

## **Abstract**

What exactly do we mean by “nature”? What do people expect from “nature”? And how has our understanding of it changed? The M.A. thesis “Nature as Myth”, using Barthe’s two-tiered system of signs and myths as a methodological tool, attempts to answer these questions through an examination of various historical and literary sources. The thesis has a chronological structure, consisting of four parts: 19th century, 1918-1938, 1938-1989, and from 1989 until the present. It focuses on fiction, memoir, and the history of “back to nature” movements. It also deals with environmental and aesthetic issues. The last section touches on the representation of nature in advertisement. The thesis will demonstrate that in all four of the time periods the most common depiction of nature is as a place of escape – both literally and figuratively.

### **key words:**

nature, hiking, tramping, scouting, woodcraft, recreation in the cabins and cottages, ecology