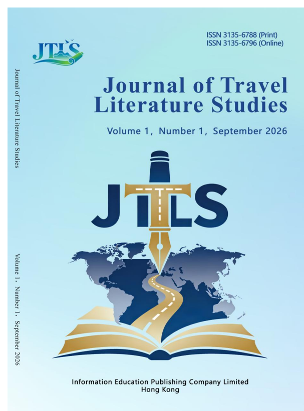

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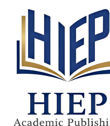

Other Bodies: An Embodied Perspective on Two Women's Travel Accounts of Japan (1904)

Tomasz Ewertowski

Abstract: This article examines how bodily and sensory experiences shape representations of cultural otherness in early twentieth-century Polish travel writing about Japan. Focusing on travelogues by Antonina Wernicowa and Helena Witwicka, it shows that travel experience extends beyond visual observation to include a wide range of aural, tactile, olfactory, and kinaesthetic sensations. Drawing on sensory history and body studies, the analysis identifies several modes of representing bodily experience, from simple references to more elaborate, affective descriptions and reflections. Such representations lend immediacy and credibility to the narrative while constructing vivid images of foreign spaces. At the same time, embodied experiences are shaped by pre-existing discourses and social conditioning, often producing ambivalent responses that combine fascination with discomfort. Particular attention is paid to everyday practices and interpersonal encounters, which reveal how bodily interactions could both reinforce and challenge perceptions of otherness, introducing nuance into depictions of Japan as an exotic Other.

Keywords: Polish travel writing; Japan; body; sensory history; embodiment

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Introduction

One approach that has been extremely productive in travel writing studies in recent decades can be summed up in the phrases "travelers' gaze" and "in travelers' eyes." Examining what travelers "see" and what they do not—often treating "seeing" in a metaphorical way—can lead to thought-provoking reflections on representations of observed reality and the discourses that influence it (Pratt; Jezernik). However, despite the remarkable results of this conceptual framework, such a focus on travelers' eyes inevitably invites a question: what about the rest of their bodies? With this issue in mind, we can read the following excerpt about a Buddhist temple in Osaka, visited by the Polish traveler Antonina Wernicowa in 1904:

> I turned toward the temple; the devout were purchasing various kinds of incense as offerings to the deities. Another offering consisted of throwing a small coin, worth one-tenth of a cent, into the stone trough in front of the temple. After making this payment, the Japanese would pull a rope, whereupon a sound could be heard, as if wood had struck a basin. Inside the temple, several of the devout, standing, clapped their hands and whispered a prayer. It was quite noisy there; some were entering, others leaving. People spoke loudly. Children laughed and called out. The bonzes moved bells and gongs. On the right side, deeper inside, stood a small stone statue of the Buddha. The devout touched, or rather rubbed, various parts of its body, after which they did the same to their own bodies. There were such bustle and noise in the temple that I could not remain there for long (Wernicowa, p. 217).[1]

[1] Translations into English are my own unless otherwise stated. The original reads: "Zwróciłam się do świątyni; pobożni nabywali różne kadzidła na ofiarę bożkom. Drugą ofiarą było rzucanie pieniążka, wartości jedna dziesiąta centa, do kamiennego koryta przed świątynią. Po złożeniu tej opłaty, japończycy ciągnęli za sznur, poczem dawał się słyszeć dźwięk, jakby drzewem uderzono w miednicę. W świątyni kilku pobożnych, w postawie stojącej, klaskało w ręce, i szeptało modlitwę. Było tu dosyć gwarno; jedni wchodzili, drudzy wychodzili. Rozmawiano głośno. Dzieci śmiały się i nawoływały. Bonzowie poruszali dzwonkami i gongami. Po prawej stronie, w głębi, stał niewielki, kamienny posąg Buddy. Pobożni dotykali, a raczej pocierali różne części jego ciała, poczem czynili toż samo na swojem ciele. W świątyni taki był gwar i hałas, że długo w niej pozostać nie mogłam."

This excerpt is a typical piece of travel writing, recording a personal, singular experience of visiting a landmark and events taking place there during a journey. Wernicowa portrayed what she saw, but also much more than this. At the beginning, it was through the embodied experience of movement that the described scene was initiated ("I turned toward the temple"). In the end, the bustling atmosphere of the temple put Wernicowa's body under such pressure that she had to leave the place. In between, numerous bodily sensations were recorded, predominantly aural, including human voices, gongs, and bells. Although the traveler did not write about her own tactile or olfactory engagements, her remarks about incense allow one to reconstruct the smell of the temple. There is also a phenomenon that can be variously described as "touch of the eye" (Garrington, pp. 7, 9, 20, 89), "extended haptics" (Smolińska, p. 62) —and "haptic visuality"—a way of looking focused on surfaces and textures (Jackson, p. 229): Wernicowa suggestively wrote about worshippers touching the statue of the Buddha and their own bodies. Finally, the very fact that the travel writer emphasized that she could not remain there for long, while it was apparently not a problem for local temple visitors, suggestively set Wernicowa apart from the Japanese, revealing an embodied experience of othering.

This example clearly demonstrates that the travel experience consists of much more than seeing (Podemski, pp. 9–10; Adler; Pettinger and Youngs, pp. 208–61). The way in which various bodily experiences are conveyed in travel writing is an intricate issue that will be examined in this paper. My main goal is to investigate how bodily experiences are represented in narratives, what the functions of such descriptions are, and how they correspond with travel writers' ideologies and discourses. In the next section, the conceptual and methodological background of this inquiry will be described, which will also help characterize the article's goals and structure in more detail. Before that, in the remaining part of this introduction, I will present my sources and the context of the travels described in them.

Two travel accounts analyzed in this article were written by the aforementioned Antonina Wernicowa and by Helena Witwicka (1841–1923), two Polish women who independently visited Japan and whose accounts were published in Polish newspapers. Wernicowa stayed for a few years in Harbin in Northeast China, where her husband was working for the Russian-built Chinese Eastern Railway. His career was not a

unique situation; Poland was not an independent state at the time, and the Russian enterprise employed many Poles who were Tsarist subjects and for whom career opportunities in Asia were greater than in the oppressively ruled historical Polish lands.[1] In 1904, when her husband's contract was about to expire, she decided to take a short tourist excursion to Japan, "about whose civilization I have heard so much" (Wernicowa, p. 104). She visited Nagasaki, Kyoto, Kobe, Osaka, Tokyo, and Yokohama, and shortly after that she published a serialized travelogue in the weekly *Tygodnik Polski* (Polish Weekly). She represented the sensibilities of a tourist, using opportunities created for Europeans during nineteenth-century globalization to experience what she perceived as an exotic foreign country. Additionally, because of her few years of residence in China, in her writings readers encountered comparisons of the "familiar exotic" (Chinese) with the "unfamiliar exotic" (Japanese).

