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*Competing Eyes*  
:  
Visual Encounters  
With Alterity in Central  
and Eastern Europe

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The primitive nature and the refined culture  
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# Contents

9 Acknowledgements

11 Dagnosław Demski and Ildikó Sz. Kristóf  
Introduction

## **1. Western Eyes, Eastern Gazes**

26 Vilmos Voigt  
*Icon Animorum* by John Barclay and the Origins of the Characterization  
of European Nations

40 Ildikó Sz. Kristóf  
Domesticating Nature, Appropriating Hierarchy: The Representation  
of European and Non-European Peoples in an Early-Nineteenth-Century  
Schoolbook of Natural History

68 Dagnosław Demski  
Playing With Otherness: Within and Beyond Stereotypes in Visual  
Representations

## **2. Forming Nations and Constructing the Visual “National Body”**

100 Anssi Halmesvirta  
Encountering the Hungarian Alterity: An Analysis of a Narrative by a  
Finnish Traveller

112 Anelia Kassabova  
Inclusion and Exclusion: The Role of Photography in the Nation-Building  
Process in Bulgaria From Approximately 1860 to World War I

140 Ana Djordjević  
Social Differentiation and Construction of Elites in Belgrade Studio  
Photography at the Turn of the Twentieth Century

170 Gundega Gailīte  
Role of “Mother Latvia” in Constructing Self and Other: A Case  
of Latvian Caricature From the Nineteenth Century to 1920

## **3. Reinterpreting Eastern Pasts for Show**

- 190 Miklós Székely  
From Figure to Pattern: The Changing Role of Folk Tradition  
in Hungarian Representations at Universal Exhibitions (1867–1911)
- 212 Miloslav Szabó  
Invasion of “Judeo-Magyars”? The Hungarian Millennium of 1896 in  
the Anti-Semitic Caricature
- 230 Joanna Bartuszek  
“Close Exoticism”: The Image of the Hutsuls and Their Region in  
the Archives and Photographs of the Nineteenth Century and the First  
Half of the Twentieth Century

#### **4. Representations of War and the Other**

- 252 Alexander Kozintsev  
Representing the Other in British, French, and German Cartoons of  
the Crimean War
- 278 Ágnes Tamás  
From Allies to Enemies: The Two Balkan Wars (1912–1913)  
in Caricatures
- 304 Magdalena Żakowska  
The Bear and His Protégés: Life in the Balkan Kettle According to  
the German-Language Caricatures of the *Belle Époque*
- 330 Petr Karlíček  
Us and Them: Cartoons of the Sudeten German Satirical Magazine  
*Der Igel* at the End of the First Czechoslovakian Republic  
(1935–1938)

#### **5. Political Eyes: From Distant to Close Others**

- 352 Edina Kicsindi  
Reinterpreting the Distant Other in Nineteenth-Century Hungarian  
Political Cartoons
- 374 Barbara Derler  
Constructions of Otherness: The Establishment of Studio Photography  
and the (Non-)Visibility of Muslim Women in Sarajevo Until World War I

- 392 Anna M. Rosner  
The Image of the Jewish Street Seller in Nineteenth Century London
- 418 Dobrinka Parusheva  
Bulgarians Gazing at the Balkans: Neighboring People in Bulgarian  
Political Caricature at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century

## **6. New Versus Old: Local Responses to a Changing World**

- 438 Karla Huebner  
Otherness in First Republic Czechoslovak Representations of Women
- 462 Eva Krekovičová and Zuzana Panczová  
Visual Representations of “Self” and “Others”: Images of the Traitor and  
the Enemy in Slovak Political Cartoons, 1861–1910
- 488 Florin-Aron Pădurean  
When Ytzig Met Shtrul: On Schmoozing and Jewish Conspiracy in  
Romanian Art
- 516 Katarina Šrampf  
Residents of Lemberg as Other
- 533 List of Illustrations
- 541 Contributors

# Domesticating Nature, Appropriating Hierarchy: The Representation of European and Non-European Peoples in an Early-Nineteenth-Century Schoolbook of Natural History

40

Certain periods in the history of concepts and representations bore more relevance than others to the discourse of the sciences *par excellence* of “The Other,” that is, ethnography, ethnology, and anthropology. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, a considerable reception of western European ideas took place in the Kingdom of Hungary and, more broadly, in the east-central European region. These ideas seem to have been connected closely to the emergence of the above-mentioned sciences. The present study results from ongoing research of a broader, but closely related, subject. My interests have long been in the development of knowledge about non-European indigenous peoples—especially those of the western hemisphere, and the channels of communication (human as well as instrumental media) by means of which this knowledge was transferred to Hungary during the early modern–modern period.

This knowledge has never existed independently of time and the sociocultural microcontext in which it was born and/or was received, and which also shaped its form and meaning. The Kingdom of Hungary and the Habsburg monarchy (Holy Roman Empire until 1806) to which it was related in various political formations from the late seventeenth century up until 1919 did not have any overseas colonies, so notions about the indigenous inhabitants of faraway continents have arrived here mostly by travelers’ accounts, peregrinating students’ knowledge gathered at foreign (mostly western European) universities, and, no less importantly, translations and adaptations of foreign (mostly western European) books. Among the latter, schoolbooks on natural history constituted an important channel of ideas and images conveying what may be called a *(pre-)ethnographical knowledge*, especially during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. As I have emphasized in an earlier article, scholars from different western European countries have pursued exciting research relating to the overlapping fields of natural history and the history of ethnography/anthropology, and they have also made important efforts to review critically their own colonial past as well as the political-epistemological history of their sciences. In the east-central European region, such initiatives have, however,

been rare.<sup>1</sup> It was within such considerations that I started investigating the central archives and libraries of Hungary a couple of years ago and looking especially for books of natural history and geography in them that were published in the old Kingdom of Hungary during the early modern–modern period. One of the most important results of that research was to find that, not only specific knowledge about non-European indigenous peoples, but more generally concepts about human society and social evolution had arrived in east-central Europe to a great extent by adaptations of works originating in foreign cultural centers, like those of France, Great Britain, and/or the German principalities (Sz. Kristóf 2011, 2012a, 2012b and 2012c).

In the following, I am going to discuss a book that conveyed a similar knowledge to the eastern/east-central European region, and whose visual and textual contents relating to sociocultural stereotypes formed of Us, that is, eastern Europe itself, had contributed possibly to the representation of Otherness in our region around the turn of the eighteenth century and the nineteenth century. I started examining this work earlier, aiming those studies mostly at a western European and a specifically Hungarian audience (Sz. Kristóf 2011 and 2012b). Publishing a greater number of images and providing a broader and, in some respects, more detailed analysis of the book as a whole, I would like to introduce it this time to an *east-central European* scholarly readership with the admitted intention of looking for partners for a future, multilateral cooperation in which to continue its research.

