



Erasmus+



**„The Theme of Work in Literature,
Art and Cinematography” –
a multimedia presentation
made for the Erasmus+ project
by II Liceum Ogólnokształcące
im. Konstytucji 3 Maja w Krośnie, Poland**

The theme of work in literature

Work has accompanied people since the beginning of their history. It was a foundation of each civilization. People would achieve nothing without work. It gives the meaning to a person's life. Work is the source of personal satisfaction and it determines the value of a person.

Examples of literary
works which include
the theme of work

„Pieśń Świętojańska o Sobótce” by Jan Kochanowski



The work consists of 12 songs which praise a calm, rural life. Work shown in this literary work makes you happy as it is not laborious hardship, but an easy task. The householder – the main character – looks after the cattle and the orchard whereas his wife does simple housework.



Jan Kochanowski (1530-1584)

Poet from the Renaissance period and Royal Secretary.

„Nad Niemnem” by Eliza Orzeszkowa



This novel contains a cult of hard everyday work on the land. Despite the hard physical effort, work gives much satisfaction to the main characters. In the book the author shows conflicts between the representatives of different generations and the relationship between the poor and the wealthy nobility.



Eliza Orzeszkowa (1841-1910)

Writer, publicist and social activist.

„Lalka” by Bolesław Prus



This book is about wealthy Polish people who had unwilling attitude to common work. For the aristocracy heavy labor was a humiliating thing. Their inability to do solid everyday work, their lack of respect and appreciation for it caused a moral demise of a human.



Bolesław Prus (1847-1912)

**Writer, prose writer, short story writer and publicist
from the Positivism period.**

„Inny świat” by Gustaw Herling – Grudziński



This literary work presents an attempt to destroy a man by the soviet totalitarian system and a struggle of an individual to keep their dignity.

The enemies of the communist system were imprisoned in gulags, i.e. labor camps. The prisoners were forced to work really hard out in the freezing cold. They were badly fed. In order to survive, they had to accept the rules which were completely different from those obligatory at large.



Gustaw Herling – Grudziński (1919-2000)

Writer, essayist, literary critic, journalist and soldier.

„Mendel Gdański”

by Maria Konopnicka



The author writes about the problems of the Polish Jews. She shows the feelings and internal experiences of the main character. The people among whom he had lived and worked for about 30 years wanted to destroy all of his possessions and harm him and his grandson. The main character – Mendel – is badly disappointed. He was not accepted by the community which he considered as his own.



Maria Konopnicka (1842-1910)

**Poet and short story writer of the Realism period,
literary critic, publicist and translator.**

„Chłopi” by Władysław Reymont



The title of this novel reflects its content. The author shows an everyday life of the peasants living in a village called Lipce. Work plays the main role in this book. The people who work are respected and appreciated. Work helps people avoid poverty, which is common in Lipce. The richest and the most hard-working householders enjoy the biggest respect.



