann (1980), he was not very successful as a tutor, this vicar seemed without doubt to be a good friend and companion who helped the young Wundt to "survive" the lonely and stressful years of Heidelberg. For the time of his absence, during which he had to attend to his spiritual duties, he gave his young pupil homework which young Wundt had to do in his room, which he shared with the clergyman, high up under the roof of the parsonage (see Fig. 11).



Figure 11: Look of Wundt's former study at the Heidelberg city gate from today's perspective



Figure 12: School of Heidelberg in which Wundt started 1838

After his return he checked and corrected the work of young Wundt and sometimes discussed it with him. Bringmann (1980) reports that Vicar Müller did a good job in teaching Latin, but because of his own inadequate mathematical abilities he laid the foundation for Wundt's later difficulties and lack of self-confidence in this subject. Bringmann (1980) further reports that this teaching method of the young vicar unfortunately strengthened the lonely and withdrawn Wundt in his isolation. Wundt's own comment appears clear and unambiguous:

"My upbringing took on a substantially different character than when I was about eight years old, when Vicarius Friedrich Müller took over this and with it regular lessons in which Latin was added to the subjects taught at elementary school... so it happened that I soon got used to lonely work, and even more so that during most of the time during which I was supposed to do my tasks I did not occupy myself with them at all, but spent time with free imagination" (Wundt, 1920, p. 37).

Whatever may have contributed to the tendency to daydream, one gets the impression after this description that the young 8-year-old student Wundt was completely isolated and lonely. That this was not quite the case is shown by

Wundt in his autobiography, even when describing his social contacts at that time:

"So I spent the years in Heidelberg almost without companions. For the companion I used to meet in front of my parents' home, who was almost daily, was a silly man, a little older than I was, hardly able to speak the language, but infinitely good-natured and obviously as devoted to me as I was to him. I also consorted with some adults whom I often visited their apartments. First there were two older women, the daughters of a former clergyman of the village, with their somewhat younger brother, who was working in the bookbinding trade, which was of little concern to him. He limped and was a highly original personality, witty in his own way. He was full of adventurous stories, which he told the boy and which he wanted to experience for himself. He was always ready for jokes, disguises and comedy, so that conversation with him was all the more a source of incessant amusement, since I always believed his stories half and half. ..." (Wundt, 1920, p. 31).

The quotation shows that the young Wundt was, despite his difficult situation as an "only child", able to establish and maintain contacts which were halfway satisfying for him and also entertaining for him.

And it goes on to say:

"While my steps were directed almost daily to the house of this splendid sibling isolation, which was just opposite our own, despite the dangers that threatened me on the way there across the marketplace from the chasing village geese, there were some other friendships that I cultivated at times. There was one Jewish family in particular who had some conversation not only with me but also with my mother. The grandmother of this family traded in all kinds of goods and did not fail to deliver some Easter bread as a gift during the Jewish Easter season; the father wandered around the area day after day as a peddler. For me, however, it was a special feast when I was allowed to accompany him to the synagogue or when I was invited by him to his home for the Feast of Tabernacles. In contrast..... to such regular traffic, the participation in the game, namely the ball game, of a large number of street boys who had gathered by chance in the marketplace was a rare exception, which, by the way, gave me little pleasure, since I felt that my fellow players were considerably superior to me in physical dexterity." (Wundt, 1920, p. 32)

The last part of the quotation shows, however, that the young and obviously sensitive Wundt rather kept away from the rough street boys and apparently suffered a little from the feeling of physical inferiority. This is also underlined by a reminder of the annual Easter Egg Picking Competition in which the entire village youth competed on Easter Monday after church for the game of "egg picking". The boys, whose ice tip broke the ice tip of the other one, received this as a prize, although many young people cheated with eggs filled with pitch, from which especially the young Wundt had to suffer:

....."and in particular the pastor's son usually went home saddened, because a considerable part of his eggs was robbed in this way" (Wundt, 1920, p. 33).

After the young Wundt had followed his teacher Vicar Müller in his new parish of Münzesheim for another year with his parents' permission, he was finally enrolled in the Grand Ducal grammar school in Bruchsal in 1844, where apparently a real time of suffering began for the young Wundt.

"The fact that my good teacher Müller was not able to overcome the resulting obstacles (i.e. fantasy games), proved itself when I was accepted into the 4th class of the Gymnasium in Bruchsal in the age of 13. The entrance examination was an excessively mild one, so that I fell behind my classmates as well as by getting used to joint lessons and was thus condemned from the beginning to remain sitting in the class" (Wundt, 1920, p. 39).