A series of concepts have emerged from my previous studies that appear useful for the elaboration of a more advanced methodology of research for the analysis of illustrated books, as the book in question was. These concepts relate closely to the topic currently in focus, namely “visual encounters with alterity,” and some of the possible ways of its complex—textual/visual/social and, at the same time, historical, and anthropological—investigation. I have gathered those concepts together, and it is according to them that I am going to structure what follows. These concepts may provide some clues for a more general methodology of studying the phenomenon of visual Othering in a textual context, what is manifest in the case of illustrated texts, such as scientific books, schoolbooks, newspapers with drawings, and caricatures.

### **The medium of the encounter**

The first concept I propose relates to the place/very spot of “visual encounter with alterity.” One always should see very clearly where/in what kind of sources/media one identifies that encounter and how the particular source/medium itself affects its representation.

In my case, it is a schoolbook, a late-eighteenth-century illustrated German

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<sup>1</sup> For example, Thomas 1994; Jardine-Secord-Spary 1996; Spary 2000; Schiebinger-Swan 2005; Cañizares-Esguerra 2006; Ogilvie 2006 and Mason 2009. For important beginnings in Hungary, see Fejős-Pusztai (eds.) 2008, and *Korall Társadalomtörténeti folyóirat* 2006, vol. 26 (Utazók és utazások). See also Sz. Kristóf 2011.

schoolbook, which was translated three times into Hungarian and was published throughout the early nineteenth century in three different cities in the Kingdom of Hungary. Originally it was entitled *Naturgeschichte für Kinder* (Natural History for Children) and was published in 1778 by Georg Christian Raff, a professor of history and geography in the grammar school in Göttingen (Lower Saxony).<sup>2</sup> This was not Raff's only work of importance: he also published a huge, two-volume *Geographie für Kinder* (Geography for Children) in 1776 in the same town.<sup>3</sup> From the point of view of visibility, however, *Naturgeschichte für Kinder* was, and still is, outstanding. The ordinarily one-volume book aimed at elementary- and secondary-level education, contains fourteen to fifteen copperplates of page size, and the plates show a great number of plants, animals, and human beings from the different parts of the world. The visual as well as textual order and structure according to which the images have been sorted out deserves special attention, since they reveal much about the interpretive—scientific and representational—tradition of late Classicism/Enlightenment, as well as Romanticism in western Europe, that has found its way to eastern Europe as well.

### Distribution and popularity

42

The second concept that I propose concerns the extent and importance of *distribution*. How widely has the studied manifestation of “visual encounter” been spread by its medium; *how popular* could it have become?

In the case of Raff's schoolbook, we find an exceptionally large and widespread distribution. As I have discussed elsewhere, the schoolbook had several reeditions, translations, and adaptations inside as well as outside the German-speaking world. Apart from its German and Hungarian versions, it had English, French, and Danish, and also Austrian, Slavonic-Serbian, and Russian adaptations; and it has reached the North American continent (to my current knowledge, the state of Ohio), too (Sz. Kristóf 2011: 311 and Cazden 1998: 57–77). It may have had, however, many other editions, translations, and adaptations in eastern/east-central Europe that I am not aware of yet (for example, Slovak, Czech, Polish, and Croatian editions). The adaptations that I did come across—such as the Austrian (Vienna 1785 and 1791), Slavonic-Serbian (Buda 1809), and Russian (St Petersburg 1785 and 1796)—have not been studied in the light of the others yet, though highly exciting textual/cultural comparisons could be made even among the already found different versions (Sz. Kristóf 2011: 328–329, note 39). I would suggest that a large-scale international archival-philological work should be done to explore the true dimensions of the geographical distribution of Raff's

<sup>2</sup> For the different editions of the schoolbook see Sz. Kristóf 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Raff (1748–1788) worked as a private lecturer and deputy headmaster (*Konrektor*) at the gymnasium (*Lyceum*) in Göttingen. For details of his life and work, see Kunze 1976: 131–135; Doderer 1979: 119–120; and Te Heesen 2002: 47, 75, and 78–79.



texts and images.<sup>4</sup>

### **(Morphological/structural) invariability**

The third concept that I would like to emphasize is (morphological) *invariability*. Visual stereotypes, as products of the printing press, seem to have a very long life and, accordingly, a long-lasting impact on their readers'/viewers' minds. One can think of certain *feedback* effects, too, functioning in the background. In order to be recognizable for the readers/viewers, visual stereotypes need to stay constant, fixed, for a certain period of time.

The editions of Raff's schoolbook contained—preserved—indeed the *same* images from Göttingen to Glasgow and Paris, or to Vienna and Kassa (Košice, today in Slovakia), and so on. The engravings show a basic similarity in *structure and matter* for more than half of a century, that is, until the last editions of the schoolbook around the middle of the nineteenth century, and that independently of the place of edition.<sup>5</sup> Smaller changes, modifications, did occur during the process of the reproduction of the images (re-drawings, re-cuts after pre-existing models), but I dare to claim that the different editions of Raff's schoolbook have conveyed the *same elementary ideas of the order of nature and human society* from the western corners of Europe (London and Edinburgh 1796; Amsterdam 1793; Paris and Strasbourg 1786; and so on) to its central and easternmost parts (Sz. Kristóf 2011: 325–327). It seems to have been one of the most important schoolbooks of natural history in that enormous region of Europe until about the middle of the nineteenth century, so the system of the classification of the world that it communicated in a fixed and constant order for decades had indeed the opportunity to impose itself upon the minds of masses of students (and teachers/professors) all over that area.

The importance of Raff's *Naturgeschichte*, specifically for us east-central European researchers lies in the fact that the representations that it provided of Us, that is, east-central European peoples, are inscribed, as I will discuss later, in a much broader context. It is a characteristic *symbolic geography* as well as *historical-political philosophy* of the late eighteenth century that shaped the representation of all the peoples—and plants and animals, and so on—occurring in it. And this geography and philosophy penetrated well into the nineteenth century with the long-lasting translations and adaptations of the schoolbook.

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<sup>4</sup> The schoolbook has become so popular in western Europe that the surname of its author started representing the genre itself in the German territories, and so it entered the international catalogues of natural history, too. Philipp Jacob Beumer's *Der Kleine Raff, oder, Vater Gotthold's Unterhaltungen mit Seinen Kindern über die Reiche der Natur* (Wesel 1841) is included, for example, in the *Bibliographia* of Louis Agassiz (Agassiz 1848: 278). See also Kunze 1976: 131–135 and Doderer 1979: 120.

<sup>5</sup> As to my knowledge, Raff's schoolbook was published in the German territories until 1861. As for the Kingdom of Hungary, it was popular during almost fifty years, the period between 1799 and 1846 (Sz. Kristóf 2011: 312, note 9, and 323). Images published here are Courtesy of National Széchenyi Library, Budapest.

