

The aim of this bachelor thesis is the depiction of the portrayal of Indians in two pieces of art, James Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* and René François de Chateaubriand's *Les Natchez*. Both authors depict the character of the Indian on the background of the emerging American states.

The exotic setting, which fascinated a great number of artists, served as a device for the critique of the European society and civilization. The wilderness of the American continent was shrouded in mystery and thus stimulated the imagination of writers. Cooper and Chateaubriand were influenced by the reading of early reports of adventurers and ethnographers. These records were mingled with their own experience, traditions, myths, and the common presuppositions. Therefore, in both pieces of art, Indian characters bear idealized character features.

Cooper and Chateaubriand both deal with the issue of mixing of races, gender and racial roles, and tension between civilization and savagery. Due to the problem of the blood-purity which would be destroyed by the interracial marriage, the main heroes of *The Last of the Mohicans* are sentenced to die. Chateaubriand, on the other hand, burdens his characters with Christian features and their lives are spent in brooding over the uneasiness of life and destiny.

The thesis also deals with the question of Indian alliances with white settlers. Indian characters are depicted as supporters of both warring parties in the context of the American War of Independence. At the same time, they are depicted as members of a civilization which is connected with nature and the natural way of life. Therefore, the Native Americans are incapable of assimilation or integration into the white society. Cooper is concerned with the problem of acculturation and assimilation of the Indians into the civilized society. Chateaubriand, on the other hand, uses his Indian characters as a device for the critique of the French society after the Great Revolution. Nevertheless, both authors draw that these two cultures are incapable of a peaceful coexistence. The misunderstanding and mutual conflicts lead to fights and presupposed inferiority of the Native Americans and the period of Indian fights and removals is considered as a delicate period of the American history.