

A DRAMA THAT WAS NOT PLAYED IN HUNGARY. DRAMATIC WORKS OF PRESSBURG SCHOLAR AND WRITER TOBIAS GOTTFRIED SCHRÖER (1791 – 1850)

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Abstract: The study deals with the dramatic works of a writer, professor of the Evangelical Lyceum of the Augsburg Confession in Pressburg, Tobias Gottfried Schröer. As a citizen of German descent striving to avoid the harsh censorship of the time, between 1820 and 1849, he published his works under various pseudonyms. Under his real name, he published only textbooks and three compendia intended for the Lyceum students. In Germany (Leipzig, Hamburg, etc.), he was quite a well-known writer; his short stories, poems and plays were published in various almanacs and collections. His drama work is almost unknown, and the number of his plays (existing as primary sources, including those that are only referred to), we estimate at fifteen so far. They were written approximately between the years 1806 and 1846, which testifies to their author's lifelong interest in theatre and story dramatizations. A historical drama *Leben und Thaten Emerich Tokoly's und seiner Streitgenossen* [The Life and Deeds of Emerich Tököly and His Comrades-in-arms by A. Z.] (1839), published in Leipzig under the pseudonym of A. Z., and a comedy *Der Bär* [The Bear] (1830) can be considered the most important.

Keywords: theatre, historical drama, comedy, farce, Pressburg Evangelical Lyceum, censorship, Tobias Gottfried Schröer, Christian Oeser

Scholar and Professor Tobias Gottfried Schröer in the Cultural Milieu of Pressburg

In our territory, in the history of literature, dramatic arts, educational system and endeavours in aesthetic education, we find established figures but also figures that are still outside the official historical interpretation. The work of Tobias Gottfried Schröer (1791 – 1850), professor of the Evangelical Lyceum in Pressburg (Poszonyi, Prešporok, today's Bratislava), his literary and educational activities are among the little-explored chapters of the history of aesthetics thinking and national literatures in Upper Hungary in the first half of the 19th century.

Tobias Gottfried Schröer was born into the family of a bookbinding master. His father Karl Traugott Schröer came to Pressburg from Sorora, Russia in 1788. In 1810, Tobias graduated from the Evangelical Lyceum of the Augsburg Confession in Pressburg. After graduating, he educated girls from aristocratic families in Vienna, Kőszeg, and Sopron. From 1816 to 1817, he studied theology, pedagogy, classical philology and the Hebrew language at the university in Halle. After returning home, he became a teacher at the Evangelical Lyceum in Pressburg (from 1817) and at the Girls' High School of the Evangelical Church (from 1818).¹ His wife, Eleonore Therese, neé Lang-

¹ Schröer's wife, Eleonore Therese, née Langwieser (1804 – 1885) was a writer and excellent singer; Schröer's son Karl Jilius, (1825 – 1900) became a prominent linguist, Germanist, and literary historian based in Vienna; his daughter Mary (1827 – ?) was an opera singer.

wieser (1804 – 1885), was a writer and excellent singer. His son, Karl Julius Schröer (1825 – 1900), became an important linguist, Germanist and literary historian based in Vienna. His daughter Mary (1827 – ?) was an opera singer. He devoted himself to pedagogical activities continuously from 1817 till 1849, shortly before his death he became an imperial-royal school inspector.

There are several reasons why Schröer, a popular teacher, polymath, literary scholar, playwright, esthetician and music lover – despite living all his life in Pressburg – has not yet become a part of the milieu. Probably the most logical explanation is the then very complicated political atmosphere of the reform period (since the 1830s) in the multi-ethnic Habsburg monarchy, which included strict censorship and sanctioning authors. This made Schröer cautious to such an extent that he published almost all of his works (short stories, poems, plays, handbooks of practical aesthetics) under various pseudonyms. He most often used pseudonyms Ch./Chr. Oeser, Pius Desiderius, Elias Tibiscanus, Theodoricus Schernberk jr., A. Z., etc. This remained the case until 1869, when his son Karl Julius unveiled this information in his article in the Viennese newspaper *Neuen Freien Presse*.²

Textbooks of aesthetics education, at that time called textbooks of education of taste for young women, and an aesthetics compendium for the lyceum students, can be included in school aesthetics³. One of the most popular books is his practical aesthetics for young women *Weihgeschenk für deutsche Jungfrauen in Briefen an Selma über höhere Bildung von Ch. Oeser* [A Noble Gift for Young German Women in the Letters to Selma about the Higher Education by Ch. Oeser], published in Leipzig in 1838 under the pseudonym.⁴ In the first half of the 19th century, at the Evangelical Lyceum in Pressburg⁵, Tobias Gottfried Schröer taught especially German literature, Latin, Greek, classical studies, history of ancient cultures, later aesthetics and courses about the arts. He devoted himself intensively to the activities of the German Association, founded in 1818, which experienced a great boom between 1833 and 1839. The association was later renamed as the Seminar of German Language and Literature. The association activities included lectures on literary history and the interpretation of German literary works. Schröer' participated owing to his interest in medieval German literary works, mainly because of his admiration for Johann Wolfgang Goethe's literary work.

