The Working-Class History of Literature
Invitation to Submit to the Issue of “Czytanie Literatury. Łódzkie Studia Literaturoznawcze”

We live in times of great civilizational and moral discord. On the one hand, marginalization, stigmatization and exclusion affect individuals and whole groups. On the other hand, emancipatory tendencies and practices are more and more clearly transforming social life in Poland. They also find strong resonance in sociological and anthropological reflection, as well as in non-fiction and fiction.

Published a year ago, Ludowa historia Polski. Historia wyzysku i oporu. Mitologia panowania [A People’s History of Poland: A Story of Exploitation and Resistance – the Mythology of Ruling] has sparked an important discussion on the fate of the Polish people and peasants as it revealed the mechanisms of legal, economic, and cultural disadvantage suffered by the majority of society over the centuries. In the forthcoming issue of “Reading Literature,” we invite you to reflect on the presence and place of workers in culture: the direct creators of industrial capitalism and the foundations of the prosperity of modern states. The workers’ ethos, everyday life and the cultural horizon, as well as the political aspirations of the workers, and finally, the emancipatory activities of individual members of this community have been particularly ideologized and distorted in our Polish context by communist propaganda. As a result, for quite a long time after 1989, the subject of workers functioned on the margins of cultural and literary studies, as somewhat inconvenient. This is why we encourage you to study the portrait of workers and the working class in all their aspects. Especially from the perspective of the textile monoculture in Łódź, an important question arises about the specificity of the female experience, the experience of a woman worker. The representations of female and male workers in older cultural texts, as well as in contemporary ones, and the examination of possible changes which these representations undergo seem equally interesting.

We value both the studies that present the issue from a panoramic perspective, as well as case studies: attempts to read specific literary texts, to analyze the very presence of the working-class theme in literature, as well as the various practices of its particular marking (ideological or moral), stigmatizing, ideologizing, and mythicizing. We are interested in the everyday life of workers and in special experiences: the Revolution of 1905–1907, the Great Depression, the turning points in the history of the Polish People’s Republic up to 1980 and 1989, the life of workers in the Third Republic, but also the portrayal of workers in foreign literature.

Big industry has always meant a degrading interference with the natural environment. It is important to examine the depiction and evolution of the representation of this issue in various cultural texts.

Please send initial declarations of topics and short abstracts by January 31, 2022, and complete articles by April 30, 2022. We also invite you to submit proposals for the regular sections of the journal: articles, discussions, reviews and interviews. All submissions should be sent to one of the following addresses:
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