

In Search of Grigory Skovoroda's Motivation¹

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Abstract: The article aims to explain a particular thread of Hungarian motifs in the literary and philosophical works of Grigory Savvich Skovoroda (1722–1794), the first Russian and Ukrainian Christian philosopher. The Hungarian period of his biography remains the least studied; therefore, it demands special attention in the interests of determining objective reasons for the themes of his writings in the context of the formation of Russian and Ukrainian literature of the period.

DOI: 10.7592/methis.v17i21/22.14590

Keywords: *srodnost*, antithetics, symbolic cognition and interpretation, duality of the world, *strannichestvo*, Slavonic interiorism

And Italy has a habit of treading out the grain with oxen...

(Skovoroda 1973, 1:388)

The European or foreign period in Skovoroda's biography is one of its least studied periods and deserves special attention in order to determine the motivation behind the diverse themes of his poetic and prosaic writings. This subject has been frequently discussed before, but without a proper account of the geographical places and historical conditions directly connected to Skovoroda's Imperial Service in Hungary, Austria, Italy and Poland in 1745–1750. Notwithstanding the considerable stretch of time and the extent of scholarly research, the name of this talented but often unjustly neglected Ukrainian master of *belles lettres* continues to invite the scrutiny of modern scholars. The current interest in Skovoroda can be explained by various intercultural processes coursing through united Europe. On both sides of the new political borders, this interest has a positive influence on the relations between the nations visited by the young poet and future philosopher Skovoroda more than two hundred and seventy years ago.

Drawing thematic parallels, it should be stressed that Skovoroda's literary and philosophical works were greatly inspired by the Moravian visual world of Comenius, the French sacral psalms of Muretus, the Dutch esoteric symbols of Wetstenium and, last but not least, by the Chinese humanistic teachings of Confucius, according

¹ The article is dedicated to the 295th anniversary of Skovoroda's birth.

to which eternal truth lies behind that which is evident. Skovoroda's spiritual heritage has continued to combine the best features of the national cultures of Russia, Ukraine, Hungary, Austria, Italy, and Poland, thereby constituting an excellent example for new European men of letters to follow. Among numerous works of biographical character, it is necessary to note the essay of the Russian writer Kovalensky, *The Life of Grigory Skovoroda*, written in 1795 and based upon the author's personal experience as Skovoroda's close friend and disciple. Furthermore, it is important to point to the article by the Hungarian professor Gustav Hess de Calve, "Skovoroda—the Cynic of the Present Age", which appeared under the common title, *Skovoroda, the Ukrainian Philosopher*, in the *Ukrainian Vestnik* in April 1817 alongside the short memoirs of the Swiss journalist Ivan Vernet, entitled "The Lopansky Bridge—an Excerpt from the Reminiscences of Kharkov"; Vernet had personally known Skovoroda and argued hotly with him more than once on different pedagogical matters.

Serving as a *pridvorny ustavshchik*² for the Imperial Commission of Hungarian Wines at Tokay under the command of General-Mayor Vishnevsky, Skovoroda composed a whole series of colourful writings vividly describing the everyday life of common Magyars, who in many respects greatly resembled his native Malorosses. During the reigns of the Russian Empresses Elizabeth and Catherine the Great, Skovoroda became a practical follower of the pansophical teaching of Comenius, an ingenious Moravian educator of the seventeenth century, bringing his ideas to a higher academic level in spite of severe episcopal censorship. Summing up the results of his five-year Imperial Service in Hungary, we should not forget the positive influence he incurred from Hungarian culture and his encounters with the representatives of various social layers and religious denominations. In today's language, we should say that Skovoroda stepped forward as the first Malorossian dissident to travel on the thorny paths of the Russian Empire, showing his unwillingness to follow the dark clerical dictatorship and, by his symbolic allegory, throwing down the gauntlet to openly challenge church censors. His banned treatises, *The Wife of Lot*, *The Serpent of Israel* and *The Flood of the Serpent*, as political *samizdat*³ of the time, turned into an inexhaustible source of Christian symbols and ideas, inspiring a large number of artists and narrators to create enthusiastically, regardless of their ethnic origin and social background.

