

## Travels among “backward heathens”: J. I. Bajza’s “The Adventures and Experiences of the Young Man René” as a frontier orientalist fantasy

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Jozef Ignác Bajza. André Gingrich. Frontier orientalism. The novel of education. Slovak nationalism. Slovak Enlightenment.

This article analyzes the Slovak novel *René mládenca príhody a skúsenosti* (1783–1785) by Jozef Ignác Bajza as a frontier orientalist fantasy. Unlike in Western European orientalist texts, where images of alien Muslim cultures served as a justification for imperialism, here they are used to fashion a Slovak modernity, confirming the Slovak people’s Christian, European and Slavic identity at a time when it was politically just starting to come into being as a nation. It is further argued that the novel departs from the typical Western orientalist fantasy, figured as a heterosexual heroic romance, towards the narrative of homo-social nationalist self-fashioning.

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