Helena Witwicka's travel was of a different character.[2] She came from an aristocratic, landowning family. Her brother was an industrialist and a Polish patriot, and Helena never married, accompanying her brother in his various business and social activities. Because of his enterprise, Witwicka stayed for many years in Russia. In 1888–89, she traveled through Siberia to Japan together with her friend, the singer Dina Nikolaevna Kravtsov-Krasov, giving concerts. Due to their status as members of the nobility and as musicians, they were able to meet Japanese notables, including a brief encounter with Emperor Meiji (born Matsuhito, 1852–1912, reigned 1867–1912). They even performed in front of the court. In comparison with Wernicowa, Witwicka wrote much more about personal interactions with the higher levels of Japanese society and much less about typical sightseeing activities. She published a serialized account of her stay in Japan in 1904 in the Warsaw newspaper *Kurjer Warszawski* (Warsaw Courier).

The two Polish accounts offer a relatively rare perspective on female travel experience. Despite a few famous, well-known, and extensively studied female travelers from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, such as Isabella Bird

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[1] For a general overview of the history of the Chinese Eastern Railway, see Elleman and Kotkin and Nilus. For the Polish perspective, see Kajdański. For an overview of the activities of Poles in Northeast China, see Borysiewicz, "Polish Settlement," and "History and Historiography."

[2] The biographical information is based on a blog about the Witwicki family (https://rodzinawitwickich.blogspot.com/) that contains not only descriptions of family life but also numerous scanned sources and is the result of research begun as early as 2009 (Stępień). A book on the Witwickis is currently being prepared by the blog's author, Olga Stępień. I would like to express my deep gratitude to Olga Stępień for her kindness and generosity in sharing information and resources on Helena Witwicka.

Bishop, Mary Kingsley, and Ida Pfeiffer, in the period in question women still traveled and wrote about it less often than men.[1] In a relatively conservative Polish society, this situation was even more pronounced (Wojda 100–105; Forajter), so it is especially valuable to analyze accounts penned by them. Additionally, even though Polish travel writing on Japan has been the object of some, although not extensive, scholarly attention (Gromadzka; Konopka-Wilk; Kalarus), Wernicowa and Witwicka are not mentioned there. In fact, I am not aware of any studies investigating extensively their accounts, besides short remarks about Witwicka's stay in Japan in publications concerned with the role of her family in the Skarżysko region and a footnote mentioning both travelers in a PhD dissertation concerning Polish participation in the Russo-Japanese War (Bębenek, p. 140). They are not recorded in dictionaries or general overviews of Polish travel writing or in the bibliography of Polish Japonica (Zieliński; Słabczyński; Nowakowski). Therefore, making these two female travelers the subject of an analysis allows one to introduce sources that are rarely known even in their native country.

From the perspective of the main topic of this article, bodily experiences in travel writing, female travelogues are important because their authors' sensory engagements could be very different from those of men; for example, they were allowed into various private spaces prohibited to male visitors and more often wrote about interactions with people and friendships (Bassnett, pp. 229–30; Mills, p. 105; Kumojima, pp. 50–52). Additionally, in female travel writing the body can be seen as a site of gender performance and experimentation (Bird). Furthermore, E.M. Collingham, in her investigation of "imperial bodies" in British India, states, following Pierre Bourdieu, that bodily dispositions and attitudes are acquired through the process of socialization, resulting in the fact that "social structures are embedded in the body" (Collingham, pp. 2–3). Consequently, due to differences in the socialization process, women's sensorial experiences could differ from those of male travelers. All this makes Wernicowa's and Witwicka's accounts a significant subject of investigation.

Their travel writings about Japan are a compelling topic also because of the island country's "categorical ambiguity" (Kumojima, p. 2). At the end of the

[1] On gender issues in travel writing in general, see, e.g., Bassnett and Aldrich. In a colonial and East Asian context, see, e.g., Mills, Bird, Kumojima, and Wu.

nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, the period of high European imperialism, for Europeans Japan was clearly an "exotic other," but it avoided the fate of Asian and African countries subjected to colonialism and economic domination. European writings about Japan from that period represent a conflux of different, partially contradictory discourses. There was a fascination with Japanese aesthetics intertwined with a Eurocentric, superior attitude toward "Eastern others." Japan's rapid modernization was admired, but it also caused disparaging comments about "aping" the West. Technological development and military successes were praised, but they also caused anxiety by undermining assumptions about inherent Western racial and civilizational superiority (Adas, pp. 357–65). Additionally, Japan's growing expansion was one of the factors contributing to the rise of the "yellow peril" discourse (Keevak, pp. 125–44). In the Polish context, one more aspect is important. In that period, Poland was not independent, with a large part of historically Polish lands being under harsh Russian rule. Japan's rapid modernization was seen by some Poles as a positive example, and its victory in the war of 1904–05 over the Tsarist regime was widely welcomed (Crowley). Some Polish nationalist geographers and politicians wrote enthusiastically about Japan (Romer; Yasui), whereas during the war Józef Piłsudski, the future leader of the Polish independent state recreated in 1918, went to Japan to offer support for its struggle against Russia. Both authors analyzed in this article traveled before the outbreak of hostilities, but their accounts were published during the initial stages of the war, so this context should be taken into account together with the other discourses pointed out at the beginning of this paragraph. Traveler's bodily experiences emerged at their nexus. Wernicowa and Witwicka, physically felt the otherness of Japanese culture, sometimes with attraction, sometimes with revulsion. Consequently, travel writing about Japan, perceived as both an exotic other and a curious example of the first fully successful modernization of a non-European society (Eisenstadt, p. 435; Denison, p. 27), offers ample material for reflection on "traveling bodies," and this research approach will be characterized in a more detailed way in the following section.

Bodies in motion: conceptual background

This paper is situated at the intersection of several fields of research. First, it explores the particularities of women's travel writing, as indicated above in the discussion of

the backgrounds of Wernicowa's and Witwicka's travels. Second, by analyzing the writings of two travelers from partitioned Poland in Japan, I contribute to discussions of what the involvement of peripheral European nations in travel practices in the age of empire reveals about their position within the world system (Křížová and Malečková; Mrázek; Patton; Schär and Toivanen). However, for this article, the most important fields are sensory and embodied history and their application to travel writing studies.

