

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

THE SYMBOLS OF H.S. SKOVORODA

A DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

by

Jaroslav R. Pinczuk

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**A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of  
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## ABSTRACT

The subject of this thesis deals with the essential nature and function of symbols in the life and thought of the Ukrainian philosopher-writer, Hryhorii Skovoroda.

Since much confusion and misunderstanding has always surrounded Skovoroda's philosophic and literary creativity, this dissertation's primary objective attempts to show that his thought can often be greatly simplified and more easily understood once he is approached symbolically, rather than by the traditional methods of literal interpretation.

The thesis is composed of three chapters and an appendix which contains a select number of illustrations and symbolic sketches which are directly related to the study.

In the first chapter, various interpretations concerning Skovoroda's life and works are discussed, followed by a critical examination of some existing problems associated with the current state of research on Skovoroda as a whole. Chapter two sketches the evolution and subsequent influence of symbols on the philosopher with special emphasis directed toward the purpose of his philosophic terminology, graphic symbols, and stylistic method of expression. Finally, the nature and function of Skovoroda's symbolic images and terminology is carefully described and analysed as they are respectively related to some of the more important themes found within the broad spectrum of his metaphysical thought.

On the basis of these investigations, it was found that substantial evidence conclusively supports the contention that the philosophy of Skovoroda is greatly simplified and more easily comprehended whenever he is approached from the symbolic point of view and in accordance with his personal method of expression, namely, by means of his philosophic termin-

ology.

Although the study of symbols in Skovoroda has by no means been exhausted, this thesis is an attempt to take a small step forward in deepening and expanding existing research on this topic.



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## CHAPTER ONE

### SKOVORODA, A PHILOSOPHER OF MISUNDERSTANDING

#### Introduction

Most scholars of Slavic thought are generally agreed that the distinguished Ukrainian philosopher-writer of the eighteenth century, Hryhorii Skovoroda is basically an unknown entity in world philosophical circles.

In 1972, on the occasion of the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth, many important scholarly seminars and publications re-focussed world-wide academic interest on his life and works, which had gradually declined to a state of intellectual dormancy. It was at one of these commemorative seminars held in New York City that J. B. Rudnyc'kyj underscored the existence of what he termed as "a conspiracy of silence" <sup>1</sup> against Skovoroda which continued to obscure him from the ranks of the world's most noted philosophers. Rudnyc'kyj contended that,

" . . . it should be stressed that unlike his great contemporaries, J. J. Rousseau, Denis Diderot, Francois Marie Voltaire, Immanuel Kant, and others, Skovoroda is mostly unknown to basic Western reference works (e. g. "Encyclopedia Britanica", "Americana", "Grolier", "Chamber's", etc.) or to most compendia of the history of world philosophy." <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> J. B. Rudnyc'kyj, "Tribute to Skovoroda". The Ukrainian Review (London, The Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain, Ltd, 1973), Summer edition, Vol. XX, No. 2, p. 17. The above article is the text of a paper, delivered by Prof. J. B. Rudnyc'kyj at the annual meeting of the American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages (AATSEEL) in New York, Dec. 29, 1972, closing Skovoroda celebrations in America in 1972. Prof. Rudnyc'kyj is Vice-President of the Association.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

In 1933 Dmytro Chyzhevs'kyi stated in the preface to his Fil'osofia H. S. Skovorody that although Skovoroda's biography was well known in literature according to existing sources, there was little unanimity amongst scholars regarding his literary or philosophic works.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, besides one or two rare exceptions<sup>2</sup> any attempt to systematically analyze the works of Skovoroda was, for some reason, avoided.<sup>3</sup>

Chyzhevs'kyi noted that no other philosopher in the world has been so variously and diametrically interpreted as Skovoroda. For example, of the 250 studies devoted to Skovoroda by 1933, Chyzhevs'kyi maintained that of these, no less than 250 variant viewpoints were expressed regarding that philosopher's influence in past, present and future facets of Ukrainian cultural life.<sup>4</sup>

The scope and object of this essay is to approach Skovoroda's creative works from the standpoint of his symbolic images which appear to play a major role in the simplification of his entire metaphysical thought. Along with this symbolic approach, Skovoroda will be examined within the historical context of his particular epoch and according to his personal method of expression, namely, by means of his symbolic terminology.

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<sup>1</sup> Dmytro Chyzhevs'kyi, Fil'osofia H. S. Skovorody (Varshava, Pratsi Ukrain's'koho Naukovoho Instytutu, 1934), p. 3. Hereafter cited as, Chyzhevs'kyi, Fil'osofia, p.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 3. Chyzhevs'kyi cites V. Ern's Hryhorii Savvykh Skovoroda, Zhyzn' i Uchenie (Moskva, 1912) as the first genuine attempt to analyze the works of Skovoroda.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

## REASONS FOR SKOVORODA'S OBSCURITY

Soon after his death in 1794, Skovoroda's works sustained severe "censorship oppression" while a number of his other manuscripts were "not permitted to be printed".<sup>1</sup> This would explain why so few of Skovoroda's works were known in the nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup> Vladimir Ern suggests that the Ukrainian philosopher actually "guarded his manuscripts from his literary enemies" by specially preserving them for his closest friends.<sup>3</sup>

Since few of his works were approved for publication by the strict censors, no Skovorodaic school of thought was able to emerge immediately after his death to preserve his rich legacy for future generations.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, "just as in his lifetime he had had more admirers than disciples, so after his death there were many who were fascinated by his personality and would honour his memory, but few who showed an interest in his works and became absorbed in his ideas."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> D. Bahalii, Ukrains'kyi mandrovanyi filosof Hr. Sav. Skovoroda (Kharkiv, 1926), p. 201. Quoted after Domet Olianchyn, "Tvory Hr. Skovorody i Moskovs'ka Tsenzura", Nasha Kul'tura (Zhovten', 1936), Kn. 10, p. 691. See Appendix, Table #1 which lists an example of a censored page from Skovoroda's "Alfavyt ili bukvar' myra".

<sup>2</sup> Olianchyn, op. cit., p. 694.

<sup>3</sup> Ern, op. cit., pp. 170-171.

<sup>4</sup> John-Paul Himka, "H. S. Skovoroda: His Place in Intellectual Tradition", Minutes of the Seminar in Ukrainian Studies held at Harvard University during the Academic Year 1971-1972. Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1971-1972, p. 83.

<sup>5</sup> Ivan Dziuba, "Ivan Dziuba on Hryhorii Skovoroda", The Ukrainian Review, (London, The Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain, Ltd., 1966), Autumn edition, Vol. XIII, No. 3, p. 67. (Translation of an essay by Dziuba, published December 4, 1962 in Literaturna Ukraina).

Once the works of Skovoroda began to gradually infiltrate into the world, a major obstacle that was to hinder their wide acceptance soon became apparent. In the early nineteenth century, Ukrainian or Russian philosophic terminology was almost nonexistent and many of the unique expressive terms which Skovoroda coined in his literary and philosophic works were not readily understood and therefore not retained in the subsequent development of those particular disciplines.<sup>1</sup> This same problem, as far as current Skovorodian studies are concerned, is still evident today with the absence of appropriate philosophic dictionaries or scholarly lexicons that would explain the various philosophic symbols and word structures employed by that philosopher in his works.

In a report entitled, "H. S. Skovoroda: His Place in Intellectual Tradition" delivered by John-Paul Himka at Harvard University in 1972, five "obstacles" were described which he considered to have "long impeded an assessment of Skovoroda's place in intellectual tradition". These may be summarized as follows: Skovoroda's obscure style, the varied interpretations of his philosophy, outright falsifications of his texts, inadequate biographical/archival research and inadequate editions of Skovoroda's works themselves.<sup>2</sup>

Rudnyc'kyj suggests that "the lack of comparative philosophical

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<sup>1</sup> George L. Kline, "Philosophy", Dictionary of Russian Literature (Westport, Connecticut, Greenwood Press, 1971), Edited by William E. Har-kins, p. 289. (Originally published in 1956 by the Philosophical Library, New York).

<sup>2</sup> Himka, op. cit., p. 83.

studies of Skovoroda" must be seriously considered as another factor responsible for that philosopher-writer's obscurity in world recognition:

"Except for D. Čyževskij's and J. Mirčuk's efforts to link him with German mystics, and his Soviet Russian lineage "a priori" from M. V. Lomonosov, no serious study has been undertaken to compare Skovoroda to Descartes (with whom he shares some characteristics in outlook), to Rousseau (with regard to his 'encyclopedism'), to Voltaire (as far as his 'enlightenment' is concerned), or even to the classical philosophers, in particular Stoics (Zeno, Seneca, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius) and idealists (Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle). On the other hand, the study of Skovoroda's relation to freemasonry and the sectarian movements (including Canadian "douxobors") is in a cradle stage."

According to Taras Zakydalsky's conjecture concerning "Skovoroda's Philosophy of Man" an "inadequate analysis of the key concepts of his theory of man has led to confusion and even inconsistency in some studies dealing with Skovoroda". <sup>2</sup>

From the Soviet viewpoint, P. M. Popov describes a simple three point outline in an effort to explain Skovoroda's secondary role in world philosophy: Skovoroda's work is itself contradictory; Skovoroda did not leave a clear, systematized exposition of his views; not all sides of his life, work, and Weltanschauung have been properly investigated. <sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Rudnyc'kyi, op. cit., pp. 16-17.

<sup>2</sup> Zakydalsky, "Skovoroda's Philosophy of Man", Minutes of the Seminar in Ukrainian Studies held at Harvard University, 1971-1972, op. cit., p. 84. <sup>3</sup>

P. M. Popov, Hryhorii Skovoroda. Literaturnyi Portret (Kyiv, "Dni-pro", 1969), p. 40.

Although other valid reasons could be added to the above-mentioned summary to show why Skovoroda is still little known in the intellectual world, the given information leads one to the inevitable conclusion that the philosophy of Skovoroda has never really been properly understood in order that it might be justly evaluated and universally appreciated. Unfortunately, whenever any serious attempt has been made to further the studies of Skovoroda without approaching him through his symbols and philosophic terminology, it appears as if he has, more often than not, been more confused and misunderstood than before.

A brief survey of some of the many varying interpretations found in studies devoted to Skovorodian topics will clearly illustrate the validity of such a view.

#### VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS

In a recent in depth biographical study on Skovoroda made by the Soviet Ukrainian scholar Leonid Makhnovets', it was stated that in 1972 there were approximately 1,442 studies published on Skovorodian topics.<sup>1</sup> Since this figure would probably include only the known Soviet publications, it is enough to justify the assumption that there has been a remarkable resurgence of interest in Skovoroda in recent years.

These studies, however, have not always served to bring the works of that philosopher into clearer focus. Many, if not most of them, have seriously fractured and distorted his views by their unfounded and contradictory conceptions and assertions.

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Leonid Makhnovets', Hryhorii Skovoroda. Biohrafiia (Kyiv, "Naukova dumka", 1972), p. 3.

An attempt will be made to summarize in limited detail some of the more important differing viewpoints currently held regarding the nature and substance of Skovoroda's literary and philosophic works. This should convincingly substantiate the suggested premise that Skovoroda has, and remains to be generally misunderstood today, because his creative works and mode of self expression have been approached literally and haphazardly leading to confused conclusions.

In the first place, some Russian and Western scholars have, according to existent political tendencies, chosen to consider Skovoroda as "a Russian philosopher" rather than a philosopher-writer of Ukrainian origin. According to V. V. Zenkovsky "Gregory Savvich Skovoroda (1722-94) is noteworthy as the first Russian philosopher in the strict sense of the word" <sup>1</sup> having somehow experienced national metamorphosis:

"Although Skovoroda's development was closely connected with the ecclesiastical life of the Ukraine, he went far beyond its boundaries and was essentially in harmony with the Russian spiritual life. He is universally Russian in importance and occupies a legitimate place in the history of Russian philosophy." <sup>2</sup>

Earlier in his introduction to Skovoroda, however, Zenkovsky apparently contradicts himself when he says, "Skovoroda would be incomprehensible taken out of historical perspective, apart from the philosophic culture which developed in South Russia (Ukraine, JRP) around the Kiev Academy." <sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> V. V. Zenkovsky, A History of Russian Philosophy (New York, Columbia University Press, 1953), trans. by George L. Kline, 2 Vols., I, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 53.



Similarly, Joseph T. Fuhrmann begins his essay on "The First Russian Philosopher's Search for the Kingdom of God" by introducing Skovoroda as "a Ukrainian-Russian mystic and wanderer of the eighteenth century" <sup>1</sup>, and explains that "this is no reflection upon Skovoroda himself, merely a commentary upon the extent to which he has been appreciated by students of Russian intellectual history in the Soviet Union and abroad." <sup>2</sup> That Fuhrmann considers Skovoroda as "Russian" rather than "Ukrainian" is illustrated by such statements as "Skovoroda stands forth as the first true Russian philosopher" <sup>3</sup> and, " . . . Skovoroda, the most learned Russian of the period". <sup>4</sup>

In an apparent effort to justify these assertions, Fuhrmann attempts to explain his abovementioned views in the following manner:

"It is true, of course, that the "Russian" philosopher Skovoroda was actually Ukrainian by birth, residence, and immediate area of influence. By the late eighteenth century, however, the integration of the Ukraine into the cultural life of the Russian empire had gone so far that Skovoroda himself chose to write in Russian, with numerous letters in Latin and Greek, and this placed him, ultimately, within the overall framework of Russian history and culture. Moreover, although Skovoroda loved the Ukraine as his home, I find in him few elements of Ukrainian "nationalism", nor, for that matter, <sup>5</sup> dissatisfaction in being a "Russian subject".

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph T. Fuhrmann, "The First Russian Philosopher's Search for the Kingdom of God", Essays on Russian Intellectual History (Austin, Texas, University of Texas Press, 1971), Edited by Leon Borden Blair, p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 33-34.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 38.

Richard Hantula of Harvard University, in a reference to Fuhrmann's essay, makes some key observations regarding the latter's attitude toward the use of Ukrainian by Skovoroda which is worthy of mention at this point:

"Nowhere do we find a reference to a work in Ukrainian, which is to say that Fuhrmann has apparently not read not only the large works of Cyzevs'kyj and Bahaliij, but also many smaller but useful articles or monographs. Perhaps this is why he does not exhibit a very critical use of sources in describing Skovoroda's life. His so-called "Bibliographical Essay" fails to mention the invaluable Biobibliohrafiia of 1968 (Xarkiv). He does of course use the 1961 edition of Tvory, which he criticizes: "Unfortunately its lengthy "Introduction" and notes . . . , as well as translations of Skovoroda's many letters written in Latin and Greek, are given only in Ukrainian, which means that these volumes will do remarkably little to elevate Skovoroda to something higher than the status of a provincial Ukrainian thinker." <sup>1</sup>

Many other similar quotations could be cited almost indefinitely showing how Skovoroda is often cast in the role of an "eighteenth century Russian" <sup>2</sup> rather than as a bona fide representative of Ukrainian cultural life.

M. I. Kovalens'kyi <sup>3</sup>, Skovoroda's first biographer, student, follower, and intimate friend described him as being born in 1722 in Chernuxy, a small Ukrainian village located between Kyiv and Kharkiv, in the Liuben-

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<sup>1</sup> P. M. Popov, Hryhorii Skovoroda. Literaturnyi portret (Kyiv, "Dni-pro", 1969), reviewed by Richard Hantula in Recenzija, Spring 1972 edition, Vol. II, No. 2, p. 43.

<sup>2</sup> Ern, op. cit., p. 48.

<sup>3</sup> Comprehensive archival research by Leonid Makhnovets' has revealed that Skovoroda's biographer was known as "Kovalens'kyi" rather than "Kovalins'kyi" as often used to date. See Makhnovets', op. cit., p. 7, ff.

skii region.<sup>1</sup> Ivan Franko spoke of Skovoroda as "probably the greatest figure in the spiritual circles of Ukraine in the eighteenth century".<sup>2</sup> After a brief sojourn in the West and a short visit to Moscow, Skovoroda remained within the borders of Ukraine until his death.<sup>3</sup> Once, when Catherine the Great invited him to settle in the intellectual milieu of St. Petersburg, Skovoroda replied to the emissary bearing this proposal: "Tell our little mother (matushka) the tsarina, that I will not abandon my homeland (the Ukraine). My reed pipe and sheep are dearer to me than a sovereign's crown".<sup>4</sup>

Most of the well known Ukrainian and Russian scholars describe Skovoroda as "a distinguished Ukrainian philosopher-writer of the eighteenth century"<sup>5</sup>, or "a great Ukrainian philosopher"<sup>6</sup>, or even more patriotically as "a great son of the Ukrainian nation".<sup>7</sup>

Often, a combination of such descriptive terminology is used in a context that definitely portrays Skovoroda as being a fundamentally Ukrainian philosopher. Typical of this approach is the characterization made by Makhnovets' who represents the traditional Soviet-Ukrainian interpretation:

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<sup>1</sup> D. I. Bilets'kyi (ed.), Hryhorii Skovoroda: Tvory v Dvokh Tomakh, Kyiv, 1961, II, p. 488. Hereafter cited as Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, Vol. p.

<sup>2</sup> Ivan Franko, "Bibliohrafiia", Zapysky naukovoho tovarystva im. T. H. Shevchenka (L'viv, 1895), T. v, I, p. 79.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 80.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted after Joseph T. Fuhrmann, op. cit., p. 44. Text translated by Fuhrmann.

<sup>5</sup> Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, I, p. XI.

<sup>6</sup> Grigorii Skovoroda, Sochineniia v dvukh tomakh (Moskva, "Mysl'", 1973), I, p. 5.

<sup>7</sup> Istoriia Ukrain's'koi Literatury u vos'my tomakh (Kyiv, 1967), II. p. 110.

"Мислитель філософ, художник слова, педагог, музикакомпозитор Григорій Савич Сковорода належить до найвизначніших постатей в історії українського народу".