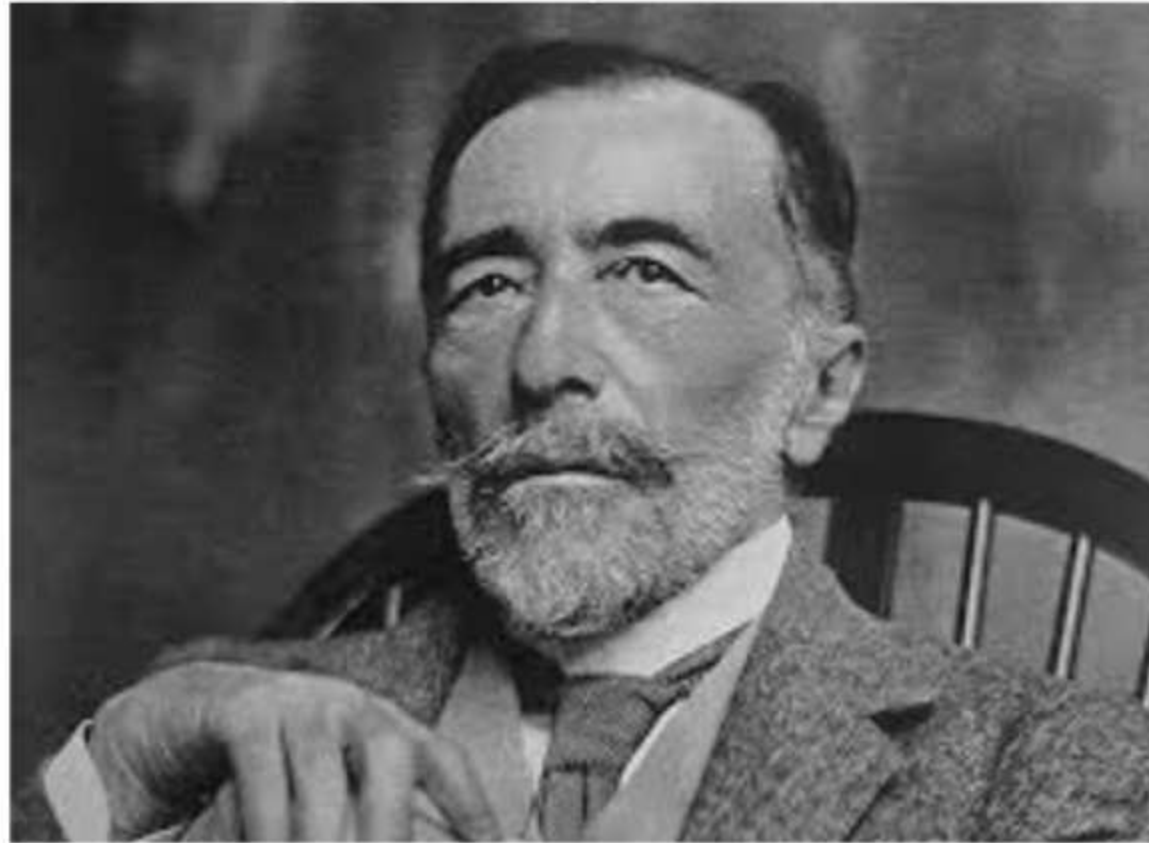
Władysław Reymont (1867-1925)

Writer, prose writer, one of the main representatives of Realism, the Nobel Prize winner for the novel „Chłopi”.

„Jądro ciemności” by Joseph Conrad (Korzeniowski)



In this work the colonizers are shown as people who care for nothing but their own benefits. Work is the biggest value professed by the main character – Marlow. He feels fulfilled only when he does his job the best he can. The people who work as hard as he does are the only ones who deserve his respect.



Joseph Conrad (Korzeniowski)

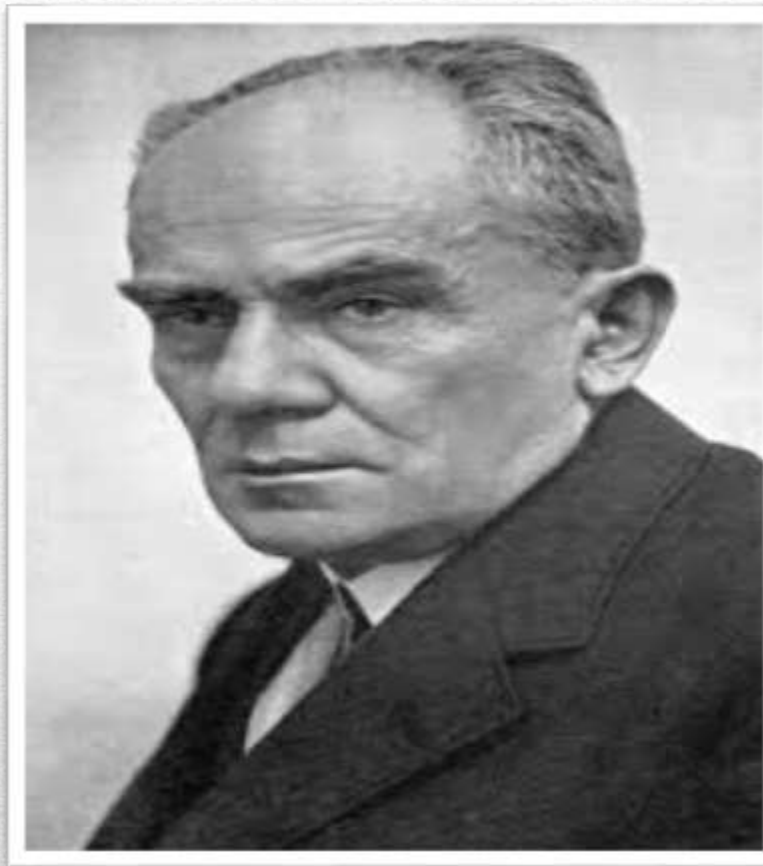
(1857-1924)

English writer and publicist of Polish origin.