The corporeal turn of the 1980s and 1990s rendered embodiment an important topic of analysis (Allen, p. 65). The history of the body is intertwined with sensory history, because "Reports from 'the senses'—via the sight, smell, touch, auditing, and speech of others—always mediate and constitute the facts of any historical matter, the grounding evidence" (Allen, pp. 71–72). The human sensorium is culturally conditioned: societies assign various meanings to sensory acts, understand perceptions differently, and descriptions of sensuous impressions transmit cultural values (Low, pp. 3–13; Classen, *Worlds of Sense*, p. 5; Rodaway, pp. 22–25). Additionally, Mark M. Smith and other historians oppose the idea of a sharp division between modern and premodern culture, the former allegedly characterized by the primacy of the visual. They emphasize that modernity intensified particular aural, tactile, haptic, olfactory, and gustatory dimensions of human existence (Smith; Classen, *A Cultural History of the Senses*). This is especially important for the topic of this article, because modern travel practices are not limited to seeing; for example, modern means of transportation created new aural and haptic sensations (Merriman, pp. 72–97; Ewertowski, "Bodies in Networks"), while increased mobility and the rise of tourism were accompanied by a growing appetite for "tasting the world," also in the literal sense of exploring foreign culinary traditions (Wieczorkiewicz; Bąk).

In general, travelogues are of great interest for sensory history and anthropology because, as noted by Zaid Fahmy, they are both the most promising and the most problematic sources. Although travelogues can be biased and represent reality in a distorted way, they offer a variety of sensory information: "Travel accounts are loaded with sensory information, as foreigners who are unfamiliar with the new sounds, sights, smells, tastes, and textures they encounter rush to write down every unfamiliar detail" (Fahmy, p. 18). This is, however, only one of the reasons why traveling, travel writing, and reflection on the body and senses are interlocked. As indicated by the

editors of an important collection, *Traveling Bodies: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Traveling as an Embodied Practice*, the body is "the medium of our travels, and our mobility, our perceptions and experiences strongly depend on its condition and its functioning" (Maruo-Schröder et al., pp. 1–2). Besides the fact that, as indicated by Fahmy, visiting new places offers new kinds of sensory input, it also made travelers experience their own bodies in new ways, not always pleasant (e.g., travel diarrhea). Sensuous impressions are also an important part of the rhetoric of travel writing; by describing them, writers try to bring to life in readers' minds places and situations encountered during journeys (Maruo-Schröder et al., p. 3). References to the senses highlight a travel writer's individual experience, reinforce their authority as a credible witness, and foster reader engagement with the narrative (Temmerman). This is noticeable in the excerpt about the temple quoted above. The way in which Japanese people and their actions are described corresponds with another aspect of bodily experiences in travel writing—how the bodies of travelees are portrayed as sights and how such descriptions carry meanings linked with particular ideas about physicality (Maruo-Schröder et al., p. 9).

When reading Polish travel accounts about Japan, it is important to consider how historical research focused on the body and the senses engages with such spatial and historical contexts. This article contributes to "sensory research in Asian settings," which is, as indicated by Kelvin E. Y. Low, "in a largely nascent stage" (Low, p. 4). Low proposes an inspiring approach of investigating "how senses in everyday life manifest in historical and contemporary contexts within Asian communities and cultures" (p. 4), attempting to "analyze multipronged sensory ties and connections" (p. 6). In the context of travel accounts written by Europeans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, focusing on sensory connections between different regions, as suggested by Low, also requires attention to another line of inquiry, namely the physical, sensory experience of colonialism (Collingham; Rotter). Virtually all European interactions with Asia, even in the case of Japan, which was not colonized and occupied ambiguous position (as indicated above), and Polish travelers, who were themselves under foreign rule, were underpinned by "an imperial cloud"—"a shared reservoir of knowledge, which was not bound to a single empire, but had a multi-local existence and was accessible to agents of different empires, both from the peripheries and the metropoles" (Kamissek and Kreienbaum, p. 165). In the late nineteenth and

early twentieth centuries, the period of the most extensive European colonial expansion, the Land of the Rising Sun, until recently closed to outside visitors, was full of sensuous surprises described by travelers, but it is necessary to remember that ideas of racism, Orientalism, European superiority, and various stereotypes and preconceived notions impacted how the two Polish women felt Japan. Because of that, the most promising mode of analysis of embodied experience in travelogues is to focus on the notion of otherness. I would like to explore how sensory impressions of the East Asian country and its inhabitants contribute to the construction of an alien space; how bodily interactions with the Japanese could reinforce or weaken the sense of their foreignness; and how, while writing for a Polish audience, the two female authors sought to provide an appropriate representation of the places they visited.

Embodied feelings of cultural otherness in travel accounts from Japan manifested themselves on a few levels, which will be examined in the three following sections of this article. In the first section, the perception of "sights" representing Japan will be explored. Travelers visited temples, monuments, theaters, and exhibitions that were recommended in guidebooks; during these visits, besides the conscious observation of cultural heritage, their bodies experienced sounds, smells, and other sensations, giving bodily texture to the experience of cultural otherness.

On the second level, travelers became aware of Japan's otherness by experiencing seemingly simple everyday life situations, such as eating, sleeping, and walking. Such experiences will be scrutinized in the second section.

Finally, travelers interacted with Japanese people, and such encounters offered an opportunity to overcome differences between cultures, but they could also collapse into misunderstandings and even escalate into violence. Such situations will be the subject of the third section.

"There were such bustle and noise in the temple": Sights of Japan from a Sensory Perspective

The excerpt quoted at the beginning of this article is an example of an embodied approach to typical "sights." It demonstrates how sacred sites were loci of otherness not only because of religious differences (Polish Catholics and Buddhist Japanese) but also because of a different physical experience. Aural and other bodily sensations were so unlike those familiar from European churches and other public edifices, and

so overwhelming, that Wernicowa left the temple. In the other analyzed account, we also find an example of the embodied feeling of difference in temples. Witwicka wrote that when she was offered a visit to a Buddhist temple, she and her companions were repulsed in a similar way to Wernicowa: "the darkness prevailing inside, the chaotic noise and clamor of human voices inspired so little confidence in us, especially with evening falling so quickly, that despite our heightened curiosity, we postponed the plan until later"[1] (Witwicka, "Moje wspomnienia," no. 72, p. 2). What is important in both situations is that the intellectual curiosity of a tourist wanting to explore religious and cultural sites is countered by physical discomfort, which eventually turns out to be stronger. In Witwicka's account, there is yet another interesting scene describing a visit to a Buddhist temple in Tokyo together with a young, progressive Japanese intellectual (Stępień). The Polish travel writer commented on deities evoking fear and disgust; mysterious darkness, with the gaze lost in the recesses of the vast nave; the overwhelming excess of ornamentation and detail; and aural sensations of gongs and the gloomy murmuring of mantras by monks. This description of confusing sensory overload, similar to Wernicowa's impression, is accompanied by comments from Witwicka's Japanese companion, who presented the temple as a site of backward superstitions and contrasted Buddhism with what he called the modern religion of Shinto. Later, this young Japanese intellectual took his guests to "his" Shinto shrine, where "Young Japan," including the emperor, gathered. Witwicka felt richly rewarded by the beauty of that site—marked by elegant lines, simplicity, and refined decoration—where a calm and composed audience gathered to pray in a serene atmosphere devoid of the frightening deities and overwhelming excess seen in the Buddhist temple. Here, the contrast between embodied reactions to the two places of worship is interlocked with the discourse of modernization. This is reinforced by comments from the Japanese intellectual reported by Witwicka, who condemned the traditional religion with an aura of modern superiority, usually associated with European colonial discourse, revealing internal ruptures and leaps accompanying the transformation of Japanese society (Josephson).