Dr. Vasyl Lev's essay on "Hryhoriy Skovoroda, A Ukrainian Philosopher" may well be summarized by the statement he made concerning Skovoroda's contributions to Ukrainian cultural life in that "he awakened in them a deep love for Ukraine".<sup>2</sup> Dr. Lev has noted that "In Ukraine, the Russian regime considers him (Skovoroda, JRP) a Russian as well as a Ukrainian philosopher and poet simply because he spent some time in Russia and wrote in literary baroque language, slightly influenced by the then official language".<sup>3</sup>

According to Ivan Dziuba, a noted contemporary literary critic in Ukraine, "Hryhory Skovoroda was no provincial philosophizing eccentric, but a profound and original thinker, a new and bold pioneer of human thought".<sup>4</sup> Dziuba goes on to describe Skovoroda as "a specifically Ukrainian philosopher" who may be readily compared to Shevchenko:

"What the two have in common is the truly Ukrainian conception of truth and conscience as immutable human principles. These principles are echoed in the popular philosophy of Ukraine, in Ukrainian folklore: inner stubbornness and rebellious attitude, protest against the flouting of human dignity, disdain for the trivial and superficial, and, finally, the hard struggle of the soul in pursuit of the genuine and hidden".<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Makhnovets', op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Vasyl Lev, "Hryhoriy Skovoroda: A Ukrainian Philosopher" The Ukrainian Review, op. cit., p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Lev, op. cit., p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Dziuba, op. cit., p. 68.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

These views reflect those of I. Mirchuk who insisted that the personality and creative works of Skovoroda featured and depicted those unique characteristic elements of the Ukrainian people of his day. This was a perfectly natural phenomenon because every creative writer is, in a very real sense, a child of his own epoch and social environment in which he was reared.<sup>1</sup> It is precisely in this Ukrainian national and cultural context that Skovoroda must always be studied:

"He cannot, in fact, be understood outside that historical succession of national figures and personalities like Ivan Vyshensky, the controversialists of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Melchisedek Znachko-Yavorsky, the Cossack chroniclers, the Haydamaks, the fighters against the policy of the empresses Elisabeth and Catherine and of tsar Peter I, a policy which sought to destroy the distinctness of Ukraine (" . . . so that there be no dissimilarity)".<sup>2</sup>

From the evidence presented thus far it is obvious that should Skovoroda be approached and studied in any other national or cultural context than his own Ukrainian heritage, his philosophy and meaning will never be properly understood or appreciated:

"Only in this context and in the context of Ukrainian national philosophy and psychology can Skovoroda be grasped. For a full understanding of his work it is equally necessary to keep in mind the many important analogous examples in history of how the human mind and human conscience have withstood the pressures of a treacherous epoch".<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I. Mirchuk, H. S. Skovoroda (Zamitky do istorii ukrains'koi kul'tury, Pratsi Ukrains'koho Istorychno-Filolohychnoho Tovarystva v Prazi (Praha, 1926), Vol. I, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Dziuba, op. cit., p. 69.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

It is significant that P. M. Popov, who generally reflects the traditional Soviet interpretation of Skovoroda, supports this point of view by stating that Skovoroda must be evaluated historically as a Ukrainian national ("narodnyi") philosopher-writer whose thoughts and works are rooted deeply in the culture from which he evolved:

"Щоб правильно оцінити спадщину Сковороди і визначити її місце в процесі розвитку філософії та літератури XVIII ст., треба підійти до них і с т о р и ч н о, не відривати філософа від його епохи, тобто розглядати його з усіма сильними і слабкими сторонами, враховуючи, що він, як і всякий мислитель, письменник, історичний діяч, був сином своєї епохи, виразником свого середовища".<sup>1</sup>

Finally, the well-known Soviet scholar, A. M. Nizhenets<sup>1</sup> has observed that the identity of Skovoroda has been permanently engraved upon his tombstone which reads, "Hryhorii Savych Skovoroda, Ukrainian Philosopher, Born in 1722, Died October 29, 1794. 'The World Was After Me, But Never Trapped Me'".<sup>2</sup>

Not only has Skovoroda been described as a "Russian philosopher" but many of those who have studied his works claim that he wrote almost exclusively in the "Russian language." This difference of opinion has often given rise to many heated debates and discussions.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>

Popov, op. cit., p. 40.

<sup>2</sup>

A. M. Nizhenets', G. S. Skovoroda: Memorable Places in the Kharkov Region (Kharkov, "Prapor", 1969), p. 61. See Appendix, Figure #2 for a photograph of Skovoroda's tombstone depicting the epitaph described above by Nizhenets'.

<sup>3</sup>

Hantula, "Skovoroda in Subsequent Literature" Minutes of the Seminar in Ukrainian Studies held at Harvard University, op. cit., p. 86.

Fuhrmann, for instance, seriously doubts that Skovoroda ever wrote in Ukrainian, "not even in letters to fellow Ukrainians" <sup>1</sup>, while James M. Edie asserts he wrote exclusively in the so-called "Russian idiom" of his time and milieu. <sup>2</sup> Still others, such as Iavors'kyi and to some extent Tovkachevs'kyi, consider Skovoroda as an "internationalist" who created an alleged "linguistic dialect" from the existent Russian, Ukrainian and Old Church Slavic languages for easier communication between residents and strangers alike. <sup>3</sup>

That some found it "difficult" to understand the language used by Skovoroda in his literary and philosophic works is further illustrated by P. Zhytets'kyi who described the Ukrainian philosopher's terminology as "chaotic":

"Не легко іноді розібратися в цьому хаосі слів, то відмінних за значенням і походженням, то подібних за значенням, але відмінних за походженням . . . Підкоряючись різноманітним впливам мови, то книжної, то розмовної, то міської, то сільської, він ніби втратив саме відчуття її . . ." <sup>4</sup>

Taras Shevchenko, who at one time had underestimated Skovoroda's mode of expression, stated that the language of Skovoroda had precluded him from becoming a great and national poet. <sup>5</sup> Similarly, Ivan Franko

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<sup>1</sup> Fuhrmann, op. cit., p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> James M. Edie et al., eds. and trans., Russian Philosophy (Chicago, Quadrangle Books, 1965), p. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Mirchuk, op. cit., p. 30.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted after Borys Derkach, "Hryhorii Skovoroda - Pys'mennyk", Radians'ke Literaturoznavstvo (Kyiv, "Naukova Dumka", 1971), II, p. 69.

<sup>5</sup> Derkach, op. cit., p. 69.

observed that Skovoroda wrote his verses and songs in a "rather awkward bookish language" with an "unusually crimped and disturbing style".<sup>1</sup> Derkach is quick to point out, however, that the views expressed by Shevchenko and Franko were later proven to be unfounded when the language and style of Skovoroda was finally studied against the historical context in which he lived and created his works.<sup>2</sup>

Dziuba conceded that, although Skovoroda's linguistic method of expression was somewhat "different" from the contemporary Ukrainian literary language, its basic style and structure was nonetheless "deeply rooted in the national soil" of Ukrainian culture:

"... it is said that the somewhat unwieldy and rather artificial language of Skovoroda makes it hard to read his works. Up to a point this may be so. But it is quite easy to get accustomed to his language. One must appreciate the difficulty of his task, since he had first to coin new words for a philosophical vocabulary in Ukrainian. Nevertheless, and despite the use of an uncommon vocabulary, Skovoroda's language is - in its structure, rhythm, spirit and intonation, not to mention its imagery - the language of Ukraine, deeply rooted in the national soil".<sup>3</sup>

A similar view has been expressed by the editors of the 1961 edition of Skovoroda's philosophic and literary works:

"Г. С. Сковорода писав свої твори складною мовою, що має характер суміші традиційної церковнослов'янської, старокнижної української і російської мов того часу та живої розмовної української мови... Українізм є органічним елементом мови Сковороди, який пронизує всі його твори і виявляється у всіх мовних засобах викладу його думок і почуттів".<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Derkach, op. cit., p. 69.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Dziuba, op. cit., p. 70.

<sup>4</sup> Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, I, p. XXXV.



According to V. Chaplenko the so-called "High Slavonic literary language" current during Skovoroda's time (i.e. consisting of Ukrainian, Church Slavic, and Russian elements), which Skovoroda used, resulted from the political and cultural turbulence that existed in Ukraine in the second half of the eighteenth century:

"Це був час ліквідації політичної автономії центральних українських земель - Гетьманщини, час затрати попередньої української культурної традиції та включання тодішньої української творчої інтелігенції в усеімперське культурне життя, фактично російське /"велико-російське"/".<sup>1</sup>

This internal national conflict had tragic consequences for the future development of the living Ukrainian language as it came into increasing conflict with the dominant Church Slavic and Russian literary languages:

"Цей трагізм був у тому, що, з одного боку, над українським культурним життям ще й далі тяжіла як історичне прокляття чужа своїм походженням церковнослов'янська мова, що не допускала до вжитку в культурних функціях живої, властивої української мови, а з другого - централізація культурного процесу в Російській імперії призводила до занехання й цієї мови, сяк-так усе таки пристосованої внаслідок довготривалого попереднього вжитку до національно-культурних потреб, а натомість накидала російський варіант тієї ж таки церковнослов'янської мови. Це все створило, в цей перехідний період - в одному напрямі до повної русифікації вживаної літературної мови, а в другому - до зародження нової української літературної мови . . ."

<sup>1</sup>

V. Chaplenko, "Movna Pozytyisia i Mova Hryhoriia Skovorody", Vyzvol'nyi Shliakh (London, "Ukr. vyd. spilka", 1963), p. 650.

<sup>2</sup>

Chaplenko, op. cit., p. 651.

It's interesting to note that Skovoroda often intentionally differentiated between his use of "Ukrainian" and "Russian" terminology <sup>1</sup>, but for the most part his basic communication with the Ukrainian population was in Ukrainian <sup>2</sup>, and not Russian. There are numerous instances where Skovoroda employed the living Ukrainian language in his songs and tales as exemplified by his popular verse, "Oi ty, ptychko zholtoboko":

"Ой ти, птичко, жолтобоко,  
Не клади гнізда високо!  
Клади на зеленій травці,  
На молоденькій муравці.  
.....  
Стоит явор над горою,  
Все кивает головою.  
Буйні вѣтри повѣвають,  
Руки явору ламають". <sup>3</sup>

Definite basic Ukrainian elements appear in all the phonetical, morphological, syntactical, lexical, and phraseological aspects, including the linguistic styles of Skovoroda <sup>4</sup>, as illustrated in the introductory notes in the 1961 edition of Skovoroda's works. <sup>5</sup> It was not long before the "complicated bookish language" of Skovoroda evolved into the modern Ukrainian literary language:

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<sup>1</sup> Chaplenko, op. cit., p. 652.

<sup>2</sup> Derkach, op. cit., p. 69.

<sup>3</sup> Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, II, p. 32.

<sup>4</sup> Popov, op. cit., p. 67.

<sup>5</sup> Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, I, pp. XXXV-XXXVII. For a more comprehensive treatment of this subject see, V. Chaplenko, "Movna Pozysia i Mova Hryhorii Skovorody", Vyzvol'nyi Shliakh, op. cit., pp. 649-671; and P. A. Morgun, "Mistse H. S. Skovorody v Istorii Rozvytku Ukrain's'koi Literaturnoi Movy", O. O. Potebnia i Deiakii Pytannia Suchasnoi Slavistyky (Kharkiv, Vydavnytstvo Kharkivs'koho Universytetu, 1962), pp. 98-116.

"Будучи одним з останніх проявів попередньої старокнижної мовної традиції, яка закінчувалась у XVIII ст., мова Сковороди водночас містить у собі і зародки нової літературної мови на народній основі. В світлі цієї тенденції Сковороду можна вважати в історії української літературної мови одним з попередників І. Котляревського".<sup>1</sup>

Chyzhevs'kyi's summation of the nature of Skovoroda's linguistic style is brief and to the point when he says,

"... мова Сковороди не була на тодішній Україні чужа мова, таксама, як не був чужий і його літературний стиль... і мова Сковороди, й його літературний стиль не мають із мовою та літературним стилем сучасної йому російської літератури нічого спільного".<sup>2</sup>

On the basis of the above, it becomes clearly evident that Skovoroda was unquestionably a Ukrainian philosopher who expressed himself in the language of his own people, namely, the Ukrainian language.

Not only has Skovoroda been misunderstood from the all-important standpoint of nationality and use of language as a means of creative expression, but there has been certain controversy in whether or not he should be spoken of as a philosopher in the specific implication of that term. Mirchuk expresses that contentious point of view in this way:

"Сковорода це не філософ західно-європейської міри... Як схочемо шукати Сковороди як філософа в його писаннях,

1

Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, I, p. XXXVII.

2

Dm. Chyzhevs'kyi, "Ukr. Literaturnyi barok", Pratsi Ukr. - Ist. Filh. T-va v Prazi, No. II, Vol. IV, (Praha, 1942), p. 181.

то ми ніколи не відшукаємо його, бо літературна спадщина так небогата кількістю і неоригінальна формою, що сміло можна сказати, що на тій основі не можна його признати філософом в повнім розумінні того слова. Окрім цього головні його думки розкинені у його творах без найменшого порядку, так що завданням критика являється щойно певна системізація цих думок".

Although Mirchuk concedes that Skovoroda could be described as "the first Ukrainian philosopher in general" <sup>2</sup>, he nevertheless insists that Skovoroda's philosophy is "unsystematic" and "superficial":

"Хоча Сковорода залишив по собі літературну спадщину, то мимо того цілком оправдано називає його Кудринський "філософом без систем", бо жадної системи він нам не дав ані навіть не показав нам нових методів наукової праці. Щоб мати поняття про Сковороду, досить прочитати один його твір, всі другі його твори повторяють "mutatis mutandis" ті самі думки, не дають нам нічого нового. Незвичайна простора філософії Сковороди, неможливість підійти до неї зі звичайним масштабом критики робить її тяжкою для викладу і тому у всіх давнійших працях про Сковороду . . . бачимо з філософічного боку звичайно доволі поверховне трактування справи". <sup>3</sup>

Gustav Shpet, who according to Zenkovsky "had written an excellent study on the history of Russian philosophy in general", arrogantly denied that Skovoroda was a philosopher, asserting that "in Skovoroda's works I find an extremely small amount of philosophy". <sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mirchuk, op. cit., p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted after Zenkovsky, op. cit., p. 55. See Gustav Shpet, Ocherk razvitiia russkoi filosofii (Petrograd, 1922), pp. 69-70, 70, 74.

Over against these negative views is the positive contention expressed by Ivan Dziuba who declared that "Skovoroda was first and foremost a philosopher":

"Even as a poet he was at his best in his philosophical-theological works. Yet he is a philosopher of a singular kind, who is important not so much for working out generally valid systems and concepts, but for his poetic-psychological comprehensions of the human soul, although he by no means neglected questions of a universal nature."<sup>1</sup>

It has already been seen that Chyzhevs'kyi considers Skovoroda as "the first representative of Ukrainian philosophy" whose "life was his philosophy, and whose philosophy was his life."<sup>2</sup> This summation is generally held by most students of Skovoroda, yet there is a valid explanation for his "unsystematic" approach, as well as his "practical" exemplification of his singular philosophic thought.

In the first place, it should be remembered that Skovoroda's philosophy was not originally designed or refined for publication in a systematic form, nor was it primarily intended for wide readership as explained by Morgun in the following quotation:

"До речі сказати, що автор писав свої твори не спеціально для опублікування, а здебільшого присвячував їх приятелям - знайомим і не знайомим. Твори Г. Сковороди в більшості переписувались його учнями та приятелями і пересилалися на різні адреси. Рідше посилалися самі автографи. Ці обставини зумовлювали до певної міри мовностилістичну спрямованість та правопис творів".<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Dziuba, op. cit., p. 67.

<sup>2</sup> Chyzhevs'kyi, Narysy z Istorii Filosofii na Ukraini (Praha, Ukrain's'kyi Hromads'kyi Vydavnychy Fond, 1931), pp. 35, 38. Hereafter cited as, Chyzhevs'kyi, Narysy, p.

<sup>3</sup> Morgun, op. cit., p. 113.

Furthermore, Skovoroda himself was not overly concerned about the traditional concepts of philosophy (such as "theoretical" or "cognitive" practices) as he was about the deep emotional and volitional nature of the human soul - the "heart" of man. For example, when asked for his personal definition on the meaning of "philosophy", Skovoroda replied in this way:

"The chief end of human life, the head or governor of a man's deeds is his spirit, mind or heart. Everyone pursues an end in life, but not everyone pursues the chief end, that is, not everyone is occupied with life's belly, that is, he directs all of his deeds to giving life to his belly; another to the eyes, another to the hair, another to the legs and other limbs, still another to fine clothing and such soulless things. Philosophy, or the love of wisdom, directs the whole circle of its deeds to a single end, in order to give life to the spirit, nobility to the heart, radiance to the mind, as to the head or governor of all things. When a man's spirit is cheerful, when his mind is tranquil, his heart at peace, then everything is radiant, happy, and blessed. Such is philosophy. ." <sup>1</sup>

The Ukrainian philosopher had a special love for world philosophy which invariably had a profound impact upon his future thought:

"Все своє свідоме життя звертався Сковорода до спадщини античної філософії та літератури. В його творах зустрічаються часті посилення на античні твори та висловлювання старогрецьких і римських мислителів та поетів, таких, як Солон, Платон, Арістотель, Сократ, Піфагор, Гораций, Цицерон, Сенека, Плутарх та багатьох інших. Як письменник Сковорода перекладав твори Евріпіда, Горация, Овідія, обробляв байкові сюжети Езопа.

1

V. Bonch-Bruevich (ed.), Materiialy k Istorii i Izucheniiu Russkago Sektantstva i Staroobriadchestva, Part 5, Sobranie Sochinenii H. S. Skovorody (St. Petersburg, 1912), p. 32. Hereafter cited as, Bonch-Bruevich, p. Text quoted after the translation of George L. Kline, Edie, op. cit., pp. 22-23.

Йому належать переклади філософських творів Плутарха та Ціцерона. Зацікавленість Сковороди спадщиною античних мислителів відбилася на змісті його власної філософії".<sup>1</sup>

Besides having an excellent knowledge of the above-mentioned ancient Greek and Roman philosophers, Chyzhevs'kyi's thesis shows that Skovoroda obviously had a good working knowledge of the so-called "German mystics", the philosophers of the Middle Ages and the Early Church Fathers.<sup>2</sup>

As a student of philosophy and theology at the Kievan Academy<sup>3</sup>, who was ranked among the top students in his class<sup>4</sup>, Skovoroda was destined to become one of the most enlightened individuals of his era.<sup>5</sup> He was, in fact, often referred to as the "Ukrainian Socrates"<sup>6</sup> and Iurii Lavrinenko cites a quotation from V. Karazyn (a contemporary of Skovoroda) who thought of him as a Ukrainian Pythagoras, Origen and Leibnitz. In a letter to his publisher, Molodyk, Karazyn wrote,

"Тоді, можливо, напишу я біографію нашого мудреця, недостатньо в різних журналах подану, та й то уривками з 1810 року, бож із того року тільки почали догадуватись що ми під чубом і в українській свитці мали свого Пітагора, Орігена, Ляйбніца",<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I. V. Ivan'o, "Etyka Skovorody i Filosofiia Epikura", Vid Vyshens'koho do Skovorody (Kyiv, "Naukova Dumka", 1972), p. 125.