### Intended messages, implied readings

In order to approach the textual-visual world of Raff, let me propose another concept, and that from the research methodology of the French “cultural history of reading” (*histoire culturelle de la lecture*). What are the *intended messages* or *implied readings* of texts and images included in a printed book? As it has been proposed by Roger Chartier, a leading figure of the French approach to reading as a specific sociocultural practice of sense-making, those messages or readings would represent the authors’ and/or the editors’ intentions concerning a certain kind of reception of their products. The intended messages or readings may be hidden both in the text and the physical form of the book, its paratexts (e.g., footnotes), and the content, iconographical execution, and layout (arrangement, order, etc.) of its images, and also in the particular conditions and circumstances of the publication of the work as a whole (Chartier 1987; 1989a; 1989b and 1992).

What kind of a “visual encounter with alterity” was provided in/made possible by Raff’s schoolbook? At whom exactly was it aimed? How old or, for that matter, how modern were the classification of the world and the relating visual imagery belonging to it?

44 Let us start with the intended readership. Aiming at children of “every kind,” as the preface of the schoolbook says, “rich and poor, capable and incapable of learning, diligent or idle, younger or older, five, or ten years of age or even older,” the schoolbook was intended to be used both at elementary and higher levels of education, and in the German territories it has become indeed one of the most well known works on natural history for young students in the second half of the eighteenth century (Te Heesen 2002: 75, 78). As it is testified by the different translations, this kind of intended readership did not seem to have changed considerably through the various editions and adaptations.<sup>6</sup>

The classification of the world that Raff’s schoolbook contained and the imagery depicting it was, in many of its aspects, quite modern. As I had the opportunity to discuss it elsewhere, it was founded on the classifications of two great scholars of the age: that of the Swedish surgeon and botanist Carl Linnaeus, on the one hand, whose *Systema naturae* had several editions and translations all over Europe from 1735 on (Koerner 1999) and that of Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, a German surgeon and professor in the University of Göttingen, on the other, whose *De generis*

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<sup>6</sup> The subsequent German reeditions as well as the first Hungarian translation preserved this recommendation almost word for word (Raff 1799). The Dutch edition mentioned school children between 6 and 11 years of age (Raff 1789); the French edition spoke of *des enfants ... depuis l’âge où ils peuvent savoir lire couramment et même commencent à raisonner* (Raff 1786: 12); and the English edition, omitting the whole original German preface (just like the Dutch and the French editors had) although not specifying the age of its most preferred readers, aimed at “the young” and “those who need instructions from books” (Raff 1796, vol. 1: v.). For the details of those western European editions see Sz. Kristóf 2011: 325–329.

*humani varietate nativa* (1775) and *Allgemeine Naturgeschichte* (1779) became highly influential at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Blumenbach 2005).

Raff's own classification—just like that of Linnaeus or Blumenbach—has been founded, however, on a much older, tripartite division of the world according to which every being could be ordered into one of the three “kingdoms” or “countries” of nature: animals, plants, minerals (Feuerstein-Herz 2007). The place of Man seemed, however, either completely distinct or rather elusive in this division. Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century authors did not necessarily include a discussion of human beings—a topic held to belong rather to theology and/or the competency of theologians for a long time—in their *historia naturalis* (Feuerstein-Herz 2007). Raff, and especially the two (secular) authors that he relied on, did, and this was an important moment in late-eighteenth-century scientific thinking. Though not making a distinct “kingdom” or “country” in themselves, human beings came to belong with Linnaeus, Blumenbach, and Raff—to *nature*, and more or less to the “kingdom” of animals. Humans were said to dominate the latter as well as the other “kingdoms” of nature. They have formed, as Raff says—with Blumenbach—as distinct an “order” (*Ordnung, rend, classe, class*, etc.) as all the other natural beings.

Raff's description of the various peoples belonging to the human order, and their further division was not, however, systematic. It was based rather randomly on such categories as skin color, height, and climatic and territorial distribution that have been in use in European scientific thinking for centuries. Altogether, Raff's description of Man seems to have been based upon Linnaeus to a greater extent than upon the more meticulous classification of the peoples of the world provided in the works of Blumenbach.<sup>7</sup> In about the middle of the chapter on “the history of Man,” for example, Raff devoted long paragraphs to the “wild men” and “wild women,” that is, human children having been apparently lost or kidnapped and later raised, as it was thought, by animals. According to the schoolbook, plenty of such “feral children” have been found in the forests in different parts of Europe—cases from Hessen, Lithuania, and from Ireland, Holland, Spain, and France are mentioned

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<sup>7</sup> Raff does not seem to have taken over Blumenbach's division of humankind in its details, although the latter's *De generis humani varietate nativa* came out in 1775 in Göttingen, that is, three years before the first publication of Raff's schoolbook in 1778. It is worth emphasizing, however, that the basic categories of peoples discussed in the chapter on Man and shown in the pictures do seem to correlate with those of Blumenbach. The latter distinguished altogether *five races* (Caucasian, Asian, Malay, African, and American), while Raff spoke of, as well as represented in the images, altogether *five “peoples.”* These “men,” (or “Menschen,” “Leute,” “Völker,” “hommes,” “peuples,” “emberek,” “népek” [in Hungarian]) are described as being attached to certain geographical regions with populations showing different *external characteristics* (hair as well as skin color). Raff distinguished European, north or continental Asian, east or island Asian, African, and American peoples, and in this sense his schoolbook conveyed and popularized a division of humankind that was similar to, although not entirely identical with, that of Blumenbach.

from the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. The inclusion of such miraculous beings, human “wonders” in the schoolbook also would suggest that in his account of the “history of Man,” Raff drew much more on the works of the Swedish scholar whose concepts regarding “feral children” and “feral men” (*Homo sapiens ferus*) were well known in the age—and heavily criticized by, among others, Blumenbach himself.<sup>8</sup>

Raff’s *Naturgeschichte* could contribute enormously to the diffusion of new—as well as some old-fashioned—ideas of nature (and of humans included in it), by its numerous editions both in western as well as eastern Europe. This, however, is only a part of the story. Let us see even closer what was represented in the schoolbook and how.