Inadequate preparation in Latin, Greek and French made failure inevitable (Bringmann & Schmiech, 1975). The teachers of this school apparently regarded him as stupid and lazy, treated him accordingly. Wundt's class teacher was used to massive punishment of his pupils and preferred to "regale" the young Wundt with slaps in the face. The following quotation illustrates how much the young Wundt suffered from this after the private lessons by Vicar Müller

"In memory of the love with which I was attached to my teacher Müller, I also deeply felt the contempt with which I was treated by the teachers, although I was aware that I deserved this treatment –.... a history teacher who was quite benevolent towards me treated me more with pity. I still remember a speech he gave me in front of the assembled class, in which he assured me that not every son of a studied gentleman had to study as well. There were enough professions that were quite honourable, but did not require the effort of studying. In particular he advised me as such the post office box" (Wundt, 1920, p. 40/41).

The second part of the above quotation tempts us to smile, if we think of the tedious school experiences of later famous personalities. Wundt himself (1920) describes this time in his autobiography as a "school of suffering". Apart from the "feeling of inadequacy towards his schoolmates" the stress at this Catholic school became so great for the young Protestant Wundt that he one day took flight to return home to his parents in a walk of about one hour, but that did not help him, since his mother brought him back again. This must have happened in the winter of 1844/45, when Wundt's father suffered a second serious stroke.

After these painful experiences, the parents decided to send their son Wilhelm to the Heidelberg Lyceum, where his brother Ludwig had just passed his final examination. At the beginning he lived in the house of the same maternal aunt who had looked after her brother since the days of Leutershausen.

"After one year my parents decided to take me to the Gymnasium in Heidelberg, in order to take me once again and hopefully with better success through the course of a quarter according to the count at that time, which started with the lowest class as the Prima. This hope was fulfilled, although for the time- being, I only stayed in the

middle of the class for a longer time after my performance. By the way, the greater was the change that I experienced. I now completed my tasks together in the same room as my brother and my cousin, who were both very diligent students and exercised a certain control over me, so that the excessive fantasy games came to an end" (Wundt, 1920, p. 41).

FANTASY GAMES

The daydreams and fantasy games already quoted have obviously played an important role in Wundt's early school days. It seems to make sense not only from a biographical but also from a developmental psychological point of view to go into this in more detail.

Wundt's first biographer, his daughter Eleonore (1928), only indirectly mentions this "regular characteristic" of her father in the rather academic biography, pointing out the failure to attend regular school and some learning difficulties. Wundt himself deals with this problem in great detail in his autobiography (1920) under the title "Kindliche Phantasiespiele und ihre pädagogische Bedeutung" ("Childlike Fantasy Games and their Pedagogical Significance"), where he explains

"I waited occasionally with longing for my teacher to leave me, only to immediately indulge in all kinds of fictional experiences, which often continued from one day to the next. Usually I would pick up the pen next to me and move it rhythmically up and down while staring at the book in front of me without reading anything. These fantasy games gradually became a passion, and I became increasingly habitually inattentive to everything that was going on around me" (Wundt, 1920, p. 38).

This "passion" was apparently so strong that, according to Wundt, it continued to make itself felt beyond his later school days and into the majority of his university lectures, whereby Wundt names the talented physicist Jolly and his teacher Ewald Hasse as only two exceptions for his attentive listening. In an autobiographical review of this "passion", Wundt, as an old man, associates this behaviour with psychological sensitivity with the loneliness that the child has to cope with.

"Of course, this is not an individual characteristic, but it is certainly a characteristic of some children; but it does so, as can be seen from the accompanying gestures, preferably in the solitary, not the collective play, and from there it is transferred to the solitary work, while it is displaced by the interaction and also by cooperation in school. After all, it may be that such pure fantasy games of the lonely child have a certain value as exercises of the imagination" (Wundt, 1920, p. 39).

Even with recourse to psychoanalytical theories on the interpretation of dreams (Freud, 1972) and the assumption of wishful motives in daydreams, one can assume in the case of the young Wundt that these fantasy games were indeed promoted by unfavourable teaching methods of the vicar Müller, but that they probably primarily represent an attempt to cope with the great loneliness of the obviously gifted child.

In his account of Wilhelm Wundt's life picture from his correspondence, Schlotte (1955) now makes an interesting connection with the method of introspection described by Wundt himself (in addition to the experimental method) when he says that "this habit of directing the gaze to one's own inner life certainly prepared the ground for the psychological interest that would return later". Such a connection seems plausible, comprehensible and, based on biographical analysis, probable.

With the change to the Heidelberg grammar school, however, the young Wundt not only developed a more regulated learning behaviour and turned away from daydreaming, but also a significant break in his social personality development.