Schröer's numerous writings on politics, on the history of education, arts, aesthetics, on pedagogy and literature, as well as his original concept of aesthetics education of girls with the dominance of literary and dramatic education, are almost unknown in Slovakia. However, our long-term research effort is not unique. We have noted the

² SCHRÖER, K. J. Enthüllungen über Christian Oeser (von Prof. KI Schröer). In *Der Wiener „Neuen Freien Presse“*, 2. 4. 1869, p. 1. A year later, the most important biographical lexicon refers to Schröer directly through Oeser and vice versa). See WURZBACH, C. *Biographische Lexikon des Kaiserthums Oesterreich*. 21. Theil. Wien : Druck und Verlag der k. k. Hof – und Statsdruckerei, 1870, pp. 18 – 24.

³ Aesthetics compendium *Isagoge eruditione in aestheticam* (1842) along with Michael Greguss's *Compendium aestheticae* (1826) are the only two known compendia published in Upper Hungary in the first half of the 19th century.

⁴ Textbook of practical aesthetics for women's youth *Weihgeschenk für deutsche Jungfrauen in Briefen* (1838) was so popular in German-speaking countries that between 1838 and 1899 it was published in 26 editions, to which we add other pirate editions, a translation into Hungarian from 1853, etc.

⁵ At the Evangelical Lyceum in Pressburg, he held the position of vice-rector (1824 – 1838), and from 1838 also that of rector.

recent efforts of Hungarian literary scholars to include him in the history of Hungarian aesthetics and literature.⁶ In the history of German literature, he is quite known primarily as Oeser⁷. In Slovakia, his literary and dramatic works were sporadically dealt with by several literary scholars and Germanists⁸. In the past, also Ukrainian philosopher Dmytro Chizhevsky⁹ conducted some research. As a German native and a proud citizen of the Hungarian homeland (he publicly declared that he was a Hungarian), Schröer is not dealt with in the history of Slovak literature; therefore, his smaller literary units, short stories, plays, and political treatises written in German did not get a place in Slovak literary history. The context of his contacts with the Štúr generation is also interesting. Among his students were many talented sons of Slovak nation, e.g. Ľudovít Štúr (later he also became his colleague at the lyceum), Janko Kalinčiak and others, who held him in high esteem. He is almost unknown as a playwright. His comedies, farces, but also dramas were political allegories of the Metternich absolutist regime. They were relatively well known and highly valued in Germany, where they were published, but exclusively under pseudonyms.

Playwright and Writer Tobias Gottfried Schröer in the First Half of the 19th Century

Schröer's love for literature and drama changed into the desire to become an actor in his youth. Later it transformed into his own and relatively successful playwright work and became tangible in about fifteen plays¹⁰ and three short stories. He fulfilled his artistic ambitions in writing plays and his writing and pedagogical ambitions in writing textbooks, compendia, grammars, numerous German literary readers and textbooks for girls' home education. This made him a successful author, although apparently Hungary and Pressburg could not appreciate his efforts either during his lifetime or later.

Tobias Gottfried Schröer's dramatic works are mainly works of his youth and mature age, but at least two¹¹ theatre plays seem to have been written in his late

⁶ A széptan és a szépem: Christian Oeser nőknek szóló esztétikája (1838 – 1899). In *Nőszerzők a 19. században: lehetőségek és korlátok*. (Ed. Török Zsuzsa). Budapest : Reciti Kiadó, 2019, pp. 47 – 76.

⁷ BARTH, S. *Mädchenlektüren: Lesediskurse im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert*. Frankfurt am Main : Campus Verl., 2002.

⁸ PETRAŠKO, L. Nemecké divadlo v hornom Uhorsku: V službe moci. [German Theatre in Upper Hungary: In the Service of Power]. In *Literárny týždenník*, 2018, Vol. 31, Issue 35 – 36, p. 7; ZUBAL, P. Literárne články T. G. Schröera ako reflexia Weimarskej klasiky a tradície literárneho salónu nemeckého romantizmu [T. G. Schröer's Literary Readings as a Reflection of the Weimar Classic and the Tradition of German Romanticism Literary Salon]. In *Súradnice estetiky, umenia a kultúry V. Estetická výchova a prax vyučovania estetiky v kontextoch európskeho estetického myslenia 19. a 20. storočia – dialóg s tradíciou a súčasné koncepcie*. [Coordinates of Aesthetics, Arts and Culture V. Aesthetics Education and the Practice of Teaching Aesthetics within 19th-20th-century European Aesthetics Thinking – a Dialogue with the Tradition and Current Concepts.] *Studia Aesthetica XX*. (Ed. Slávka Kopčáková). Prešov: Filozofická fakulta Prešovskej univerzity, 2020, pp. 135 – 151.

⁹ ČYŽEVSKIJ, D. I. Tobias Gottfried Schröer a Slovensko [Tobias Gottfried Schröer and Slovakia]. In *Slovenské pohľady*, 1936, Vol. 52, Issue 3, pp. 140 – 146.

¹⁰ These are dramas, comedies, farces. Some cannot be traced, some had been lost on the way to the publisher, some are known only from references in the primary sources.

