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Tomasz Ewertowski

THE IMAGE OF THE CHINESE IN THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN CONTACT ZONE. NATIONAL COMPARISONS IN THE TRAVELOGUES OF MILAN JOVANOVIĆ AND WŁADYSŁAW MICHAŁ ZALESKI

The main aim of the article is to examine the ideological background and socio-political framework of two different images of the Chinese communities in Southeast Asia as presented in two travelogues respectively written by the Polish clergyman Władysław Michał Zaleski and Serbian writer and doctor Milan Jovanović. Southeast Asia is treated as a “contact zone” whereby different communities are intertwined in a struggle for hegemony. The writers’ trips to Asia were conditioned by European capitalistic expansion; however, being respectively Polish and Serbian, they came from countries which were also oppressed by great powers. Analysis of their travel writings shows how imperialist and orientalist discourse might have been influenced by various factors. Differences between the two writers issued mostly from their different outlooks on the world; Jovanović being liberal, and Zaleski being conservative and Catholic.

Keywords: imagology, comparative literature, travel writing, image of China, contact zone, postcolonialism.

Introduction

Quite a number of studies have analyzed how cultural and social conditions influenced the image of China among Europeans [1–3]. The way people see, imagine and describe the other betrays their own stereotypes, values and thinking habits. This paper addresses one specific problem within this field: the way in which Europeans portray the overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia. This is a question of three civilizations crossing paths, which makes it a compelling research topic.

My analysis focuses on two travelogues from the last decades of the 19th century, written respectively by the Polish author Władysław Michał Zaleski and by the Serbian writer Milan Jovanović. Both of them traveled in Southeast Asia and East Asia at the end of the 19th century. The choice of a Polish and a Serbian writer is not accidental. An analysis of travelogues written by representatives of these European states that were not

engaged in imperial politics makes it possible to see how imperialist and orientalist discourse could have been transformed.

The second half of the 19th century witnessed the height of European colonialism in Asia, and this wave of European expansion also brought both Jovanović and Zaleski to the region, since they represented European institutions. Zaleski was an important Catholic Church dignitary in India, while Jovanović worked as a medical doctor on a Lloyd company's steamer. However, it should be stated that neither hailed from any colonialist nation. On the contrary, their political sensibility was influenced by imperial oppression of their home countries. Therefore, although the writers' image of Asia was to some extent conditioned by Eurocentrism and colonial ideology, Jovanović and Zaleski shared the same background of being writers hailing from dominated nations. Nevertheless, both often held opposing opinions, because their background and values were not exactly the same. The Serbian writer's liberal ideas made him sensitive to Asian peoples' dignity, while the Polish dignitary often complied with colonial ideology because of his Catholic conservative background. In this paper, the factors that may have influenced their views on the Chinese diaspora will be analyzed.

Writers' position: general framework

Our research is based on certain theoretical assumptions from the field of imagology [4], postcolonial studies – especially the idea of imaginative geography [5] – and the concept of travel writing developed by Vladimir Gvozden [6, 7]. Mary Louise-Pratt's terms, e.g. "contact zone", "anticonquest", "transculturalism", are also meaningful for this research, as they help to describe places where different cultures meet and/or struggle for hegemony, as the case was/is in Southeast Asia [8].

The aforementioned theoretical assumptions suggest that it is of the utmost importance to determine from which position Jovanović and Zaleski made their remarks on the overseas Chinese. The questions must be answered of who they are, whose interests they represent, to whom their writings are addressed, what goals they have, and in which circumstances their encounter with China and its people took place.

The general framework consists of Sino-European relations in the second half of the 19th century and Western colonial expansion. In this period, the Chinese Qing Empire was in decline. Population growth, environmental pressure and social tensions created critical issues for the country, which resulted in poverty, famine and violent uprisings. "To these

internal problems was added a new external challenge: Western powers whose technological, economic, and military strength enabled them to take an aggressive stance toward the Qing Empire” [9. P. 380]. In foreign policy, the Celestial Kingdom lost two so-called “opium wars” as well as the war with Japan, and so it was forced to grant concessions to foreign powers. The crisis was multidimensional, for it was “a perfect storm of three simultaneous problems: the external shock of the expanding West, a secular crisis caused by an accumulation of socioeconomic difficulties over the long term, and more acute political dysfunctions associated with the familiar pattern of the dynastic cycle” [10. P. 150].

