

## SUMMARY OF DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

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Temat rozprawy doktorskiej: Obraz Wielkiej Brytanii w polskim i angielskim  
podróżopisarstwie w latach 1790-1839 / The Image of Great Britain  
in Polish and English Travel Writing in the years of 1790-1839

This dissertation comprises a comparative analysis of Polish and English evidence of travels through England, Scotland, Wales and a small area of Ireland. The texts selected for the research present female and male perspective, written in various literary and paraliterary conventions. The juxtaposition of travelogues written in two different national traditions helped to present a more complex and more objective, literary picture of The Kingdom of Great Britain in the years 1790-1839. In the course of argument, I systematically come back to concepts which were urgent for romanticism, that is moral (freedom, presence and absence of another person), esthetic (beauty, sublime, picturesque) and social (tension among social classes, international relations). These are the topics which organize the comparative reflection to present a literary picture of the country.

The dissertation involves five chapters, introduction, conclusions, bibliography and the list of illustrations. The introduction presents the current state of research on the primary sources, the analyzed travelogues and their authors. In this part, I also refer to the methodology of research, in particular to comparative studies, which I understand as a part of cultural studies. Chapter one is devoted to imaginary pictures of Great Britain which created social and esthetic awareness, especially for the Polish travelers. The imaginary images are understood as a prerequisite for the composition of pictures of a country, which are analysed in detail in consecutive chapters. Chapter two is the result of research on travel literature, including old prints and maps dated to 1800 and earlier, to which I had access during a library search in the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh in 2019, as a beneficiary of the PROM-NAWA exchange. In this chapter, I also concentrate on the perception of road itself, and how such perception would influence the literary visions of the visited spaces and places. Chapter three concerns the ways of perceiving people who were present in the visited places, and who involuntarily, became the actors and participants of the travels. Their behaviour, customs and interactions with the travelers help to conclude on further similarities and differences in imaging. The next, fourth chapter, is constructed on the opposition between the centre and what is beyond it. In the contrastive analysis, I decided not to concentrate on a detailed analysis of towns and cities, but to focus on the images of London and Edinburgh, and as a contrast to them, the images of the English countryside, which I understand as an important space of social, economic and political activity at the

beginning of the 19th century. Chapter five, is devoted to images of nature and spaces in which the travelers experienced Great Britain through nature and geological features.

The contrastive analysis carried out in the dissertation reveals how the travel literature shapes the image of a country which in those times was deemed to be the centre of Europe and the world. The observations of Polish and English travelers are in many respects concurrent, especially those which pertain to esthetics and social issues. The comparative reading of literary evidence of travels suggests that the Polish fascination of Great Britain was a fact; political mechanisms, organization of everyday life, English manners and how 19th-century ideas were implemented into life were paramount for the search of which Polish travelers would set off.

It can also be concluded that 19th-century travels through Great Britain could be a successful way to learn and discover new values. Here, the vital were explorations of still virgin, in those days, areas of Scotland and The Lake District - the cradle of the English romanticism. The analyzed travels are by no means a sole laudation of Shakespeare's homeland. The travelers quoted in the dissertation are consistent in criticizing what they observed, which is the evidence of authenticity in the travel narration of those times.

The presented dissertation covers but a fragment of a much larger image of Great Britain. As such, it is an unfinished attempt of interpretation of the proposed texts with the intention to complement the texts already known to the Polish readers with less known English travel literature. That reveals a more objective story about Great Britain and could be evidence that contrastive studies applied to literary sources from two different cultures help to understand a studied topic more thoroughly.

27.05.2020

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