¹¹ Two plays from 1845, *Krebse und derartiges Ungeziefer. Ein Fastnachtspiel* [Crabs and Vermin of This Kind. A Carnival Play] and *Der Vogel-heerd. Dramatisches Gemälde aus Luthers häuslichem Leben. Ein Geschenk für Frau und Kinder* [A Flock of Birds. A Dramatic Painting from Luther's Home Life. A Gift for Wife and Children].

creative period, between 1845 and 1846.¹² His first plays appear to have originated in the last years of his studies. After his father's sudden death (1806), the peaceful student life in Pressburg was replaced by a period of material deprivation of the family.¹³ At the same time, Gottfried began to be interested in writing, as it is evidenced by the tragedy in six acts *Pizarro*, based on the story of Joachim Heinrich Campe.¹⁴ Other plays from this period are *Cortez oder die Nacht der Trübsal* [Cortez or a Night of Sorrow] inspired by Voltaire, drama *Die Soldaten* [The Soldiers] depicting the horror of the process of recruiting soldiers in Hungary, drama *Die Pfaffen* [The Priests] in which the theme of celibate appears; and the comedy *Karzer und Liebe* [Prison¹⁵ and Love], which ridiculed Professor Johann Gross and the strict school discipline at the Evangelical Lyceum in Pressburg. We do not know much about these plays, they are only mentioned by Schröer's grandchildren as editors of his memoirs¹⁶; in essential biographical works, they are not mentioned at all.¹⁷

At the time of his graduation from lyceum, Tobias, as a young student, was considering theological university studies in Germany. At the same time, he was fascinated by the world of theatre, he felt a strong desire to become an actor. The atmosphere of the festivities connected with the session of the Regional Assembly in Pressburg in 1808 and the coronation of the young queen, Maria Luisa of Modena, the emperor's third wife, also added to this.¹⁸ The last school year at the lyceum (1809/1810) was really challenging for him, as he began to make a living as a home educator and a teacher for middle-class ladies to earn money for the family. In 1810, he tried a theatre career in Pest¹⁹, where he travelled via Győr.²⁰ In Pest, however, he soon experienced bitter sobriety in recognizing the deceptive false glitter of the theatre world and also in learning that it is a long path to acting full of suffering. The expectation of success in the acting environment remained unfulfilled, he was disappointed to realize that he probably lacks talent to pursue the career of a theatre actor.

¹² See OESER, Chr., [SCHRÖER, T. G.] *Theestunden in Lindenhain. Eine Sammlung von Gedichten, Novellen und Schauspielen. Herausgegeben von Chr. Oeser. Zweiter Band.* Leipzig : Eihorn's Verlags Expedition (Fr. Brandstetter), 1846, pp. 1 – 250. The second part of the collection of poems, short stories and plays consists of five plays; we cannot specify the date of origin, except for the play *Rein gefegt* (1828) and *Der Bär* (1930), which were previously published (in the earlier almanac or separately).

¹³ Student life in Pressburg was filled with ordinary worries and joys, it flowed peacefully, which, however, changed radically after his father's untimely death in April 1806. This meant selling his father's trade and moving the family to his mother's sister's place in Blumental, the Pressburg vine-growing suburbs.

¹⁴ Joachim Heinrich Campe (1746 – 1818), a German writer and teacher, in 1800, wrote a story *Pizarro, or the Conquest of Peru*.

¹⁵ Alternatively, it can be translated as a dungeon.

¹⁶ SCHRÖER, A. – SCHRÖER, R. – ZILCHERT, R. *Chr. Oeser's – Tobias Gottfried Schröer's Lebenserinnerungen.* Stuttgart : Ausland und Heimat Verlags-Aktiengesellschaft, 1933, p. 30.

¹⁷ See WURZBACH, C. *Biographische Lexikon des Kaiserthums Oesterreich.* pp. 18 – 24; SZINNYEI, J. *Magyar írok élete és munkái a magyar tudományos akadémia megbízásából.* XI. Kötet. Budapest : Hornyánszky Viktor, 1903, pp. 1234 – 1238.

¹⁸ On this occasion, a number of festivities took place in Pressburg, and he was deeply impressed by the performance of the then prominent actor Wilhelm Iffland, who was visiting neighboring Vienna. Enchanted by his personality, he bought his biography book and decided to travel to Pest to become an actor.

¹⁹ This happened mainly under the influence of Schiller's approach to theatre as a moral instance. He traveled to Pest, via Győr, where he worked under the stage name of Karl Tanner. See SCHRÖER, A. et al. *Chr. Oeser's – Tobias Gottfried Schröer's Lebenserinnerungen*, p. 93.

²⁰ He kept his true intention secret and told the family that he was going to Vienna to work as an educator.

After returning to Pressburg from Pest, he decided to study and improve declamation skills, necessary for the theatre career. In particular, however, he returned to work as an educator to obtain funding for three years of theological studies in Germany. It was followed by his apprenticeship and a ten-month stay in Germany from 1816 to 1817. In the year of his return home, he also began his teaching career; he transferred from the private space of teaching to a public position (at both the Evangelical Lyceum and the girls' high school in Pressburg). His comedies written during his strenuous teaching career were a success; in particular *Rein gefegt* [Swept Clean] published in the yearbook *Almanach dramatische Spiele* (1828)²¹ and *Der Bär* [The Bear] published in the yearbook *Jahrbuch deutsche Bühnenspiele* (1830), which encouraged him to continue writing. Both plays were also published later, in 1846 in the second part of the collection of short stories, poems and plays *Theestunden in Lindenhain* [Tea Time in Lindenhaine] (1846). The collection includes other plays, like *Die Ehescheuen* [The Marriage Shy], *Parforcepoeten* [Poets Par Force²²], *Hebe Hercules* [Raise Hercules], which, assumingly, also date back to an earlier period, the 1920s and 1930s.