Therefore, Jovanović and Zaleski, being Europeans, might have tended to look at the Chinese from the position of hegemony. However, even the weak Qing China was still a huge and populated political entity with a cultural heritage of a few thousand years, which was still highly appreciated in the West. Furthermore, stereotypes about a “slumbering giant” and “yellow peril” were widely circulated [11. P. 150].

While talking about the general framework of analyzed travelogues, views on Chinese migrations have to be taken into account. As various historians point out, unstable political and economic situation in Qing China, population pressure, and rural poverty forced many Chinese to emigrate. However, external factors were also important in the process of creating a Chinese diaspora in Southeast Asia, which was encountered by Zaleski and Jovanović: “It was no accident that the need for a freer flow of labor to the mines and plantations opened up by the new generation of European capitalists coincided with the series of coastal wars that opened up China for international trade” [12. P. 61].

Notwithstanding that Chinese communities were already in Southeast Asia before the 19th century [12; 13. P. XXII; 14], the great migration process only started after Qing’s opening to the West in the second half of the 19th century. A stereotypical image of a Chinese emigrant is that of a hard-working, but unskilled and passive coolie, who was driven out from rural China by European masters to work almost as a slave laborer. However, Adam McKeown states that “Chinese migrations were qualitatively and quantitatively similar to European ones” [15. P. 66]. This author claims that Chinese migrants were a part of the global history of that period and were often independent and enterprising. The overseas Chinese played a huge role in Southeast Asian economies, especially in British colonies that were visited by both travelers. They are seen as a classic example of the “marginal trading minority” [13. P. XII]. Chinese miners

brought industrial development, new technology and capitalistic economy to jungle areas [16. P. 33]. It has also to be emphasized that while both the Polish and Serbian writers tend to write about “Chinese immigrants” in general, the Chinese communities were in fact very diverse, not only because of different social positions in different countries, but also by dialects [17. P. 14–17].

Both Zaleski and Jovanović considered Chinese migrations, assimilation and their role in colonial economy as a fascinating phenomenon of great importance. For the Polish writer, this “hot issue” [18. P. 61] was so compelling that he decided to travel to Southeast Asia to study it.□

After establishing a general framework of both travelogues, the specific circumstances of each author will be examined based on some biographical data and comments on each writer’s outlook on the world.

Jovanović: human brotherhood and anticolonial stance

Milan Jovanović (later nicknamed ‘Morski’ which means ‘sea’ in Serbian because of his many travels) was born in 1834 in Banat (a region which at the time was part of the Austrian Empire)¹. His education in the multinational Austro-Hungarian Empire and in Germany (in 1867 he got a doctorate in Leipzig) might have contributed to his social awareness and interest in cross-cultural communication.

He started traveling in 1876 around the Mediterranean and in Asia while working as a ship’s doctor for the steamship company Lloyd from Trieste, hence his travels in Asia were conditioned by huge social-economic changes brought to East Asia by steamships [21. P. 107]. From 1882, he lived in Serbia, and in 1892 he became a member of the Serbian Royal Academy of Sciences. He died in Belgrade in 1896.

Jovanović’s travelogues include “Gore dole po Napulju” (“Up and down in Naples”, on this travelogue see [22. P. 133–136; 23. P. 187–195]), *S mora i sa suva* (“From the see and from the land”, on this work see Kostadinović), and *Tamo amo po istoku* (“Here and there in Naples”). Jovanović’s travelogues are important because of their author’s unique (for 19th-century Serbs) travel experience and his writing skills (about other Serbian travelers to China, see anthologies: Pušić, *Podnebesko*; Pušić, *Kapija*). Chinese topics were touched on by the Serbian author in the book *Tamo amo po istoku* and the article will focus on this work. Because of the fact that in this period not many Serbs were able to travel to

¹ This brief introduction to Jovanović’s life and work is based on the biographical works of two Serbian scholars [19, 20].

Asia, Jovanović is writing as a storyteller, who is trying to show and explain an unknown reality. He does not present himself as an explorer, but as someone who can show the beauty and curiosity of foreign lands. The Serbian writer is a humanist and a liberal who appreciated the idea of human brotherhood and the belief in the dignity of every human being, thus Jovanović is also a very sharp critic of European expansionism and colonialism¹. The infamous “scramble for Africa” is described in the following way: “The so-called European civilization looks like another form of aboriginal African barbarism < . . . >. It is interesting to observe the determination with which those European strangers rob each other of foreign countries and peoples”² [28. P. 113].

