

The Coal 3rd Edition

Coal: Motion

September 26th – 27th 2019

The Coal Mining Museum in Zabrze
The Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology;
Faculty of Ethnology and Educational Science in Katowice
The Department of History; Faculty of Social Sciences in Katowice

Coal as a source of energy has the power of transformation, thanks to the force accumulated within it, which sets everything in motion. It causes the world that has grown on it, to change. The realities of communities and individuals shaped by carbon, and the culture they produce have yielded to the causative power of this mineral from the late 18th century. The liberated energy controlled by people made the space of nature become a place of formation of culture. Industrialization has transformed coal from a natural raw material into a tool of human thought, inventiveness and the will to transform the world. Coal has become the source of energy that drives local communities, but also acts like a magnet, attracting new ideas and phenomena.

By stimulating a discussion on the causative power of coal, we want to consider whether it has turned out to be the all-encompassing „carbon loci” for entire communities. It seems that the creation and development of an industrial organism has caused socio-cultural consequences for people besides those employed in steel works and mines. We are interested in how much the creative potential of coal influenced professional and everyday life, how it changed places and the memory of them. Which social groups it had more influence on and why? Whether building on coal had the rooting (mental and intellectual) or, on the contrary, elimination of identity, setting it in motion.

We would like the participants of this year’s edition of the „Coal” conference, using the paradigms of the humanities, to take part in the discussion on the „creative” and „energetic” potential of coal. The time frame for the discussion matter is from the 19th century until the end of the 20th century.

Suggested topics:

Migration:

The creation of industrial centres, their extension and modernization caused a mass movement of the population. Migrations triggered the creation of opposing concepts of „homeliness” and „foreignness”; these, in turn, generated new social phenomena and had a prominent culture-forming factor. The varied identity of migrants meant that the integration or „alienation” of new arrivals was dynamic and changeable. Just like the process of adapting the local community during industrialization, because the formation of the industrial community was not a stable process. An important issue is also to discover how the migrants adapt everyday life to new living conditions in the industrialized space.

Political, occupational, social, religious and cultural movements:

Industrialization has forced states, politicians and the clergy to react to the changes in society. It influenced both political and religious life, which was a direct reaction to the ongoing social transformation. At the same time, the change of lifestyle led to political, social and culture-forming actions among the inhabitants of areas undergoing industrialization, which were undertaken by and for the population - from the bottom up. Both the outbreaks of strike actions and numerous workers’ associations owe their appearance to the industrialized space.

Intellectual and creative ferment:

Innovativeness and creativity hidden in the industrialized places encouraged the participation of intellectuals and artists using various means of expression in the discourse on the creation of a new world. This discourse includes both the earliest discussions on ecology, as well as the ideologically involved unprofessional art, painting and leading film creations.

Social and civilization effects of industrialization and mechanization of production and life:

The inclusion of a machine, an indispensable product of industrialization, in the realities of everyday life significantly affected both work and everyday life. As a result, a new lifestyle was created, and the role of the heavy industry worker’s ethos collided with the mechanization of this change. It also influenced the family, whose tradition has often turned out to be a creative factor and a point of reference to the „new” one. Just like the civilization and social effects of ecosystem degradation caused by emerging and expanding coal mines.

Cultural clash triggered by migratory movements:

The movement of large social groups with diverse cultural baggage caused impactful interactions: collisions, wars and exchanges. Individual communities adopted various forms and strategies for adapting cultural systems to dynamically changing living conditions. This was accompanied by the creation and degradation of cultural traditions. Some of those participating in industrialization had to redefine the importance of tradition and identity in this period. The development of places of residence common to migrants (colonies and workers’ estates) intensified the socio-cultural consequences of the „co-existence” between people with diverse cultural baggage.

Conference fee: PLN 100

The duration of each presentation should not be longer than 20 minutes.

Please send your applications via the form provided on www.muzeumgornictwa.pl to:
konferencja@muzeumgornictwa.pl till August 2nd, 2019
Agenda of the conference will be announced before Aug 19th, 2019.

In case of any further questions, please refer to dr Beata Piecha-van Schagen
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