Social Conditions and Cultural Climate of the So-called Reform Period in Hungary

Thus, it seems that Schröer was a relatively "known" author in Germany thanks to his published dramatic texts; however, we have no evidence of the staging practice of these plays. His historical drama *Leben und Thaten Emerich Tököly's und seiner Streitgenossen von A. Z.* [The Life and Deeds of Emerich Tököly and His Comrades-in-arms by A. Z.] (1839), in which he vividly and truthfully portrayed the struggle of Hungarian Protestants for their rights and the intrigues of the court of the monarchy, caused a sensation²³, without being attributed to a specific author. Schröer published his literary pieces and political writings exclusively under a pseudonym. This is directly related to the censorship that grew stronger at the end of the 18th century and lasted throughout the 19th century, the century rich in cultural and political changes in the monarchy.²⁴ In the Hungarian multilingual environment, the situation was such that the censors' views also led to a certain parallel marginalization of literature written in Hungarian, Latin and German languages. Especially since the Josephinian era,

²¹ The play received also an award offered by the Hamburg publisher Lebrun, despite its being delivered to the competition after the deadline. However, even during Schröer's lifetime, there was no one to hand over the prize. WURZBACH, C. *Biographische Lexikon des Kaiserthums Oesterreich*, p. 19.

²² Par force is a rare adverb, which means "involuntarily," "necessarily" something that cannot be avoided. Parforce Philosophos and Parforce Poeten (a term dating back to the second half of the 18th century) are all laughed at, or they at once laugh and cry, the term also relates to melancholy. See SCHINGS, H. *Melancholie und Aufklärung. Melancholiker und ihre Kritiker in Erfahrungsseelenkunde und Literatur des 18. Jahrhunderts*. Springer Nature Switzerland AG, 1977.

²³ BRÜMMER, F. Schröer, Tobias. In *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*. Leipzig, 1891, p. 551. [online]. [cit. 11. 1/2021]. Available at: <https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd119060396.html#adbcontent>.

²⁴ "It was a period of radical social reforms and of the birth of national movements, and it culminated in the 1848 revolution. It is typified not only by political but also cultural changes, the formation of the political and literary public. (...) It is a phase just before the formation of the concept of national literature, which has been influencing literary research to this day and is also responsible for the use of the language selective filter and for the inclination of traditional national philologies to the linguistically delineated whole of national literature." KOLLÁROVÁ, I. Censorship and Development of Literature in Late Enlightenment. Finding Correlation. In *Litikon*, 2017, Vol. 2, Issue 2, p. 83.

however, a problematic or unacceptable attribute of the text was the use of the Slovak language, as it might as well make it accessible to wider population with lower education, which posed a potential threat with regard to growing dissatisfaction of the lieges.²⁵ As a keen observer (and in the 1930s also a glossator of political conditions), Schröer as a German was conscious of his situation in Hungary and of his limited opportunities to act as a writer and to express himself freely.

Schröer's creative interest in dramatic arts was not only conditioned by his personal liking for theatre, but also by the broader context of the emancipation of the German bourgeoisie in the second half of the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century. It was the emancipation process of the bourgeoisie that was a testament to the power with which the arts could directly influence events and envisaged or desired changes in the society. This had been continuously observed in Germany's social situation since the Enlightenment. As a teacher, Schröer valued the importance of dramatic arts in aesthetics education, especially for girls²⁶, whom he began teaching immediately after returning from a study stay in Germany. At the time of the unprecedented cultural flourishing of the German territory, mainly thanks to Friedrich Schiller and Johann Wolfgang Goethe, who themselves had an inescapable relationship to the drama, Schröer also succumbed these influences. The relationship of the two cooperating greats to the drama was rooted to some extent in the overall development of a fragmented Germany, characterized by the isolation and conservatism of a privileged aristocratic class, and the existence of a number of small absolutist state units. All over the territory, strict censorship was employed; as a result, it was practically impossible to criticize the conditions in the then society. Here, too, we see parallels to the situation in Hungary, leading to the clarification of Schröer's cautious approach to the publication of his literary and theatre works.²⁷

On the other hand, writers realized that literature and dramatic arts are a unique means of possible public criticism of social and political conditions in an indirect way (allegorically), thus avoiding the censorship in a sophisticated fashion. However, it was not only the mentioned external events that shaped Schröer's relationship to dramatic arts. It is clear that his activities in dramatic production were also co-determined by thorough knowledge of the development of theoretical views. In addition to Goethe and Schiller's co-authored piece *Über epische und dramatische Dichtung* [On Epic and Dramatic Work] (1797, published as late as in 1827), the probable source of inspiration is, in particular, Schiller's work *Die Schaubühne als eine moralische Anstalt* [Theatre scene as a moral institution] (1802), which he published three years before his death. Schröer apparently drew from these ideas and learned from his role models, which, however, can only be proved on the basis of analyses that far exceed the possibilities of the present text. He also transformed them into a carefully thought-out strategy within the thematic and compositional levels of his works. However, he did not do it mechanically, but inventively and with an emphasis on its

²⁵ Ibid., p. 99.

²⁶ For example, the festivities of roses (Rosenfest) organized by him, where his female students recited poems, played excerpts from dramas, sang, etc. in nature.

