

Cezary Was (Museum of Architecture, Wrocław) / Lem's visions of impossible worlds versus contemporary anti-metaphysical trends in philosophy

An anti-metaphysical approach in philosophy, as understood by Stefan Sarnowski, was born at the same time as philosophy and metaphysics and means questioning all principles and sources of sense or an objection to trials of finding the foundation of truth. The usual adoption of such attitude comes from extending knowledge, but maybe it can give something more, what if crossing beyond the existing world is just its creation?

At the beginning of his artistic activity Lem engaged in polemics with the system of rules in a rather amusing and off-hand manner, also he was never likely to abandon easily his faith in the reason, nevertheless with the passing years he was more and more prone to believe that a man is a "fierce ape", the world is a chaos and logic, geometry or mathematics are the areas of almost literary fiction. He could not have been sure of this, though, since certainty stopped being attainable. Although he did not want that he became a postmodernist. As many other thinkers of his time he suffered from modernist optimism and in accordance with trends of the changing world and the rules of biology he eventually became an insufferable grumpy old man. It was not as interesting any more as then when he had hesitated, awaken his doubts, accidentally revealed contradictions and plunged into ambiguity. But only the whole Lem, both the earlier one and the later one, paints the picture of problems, which are as old as human thought and which stay undetermined forever. With highest difficulty it needs to be acknowledged that even the most extreme and mutually excluding ideas have their foundation in rich argumentation which evokes respect. It is equally difficult to accept that, what after the intellectual storms of the second half of the 20th century is presently the basis for thought is wobbling between two sides of dialectic discourse, never even to aspire to a state of certainty.