Although Jovanović has a strong sense of the European identity, he is willing to recognize the achievements of Asian civilizations, and his travelogue is also full of reverence for the Chinese, for example: “I came to China with a curiosity of a European to get to know this strange world and maybe laugh at it, but my curiosity in a short time changed into admiration, and I left there with a feeling of respect for this ancient nation”³ [28. P. 193].

Zaleski: a Catholic missionary perspective

The Polish traveler’s circumstance shares some similarities with Jovanović’s, but Zaleski’s background was very different and it influenced strongly his writing. Zaleski was born in 1852 in Lithuania, which at the time was part of the Russian Empire, and was earlier part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth⁴. His family was rich and aristocratic. From Zaleski’s point of view, the most important thing was his position within the Catholic Church. At the age of 27, he decided to become a clergyman. Following studies in Warsaw and Rome, he was ordained and then received a doctorate in theology before serving at the *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*. In 1890, he was appointed the new Apostolic Dele-

¹ On Jovanović’s attitude towards colonialism and the image of China see [27].

² All translations into English are the author’s own, unless otherwise indicated. For the convenience of readers, all Serbian Cyrillic texts have been transcribed into the Latin script. The original says: “Tako zvana evropska civilizacija izgleda kao da je drugi oblik iskonskoga varvarstva afričkoga (...). Zanimljivo je posmatrati revnost kojom ovi evropski došljaci otimlju jedan od drugoga tuđe zemlje i stanovnika”.

³ “Stupio sam na kinesku zemlju s ljubopistvom Evropljanina, da se upoznam s tim čudnovatim svetom i da mu se možda i – nasmejem; ali se to ljubipistvo moje za kratko vreme prometlo u divljenje, i ja sam pošao od tuda sa osećajem poštovanja prema tom drevnom narodu”.

⁴ The following short biographical outline is based on [29–31].

gate for the East Indies, under whose jurisdiction was the huge territory of British India. Zaleski served there until 1916; during this time he covered 280,000 kilometers while traveling, including trips outside his jurisdiction to Southeast Asia and China, where he encountered the Chinese diaspora. Apart from being a clergyman, he was also a prolific writer, an art collector and a botanist [31, 32]. He died in Rome in 1925.

Zaleski's circumstance was a unique one. He was traveling as a church dignitary, so almost everywhere he was welcomed warmly. While meeting the Chinese diaspora in Southeast Asia, he was mostly in contact with Catholics, and was greeted by them as a Papal representative; hence, his experience was very different from Jovanović's, who had contacts mostly with passengers on steamships.

In comparison with the Serbian writer's critical attitude towards colonialism and appreciation of Asian cultures, Zaleski was far more ambiguous. On the one hand, some of his biographers stress that he loved Indians [29. P. 197; 31. P. 517]. *Edward Kajdański* emphasizes Zaleski's wide range of interests [33. P. 229]. The Polish missionary laid the foundations for a native hierarchy in India and, as we will see, he really appreciated the character of the Catholic Chinese, so he was not a racist in any sense. On the other hand, the Archbishop was very limited by his conservative, Catholic outlook on the world: "His often naive and somewhat condescending observations indicate a lack of objectivity and deeper understanding of oriental civilizations" [30. P. 62].

In the Archbishop's outlook on the world, civilization meant Europe. Zaleski believed in the civilizing mission and "white man's burden". Even with his Catholic, anti-Protestant bias, he praised the Dutch system of compulsory labor in Java. He writes: "semi-wild peoples may be compared to small children that need care: work, and welfare, which is brought by work, are great civilizing agents"¹ [18. P. 87]. Zaleski declared that Asian nations should not be compelled to accept the Western way of life, and so criticized Protestantism for imposing a foreign culture, but he seemed not to have realized that his own missionary activity was also part of such a process.

Zaleski's audience and writer's attitude towards readers were similar to Jovanović's, they both were informing readers about distant, exotic countries. However, a big difference is that Zaleski's accounts were written for readers of a Catholic magazine, *Misje katolickie* [Catholic mis-

¹ "Na wół dzikie ludy porównać można do małoletnich dzieci, które potrzebują opieki: praca, i dobrobyt jaki praca przynosi, są wielkimi agentami cywilizacyjnymi".

sion]. It renders focusing on religious issues somewhat natural, while the writer's position within the Church makes him a teacher-like figure.