### a. Project(s) of reading, projects of interpretation

Raff and his engravers also have invented certain subgroupings or clusters of items inside of the “kingdoms” or “countries” of nature. They have created certain micro-scenes and represented them as genre pictures in the plates attached to the schoolbook, which they most probably thought more attractive and understandable for children than Linnaeus’s sophisticated division and dry Latin taxonomy. These micro-scenes, as I have shown elsewhere (Sz. Kristóf 2011: 313-319), have been arranged in a particular way, and Raff has given instructions in the preface, as well as scattered throughout the main text, for how to imagine this order, how to learn and teach from the book, that is, how to read it. The different scenes were to be imagined along a straight line, a *linear itinerary* leaving out of a center and crossing different “worlds” (subgroups or scenes) that have been arranged in concentric circles. In the very center of these circles there was The House (of the reader/viewer), represented—so far as can be judged from the picture of silkworm breeding (Plate III, middle section [ills. 3 and 3a])—in a basic, stereotyped “European” way. Moving linearly away from it, the “Little Traveler,” as the child or student reader was often called in the text, penetrated first the world of *vicinity*, that is, the well known, domestic world, such as the Garden (Plate III, upper and lower sections [ill. 4]); the (Court)yard (Plate IX, middle section [ill. 5]); the Cultivated land and the Meadow (Plate VI, middle and upper sections [ill. 6]); the Pasture (Plate V, middle section [ill. 8]); and the Lake (Plate V, lower section). Then he arrived to the *world of faraway*, that is, the wild, lesser known regions: the Forest (Plate VII, middle section); the East and the North of Europe; the sea/ocean (Plate XI, middle section [ill. 7]); and finally other continents.

What is revealed by the images of the plates and the relating texts is an *imaginary landscape*, an *imaginary geography*. Its order and structure may not have been so rigid and fixed as I have outlined here, but it was undoubtedly intended to organize

<sup>8</sup> For Blumenbach’s refutation of “feral men” as a distinct species of *Homo sapiens* that would relate humans closely to animals as well as his criticism of Linnaeus, see his *Of the Difference of Man From Other Animals* in Blumenbach 2005: 163–166.

the direction of reading and the process of learning for the students as well as their professors.

While the overall order of the plates seems to follow Linnaeus's system of classification of nature, the particular visual subdivisions or microscenes show up immediately, so from the beginning to the end (from Table I to Table XIV) the structures of another order also unfold. The reader/viewer finds himself/herself contemplating representations of a world geography, the plates conveying stereotyped representations of the inhabited world. The reader encounters images that evoke China, the east-Indian (Spice) islands (Plate I), Middle and North America (Plate II), and then, rather randomly, western Europe (Plate III), the European "East" (Plate VIII), "North" (Plate IX), and Africa (plates X and XVI). The instructions of the preface as well as the introductory passages to certain subsections of Linnaeus's classification of plants and animals contain explicit instructions of, or indicate implicitly, how to move from the immediate, more familiar surroundings and regions to the faraway and unknown ones.

What the whole procedure reveals is an implied—well-structured and apparently prefigured—*topographical/geographical* project of reading.<sup>9</sup> The principal message toward which the reader has been lead is that the process of gaining knowledge about nature and society is nothing else but a *journey*. Reading the schoolbook—that is, reading, to use another age-old metaphor of *historia naturalis*, the "book of nature"—was represented iconographically as well as textually for the young students of late Enlightenment Europe as an *imaginary travel of discovery* in Raff's schoolbook, during the course of which a proper knowledge of things could be achieved and a (scientific) *re-grouping, re-naming*, and a new, scholarly *re-categorization* of the entities of nature encountered could be accomplished. This was probably one of the most important "intended/implied messages" of the schoolbook, embedded in the rise of the culture of travel and exploration during the seventeenth and especially the eighteenth centuries.<sup>10</sup>

### **b. Visual strategies of Othering**

By what kind of images did this message—this particular reading—convey to students and professors alike? The geographical representations of the schoolbook

<sup>9</sup> For details of the author's conscious geographical method in the teaching of natural history, see especially the introduction to "Pflanzenreich." The preface to the French translation itself emphasizes a very close connection between the instruction of natural history and geography; the latter following the former in time but also *emerging* from it: "En passant des productions indigènes aux productions exotiques, on sent assez combien il est aisé de faire naître aux enfans le desir de savoir la *géographie*, première disposition toujours nécessaire" (emphasis added; Raff 1786: 38.) On the idea of gradual progress and stadiality implied in late-eighteenth-century concepts of pedagogy and learning, see Te Heesen 2002: 47.

<sup>10</sup> Regarding the eighteenth-century travel boom and the emerging travel literature and culture in western Europe, see Marshall and Williams 1982; Fulford, Lee, and Kitson 2004; and Bohls and Duncan 2005. An excellent collection of studies on early modern-modern travel as a cultural practice is Elsner and Rubiés 1999.

seem to have been designed to provide the readers/viewers with particular *visual patterns* of the peoples of the world as well as the surrounding flora and fauna. A number of significant, what may be called, visual strategies of Othering functioned in the construction of those patterns. Let us see those that concerned human beings, that is, the different peoples.

Raff's geographical pictures reveal a certain Eurocentric approach in its rather western European manifestation. This kind of bias is perceptible both in the selection of the people represented as well as in the ways in which they are depicted. As for non-European peoples, there are two scenes that can be called "Asian." One shows a sitting Chinese character picking leaves from a tea bush and another scene depicts an east-Indian island native of dark skin climbing upon a fruit tree (Plate I, lower section [ills. 14 and 8a]). There are two "African" scenes. One shows a so-called Hottentot family of dark skin in the foreground of a landscape;<sup>11</sup> they wear only breechcloths, headbands, and some jewelry, and the viewer can also see their village made of simple huts (Plate XIV [ill. 11]). In the other scene one sees a rather simplified figure of an unidentifiable African native of black skin sitting on the back of a camel (Plate X, middle section [ill. 12]). There are two American scenes, too. One depicts a Central American slave of dark skin carrying a bunch of sugar canes, with a simple hut in the background, while the other picture (at least from the early-nineteenth-century editions on) shows a North American Indian woman wearing nothing but a short skirt and a necklace and carrying a piece of basketry. She has another, bigger basket of fish at her feet (Plate II, upper section [ill. 7a]).