2 Court regulator responsible for the maintenance of domestic churches and chapels at royal palaces, as well as the order of organized church services (in Russian).

3 Unofficial reproduction of unpublished manuscripts (in Russian).

The literary and philosophical works of Skovoroda are traditionally divided into three main parts: the spiritual poetry of *The Garden of Godly Songs*, the Aesopian prose of the *The Kharkovian Fables* and the exegetical treatises, dialogues and parables, including the interpretations of Muretus, Ovidius, Vergilius, Hosius, Cicero, Plutarch, Terentius, Horatius and Tertullianus. Moreover, it is important to mention his private correspondence consisting of 125 letters, 79 of which were addressed to his soul mate Kovalensky, 14 to Pravitsky and 32 to different friends and other people, such as Yakubovich, Liashevetsky, Zhebokritsky, Maximovich, Bazilevich, Tamara, Dolgansky, Teviashov, Norov, Disky, Karpov, Zemborsky, Soshalsky, Kurdiumov, Donets-Zaharzhevsky and others. Kovalensky's biographical essay, *The Life of Grigory Skovoroda*, occupies an important place in his heritage, allowing an understanding of current historical events of the time and personalities who surrounded Skovoroda, with whom he had a long-term association. Alongside this essay, and thanks to his article "Skovoroda—the Cynic of the Present Age" (1817), Hess de Calve, a native of Pest-Buda and a professor of philosophy at Kharkov University, justly deserves the honourable title of the first biographer of Skovoroda in Hungary. The archival research of the Russian and Hungarian historians Aleksandr Rachinsky and Lajos Tardy helped clarify the real reasons for the centuries-old popularity of high-quality Tokayan Aszu, a specialty indispensable to the festive tables of Russian and Polish noblemen. As for the work of the Russian historian Rachinsky (1875), *Russian Commissars at Tokay in the XVIII century*, this was written on the basis of Rachinsky's findings at the Central Moscow Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia and published in the *Russkii Vestnik*. There, for the first time, a full account was given of the activities of the Imperial Commission of Hungarian Wines, established by the order of Empress Anna Ioannovna in June 1733, which for many years was headed by General-Mayor Vishnevsky, about whom Kovalensky wrote in connection with Skovoroda's departure abroad. Having at his disposal some unique documents and letters from the official correspondence of the Russian Empress Elizabeth and Court Commissar Vishnevsky, Rachinsky eventually managed to shed light on some less known facts concerning Skovoroda's five-year Imperial Service at Tokay, without which his biography would have remained incomplete and unfinished. According to Rachinsky, Empress Elizabeth, by her personal edict of 6 April 1745, dispatched Vishnevsky to produce, purchase and supply Tokayan wine to Russia. Thanks to the military and political union between Peter the Great and the Transylvanian Prince Ferenc Rakoczi II, Tokayan wine had acquired a huge popularity in the highest circles of Russia; the Hungarian historian Tardy (1963) provides a detailed account of this in the Sarospatakian study, *The History of the Tokayan Wine Trade Commission (1733–1798)*.

