

The Peripheral Literary Myth as a Way to Cope with Workplace Flexibility

OCHINOWSKI, Tomasz; Faculty of Management, University of Warsaw, Poland

Email: Ochinto@wz.uw.edu.pl

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Abstract

This article uses a concept of “organizational historiography” as a way of critical reading the business past, including the literary representations of this past. The author analyzes—as a particular example—some historical contexts of narrations about workplace flexibility as a human challenge. Article refers to a psychological narrative about flexibility accumulated in the early 90s. in Protean Self-concept by Robert Jay Lifton and followed by the contemporary concepts of Resiliency. As the main themes the text outlines the selected literary antecedents of struggle with workplace flexibility on the example of belles-lettres. The author focuses on the intercultural, yet provincial, myths of “Lozdremensch” and “Silesian fate” that was developed in the belles-lettres, which focus of the experiences of the people who were living on Polish territory at the turn of nineteenth and twentieth century and later. According to the author, these myths carries the narrative of a cultural heritage, valid also (or even especially) regarding psychological problems of workplace flexibility today. Such reading of the novels, poetic essays and stories seems to be consistent with the Deirdre McCloskey’s idea that nothing like the work of writers helps to understand and “calibrate” economic reality.

Keywords: Organizational Historiography, Workplace Flexibility, Resilience, Literary Representations of Economic Reality