48

The logic that is recognizable in this representation of "less developed" and "more developed" societies shown from the different continents—that is, that *certain societies are shown as less developed while others are shown as more developed*—is valid also for the representation of *Europe*. The image of silkworm breeding—two women and a young boy wearing standard European-style clothes of the late eighteenth century and working in a pavilion (Plate III, middle section; in the early-nineteenth-century editions they are to be found inside of an ordinary house [ills. 3 and 3a])—depicts the world of "home" for the readers/viewers, the most familiar scene with which the latter were expected to identify. Apart from that we find depictions of two non-western European peoples: the Lapp (Sami) people representing the "North" (Plate IX, lower section [ill. 9]), and the Poles representing the "East" (Plate VIII, middle section [ill. 10]). From the direction of the imagined home of the reader, both the Lapps and the Polish look like close aliens or inner Others in the same continent. In the Lapp scene (Plate IX, lower section [ill. 9]), two men are shown in the foreground of a "Nordic" landscape; one is standing, wearing elabo-

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<sup>11</sup> The term "Hottentot" was applied loosely to South African indigenous peoples during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It referred more precisely to the Khoikhoi people. Raff's schoolbook used this term in a general sense, it did not give any indication of *which* of those peoples it aimed to represent.

rate fur clothes and holding a stick in his hand, while the other is sitting, a whip in his hand, in a triangle-shaped sleigh (the *pulka* of the Sami people) pulled by a reindeer. The Poles (Plate VIII, middle section [ill. 10]) are shown as two men in the forest: a younger and an older musician wearing peculiar clothes, long coats tied with a belt on their waists, playing trumpet-like musical instruments and having a big bear dance to the music. While the Lapp scene (together with its detailed textual description of the life of those reindeer keepers) was presented as an “accurate” ethnographical demonstration of those people living close to nature,<sup>12</sup> and the funny, joyful Polish scene—likewise putting its main characters out in nature—might contain an anecdote or tale belonging to it,<sup>13</sup> both people were presented as *strangers* in a Europe imagined, as it seems to have been, somewhere from its more industrialized, western corner. This corner has not, however, been defined any more closely.

The general Western gaze of Raff’s schoolbook seems to have been founded on, and supported by, the use of a number of different, identifiable iconographical strategies of Othering present in the images. These visual strategies of representation were drawn upon in order to construct a visual Them as different from a—similarly constructed—visual Us. Although these strategies are well distinguishable from one another, they are present in the pictures rather simultaneously. Two, three, or more of them interpenetrate each other in the individual images. The first of such visual strategies is *simplification* and *uniformization*, that is, reducing the representation of the people (mostly of non-European indigenous people) to some basic features like dark skin and (almost) nakedness, wearing simple clothes like loin-cloths, short skirts, and so forth. The second strategy is *stereotypization* and *commonplacing*, that is, assigning certain activities to or features thought/proposed to be dominant among the people depicted. In the case of those European inner Others (among them, eastern Europeans), one such feature is an unusually close connection to the woods and some of its animals (bears, in the case of the Poles, and reindeer, in the

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<sup>12</sup> The text relating to the reindeer—just like other passages in Raff’s schoolbook—provides kind of a *micro-ethnographical* profile. It describes in detail how the geographical region looks like where the Lapps live, what sort of animals they raise, what a reindeer is like, and how those people make use of every part of the animal. The figure of the Lapp appears as commonplace in eighteenth century books of natural history. One finds striking similarities between Raff’s profile of those Nordic people and, for example, that of Buffon in their attempt at describing meticulously the specificities of it as an *alien* culture. The different editions of Buffon focused not only on the various uses of the reindeer but also the peculiar shape and know-how of the *pulka* well into the nineteenth century (e.g., Buffon 1835: 73–78). Lapland had a special importance for Linnaeus himself. He took a journey there in 1732, published on its flora (*Flora Lapponica* 1737) and, in general, considered the Lapps an exotic, happy people, not less than “our teacher” (Koerner 1999: 56–81).

<sup>13</sup> Bear-dancing was a common visual stereotype attached to the eastern Slavic peoples in general in the age; one would associate it also with the Russians. The presence of this image in Raff’s schoolbook testifies again to its cultural bias and generalizing-uniformizing efforts. It also singles out one of the printed media—*illustrated schoolbooks*—in which such visual stereotypes of ethnicity circulated all over Europe throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

case of the Lapps); while keeping camel (as well as smoking pipes) would characterize the Africans;<sup>14</sup> eating raw food (in the form of fruits to be gathered from trees), the “East-Indians”; producing tea and building pagodas, the Chinese; producing sugarcane and building very humble huts, the Central Americans (at least the black slaves); and—what may be surprising to find—fishing and basketry, the North American Indians.<sup>15</sup> Not unrelated to the second, the third strategy of representation used in the images of Raff is an explicit “nature-isation” of the human beings depicted. I borrow the expression—and appreciate the approach—of an excellent French historian of science, Claude Blanckaert, who defines what emerged as a new interpretation, a new epistemological field in the European sciences (especially in French geography and anthropology during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries) as an intellectual process of the “naturalisation de l’homme” (Blanckaert 2004, 667). Parallel to this new *épistémé*, “nature-isation” as a visual strategy appears as inserting those Others in characteristic scenes of nature, that is, showing them in the woods, next to trees, bushes, plants, and/or various animals.

The fourth strategy of representation is kind of an *ethnologization*, that is, showing the people of the world surrounded with pieces of their material culture, tools, instruments, clothes, livestock, buildings, carvings, and so on. This is what we see in the case of the Lapps, the American Indians, the “Hottentots,” the Chinese, and so on, announcing the scope and the fields of interest of the emerging new sciences of ethnography and ethnology/anthropology all over Europe, which tend to seek more and more *empirical* knowledge and data and, also, more and more what is thought to be connected to it, *authenticity* and *archaism/primitiveness*.<sup>16</sup> The fifth visual strategy used in Raff’s schoolbook is *gendering* which in this case means representing the majority of human beings—Us as well as Others—mostly as males rather than females. This kind of representation may have corresponded to one of the purposes of the schoolbook, namely, to address young *boys* rather than girls.

50

<sup>14</sup> Scenes showing smoking natives constitute a widely used stereotype in books of geography during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to represent *Oriental*—Arab, Turkish, and in general *African*—peoples, such as the “Hottentots” in Raff’s schoolbook.

<sup>15</sup> A considerable historical distance separates Raff’s rather *ethnographic* representation of American Indians from either the diabolized image of the Central American Indians known from Christian missionary discourse of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Sz. Kristóf 2012a and 2012b) or the exoticized, artificial cultural mixture of Karl May’s Winneotu at the end of the nineteenth century. Raff’s images resemble the naturalistic descriptions of American Indian life (especially that of north-eastern North America) provided by late eighteenth century European travelers and, for that matter, the novels of James Fenimore Cooper. For stereotyping American Indians, see Sz. Kristóf 2011: 320, note 17.

<sup>16</sup> From the vast body of literature consisting of critical historiographies of Western anthropology, let me mention only a more recent as well as a classical work focusing on the emergence and the institutionalization of that science during the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries: Fulford, Lee, and Kitson 2004, and Stocking 1987. About the impact of the Enlightenment and especially Rousseau’s ideas (primitivism and the idealization of indigenous peoples) on early anthropology, see During 1994.