A visit to the Japanese theater offered a different kind of bodily experience, revealing other aspects of embodied otherness. Wernicowa wrote that, being in Japan,

[1] "panujący wewnątrz mrok, bezładny hałas i zgiełk ludzkich głosów, tak mało wzbudzał w nas zaufania wobec szybko przy tym zapadającego wieczoru, że pomimo zaostrzonej ciekawości, odłożyłyśmy na później ten projekt."

she would feel ashamed not to attend a Japanese play. This makes cultural activity a part of a tourist duty, showing how conventions of tourist travel determined a traveler's decisions. Eventually, the Polish woman had mixed feelings about the theater. What was positive was associated with visual sensations—she praised the actors' mimic skills, magnificent costumes, and decorations. Aural sensations were far less enjoyable; according to her, actors did not know how to declaim, whereas the performance of the orchestra and choir during the most dramatic moments of the play was called by her "an infernal music" (Wernicowa, p. 184). The bodily arrangement of the audience—sitting cross-legged on mats, not on seats, and walking to one's place on a ramp—was described as "strange" (Wernicowa, p. 184). In general, it is not surprising that Wernicowa was not in raptures after visiting the theater; not only did she not speak the language, but she was also unfamiliar with the traditional stories that form the fabric of the plays, she did not know Japanese theatrical conventions, and she entered the audience in the middle of the performance. In fact, she failed to register even what specific form of Japanese theater she attended (her description suggests it was kabuki). The excursion was motivated neither by a genuine aesthetic engagement nor by a desire for immersion in popular entertainment; rather, it functioned primarily as a touristic encounter with local culture, like visiting a temple for sightseeing, not for religious worship, or tasting a local dish out of curiosity, not out of hunger. Describing visits to the theater while in East Asia was a staple of travel accounts in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; Wernicowa wrote that she went to performances in Harbin many times, compared Chinese theater with the Japanese, and her impressions in Japan, although not enthusiastic, were still more positive than the responses of the majority of Polish travelers to Chinese theater (Ewertowski, *Images of China*, pp. 300–2). Significantly, paying attention to a variety of sensory experiences helps avoid simplifying generalizations regarding travelers' encounters with otherness. Visual sensations in Japanese theater were relatively similar to European conventions, and they offered Wernicowa what she enjoyed, namely looking at costumes and decorations. Still, she complained about the fact that, unlike in European theater, the stage was not separated by the orchestra pit and was open on both sides, and it destroyed the visual illusion. In contrast to the costumes and decorations, auditory sensations differed significantly from those of European theater: the music was too brash, and the audience laughed and talked loudly, which

drew Wernicowa's disapproval. Finally, spectators' bodily positions contrasted with the familiar rows of seats and were therefore described as "strange." As a tourist, she was interested in exploring otherness and thus wished to visit the theater; however, what departed too far from customary conventions and produced unfamiliar bodily sensations was evaluated negatively as strange. Importantly, her feeling of discomfort had deep social roots. As suggested by James H. Johnson in the context of Paris, but applicable to Poland as well, silent spectatorship accompanied the rise of bourgeois ideas about decent and proper conduct as signs of social status (Johnson, pp. 238–36; Łuksza, pp. 73–111). Noises and spectators sitting on mats thus contradicted bodily dispositions acquired by the Polish traveler through the process of socialization.

While the theater spectacle failed to provide Wernicowa with real enjoyment, it was different in the case of another example of cultural heritage, namely geishas' performances. She did not write a description as detailed as the one about the theater, but she commented that their dance "does not intoxicate, but rather delights with extraordinary grace"[1] (Wernicowa, p. 230). Witwicka, who, thanks to her position, was invited to a dinner and party at a well-established Japanese family home, gave a much more elaborate description. Initially, her reaction resembled Wernicowa's theater experience: the music was far from impressive, but the magnificence of the performers' costumes attracted visual attention.

> At a given signal from Okin-San, an elderly Japanese woman seated herself to the side before a stringed instrument lying on the ground, several cubits in length. Plucking its strings in rhythm, she began to sing in a trembling voice—a plaintive, high-pitched melody in a minor key. Yet with the appearance of the geisha in splendid new costumes, everyone's attention turned to them[2] (Witwicka, "Moje wspomnienia ," no. 252, p. 4).

The following description of the dance reveals how it created a space of shared feeling between cultures:

[1] "jej taniec nie upaja, lecz zachwyca wdziękiem nadwyczajnym."

[2] "na dany znak przez Okin-San, zasiadła, z boku stara Japonka przed leżącym na ziemi instrumentem długim na pare łokci, a brząkając w takt po strunach, zaczęła śpiewać drżącym głosem, rozpaczliwie-piskliwo minorową melodye. Dzięki jednak zjawieniu się gejsz w przepysznych nowych kostiumach, uwaga wszystkich zwróciła się na nie."

> At first, only four dancers appeared, assuming solemn poses—at times writhing in despair, at others surrendering to the sweetness of consolation, and finally bowing as if before a higher power. Okin-San explained that this dance represented the turmoil of the human soul, ultimately humbled by a deity, and that it belonged to the category of religious dances.
>
> The movements, the plasticity, and the gradual changes of physiognomy were rendered here with astonishing clarity, involuntarily drawing the viewer into a genuinely serious and reflective mood. This may seem amusing, and yet I experienced it myself[1] (Witwicka, "Moje wspomnienia," no. 252, p. 4).

