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Thermodynamics today

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ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT

Thermodynamics today

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Abstract

In this paper I use the example set by Prof. Jan Szargut as point of reference for a brief look at the current state of thermodynamics—the doctrine, its reach and importance. I start with my first encounter with Prof. Jan Szargut in 1979, and I show how his work influenced mine. Next, I review the structure that underpins thermodynamics as a discipline: the laws and the self-standing phenomena that they underpin, and graphic methods that convey these principles. Along the way, I draw attention to a recent trend that is caused by the inflation in scientific publishing due to the internet: the most common mistakes and misconceptions in thermodynamics, and how they are being spread. In sum, this paper is a call to action, to value, improve and defend the science of thermodynamics.

Keywords: Thermodynamics, laws, mechanics, caloric, constructal, evolution, design, discipline.

1. Professor Szargut

Science is like a civilized territory that improves, prospers and expands because it makes life better for the people who belong to it. It expands as long as it keeps producing useful things, which attract people. The civilized welcome the newcomers—the nobodies—provided that they obey the laws, the discipline. People join because their lives become better that way. To fight the barbarians who pillage on the perimeter is a necessary and unpleasant effort, a nuisance, not the objective. As the defeated barbarians are assimilated and civilized, the civilized territory expands

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