As I have already pinpointed elsewhere, in every translation of the schoolbook that I could consult so far, the “Little Traveller” is represented as a boy, being referred to with forms of masculinity—“Mein Sohn,” “Kleiner Mann,” “édes Fiam,” and “Fiatskáim” (in Hungarian; Sz. Kristóf 2011: 319). It seems that natural history as a science and travels of discovery as a social practice were expected and taught to be overwhelmingly male activities in the age.<sup>17</sup> This is another feature that does not seem to have changed throughout the time period and the different editions of Raff’s schoolbook that I have studied. The North American Indian represented as a woman (Plate XIII; in nineteenth-century editions Plate II) is a peculiar exception, but it may go back to age-old iconographical conventions of representing the continents.<sup>18</sup> *Male-ing* the images may have been one of the means by which Raff and the designers of the book expected, and incited, the young readers to identify with the world presented in it. The schoolbook’s stress on men in the depicted arts, activities of subsistence, industries, and sciences could, beyond being familiar for its readers, also confirm the existing gender hierarchy for them. In this respect, as well as in others, Raff’s schoolbook contributed only to support the existing sociocultural order of late feudalism.

One would come to a similar conclusion if one considers the sixth and apparently all-embracing visual strategy of representation that implies another important layer of the intended messages of the schoolbook. I would call it *hierarchization* and/or *barbarization*, that is, ordering and representing the groups of Others according to the historical ideas that had been elaborated by the western European thinkers of the Enlightenment. If one takes a look at the *ensemble* of the geographical images of Raff, one soon realizes that it is more than—or something other than—geography that is represented in them.<sup>19</sup> I would argue that the pictures refer to “stages,”

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<sup>17</sup> Despite the contribution of so many important women to science during the eighteenth century (Fara 2004; O’Brien 2009), elementary education was long penetrated by such a gendered image and ideology of a scientist in western as well as eastern Europe.

<sup>18</sup> The American continent seems to have been represented historically rather by female allegorical figures (see, e.g., McIntyre and Phillips 2007, 249, and Day 2010; for male figures see Stagl 1995: 162–170).

<sup>19</sup> The representation of South America and the whole area of Oceania is entirely missing from the images and so are important details even of the depicted parts of the world. The first German edition of the schoolbook (Göttingen 1778) came out toward the end of James Cook’s three consecutive voyages in the area (1768–1779) and one year before his death in Hawaii during the third journey. Was it too early for the existing contemporary accounts of these voyages to Tahiti, New Zealand, New South Wales (then Tonga), South America (Tierra del Fuego), and Hawaii to make their impact on the schoolbook’s concept of geography? Cook’s *Voyage Towards the South Pole* was published in 1777 just like George Forster’s account, while Johann Reinhold Forster’s *Observations* came out in 1778 (Williams 2004). And why did not some of the earlier travelogues on the Cook expedition (like those of Hawkesworth and Parkinson, published already in 1773), as well as other accounts of the earlier voyages to the Pacific (like that of Byron, Dalrymple, and Bougainville, published between 1768 and 1772, Williams 2004) leave their impact on Raff? It is even more remarkable that the new discoveries have not got a place in

“stades,” or “grades” of the kind of hierarchical and linear history that, for so many philosophers of the Enlightenment, implied the hypothesis of a universal—and *stadial*—way of development of the human societies of the world. This theory held that human societies would advance through gradual steps of evolution that had been thought to be the same for each of them. They start as “savages,” that is, gathering, fishing, hunting communities; then, as agriculture develops, they enter a “barbarian” stade; then they start forming big political organizations like states with elaborate pagan religions, multiple gods, and huge, ceremonial buildings and sophisticated arts. So in this stade—if it is about a four-stage development—the society becomes “half-civilized,” and finally they reach the top of the hierarchy, or the final stage of “civilization.” This latter has been understood in the European sense, namely, that people move to permanent houses, writing appears, different industries develop, and the number of gods is reduced to one (Harris 1968: 27–35).

The geographical images of Raff’s schoolbook seem to convey exactly such a linear and universal history. The individual images could be ordered (some of them *are* already) in a hierarchical, stadial order of social progress; it is as if they were designed *initially* to be ordered so. The image of the half-naked, tree-climbing “East-Indian” and the camel-riding African black-skin characters could represent the very beginning (gathering and animal-keeping societies), then would come the North American Indian woman with the fish in her basket and the Lapps with their reindeer (animal-keeper/hunter societies). The Chinese man—in his richly decorated coat and with pagodas in the background—could stand for the “half-civilized stage,” [ill. 14] and the various industries and elements of a “developed” material culture—silkworm breeding, whale hunting (Plate XI, middle section [ills. 14 and 8a]), and sugar production, as well as (western European-style) houses, pavilions, huge ships and firearms—would represent the “end” or “top” of history. A striking contrast between such a beginning and end is represented in the picture of the “Hottentot” family (Plate XIV [ill. 11]) in which one sees, as I mentioned before, an indigenous family standing in front of their simple hut; the people are half-naked and have only a spear, a bow, and an ox (?) at their disposal. In the background of the picture a hunting scene is shown: a group of armed horsemen—seemingly Europeans (probably settlers)—are chasing animals, shooting at them with guns. The principal division of Europe itself into a materially developed, industrious “West” characterized

52

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the *later*, nineteenth century editions of the schoolbook either, in a period when an increasing number of the travelogues of the “South Sea” was accessible almost all over Europe (Ballantyne 2004). The children who had only Raff’s schoolbook at their disposal to learn about what the world looked like, got to know it as a *four*-continent entity even until the middle of the nineteenth century. But, considering that Raff’s plates provided more of a historical-philosophical than a strictly geographic-empirical representation of the world, the existing image of “East-India”—with its tree-climbing natives of black skin gathering raw fruits—could well have been used, if it were needed, to illustrate the *first* part of the world. And similarly, one of the two existing images of “America” could have been used to represent the South American continent as well.

by an indoor-dwelling life-style, as it is shown in the picture of silkworm breeding (Plate III), and of an outdoor-living, nature/forest-cultivating “North” and “East,” living close to its animals is another example of the opposing poles or “stades” of such an imaginary hierarchical history (ills. 3, 9, and 10).

All in all, Raff’s schoolbook provided—especially by means of its images—a vulgarized, popular version of the general idea of stadial history and contributed a lot to the distribution of this powerful concept all over Europe, the eastern part included, and North America. Illustrating the imagined hierarchical order of societies for the students, and designating a place in it for virtually every society, it supported, again, the prevailing social-political establishment and was aimed toward confirming its dominant ideas and ideology for all possible readers. The most important, historical-philosophical layer of the intended messages of the schoolbook consisted, I would argue, of a double thought. It taught on the one hand that human societies are unequal in quality (since unequal in their grade of progress), but, on the other hand, the theory implied and expressed a certain “assurance” or “guarantee” as well, namely, that there is a chance for progress for each society. Like non-European indigenous people may be—as Raff says in the chapter on “Man”—“altogether or nearly savage,” or they may look “ugly” and “repulsive,” especially under the coldest and the hottest climates in Asia and Africa<sup>20</sup>—they unconditionally belong to the great family of humankind. They show different signs of social and cultural life; they are basically content with their situation, he argues; and they as well as all the other less developed societies of the world necessarily will progress towards “civilization,” that is, western European high civilization. The same would be the case of eastern European societies.