The overseas Chinese in the Southeast Asian Contact Zone

Jovanović writes about the Chinese in the British Strait Settlements, in Penang and Singapore; Zaleski also describes immigrants in Rangoon and Java. Of course, conditions in all these areas and the situation of Chinese communities were very different. However, all of them can be described as a "contact zone" in the sense given to this term by Pratt. Chinese immigrants, local people (the Burmese, the Malays or the Javanese) and the Europeans were all trying to organize their lives, and thus often competing with each other in many ways. Zaleski and Jovanović describe this situation through a comparison of these three groups of people. Even if they were conscious of differences, nevertheless they made general statements about the observed societies, using labels like "Chinese" or "Europeans". In the history of European literature, a comparison of different nations was often connected with an essentialist view of the national character. Comparison is a way to define specific traits of a nation [34. P. 57, 64]. Furthermore, one of the features of travel-writing is to "attach unknown entities to known reference points" [35. P. 67] that can be made by comparison. These two Polish and Serbian authors compared national characters, customs, economic activity, hence arriving at a different vision of the collective identity.

The Chinese and the Europeans

While describing a shopping district in Penang, Jovanović claimed that Chinese business activity and perseverance made them more successful than the English colonial masters. A comparison of Englishmen and the Chinese served to underscore the positive qualities of the latter.

In the tropics the English are not the same as on their island. They do not go to work before 10 am – the Chinese are in their shops at dawn; an Englishman rests over dinner – a Chinese works; after dinner there is no trade for an Englishman – a Chinese trades in the middle of the night; on Sunday an Englishman does not leave his house – for a Chinese there is no Sunday or holidays; an Englishman wants to use a good part of his earnings for a living – for a Chinese a handful of rice and a small amount of greens are enough. And when all is taken into account, without which

an Englishman cannot live, and what is completely unnecessary for a Chinese, it is clearly evident that a Chinese reaps a profit and he can easily compete with his [colonial] master until he forces him to give way¹ [28. P. 94].

Zaleski made similar comments about Chinese industriousness and business-minded orientation:

<...> neither European settlers nor the local population can withstand Chinese competition, who have an unusual talent for trade and are hardworking, sober and intelligent.

They have already steamship lines and great department stores, which make not a small competition for local and European trading companies; smaller traders have to fight with Chinese shopkeepers, who are satisfied with smaller income and attract customers with cheap products. In the end, the Chinese worker works better and is satisfied with a lower salary.

The active, hard-working, savvy and patient Chinese push out European settlers, who have bigger demands and need more for survival <...>² [18. P. 62].

The European character and customs are treated as a norm, therefore the fact that the Chinese excel in business made their character traits and customs extraordinary. The general image is very positive, as both authors write about the successes of Chinese migrants in Southeast Asia. However, writing on Chinese excellence in comparison with the Europeans may lead to the thought that Western colonial dominions in Asia are

¹ "U tropskim predelima Englezi nisu oni isti što su na svome ostrvu; oni pre 10 časova ne idu na rad – Hinezi su sa zorom u svojim dućanima; Englez se za ručkom odmara – Hinez radi; po obedu za Engleza „nema trgovanja“ – Hinez trguje usred noći; nedeljom Englez ne izlazi iz svoje kuće – U Hineza nema nedelje ni praznika; Englezu se hoće dobar deo zarade za život – Hinezu je dosta pregrš pirinča i malo zelja. I kad se sračuna sve to i još pogdešto drugo, bez čega Englez ne može da živi, a što Hinezu ni malo nije od potrebe, tada je čisto na čisto Hinez u donitku, i može da lako konkuriše sa svojim gazdom, dok ga ne prinudi da mu ustupi mesto”.