Witwicka did not dance herself; she watched the dancers and listened to the music, but her experience can be described using the formula of "extended haptics" mentioned in the introduction: "the somaesthetic modality of many senses which activates the haptic system" (Smolińska, p. 62). The haptic is understood broadly and includes not only tactile but all cutaneous sensations (including pressure, temperature, and pain), as well as kinesthesia (the sense of movement), proprioception (the sense of bodily position), and the vestibular system (the sense of balance) (Paterson, p. ix). Despite being "just" a spectator, Witwicka's embodied reaction immersed her in the mood of the dance. Cultural barriers were surmounted. On an intellectual level, she might not have been attracted by the traditional religious content of the dance and, as we have already seen, visits to sacred sites were just examples of tourist consumption. However, the atmosphere of the dance aroused in her feelings that brought her closer to her Japanese hosts' artistic and religious sensibilities. Furthermore, her description of the dances contains also a notable remark on geishas' skills:

> In the subsequent dances, the beautiful geishas captivated us with the precision of their movements, full of gentle grace, or with the adoption of poses marked by sharp lines—always so original that they bore no resemblance whatsoever to our dances. Their mimicry was remarkable, and the very skill of moving

[1] "Z początku wystąpiły tylko cztery tancerki w poważnych pozach, raz wijących się w rozpaczy, to znów napawających się słodyczą ukojenia, korząc się w końcu jakby przed siłą wyższą.
Okin-San objaśniła, iż taniec ten wyobraża miotanie się duszy człowieka, upokorzonej ostatecznie przez bóstwo i zalicza się do rodzaju tańców religijnych. – Ruchy, plastyka i stopniowe zmiany fizjognomii oddane tu były ze zdumiewająca wyrazistością, wprowadzając widza mimowolnie w jakiś rzeczywiście poważny nastrój myśli. Wyda się to może śmiesznem, a jednak doświadczyłam tego na sobie."

> harmoniously in trailing kimonos, which wrapped around the figure in serpentine coils, deserves special attention.[1]

She was so amazed by the high skills of the geishas that even the fact that their dances "bore no resemblance whatsoever to our dances" did not lead to a feeling of "strangeness" but was described as a positive value, namely "originality."

One can ask why dance and music were experienced in a different way than theater or temples, and why, through this kind of artistic impression, the binary division between the traveler and the travelee was transcended. It can be speculated that dance and music are nonverbal, and even if they use symbolic codes unknown to spectators, they can still be appreciated in an aesthetic way on a pre-cognitive level. This is a phenomenon described by Peter Merriman and Lynne Pearce as "kin-aesthetics—the aesthetics of movement" (pp. 498–99). Dance is characterized by creativity, rhythm, and simple, pleasant muscular sensations linked to movement, which can be felt even by foreign observers through the mechanism of "extended haptics." In the analyzed case, an aesthetic bridge between cultures was built. Consequently, in Witwicka's account it is descriptions of bodily sensations that lead to the creation of a positive image of the island country within the convention of friendly exoticism, even though many aspects of the intellectual assessment of Japan point to its alienness.

"Egg Yolk Baked with Sugar Inside a Tomato": The Body and Otherness of Everyday Life

Mechanisms of feeling otherness in everyday life functioned differently from tourist encounters with Japanese landmarks and heritage described above. Such sensations were often involuntary and meant being involved in very ordinary situations. Otherness manifested itself, for example, through the clapping of wooden shoe soles on the stony street surface. Wernicowa remarked that she was often awakened by them at night (121), demonstrating how even singular unfamiliar bodily sensations

[1] "W następnych tańcach śliczne gejsze zachwycały nas precyzją ruchów pełnych łagodnej gracyi, lub też przybieraniem póz o ostrych linjach a tak zawsze oryginalnych, że w niczem literalnie nie przypominają naszych tańców. Przytem mimika zdumiewająca, a sama umiejętność harmonijnego poruszania się w powłóczystych kimonach, owijających wężowemi zwojami figurę, jest godną uwagi."

encountered while traveling impacted the whole bodily condition. Witwicka made this sound a part of a longer description of her point of entry to Japan, Nagasaki:

> The rumble and noise are entirely unknown here. Neither passing carriages nor the clatter of horses' hooves disturb the silence, for the simple reason that there are neither in the whole city. Instead, on the asphalt street beneath the windows, one could hear a characteristic clattering, reminiscent of a herd of cows in Zakopane: it was the sound of the sandals of graceful Japanese women and their lively companions striking the ground. Accompanying it was the delicate chirping of some local cricket, which would sing out from time to time as dusk fell swiftly in that region, while the aromatic scent of musk filled the air more and more intensely. This scent is characteristic of Japan—it can be encountered everywhere[1] (Witwicka, "Moje wspomnienia," no 97, p. 3).

This fragment describes the experience of Japanese otherness using a method typical of travel writing: relating the unfamiliar to familiar concepts and facts through analogy, contrast, and exaggeration (Maier, p. 446). First, the familiar European sound environment is contrasted with "exotic" Japan. The term keynote—"recurring, generally repetitive, background sounds against which the other sounds in a soundscape may be heard" (Rodaway, p. 87; see also Schafer, pp. 9–10)—is useful here because the comparison made by Witwicka is based on contrasting two keynotes, one typical of the European soundscape, the other of Japan. However, when the travel writer wanted to describe in more detail the Japanese keynote, unfamiliar to her readers, she used an analogy: the clattering of wooden sandals was perceived as analogous to a herd of cows in a Polish resort town. Interestingly, whereas Wernicowa characterized this sound by pointing out its negative impact on her bodily condition, Witwicka used it as a vehicle for a positive characterization of the Japanese people, who walked lively and gracefully, demonstrating the validity of R. Murray Schafer's assertion that "the keynote sounds of a given place are important because they help to

[1] "Turkot i hałas są tu zupełnie nieznane. Ani przejeżdżający powóz, ani tupot koni nie mąci ciszy dla prostej przyczyny, że ani jednych ani drugich nie ma w całem mieście. – Natomiast na asfaltowej uliczce pod oknami dawał się słyszeć charakterystyczny klekot, przypominający stado krów w Zakopanem: były to uderzenia sandałów zgrabnych Japonek i ich ruchliwych towarzyszów. Wtórował im delikatny świergot jakiegoś miejscowego świerszcza, odzywającego się śpiewnie od czasu do czasu przy szybko zapadającym w tamtej strefie zmierzchu, a zapach aromatyczny piżma napełniał coraz silniej powietrze. Zapach ten jest charakterystyczny w Japonji: wszędzie go się spotyka."

outline the character of men living among them" (p. 9). However, one can then wonder why the analogy is made with cows, which points to a general problem of difficulties in conveying through words bodily sensations alien to the readers. Finally, olfactory sensations also found their way into this multisensory portrayal of Japan with the reference to the scent of musk. By emphasizing its alleged omnipresence, Witwicka constructed the olfactory geography of Japan on the basis of exaggeration. Additionally, while scholars have emphasized the power of smell to create a strong emotional response (Rodaway, pp. 64–65) and that among the senses smell had, probably, the greatest potential for creating and marking others (Smith, p. 59; see, e.g., Huang), the reference to this allegedly "omnipresent" aroma of musk appears only once in Witwicka's travelogue, and other olfactory references are also not as prominent. Why is this so? One answer could be the elusive nature of the sense of smell and the difficulties of verbalizing such sensations (Rodaway, p. 65). Another is that the smellscape of travel writing is often part of negative characterization based on a critique of others' habits and/or racist stereotypes (Brant, pp. 251–53), whereas Witwicka was creating a positive image of Japan.

