

THEATRICALITY, MENTALITY, BOURGEOIS REVOLUTION

Aspects of Czech Culture in the Nineteenth Century

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Making use of numerous examples, this study examines the degree to which the real world of the Bohemian civil society found adequate expression in the Czech national culture of the nineteenth century. The idea of a middle-class salon as a center of communication, a national theatre as a civic educational establishment, the realistic contemporary novels, the sculpture, the paintings, and the architecture have been examined as possible expressions of middle class values and life styles. According to the provisional results, when seen from a sociological point of view, the content of the adopted forms of culture were only occasionally authentically bourgeois. Usually they were hidden behind a façade of pompous historicism, late romantic idylls, poetic allegories and affected gestures. This has to do with the long underdeveloped "petit bourgeois" social structure of Czech national society, as well as with opposition to the dominant German liberalism, against which the national myths and a romantic populism contrasted.