There is practically no exact information left about the official position that Skovoroda held at the Imperial Commission of Hungarian Wines and about the Hungarian scholars he met. The reason for this may be the fact that commercial and political goals were pursued simultaneously, and were often expressed as religious propaganda among the Slavonic speakers inhabiting the Habsburg Empire. These efforts were directed at the mass resettlement of Rascians, or Serbs in the free *volosts*⁴ of southwestern and throughout southeastern Russia in order to establish New-Serbia and Slav-Serbia. This plan was successfully carried out in July 1751 under the leadership of the Serbian Colonel Horvath, who subsequently became a general and the first Governor of the Novoserbian Province, by the mutual agreement of the Austrian Archduchess Maria Theresa and the Russian Empress Elizabeth, who planned to declare the Seven Years' War against Prussia. In the hope of a better life and obtaining fertile lands, thousands of settlers originating from the Balkan and Transylvanian regions moved from Austria and Hungary to the territories of the Kropivnitsky (Kirovograd) and Lugansk (Voroshilovgrad) *oblasts*⁵ of modern Ukraine, where their genetic descendants still live today. It is quite possible that Skovoroda had played an active part in the preparations for this geopolitical process while serving at the Tokayan Gardens from approximately 20 September 1745 to 8 September 1750 (according to the chronological calculations of the Ukrainian biographer Leonid Makhnovets (1972), the author of the book *Grigory Skovoroda*).

The other reason for the absence of some authentic materials in relation to the Hungarian period of Skovoroda's biography may be the fact that Empresses Elizabeth and Catherine the Great did not intend to make public anything concerning the mass resettlements of Maria Theresa's Slavonic subjects on the southern borders of Russia. Even today, most Ukrainian historians prefer to keep silence about this issue, and to some extent it continues to be a taboo in the ethnic annals of the eighteenth-century Ukraine.

In view of these facts, all the existing information on the life of Skovoroda abroad is extremely important, as the majority of his songs, poems, epigrams, fables, treatises, dialogues, parables and interpretations contain hidden biographical contexts, motivated by concrete geographical names and political processes. Neither can the key to Skovoroda's legendary secrecy be found in the documentary article by Rachinsky (1875), although it is full of all kinds of events and names of people directly connected to Skovoroda's Imperial Service in Hungary. Rather, the explanation is to

4 Smallest administrative division of tsarist Russia (in Russian).

5 Designation of administrative division of modern Russia and Ukraine (in Russian).

be sought in the psychological analysis of the character of Skovoroda, his excessive self-restraint and unconcealed inclination to mysticism which finally turned into his religious and idealistic philosophy.

A special role in the composition of Skovoroda's literary portrait is played by his personal correspondence with Kovalensky, Tamara, Pravitsky, Yakubovich, Teviashov, Soshalsky and Kanorovsky-Sokha—the people who were spiritually very close to him. It is also essential to mention that Skovoroda's exegetical treatises were strictly banned by the official Russian censorship and not published until 1912, a fact which certainly affected the research of his numerous biographers and critics. Kovalensky, Hess de Calve, Vernet, Snegiriov, Sreznevsky, Hizhdeu, Danilevsky, Yefimenko, Bagaley, Bonch-Bruyevich, Ern, Sumtsov, Tchizhevsky, Verhovets, Popov, Redko, Ivanyo, Makhnovets, Nezhenets, Verba, etc. are traditionally referred to as the researchers of Skovoroda's life. Whole generations of Russian poets and writers, including Karamzin, Snegiriov, Sreznevsky, Gogol, Tyutchev and Tolstoy, regularly visited Austria and Hungary to see the places from where the young Skovoroda had drawn his artistic inspiration. Even today, at the Great Library of Sarospatak Calvinist College, one can find works of Comenius, Hosius and Muretus once leafed through by the young Malorossian Cossack Skovoroda. Later on, the activities of the Imperial Commission of Hungarian Wines were tightly linked to his personality, as he continued to be interested in the fates of those with whom he had served, dedicating his poetry and prose to them; for example, *An Interpretation from Plutarch's About the Tranquillity of the Heart* is dedicated to Falkovsky. Out of respect, Skovoroda's friends, Kanorovsky-Sokha among them, began dignifying him with the nickname *Dunaievsky*, generously offering their financial help and influence in Russian society.