Another everyday life practice important for constructing sensory representations of the other in travel writing is eating. Here the situation is complex, because eating involves several different phenomena: first, the physical sensation of the taste of food, which is inextricably linked with smell; second, the very experience of having a meal, which, besides taste and smell, encompasses, for example, the look of dishes, the position of the body while consuming, and also interactions with others; third, cultural conventions connected with eating. Additionally, although the act of eating is not involuntary (contrary to smelling or hearing, discussed above), consuming food is necessary for human survival, so in a foreign country a traveler depended on local resources. The global dominance of European colonial powers in the late nineteenth century did not change this, even in the "comfort zone" of Western hotels (Peleggi). When Witwicka, in a Western-style hotel in Nagasaki, asked for milk, the servant responded to her with contempt and indignation that milk was not allowed and that no one drank it, because feeding such large animals would be complicated and no self-respecting Japanese person would put such a repulsive drink to their mouth (Witwicka, "Moje wspomnienia," no 142, p. 2). Wernicowa, while returning from a long excursion in Nagasaki, felt tired and hungry, so she entered one of the local

restaurants. Knowing Japanese customs, she removed her shoes and ordered a light meal (p. 140). These two simple examples demonstrate how travelers navigated a triangle formed by their own needs and wants, local cultural conventions, and the foodstuffs available. How Wernicowa had to adjust herself when wanting to eat in a restaurant and how a Japanese servant reacted to a request for milk illustrate that descriptions of food and eating habits are often used as a means of constructing otherness. Conversely, in some situations travel writers strive to render foreign food familiar (Horolets, p. 201). For example, Witwicka remarked that the kaki fruit, beloved by the Japanese, looked exactly like a tomato (Witwicka, "Moje wspomnienia", no. 252, p. 4). The kaki fruit, being popular in Japan but unknown in Poland, also attracted the attention of Wernicowa, who made a general sensory comparison of different fruits. She concluded that Japanese fruit trees were more beautiful than Polish ones (or European, as the travel writer simply used the pronoun "ours"), and that cherry blossoms gave off a more pleasant fragrance than roses. However, the fruits themselves did not equal the better varieties of "our" own in taste. The flavor of the favorite Japanese fruit, kaki, was somewhat disparagingly described as resembling "egg yolk baked with sugar inside a tomato" (Wernicowa, p. 245).

Uta Schaffers asserts that bodily responses to food may seem natural, but they are shaped by cultural discourses, as seen in our example of the Japanese servant's response to milk or the analogies with tomatoes made by both travelers. In travel writing, descriptions of the other's food do more than convey sensory experience; they often serve to denigrate or exoticize other cultures while affirming the superiority of one's own. From another perspective, eating can symbolically "incorporate" the other, both creating connections and reinforcing divisions between "us" and "them" (Schaffers, pp. 145–46). Ross Forman (p. 65) also claims that the travel writer's dual role as both eater and narrator simultaneously reinforces cultural boundaries and blurs them. To familiarize foreign culinary cultures, travel writers often rely on analogy to render unfamiliar practices comprehensible, although such attempts often yield questionable results. Could Polish readers who had never tried kaki fruit really feel and understand its taste after reading Wernicowa's analogy to egg yolk baked with sugar inside a tomato? As in the analogy with the herd of cows mentioned above, this question could serve as an entry point to a larger philosophical discussion about the communicability of sensory impressions, but I will not delve into this topic here.

Witwicka's description of the Japanese servant's reaction to milk directs our attention to one more issue raised by Forman: in some cases, travelers may also defamiliarize their own food traditions by revealing their potentially "strange" character to others (p. 65). By allowing the servant's perspective to emerge, albeit only in indirect speech and under the full control of the travel writer's voice, Witwicka nonetheless introduced a foreign perspective on a basic element of Polish cuisine.

In Witwicka's account, we also find a relatively long description of an opulent meal given for foreign guests by a rich aristocrat, which was followed by the geisha performance analyzed above. A long excerpt from this scene can help us to understand how the aforementioned dynamics of simultaneously reinforcing and blurring cultural differences work, as well as allow us to introduce some additional aspects of portraying otherness through bodily sensations:

> The soup served was clear water, however of a pleasant taste, as a few green sprigs of ginger floated in it, which is why it was called "ginger [soup]."
>
> After it, a portion of thinly sliced raw fish was brought, "caught today," in appearance similar to cooked bacon. It is a delicacy much favored by the locals. As for me, I must admit, it did not delight me very much. Next, whale schnitzels were served, the meat white, very tasty, resembling young pork. During the meal there is general merriment and laughter, provoked by our "European," very clumsy use of Japanese chopsticks. The conversation does not falter either, for every well-bred and cheerful geisha continually entertains the guest she "attends to" (not serves). At the same time she often pours sake into a microscopic cup, inviting one to drink it[1] (Witwicka, "Moje wspomnienia," no. 252, p. 3).

[1] "Podana zupa była to czysta woda przyjemnego smaku wszakże, bo w niej pływało kilka zielonych trawek imbiru, dlatego nazwana szumnie imbirową. Po niej przyniesiono porcyjkę cienko ukrojonych plasterków surowej ryby "dziś wyłowionej" - na wygląd podobnej do ugotowanej słoniny. Jest to smakołyk, za którym przepadają krajowcy. Mnie zaś - przyznam się - nie zachwycił wcale./ Następnie podano sznycelki wielorybie, - mięso białe, bardzo smaczne, zbliżone do młodej wieprzowiny. Podczas jedzenia panuje wesołość i śmiech ogólny, wzbudzony naszem europejskiem, bardzo niezgrabnem użyciem pałeczek japońskich. Rozmowa też nie upada, bo każda dobrze wychowana i wesoła gejsza bawi ciągle gościa, którym się zajmuje (nie usługuje). Przytem często nalewa 'saki' do mikroskopijnego kubeczka, zapraszając do wypicia."