² “ (...) ani osadnici krvi evropske, ani ludnošć krajowa znieść nie potrafi konkurencji Chińczyków, którzy posiadają niepospolite zdolności do interesów handlowych, są pracowici, trzeźwi i inteligentni. Posiadają oni już linie parowców i wielkie domy handlowe, które niemałą robią konkurencyę miejscowym i europejskim towarzystwom handlowym; mniejsi kupcy walczyć muszą z chińskimi kramarzami, którzy zadawalnając się mniejszym zarobkiem, taniością towarów przyciągają kupujących. Wkońcu [sic!] wyrobnik chiński lepiej pracuje i mniejszą zadawalnią [sic!] się płacą. Chińczyk czynny, pracowity, oszczędny, cierpliwy, wypycha powoli zewsząd osadnika krwi europejskiej, mającego większe wymagania i więcej potrzebującego na przeżycie (...)”.

in danger. As stated in the discussion on the general framework, in the second half of the 19th century the stereotype of the “yellow peril” was present in European minds. This thought of Chinese migrations as a threat is also mentioned in Zaleski’s account. Nonetheless, both authors do not succumb to this way of thinking, although their reasons for it are different.

Jovanović does not appreciate the European presence in East Asia. Therefore, even if he considers that the British masters of the Strait Settlements might in the future suffer because of immigration, he is not very concerned. Furthermore, as stated already, the author of *Tamo amo po istoku* highly valued the Chinese culture. Jovanović’s liberal and humanitarian ideas, linked to his appreciation of the Chinese culture, turn his comparison of the two groups into a sharp criticism of European civilization as being dominated by greed and violence. Chinese migrations do not create conflicts; any problems are triggered by the European expansive policy: “For all these joys which they give to our life, we are giving them only two things which destroy life – opium and weapon”¹ [28. P. 196].

Opposing the stereotype of the yellow peril, the Serbian traveler believes that contact with the Chinese civilization might bring a better future:

“Will the diligence and peacefulness of these nations subdue our warlike race and direct us to the road of real humanity and sublime patience, which sees in every human being, no matter from which part of the world he is, a fellow human? Or will those nations in contact with us assimilate our wild, expansionist nature, as the Japanese, and start to fight us with the weapon we gave them?”² [28. P. 194].

Zaleski’s refutation of the “yellow peril”-style interpretation of Chinese migration is explicitly motivated by his missionary outlook on the world. “A Catholic missionary looks at this issue from another angle, he is less concerned with the political and economic aspects, because for apostolic work all racial differences disappear: *non enim est distinctio Judaei et Graeci*”³ [18. P. 63].

¹ “Za sve usluge što oni pružaju životu našem, mi im dajemo samo dve stvari, kojima se život gasi – opijum i oružje”.

² “hoće li radnost i miroljubivost tih naroda ukrotiti našu ratobornu rasu i skrenuti je na puteve iskrena čovekoljublja i uzvišene trpljivosti koja u svakome čoveku, bio on iz kojega mu drago kraja sveta, gleda obličje svoje – sačoveka svoga; – ili će ti narodi u dodiru s nama prisvojiti s vremenom, kao Japanci, divlju, osvajačku ćud našu i početi da nas tamane oružjem što smo im sami utisli u ruke?”

³ “Missyonarz z innej strony spogląda na tę kwestyę; mniej go zajmuje strona polityczna lub ekonomiczna, bo wobec apostołstwa nikną wszelkie różnice rasowe: *non enim est distinctio Judaei et Graeci*”.

Zaleski perceives Chinese migration not as a peril, but as a chance, at least for the Catholic Church. He contrasts the Protestant and the Catholic faiths, saying that a flow of new, non-Christian people might be dangerous for the former. However, he appreciates the Catholic faith and missionary activity, thus:

Chinese emigration does not in the least threaten the Catholic faith. On the contrary, it opens up a new and large field for apostolic work. It is easier to convert a Chinese outside the borders of China, where he is free and easily accepts the education of his surroundings, than in their own homeland, where apostolic work is still difficult for many reasons.

One who has not touched, let me say, this issue with a hand cannot imagine how the Catholic faith changes a Chinese, how it ennoble him and how it develops his character traits positively, after having been so far overwhelmed by a pagan yoke. The Chinese nation deserves serious attention. A giant has been in a sort of lethargic slumber, but eventually it will play a role in the world history¹ [18. P. 64].

Zaleski uses the famous Napoleonic metaphor of a sleeping giant; however, he does not want to scare his readers. His goal is to present opportunities for Catholic missionary activity. The Polish writer also does really admire the Chinese Catholics; in his travelogue, he emphasizes their positive qualities rather often. However, while not being a racist, the Archbishop holds a Eurocentric point of view: traditional Chinese culture is called a “pagan yoke”, and Catholicism is necessary to transform the Chinese. Generally, Zaleski’s way of thinking seems to have a lot in common with the European Middle Ages anthropology, which divided the world into the Christian and the Pagan zones, and identified the first one with civilization [36. P. 14–18].