Dmitry Ivanovich Tchizhevsky (1934), an outstanding Russian and Ukrainian philosopher, a philologist and slavist, was the first to draw attention to a certain methodological connection between the Slobodian enlightener Skovoroda and the Moravian humanist Comenius, thus playing an important role in the comprehension and theoretical assessment of Skovoroda's literary and philosophical works. The materialistic sensualism of Comenius with its three sources of cognition corresponds to Skovoroda's popular "love of wisdom", that is his principle of universal agreement, the unity of the world and the correlation of opposites. According to Skovoroda, man is part of nature and ought to obey its laws, therefore, everything that is related to it has to be conformable. According to his definition, *srodnost*⁶ is an

6 Relationship (in Russian).

absolute harmony of moral and aesthetic principles towards which one must constantly aspire.

Despite his great number of publications, Skovoroda had for many decades remained unstudied and practically forgotten as a poet, writer, and philosopher. It was hardly possible to define his literary style and the philosophical school to which he belonged. Tchizhevsky became the first to succeed at this, thanks to the scientific milieu in which he found himself during his political emigration abroad. Due to political circumstances, his book, *The Philosophy of G. S. Skovoroda* could not be published in the USSR in the 1930s. However, without looking back at Stalinist censors, Tchizhevsky boldly characterized Skovoroda as an extremely paradoxical representative of dialectical thinking in the sense of antiquity, which in turn determined the two basic elements of his philosophy: antithetics and the principle of circulation, directly derived from the teachings of Plato, Plotinus, Proclus and the Fathers of the Church.

In Tchizhevsky's opinion, the antithetics of Skovoroda is an entirely regular process, consisting of antique Platonism, the mysticism of the Middle Ages, and modern German mysticism. Skovoroda's antinomical style should not be disregarded, as it immediately attracts the attention of the reader of his dialogues and conversations. The same is true of his ethics, which is no less antithetical and often expressed in a humorous manner as, for example, in his Aesopian fables. Admitting the unsystematic character of the antithetics of Skovoroda, Tchizhevsky is confident that Skovoroda's thoughts are filled with the conviction of the antagonism of the world and real existence. In the first place, his antithetical formulae are contradictions between contiguous notions, which remain continually opposed. Apart from Skovoroda's dialectics, which is comprised of the antithetics and the teaching of circulation, there is also symbolism, marked by the constant addressing of a certain environment, nature, art, religion, etc. Naturally, Skovoroda's symbols do not always yield to monosemantic decoding, but they clearly have at their disposal possibilities for symbolic cognition and interpretation, directly compelling one to actually search for the truth. Skovoroda's philosophical style is a distinctive turn from the theoretical interpretation of habitual verbal notions to primary forms of thinking, presented emblematically. As was already characteristic of pre-Socratic thinkers, each of Skovoroda's symbols has not one but several meanings, often intercrossing with each other. Skovoroda interprets events of historical or biblical origin symbolically, expressing them in a simple but quite pronounced form with a hidden sense of existence. The visual method of Comenius is similarly imbued with the idea of symbolism, that is, the transfer of different kinds of information through a system of images and pictures, which was achieved in his pictorial dictionary, *Orbis Sensualium Pictus*.

Comenius' main difference from Skovoroda consists of a more exact formulation of thoughts that served the chief aim of his Latin teaching at the Sarospatak Calvinist College in Hungary.

Skovoroda's metaphysical thoughts are united by monodualism based upon antithetical thinking. Matter, in his understanding, is liable to decay; it is mortal, dependent, and passive, and therefore needs constant external support from God. Speaking of Skovoroda's dualism, Tchizhevsky justifiably thinks that it hardly differs from the German mystics, the Church Fathers and Philon, thus retaining a close connection with the whole of Christian philosophy. More generally, the duality of the world is one of the central elements of baroque poetry; Skovoroda's antithetical interpretation of two natures, one visible and the other invisible, is thus very important for the understanding of his philosophical views and ideas.