²⁷ Already during the Enlightenment, this was done mainly by laying the foundations of the German national tragedy thanks to Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, and later through direct bold criticism in F. Schiller's and J. W. Goethe's works as a result of gradual changes in social conditions in favour of the growing self-esteem of the bourgeoisie.

legitimate transmission or application in the process of educating a young person.²⁸ Not only did he set out on the path of themed stories from the life of real historical figures (inventors and conquerors, such as Francisco Pizarro or Hernando Cortéz, Count Tököly, Tsar Ivan the Terrible), but he also spiced up some of these themes with an educational aspect, as evidenced by the play from the late period of his life *Der Vogelherd. Dramatisches Gemälde aus Luthers häuslichem Leben. Ein Geschenk für Frau und Kinder* [A Flock of Birds. A Dramatic Painting from Luther's Home Life. A Gift for a Woman and Children] (1845), which was published in Halle, probably under the attested pseudonym Oeser.

There were basically only two ways to protect himself and his family: either consistently continue to use pseudonyms (and, if possible, change them) when publishing literary works, or to use the proven principle of allegory, under the guise of which the censorship has not always been able to reveal the author's real intentions and published ideas. That was the case with the play *Krebse und derartiges Ungeziefer. Ein Fastnachtspiel. Von Theodoricus Schernbergk dem Jüngeren* [Crabs and Vermin of This Kind. A Carnival Play. By Theodoricus Schernbergk jr] (1845), which he published under the pseudonym of Schernberk. The play was written earlier and its original name was *Die Krebse* [The Crabs]. However, since the original text was written – from the church point of view – in a callous spirit, no one dared to publish it. The carnival play finally came out crippled²⁹ as late as in 1845 in Magdeburg, under a changed title *Krebse und derartiges Ungeziefer. Ein Fastnachtspiel*.³⁰ We can mention also the use of a popular means of critically depicting social scandals, the roots of which go back to the Enlightenment, by transferring the scene into other country or other historical period, as evidenced by the play from 1839 *Leben und Taten Emerich Tökölys und seiner Streitgenossen* [The Life and Deeds of Emerich Tököly and His Comrades-in-arms].

Mature Works by Playwright Tobias Gottfried Schröer and Their Public Acceptance

Schröer's comedy *Der Bär* from 1830 is a testimony to the genre diversity of his dramatic work and a proof that even serious problems can be presented and solved

²⁸ When evaluating T. G. Schröer's dramatic works, it cannot be overlooked that, in addition to his drawing from the ideas of the Enlightenment, his sources of inspiration go back to the traditions of didactic or school plays, which originated in the gradually developing urban Protestant schools since the 16th century (humanistic schooling).

²⁹ The censorship, defined as the "general principles of freedom of the press" as formulated by the Royal Commission in 1792, was supposed to define those areas of the society that need to be protected by a ban on the distribution of books that threaten it (by attacking the king and the royal family, undermining laws, damaging good morals, Christian religions, and bringing insults to tolerated religions, etc." On the other hand, many authors, when balancing their literary work, felt that if there was no censorship, they could offer the society much more. KOLLÁROVÁ, I. *Tajne. Nebezpečná myšlienka a netransparentnosť komunikačných sietí v čase nepokoja (1789 – 1799)* [Secret. A Dangerous Idea and Non-transparency of Communication Networks in the Times of Conflict (1789 – 1799)]. Bratislava : VEDA, 2020, p. 57.

³⁰ Here, it is necessary to point out the retarding influence of the censorship on the development of literature, as stated by I. Kollárová: "In my research into the history of publishing, I perceived censorship as the supervision and disciplining of social communication, first at the level of explicit censorship acts – regulations, decrees, censorship opinions and prohibitions. Gradually, however, questions related to never-before-published manuscripts and texts, of which we now know only through a censorship review, arose and led to reflections freed from the solid ground of source proofing." *Ibid.*, p. 168.

in a painless way. The author showed a special talent for the comedy genre in it. Even to an uninterested recipient, it is clear that the location of the scene of this one-act play in Russia is directly related to its name and the traditions of political perception of this country.³¹ It was written in the so-called Biedermeier period (after the Vienna Congress³²), that is, in the era of the bourgeoisie's thrifty lifestyle and preference for family life values as a result of Metternich's absolutism and the impossibility of any direct criticism of the existing regime. This was manifested in the inclination to dramatic arts in general, or in preferring the genre of comedy and farce, which provided an opportunity to escape the bleak reality and also indirectly (despite the existing censorship) to bring some criticism of the present social conditions. These sources of inspiration were not unknown to Schröder, as he was very well versed in the political situation of the monarchy.

In the one-act play *Der Bär*, Schröder resorted to historical material³³ in order to, to some extent, demystify the figure of Tsar Ivan the Terrible as an absolutist monarch. Thus, his human weaknesses and shortcomings come to the fore. The play features several characters representing different social classes of the then Russian society: Ivan Vasilyevich II. (Tsar of Russia), Roman Sakharinich and his daughter Anastasia, Alexei Kiyevsky (officer), Vsevolod (chancellor), Yaroslav (butler), young nobles and officers. It is a love story between a young tsar and a girl, Anastasia. The author's criticism is directed mainly at the nobility, their decadent way of life, especially their arrogance and willfulness in deciding on the fates of the lieges. Albeit entertaining, which corresponds to the genre of one-act play, it is also an imaginary confrontation between the aristocracy and the lieges, in which the winning ones are lower-class characters due to their courage, ingenuity and natural intelligence.