It is also worth noticing that although Zaleski respects the Chinese nation because of its vast territory and population, only Europeans are considered active. While Jovanović sees an opportunity for exchange, and

¹ “Emigracja chińska nie zagraża bynajmniej katolickiej wierze — przeciwnie, otwiera ona nowe i rozległe pole dla pracy apostołskiej. Łatwiej jest bowiem nawrócić Chińczyka po za granicami Chin, gdzie się on czuje wolnym i łatwo przyswaja oświatę pośród której żyje, niż w ich własnej ojczyźnie, gdzie wiele jeszcze przyczyn utrudnia apostołstwo.

Kto się tego nie dotknął, że tak powiem ręką, wyobrazić sobie nawet nie potrafi, jak wiara katolicka przekształca Chińczyka, ile go uszlachetnia i rozwija dodatnie strony jego charakteru, dotychczas przygniecionego pod jarzmem pogaństwa. Jest to naród, który zasługuje na poważną uwagę. Olbrzym dotychczas pogrążony jakby we śnie letargicznym, który jednak prędzej czy później odegra rolę na polu dziejowym świata”.

actually Europeans are beneficial receivers for him, Zaleski considers influence as only flowing one-way.

This way of thinking was quite common in the 19th century, as analyzed by Dipesh Chakrabarty in *Provincializing Europe*. According to the Indian scholar, the European idea of historicism universalized particular processes of Western history. Many Europeans were looking for an established order of historical changes which occurred first in Europe, then in the rest of the world. Zaleski compares indigenous peoples with “children” and claims they need to “grow up”: “History teaches us that almost all European peoples, before they reached modern development of culture, had to go through the stadium of serfdom, as long as they were juvenile”¹ [18. P. 87]. Furthermore, China is described by Zaleski as a “slumbering giant” and the Chinese as passive receivers of European influence. Thus, they are placed in the “Imaginary Waiting Room of History” [37. P. 9].

The Chinese and the local peoples

A comparison of the overseas Chinese with the Europeans is akin to a comparison of “familiar vs unfamiliar”. However, one of the reasons why the image of the Chinese diaspora is so interesting is the fact that immigrants are also compared with the native populations of Southeast Asia, so readers are confronted with two “unfamiliarities”.

In Zaleski’s account, this presentation very much favors the descendants of the Celestial Kingdoms. For example, he compares the Javanese in Yogyakarta with the local Chinese as follows:

Javanese are the population, allegedly Mahometan, but there are no mosques, neither do they seem to know what their faith is, being in fact the simplest of pagans. They would be a beautiful people, if only they have not a deep shabbiness on their faces. Even children do not have a pure expression; sight without life, languid.

What a difference if they are compared with many Chinese, who walk lively on the street² [18. P. 82–83].

¹ “Dzieje nas uczą, że prawie wszystkie ludy Europy, zanim doszły do dzisiejszego rozwoju kultury, przejść musiały przez stadyum poddaństwa, które trwało dopóty, dopóki lud był, że tak powiem, małoletnim”.

² “Ludność, są to Jawańczycy, mahometańskiej niby wiary, lecz nie widać ani meczetów, ani żadnych śladów, żeby wiedzieli czym jest ta ich wiara, będąca w rzeczy samej najprostszym pogaństwem. Byliby to piękni ludzie, gdyby głębokie upodlenie nie malowało się na ich twarzy.

Locals are lazy and ignorant even in the matter of their own faith. Low intellectual and moral qualities make them also ugly (in this way Zaleski seems to be a follower of one of the traditional concepts of European philosophy which derived from the ancient Greek idea of *kalokagathia*).

Zaleski makes a similar comparison when comparing the Chinese with other Southeast Asian peoples. In his general opening statement on emigration from the Qing Empire, which has been partially quoted above, he accentuates not only that the Chinese are competing with the Europeans, but they are also pushing the natives out: "A Chinese (...) pushes out also a native, because he has more energy, entrepreneurial spirit and a slightly higher level of civilization"¹ [18. P. 62]. Especially interesting is the very Eurocentric notion of a "slightly higher level of civilization", which clearly shows the Archbishop's bias.