Skovoroda's literary legacy cannot be limited by conditionally accepted frameworks of ethnic character. The geography of his creations practically knows no borders, since he belongs to world culture, while rejecting any cosmopolitanism, to which his pre- and post-Soviet critics often refer. The secret of the phenomenon of Skovoroda should be sought in his complex biography, stretching from the Malorossian village of Chernukhy to Rome in Italy. His spiritual influence occupies an important place in the Slavonic literatures of the former Soviet republics. Taking into consideration Tchizevsky's political situation, it can be easily understood why he so militantly accentuates the priority of the Ukrainian element in Skovoroda's writings; although he asserts that the philosophy of Skovoroda is mystical, a system deriving rather from the symbolism, emblematicism and interpretation of Holy Scripture, this is open to question. The traditional reference to Skovoroda's composition, *The Dream*, written in Kavray in November 1758 can hardly serve as evidence for such a categorical claim; rather, this text is based upon some of the author's real experiences and is only partly mystified for the sake of a greater stylistic effect. All the events described in the work are concrete episodes in the writer's life over the course of several years, involving the Petersburgian and Tokayan periods of his biography. This points once again to the need for obtaining exact details of his service at the Imperial Court and the Imperial Commission of Hungarian Wines. Ignoring or sometimes deliberately neglecting some biographical facts may result in a misunderstanding and a subsequent distortion of Skovoroda's true thoughts and views. As a poet and writer, Skovoroda was by nature inclined to a partially mystical interpretation of events of personal character, and this was reflected afterwards in his poetic and prosaic translations.

As a logical result of the philosophical analysis of Skovoroda, Tchizhevsky (1934) proclaims him "the most interesting Slavonic pre-Romantic" and believes that the

tradition of the development of mysticism and Platonism undoubtedly leads to the philosophy of Romanticism. Underlining the strong and weak sides of his study, it should be mentioned that Tchizhevsky was the first to discover the relation of Skovoroda's works to the emblematic compilation of Wetstenium, *Symbola et Emblemata Selecta*. This became regarded as a universal key to the understanding of Skovoroda's symbols, whereby Tchizhevsky managed to explain every single drawing and engraving, making Skovoroda's thoughts more understandable for the modern reader. Today, *Symbola et Emblemata Selecta* is available for researchers in a complete electronic volume. The chief analytical shortcomings of Tchizhevsky, Bagaley, Ern and others before them lie in the researchers' lack of the entire reality of Skovoroda's biography. For the same reasons, these scholars were unable to shed light on important primary sources, such as *Hymni Sacri* of Muretus. Thus Tchizhevsky underestimated the role of German, or rather, Hungarian philosophy when referring to the subjective comments of Vernet in the memoirs, "The Lopansky Bridge—an Except from the Reminiscences of Kharkov". While in the Imperial Service in the Tokayan Gardens, Skovoroda more than once accompanied Court Commissar Vishnevsky to Sarospatak where Mihaly Szatmary Paksi II, David Sarkany and Istvan F. Banya were teaching at that time. They were famous Calvinist professors, convinced supporters of positive rationalism and followers of the Sarospatakian pedagogue Janos Csecsi Jr., who had combined the basic principles of the philosophy of Descartes with the theology of Coccejus in his work *Theologica Prophetica et Symbolica*. The students of these professors read Grotius, Spinoza, Leibniz, Rousseau and Kant with great enthusiasm, and studied the multivolume edition of a new French encyclopedia. Following the example of Csecsi, and with the help of rich Zemplenian sponsors, the future teachers and Protestant ministers regularly attended the universities of Franeker, Utrecht, Amsterdam, Halle, Heidelberg, Bern, Zurich and Geneva. The exchange of views with the Calvinists radically changed Skovoroda's spiritual world view. Despite the ideological predisposition of the Soviet critics Shinkaruk and Ivanyo, and their prejudice regarding Tchizhevsky, whom they accused of bourgeois nationalism and distortion of Skovoroda's anticlerical views, we can say that Tchizhevsky's work, *The Philosophy of G. S. Skovoroda* (1934), remains an essential source for modern researchers of this great eighteenth-century philosopher. Like a symbolic bridge, Skovoroda had connected Hungarian positive rationalism to Russian and Ukrainian Christian thinking.