<sup>2</sup> Chyzhevs'kyi, Fil'osofiia, op. cit., p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Makhnovets', op. cit., p. 23.

<sup>4</sup> Ern, op. cit., p. 51.

<sup>5</sup> Istoriia Ukrains'koi Literatury, op. cit., II, p. 111.

<sup>6</sup> Marc Raeff, Imperial Russia 1682-1825: The Coming of Age of Modern Russia (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1971), p. 127.

<sup>7</sup> Iurii Lavrinenko, Vasyl' Karazyn: Arkhitekt Vidrozhennia (Miun-khen, "Suchasnist'", 1975), p. 37.

In a very real sense, D. I. Bahalii perceived the real Skovoroda when he wrote, "it is impossible to distinguish in Skovoroda the writer from the philosopher or even the person, because in him all of this was blended into a single monolith".<sup>1</sup>

However, as already mentioned, the "unsystematic" philosophy of Skovoroda is sufficiently continuous to enable a careful student to understand some of its more difficult details. Naturally, not all of these details nor all of his major philosophic thoughts are always readily and easily comprehended. This is, of course, the reason why there are so many unfounded views and serious contradictions existent in works on Skovoroda today.

There has long been a school of thought claiming that Skovoroda was "not an original thinker, or even an influential one for later Russian philosophy"<sup>2</sup>, but that he "arrived at a philosophy which was eclectic rather than original".<sup>3</sup> In other words, it is alleged that the Ukrainian philosopher favoured no particular belief or practice, but selected what he considered to be the best philosophic elements from all schools or methods.

To a certain degree, these contentions may be partially valid for Skovoroda was indeed greatly influenced by other philosophers as noted earlier. Yet, to allege that the Ukrainian philosopher lacked total originality in his creative works is a point of view that cannot be factually justified.

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted after Derkach, op. cit., p. 60.

<sup>2</sup> Stephen Patrick Scherer, The Life and Thought of Russia's First Lay Theologian, Grigorij Savvic Skovoroda (1722-94), (Ph.D Dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1969), p. 46.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 172. See also Chyzhevs'kyi, Fil'osofia, op. cit., p. 5.



Those who consider him as an "original thinker, poet, and enlightener" are generally agreed that Skovoroda created an original philosophy even though he may have derived much of his inspiration from the ancient Greeks or from the other philosophers he may have studied.<sup>1</sup> Zenkovsky explains this as follows:

"... even a cursory acquaintance with Skovoroda's works makes one feel his unquestionable originality, not in the sense that he was subject to no influences, but in the sense that he always thought his ideas through independently, even if they came to him from outside. He was a genuine philosopher."<sup>2</sup>

Vladimir Ern pictures Skovoroda as a dexterous "bee", who, although influenced by the philosophers of antiquity and later Church Fathers, skillfully reworked their thoughts into his own pure and original "honey".<sup>3</sup> Ivan Franko appears to support this evaluation, having spoken of Skovoroda as "pouring new wine into the old skins" of philosophic thought in Ukraine.<sup>4</sup> N. I. Kostomarov not only viewed Skovoroda's work positively in terms of time and place in which it appeared, but also found in it a remarkable original morality and freedom of thought.<sup>5</sup>

Related to the question of originality is the fact that not all who have attempted to study Skovoroda have arrived at the same conclusion concerning his intellectual or scholarly abilities. Ern has shown that some of his contemporaries considered him to be a "dunce",<sup>6</sup> while many of his

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<sup>1</sup> I. V. Ivan'o, op. cit., p. 131.

<sup>2</sup> Zenkovsky, op. cit., p. 55.

<sup>3</sup> Ern, op. cit., p. 209.

<sup>4</sup> Franko, op. cit., pp. 79, 81.

<sup>5</sup> N. I. Kostomarov, "Slovo o Skovorode", Osnova, 1861, #7, p. 178.

<sup>6</sup> Ern, op. cit., p. 210.

philosophic works were classified as too "dangerous" for publication.<sup>1</sup>

Shpet denies that Skovoroda was a highly educated person claiming that, although Skovoroda had some knowledge of ancient philosophy and the Church Fathers, it is "not enough to conclude that he was a 'successor to Plato' as many historians have done".<sup>2</sup> This opinion was shared to some extent by E. Radlov in his Ocherk istorii russkoi filosofii.<sup>3</sup>

Vladimir Ern cites V. Krestovs'kyi who as early as 1861 had published the following description of Skovoroda in his periodical, Russkoe Slovo:

"I consider Hryhorii Savich no more and no less than another seminary dunce, born by the thousands in the Kievan, theological seminary over the past century".<sup>4</sup>

In the very next issue of that same publication, Krestovs'kyi's attack against Skovoroda was continued when he declared him to be a "dull-witted" and "carrionic seminarian".<sup>5</sup>

Another who failed to appreciate the intellectual and philosophic worth of Skovoroda was one of his biographers, H. P. Danylevs'kyi who wrote that "although Skovoroda's life was well known, his philosophical works for our time have no meaning".<sup>6</sup> Ern has noted that Skovoroda was "too great for his epoch", and therefore it was difficult for average scholars to understand him and accurately evaluate his creative abilities.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Olianchyn, op. cit., p. 692.

<sup>2</sup> Shpet, op. cit., pp. 70, 74.

<sup>3</sup> E. Radlov, Ocherk istorii russkoi filosofii (St. Petersburg, 1920), p. 10.

<sup>4</sup> Ern, op. cit., p. 210.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 210-211.

<sup>6</sup> H. P. Danylevs'kyi, Sochineniia v XXIV tomakh (St. Petersburg, 1902), Vol. XXI, p. 87.

<sup>7</sup> Ern, op. cit., p. 54.

Early in his childhood Skovoroda demonstrated a remarkable talent and thirst for learning.<sup>1</sup> So intense was his love for acquiring greater knowledge that Kovalens'kyi made it clear that it was not Skovoroda's father's idea to send him to the Academy, but rather that his father sent him to the Academy in 1738, "as a result of his (Skovoroda's - JRP) wishes."<sup>2</sup> It was a little later in life that Skovoroda recalled wistfully, "from my earliest years a mysterious power and mania attracted me to moralizing books, and I loved them more than anything else: they doctored and cheered my heart".<sup>3</sup>

Along with his books, nature played a significant role in the formation of Skovoroda's character and education.<sup>4</sup> The scope of his knowledge extended from philosophy and theology to music, history, mathematics, and science.<sup>5</sup> Some scholars claim his works were "widely disseminated in manuscript form during his lifetime" such that he soon became known as an "encyclopaedically enlightened person" and a "wandering university".<sup>6</sup>

On the basis of sound historical and biographical evidence it becomes apparent that the Ukrainian philosopher was not indifferent to learning for he argued that "nothing is better than a good education:

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<sup>1</sup> Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, II, p. 488.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 489. Recent biographical studies on Skovoroda have revealed documented evidence that the Ukrainian philosopher studied only one full year (1744-1745) at the Kievan Academy rather than the widely accepted (1738-42; 1744-50) years as compiled by M. I. Petrov in 1902. (See L. Makhnovets', op. cit., pp. 23-24).

<sup>3</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 245.

<sup>4</sup> Mykhailo Vozniak, Istoriia Ukrain's'koi Literatury (L'vov, "Prosvita", 1924), III, p. 77.

<sup>5</sup> Ern, op. cit., pp. 61-63. See also, Vozniak, op. cit., pp. 78-79.

<sup>6</sup> Istoriia Ukrain's'koi Literatury (Kyiv, 1967), op. cit., pp. 110-111.

neither rank, nor wealth, nor family, nor the tenderness of landlords, nor noble birth".<sup>1</sup>

Skovoroda's influence, both philosophic and academic, was very profound upon the Ukrainian population and later served to establish the necessary groundwork for the founding of Kharkiv university.<sup>2</sup> It can therefore be safely concluded that the Ukrainian philosopher was not only recognized as an original thinker, but as a competent educator who exemplified his academic credentials not only by his many years of teaching and lecturing, but also in his substantial philosophic and literary creativity.

It appears as if Ern was among the first to initiate the controversy concerning Skovoroda's relation and attitude toward religion and the Church when he wrote, "Skovoroda, although he was not in principle hostile to the Church, nevertheless found himself in a position of mute, unconscious opposition to it".<sup>3</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, the editor of Skovoroda's works goes further and, on the basis of isolated expressions gleaned from Skovoroda, represents him as close to sectarianism.<sup>4</sup> This view was later revived by P. Miliukov who classified the Ukrainian philosopher as "a Sectarian in spirit".

The general Soviet interpretation of Skovoroda's attitude toward religion and the Church casts him as "resolutely rejecting the Christian concept of God",<sup>5</sup> since, according to Bilych and Popov, he was basically

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<sup>1</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 462.

<sup>2</sup> Vozniak, op. cit., p. 84.

<sup>3</sup> Ern, op. cit., p. 325.

<sup>4</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, "Zamitka ot redaktsii", pp. vii-xv.

<sup>5</sup> Ol. Doroshenko, Pidruchnyk Istorii Ukrains'koi Literatury (Kharkiv, "Knyhospilka", 1930), p. 70.

an "atheist" and very "materialistic" in his outlook.<sup>1</sup> M. P. Red'ko's thesis characterizes Skovoroda as an idealistic opponent of religion and an enemy of the official Church.<sup>2</sup>

In a very interesting essay entitled "The World of Symbols in H. S. Skovoroda", D. P. Kyryk explains that Soviet scholars have often misrepresented Skovoroda's religious convictions because most of them have expressed literal rather than the proper symbolic insights of his philosophy and have ignored or misunderstood his "method of expression".<sup>3</sup> A. P. Markov reflects Kyryk's conclusions stating that "to conclude that Skovoroda was an atheist or an idealistic opponent of religion is unfounded".<sup>4</sup>

Other scholars such as V. V. Zenkovsky concur with these views showing that the Church in Skovoroda's day was sadly secularized and that "Skovoroda was a free ecclesiastical thinker, who felt himself a member of the Church, but firmly preserved his freedom of thought".<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, "Skovoroda's thought never broke away from the Bible, and the more his thought matured, the more profound did the meaning of the Biblical narratives appear to him".<sup>6</sup>

In Skovoroda's dialogue entitled, "A Conversation Among Five Travel-

<sup>1</sup> See T. A. Bilych, "Kalendar ateista", H. S. Skovoroda, (Kyiv, 1959); P. Popov, Hryhorii Skovoroda (Kyiv, 1960).

<sup>2</sup> M. P. Red'ko, Svitohliad H. S. Skovorody (L'viv, 1967).

<sup>3</sup> Kyryk, "Svit Symboliv H. S. Skovorody", Vid Vyshens'koho do Skovorody, op. cit., pp. 117, 120.

<sup>4</sup> A. P. Markov, "Spivvidnoshennia dukhovnoho i material'noho u filosofii H. S. Skovorody", Vid Vyshens'koho do Skovorody, op. cit., p. 115.

<sup>5</sup> Zenkovsky, op. cit., p. 57.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., pp. 57-58.

ers Concerning Life's True Happiness," Longinus (Skovoroda) says:

"I began to read the Bible in my thirtieth year. But this splendid Book won out over all my other loves, slaking my long hunger and thirst with the bread and water of God's truth and justice, which were sweeter to me than honey and the honeycomb. I feel by nature especially drawn to them. I have fled, and I flee, under the guidance of my Lord, all the obstacles of life, and all carnal lovers, so that I might find peace and joy in the pure embrace of this daughter of God who is fairer than all the daughters of men . . ."

Skovoroda lived by his faith, and he had not the least fear of losing that faith in the paths of free thought, as Mirchuk points out in the following quotation:

"Сковорода мав свою релігію, вірив в Бога займався Біблією тоді, коли ці річи видавалися інтелігентним колам, вихованим на французькій літературі, цілком зайвим балястом".<sup>2</sup>

According to Franko, Skovoroda's philosophy of life along with his interpretation of morality, precluded any intimate association with the existant hierarchy.<sup>3</sup> He was not an avowed "enemy" of the Church, nor was he "atheistic" in his religious outlook. The Ukrainian philosopher simply considered the Orthodox Church as incapable of true spiritual leadership<sup>4</sup>, its monasteries as nests of indulgent pharisees<sup>5</sup>, and its membership as a crowd of unreflective and superstitious louts.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, I, p. 246. Quoted after the translation by George L. Kline. Compare, Edie, op. cit., p. 56.

<sup>2</sup> Mirchuk, op. cit., p. 32.

<sup>3</sup> Franko, op. cit., p. 80.

<sup>4</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 72.

<sup>5</sup> Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, II, p. 498.

<sup>6</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 362.

These views and attitudes have caused some writers to see him as the "forerunner of Ukrainian evangelism".<sup>1</sup> Stephen Scherer sums up Skovoroda's attitude toward the established Church in this way:

"Despite his outlook concerning the Church, however, Skovoroda did not abandon his belief in its most crucial dogmas, the trinity of God and the Divinity of Jesus Christ. Still his opposition to the Orthodox Church impelled him to seek a more spiritual and ascetic Christianity removed from a dependence on material forms and comforts".<sup>2</sup>

In short, Skovoroda believed that individual spiritual regeneration rather than ecclesiastical or social reform would promote social tranquility. To this end he was willing to devote his entire strength and ability, even his life.

Dmytro Chyzhevs'kyi mentions a number of other areas where Skovoroda has been grossly misunderstood and where diametric interpretations still exist. Metaphysically, he was described as a monist, dualist and materialist.<sup>3</sup> Ethically, says Chyzhevs'kyi, he was denoted as a relativist who defined norms meaningful only for the individual; while conversely, he has been described as the precursor of "absolute" ethics.<sup>4</sup> Chyzhevs'kyi goes on to point out how the philosophy of Skovoroda has been variously compared to the thoughts of other philosophers whose views were known to be founded upon different premises:

"Сковороду зв'язували і з найрізноманітнішими філософічними традиціями: з Сократом, Платоном, Арістотелем, стоїками, Плотіном, отцями церкви, Спінозою, Мальбраншем, Хр. Вольфом, філософією просвіченості /французька просвіченість, Раймарус/,"

<sup>1</sup> Iv. Floryns'kyi, Hryhorii Skovoroda - Predtecha Ukrain's'koho Ievanhelizmu (Toronto, National Publishers Limited, 1956).

<sup>2</sup> Scherer, op. cit., p. 51.

<sup>3</sup> Chyzhevs'kyi, Fil'osofiia, op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.,

та навіть із мислениками, що жили по Сковороді - з Шеллінгом, Гегелем та Гербартом! Цей ряд імен ми могли б продовжити та поповнити іменами менш відомими . . ."

There are similar differences of opinion concerning the influences that the West may or may not have had on Skovoroda. While Chyzhevs'kyi concedes such a probability <sup>2</sup>, Ern strongly rejects the validity of any argument to uphold that belief. <sup>3</sup>

Last, and by no means least, a number of scholars have classified Skovoroda as "a late representative of Baroque mysticism" in Ukraine. <sup>4</sup> Popov, however, rejects the attempts of those (such as Ivan'o and Chyzhevs'kyi in this instance) who choose to link Skovoroda to the Baroque style, as "anti-historical". <sup>5</sup>

In view of these conflicting interpretations made by scholars regarding the life and works of Skovoroda, Chyzhevs'kyi poses a number of crucial questions which demand serious consideration by those with a genuine desire to know and further the studies of Skovoroda in the academic world:

"Що можна зробити з цим хаосом думок? Чи не базується ця розбіжність оцінів, інтерпретацій на тому що Сковорода був дух, який усе приймав, усе сполучував, - або ліпше усе змішував, усе зливав у одне? Чи не був він один із тих, що не є нічим певним, бо хоче бути всім разом? Чи не зна-

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<sup>1</sup> Chyzhevs'kyi, Fil'osofiia, op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Ern, op. cit., pp. 55-59.

<sup>4</sup> Dmitrij Cizevskij, Comparative History of Slavic Literatures (Baltimore, Maryland, Vanderbilt University Press, 1971), Translated by Richard Noel Porter and Martin P. Rice, p. 92. See also, Ivan Ivan'o, "Nove Doslidzhennia Pro Hryhoriia Skovorody", Dnipro (Kyiv, 1969), No. 5, p. 147.

<sup>5</sup> Popov, op. cit., p. 127.



чить це, що він був лише к у р і о з о м,  
а ніяк не ч у д о м у історії українсь-  
кого духа? Але, як тоді зясувати внутріш-  
ню єдність його особистості та його життє-  
вого шляху? Як зясувати його глибокий  
вплив на сучасників та той факт, що укра-  
їнська духовна історія все, як зачарована,  
повертається до "Сковородинства"? . . ."<sup>1</sup>

In response to Chyzhevs'kyi's obvious concern about the confused state of Skovorodian studies due to the existence of so many inconsistent and diametric interpretations, an attempt will be made in this thesis to approach Skovoroda a little differently by viewing his works through his symbols, emblems and philosophic terms rather than through the traditional means of literal interpretation. Furthermore, it is believed that once he is examined within the historical context of his own epoch and according to his personal method of stylistic expression, then his entire philosophical thought and literary creativity will crystallize into a sensible unified system of ideas that will be recognized as being strangely unique in the history of world philosophical thought.

#### PROBLEMS TO BE RESOLVED

From all indications it appears as if Skovoroda will continue to be a "non-entity" among the world's most celebrated philosophers unless his works are re-published by scholars who are qualified to undertake and improve upon the quality of existing editions of his works. Furthermore, in the interests of encouraging future Skovorodian studies, such well-known early editions and studies on Skovoroda by I. T. Lysenkov<sup>2</sup>, as well as

<sup>1</sup>

Chyzhevs'kyi, Fil'osofiiia, op. cit., p. 6.

<sup>2</sup>

I. T. Lysenkov (ed.), Sochineniia b stikhakh i proze Hryhoriia Savycha Skovorody (St. Petersburg, 1861). Located at Columbia University it is the earliest comprehensive edition of Skovoroda's writings.

D. I. Bahalii <sup>1</sup>, and V. D. Bonch-Bruevich <sup>2</sup> (which are now recognized as "biographical rarities" <sup>3</sup>) should be re-issued, as without easy access to these and other important works, students of Skovoroda can become easily discouraged in their research.

There are, of course, many valuable in-depth studies and essays on Skovoroda that are, for the most part, inaccessible to students on an intermediate level of academic research. Since these works are often difficult to locate on an inter-library loan basis, many students are thereby hindered in making positive and reliable progress on the basis of earlier scholarly accomplishments in these areas.