In the account on Burma, the image of a lazy local compared with a lively and hard-working Chinese is also introduced. What seems interesting is that Burmese women are presented as enterprising, which only exaggerates men's indolence: "Men's infirmity in Burma is a reason accounting for the number of the pure blood Burmese gradually decreasing, because a Burmese girl, when given a choice, would like to marry a Chinese or an Indian. She says: 'If I marry a Burmese, I will have to work for him, if I take a Chinese, he will work for me'"² [18. P. 13].

Zaleski's comparison of the Chinese and the local communities reduces a set of stereotypes analyzed by Syed Hussein Alatas in his book *The Myth of the Lazy Native*. This work can be used to explain Zaleski's point of view.

Firstly, the number of critical remarks on the natives' indolence coincided with an increase in the European colonial involvement in East Asia. Traditional local societies opposed these changes, such that their way of life became an obstacle to the introduction of pro-European, capitalist forms of the economy. Portraying them as lazy was a sort of reaction to

Dzieci nawet nie mają tego niewinnego wyrazu, które serce do nich przyciąga; wzrok bez życia, ospały".

Co za różnica porównując ich z licznymi Chińczykami, którzy żwawo się przechadzają po ulicach.

¹ "Chińczyk (...) wypycha też krajowca, bo posiada więcej energii, przedsiębiorczego ducha i wyższy nieco stopień cywilizacji".

² "To niedołęztwo mężczyzn w Birmanii jest powodem, że liczba czystej krwi Birmanów, stopniowo się zmniejsza, bo birmańska dziewczyna, mając wolny wybór, woli wyjść za Chińczyka albo Indyanina: 'Jeżeli wyjdę za Chińczyka – mówi – za Birmańczyka, będę musiała pracować dla niego, jeżeli zaś wezmę Chińczyka, on dla mnie będzie pracował.'"

such a situation [38. P. 72]. A similar capitalist discourse on the laziness of local societies is analyzed by Pratt based on European travel writing in the 19th century America [8. P. 216].

While traveling, Zaleski often met up with Western business persons, praising their knowledge so as to allow him to adapt their point of view on natives. Furthermore, Alatas claims that although only in the Philippines was the Catholic Church recognized as necessary to the civilizing process, in general the ideology of the civilizing mission presented all aspects of European culture, including religion, as better [38. P. 7]. Zaleski's actions as a missionary were, to a great extent, conditioned by the expansionist policy of European nations, so it is not surprising that he repeated such stereotypes.

Commenting on comparisons between the natives and the Chinese, Alatas does not negate a possible higher work rate among immigrants, but he points out which factors conditioned this situation: "The Malays <...> were considered indolent, not because they were really indolent by definition, but because they avoided the type of slave labor which the Chinese and the Indians were compelled to do owing to their immigrant status" [38. P. 75].

This idea can explain Zaleski's point of view. Although his perspective is that of a Catholic missionary and not that of a plantation owner, nonetheless, his reasoning is based on the same principle. The religious bonds and strong cultural traditions of the Malays, the Javanese or the Burmese made missionary activity among them difficult, just as their traditional way of life made them unwilling to provide labor for colonial masters. The Chinese, owing to their immigrant status, were much more inclined to accept a new religious affiliation. Zaleski himself writes that it is easier to convert a Chinese outside the borders of China, where he easily accepts foreign influences [18. P. 64]. Also, it is worth noticing that when Burmese shopkeepers serve him slowly and without enthusiasm, he attributes it to their laziness [18. P. 12], and he does not consider that they may be unwilling to serve him as a colonizer.

Jovanović's comparison of the Singaporean Chinese and the Malays is very different from Zaleski's. It is stated that the living quarters of the Chinese and the Malays are totally different, not only because of the diverse architecture, but also due to dissimilar ways of life of both nations. Jovanović praises Chinese workshops and products, as well as their social cohesion and order [28. P. 128]. And while being impressed by the Chinese, he does not despise the Malays. The Serbian writer appreciates na-

tive handicrafts and highlights a good number of smithies as proof of a high level of culture [28. P. 129]. Finally, while writing on his departure from the British port, the writer praises the Malays as hardworking and calm: “a colored native – a Malay, who is industrious and docile, spends his life working hard on the land and sea”¹ [28. P. 138]. Jovanović’s anti-colonial stance and his liberal ideas allow him to recognize cultural values other than European. He is not interested in establishing a business in Malaya, his home country is not a colonial power, and he is not concerned with a missionary activity like Zaleski, so the traditional Malay life is not an obstacle for him; on the contrary, it arouses his interest.

