

# Body Gesture and Language Expression —On Wundt's Gestural Theory of Language Origins and His Idea of Folkpsychology

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## Abstract

Based on the gestural theory of language origins that Wundt offered in his *Folkpsychology*, this paper aims to justify the notion that the foundation of the meaning of words lies in bodily gestures, such as facial and pantomimic expression. Since Wundt's body gesture theory of meaning derives from the tradition of philosophy of language in the nineteenth century, this paper would also retrace to the psychological turn within historical comparative linguistics in that century, and explain how Steinthal's psychological exposition of Humboldt's inner language form carried weight with Wundt's insight that the accessibility of the meaning of language should be established upon expressive movements of affection and the body. These explanations will, at last, reveal Wundt's concept of folkpsychology as a linguistic foundation of cultural science.

**Key Words:** the gestural theory of language origins, the theory of meaning, body gesture, folkpsychology, Wilhelm Wundt