Joseph T. Fuhrmann in his "Biographical Essay" <sup>4</sup>, cites a series of interesting Skovorodian sources by Russian authors including Khidzheu <sup>5</sup>, Father Superior Gavriil <sup>6</sup>, N. Stelletskii <sup>7</sup>, A. S. Lebedev <sup>8</sup>, and several others which appear as if they would enrich the progress of research on Skovoroda were they to become "standard references" in most university libraries.

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<sup>1</sup>

D. I. Bahalii, Sochineniia Hryhoriia Savycha Skovorody (Kharkov, 1894 in 2 volumes, located at the Library of Congress. Also, D. Bahalii, Ukrains'kyi mandrovanyi filosof Hr. Sav. Skovoroda, (Kharkiv, 1926).

<sup>2</sup> V. D. Bonch-Bruevich, Sobranie Sochinenii H. S. Skovorody (St. Petersburg, 1912). Located at the University of Manitoba, it was originally planned as an extensive 2-volumed edition, but only the first volume containing the dialogues appeared in 1912.

<sup>3</sup> Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, I, p. VI.

<sup>4</sup> Fuhrmann, op. cit., pp. 67-72.

<sup>5</sup> Khidzheu, "Grigorii Varsava Skovoroda. Istoriko-kriticheskii ocherk", Teleskop, No. 26 (1835), pp. 1-24, 151-178. Located in the New York Public Library.

<sup>6</sup> Father Superior Gavriil, Istoriia Filosofii (Kazan, 1839-1840). Vol. 6. Located at the Library of Congress.

<sup>7</sup> N. Stelletskii, "Stranstvuiushchii ukrains'kii filosof Grigorii Savvich Skovoroda", Trudy Kievskoi Dukhovnoi Akademii, 2 (July, August 1894), pp. 449-478; 608-629. Located at Harvard University.

<sup>8</sup> A. S. Lebedev, "G. S. Skovoroda kak bogoslov", Voprosy filosofii i psikhologii, 27 (1898), pp. 170-177. Located at the Library of Congress.

In the second place, it is generally known that not all the literary or philosophic works on Skovoroda have been found and subsequently published. For example, Figures #6 and #7 in the Appendix of this essay illustrate two copies of a newly discovered letter and song of Skovoroda that were unknown to students of Skovorodian studies up until only a few years ago. Although the editors of the 1961 edition of the Ukrainian philosopher's works state that in these two volumes are published "all the known works of Skovoroda"<sup>1</sup>, it is widely held that with future archival research by Soviet scholars, many new works by that philosopher-writer will be discovered thereby enhancing his stature as a philosopher deserving world-wide recognition.

Whenever the works of Skovoroda have been republished by Soviet scholars (such as in the 1961 and 1973 editions), the original text has always undergone considerable "modification" by its translation into the contemporary Ukrainian or Russian orthography. In so doing, the intrinsic essence and meaning of the Ukrainian philosopher's thoughts have been deformed and subsequently misrepresented, because the new orthography tends to cloud the gist of the original.

Even though such a departure from accepted norms was acknowledged in the interests of encouraging "wider readership"<sup>2</sup>, it should be noted that the failure to render a "word-for-word" precise interpretation of the text has given rise to many unfortunate inaccuracies and uncertainties concerning Skovoroda's literary style and method of linguistic expression.

For example, since the old "Ѣ" sign has been omitted (whereas "Ѣ",

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<sup>1</sup> Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, I, p. VI.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. VII.

" i " and " Ъ " have been retained "as dictated by the original" <sup>1</sup> ),  
the following difficulties arise in the text:

- a). Original phrases such as "ТО Я И САМЪ, ТОТЪ ЧАС ВСТА́НУ" <sup>2</sup> are altered by the contemporary translation to read, "ТО Я И САМ ТОТЧАС ВСТА́НУ . ." <sup>3</sup>
- b). Having already made such a drastic change, the phrase rendered in the first of Skovoroda's "Sad bozhestvennykh pisnei":  
"А СМЕРТЬ ЕСТЬ СВЯТАЯ, КОНЧИТ НАША ЗЛАЯ,  
ИЗВОДИТЬ ЗЛОЙ ВОЙНЫ В ПОКОЙ . ."  
could be read as . . .  
"И ЗВОДИТ З ЗЛОЙ ВОЙНЫ В ПОКОЙ."

Furthermore, according to some of the earliest grammatical customs (which were still widely practiced during the time of Skovoroda, 1722-1794), the stress ("naholos") played a very important role in Ukrainian orthography. Skovoroda often employed these "stress" signs in his philosophic and literary works as they were very unique in Ukraine <sup>5</sup> and were widely used to differentiate between Ukrainian and Russian speech forms. Therefore, in publishing any ancient Ukrainian manuscripts it is essential that every given case of "stress" be reproduced without any change whatsoever.

This has not always been done by Soviet scholars as, by their own admission, stresses were "only retained whenever they differed from contemporary usage - or where the stress more accurately defines the meaning of the word". <sup>6</sup> Having thus omitted the all-important stress signs from

<sup>1</sup> Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, I, p. VII.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 65. See Appendix, Figure #3.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 66.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., II, p. 7.

<sup>5</sup> For further details see, I. Ohienko, "Naholos iak metod oznachennia mistsia vykhodu starodrukovanykh knyzhok". Zap. N. T. Sh. (L'viv, 1925), pp. 136-137; pp. 197-224.

<sup>6</sup> Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, I, p. VII.

the works of Skovoroda "unless they differed from contemporary usage", one begins to wonder whether "contemporary usage" refers to the Ukrainian or Russian language!

In order to simplify the study and understanding of Skovoroda's creativity, it is absolutely essential that all grammatical peculiarities (unique to the original text) be retained whether they compliment present day usages or not. The following examples amply justify the necessity of such retentions:

- a). Skovoroda's stress signs can clearly be seen in his original autographs. "Егда немоществую . . ." <sup>1</sup> is rendered on the opposite page as "Егда немоществую . . ." <sup>2</sup> without the stress!
- b). It would be interesting to know how Skovoroda pronounced the word "ИМЯ" (name); in Russian "ИМЯ" or in Ukrainian "ИМЯ"? (According to Soviet reproductions of the original text, this would be difficult to reconcile)!

Similarly, one cannot add such things as "punctuation marks" (if they do not exist in the original text) because these are historical documents and cannot be altered under any circumstances, unless they are clearly designated and properly acknowledged by footnotes, in the extenuating circumstance.

A most significant judgment was made by Constantine Kostencheskyi, the distinguished Serbo-Bulgarian paleographer of the XIV<sup>th</sup> century, that "every letter within each word has its own meaning", which can easily be lost in translation. <sup>3</sup> "Heresies often result", he says, "from omissions and additions to the original text" <sup>4</sup> and this is even more applicable to the translation of religious manuscripts.

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<sup>1</sup> Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, II, p. 409. See Appendix, Figure # 5.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 408.

<sup>3</sup> D. C. Lykhachev, Razvitie Russkoi Literatury X-XVII vekov (Leningrad, "Nauka", 1973), p. 85.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 85.

Publishers often tend to justify such textual "corrections" on the premise that they "simplify the understanding of these works for the benefit of contemporary readers".<sup>1</sup> These works, of course, are often mostly studied by students, which would therefore negate the apparent "necessity" for tampering with the original Skovorodian manuscript. Should such "changes" be insisted upon, then the original document would have to be given intact on the opposite page for textual comparisons. In this way, by respecting the importance and significance of preserving the original text in republication, Skovorodian studies would be greatly simplified once the proper rules and methods of studying it are adopted.

In accordance with these same principles the illustrations, diagrams and autographs made by Skovoroda should be more clearly reprinted to facilitate easier scrutiny and evaluation by the serious scholar.

Skovoroda's creative works, both literary and philosophical, are always more easily comprehended once they are studied within the proper Biblical context from which they received their original inspiration.

By the age of seven, the young Ukrainian philosopher-writer had already become aware of a strange "attraction within him" for the study of the Bible<sup>2</sup>, a mysterious inner compulsion that increased in intensity all through his life. Kovalens'kyi has shown that the Old and New Testaments of the Bible were for Skovoroda the basis of his life, knowledge, education, and creative writing.<sup>3</sup> He studied the Holy Scriptures fervently both day and night and committed most of the Bible to memory. Seldom

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<sup>1</sup> Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, I, pp. VII-VIII.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., II, p. 488.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 525-526.

was he separated from it as he carried the Scriptures with him everywhere in his wanderings considering the Bible as "one of the most important crucibles of truth available to man".<sup>1</sup> When he died, he rested his head upon the Bible - as a symbolic gesture of its importance to his life and works.<sup>2</sup>

A close examination and consideration of his writings will reveal that Skovoroda's language and works are literally saturated with specific Biblical thoughts. In fact, there is rarely an important thought in Skovoroda that does not reflect a definite Biblical quotation either by direct citation or casual implication when given from memory.<sup>3</sup>

It would appear that these quotations (either from the Old or New Testaments) should be clearly acknowledged wherever they appear in the original manuscript and appropriate footnotes should accompany those instances where Skovoroda made definite reference to Biblical sources, but failed to denote the Scripture reference he used. This procedure is often practiced by scholars in most academic circles.

Should these quotations from the Bible be appended in italic form, the reader would be able to see that the Bible was clearly the basic source of Skovoroda's thought for, in reality, he never departed from the Scriptures. The following examples illustrate this point more fully:

In his dialogue, "A Conversation Among Five Travellers" we read,

Л О Н Г И Н. Ах человек! Постыдись сего  
говорить! Если краснѣет запад солнечный,  
что завтрашний день воссияет чистый, а

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<sup>1</sup> Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, II, p. 502.

<sup>2</sup> Hr. P. Bobrynskoï, Starchyk Hryhorii Skovoroda: Zhyzn' i Uchenie (Paryzh, "Vozrozhdenie", 1929), p. 76.

<sup>3</sup> Kyryk, "Svit symboliv H. S. Skovorody", Vid Vyshens'koho do Skovorody, op. cit., p. 121.

если зарумянится восток, - стужа и непогода будет сего дня, всё говорим - и бывает так."

Neither the author (Skovoroda) nor the editors of the 1961 edition of his works have noted that this thought is Biblical rather than Skovorodian.<sup>2</sup>

Similar examples can be found even in Bonch-Bruevich's edition of 1912:

"Лицёмъры /говорится къ намъ/, лице небесное подлинно хорошо вы разбирать научились, а для чего не примѣчаете законовъ, что бы вамъ, какъ по слѣду, добратъся до имѣющей ошастливити васъ истинъ?"<sup>2</sup>

This thought was based upon Luke 12:56 though neither Skovoroda nor Bonch-Bruevich had taken the trouble to acknowledge it.

From the given examples it is clear that Skovoroda often thinks in Biblical terms without consistently acknowledging his Scriptural source by an appropriate notation. Instances such as those given above could be cited almost indefinitely showing that the omission of such known Biblical references greatly hinders a clearer understanding of his works. Since most Soviet Ukrainian scholars interpret Skovoroda as an "atheist" and "materialist"<sup>3</sup>, it would probably explain why a more complete compilation of these Biblical references in Skovoroda has not yet been made.

In view of the confused and diametric interpretations already considered in works on Skovoroda, it is glaringly obvious that few who have studied his works in any real depth, have been able to properly distinguish between the thoughts Skovoroda gleaned from the Bible, from other philosophers, or those which may have been his own. Failing to make this

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<sup>1</sup> Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, I, p. 223.

<sup>2</sup> Compare, Luke 12: 54-55.

<sup>3</sup> A. P. Markov, "Spivvidnoshennia Dukhovnoho i Materiial'noho u Filosofii H. S. Skovorody", Vid Vyshens'koho do Skovorody, op. cit., p. 110.



important discovery, the works of Skovoroda have therefore remained misunderstood and classified as "too confused" or even as "irrelevant".

Still another important requirement essential to the simplification of Skovoroda's thought is the need to preserve the use of all capital letters as rendered in the original text to distinguish "Holy names" or "Sacred terms" from those of common origin. In the ancient Ukrainian manuscripts, "Holy words" were often written in an abbreviated form with a short line placed over the word: e. g.  $\overline{bgz}$ ,  $\overline{bgu}$ , denoting  $\overline{bogz}$ ,  $\overline{bogu}$ , as Horace G. Lunt describes more fully in his Old Church Slavonic Grammar:

"Apparently this was originally a means of emphasis rather than a space-saving device, and it was restricted to the "nomina sacra", the names of Divinity, such as "God", "Jesus", "Spirit". It early became extended to a number of other words, and is particularly common with the forms of the verb "glagolati" 'speak, say':  $\overline{r\overline{g}et\overline{z}}$ ,  $\overline{r\overline{g}a}$  =  $\overline{glagoletz}$ ,  $\overline{glagolje}$ , etc".

The above-mentioned short line (tittle) placed over abbreviated words primarily indicated that the word below it was "Holy". This was a grammatical law that was never broken in Ukraine. With the passing of time, (as this practice was extended to include a number of other words such as "glagolati" mentioned by Lunt), the "nomina sacra" began to be written with a capital letter (still in the abbreviated form under a tittle), in order to be easily distinguished from the abbreviated secular words.

In 1707, according to a decree issued by Peter the Great, these words were now to be written in full (without tittles) but still in the capitalized form denoting the Divine form. This trend continued to be

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<sup>1</sup>  
Horace G. Lunt, Old Church Slavonic Grammar (The Hague, Mouton & Co. N. V. 1968), pp. 22-23.

upheld by the grammatical laws of the XVII<sup>th</sup> and XVIII<sup>th</sup> centuries in Ukraine, until the beginning of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century when, according to the orthographic reforms of Ja. K. Grot <sup>1</sup>, a protestant who did not recognize the "nomina sacra" law, the tendency to write Divine words in the lower case was initiated.

It should be noted, however, that Skovoroda strictly observed the "nomina sacra" law and distinguished all Divine words from common ones by using the capitalized form along with the appropriate titles, although there are instances where the latter was sometimes omitted by the philosopher. Nevertheless, capitals were always used, not only by Skovoroda, but by the entire region of Ukraine.

In recent years, most publications of Skovoroda's works have appeared without the proper use of capitals to denote Divine words "in order to be consistent with current grammatical laws". <sup>2</sup> Representative examples can be easily given from Skovoroda's personal autographs in the 1961 edition of his works to show his respect for the "nomina sacra" law. Consider, for example, the following specimens:

"Десятострунная Псалтырь . . . Когда при́йду,  
и явлюся Лицу Б/о/жю? . . . к Царю Небесному  
Дѣвы . . . Отверзите мнѣ Врата Правды . . .  
Б/о/г Г/о/с/по/д/ь" <sup>3</sup>, "Царствія Божія . . .  
Б/о/гъ . . ." <sup>4</sup> "Слово Б/о/жіє . . ." <sup>5</sup> "Ты  
святый Боже, и вѣковъ Творецъ . . ." <sup>6</sup> "О Б/о/же  
. . . и насладитися Бесѣдою во Хр/и/стѣ, иже  
мя вѣсть, и азъ бо . . ." <sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> W. K. Matthews, Russian Historical Grammar (London, The Athlone Press, University of London, 1960), p. 314. Reprinted with corrections, 1967.

<sup>2</sup> Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, I, p. VIII.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 65. See Appendix, Figure # 3.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 347. See Appendix, Figure # 4.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 435.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., II, p. 63.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 409.

From the above examples we can see that Skovoroda always denoted Divine terms with capital letters thereby expressing his reverence and respect for the Divinity he was referring to. It is significant that the editors of the 1861, 1894, and 1912 editions of Skovoroda's works had carefully retained this practice observed by Skovoroda, although this cannot be said of the more recent editions.

Whenever these capitals have been removed from the text (as evidenced by the 1961 and 1973 editions) the initial meaning of Skovoroda's works immediately become confused because one cannot always distinguish the true meaning of the philosopher's thoughts.

This fact is clearly seen by the following examples: "Аз есм, аз есм, аз есм сый . ." <sup>1</sup> (This phrase refers to the Name of God indicating the "unsearchableness" of God, rather than His mere "existence", as commonly supposed. Cf. Exodus 3:14). In each instance, the underlined letter should be capitalized according to Skovoroda's original text. And again: " . . а богослов другое имя дает: бог - любовь есть". <sup>2</sup> (Here, "bohoslov" refers to the Apostle John who wrote, "God is Love", I John 4:16). As one can see, the capitals have been omitted here also. Finally, " . . чтоб всевидящее, недремлющее, великое всего мира око . ." <sup>3</sup> (Reference here is being made to the all-seeing Eye of God, which should be capitalized).

Included in the capitalized form of Divine terminology were such things as the names of the Biblical books, the word, "Bible", "Gospel", etc. The omission of such capitalized forms not only destroys the original

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<sup>1</sup> Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, I, p. 213. All underlinings are my own.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 214. All underlinings are my own.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 221. All underlinings are my own.

text but severely clouds the meaning of its contents.<sup>1</sup> For the average reader, the statement: "Посла духа сына своего в сердца наша . ."<sup>2</sup> would be relatively unclear. However, when from the original autograph we read the proper capitalized form: "Посла Духа Сына Своего в сердца наша . ." - everything becomes clear!

Correlated with the above-mentioned "nomina sacra" law was the practice of denoting pronouns with small letters rather than capitals as we do today. In a letter to his friend, Ja. Pravyts'kyi, Skovoroda wrote: "Мнѣ давно скучно, что съ ва́ми не бесѣ́дую . . потщѹ́ся ви́дѣти вас . ." <sup>3</sup> On page 408, directly opposite the given original autograph, the pronouns in Skovoroda's text have all been capitalized by the editors of that edition thereby adding further confusion in the understanding of his works.

In an effort to justify the absolute necessity of preserving ancient manuscripts in their given original form, D. S. Lykhachev cites Kostencheskyi who willed the "wrath of God" upon those who chose to add to or subtract even the minutest detail from the primary source:

"Константин Костенческий исходит из убеждения, что каждая особенность графики, каждая особенность написания, произношения слова имеет свой смысл. Познание для него, как и для многих богословов средневековья, - это выражение мира средствами языка. Слово и сущность для него неразрывны. Отсюда его чрезвычайное беспокойство о каждом случае расхождения между

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<sup>1</sup> For further details see, Mytropolyt Ilarion, Nasha Literaturna Mova (Winnipeg, "Nasha Kul'tura", 1958), pp. 334-362.

<sup>2</sup> Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, II, p. 12. All underlinings are my own.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 409. See Appendix, Figure # 5.

