
Malgorzata Sugiera (Faculty of Performance Studies, Jagiellonian University, Cracow) / After the megabyte bomb I: New systems and new catastrophes

In the article the author asks the question why and for what reasons both Lem's science fiction novels and science essays, judged to be a proven way of investigation into human and nonhuman forms of contemporary and future life, have lost some of their intellectual or critical significance. To answer the question she revisits *The Megabyte Bomb*, a collection of Lem's essays published by the turn of the 20th century, in the context of the contemporary debates about information and new media, and the relationship between technology and humanity. She posits that the global information system that is embracing every aspect of our lives has changed the traditional image of our future as catastrophe which science fiction used to describe in order to prevent it from happening. To prove it she undertakes an analysis of two recent novels depicting the Internet binges, torrents of information, and endless loops of feedback typical of the technology-driven mentality: Dave Eggers' *The Circle* (2013), by many critics hailed as a *Brave New World* of the 21st century, and Thomas Pynchon's *Bleeding Edge* (2013) where the famous attack on the WTC is shown in an entirely unexpected way – as a catastrophe without a catastrophe.