

## Doctoral thesis abstract

**Lukasz Sochacki, *Scientific Worldview and Popular Culture. Neo-Mythologies of Contemporary Culture*. Written under the supervision of prof. dr hab. Dariusz Czaja. June 12, 2017.**

The cultural texts analysed in the doctoral thesis unveil the bearing capacity of mythical matrices that depict the image of science and scientists. Folklore and mythological toposes are a permanent heritage that is used for structuring the experience and they do not bypass the scientific content. The use of these toposes in popular science texts and in other genres raise the curtain on the potential of the results of scientific discoveries for the creation of meaning. It is shown that science is prone to myth-making processes to the same degree as are other areas of human experience. The analysed examples prove conclusively that the rational “core” of science does not protect it from mythological transformation of tasks, objectives and cognitive results that are inherent to it; they confirm that scientific search and the results of scientific research might at any moment be annexed by popular thought and tied to the patterns of mythological thinking which has not much in common with standard scientific procedures (intersubjectivity, correctability, falsifiability, etc.).

Science provokes to fundamental anthropological questions and equally crucial answers: about the beginning and the end of the world, about sacred reality, about the existence of a universal language (here: mathematics) which, as it is believed, unfolds and reveals the principal mysteries of existence and the universe. It is a thought-provoking issue that by destroying “superstitions” and mythical heroes, science replaces them in the structure of experience. It becomes a functional equivalent for mythical stories about the world and about its *quasi*-divine heroes. Findings presented in the thesis fully confirm the conclusion that science takes over the functions that used to be assigned to mythical narrations.

The common knowledge does not perceive science to be able to disenchant reality. It seems to be the opposite. Scientific content is effective at activating the myth-making potential. What is more, by approaching the infinitely small (the physics of particles) and the infinitely big (cosmology), science tries to embrace the “completeness” of our experience and answer the core existential questions. It is assisted by authority that scientists are acknowledged (with special regard to natural science practitioners). Thus, science holds functions that used to be assigned to mythological and theological narrations. It is no longer – contrary to many – a neutral discipline that exists in everyday life as an island of reason on the sea of mythological concepts. Au contraire: common thinking exposes it as a radically myth-making matter. It becomes a vehicle of archaic images, symbols and myths that is both existentially productive and cognitively fascinating.

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