ними, которое может получиться от неправильного написания, от неправильной формы слова. Эти расхождения могут привести к ереси и, во всяком случае, к неправильным воззрениям." <sup>1</sup>

Kostencheskyi goes so far as to say that every letter in each word has its own unique meaning and purpose and therefore cannot be replaced under any circumstance without doing irreparable harm to the entire context of the given situation:

"Отсюда главной задачей науки он считает создание правильного языка, правильной орфографии, правильного письма. Он стремится уничтожить возможные неправильности в языке, орфографии и письме, пытается многочисленными примерами продемонстрировать теснейшую связь внешней формы слова и его значения, показать смысл каждой мельчайшей особенности орфографии и графики. Ереси происходят, по его мнению, от недостатков или излишеств в письме. Его крайне беспокоят все разногласия между списками, и он призывает казнь божью на тех, кто делает описки в рукописях, или, даже только зная об описках не "обличает" их. Он исходит из положения, что каждая буква в слове имеет свое значение и способна изменить смысл речи. При этом он пытается видеть особый, внутренний смысл даже в буквах самих по себе, приписывает каждой из них свою индивидуальную роль. ." <sup>2</sup>

By reproducing Skovoroda's works according to the strict guidelines suggested by Kostencheskyi, (without additions, corrections, modifications, or subtractions), his philosophic thoughts and views would be greatly simplified and more easily comprehended.

Since Skovoroda's vocabulary consists of many Church Slavic, Old Ukrainian, and Russian terms, his works could be further simplified with

<sup>1</sup>

Lykhachev, op. cit., p. 85.

<sup>2</sup>

Ibid. Kostencheskyi argued that religious manuscripts were more especially vulnerable to heretical interpretation by careless translation. Since these religious texts revealed spiritual truths, absolute accuracy demanded that precise "letter-by-letter" renditions be given (op. cit., pp. 86-87).

the compilation of a scholarly dictionary both for his philosophic and literary terminology. Most students of Skovoroda would generally agree that to read his works without the use of an appropriate dictionary is a tedious task.

It would appear as if the Kievan Academy could make a tremendous contribution to Skovorodian studies by publishing a similar dictionary to explain the language of Skovoroda as it did to simplify the vocabulary employed by Taras Shevchenko in his creative works.<sup>1</sup> D. P. Kyryk illustrates the necessity of such a dictionary for the simplification of Skovoroda's symbolic and literary terminology when he describes the intrinsic meaning of the word "tvar'" often used by that philosopher-writer in his description of the "visible nature" or great world:

"Тварь" у церковнослов'янській мові означає "творіння", "предмет", "істота". Цей термін Сковорода вживає не випадково. Він підкреслює похідність, залежність "тварей" від того, що не твориться, від вічності, тобто від невидимої натури".<sup>2</sup>

Although a brief listing of archaic and little known words is given with short explanations in the 1973 edition of Skovoroda's works<sup>3</sup>, it is clearly inadequate for in-depth research purposes, though it may be seen as a definite step forward in simplifying the study of Skovoroda. Until a good scholarly dictionary is produced for his works, Skovoroda's philosophy will remain obscure and difficult to everyone who is not reasonably proficient in the Old Church Slavic language and who can read his works with relative ease and understanding.

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<sup>1</sup> V. S. Vashchenko (ed.), Slovnnyk Movy Shevchenka v Dvokh Tomakh (Kyiv, "Naukova Dumka", 1964).

<sup>2</sup> Kyryk, "Svit symboliv H. S. Skovorody", Vid Vyshens'koho do Skovorody, op. cit., p. 120.

<sup>3</sup> Hryhorii Skovoroda: Povne Zibrannia Tvoriv (Kyiv, "Naukova Dumka", 1973), II, pp. 557-560.

Once a good translation is made of Skovoroda's philosophic and literary works by competent scholars of the Church Slavic, Old Ukrainian and Old Russian languages, and published in a form where the original text faces the translation for easy reference and comparison, then the works of Skovoroda will undoubtedly experience greater popularity in areas where they are virtually unknown today.

Finally, the present status of Skovorodian studies demand more extensive biographical and archival research, not only to critically evaluate known facts on Skovoroda <sup>1</sup>, but to discover new material that will enhance the level of our present understanding of that great philosopher-writer of Ukraine.

With the publication in 1960 <sup>2</sup> and 1972 <sup>3</sup> of the known bibliography on Skovoroda by the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences in Kyiv and Kharkiv, it was found that over 1,442 different titles were devoted to the study of that particular philosopher. <sup>4</sup> Although many of these recorded studies may not be readily available to the Western student, they still have immeasurable value to the over-all study of Skovoroda's philosophy.

When searching for a similar Skovorodian bibliography compiled by Western scholars, one will invariably be greatly disappointed. Besides a number of sketchy listings, there is very little reliable information available as to the number, description or location of such similar studies made in the West. Until this important bibliographical information on Skovoroda is gathered and properly compiled to compliment the Soviet list-

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<sup>1</sup> Makhnovets', op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Ukrains'ki Pys'mennyky: Bio-Bibliohrafichnyi Slovnyk u p'iaty tomakh, O. I. Bilets'kyi (ed.), (Kyiv, 1960), I, pp. 521-536.

<sup>3</sup> A. P. Kovalivs'kyi (ed.), Hryhorii Skovoroda: Biobibliohrafiia (Kharkiv, Vyd-vo Kharkivs'koho universytetu, 1972), 204 pp.

<sup>4</sup> Makhnovets', op. cit., p. 3.

ings, progress in simplifying the study of Skovoroda will remain in a state of retardation.

Summary - An assessment of Skovoroda's place in intellectual tradition has long been impeded by many obstacles and problems. With the severe censorship of his creative works, no school of thought was able to emerge after Skovoroda's death to preserve his rich legacy for future generations.

A lack of scholarly comparative philosophical studies on Skovoroda seemed to support the view that his thought was too obscure and unsystematic for serious academic consideration. Having underestimated and misunderstood the philosopher's method of philosophic and literary expression, many varied and often falsified interpretations on his life, works, and influence soon began to appear in publication.

In recent years, inadequate translations and reproductions of the philosopher's original texts along with the lack of suitable Skovorodian dictionaries and lexicons, have hindered the progress of study and research in this area of Ukrainian philosophy and literature. Finally, the present state of limited biographical/archival research and the inadequate editions of Skovoroda's works themselves have done little to simplify the study of that Ukrainian philosopher-writer such that he continues to be denied a place of rightful prominence in world philosophical circles.

An attempt will be made in the following chapter to examine Skovoroda's life and thought by means of the many symbols and philosophic descriptions found scattered throughout the entire spectrum of his creative works. In so doing, it is hoped that this may be a positive step forward in simplifying and understanding the valuable philosophic and literary legacy left for us by that unusual philosopher.



## CHAPTER TWO

### THE ROLE OF SYMBOLS IN SKOVORODA

#### Introduction

The history of world philosophical thought has clearly revealed that the creative religious writer or philosopher seeks to formulate deep, intangible but profoundly significant meanings to the intense feelings or reflective thoughts he has experienced. For the most part, these intangible meanings cannot be expressed directly or literally, but only through the skillful use of carefully selected symbols or images. The deeper meanings of religious experience must be expressed in symbols which are taken from the external world but used in a way that seeks to express inner relationships and meanings.

To try to make a literal interpretation of what a philosopher expresses is to miss the point completely, as a literal interpretation of the meaning of a great work of art would miss its deeper meaning. For example, Skovoroda often speaks of the Bible as a snake.<sup>1</sup> Now if this is taken literally (as often is the case) it makes no sense. Rather, it is to be used as an image or symbol through which a deeper truth is communicated on the level of feelings as well as of ideas.

Religious symbols are like "windows" through which we may look into our own souls and into the nature and meaning of life. It is not the symbol which is important, but what the philosopher is trying to say through the symbol. Our task is to approach the symbol with receptivity, imagination and feeling as well as reason, and in this way come to "see" its

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Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, I, p. 297.

meaning rather than to arrive at "logical conclusions."

Skovoroda clearly underscores the soundness of this approach when he says, "Не велика нужда знать, откуда сіе слово родилось: хлѣб-от хлѣба или от хлопот, а в том толко сила, чтоб узнать, что чрез тоє имя означається." <sup>1</sup> Another supporting example could be cited as follows:

"Естли кто знает бога, чем ні есть именует его сердце почитателево, все то дѣйствительно и доброе имя. Нѣт ничего, что один знает *ἀρτος*, а другій panus, <sup>2</sup> толко бы в разумѣ не порознились . . ."

Similar thoughts can be found in the tale "Verbliud i olen'" and in Skovoroda's 21-st letter to M. Kovalens'kyi. Here, Skovoroda draws attention to the fact that a name or word is merely a conventional "sign" (symbol), not directly linked with the basic essence of the designated object. Apart from the verbal sign (which has a corporeal material nature), one must be able to properly discern its true meaning which is immaterial, spiritual and invisible. In other words, by making use of words we utilize the "shadow" rather than the "body", or the "sign" instead of the true "substance". <sup>3</sup> Skovoroda explains the use of these signs, words or names in this way:

"Слово, имя, знак . . . термин есть то тлѣнныи ворота, ведущій к нетлѣннѣи источнику. Кто не раздѣляет словесныхъ знаков на плоть и дух, сей не может различать между водою и водою, красот небесныхъ и росы." <sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Skovoroda, *Tvory*, 1961, I, p. 213.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 214.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, II, p. 267.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 125-126.

In short, it is argued that it makes little difference by what designation God has been named at various times by different authors, especially in the Bible. What is important, however, is that these designations all refer to one and the same source, namely, the "invisible nature", which is omniscient, omnipresent and everlasting.<sup>1</sup>

It may be of some help to understand the nature of the symbol in contrast with other forms of representational imagery such as allegory and metaphor. Between allegory and symbol the borderlines are not always easily discernible, and therefore their difference is frequently blurred in common terminology. The reason for this is their aiming at the same goal from opposite ends.

The symbol, especially as used by Skovoroda, is something concrete and specific that is intended to convey something spiritual or invisible, either as an indicating sign or image, i. e. an act of pointing, or as an actual representation in which the dynamic division of the sign is abolished. That which points, that which it points to, and the act of pointing, have become one and the same.

Etymologically, the word "symbol" can be traced to the Greek "sym-ballein", which means to "throw together" or simply to "place together", as when two things are juxtaposed for the purpose of comparing them. The abstract and more general use of the term still retains the notion of one thing (usually material and visible) calling forth its complement or better half (usually something that is immaterial and unseen).<sup>2</sup> Thus, Hugh of Saint-Victor describes the symbolic process as "a comparison of the

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<sup>1</sup>

Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, I, pp. 16, 21, 42, 57.

<sup>2</sup>

J. M. Somerville, "Symbol", New Catholic Encyclopedia (New York, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967), Vol. 13, p. 860.

visible forms for the showing forth of the invisible".<sup>1</sup>

Allegory, conversely, starts from something primarily general and abstract, a purely conceptual entity, which it clothes in a concrete body. Related distinctions between allegory and symbol have been made by Goethe and Coleridge. According to Goethe,

"Allegory transforms the phenomenon (Erscheinung) into an abstract concept (Begriff), the concept into an image, but in such a way that the concept can still be expressed and beheld in the image in a clearly circumscribed and complete form. Symbolism transforms the phenomenon into an idea, the idea into an image, in such a way that the idea remains for ever infinitely active and unreachable in the image and, even if expressed in all languages, still inexpressible . . . We may speak of true symbolism, when the particular represents the more general, not as a dream, or shadow, but as a living instantaneous revelation of the inscrutable."<sup>2</sup>

Coleridge speaks of allegory as merely,

" . . a translation of abstract notions into a picture language, which is itself nothing but an abstraction from objects of the senses . . a symbol is characterized by a translucence of the special (the species) in the individual, or of the general (genus) in the special . . above all by the translucence of the eternal through and in the temporal."<sup>3</sup>

The metaphor (from Greek: "metaphora", transference) is neither a sign, nor the representational unity of duality, but paraphrase, parallelism, "simile". Commonly, it is meant to elucidate an abstraction by visualizing it, transferring it into an image; this, however, not in the manner of allegory, through personifying incarnation, but rather by way of analogy.

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<sup>1</sup>

Somerville, op. cit., p. 860.

<sup>2</sup>

Quoted after Rene Welleck and Austin Warren in Theory of Literature (New York, Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1949), pp. 193 ff.

<sup>3</sup>

Ibid., pp. 193 ff.

Scherer's analysis of Skovoroda's epistemology reveals two reasons why symbols were of significance in his philosophical thought:

"Firstly, his view of knowledge impelled him to see the material spheres, nature, man and the Bible, as symbols whose appearances concealed the Divine essence. Man, through self-knowledge, could penetrate these symbols and arrive at knowledge of the Divine spark in himself as well as in nature and the Bible. In fact, Skovoroda's view of the material sphere as a symbol which shields the Divine principle is a crucial feature of all mystical thought".

In the second place, he contends that,

"Skovoroda, who had himself experienced the ineffable and noetic experiences of a meeting with the true man and God, found it impossible to describe such an encounter or the insights it produced in any but symbolic terms. Therefore he employed the symbols as a bridge between his "inner" experiences and the "outer" world".<sup>2</sup>

While describing the nature and importance of symbols, Skovoroda declared that the use of symbols evolved from the initial attempts made by men to convey the meaning of their most profound religious experiences and insights:

" . . truth, to the sharp gaze of wise men, did not seem vague and distant, as it did to the ignorant, but rather it presented itself clearly as in a mirror, and the wise men, having vividly seen its living form, likened it to various material figures."<sup>3</sup>

Since it was virtually impossible for man to express his intense inner religious feelings and intangible spiritual thoughts by means of literal or factual words or descriptive phrases, he was constrained in his dilemma to see symbolic rather than abstract terms to communicate those ethereal emotions. Skovoroda's partiality to the use of symbols for the most accur-

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<sup>1</sup> Scherer, op. cit., p. 80.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 80.

<sup>3</sup> Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, II, p. 102. Quoted after the translation by Scherer, op. cit., p. 81.

ate expression of the Divine or of such intangible entities as truth or beauty is shown in his declaration that, "Colours alone do not describe the rose, the lily, and the narcissus so vividly as the shadow of heavenly and earthly forms creates in them the invisible Divine truth. From this were born hieroglyphics, emblems, and symbols".<sup>1</sup> It is apparent, therefore, that symbols, according to Skovoroda, were Divinely inspired so that they might compensate for man's inability to express his spiritual thoughts and emotions by natural means.<sup>2</sup>

From a brief analysis of Skovoroda's use of symbols, Scherer points out that from that philosopher's conception of Divine symbols, material figures could serve as symbols for the Divine only because matter itself contained a spark of divinity:

"In more general terms a symbol, for Skovoroda, had to participate in, or perhaps, be like that which it symbolized. Of course a symbol also had to be different from that which it symbolized or there would have been no need for symbols. Skovoroda, therefore, argued for the use of material figures as symbols of the Divine, because matter was both like and unlike God".<sup>3</sup>

While discussing the merits of symbols in defining the intangible thoughts and feelings of men, Skovoroda was fully aware that not all men would be able to perceive the Eternal by means of these material figures or symbols. Ern has, in fact, shown that a "specially trained eye" is needed in order to detect the hidden symbolic meanings concealed within the given figure or image.<sup>4</sup> There were those in ancient times, for example, who did not see the figure as a "symbol" and subsequently considered it as an end in itself. That Skovoroda was painfully aware of

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<sup>1</sup> Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, II, p. 102.

<sup>2</sup> Scherer, op. cit., p. 82.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ern, op. cit., p. 228.

the potential deterioration and possible destruction of the symbol is seen in his references to the unfortunate circumstances surrounding the ancient Egyptian sphinx:

"The fortune-telling of this monster concealed a single moral: know yourself. Not untying this knot was the destruction of the spirit, and the deprivation of the world. The Egyptians built statues of this monster along the streets so that, like numerous mirrors striking the eyes, they would bring to mind this self-sufficient knowledge."

The sphinx to the ancient Egyptians was a symbol-monument, for within it was concealed the luminous truth, "Know Thyself". Their offspring, however, did not follow in their steps. They lost their head for wisdom, and a portion of their worshipping God fell into decay in that only the ornamental "arts" with their physical enchantments and superstitions remained.<sup>2</sup>

The original monument of their forefathers, which was filled with light, was gradually transformed into an image, an idol, "a lantern without light":

"They removed the essence of wisdom from this symbol, stripped away the purity of its God-worship, and left only a physical piece of art with its attendant magic and superstition. This monument, suffused with the most useful advice for all, became a temple which had a mouth but did not speak. It only beautified the streets, and was now born as the source of falsehood."

A similar phenomena took place in ancient Greece. When amongst the Athenians there were no more sages (such as Socrates), then "the fountain,

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<sup>1</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, *op. cit.*, p. 320. Quoted after the translation by Scherer, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* Quoted after the translation by Scherer, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

that waters the garden of society, became contaminated and trampled by a herd of swine. They were a mob of philosophical apes, who, apart from their comical masks 'recall the philosophical garb and beard), they had no essence of veritable wisdom". A great number at that time "of the asses were named as mules, and the mules as colts". <sup>1</sup>

Skovoroda, writing of the Persians in like manner, declared that,

"Zoroaster depicted the Sun in these words, 'Hear us! Blessed, all-seeing, all-possessing, and eternal eye'. Hence the ancient Persians worshipped the sun . . . The eye however gave cause to depict the monument as men, beasts, brutes, birds, fish and reptiles. And from this came the occasion for idolatry. Baseness, seeing the sculpted or painted figures in places of honor, and not penetrating to the Divine principle hidden within them . . . seized upon the insignificant canopy of figures and wallowed in it." <sup>2</sup>

All of this was, as expressed by Ern, a historical blackout, a corruption of the symbol, transferring it from a monument into an idol-image, a decay of symbolic thought and cognition of the world. <sup>3</sup>

Because Skovoroda understood superstition to be precisely the loss of "double-vision" and the resulting destruction of the symbol, he considered it as the most baneful feature of human life. <sup>4</sup> For this reason he wrote that,

"Nothing is more harmful than the symbol which is built for the chief good, but becomes corrupt. Nothing is more fatal for society than superstition: it is the camouflage for hypocrites, the mask for swindlers, the protection for parasites, and the spear and the torch for the childish-minded". <sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 332.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 369. Quoted after Scherer's translation, op. cit., pp. 83-84.

<sup>3</sup> Ern, op. cit., p. 227.

<sup>4</sup> Scherer, op. cit., p. 84.

<sup>5</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 362. Quoted after Scherer's translation, op. cit., pp. 84-85.



