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ROZERVANEC OR ROZTRHANEC?

ROMANTICISM OR BIEDERMEIER?

This text reviews the opposition between Romanticism and Biedermeier in Czech culture and Czech literature before the 19th century. Biedermeier is a relatively new term that has not been defined clearly enough and has not been significantly employed in Czech literary history. But this term successfully describes a substantial part of Czech literary production in this period. Recently, it has become more and more popular and there are already conferences organized for the purpose of discussing Czech Biedermeier. Some scholars try to unite these two directions of thought but in fact they represent opposing aesthetics that have at times been even hostile to each other. An interesting example for this is the novella Rozervanec by Josef Kajetan Tyl, in which the author – traditionally viewed as a proponent of the Romanticism movement – expresses his absolute refusal to accept the outlook on life and arts of the only consistently Romantic author in Czech literature – Karel Hynek Mácha.

Keywords: Czech romanticism, Biedermeier, Josef Kajetán Tyl, Karel Hynek Mácha, Rozervanec