Despite applying a certain scheme in the depiction of the characters (Tsar Ivan the Terrible, Roman Sacharinich as the bride's father), the author both treats his characters kindly and leaves room for their development or improvement, which in a sense can be understood as the influence of the Biedermeier time, the concept of which is based on giving considerable emphasis on human education. In the comedy, as a frequent compositional element, bringing a fresh moment, is used the principle of confusion of characters, originating in the *commedia dell'arte*. It acts here as a productive element of situational humour and of the possibility to present the attitudes of individual characters in terms, thus shaping their characters. However, in places, Schröder could not abstain from didacticism or naivism.³⁴

³¹ The bear, as a huge animal, is associated with Russia even today as a symbol of strength and courage but also cruelty (to this day, this metaphorical "insult" is sometimes used for figures like Boris Yeltsin or Vladimir Putin). However, we emphasize in particular the state of hibernation of this animal. King of Prussia Friedrich II. once warned against the "sleeping Russian bear" in the connotation of not underestimating Russia as a potential military imperial threat to other countries.

³² After the French Revolution and the defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte, the Congress of Vienna (1814 – 1815) aimed to dismiss the political changes brought about by the Napoleonic military campaign and, if possible, to restore the legitimacy of the expelled ruling dynasties, to change the political map of Europe. The main figure of the congress and the architect of changes in post-war Europe was the charming Austrian chancellor Prince Clemens Lothar Metternich (1773 – 1859).

³³ At the beginning of the play, T. G. Schröder states that the story took place in Moscow in 1547. OESER, Chr. [SCHRÖDER, T. G.]. *Der Bär. Lustspiel in einem Akt*. In *Theestunden in Lindenhain, Zweiter Band*, p. 172.

³⁴ Since the text of the play (its 1830 edition) was not available to us, we studied that in Schröder's collection of poems, short stories and plays, as well as its translation into English by the Irish Germanist

Significant disturbance³⁵ was caused by a historic drama *Leben und Taten Emerich Tököly's und seiner Streitgenossen* [The Life and Deeds of Emerich Tököly and His Comrades-in-arms] (1839), written under the pseudonym of A. Z. The motif was the period of the anti-Habsburg uprisings in Hungary in the 17th century. In this play, the author used the principle of criticism of contemporary social conditions by placing the story in a different environment (different country and fictional places) and historical period, although it was clear that his critique was directed at contemporary political conditions. Schröer's critique is directed against the Catholic Church, which in his eyes was one of the basic pillars of the contemporary absolutist system of the Habsburg monarchy. In terms of form, the play largely corresponds to the principles of the poetics of the Sturm und Drang movement.

The protagonist of the play is the Hungarian nobleman Emmerich Thököly (1657 – 1705). It was a strange choice, because at that time the author was very well aware of the real archaic position of the nobility, their being perceived as an obstacle to the implementation of the necessary social reforms. The main character appears here in a highly idealized form, which is already some kind of evidence of the influence of the Romanticism artistic conception. Count Thököly was a prince (or ruler) of Upper Hungary, also called the "Slovak king" or the Kuruc king by his contemporaries. The Prešov Evangelical Lyceum alumnus became famous as the leader of the anti-Habsburg uprising (the Thököly uprising) in 1678 – 1686, the main goal of which was, at the beginning, to restore the Hungarian estate constitution and achieve religious freedom.³⁶ The historical drama may have been inspired by Goethe's drama *Götz von Berlichingen* (1773).³⁷ The play begins with an untitled heroic poem with the introductory words "Du schönes Land...", praising the natural beauty of the country, the people living in it and their desire for freedom.³⁸ The story takes place at Mukachevo Castle, in the field camp of the rebels in Leopoldov, outside the cathedral in Vienna, at Orava Castle, in Gemer and Pressburg, at the farm market in Košice (the conquest of the town of Tököly is shown), in Banská Štiavnica, Trnava and in the forest near Prešov.

The play is populated with dozens of mostly historical characters³⁹; also a Slovak

D. Wood. See OESER, Chr. [SCHRÖER, T. G.]. Der Bär. Lustspiel in einem Akt. In *Theestunden in Lindenhain. Zweiter Band*, pp. 171 – 216; WOOD, D. W. *Tobias Gottfried Schröer. The Bear (A One-Act Comedy, 1830)*. Transl., 2001. [online]. [cit. 21. 11. 2020]. Available at: https://www.academia.edu/12808971/Tobias_Gottfried_Schr%C3%B6er_The_Bear_A_One_Act_Comedy_1830_.

³⁵ However, the response to the play was not entirely clear. On the one hand, it was received enthusiastically (family friend, actor and poet Karl von Holtei), but on the other hand it was also criticized, especially its formal shortcomings (playwright, publicist and literary critic Christian Friedrich Hebbel based in Vienna). See SCHRÖER, A. et al. *ARG Oeser's - Tobias Gottfried Schröer's Lebinnererinnerungen*, p. 93.

³⁶ A significant part of the insurgents of the Estates Uprising were burghers, lieges, soldiers, and other non-noble groups. In Slovakia, the temporary success of the uprising enabled the development of the Prešov School of Philosophy. In 1694, Thököly disbanded the last Kuruc army and lived in Asia Minor till his death.

³⁷ PETRAŠKO, Ľ. *Nemecké divadlo v hornom Uhorsku: V službe moci*. In *Literárny týždenník*, 2018, Vol. 31, Issue 35 – 36, p. 7.