Having expressed such strong sentiments for the demise of the ancient symbol, one can now more readily appreciate the relevance Skovoroda placed upon the role of symbols in his own philosophy. He did not limit himself, as did many other philosophers, to a mere re-definition of one empty term with another. On the contrary, the Ukrainian philosopher introduced a new and unique content into the realm of philosophic thought in the Ukraine of the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century. Ern characterizes this remarkable revolutionary innovation by Skovoroda in one succinct phrase:

"Онъ сознательно вернулъ серьезное значеніе символу и сделалъ символъ одной изъ центральныхъ категорій своего философствованія . . ." <sup>1</sup>

Since the symbol occupies such an important place in his life and thought, it would be well to sketch its evolution and then examine the ways it actually influenced Skovoroda during his formative years.

#### EVOLUTION OF SYMBOLS

As mentioned earlier, it is generally believed that the use of symbols developed from an innate urge by early man to express his most profound religious thoughts and emotions into some tangible, understandable form. In an effort to accomplish this most difficult assignment, Skovoroda has shown that a special "symbolic language" was devised by the ancients as a means of "expressing the inexpressible":

"Ancient sages had their own special language where they expressed their thoughts through imagery as if with words. Those images were figures of heavenly and earthly creatures where, for example, the sun depicted truth. A circle, or a snake coiled in a circle, represented eternity. An anchor - decision or resolution. A dove - shyness, stork <sup>2</sup> piety. Seed and grain - thought and ideas . . ." <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>

Ern, op. cit., p. 223.

<sup>2</sup>

Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 268.

Comparable traditions were evident in the culture of the ancient Egyptians whose symbolic writing was one form of hieroglyphic writing. Clement of Alexandria, a Greek Christian theologian of the second century A. D., gives a detailed exposition and classification of the symbolic Egyptian text which is worth noting at this point:

"Єгиптяни навчають тих, хто в них учиться, спершу того письма, що зветься в них лис-тівне, потім удруге - гієратичного письма, що вживається в святих книгах, відтак, на-решті, гієрогліфічного письма. Це останє поділяється, зі свого боку, на два роди: перше подає безпосередньо знаки звуків, друге є символічне письмо знаками. Сим-волічне письмо або зображує речі безпосе-редньо через наслідування, або подає сим-волічні знаки /тропічно/, або висловлює думки через порівняння при допомозі певних загадок /енігматично/. Так вони роблять коло, щоб визначити сонце, серповатий знак, щоб визначити місяць. . . ."

Clement concludes his description of these Egyptian hieroglyphics by stat-  
ing that,

" . . . Символічним засобом вони користують-ся, коли за деякою подобою /значіння/ пред-метів переносять або прикладають до чогось иншого, почасти необмінюючи, почасти зміню-ючи їх. А це хай буде приклад на третій, енігматичний засіб - инші зорі, за їх кри-волінійний хід, вони визначають тілом змії, зате сонце вони зображають малюнком скара-бея, бо скарабей робить кульку з коров'ячого кіз'яку та котить її поперед себе."

Skovoroda, while referring to the origins of these unique hierogly-  
phics, explains that they were among the first attempts made by man to des-  
cribe and define the "invisible" and secret intangibles of life:

" . . . Були й вигадані образи, напр., сфінкс, сирена, фенікс, семиголовий змій та ин . . .

Образ, що в собі заховує таємницю, звався по-грецьки *Εμβλήματα* Emblema, себто вставлене, вправлене, ніби в каблучку діаманта, напр., зображений гриф із підписом: усяке тіло є трава. Якщо було дві або три такі фігури скласти до купи . . , тоді вони звалися *Σύν-βολον*. Conjectura по-римськи; по-нашому - скинене, звержене . . . Такі фігури, що таємне зображувала вічність, вирізували старі на печатках, на каблучках, на посуді, на таблицях, на стінах храмів, тимто вони і звалися Hieroglyphica, себто свята фігура або різьба, а товмачі звалися Hierophantes - святоявники або Mystagogi, себто тайноводи,"<sup>1</sup>

It was not long before the early Greeks had "similar figures, which embodied secret hidden powers, and were identified by the Greek philosophers as . . . Emblemata, Hieroglyphica".<sup>2</sup> These primitive forms of symbolism Skovoroda often described as "pagan theology".<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, the invention of the symbol was hailed by the Ukrainian philosopher as one of the greatest and advanced discoveries of man in that day:

"Еще намъ не было слышно имя сіе математика, а наши предки давно уже имѣли построенные храмы Христовой школы. Въ ней обучается весь родъ человеческій сроднаго себе щастія и сія то есть католическая, то есть всеродная наука. Языческіе кумирницы, "божницы" или капища есть тожъ храмы Христова ученія и школы . . ." <sup>4</sup>

Chyzhevs'kyi has shown that although the philosophy of antiquity was primarily founded upon the symbol, its sense or meaning was rarely described beyond the given symbolic form:

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<sup>1</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, *op. cit.*, pp. 268-269. Quoted after Chyzhevs'kyi's translation, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 373.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 75, 146, 328, 355.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 226-227.

"Філософія античності /в її головних течіях, таксамо як і патристика, як містика середньовіччя та нових часів, як і ціла низка течій новітньої філософії/ романтика/, були наскрізь символічні, вони не вияшнювали, що правда, сенсу цієї символіки філософічно, та іноді навіть не підкреслювали отверто та ясно символічного характеру власної методи".

It was not until the time of Plato (427? - 347? B.C.) that the symbol began to be more closely examined and discussed in terms of its nature, purpose and function in philosophical thought.<sup>2</sup>

The symbolic interpretation of the Bible by Skovoroda was not, therefore, something really new or unique in the development of metaphysical thought down through the ages. Under the influence of Platonic and Biblical thought, the early Greek Fathers, especially of the Alexandrian School (Philo, Clement, Origen, etc), took a highly symbolic view of the Scriptures and of the universe as a whole. During this creative period, the Bible was approached allegorically and symbolically, and in this they were followed in the West by Ambrose, Augustine, and Gregory the Great, whose symbolic cast of thought is manifest in their allegorical exegesis.<sup>3</sup>

Chyzhevs'kyi cites a number of interesting quotations from the writings of Philo, Tertullian, Origen and Clement of Alexandria which reflect a remarkable similarity of thought with that of Skovoroda. Philo, for instance, clearly placed a symbolical interpretation upon his understanding of the Scriptures, for he wrote, "after a literal narration it is essential to render the allegorical sense . . . because almost everything in the (Bible - JRP) has an allegorical meaning".<sup>4</sup> Similarly, Origen

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<sup>1</sup> Chyzhevs'kyi, Fil'osofiia, op. cit., p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> A. Dulles, "Symbol in Revelation", New Catholic Encyclopedia, op. cit., p. 862.

<sup>4</sup> Chyzhevs'kyi, Fil'osofiia, op. cit., p. 29.

observed that "the 'letter' of the Scriptures is the visible covering, the 'husk', the sense being hidden beneath this surface spirit" <sup>1</sup>, while Tertullian had devised a classification of symbols: *figurae*, *aenigmata*, *allegoriae*, *parabola*e. <sup>2</sup>

In the Middle Ages, symbolism in religious art and literature became progressively more exuberant. <sup>3</sup> By the XVI<sup>th</sup> and XVII<sup>th</sup> centuries, the allegorical method of interpreting the Bible was continued in the works of N. Conti, Philippi Picenelli and, in some instances, in George Bruno. <sup>4</sup>

The beginning of the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century saw the publication in the Russian language of Vetstenyi Henrykh's *Symbola et emblemata selecta*, which was destined to have a tremendous impact upon Skovoroda's metaphysical thought as we shall see later. <sup>5</sup> It is important to note, however, that during the XVI<sup>th</sup> and XVII<sup>th</sup> centuries, the expression of thought by means of symbols, images and metaphors was greatly expanded, and for many philosophers and intellectuals it soon became an accepted form of meditation and contemplation. <sup>6</sup>

So widespread was the use of symbols during this period, that the Kievan Academy offered special courses in the "allegoric interpretation of the Bible" to its prospective students of theology and religion. <sup>7</sup> F. Prokopovych, the distinguished Ukrainian professor of rhetoric and religion

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<sup>1</sup> Chyzhevs'kyi, *Fil'osofia*, op. cit., p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> A. Dulles, op. cit., p. 862.

<sup>4</sup> Kyryk, "Svit symvoliv H. S. Skovorody", Vid Vyshens'koho do Skovorody, op. cit., p. 117.

<sup>5</sup> Chyzhevs'kyi, *Narysy*, op. cit., pp. 41-63.

<sup>6</sup> Kyryk, "Svit symvoliv H. S. Skovorody", Vid Vyshens'koho do Skovorody, op. cit., p. 117.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

at the Kievan Academy during the years 1704-1715<sup>1</sup>, wrote that the teachings of the Holy Scriptures would not impede scientific discoveries because these texts are to be "understood allegorically and not literally".<sup>2</sup> Reliable historic sources indicate that during Skovoroda's attendance at the Academy in Kyiv, there were certain courses in philosophy available which dealt primarily with the study of symbols and their relationship to terminological means of expression. D. P. Kyryk describes one of these lectures as taught by M. Kozachyns'kyi:

"На символічне, а не буквальне розуміння Біблії Сковороду, очевидно, нагтовхували також читані в академії курси філософії, в яких чимало місця відводилося питанням семіотики. Наприклад, у курсі філософії М. Козачинського /курс читався з 1743 по 1745 р./ міститься розділ "Про знаки", в якому докладно розглядаються види знаків, з'ясовується природа слова як умовна знака, аналізується відношення слова до речі і поняття тощо . . ."<sup>3</sup>

That the symbol was popular in Ukrainian literature during the XVII<sup>th</sup> and XVIII<sup>th</sup> centuries is not so unusual for this period generally denotes the epoch of Ukrainian Baroque.<sup>4</sup> With the approach of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century, however, the popularity of the symbol in the Ukrainian Baroque tradition quickly faded with the advent of the Romantic Movement. Although the symbol was still quite fashionable in Western philosophical circles<sup>5</sup>, it had clearly lost its appeal in the Ukraine by the XIX<sup>th</sup> century as Chyzhevs'kyi explains so well:

<sup>1</sup> Kratkaia Literaturnaia Entsiklopediia (Moskva, "Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia", 1971), Vol. 6, p. 31. Hereafter referred to as "KLE", p.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted after Kyryk, "Svit symboliv H. S. Skovorody", op. cit., p. 117. See also, A. N. Pypin, Istoriia russkoi literatury (St. Petersburg, 1902) Vol. III, p. 201.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 117-118.

<sup>4</sup> S. Pohorilyj, "Symvoly u Skovorody", Ridna Nyva (Winnipeg, "Spilka Ekkleziia", 1974), p. 98.

<sup>5</sup> Chyzhevs'kyi, Fil'osofia, op. cit., pp. 30-32.

"It was not possible, however, for the Slavs to revert to baroque literature, as baroque had done with the literature of the Late Middle Ages. There was an unbridgeable barrier between the literature of the baroque period and that of the newly emerging romanticism: on the one hand the language of baroque poetry, and in part its poetics, was entirely antiquated; on the other hand, many of the baroque poets were still to too great an extent under the influence of ecclesiastical ideology. In any case the Slav romanticists seldom referred back to the baroque sources, they created their romantic ideology with the help of the newer philosophy".

Thus, at the turn of the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century, Ukrainian literature experienced not only a change in style (baroque-romanticism), but also a revolution in language. As a late representative of Baroque mysticism, Skovoroda was quickly brushed aside into the shadows of his era and was, in large measure, forgotten.<sup>2</sup>

Ironically, some of the most important figures of the Romantic period in Ukraine could not comprehend the mode of thinking or means of expression in Skovoroda. Symbolism in his creative works was taken literally, while his Old Ukrainian language was thought to have been Russianized. Moreover, his philosophical works within a short time were branded as antiquated, unintelligible, extravagant and carrionic.<sup>3</sup>

Fortunately, this prodigious philosopher-writer was rediscovered by Bahalii, Ern, and more recently by Chyzhevs'kyi as they began to approach him and his intriguing philosophy by means of his "forgotten symbol." In so doing, it appears as if they were primarily responsible for the remarkable resurgence of interest in Skovoroda evident over the past few decades.

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<sup>1</sup> Chyzhevs'kyi, Comparative History of Slavic Literatures, op. cit., p. 121.

<sup>2</sup> Pohorilyj, op. cit., p. 98.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

## INFLUENCE OF SYMBOLS ON SKOVORODA

It would be a great error to ignore the decisive meaning of allegory and symbols in the creative works of Hryhorii Skovoroda.<sup>1</sup> This conclusion is supported by V. Ern who has shown that Skovoroda revived the practical use of the symbol in his day and made it central to his philosophy.<sup>2</sup> "You cannot love a man's heart", says Ern by quoting that same philosopher, "unless you appreciate his mind".<sup>3</sup>

The studies of Chyzhevs'kyi reveal that Skovoroda not only spoke in a symbolic language, but that his entire life and thought was structured upon the figurative concept:

"У Сковороди поняття ніби жевріють тільки, дрімають під покровом образів та символів. Кожен символ /як це було і в досократиків/ не має у нього твердого певно-усталеного, різко-обмеженого значіння, а має певну множність значінь, межі значности яких почасти сумежні одна з одного, почасти перехрещуються, почасти цілком різні . . . Символіка живе тут повним життям і стремить вібрати в себе понятійне, означає, "сухе". Сковорода одріжняється від досократиків тим, що він має за собою велику традицію філософічного розвитку, усю "апаратуру", весь "інструментарій" понять античної філософії, патристики і почасти середньовіччя. Але він бере їх, як образи і символи, ставить до них, так би мовити, як дитина, і грається з ними, відбудовуючи замість сухих конструкцій живі символічні будови, що не є, одначе, безсистемні, беззмістовні і філософічно незначні".<sup>4</sup>

By his own admission, the Ukrainian sage often referred to the Greek and Roman philosophers of antiquity for some of his inspiration and meditation. His works are riddled with direct and indirect references and

<sup>1</sup> Ivan'o, "Nove dislidzhennia pro Hryhoriia Skovorody", Dnipro, op. cit., p. 149.

<sup>2</sup> Ern, op. cit., p. 223.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 211.

<sup>4</sup> Chyzhevs'kyi, Narysy, op. cit., p. 39.



acknowledgments to the ancients who initially discovered the intrinsic advantages of expressing intangible thoughts and emotions through symbols:

"Баснословныя древнихъ мудрецовъ книги, есть то самая предревняя богословія. Они такъ же не вещественное естество Божіе изображали фигурами, дабы невидимое было видимымъ, представляемое фигурами тварей".<sup>1</sup>

And again,

" . . . древніе мудрецы имѣли свой языкъ особливый, они изображали мысли свои образами, будто словами. Образа тѣ были фигуры небесныхъ и земныхъ тварей, наприм. солнце значило истину. Кольцо, или змій, въ кольцо свитьй, - вѣчность. Якорь - утверждение или совѣтъ. Голубь - стыдливость. Птица бусель - богочтеніе. Зерно и сѣмя, - помышление и мнѣніе. Были и вымышленные образа, наприм.: Сфинксъ, сирена,<sup>2</sup> фениксъ, семиглавный змій и прочая . . ." <sup>2</sup>

During his lifetime, Skovoroda acquired an excellent knowledge of Latin and German together with the Greek and Hebrew languages. He possessed an insatiable love for the Bible which was "the most influential book in his life".<sup>3</sup> It was the Bible, his "world of symbols" and ancient philosophy which, for the most part, formed the basis of his philosophy.<sup>4</sup>

His multi-lingual skills enabled him to become familiar with the works of many of the pre-Socratic philosophers as indicated by the preceding quotations. More importantly, though, was his erudite knowledge of Pythagoras, Socrates and Plato as well as Epicurus, Demosthenes, Aristotle,

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<sup>1</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 355.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 268-269.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>4</sup> Chyzhevs'kyi, Narysy, op. cit., pp. 40-41.

Philo and Plutarch. In addition, he was well versed in Roman literature having an acquaintance with the works of Horace, Vergil, Cicero, Marcus Aurelius, Marcus Lucanus, Seneca, Lucretius, Persius, and Terence.<sup>1</sup> His encyclopedic knowledge included a substantial awareness of the writings of the early Church Fathers such as Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Dionysius of Alexandria (the Areopagite), Gregory the Great, Isidore, Augustine, and others.<sup>2</sup>

Kovalens'kyi has little to say about Skovoroda's travels and experiences in the West except that, while there, he was able to become acquainted with many "learned people".<sup>3</sup> His Western excursion most likely brought him into contact with the scientific thoughts of that time for he expresses a somewhat sophisticated knowledge of Newton, Copernicus and other scientifically related topics in his works.<sup>4</sup> This exposure, while doubted by some scholars<sup>5</sup>, obviously broadened the scope of his learning, forcing him to re-evaluate much of his former, largely theological education.<sup>6</sup>

Some scholars of Skovorodian thought, have written that he "undertook a journey to the Holy Places; he went to Jerusalem, Mount Athos and Constantinople . . ." <sup>7</sup> Several important studies have shown that by 1753

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<sup>1</sup> Vozniak, op. cit., pp. 77-78.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>3</sup> Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, II, p. 490.

<sup>4</sup> Vozniak, op. cit., p. 78. In his works, Skovoroda mentions the planet Saturn (Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, I, p. 252), the possibility of life on other heavenly bodies, viz. the moon (Ibid., p. 223), the achievements of man in the study of the earth's interior, seas, etc., the existence of many worlds, the discovery of ranges on the moon, etc (Ibid., p. 222).

<sup>5</sup> Ern, op. cit., pp. 55-59.

<sup>6</sup> Scherer, op. cit., p. 11.

<sup>7</sup> F. P. Lubianovskii, "Vospominaniia Fedora Petrovicha Lubianovskago", Russkii Arkhiv, 1872, col. 106. Quoted after Scherer, op. cit., p. 13.

Skovoroda had met with the teachings of the German mystics and that this contact was to have a marked influence on his mature work.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps no other single work (besides the Bible) has had such a profound impact upon Skovoroda's creativity than Vetstenyi Henrykh's Symbola et emblemata selecta, published in Amsterdam in 1705.<sup>2</sup> Chyzhevs'kyi, having gained access to this rare symbolic monument, is convinced that Skovoroda used it as a primary source for his philosophic thought, because many of his key phrases, illustrations and most important symbols have been borrowed directly from Henrykh's work.