„Ludzie bezdomni” by Stefan Żeromski



This literary work describes the extremely hard work of factory workers, peasants and miners in terrible conditions, which ruin their health. The salary they get hardly lets them make ends meet. One of the characters – Tomasz Judym, who is a doctor, wants to help the poorest people in Zagłębie. His obstinacy is so big that he gives up on his private life to help the poor.



Stefan Żeromski (1864-1925)

Prose writer, publicist, playwright called „the conscience of the Polish literature”.

The theme of work in art

Examples of works
of art which include
the theme of work

„Szewc” by Tadeusz Makowski



This painting is part of a series of paintings by this artist showing the representatives of different professions. Apart from a shoe repairer, the painter also immortalized a fisherman, an archer and a baker. This work of art is in the impressionist style. It shows an elderly man who deals with repairing and making shoes.

„Fisherman” by Tadeusz Makowski





Tadeusz Makowski (1882-1932)

Polish painter working in Paris, representative of École de Paris.

„Orka” by Witold Wojtkiewicz



Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie

At first glance, it seems the painting shows a trivial scene from everyday life of a Polish peasant. However, the main protagonist is a clown with his wooden horse. Their role is to parody the effort and the specificity of the kind of work ploughing is.



Witold Wojtkiewicz (1879-1909)

Painter, drawer and graphic artist

„Kopanie buraków”

by Leon Wyczółkowski



This work of art was made in 1893 and it belongs to a series of paintings presenting genre scenes of the Ukrainian rural life. The theme of digging beetroots appeared repeatedly in the painter's output. He showed people working at various times of the day. This painting shows the hard work of simple, poor people.



Leon Wyczółkowski (1852-1936)

Painter, graphic artist and drawer, one of the leading representatives of Young Poland in the current of realistic painting.

„Piaskarze” by Aleksander Gierymski



The painting shows sanders working by the shore of the Vistula river. Their duty is to draft the sand from the boats onto high embankments. This picture is an example of a realistic oil painting created by an outstanding Polish artist.



Aleksander Gierymski (1850-1901)

Painter, representative of Realism, precursor of Polish Impressionism, luminist, also a drawer.

The theme of work in Renaissance art

Polish book illustrations, miniatures, prints, wood engravings, panel paintings, murals which remained to this day contain various images related to work. These could be pieces of art with work as the main theme, but also ones, where work is introduced as an additional thread. However, in the world's literary output work as the overriding element is rare. The unique relic is „Balthasar Behem Codex”. It is decorated with 16 colorful miniatures which show the craftsmen of various occupations at work in their workshops (e.g. a tailor, a merchant, a tanner, a baker, a shoemaker, a furrier), 9 miniatures of guild emblems and miniatures presenting the longbow fraternity's shooting range in Cracov, the emblem of Cracov and the scene of the crucifixion.

„Balthasar Behem Codex”



Painter's Studio”



„Bladesmith”



„Potter”



„Cooper”



„Tanner”



„Bell Founder”

„Święty Izydor Oracz” by Erazm Wąsowski



This work of art presents a typical farm work, particularly ploughing, which involves the crushing of the coating of farmland.

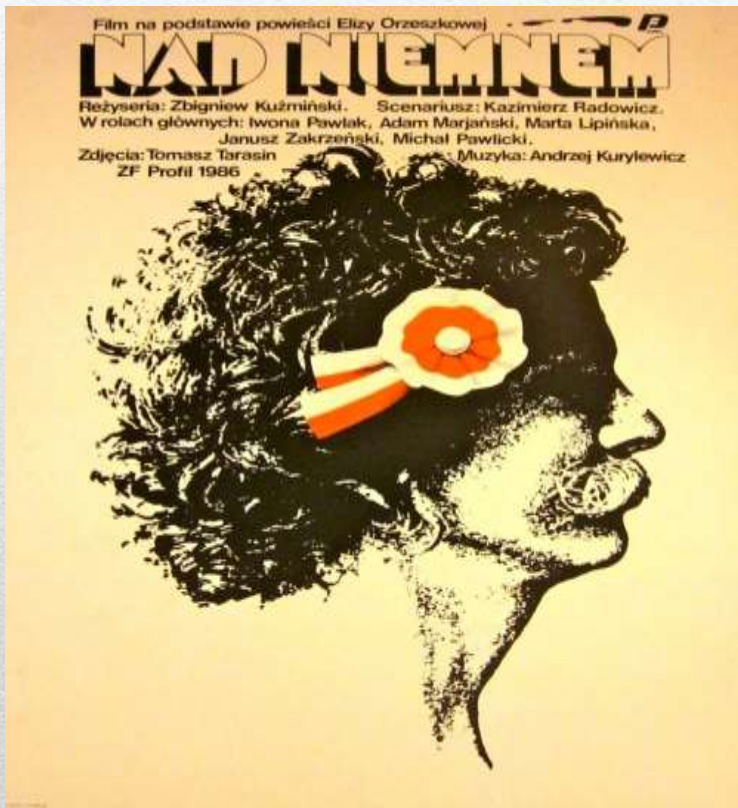
„Alegoria handlu Gdańskiego” by Izaak von Block