As a founder of Russian and Ukrainian Christian philosophy, Skovoroda's influence on subsequent literary and philosophical thought is so enormous that it would need a separate study; this remains a great challenge to anyone who wishes to

research this unique talent of eighteenth-century world culture. A large number of literary scholars and philosophers have addressed this topic, including Snegiriov, Sreznevsky, Soloviov, Tolstoy, Bagaley, Stellecky, Verkhovets, Ern and Tchizhevsky. In Ern's (1912) opinion, the principal feature that inseparably connects Skovoroda to his spiritual followers is the development of his teaching of *logos* into the concept of *strannichestvo*⁷ which in its various artistic forms finds expression in the works of talented writers and poets, such as Pecherin, Dobrolyubov, Tolstoy, Gogol, Solovoyov, Dostoyevsky, Tyutchev. Similarly to Skovoroda, Pecherin, a poet, religious thinker, professor at Moscow University, monk of the Catholic Redemptorist Order in Ireland and one of the first dissidents deprived of Russian citizenship, becomes the prototype of Pechorin, the protagonist of Lermontov's psychological novel, *The Hero of Our Times*. Dobrolyubov, a pedagogue, literary critic and publicist with extensive European knowledge, openly condemns the state educational system for servile submissiveness, absolute obedience, the suppression of personal freedom and blind subservience as killing "the internal man". At the age of 83, to the great astonishment of the whole cultural world, which was no longer accustomed to such phenomena, the great novelist Tolstoy, unexpectedly left home and went to live among common people. In an endless search of true inspiration and spiritual oblivion, the satirist and folklorist Gogol hurriedly abandoned snow-covered Petersburg and departed for sunlit Rome. The philosopher, theologian and poet Soloviov, a distant maternal relative of Skovoroda, presented the Christian idea of Sophia as a universal soul symbolizing the eternal femininity in God and his design of the world. Dostoyevsky, a realistic writer whose death sentence was commuted to long years of hard labour and military service, appears to be of the same mind as Kant in the interpretation of spiritual beauty; like Skovoroda, he discusses internal morality. Tyutchev, a singer of nature and the forerunner of Russian symbolists, organically unites nineteenth-century poetry with the late baroque style of Skovoroda, whom he regards "the most interesting Slavonic pre-Romantic", as was also concluded by Tchizhevsky (1934, 208). In contrast to Western philosophical thinking, which for centuries had foregrounded "the external", Skovoroda skilfully revived the priority of "the internal", building up "his teaching of heart" on the ancient symbols and emblems borrowed from *Symbola et Emblemata Selecta*. His original Slavonic interiorism wins over the exteriorism of the rationalistic West, paving the way to Russian symbolism, the main principle of a new Eastern philosophy. As Ern aptly remarked more than a hundred years ago,

7 Pilgrimage (in Russian).

The comparisons could have been multiplied. But for any impartial reader, all the significance of the life work and thinking of Skovoroda should become already clear. Skovoroda stands at the very threshold of Russian thinking. He is the first to creatively begin what afterwards ingeniously grows, multiplies and blooms. The brightness and greatness of the subsequent should neither even slightly hide his humble but heroic figure nor deprive him of even a particle of the glory and recognition that befit him. Skovoroda has a specific delight in the primitive, the charms of connecting the ingenious to the naïve and chaste constraint of cultural forms, and this delight, as an inimitable one, will forever stay with him. (Ern 1912, 116–117)

Skovoroda's literary and philosophical works could be colourfully expressed by the following line of Ferenc Kölcsey, the author of the Hungarian national anthem: "You dripped the nectar from the vines of Tokay..." (Kölcsey 1975, 68). For Skovoroda, Hungary forever remained the "beloved Ungaria" (Skovoroda 1973, 1:279), and he confessed that he was "the son of that land" (125). Skovoroda's later creations play a fundamental role in the organic integrity of our approach, both on artistic and thematic levels, to the national literatures of Hungary, Russia and Ukraine.