³⁸ A. Z. [SCHRÖER, T. G.]. *Leben und Thaten Emerich Tokoly's und seiner Streitgenossen. Ein historisches Drama von A. Z.* Leipzig: Verlag von Wilhelm Einhorn, 1839, pp. 9 – 10.

³⁹ There are nominally almost 60 characters as individuals, others are listed generally in the plural as magnates, bishops, deputies of the Parliament, Jesuits, spies, hussars, Turks, Jews, townspeople, peasants, people, etc.; they are listed on two pages of the printed copy of the play. See A. Z. [SCHRÖER, T. G.]. *Leben und Thaten Emerich Tokoly's und seiner Streitgenossen*, pp. 11 – 12.

element is hinted at through the characters of gypsy Bunko and his daughter Evica; there is also a figure of a Kuruc captain named Vladár, a scout who appears in Košice in disguise for a monk. Through the use of the pseudonyms (usually Chr. Oeser, and this time only A. Z.), the author protected himself against the intervention of the censorship, which enabled him to include some transparent moments that make the reader consider a confessional point of view: "Here he mocks the worship of relics by Catholics, occasionally he may even express himself in his native language: 'Don't be afraid!' Admiration for the heroic Hungarians is constantly expressed, e.g. through the mouth of the French: 'We fight for the king, for the honour of the whole nation. You, in God's name, though.' The events are consistently interpreted from a Protestant position."⁴⁰ We learn about the course of the battle at Vienna (1683) through a conversation between the townspeople who attribute a decisive share in the victory to the valiant Polish King John III Sobieski.⁴¹ When accounting for the number of characters and the places where the story takes place, the drama is a large-scale fresco.⁴²

We do not yet have any information about the staging of Schröer's plays that would be based on relevant sources. In the case of the play *Krebse und derartiges Ungeziefer. Ein Fastnachtspiel* [Crabs and Vermin of This Kind. A Carnival Play] (1845), the author had trouble finding a suitable publisher, as he opted for a ruthless critique of the contemporary conditions of the monarchy. He did so with considerable courage, as he abandoned the principle of allegory, and one of the characters of the play is the then Austrian Chancellor Metternich who embodies absolutism in the post-Vienna-Congress time. Metternich's unpopular office also served as a model for characters in other Schröer's plays, such as the farce *Der alte Herr* [The Old Man] (app. 1830 – 1840?), which was inspired by the play *Rytieri* [The Knights] by the ancient comedy writer Aristophanes. In this play, however, Metternich is portrayed in a bold and irresistibly appealing comic way as a 'housekeeper'. Unfortunately, the play was probably mislaid by a Viennese arts dealer who took it to hand it in to the publisher Campe in Hamburg.

The ruthless struggle with the censorship and literary criticism continued in Schröer's literary work outside dramatic arts. An example of how he managed to remain undetected even after translating the work into another language is a short story (also referred to as a novel by critics) *Die heilige Dorothea. Dichtung und Wahrheit*

⁴⁰ See PETRAŠKO, L. Nemecké divadlo v hornom Uhorsku, p. 7.

⁴¹ The leader of the uprising, Count Thököly, anticipates the defeat of the Ottomans near Vienna, which is confirmed by a defector from the imperial troops coming with the news that the combined imperial, Polish and German divisions defeated Kara Mustafa near Vienna and Kahlenberg. However, in their dialogues, the characters lay bare the "purpose-specific alliance that the Protestants were willing to form with the Turk against the emperor. After the battle of Vienna, there is another conflict with the imperial army near Prešov. The kuruc army is defeated, Thököly manages to escape, yet he needs to be warned of a recent ally" through the mouths of Sandor, an envoy from Transylvania. PETRAŠKO, L. Nemecké divadlo v hornom Uhorsku, p. 7. However, on the stage, the words are accompanied by a statement about betrayal. Thököly is tied up and transported by the Turks to Drinopol. According to historical data, in 1694, Thököly disbanded the last kuruc army and lived in Asia Minor till his death. KÖNYA, P. *Pod zástavou kurucov. Protihabsburské povstania v Uhorsku v r. 1670 – 1711* [Under the Banner of Kuruc. Anti-Habsburg Uprisings in Hungary in 1670 – 1711]. Prešov : Vydavateľstvo Prešovskej univerzity, 2015, pp. 156 – 264.

⁴² We do not have evidence of the staging practice; if the play was staged, it certainly had considerable demands on the set design, stage, scenery, extras, and costumes.

aus dem Kirchenleben in Ungarn [Saint Dorothea. Poetry and Truth from Church Life in Hungary] (1839). It did not get under the stern eye of the censorship as the name itself did not arouse any suspicion.⁴³ In the novel, Schröer opposed the Roman Catholic Church at a time when many ethnic Hungarians in Hungary were Protestants and often faced persecution by Catholic Habsburgs. All these difficulties are represented by a melodramatic story, pointing to the unjust attitudes of the Roman Catholic Church in relation to mixed marriages. This issue is dealt with by Schröer (under the pseudonym of Elias Tibiscanus) in his politically tuned work *Die Religionsbeschwerden der Protestanten in Ungarn, wie sie auf dem Reichstage im Jahr 1833 verhandelt worden* [The Religious Complaints of the Protestants in Hungary, As They Were Negotiated at the Reichstag in 1833] (1838).