Before attempting to examine some of these "similarities", it would be fitting to consider Chyzhevs'kyi's description of this important symbolic source:

"Книга має 840 гравюр /мідеритів/, що сполучені по 6 на таблицях; до кожного з елементами малюнків це видання подає короткий текст вісьмома мовами /церковнослов'янською, до речі, з незначними українськими елементами, латинською, французькою, італійською, еспанською, англійською, голландською та німецькою."<sup>3</sup>

The first edition of this unique volume became an immediate rarity as it was said that the vessel transporting this important anthology of symbols to St. Petersburg sank somewhere off the shores of Sweden. Later republications of these rare drawings and texts appeared in 1743, 1788, and 1811 and were imitated (at least in part) in a so-called "Nurnberg Collection".<sup>4</sup> Chyzhevs'kyi goes on to show that the influence of the

<sup>1</sup> Chyzhevs'kyi, Fil'osofia, op. cit., p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Compare, Dr. Dmytro Chyzhevs'kyi, "Pro Deiaki Dzherela Symvoliky Hr. Skovorody", Pratsi Ukrain's'koho Vysokoho Pedahohichnoho Instytutu Im. Mykhaila Drahomanova u Prazi, Naukovyi Zbirnyk, Vol. II (Praha, Ukr. Vysok. Ped. Instytutu, 1932), p. 407. Hereafter cited as Chyzhevs'kyi, Pratsi, p.

<sup>3</sup> Chyzhevs'kyi, Fil'osofia, op. cit., p. 37.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

Symbola et emblemata was widely experienced in Ukrainian and Russian spiritual circles due to its immense popularity.

Following an in-depth study of the Amsterdam Collection, Chyzhevs'kyi concludes, as noted earlier, that the majority of Skovoroda's most important symbols and emblems were borrowed from this source.<sup>1</sup> While many such instances have been cited and verified by Chyzhevs'kyi<sup>2</sup>, the following quotation mentions a number of typical examples where Skovoroda uses a symbol in the same sense as it was rendered in the Symbola et emblemata. The numerals indicate the page-location of the given symbol as they appear in the edition of Skovoroda's works published by Bonch-Bruevich:

"В амстердамському збірнику знайдемо в тому самому значінні, що й у Сковороди: бусла /104, 491, 283/, малпу /557/, голуба /372, 769/, оленя /834/, сирени /577/, фенікса /57, 135, 320, 649/; ростинна символіка Сковороди має, як ми побачимо далі . . . інше джерело, але знайдемо в "Symbola et emblemata selecta" колос у схожому до Сковородиноного значіння /582/, процвілий посох /71/; символи, запозичені з неживої природи та артефакти знайдемо в амстердамському збірнику майже всі - магнет /182/, компас /129/, веселку /384/, сонце /142, 219, 260, 464, 518, 576 та інші/, воду, джерело, потік, криницю зустрінемо нераз /64, 69, 693, 834 та не інде/, також: скелю /заголовна сторінка, 163, 462, 482, 576, 806/, побачимо й лабіринт /443/, перстень /168/, годинник /35, 539/, сітку /768/, аптеку, якір, колесо, коло й т.д."

One should be aware at this point that, although such extensive "borrowings" were made by that philosopher, his own creative works were nonetheless unique in that Skovoroda used the symbols from this, and other

<sup>1</sup> Chyzhevs'kyi, Fil'osofia, op. cit., p. 38.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 34-47. See also, Chyzhevs'kyi, Pratsi, op. cit., pp. 405-423.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 39.

sources, as a means of expressing an original philosophy.

Before the publication in Amsterdam of the Symbola et emblemata in 1705, other analogous collections on symbols and emblems had already circulated within Ukraine. For example, between 1632-1633, P. Mohyla had allegedly purchased a certain Emblemata, while Epiphanius Slavynets'kyi, Stefan Iavors'kyi, and F. Prokopovych were known to have had similar valuable acquisitions on symbolic and emblematic topics in their libraries. <sup>1</sup>

During the XVI<sup>th</sup>, XVII<sup>th</sup> and XVIII<sup>th</sup> centuries, these, and other symbolic works had a definite influence upon the art, literature and spiritual life of Ukraine. It was almost inevitable, therefore, that the works of the Ukrainian philosopher-writer were to be influenced by them also. <sup>2</sup>

Not only did these early books on symbols and emblems influence Skovoroda and other Ukrainian writers and theologians, but their value was often recognized and adopted by many well known representatives of Russian literature. Ivan Sergeyevich Turgenev (1818-1883), a leading Russian novelist and playwright of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century, specifically mentioned a certain "Symbola et emblemata" in his novel, A Nest of Gentlefolk <sup>3</sup> where his hero, Lavretskyi, during his childhood in the 1820's, had become familiar with it in his spare time.

Chyzhevs'kyi has cited H. Derzhavin (1743-1816), the greatest Russian poet of the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century, V. Zhukovs'kyi (1783-1852), a leading Romantic poet and translator of the early XIX<sup>th</sup> century, and Fyodor Tiutchev (1803-1873), one of Russia's greatest poets, as having been

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<sup>1</sup> Chyzhevs'kyi, Pratsi, op. cit., p. 416.

<sup>2</sup> Chyzhevs'kyi, Fil'osofia, op. cit., p. 41.

<sup>3</sup> I. S. Turgenev, Romany (Moskva, "Detskaia literatura", 1970), "Dvorianskoe Gnezdo", p. 177.

directly or indirectly influenced by those same symbols and emblems. <sup>1</sup>

A comparable trend was evident in the works of Herzen (1812-1870), a leading Russian revolutionary thinker and philosopher of the mid-XIX<sup>th</sup> century, V. Belinsky (1811-1848) the Russian literary critic, political thinker and philosopher of the 1830's and 1840's, and later in Alexey Remizov (1877-), a prose writer of the XX<sup>th</sup> century. <sup>2</sup>

Since the use of symbols in art, literature and philosophy was not an unusual phenomenon in Ukraine, (especially between the XVI<sup>th</sup> and XVIII<sup>th</sup> centuries), it becomes difficult to understand why so few scholars have ever attempted to approach Skovoroda from the symbolic point of view. The Ukrainian philosopher had often re-iterated in his philosophy that to see "superficially" or to interpret "literally" was nothing less than a return to "paganism" and "idol worship". <sup>3</sup> It was, in fact, a damnable heresy. <sup>4</sup> The philosopher-writer was firmly convinced that literal and superficial interpretations of the Bible had spawned the proliferation of "warring factions" and dissident "sects" in his society. <sup>5</sup>

It would appear that the divergent opinions and views on Skovoroda discussed in the first chapter of this essay bear witness to the different and conflicting perspectives which have arisen as the result of superficial and literal interpretations being made of his philosophy. Prime examples illustrating the results of these "superficial" and "literal" evaluations

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<sup>1</sup>

Chyzhevs'kyi, Pratsi, op. cit., pp. 418-419.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 419.

<sup>3</sup> Ern, op. cit., p. 228. See also, Likhachev, op. cit., pp. 83-90.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 362.

of Skovoroda can be seen in Belinsky's negative and sarcastic appraisal when he wrote, "Oh incomparable master Khoma <sup>1</sup>! How magnificent you are in your stoic indifference to everything earthly . . ." <sup>2</sup> Then there was the Russian author, V. Nikolskyi, who summarized Skovoroda's thought as:

" . . . confused and inconsistent. While it is a little pantheistic, a little rationalistic, and a little mystical it is neither the first, the second, nor the third: this is so not because Skovoroda reconciled these world views into some kind of a higher synthesis, but simply because he could not unravel one from the other." <sup>3</sup>

By their own admission, some more recent Soviet Ukrainian scholars such as A. P. Markov, I. Ivan'o, and D. P. Kyryk, have admitted that many of their colleagues have often seriously misrepresented and contradicted Skovoroda by their superficial and literal interpretations:

"З нашого погляду, це можна пояснити, зокрема, тим, що дослідники нехтували семантичним аналізом термінології Сковороди і словесну форму виразу сприймали в буквальному розумінні. Тому в концепціях дореволюційних авторів український філософ - теолог, послідовник західних містиків /М. Краснюк, Ф. Зеленогорський та інші/. З цієї ж причини радянські дослідники Т. Білич і П. Попов вважають Сковороду матеріалістом і атеїстом. В інтерпретації І. А. Табачникова він - дуаліст. Деякі роботи Сковороди З. Мелещенко називає теологічними. М.П. Редько характеризує філософа як ідейного противника релігії та ворога офіційної церкви. В питаннях онтології Сковорода нібито

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Khoma Brut, the central character in Nikolai Hohol's story "Vij." He was a seminarian and philosophy student in Kiev, who, while travelling home for the summer, experienced a series of extraordinary adventures. The last of these was his face to face meeting with the monster, Vij, which encounter resulted in Khoma Brut's death. (Footnote, Scherer, op. cit., p. 163).

<sup>2</sup> V. G. Belinsky, Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii, 13 vols., (Moscow, 1953-1959), I, p. 304.

<sup>3</sup> V. Nikolskyi, "Ukrains'kyi Sokrat", Istorichesky Vestnik, 1895, LX, p. 222. Quoted after Scherer, op. cit., p. 165.

мав два погляди на матерію. Більшість рад-  
янських авторів вважають, що Сковорода був  
матеріалістом. ." <sup>1</sup>

Others, such as M. P. Red'ko were known to have omitted key phrases from Skovoroda's original text, in order to substantiate their preferred conclusions. <sup>2</sup>

Vladimir Ern, one of the first scholars to rediscover the Ukrainian philosopher, insisted that the crucial determinant in comprehending Skovoroda's life and works was totally dependent upon one's ability to grasp his symbolic method of expression, namely, his symbolic images and unique philosophic terminology. <sup>3</sup> From all apparent indications, this appears to be by far the most reasonable and logical procedure one must follow in order to perceive the more deeper meanings of Skovoroda's philosophy.

#### SKOVORODA'S SYMBOLIC TERMINOLOGY

Most, if not all, of the world's most distinguished philosophers who have created an original philosophic system have, at the same time, devised an appropriate vocabulary in order to more easily facilitate an accurate expression of those obscure thoughts and concepts that are difficult to define by ordinary means. Skovoroda was no exception, for he is generally recognized as the first to have coined new words for a philosophical vocabulary in Ukraine. <sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A. P. Markov, op. cit., p. 110. See also, Ivan Ivan'o, "Nove Doslidzhennia Pro Hryhoriia Skovorody", op. cit., pp. 147-149; and D. P. Kyryk, "Semantychnyi metod v istoryko-filosofs'komu doslidzhenni", Z Istarii Filosofii Na Ukraini (Kyiv, Akademiia Nauk Ukrain's'koi RSR, 1967), pp. 82-91.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 110-111.

<sup>3</sup> Ern, op. cit., p. 43.

<sup>4</sup> Dziuba, op. cit., p. 70.



We have already seen that the apparent indifference by scholars toward his terminology and the scarcity of comprehensive studies on this important topic have greatly contributed to the diametric and confusing viewpoints already in existence. Nevertheless, inasmuch as thought and language have always been inseparably linked together, and the fact that genuine understanding can only exist on the basis of well-chosen words, it is obvious that a special expressive vocabulary is absolutely essential to any meaningful philosophy.

Chyzhevs'kyi argues that the obvious misunderstanding of Skovoroda's philosophy stems not so much from the peculiarity or complexity of his thought as it does from a basic difficulty in comprehending the philosopher's fundamental method of expression:

"Сковороду не легко розуміти. Це так! І це тому, що його мова не є звичайна "наукова" мова, в якій вживаються твердо і міцно усталені слова-терміни. Мова Сковороди є мова образів і символів. Навіть ті слова, які вже придбали науково-філософічне значіння в сучасній йому філософії, або ще в античності, він повертає до їх первісного образного значіння. Мова Сковороди повертається до материнського лона символіки. Тут на допомогу йому приходять і символи християнська, як отців церкви, так і української полемічної та проповідної літератури XVI-XVIII віків."

Among those who failed to distinguish between Skovoroda's symbolic terminology and the contemporary use of similar words was the Ukrainian romantic, P. Kulish, who at one time had written,

"In speech by deed he was a sage,  
In speech by word - a defunct corpse.  
. . . only a learned mouse is versed,  
In the hieroglyphics of Skovoroda".<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Chyzhevs'kyi, Narysy, op. cit., p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> Tvory Panteleimona Kulisha (L'viv, 1909), Vol. 2, p. 322.

The Soviet scholar, D. P. Kyryk has written an interesting essay entitled, The Semantic Method in Historio-Philosophical Research where he stresses the importance of studying the meanings of various speech forms, especially concerning the development and changes in the meaning of words and word groups. In addition, he proceeds to illustrate the critical relationship that exists between signs and symbols and what they signify or denote, explaining their importance in this way:

"Значення термінів можна правильно визначити лише тоді, коли спиратись на науково обгрунтовані принципи аналізу слів. Принципи аналізу значень слів, і в першу чергу наукових термінів, розроблені семантикою. Центральною проблемою семантики є питання про значення знака і про відношення знака до денотата /десигната, референта, номінанта/, тобто до позначуваного предмета . . ." <sup>1</sup>

Kyryk's "semantic method of research" leads him to the same conclusion as that deduced by Constantine Kostencheskyi, the celebrated Serbo-Bulgarian paleographer of the XIV<sup>th</sup> century quoted earlier <sup>2</sup>, who insisted that "every letter in each word has its unique meaning and purpose in its given context", and therefore cannot be replaced under any circumstance. Kyryk obviously supports that viewpoint when he contends that Skovoroda's terminology is structured in a delicate "dove-tail" fashion where every term is intimately interlocked with another and can be comprehended only as it is read in its proper context:

"Система термінів завжди будується так, що кожний термін пов'язаний з іншими і його значення розкривається через відношення до них. Дійсне значення кожного окремого терміна можна встановити, лише проаналізувавши систему термінів в цілому. Тому при розкритті змісту термінів необхідно враховувати

<sup>1</sup> D. P. Kyryk, "Semantychnyi metod v istoryko-filosofs'komu doslidzhenni", op. cit., p. 83. Hereafter quoted as Kyryk, Semantychnyi metod, p.

<sup>2</sup> See pp. 36, 43-44.

не тільки їх семантичне значення /відношення знака до денотата/, а й синтаксичне /відношення знаків один до одного/." <sup>1</sup>

A proper understanding of Skovoroda's philosophy, therefore, demands that a thorough analysis and exposure be made of such key symbolic terms as: "натура видима", "натура невидима", "тварь", "Бог", "начало", "вѣчность", "видимость", "невидимость", "ничто", "нѣчтось", "вещество", "ипостась", "матеріа", "форма", <sup>2</sup> and so forth.

In keeping with the pre-determined outline of this study, these terms will be analysed more fully in the next chapter as they are respectively related to the philosopher's various metaphysical themes.

In his work, "Kol'tso," Skovoroda specially underscores the characteristics of the symbolic method of thought as he describes the nature, evolution, and meaning of the symbol, etc. Our study thus far has revealed that the ancients invented their own special language to express their mystical thoughts not by words, but through images and symbols. And this is precisely how the Ukrainian philosopher-writer believes the Bible was originally written. Therefore, the only way it can be logically understood is through the exclusive use of symbols, because "every last sound and word in the Bible breathes symbolically and is totally dependent upon them". <sup>3</sup> Skovoroda observed that, " . . . всѣ в библии пріятныіе имена, наприклад: свѣтъ, радость, веселіе, живот, воскресеніе, путь, общаніе, рай, сладость и пр. - всѣ тѣ означают сей блаженный мир". <sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kyryk, Semantychnyi metod, op. cit., pp. 83-84.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 84.

<sup>3</sup> Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, I, p. 312.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 228.

While endeavoring to explain the purpose of his symbols, Skovoroda appears to have established a very important maxim for our careful consideration: The aim of every Biblical symbol consists in focussing man's attention upon an understanding of the "beginning", "invisible", and "eternal" nature. For example:

"Сіе истинное и единое начало есть зерном и плодом, центром и гаванью, началом и концом всіх книг еврейских. "Вначаль бѣ слово." Сирѣчь: всей библіи слово создано в том, чтобъ была она единственнымъ монументомъ начала . . . Нѣтъ в ней рѣчи, ни слова, чтобъ не дышало благовѣстіемъ вѣчнаго. ."

In the second place, the sense or meaning of the Bible is to be found in its aim to bring man to an awareness of his spiritual and inner potential, rather than the fleshly and outer appearance. This also, can only be accomplished with the assistance of Biblical images (symbols) to reveal its hidden spiritual truths. Once this is achieved, the "figurative (symbolic) curtain" drops, revealing the "Eternal", "Beginning".<sup>2</sup>

Skovoroda shows in the introduction to his work, "Zhena Lotova" that the scribes who incessantly read the Bible both day and night, saw only its exterior form. The outer world was on their eyes and thereby precluded them from grasping the other world - the invisible.<sup>3</sup>

Having established the importance and purpose of Skovoroda's symbolic terminology in expressing the inner "invisible" concepts of the Bible and of his own philosophy, it now remains for us to see how that philosophic vocabulary is used to define and explain the intangible.

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<sup>1</sup> Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, I, pp. 384-385.

<sup>2</sup> Kyryk, "Svit symboliv H. S. Skovorody", op. cit., p. 122.

<sup>3</sup> Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, I, pp. 401-402.

In so far as the Bible for Skovoroda was a Book about God, and God is the "Beginning" of all existence, then the Bible's primary purpose was to teach about that "Beginning". In the Biblical texts, says Skovoroda, "this veritable Beginning is symbolized by all that which bears resemblance to a beginning".<sup>1</sup> Some typical symbols that the philosopher uses to portray the intrinsic essence of a beginning are the words "ring", "wheel", "circlet", "head", "root", "spark", "father", and so on, including even a "snake". According to Ern, these symbols are basically "self-explanatory"<sup>2</sup>, once they are accepted figuratively and not literally, leading our minds to an understanding of deeper hidden truths.

For example, the "Beginning" can be symbolized by a serpent in that when it is coiled in a circle (holding its tail between its teeth as illustrated in the Appendix, Figure # 11), it is difficult to distinguish its beginning from its end.<sup>3</sup> The serpent (often portrayed as a symbol of the Bible) is used by Skovoroda in his works, "Kol'tso", "Ikona Alkiviads-kaia", "Zhena Lotova", and "Potop Zmiyn".<sup>4</sup> Thus, in his dialogue, "Potop Zmiyn" the philosopher stresses that in the figurative or "symbolical world" (the Bible), every being and object is designated by a system of figures (where every figure has a specific meaning), and the serpent figure naturally has its own distinct significance.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, I, p. 296.

<sup>2</sup> Ern, op. cit., p. 224.

<sup>3</sup> Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, I, p. 297.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 296-297; 373, 376-377, 400; 426, 434; 550-560.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 549. Skovoroda employed the term "serpent" to emphasize once more that the Bible, in spite of its Divinity, shared in the world of appearances or perishable figures. Compare Scherer, op. cit., pp. 80-97.