Modern networks and means of communication provide easy access to the complete electronic editions of Skovoroda's literary and philosophical works. The two-volume collection (*Grigory Skovoroda, the Complete Collection of Works in Two Volumes. Kiev: The Scientific Thought, 1973*) is particularly recommended as containing archaic forms of the eighteenth-century Russian and Ukrainian languages, thus being an excellent basis for the linguistic analysis of the style of this unique poet, writer and philosopher. Skovoroda's original vocabulary abounds in lexical richness, using a great variety of words of Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Polish, Hungarian, English, German, French, Italian and Turkish origin; his works offer practical material for the students of modern Russian and Ukrainian etymology at today's European universities.

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Grigori Skovoroda motivatsiooni otsimas*Vadim Vozdvizhensky*

Märksõnad: *srodnost*, antiteetika, sümboolne tunnetus ja interpretatsioon, maailma dualism, *stran-nichestvo*, slaavi interiorism

Artikli eesmärgiks on selgitada konkreetsete ungari motiivide esinemist esimese vene ja ukraina kristliku filosoofi Grigori Savvitš Skovoroda (1722–1794) kirjanduslikes ja filosoofilistes teostes. Tema elu Ungari-perioodi on kõige vähem uuritud, sellepärast vajab see erilist tähelepanu, et teha selle ajajärgu vene ja ukraina kirjanduse kujunemise taustal kindlaks tema kirjutiste teemade valiku objektiivsed põhjused. Selle teemaga on varemgi tegeldud, kuid tähelepanu pole pööratud kohtadele ja ajaloolistele tingimustele, mis olid otseselt seotud Skovoroda keisrikoja teenistuses veedetud ajaga Ungaris, Austrias, Itaalias ja Poolas aastatel 1745–1750. Küllatki pikast möödalinud ajast ja arvukatest juba avaldatud teadusartiklitest hoolimata sunnib see andekas ja meisterlik kirjanik ikka ja jälle endast rääkima. Seda võib seletada nii ühendatud Euroopa sees kui ka mõlemal pool uusi poliitilisi piire toimivate kultuuridevaheliste protsessidega, mis mõjutavad positiivselt Venemaa, Ukraina ja Ungari vaheliste suhete arengu dünaamikat.

Tõmmates temaatilisi paralleele Skovoroda kirjutistega, tuleb rõhutada, et tema loomingut inspireerisid Balassi vaimne aed, Comeniuse visuaalne maailm, Muretuse (Marc Antoine Muret') sakraalsed laulud ja Wetsteniumi esoteerilised sümbolid, kus igavene tõde on peidus kõige nähtavaloleva taga. Tema loominguline pärand haarab endasse vene, ukraina ja ungari rahvuskultuuride parimad jooned, osutudes nii suurepäraseks eeskujuks tuleviku Euroopa ja kogu maailma kirjameestele. Teenides kindralmajor Višnevski juhtimise all Tokajs asuvas keiserlikus Ungari veinide komisjonis öukondliku asjaajajana, kirjutas Skovoroda ohtralt värvikaid tekste, elavalt peegeldades lihtsate ungarlaste igapäeva-elu, mis oli väga sarnane tema enda väikevene rahvuskultuuride omaga. Vene keisrinnade Jelizaveta ja Katariina II valitsusajal sai temast 17. sajandi geniaalse Tšehhi haridustegelase Comeniuse pansoofiilise õpetuse järgija. Võttes kokku Skovoroda viieaastase Ungaris viibimise tulemused, ei tohi jätta märkimata viljakat mõju, mida avaldas talle ungari kultuur ja vestlused paljude eri ühiskonnakihtide ja usulahkude esindajatega. Tänapäevast kõnepruuki kasutades võib öelda, et Skovoroda osutus esimeseks Vene Impeeriumi okkalisi radu tallavaks dissidendiks, kes ei soovinud sammu pidada sünge kirikliku diktatuuriga, vaid heitis oma sümboolse allegoorikaga kiriklikele tsensoritele avaliku väljakutse. Tema traktaadid, mis keelati kui poliitilise *samizdat*'i väljaanded, said ammendamatuks kristlike sümbolite ja ideede allikaks, inspireerides kümnete kunstnike ja kirjutajate entusiastlikku loomingut hoolimata nende rahvuslikust päritolust ja sotsiaalsest tagapõhjast.