"More importantly, however, was the change in my lifestyle. I stopped being the shy and frightened boy I had been in Bruchsal. I gained numerous school friends with whom I roamed the town and its surroundings. I myself felt as if I had been born again, and when a former classmate from Bruchsal later moved to the Heidelberg Gymnasium, he assured me in astonishment that I had become a completely different person than before" (Wundt, 1920, p. 41/42)

In comparison with the rather depressing description of "egg picking" on the Heidelshheim market place, the above lines sound almost liberating. Although the burden on the Wundt family did not diminish after the father's new stroke, and the mother was tied up in lengthy negotiations about pension payments, the school situation for the young Wundt improved noticeably. The family was finally reunited in a small Heidelberg apartment in late spring 1846 (Bringmann, 1980). Just three months after this move, Wundt's father died.

While we learn about Wundt's reaction to the death of his mother in 1868 from his correspondence with Sophie Mau, his later wife, we do not find any remarks about his father's death in Wundt's autobiography. This is relatively unusual, since the loss of the father at the age of 14 falls into a very sensitive period of psychological development, when the role model function is especially important for identification.

In his life memories (1920), following the Heidelberg grammar school, Wundt reports on the inadequate conditions of the grammar schools of the time, on former theologians as grammar school teachers, on two teachers he held in



Figure 13: Former Heidelberg high school, where Wundt graduated 1851

high esteem, namely the philologist Sebastian Feldbausch and the orientalist Bernhard Jülg (1825-1886), to whom he owes his first suggestions for philological studies. However, there are no longer any references to his father's death.

Bringmann (1980) reports in his biographical accounts that Wundt successfully completed the Lyceum in 1851 and continued to regard most teachers as incompetent eccentrics. With regard to mathematics, Wundt (1920) writes about this among other things:

"So it may happen that here with the future lawyer, theologian, historian, etc. a minimum of interest in mathematics leaves the teacher indifferent, and that his interest is concentrated on the few pupils who are distinguished by a special mathematical talent. Thus I too was one of those neglected by the mathematics teacher at school, and was consistently in the majority at the older-style philological grammar school, and I can confirm Helmholtz's judgement that the blame for this failure lay much more on the side of the teachers than on the pupils, inasmuch as I later, after I had recognized at university the necessity of a reasonably sufficient mathematical knowledge for my future studies, made up for the omission within about a year" (Wundt, 1920, p. 48).

Despite the shortcomings in his private lessons with Vicar Müller and in his preparation for grammar school, the "old Wundt" (1920) can also gain something positive in his retrospect of this period, as far as his first intensive reading and his preference for poetic verses are concerned. Wundt regards his intensive reading during his time at grammar school as an aid against lonely fantasizing.

"Reading, on the other hand, offers the imagination a well-ordered material which, if it is happily chosen, can serve as an example and, if it finally leads into the paths of a planned activity, can have an educational effect. This phenomenon consisted in a reading activity which began to take hold of me at a time when others of my age either knew nothing about it at all or only paid homage to it to a limited extent" (Wundt, 1920, p. 49/50).

He had a preference for German literature, historical and romantic novellas and developed a lasting interest in the ballads of the German revolutionary period of 1848 as well as in the English poet and dramatist Shakespeare.

"So I do not think it is impossible that some volumes of Wieland's old Shakespeare translation, which I found in my father's library when I was about 10 years old, are partly related to the fact that Shakespeare is probably the poet I read most often in poetic literature, and that in a much later time of my life I hardly ever made a journey on which I did not have a few volumes of Shakespeare accompanying me as readings" (Wundt, 1920, p. 51).

The contact to his teacher Bernhard Jülg in Heidelberg must have been very important for the young Wundt after the lonely years of Heidelberg and Bruchsal, especially since he was encouraged to try his hand at writing and also read his essays to the class as a model in German lessons. Bringmann (1980) writes that through Jülg's influence Wundt was drawn to the classical languages and thought of becoming a philologist, although he was deterred from doing so by the teacher's ideas. Schlotte (1955) has captured the poetic attempt of the 18-year-old Wundt in his contribution in an exemplary manner:

Dante

The most beautiful flower in Italy
...he was, with sweet love all conquered,
...sung in delicately lovely verses once.
But soon dying his flower disappeared!

And then from this earthly bump...
to higher love's purpose,
Now the strings have sounded to thee
From a more blissful band of love.
So everyone must do what moves his heart,
Whether it brings him joy or pain,
spiritualize and purify themselves.

And is he like you in everything,
Truly, then it is certain that all here
...the earth will open up to heaven for him.

Finally, in this context Wundt also recalls those diaries in which he recorded the events around the March Revolution of 1848 with excited sympathy.

"I still believe I see before me the long lost manuscript in which I wrote down the Viennese uprising, the death of Robert Blum and his comrades in tremendous excitement. Around the same time, some excerpts from works fall into this category, of which the reading of one belongs here according to the kinship of the subject: Zimmermann's *Geschichte des Bauernkriegs*" (Wundt, 1920, p. 52).