As we have already seen, the Serbian author is a follower of the idea of human equality and unity. In this fashion, he depicts a scene of going for a walk in a park in Singapore, thus introducing an image of peaceful coexistence among various groups: “Next to a white-as-a-lily Englishman, a Malay shines in his red clothes or a blue Chinaman walks in his ceremonial attire or a drunk Dutch sailor is swaggering in his top tight and bottom wide pants – a real international team which enjoys a cool park under the guard of the always cautious British police”² [28. P. 127].

This is an idyllic scene of a multicultural society. Nevertheless, the remark about English police shows that Jovanović understands that the colonial order is ultimately based on power. However, within this order, the Malays and the Chinese are recognized by the Serbian author as equals.

Alatas also points out that because of the Western colonial expansion and monopolizing policy, “an independent, influential native trading class operating international business was eliminated” [38. P. 21]. This created space for the Chinese immigrants. Zaleski does not devote attention to this issue, as his views on the history of Southeast Asian nations seem to be very simplistic. He claims that when the Dutch conquered Java, the island laid fallow [18. P. 86], which suggests that he does not have a profound knowledge of the history of the island. Java was the seat of important kingdoms dating back to the 7th century AD [39. P. 17–18]. The conquest of Java by the Dutch was a long process which took around two centuries. The first permanent trading post was founded in 1603 [40.

¹ “obejan urođenik – Malajac, koji, vredan i potom, boravi svoj život u teškom radu na suhu i na moru”.

² “Uza belog kao krin Engleza, blešti se Malajac u svome jasnom crvenilu ili čepa modri Hinez u svom stajaćem ruhu ili giga nakvašeni mrnar holandski u svojim ozgo tesnim a dole širokim gaćama – prava međunarodna družina koja mirno uživa hladovni park pod okriljem vazda budne policije britanske”.

P. 30–31], and only from 1830, at the end of the Java war, was the entire island under Dutch control [40. P. 155]. Zaleski does not mention any of these issues, so it may be assumed that his judgments suffered from a limited if not lack of knowledge.

On the contrary, Jovanović recognized the cultural achievements of the Malays and claimed that the Europeans destroyed their ancient statehood: “His [a Malay] eyes shine with wit, which created quite an important literature, and in his clothes and housing some level of culture is visible, which he wore among other peoples of Oceania. When the Portuguese arrived in these lands in the 16th century, they found a Malay state, and the first thing they did was to destroy it, the same as their brother-Spaniards did to Montezuma’s state”¹ [28. P. 111–112].

Conclusion

As we have seen, both Zaleski and Jovanović left a lot of interesting remarks on intercultural relations within the Southeast Asian “contact zone”. For both of them, the overseas Chinese were a crucial element in the net of relations between peoples from various regions of Eurasia. When describing emigrants from the Celestial Empire, the travelers also introduced some important intellectual, economic and political problems. Their images of the overseas Chinese are quite different, because both authors hailed from different backgrounds and had different outlooks on the world. Zaleski is a conservative and a Catholic, who traveled as a Church dignitary. He had a liking for the Chinese, but treated them mostly as potential converts. Zaleski’s comparison of the Chinese with the natives shows the Archbishop’s Eurocentric bias. To a modern reader, many of his statements seem to be quite outdated. Jovanović is liberal, inquisitive and idealistic. He respects Asian cultures, writing positively of both the Malays and the Chinese. His positive attitude towards the Chinese culture is intertwined with a rather critical approach towards European civilization.

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¹ “Iz očiju mu seva duhovitost koja je stvorila prilično golemu književnost, a na ruhu i pokušanstvu vidi se izvesni stupanj kulture, koje je vazda bio nosilac kroza ostala plemena Okeanije. Kad su Portugizi u XVI veku došli prvi put u ove krajeve, zatekli su malajsku državu, i prvi im je posao bio da je razore, kao njihova braća Španjoci što su činili sa Mentezuminom državom”.

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Ewertowski, Tomasz. Adam Mickiewicz University (Poznan, Poland). E-mail: tewert@amu.edu.pl

THE IMAGE OF THE CHINESE IN THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN CONTACT ZONE. NATIONAL COMPARISONS IN THE TRAVELOGUES OF MILAN JOVANOVIĆ AND WŁADYSŁAW MICHAŁ ZALESKI

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