53

So far I have been talking about various aspects of the invariability and consistency of the work, but a truly profound analysis cannot stop at this point. It would be especially important to know how Raff’s schoolbook was received in and applied to the different countries or cultures whose languages into which it was translated. How much could its readers, coming from various local political-cultural, scholarly-intellectual circles identify—or not—with the particular place assigned to them in the stadial scheme of history and social progress by Raff’s images? How did their particular, local readings affect the ways in which the schoolbook was interpreted, “domesticated” in their respective cultures?

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<sup>20</sup> The relevant passage in the schoolbook expresses much of the White (Western) man’s disgust, esthetic as well as social-political biases through which the late-eighteenth-century precursors of those “imperial eyes” (Pratt 1992) looked at non-European peoples, emphasizing primarily external characteristics: “*in den heissesten Gegenden von Asia und Afrika sind die Leute eben nicht sonderlich gros, und sehen auch gar nicht gut aus. Was haben die Neger und Hottentoten nicht für häßliche Gesichter, für stumpffe Nasen, für aufgeworfne Lippen, und für dikwollichte Haare?... Die Amerikaner sehen etwas besser aus*” (Raff 1787: 668). The Hungarian translation is identical to the German text (Raff 1799: 624).

### Variety in the uses

The last concept of research that I would like to propose is *variety in the uses*. It seems that the local adaptation, the local interpretation or—to borrow again one of the central terms of the French history of reading—the local *appropriation* of Raff's schoolbook have changed from translation to translation, that is, from culture to culture. In my previous study I wrote more on this aspect, analyzing the characteristics of the Hungarian, the English, and the French adaptations and mentioning some features of the original German version as well as the Slaveno-Serbian and the Russian translations (Sz. Kristóf 2011: 323–333). Due to space limitations here, let me direct the reader to that study of mine and point only to the most important features of the Hungarian adaptation.

Beyond the fact that Göttingen was appreciated as a center of contemporary sciences by the Hungarian (mostly noble and Protestant) students who regularly attended its university during the second half of the eighteenth century and the nineteenth, each of the three Hungarian editions of the schoolbook (Veszprém 1799, Kassa [Košice, in today's Slovakia] 1835, and Pest 1846) was deeply embedded in the movement of political resistance and national awakening that emerged in the Kingdom of Hungary against the Austrian Habsburg (and primarily, Catholic) domination during the late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century. Each of the three Hungarian translators (József Fábián, a learned pastor of the Reformed Church who identified with many ideas of the French and German Enlightenment; Péter Vajda, a journalist/novelist-turned-peasant of Lutheran religion who proposed reforms of the Lutheran education system; and Mihály Táncsics, a radical political writer who sympathized with the ideas of early utopian socialism) belonged to certain periods as well as branches of this movement (Sz. Kristóf 2011: 323–325).

54

The order and the representations that Raff provided of nature and human history are to be interpreted in this particular context in Hungary. The most important message of the schoolbook, according to which, as I mentioned above, there was a chance for progress for each of the societies in the world, could conform very well with the actual desires and expectations of the Hungarian reformists, whose group the translators and the editors of Raff belonged to. The schoolbook could provide a *philosophical confirmation* of their belief that there was a hope—or rather, a “historical necessity”—for the political-cultural improvement in Hungary, too. As is evident from the prefaces, footnotes, and other textual and paratextual features of the Hungarian editions, the actual sociocultural context of the publication has vested the translations with a peculiar political meaning. For some groups of its readers at least, this Göttingen schoolbook was conceived, and used, as a cultural weapon against the hated Habsburg monarchy and the cultural inequalities of the prevailing feudal society.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> As Péter Vajda, the second Hungarian translator remarked in the preface of the 1835 edition: “We can surely say that we cannot expect to have a more useful *natural history* than this one (i.e., Raff). The

Such a local, domestic, and political appropriation of Raff can be confirmed by a rather unusual fact, too, namely that the third Hungarian translator, the radical political thinker Mihály Táncsics, has inserted a new passage into the text of the 1846 edition. Táncsics criticized Raff and his work in the preface,<sup>22</sup> and he argued against the hierarchical concept of history in the chapter on “Man” with the following words of his own: “The peoples of the earth might differ from one another according to external features, such as skin color, size, education, etc., but considering their inner characteristics, their natural configuration, they *all are equal*. And this means that it is equally in the one’s as well as the other’s liberty to share in the blessings of this earthly nature, since God has not made a distinction between one man and another in this respect” (Raff, Pest 1846, 407; translation from Hungarian and added emphasis by Sz. Kristóf). In this passage Táncsics could speak, however, not only about Hungary but about all the suppressed peoples of the world, and, by doing so, he fundamentally challenged the good old stadial, hierarchical concept of the Enlightenment. He attempted to explain human history in this place as well as elsewhere in his oeuvre from a new political, one might say, early democratic point of view. His approach, together with the other, earlier editions of Raff in Hungary, exemplify that fresh adaptations and new readings could have been applied to the schoolbook in east-central Europe to *contest* the order of the world conveyed in it.

## Conclusion

Raff’s schoolbook provides an excellent opportunity for the historian to study the specific visual and textual strategies by which late Enlightenment and early Romantic concepts of the social order and the sociocultural Other were imposed upon students—young readers from eastern and western Europe, altogether. This happened in parallel with the emergence (and not so many decades before the institutionalization) of the sciences of ethnography and anthropology on the continent of Europe; so it is worth noticing how many of their well-known classical universal concepts about humankind and the development of human societies, especially the ideas of progress and evolution, they shared or, one might also argue, contained and preceded. Natural history and ethnology/anthropology, western and eastern

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Germans have made it perfect ... and the Germans, in their country of sciences, tend to have a feel for it. Let us follow them, let us enlighten our descendants’ minds by useful books ... If only each village school could get a copy of it; then even our peasant children could get polished and strip off their current rudeness” (Raff 1835: vi; My translation: I. Sz. K.). For the period of Hungarian history concerned here see Kontler 1999: 191–259.

<sup>22</sup> The publisher has agreed to include the following sentence in the preface to the third edition written by Táncsics himself: “With some words finally I make the following confession that I am not satisfied with the system of Raff, but the publisher’s intention was not to have a new work done but to have that of Raff corrected” (Raff 1846). It sounds like an apology for the publication of an already obsolete work—and the schoolbook did not see any further edition indeed in Hungary during the second half of the nineteenth century.