Skovoroda kirjanduslikud ja filosoofilised teosed on traditsiooniliselt jagatud kolme suuremasse ossa: vaimne luuletsükkel „Jumalike laulude aed“, Aisopose traditsioonis proosakogumik „Harkovi valmid“ ja eksegeetilised traktaadid, dialoogid ning mõistujutud, kuhu kuuluvad ka Muretuse, Ovidiuse, Vergiliuse, Hosiuse, Cicero, Plutarchose, Terentiuse, Horatiuse ja Tertullianuse tõlgendused. Oluline on ära märkida ka tema erakirjavahetust, mis sisaldab 125 kirja. Tema pärandi käsitlemisel on olulisel kohal Kovalensky essee „Grigori Skovoroda elu“, mis aitab meil mõista ajaloosündmusi ja isikuid, kellega ta pikka aega suhtles. Kovalensky kõrvale asetub Pest-Budast pärit Harkovi Ülikooli filosoofiapro-

fessor Hess de Calve, kes tänu oma artiklile „Skovoroda – tänapäeva küünik“ on õigustatult väärt Skovoroda esimese Ungari biograafi tiitlit. Ajaloolaste Ratšinski ja Tardy uurimistöö arhiivides aitas täpsemalt mõista tegelikke põhjusi, miks kõrge kvaliteediline Tokaj Aszu oli sajandeid populaarne ja asendamatu vein vene aadlike peolaudadel. Sama tegi ka vene ajaloolase Ratšinski töö „Vene varustajad Tokajis 18. sajandil“, mis ilmus väljaandes „Russkii Vestnik“ 1875. a. Väikevenemaale tagasi pöördudes tõi Skovoroda kaasa väärtuslikku vaimutoitu, millest jätkus talle kuni elu lõpuni. Ta täiendas oma ladina, kreeka, saksa ja heebrea keele oskusi, mis tulid kasuks hilisemas õpetajatöös, ja õppis ära ka ungari keele. Lõpuks sai temast esimene vene dissident, kes oli vaimseks eeskujuks sellistele teisitimõtlevatele kirjameestele nagu Petšerin, Dostojevski, Tšernõševski, Dobroljubov, Solovjov, Balmont, Blok, Belõi, Gumiljov, Severjanin, Pasternak, Bulgakov, Tšizevski, Jessenin, Gorki, Solženitsõn ja teised. Tema eksegeetilised teosed „Loti naine“, „Iisraeli madu“ ja „Mao uputus“ ringlesid poliitilise *samizdat*’i väljaannetena Vene Impeeriumi okkalistel radadel kuni 1912. aastani. Ungari rahvushümn autor Ferenc Kólcsey olevat Skovorodale austust avaldades hüüatanud: „Sinust tilkus Tokaj viinapuude nektarit!“

Vadim Olegovich Vozdvizhensky – filosoofiadoktor, kauaaegne Grigory Skovoroda elu ja loomingu uurija alates ülikooliõpingutest Kiievis, millele järgnes töö võõrkeelte õpetajana Ungaris Sárospatakis ja Sátoraljaújhelys. Käsitleb oma loengutes ja artiklites Skovorodat regulaarselt nii Ungaris kui mujal. Tema akadeemiliste huvide hulka kuulub ka varasemate ja uuemate vene ja ungari luuletajate, näiteks Deržavini, Žukovski, Petõfi, Tjutševi, Severjanini loomingu tõlkimine.

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