The censorship troubles were incited, as the German lexicographer Franz Brümmer (1891) stated, by Schröer's free Protestant spirit that very soon, at the beginning of the writer's career, encountered the limitations of the censorship in the dual monarchy.⁴⁴ Several of Schröer's writings, published under his true name, were quite dreadfully maimed by the censor.⁴⁵ Therefore, as an author, he desperately needed a secret identity and had to be constantly vigilant in order not to get into trouble with strict supervisory authorities. After the publication of historical drama *Leben und Thaten Emerich Tököly's und seiner Streitgenossen* [The Life and Deeds of Emerich Tököly and His Comrades-in-arms] under the pseudonym of A. Z., when the censorship began to search for the author, extensive house searches followed, even at the writer's mother's place. The suspicion of the censors was aroused by two politically tuned pieces that preceded the release of the play.⁴⁶ The book was strictly banned in Austria, although its content received very favourable evaluation in terms of the artistic representation of the theme and aesthetic value.

A Drama of a German Writer That Was Not Staged in Hungary or a Drama of a German Writer in Hungary as a Crime

Tobias Gottfried Schröer apparently never received appreciation in the form of applause for the successful staging of the original theatre play, despite the response to his theoretical writings, reading books, and textbooks. With this in mind, Schröer's son and biographer Karl Julius states about his father's sad fate and ac-

⁴³ The short story was translated into Flemish in the Netherlands and even published several times. See HABETS, D. *De ellende van gemengde huwelijken. Geplaatst op 30 augustus 2020*. [online]; HABETS, D. *Dorothea en censur. Geplaatst op 31 augustus 2020*. [online]. For more see KOPČÁKOVÁ, S. Reflexia náboženských problémov hornouhorských evanjelikov a miesto náboženskej výchovy v teoretickom odkaze Tobiasa Gottfrieda Schröera [Reflections on the Religious Problems of Upper Hungarian Protestants and the Position of Religious Education in Tobias Gottfried Schröer's Theoretical Work]. In *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 2018, Vol. 9, Issue 1, pp. 115 – 129.

⁴⁴ "Schröer soon felt the irons imposed on him by the sad conditions of censorship under the Metternich regime, and when several of his writings, published under his true name in Hungary, were severely maimed by the censorship, he had to find a place to publish his intellectual work outside Austria-Hungary, especially in Leipzig." BRÜMMER, F. Schröer, Tobias. In *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*. Leipzig, 1891, pp. 551 – 552.

⁴⁵ It is a farce *Die Krebse* which the censor changed beyond recognition.

⁴⁶ DESIDERIUS, P. [SCHRÖER, T. G.]. *Über Erziehung und Unterricht in Ungarn. In Briefen an den Graphen Széchenyi*. Leipzig, 1833; TIBISCANUS, E. [SCHRÖER, T. G.]. *Religionsbeschwerden der Protestanten in Ungarn, wie sie auf dem Reichstage im Jahr 1833 verhandelt worden. Herausgegeben von Elias Tibiscanus*. Leipzig : Verlag von W. Einhorn, 1838.

tivities: "There is a bit of bourgeois tragedy in the life of a poor, so little-known and so troubled man. If ever a delicate Latin proverb *Quem Dii odere, paedagogum fecere*⁴⁷ found application in someone, it was Schröer, a professor of German literature, German rhetoric and poetry in Hungary, in the pre-March Pressburg.⁴⁸ (...) And in this crazy country, under a thoughtlessly absolutist government, in an indifferent, colourless and malevolent city, Oeser, whose entire essence was supported by German education and belief, had to be a German writer who ended his literary activity secretly, as if committing crime."⁴⁹ After all, the drama that was not played remained thus only in the form of literary activity, well-known in German-speaking countries, but little known in the area where the writer, aesthetician and playwright lived his entire prolific life.

Translated by Alena Kačmárová

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ATTACHMENT

List of plays by Tobias Gottfried Schröer (alias Chr. Oeser, A. Z., T. Schernberk, etc.)

- A. Theatre plays from the early period (app. 1806/1807 – 1816):
 - Pizarro* (undated)
 - Cortez oder die Nacht der Trübsal* (undated)
 - Die Soldaten* (undated)
 - Die Pfaffen* (undated)
 - Karzer und Liebe* (undated)
- B. Theatre plays from the mature period (app. 1828 – 1839?):
 - Rein gefegt* (1828)
 - Der Bär* (1830)
 - Die Krebse* (undated, later revised and renamed; 1845*)
 - Der alte Herr* (undated)
- C. The most important plays from the mature period (1839 – 1946):
 - Leben und Taten Emerich Tököly's und seiner Streitgenossen* (1839)
 - **Krebse und derartiges Ungeziefer. Ein Fastnachtspiel* (1845)
 - Der Vogel-heerd. Dramatisches Gemälde aus Luthers häuslichem Leben. Ein Geschenk für Frau und Kinder* (1845)
- D. Plays published in 1846 in the collection *Theestunden in Lindenhain. Zweiter band* (1846), which, however, seem to have originated in the earlier period:
 - Die Ehescheuen* (undated)
 - Parforcepoeten* (undated)
 - Hebe Herculea* (undated)

⁴⁷ Free translation of Latin proverb: Whom the gods hated, they made them teachers.

⁴⁸ The German term "der vormärzlichen Zeit" (pre-March period) refers to the pre-revolutionary period of 1848.

⁴⁹ BRÜMMER, F. Schröer, Tobias. In *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, p. 553.

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