Descriptions of dishes include their appearance, taste, ingredients, and how they were valued by both the travel writer and locals. Witwicka tried to make Japanese food more familiar to her audience—details and the use of analogies are noticeable—but the general tendency was that of othering. The very fact that all dishes required introduction is significant; additionally, the Polish traveler made a clear distinction between her own tastes and those of local people. The culinary dynamics of othering and familiarizing were complex, encompassing much more than just descriptions of dishes. On one level, the very fact of having a meal together brought Japanese and Europeans closer. However, the description of accompanying activities, such as the attendance of geishas, creates an image of otherness. The remark about chopsticks also offers an interesting perspective from which to reflect on embodied cultural differences. These utensils epitomize the otherness of East Asian traditions (Wang). An attempt to eat like a Japanese person can be seen as a recognition of their culture and an abandonment of any pretensions to European supremacy. However, the clumsiness of this effort caused laughter. Some aspects of Homi Bhabha's concept of mimicry can be applied here. It is used by Bhabha to comment on attempts by colonized subjects to imitate colonizers; being "almost the same, but not quite" (122) invites mockery but also subtly undermines the nature of authority by demonstrating its ambivalence. In the analyzed chopsticks scene, it was non-European others who were imitated by Europeans, causing merriment, but Witwicka wrote about it without resentment. It can be read as a sign of the self-confidence of European visitors, who did not feel the need to fear being laughed at. Nonetheless, this scene demonstrates how, in the context of cross-cultural interactions, even apparently innocent gestures can be burdened with meaning. Without language, communication, and knowledge of cultural context, bodily experiences of everyday life situations could be very confusing, as indicated by the following example. An amusing but potentially distressing situation caused by differences in body language is noted in the description of the same dinner. Witwicka tried to raise a European-style toast to her geisha, but each time the geisha swiftly took the cup and drank it herself, assuming it was being offered. This made the Polish traveler very upset, but another European attending the dinner later explained that this was not rude at all, but a polite Japanese response to a gesture that was interpreted as offering a cup to the geisha. Taking this whole scene into account can thus lead to the conclusion that basic physical needs and actions also

bridge cultural differences (Japanese and Europeans eat, even if their tastes are not similar), but the cultural conventions surrounding them reinforce the image of otherness, even if in a friendly and amusing way.

Finally, it is worth noting that both Wernicowa and Witwicka made a very similar remark about Japanese dining habits. Even after eating a dinner consisting of many dishes, they were still hungry: "A dinner at seven consisting of fourteen or fifteen courses, yet the dishes were so homeopathic in size that after eating them the traveler was not satisfied"[1] (Wernicowa 120); "Having returned to the hotel, despite the cheerful memories and charming images still lingering before our eyes, we were ravenously hungry after that exotic dinner."[2] (Witwicka, "Moje wspomnienia," no. 252, p. 4). Nothing better demonstrates that eating while traveling is a form of navigation between a traveler's own needs and wants, local cultural conventions, and the foodstuffs available, and that a traveling body may emerge not satiated even from an opulent dinner.

"One Must Suffer to Be Beautiful": People-to-People Encounters

In the final section of the article, I would like to pay attention to the embodied character of interpersonal encounters in travel writing. As stated by Catherine Mee, "encounters are as essential to travel as place; they shape and define journeys" (p. 3). Wernicowa and Witwicka, being foreign women in Japan, interacted with local people in a particular way. Importantly, such encounters encompassed much more than the exchange of words. Paying attention to the embodied character of their meetings reveals that these interactions could open up possibilities for bridging cultural differences, yet just as easily give rise to misunderstandings and even escalate into conflict.

Wernicowa described a scene in which she felt endangered by people invading her personal space. In Kyoto, where foreigners were a rarity, her appearance drew an inquisitive crowd that quickly surrounded her (Wernicowa, p. 153). Catherine Mee, while analyzing staring as an encounter, comments that "to travel is to submit oneself to such discomforts as the travellee's stare" (p. 94) and examines various responses to

[1] "O 7-ej obiad złożony z 14–15 dań, ale dania były tak homeopatyczne, że po spożyciu ich podróżny nie był nasycony."

[2] "powróciwszy do hotelu, pomimo wesołych wspomnień i czarownych obrazów snujących się jeszcze przed oczami, byłyśmy szalenie głodne po owym egzotycznym obiedzie."

being stared at, concluding that this involves "opening oneself to the possibilities of encounter" (p. 94). In the analyzed scene, the possibility of a friendly encounter quickly collapsed. First, two street boys stared impudently into Wernicowa's face and mocked her discomfort, violating her personal boundary even without direct bodily contact. Then the whole situation was exacerbated when one of them deliberately stepped on her dress. Still, there was no skin-to-skin contact, but since clothes constitute a "liminal zone between bodies" (Maruo-Schröder et al., p. 10), it was too much for Wernicowa, and she reported this to her guide. He began to scold the street boys sharply in Japanese. Ashamed, the boys clasped their hands, bowed deeply, and apologized. Whereas at first body language was used to provoke and scoff at Wernicowa, it was then employed for apology. But it was not the end of the story. The crowd grew restless, with voices rising against the guide. Fearing the situation might escalate into a fight, Wernicowa discreetly slipped away and hid in a temple for one hour. All these unpleasant interactions occurred without direct verbal communication between the Polish traveler and the crowd; the presence of the traveler's body caused a commotion by drawing attention with its foreignness, and then the whole situation unfolded through body language, violating conventions of personal distance and suggesting possible physical confrontation. Ultimately, it was resolved by the Polish traveler making her body absent. The scene examined above not only reveals the centrality of the body to interpersonal interactions, but also demonstrates how both sides of an encounter can be sensitive to the apparent breaking of rules of physical proximity, which can potentially lead to violence. Wernicowa's readers could generalize this scene into the conclusion that Japanese others are menacing toward different, foreign bodies.

In Witwicka's account, we can find examples of encounters of a different character because, as mentioned in the introduction, her travelogue focuses less on sightseeing and more on meeting people. They provide a worthwhile counterpoint to the conflict scene in Wernicowa's account and demonstrate how the construction of an image of an alien Japan, outlined in the two previous sections, is partially softened by friendly personal, bodily interactions. Of special interest are two scenes that revolve around femininity and the body. The first arises from an accidental interaction in a public space, when foreign bodies draw attention, and is thus analogous to the scene from Wernicowa's account discussed above. However, instead of an encounter with an

aggressive crowd on the street, it takes place among women in a train carriage (Witwicka, "Moje wspomnienia," no. 142, p. 1), showing how the modernization of transportation in the late 19th century Japan created new spaces of interaction. The Japanese female passengers gathered in small groups and, before the train departed, lit tiny pipes. Despite the smoke, Witwicka remained with them as they began taking out various amusements. Curiosity about the other overcame the physical discomfort caused by such practices as smoking. A pale, very young woman sitting beside Witwicka took out a mirror and began applying makeup. Noticing Witwicka's interest, she politely offered her the mirror and even attempted to color her lips, finding them too pale by Japanese standards. This scene presents a gendered, intimate encounter in which the everyday management of the female body becomes a site of both othering and connection. Beauty standards separate the traveler and the travelee, but the attempt to color the Polish woman's lips represents an effort to connect on the basis of a shared, gendered experience of cosmetic practices. Witwicka declined, explaining in English that such practices were improper in Europe. An older woman translated her words, prompting laughter among the group, before remarking in broken English that she had already guessed the foreign origin of Witwicka and her companions from their height and "round eyes." The Polish travel writer explained that mentioning the eyes was a compliment, noting that some Japanese women even had their eyelids altered to achieve round, European-style eyes. In this way, the scene, although grounded in a shared gendered experience, still maintained a barrier between the two cultures and reinforced European superiority by presenting the European body as an ideal for the Japanese.

