

## **Abstract**

The present dissertation outlines the main phases of the development of exoticism: its evolution from the discovery of Tahiti and its basic manifestations and transformations in French and Czech literature from the end of the eighteenth century to the 1930's. It focuses on the birth of the myth of Tahiti as a heavenly place (Bougainville), on its immediate philosophical interpretation in the period of Enlightenment (Diderot) and on its transposition to literature in a broader shape. At times, the island of Tahiti was gradually vanishing from the exotic myth behind another, more indefinite, exotic and ideal place, culture etc., while at other times, the presence of Tahiti was absolutely crucial. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the myth of the exotic paradise renewed literature and enriched it with new themes and motives (Chateaubriand, Romanticism), which, however, led progressively to the creation of simplified schemes and clichés. These, due to their repetitive nature, degraded the image of the myth (Loti). Although the superficial and unsophisticated adaptation of exoticism lasted until the twentieth century (Havlasa, Novák), in the meantime, from the second half of the nineteenth century, the myth of Tahiti was being radically reassessed and transposed to literature in a new way. Through the emergence of modern poetry (Baudelaire and others), it assumed the meaning of an internal evasion from reality and was freed from its former picturesque overtone. From the end of the nineteenth century, the significance and the function of the exotic myth were entirely innovated. As the expression of authentic interest in foreign cultures (Gauguin, Segalen), exoticism could perfectly match with avant-garde art and literature (Apollinaire, Cendrars, Nezval and others). However, ultimately, the myth was subverted in the 1930's (Michaux).