This painting documents a famous port city of Gdańsk and its trade (merchants, bards, boat builders, rafters and their vessels).

The theme of work in cinematography

„Nad Niemnem” directed by Zbigniew Kuźmiński



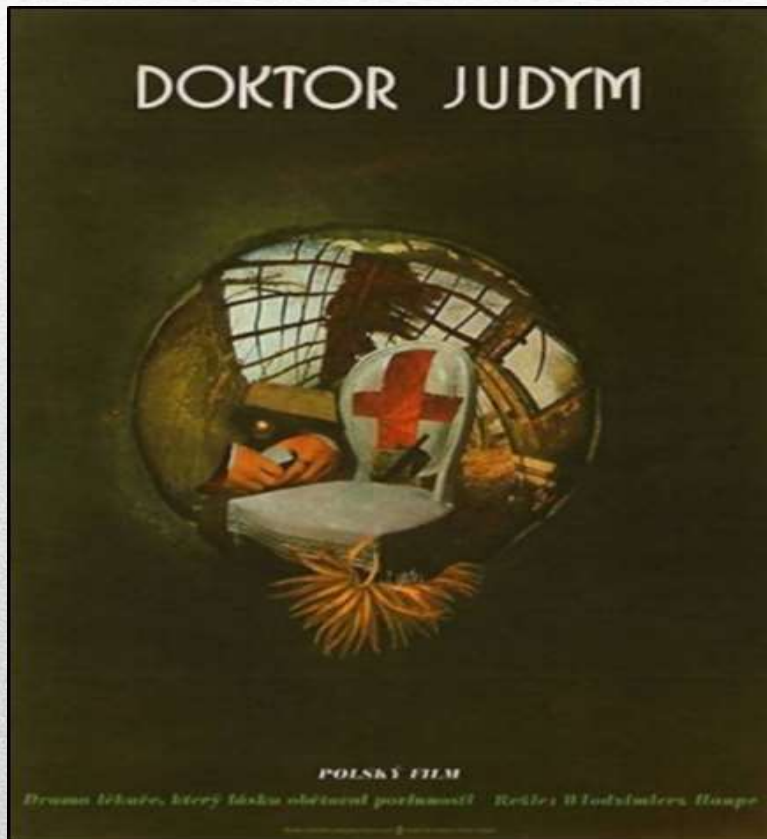
The film is based on Eliza Orzeszkowa's novel under the same title. The main character – Justyna Orzelska - meets Jan Bohatyrowicz who makes her aware of a big value of personal work. The plot of the film is much more complex, but the theme of work plays a big role in it.

A scene from „Nad Niemnem”



„Doktor Judym”

directed by Włodzimierz Haupe



The film entitled „Doctor Judym” is based on the novel „Ludzie bezdomni” by Stefan Żeromski. The film tells the story of doctor Tomasz Judym who aims at removing the social causes of diseases, e.g. poverty or injustice. Due to his radical proceedings, he becomes lonely with his objective, which requires even greater involvement in his work from him.

A scene from „Doktor Judym”



„Kariera Nikosia Dyzmy”

directed by Jacek Bromski



This well known comedy tells the story of a gravedigger who on one occasion receives an invitation to a banquet, during which he becomes appreciated by the Polish political authorities. Then he leaves his former occupation for politics, saves the situation on the Polish sugar industry and eventually becomes the Prime Minister of the Polish government.