Europe, and the first and the second half of the nineteenth century were connected more closely to one another than was ordinarily thought.

I have attempted to show in this paper how “visual encounters with alterity” are inscribed in a multitude of sociocultural-geographical (regional and local), historical, philosophical, power and gender-related, cultural-political, and so on, contexts that, on one hand, penetrate those encounters and the medium through which they are represented and, on the other hand, generate particular readings of them that may not be implied in the relevant texts and images. Exploring the ways of the local appropriations of Raff’s schoolbook is (would be) the most revealing part of the story. In east-central Europe it would necessitate a broader international cooperation that could attempt to shed light on the cultural variations of those appropriations. Raff has provided the children of Europe, and North America, with a biased, *westernized* encounter with the Other. We should know more about how it has been “domesticated” — i.e. naturalized and *easternized*—in the different east-central European countries and contexts.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> An exciting aspect of such a domestication is how one of William Blake’s etchings (published originally in John Gabriel Stedman’s *Narrative of a Five Years’ Expedition Against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam*, London 1796) has found its way to the printing house of Kassa (Košice, today’s Slovakia) during the 1830s. See Sz. Kristóf 2011: 329–332.

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3 WESTERN EUROPE (SILKWORMBREEDING)

G. C. Raff, *Természeti Historia a' Gyermekeknek.*

*Mellyet...magyarúl kiadott, és kinyomtattott Fábíán József.*

M. Számmer: Veszprém, 1799. Plate III. (detail).



WESTERN EUROPE (SILKWORMBREEDING)

G. C. Raff, *Természet História Gyermeknek. Számára. Második Magyarítás. Kassán.*

3a *Nyomtatta és kiadta Werfer Károly. 1837. Plate III (original colored). (detail).*

THE GARDEN 4

G. C. Raff, *Természeti Historia a' Gyermekeknek.*  
*Melleyet...magyarúl kiadott, és kinyomtattatott Fábíán Józef.*  
M. Számmer: Veszprém, 1799.



60



THE (COURT)YARD

G. C. Raff, *Természeti Historia a' Gyermekeknek.*  
*Melleyet...magyarúl kiadott, és kinyomtattatott Fábíán Józef.*  
M. Számmer: Veszprém, 1799. Plate IX. (detail).



**THE MEADOW / CULTIVATED LAND**

G. C. Raff, *Természeti Historia a' Gyermekneknek.*

*Mellyet...magyarúl kiadott, és kinyomtattott Fábíán Jósef.*

6 M. Számmer: Veszprém, 1799. Plate IX. (detail).

THE OCEAN / WHALEHUNTING

7

G. C. Raff, *Természeti Historia a' Gyermekeknek.*

*Mellyet...magyarúl kiadott, és kinyomtatott Fábián József.*

M. Számmer: Veszprém, 1799. Plate IX. (detail).



62



AMERICA (NORTH AND CENTRAL):  
AN AFRICAN SLAVE AND AN AMERICAN INDIAN WOMAN

G. C. Raff, *Természeti Historia a' Gyermekeknek.*

*Számára. Második Magyarítás. Kassán. Nyomtatta és kiadta Werfer Károly.*

1837 (original colored). Plate II. (detail).

7a

8 THE PASTURE

G. C. Raff, *Természeti Historia a' Gyermekeknek.*

*Mellyet...magyarúl kiadott, és kinyomtattott Fábíán József.*

M. Számmer: Veszprém, 1799. Plate V. (detail).



63



ASIA (CHINA)

G. C. Raff, *Természeti Historia a' Gyermekeknek.*

*Második Magyarítás. Kassán. Nyomtatta és kiadta Werfer Károly.*

8a 1837. Plate I (original colored). (detail).

**NORTHERN EUROPE (THE LAPPS)**

9

G. C. Raff, *Természeti Historia a' Gyermekeknek.*

*Mellyet...magyarúl kiadott, és kinyomtatott Fábíán József.*

M. Számmer: Veszprém, 1799. Plate IX. (detail).



64



**EASTERN EUROPE (THE POLES)**

G. C. Raff, *Természeti Historia a' Gyermekeknek.*

*Mellyet...magyarúl kiadott, és kinyomtatott Fábíán József.*

M. Számmer: Veszprém, 1799. Plate VIII. (detail).

10

11 AFRICA (HOTTENTOTS)

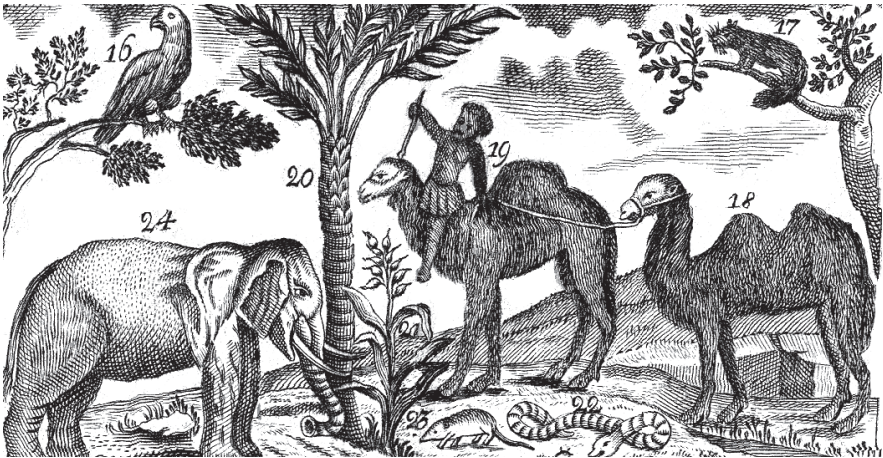
G. C. Raff, *Természeti Historia a' Gyermekeknek.*

*Mellyet...magyarúl kiadott, és kinyomtattott Fábíán József.*

M. Számmer: Veszprém, 1799. Plate XIV. (detail).



65



AFRICA

G. C. Raff, *Természeti Historia a' Gyermekeknek.*

*Mellyet...magyarúl kiadott, és kinyomtattott Fábíán József.*

12 M. Számmer: Veszprém, 1799. Plate X. (detail).

AMERICA (NORTH AND CENTRAL: AN AFRICAN SLAVE)

13

G. C. Raff, *Természeti Historia a' Gyermekeknek.*

*Mellyet...magyarúl kiadott, és kinyomtatott Fábíán József.*

M. Számmer: Veszprém, 1799. Plate II. (detail).



66



ASIA (CHINA AND SOUTHEAST ASIA)

G. C. Raff, *Természeti Historia a' Gyermekeknek.*

*Mellyet...magyarúl kiadott, és kinyomtatott Fábíán József.*

M. Számmer: Veszprém, 1799. Plate I. (detail).

14