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Physics and Psychology –an interdisciplinarity journey

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Abstract:

Physics, the study of the basic principles that rule the physical world, was instrumental in the “Scientification” of Psychology, the study of the mind and behaviour. The physicist and philosopher, Gustave Theodor Fechner (1801-1887), coined the term of psychophysics in his seminal work *Elemente der Psychophysik* in 1860 which aimed at connecting physical stimuli to the different components of consciousness, particularly sensation. Although, psychophysics presents today rather a chapter in the history of psychology –the interdisciplinary journey between physics and psychology continued –and it needed to continue because “mental processes are connected with material processes” (Ebbinghaus, 1990). My lecture will provide an overview of this more than a century lasting journey by presenting examples that will not only outline how physics shaped the methodological approaches and theories of psychology but also how psychological knowledge shaped the physical sciences.

Presenter: DUMONT, Kitty (UNISA)

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