

## ABSTRACT

*The Program of the Czech Decadent Movement and the Question of Intertextuality. The Work of Miloš Marten*

This thesis explores the work of Miloš Marten (1883–1917) seeking to analyse its decadent narrative as a modern narrative that brings into play the unity between the pinnacle and the decline. It departs from the comparison between the style and interpretation of the two versions of *Cyklus rozkoše a smrti* (orig. *The Cycle of delight and death*; 1907 and 1917/1925) and the study of the realisations of this work. For this purpose the study contextually examines the conceptions of „intertextuality“ from fin de siècle authors-critics, meaning their conceptualisations of similarity and/or identity of literary works which frequently involve a confluence of degeneration theory, the argument of the non-ethical nature of plagiarism and theory of decadence. All were often used as instruments of disqualification as well as justifications for a modern aesthetics and style. Reconstitution of Marten’s theoretical reflection on artistic genres evidences his research of a harmonizing modern culture within an anti-syncretic tendency: mythology and revolt against myth Order being shifted to tragedy and parable, while the novel is designed as an analytical-critical synthesis. Applying contemporary approaches to intertextuality as a descriptive instrument and the theoretical basis that reflects the ontological status of the literary work of art („formal“ non-autonomy as the condition for ontological autonomy), Marten’s concept of style reveals itself as an *ethical-an-aesthetic* category which takes into consideration its addressees in an aesthetical, social and historical changing context. If the *Cycle*’s first version (1907) is based on a complex system of *bounded allusions* and the dynamics of *ornamental words*, the second version rests upon the allusions often deleted or explained by exegetical commentaries and upon the attenuation of emotional language. This new *ethical-an-aesthetic* project of 1917 then stands on a rationalized language, also „supra-individual“ (but in a different way from that exposed in the 1907 version), easy to reach by the non-elitist Czech reader and puts aside the „artificial“ nature of the work of art. Thus it follows an effect of wholeness that opens space for rationality and a new imagination and that makes possible the operability of the text not only in aesthetical terms but also in a critical situation of war. The new style of Marten eventually becomes a means of renewal for individuals and society.