Witwicka met people not only casually; the connections of this travel writer enabled her to socialise with the Japanese upper classes. One such situation was a private visit to the bedroom of Witwicka's female Japanese friend. This scene is similar to the one analyzed above, but the general overtone is different. When the Polish traveler was surprised by an empty bedroom, the girl demonstrated the sleeping arrangement by lying on a thick, elegantly embroidered quilt (futon) and using a small padded wooden support for her neck. Words were not enough for a demonstration; the whole body was involved. When Witwicka protested that such "a pillow" seemed torturous, the friend replied playfully that this was necessary to protect traditional Japanese women's hairstyles and that one grew used to it—"following the idea, *Il faut*

souffrir pour être belle [one must suffer to be beautiful]"[1] (Witwicka, "Moje wspomnienia," no. 172, p. 2). Like the scene analyzed above, this is also a gendered, intimate encounter during which Witwicka had access to embodied practices inaccessible to male foreign travelers. Cosmetic bodily practices were a site of both othering and connecting, but with a different conclusion than in the scene on the train. At first, the Polish traveler projected European notions of comfort onto a typical Japanese sleeping arrangement, describing sleeping on a wooden support as "a torture," but this was countered by her Japanese friend with a reference to a logic familiar to European sensibilities—"one must suffer to be beautiful." The specifically Japanese practice of hairstyle preservation was interpreted as a generalized gendered experience. This moment of connection was reinforced by the use of the French phrase. The scene thus illustrates how femininity forms a basis for connection. Although bodily practices were initially presented as alien, in conclusion they were seen as parallel forms of gendered self-regulation. In this sense, the encounter produced a moment of affective proximity grounded in shared notions of social expectation connected with female beauty.

Conclusions

In this article, I address a series of interrelated questions posed in the first two sections: How are bodily experiences represented in travel narratives? What functions do such descriptions perform? How do they correspond to travel writers' ideologies and discourses? More specifically, I examined how sensory impressions construct an alien space, how bodily interactions shape perceptions of Japanese foreignness, and how the two female authors, writing for a Polish audience, represented the places they visited. These questions can be answered by drawing together the findings of the three preceding sections.

Verbal representations of bodily experiences are plentiful in both analyzed accounts. Sometimes they were presented directly; however, when the phenomena described were unfamiliar to the audience, Wernicowa and Witwicka often relied on comparisons based on analogy, contrast, and exaggeration. A loose typology of writing about bodily sensations can be outlined as follows: first, basic mentions of bodily sensations, consisting of simple references that indicate the presence of sensory

[1] "w myśl idei, qu'il faut souffrir pour être belle."

experience with limited descriptive detail ("Children laughed and called out"); second, bodily sensations linked to personal response, where sensory impressions are connected to the traveler's physical or emotional reactions (e.g., Wernicowa was awakened by the clapping of wooden shoe soles); third, detailed and affective sensory descriptions, offering elaborated depictions of bodily sensations, including their qualities and impact on the traveler ("The movements, the plasticity, and the gradual changes of physiognomy were rendered here with astonishing clarity, involuntarily drawing the viewer into a genuinely serious and reflective mood. This may seem amusing, and yet I experienced it myself"); and finally, sensory experience connected to broader reflection, in which bodily sensations serve as a basis for cultural, social, or philosophical interpretation (e.g., Witwicka's visit to her friend's bedroom).

The functions of these descriptions are diverse, and the remarks by Temmerman and Maruo-Schröder et al., discussed in the second section, provide a useful basis for addressing this question, even though the analyzed material suggests some modifications to their arguments. References to bodily sensations lend the narrative a personal dimension, thereby fulfilling a key condition of travel writing—its autobiographical axiom. They also reinforce the travel writer's authority, as Witwicka wrote, "This may seem amusing, and yet I experienced it myself." However, in the analyzed travelogues, their primary function is to create a representation of otherness that is more vivid and concrete than generalized statements about Japan as an exotic other. In one letter to her family, Witwicka commented that "In short, everything here is different—the people, the houses, and the color of the trees" [1] (Stępień), and such a sentence conveys the traveler's impressions, but is much less evocative than a visceral description of a Japanese dinner or a visit to a temple. Finally, descriptions of embodied experience can introduce productive ambiguities into the portrayal of the foreign country and the overall tendency of the narrative, as demonstrated by the two scenes of personal encounters with the Japanese analyzed at the end of the previous section.

Travelers' bodily sensations clearly correspond to their authors' ideologies, discourses, and preconceived notions about Japan, which is most evident in Wernicowa's account of her visit to the theater. This correspondence is inevitable, since, as indicated in the second section of the article, perception is conditioned by

[1] "Słowem tu wszystko inne, i ludzie i domy i kolor drzew"

socialization; impressions that are new are often described as strange, which can carry either a positive value ("always so original that they bore no resemblance whatsoever to our dances") or a negative one ("chaotic noise and clamor of human voices inspired so little confidence in us"). At times, an interesting tension emerges: tourists may feel intellectually obliged to visit temples or theaters, yet their embodied reactions are unpleasant. However, as suggested at the end of the previous paragraph, scrutinizing embodied experiences introduces a degree of ambiguity into representations of Japan, challenging the idea that they are merely reproductions of content "downloaded" from the "imperial cloud." Here, scenes of interpersonal interaction are of crucial importance. Whereas both accounts are dominated by the discourse of Japan as an exotic other, typical of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, face-to-face encounters with Japanese people bring these notions to the test. In Wernicowa's case, her unpleasant encounter in the streets of Kyoto may contribute to an image of a hostile, dangerous other. Witwicka's private, female encounters, by contrast, demonstrate the possibility of transcending binary differences through the shared experience of femininity.

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