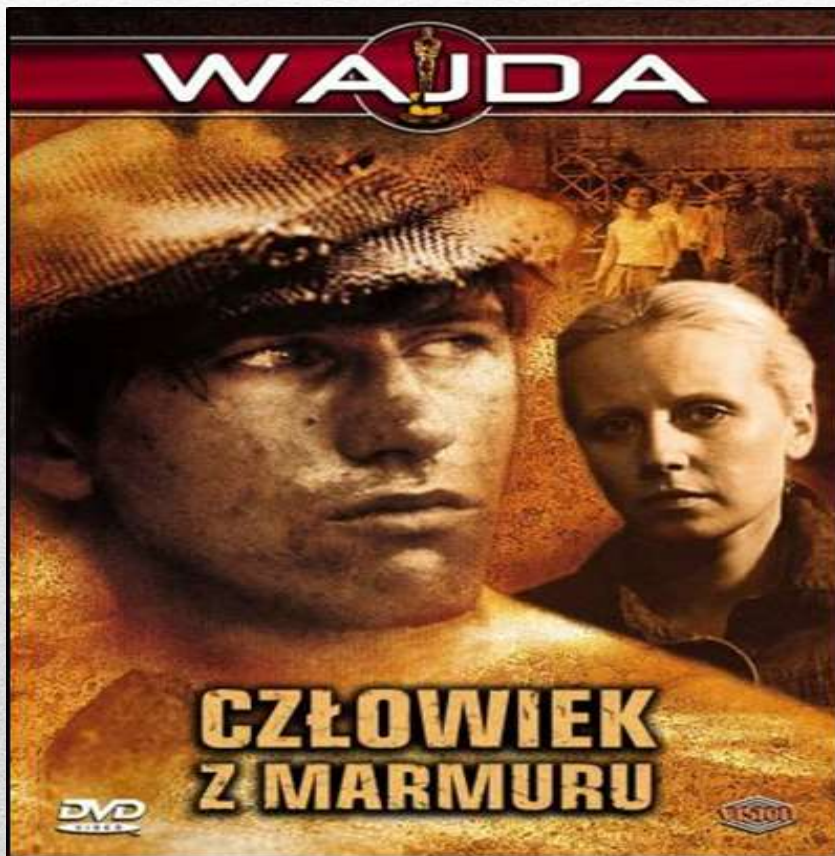
„Ballada o ścinaniu drzewa” directed by Feridun Erol



"Ballada o ścinaniu drzewa" is a drama, which in a satirical way shows what a man's work is like without proper involvement and mobilization.

The main character- majster Błaszczyk who is in charge of cutting down a roadside tree does absolutely nothing to speed up the work.

„Człowiek z marmuru” directed by Andrzej Wajda



„Człowiek z marmuru” tells the story of a superproductive worker (Udarnik – the title in USSR for very hard-working employees) whose mysteries and secrets from bygone years are being discovered by a student who is making her diploma film.

Scene from „Człowiek z marmuru”



„Człowiek z żelaza”

directed by Andrzej Wajda



"Człowiek z żelaza" is a sequel of the film entitled "Człowiek z marmuru". A journalist receives an order to make an embarrassing reportage about Maciej Tomczyk – the son of Mateusz Birkut (the main character of "Człowiek z marmuru") who is one of the leaders of the striking workers in the Gdańsk Shipyard. This film, as the first in the history of the Polish cinematography, received the prize Palme d'Or (Golden Palm).

A scene from „Człowiek z żelaza”



„Ziemia Obiecana” directed by Andrzej Wajda



The film entitled "Ziemia obiecana" is based on Władysław Reymont's novel under the same title.

The film tells the story of three friends who establish their own factory in Łódź and who desire to make a fortune. They have to face various adversities. One of them is even able to break off his engagement and marry a wealthier woman in order to help the factory exist.

Scene from „Ziemia Obiecana”



The theme of work has found its place in literature, art and cinematography throughout history. Thanks to work, the literary or film characters had a chance to find personal and professional fulfillment. They found satisfaction in work, which became a source of their happiness. However, when work was inefficient and fruitless or when it was imposed on people, it became a curse for them.

In art, showing people doing their everyday jobs always carried some additional symbolic or hidden meaning or some moralizing content.

The presentation was made by:

Paulina Belczyk

Bernard Chrunik

Martyna Prajzner

Translation:

Sebastian Cęczek