There is a sense, however, where the serpent-symbol is used by Skovoroda as a direct antithesis to the way it is portrayed in "Potop Zmiyn", as a figure of "Eternity" or of the "Beginning". The difference is primarily dependent upon whether the snake is symbolized as "coiled in a circle" or "stretched out upon the ground". In the first instance it would denote the "Invisible nature" while in the latter aspect it describes the "temporal", "perishing", "external" form. "You know what the serpent is," he wrote, "know that he and God are the same. Falsity but truth; foolishness, but wisdom; evil but good".<sup>1</sup>

By a superficial or literal interpretation, many have concluded that Skovoroda was either "inconsistent", "disorganized" and "self-contradictory", or else he was "heretical" and "atheistic" in that he described God as possessing qualities of falsity, foolishness and evil. Yet, herein is the supreme importance of grasping Skovoroda's use of symbols and comprehending the "method" of his philosophic expression.

In the abovementioned quotation, the Ukrainian philosopher simply presented an identification of evil with good. But he could not finish with such a simple identification of good and evil. Rather, he attempted to show that evil had the inherent potential of becoming good. "The serpent," says Skovoroda, "only does harm when it crawls along on the earth," and "we, like children, crawl along on the earth and the serpent crawls after us." But, he added, "If you raise your head, then you can raise your whole body", and the serpent will become harmless, evil will be overcome.

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<sup>1</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 512.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 513.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 514.

From this, we can see that falsity, foolishness and evil was not equated with God but connected with the earth. Skovoroda, therefore, later contended that the material world could assist man in his search for God, happiness and good, for "darkness was impressed on us in order that the light might be revealed . . . an observer, having recognized black, will suddenly recognize white". <sup>1</sup>

Examples such as this in the works of the Ukrainian philosopher-writer are too numerous to mention for that would far exceed the purpose and scope of this study. Although a few more of these symbols will be analysed later (according to their relationship with some of the more important philosophic themes in Skovoroda) <sup>2</sup>, the significance of this philosopher's symbolic vocabulary should now be clearly seen.

George Bruno (1548-1600), the poet, philosopher and a late representative of the Italian Renaissance <sup>3</sup>, held similar views concerning the special treatment of Biblical texts as did the Ukrainian philosopher. He taught that all words are polysemantic because they are inseparably linked in a pre-designated manner to the main subject by various means and aspects. The relationship between these words and the subjects they designate, can be understood by the reader or hearer either correctly or incorrectly. Bruno argues that a proper understanding indicates an accurate connection of the word with those subjects as they were originally conceived by the writer or speaker. Conversely, to misunderstand means to fail in the comprehension of the intended relationship of the given words with the subject as intended by the author.

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<sup>1</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 286.

<sup>2</sup> Reference to Skovoroda's "philosophic themes" has been defined and described on the basis of the philosophic content of his works. In reality, Skovoroda did not systematically classify his thought. For further details, see pp. 105-153.

<sup>3</sup> "KLE", op. cit., I, pp. 750-751.

Further, Bruno contended that besides words and phrases, many excerpts and even entire works can be polysemantic. In this respect, he isolates the Bible as being the most polysemantic inasmuch as it contains an infinite number of various meanings. It was his contention that beneath the exterior literal meaning of the Holy Scriptures, there were concealed many different spiritual meanings or connotations. In other words, not only were the very words of God polysemantic but also the teachings of Moses, David, Solomon, and so forth. The Italian philosopher-poet thus concluded that "as in one meaning of God's word are hidden all meanings, so also one meaning can be found in all words". Thus, God's thought in any given letter or word can be compared to be like the spirit dwelling in the flesh. <sup>1</sup>

The paramount significance of Bruno's observations is found in the realization that philosophers have often used words in their creative works that do not always mean the same thing as when they are used in daily conversation. For a proper analysis of any philosophic legacy, therefore, it becomes absolutely essential for one to know the particular method of expression employed by the originator of that philosophy, otherwise a correct evaluation of that system of thought would be impossible. <sup>2</sup>

It now becomes more clearly apparent why so many different and conflicting interpretations of Skovoroda's philosophy have been made:

"Ігнорування або нерозуміння "способу висловлення" мислителя приводило деяких авторів дожовтневого періоду не тільки до хибних висновків про сутність вчення Сковороди, а й до категоричного заперечення будь-якої його вартості. Не вникнувши у

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Kyryk, "Svit symboliv H. S. Skovorody", op. cit., p. 119.

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Ibid.



"спосіб висловлення" філософа, а отже, і не збагнувши сутності його вчення, вони бачили у творах українського мислителя лише незрозуміле нагромадження цитат з Біблії."

In similar fashion, many schisms and sects have occurred in Christendom from man's inability to understand the "language of expression" as used by the Inspired writers of the Bible. Skovoroda was naturally well aware of this common human failing as he taught that the Word of God could not ennoble the human heart unless man understood that the Bible was a "world of symbols", which had to be interpreted symbolically and not physically or literally. He described the Bible as a realm of symbols because, "in it are collected the heavenly, earthly and chthonic creatures. These creatures are to be the chief monuments of our thought in the conception of the Eternal Nature, which is concealed in the perishable as a portrait in its own colours".<sup>2</sup>

V. H. Kooy, in his study of Biblical symbology illustrates the use of symbols by the writers of the Holy Scriptures in such things as words, names, persons, objects, and places. The Bible is shown to contain many examples of prophetic and cultic symbolism "summing up the hopes and expectations, the meaning and significance, the past and future of Israel's faith and history".<sup>3</sup> In the New Testament, symbolism centres mostly around the person of Jesus Christ, His identity, and the significance of His life and ministry. Kooy shows that much of this figurative imagery was borrowed from the Old Testament and Jewish apocalyptic literature. Symbols were

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Kyryk, "Svit symboliv H. S. Skovorody", op. cit., p. 120.

2 Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 496.

3 V. H. Kooy, "Symbol, Symbolism", The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Edited by George Arthur Buttrick, (New York, Abingdon Press, 1962), Vol. 4, pp. 472.

thus used to describe titles, the Christ, salvation, worship, and eschatology.<sup>1</sup>

Since the Bible was a "realm of symbols", it shared the weakness inherent in all symbols, namely, the potential for becoming the base of superstition if it were interpreted on the basis of appearances alone.<sup>2</sup> The proper understanding of Biblical terminology was crucial because, according to Skovoroda, "the speech of the Bible is like the Asian river Meander. It is said that this river flows by the most beautiful places, but its current winds like a snake, and even loses its way, like a palace labyrinth".<sup>3</sup>

Nevertheless, the Ukrainian philosopher-writer argues that for the one who is not easily frustrated by the Bible's symbolic terminology, nor side-tracked by its descriptive narratives through misleading literal interpretations, the intelligent reader "between the empty burial mound of an unrestrained atheism and the foul swamp of a servile superstition, inclining neither to the right nor the left, goes straight to the Divine mountain".<sup>4</sup> In short, when one considers the Biblical language and narratives symbolically, then the inconsistencies and contradictions of literal interpretations disappear. This, of course, is true not only of the Bible, but of the works of Skovoroda themselves.

It should be noted, however, that the Ukrainian philosopher expressed his metaphysical thoughts not only in symbolic words and images, but actually illustrated many of them in descriptive graphic forms. An attempt will now be made to describe and analyse these drawings in the following chapter.

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<sup>1</sup> Kooy, op. cit., pp. 472-476.

<sup>2</sup> Scherer, op. cit., p. 89.

<sup>3</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 167.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 360-361.

## GRAPHIC SYMBOLS

Since few scholars have attempted a serious and comprehensive study of symbols in the philosophy of Skovoroda, the important graphic illustrations that symbolize his philosophy have been sadly neglected and even forgotten. This is difficult to understand because these drawings depict some of the most important abstract concepts in the Ukrainian philosopher's entire system of metaphysical thought.

A considerable number of these figurative sketches originally appeared as component parts of Skovoroda's manuscript, "Alfavyt ili Bukvar Myra", and other works, though few were ever published or described in any detail. Skovoroda described some of these "unpublished" graphic symbols in his dialogue "Kol'tso", where an appropriate explanatory inscription was appended to interpret its symbolic meaning:

" . . . снопъ травы съ сею надписью: всяка плоть трава . . . фигура змѣя, въ кольцо свѣтаго, съ сею надписью: отъ тебе Боже начало, въ тебе же да кончится. Вѣчнаго вѣчностъ такъ же образовалась тремя перстнями или кольцами, межъ собою сѣпленными съ надписью: Сѣи триє, выше всѣхъ стихій. Сердце устремившееся къ вѣчному означалось образомъ стрѣлы, горъ стремящейся къ звѣздѣ, съ такою подписью: довлѣтъ мнѣ одинъ онъ. Сердце вѣчностію просвѣщенное образовалось кустарникомъ или насажденіемъ плодопринесшимъ зерно, падающее сверху поверхности земной, съ подписью: Чаю будущія жизни. Изображалось и орломъ взирающимъ и возлетающимъ къ Солнцу съ подписью: горю къ безсмертію. Такъ же змѣемъ, совлекшимъ свою ветость весною и обновившимъ юность. Я недавно написалъ тайнственный образъ. Онъ представляетъ море съ берегомъ, съ котораго летитъ на другую сторону моря ласточка, съ надписью: зимою нѣтъ здѣсь для меня покою".<sup>1</sup>

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Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 269.

As noted earlier, Skovoroda is known to have reproduced many of these graphic symbols from the important Symbola et emblemata published in Amsterdam in 1705. Others were appropriately modified, when they were specifically adapted to his philosophy, and are found scattered throughout his various dialogues whenever truths of an eternal or intangible nature are being discussed.

Chyzhevs'kyi has noted three specific examples of Skovoroda's graphic symbols that have been preserved in the works of Bonch-Bruevich and Bahalii:

"Ті три малюнки, що, завдяки Багалієві та Бонч-Бруєвичеві, ми знаємо зі спадщини Сковороди /а таких малюнків є в нього ще не один/, стоять цілком у традиції емблематики нових часів: всевидюче око, голуб на скелі серед моря /до речі, ніби просто скопійований з амстердамського збірника/, та Ноїв ковчег - усі вони нам відомі і з інших джерел. Та основою нашого знайомства з емблематикою Сковороди можуть бути не ці малюнки, а ті десятки та сотки емблематичних образів, що порозсипувані по всіх його літературних творах." <sup>1</sup>

Of the three drawings mentioned above by Chyzhevs'kyi, only the Pythagorean symbol for God, (a point or an eye inside an equilateral triangle which was in turn circumscribed by a circle) <sup>2</sup>, was technically well reproduced and explained. Although the second drawing depicting a dove resting on a crag in the midst of an open sea <sup>3</sup>, was fairly well reproduced by Bahalii, its specific meaning was not fully described. Finally, with reference to the third illustration by Skovoroda denoting Noah's ark, it must be stated that a reliable facsimile of it cannot be easily located, nor is there much pertinent data available regarding its intended meaning.

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<sup>1</sup> Chyzhevs'kyi, Fil'sofiiia, op. cit., p. 46.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix, Figure # 8.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix, Figure # 9.

In recent years, three other sketches from Skovoroda's manuscript, "Alfavyt ili Bukvar Myra", have been reproduced from the original text.<sup>1</sup> The first of these (where God is likened to a fountain)<sup>2</sup>, appears to be an original creation of the author with the inscription, "Ne ravnnoe vcim ravenstvo". The latter two, depicting Amur supporting the earth<sup>3</sup>, and a moth hovering above a candle<sup>4</sup>, are thought to have been copied from the Symbola et emblemata published in 1705.

Although these valuable graphic drawings have not been clearly reprinted from the original manuscripts nor comprehensively described as to their specific individual meaning, their importance in the study of Skovoroda's thought cannot be underestimated.

There can be no doubt that Skovoroda firmly believed in the ancient concept of a God Who was both a Unity and a Trinity simultaneously, for he proclaimed that "3, 2 and 1 are the same".<sup>5</sup> In an effort to depict this difficult concept graphically, Skovoroda drew an equilateral triangle to illustrate the equality and three-orbed nature of God. Circumscribed around this triangle was a perfect circle symbolizing the infinity of God with the Greek letters, alpha, beta and omega denoting His having no beginning or end. The open eye within the triangle was symbolic of Divine life and intelligence, expressing the hidden powers and supernatural vision of God.<sup>6</sup> Skovoroda saw the Trinity then, as equally three in Person and one

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Iurii Loshchyts, Skovoroda (Moskva, "Molodaia Gvardiya", 1972), p. 64, Plate # 14, p. 160, Plate # 1.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix, Figure # 4.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix, Figure # 19.

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix, Figure # 17.

<sup>5</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 511.

<sup>6</sup> Peter Fingesten, The Eclipse of Symbolism (Columbia, S.C., University of South Carolina Press, 1970), pp. 37-51.

in nature: "I see one and it is three; I see three and it is one".<sup>1</sup>

Scherer has observed that,

" . . such a view of the Trinity, with its equal emphasis upon God's unity and trinity underlined the profundity of the Divine mystery, and man's inability to comprehend it. Skovoroda, throughout his writings had stressed man's incapacity for understanding God, while, by his own inquiry into the nature and persons of God emphasizing the need for man to consider God so that he could come to recognize his own inadequacies next to God's staggering magnificence".<sup>2</sup>

By illustrating the essential nature of God in the form of a simple graphic symbol, Skovoroda thereby greatly simplified the theological complexities often associated with the traditional conceptions of Divinity.

Bahalii's poorly reproduced graphic drawing depicting a dove resting on a rocky crag in the midst of an open sea (Appendix, Figure # 9), appears to describe the Eternal as a firm foundation upon which one can rest when surrounded by the flooding tides of life:

"Посмотри же, Ёарра, и на другой символъ въ центрѣ коего ударяетъ сія жь Езекиина рѣчь. Взглянь сюда!

Ё а р р а. Вижу. На самомъ верхѣ камня, въ срединѣ моря стоящаго, стоитъ кая-то птичка. Камень схожъ на сиренскій.

И з р а и л ь. Какъ ему быть сиренскимъ, когда гласъ символовъ таковъ:

"In constantia quiesco, сирѣчь:  
"На незыблемости почиваю".

Кая вѣрность на сиренскомъ, волнами покрываемомъ? Сей есть каменный Х о л м ъ вѣчнаго, возникшій изъ-подъ вселенскаго потока, на коемъ упокоился Н о е в ѣ Г о л у б ѣ, съ такимъ благовѣстіемъ:

1

Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 512.

2

Scherer, op. cit., p. 160.

Inveni portum Jesum. Caro, Munde, valete.  
 Sat me jastasis. Nunc mihi certa quies, сирѣчь:  
 Прощай стихійный потопъ!  
 Я почию на холмахъ вѣчнаго,  
 Обрѣтши вѣтвь блаженства." <sup>1</sup>

After the same principle of graphic illustration, Skovoroda's symbolic drawing depicting Noah's ark seems to portray the Bible which was described earlier as being composed of "heavenly, earthly and chthonic creatures . . ." <sup>2</sup> In his dialogue, "Kol'tso", Skovoroda says,

"Мнѣ кажется, что и самая Библия есть Богомъ создана, изъ священно-таинственныхъ образовъ. Небо, луна, солнце, звѣзды, вечеръ, утро, облакъ, дуга, рай, птицы, звѣри, человеки и прочая. Все сіе суть образы высоты, небесной премудрости, показанной Моисею на горѣ; все сіе и вся тварь есть стень, образующая Вѣчность. Кто бы могъ догадаться, что Ноева дуга образъ есть священныя Библии, если бы не сынъ Сираховъ, похваляя Божественную премудрость сказалъ: слава высоты, твердь чистоты . . ." <sup>3</sup>

Among the most popular symbolic drawings sketched by Skovoroda was that which depicted God as a "rich fountain" who invited all men, regardless of their individual capacity for understanding, to share equally in the knowledge of their inner selves. <sup>4</sup> This he defined and later symbolized as the principle of "unequal equality":

"God is like a rich fountain which fills various containers according to their capacities. Above the fountain is the inscription, 'equality is not equal for all'. Various streams of water flow from various pipes into different vessels which stand around the fountain. The smaller vessels contain less than the larger, but they are equally large in so far as they are equally full". <sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., pp. 198, 265.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 496.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 269-270.

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix, Figure # 4.

<sup>5</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., pp. 340-341. Quoted after Scherer's translation, op. cit., p. 72.

Before publishing his Fil'osofia H. S. Skovorody in 1933, Chyzhevs'kyi had petitioned authorities in Moscow and Kyiv for photographic copies of the unpublished graphic symbols that were known to have appeared in the philosophic works of Skovoroda. Particular interest was expressed in the Ukrainian philosopher's original manuscript "Alfavyt ili Bukvar Myra", as it was believed that many of Skovoroda's drawings in this work were influenced by the aforementioned Symbola et emblemata.<sup>1</sup>

Since these requests were not acknowledged, it was not until Iurii Loshchyts' book was published in 1972 that the first two of these drawings were finally released.<sup>2</sup> Then, in the 1973 edition of Skovoroda's works, along with the well-known Pythagorean triangle and fountain symbol, another nine new graphic illustrations were published as they had originally appeared in Skovoroda's "Alfavyt ili Bukvar Myra".<sup>3</sup>

A simple comparison of these emblematic sketches with those discovered by Chyzhevs'kyi in Henrykh's Symbola et emblemata show that the Ukrainian philosopher either copied or adapted at least twelve of the known seventeen drawings noted by Chyzhevs'kyi from the Amsterdam Collection.<sup>4</sup>

Whether Skovoroda chooses to explain his philosophy by means of natural symbols, specially devised philosophical terms, or by graphic illustrations and drawings, there is a definite "method" he employs which appears to be rooted in the traditions of antiquity. For want of a better descriptive term, these shall now be examined and analysed as part of Skovoroda's philosophic stylistics.

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1

Chyzhevs'kyi, Fil'osofia, op. cit., p. 210.

2

Loshchyts, op. cit., p. 160 (a).

3

Skovoroda, Povne Zibrannia Tvoriv, 1973, Vol. 1, op. cit., pp. 304, 435, 448-455, 457-459.

4

Compare the 17 symbols listed in Figures # 10 & 11 of the Appendix as they originally appeared in the Symbola et emblemata with those adapted by Skovoroda as shown in Figures 13-21.



## SKOVORODA'S PHILOSOPHIC STYLISTICS

A close examination of Skovoroda's "method of philosophizing" will reveal that his creative works are almost all written in the form of dialogues in which the protagonists discuss ethical, metaphysical and religious topics related to the purpose of life, the nature of man, the soul, the virtues, God, and the ultimate nature of reality.

The dialogue, generally recognized as an ancient literary form <sup>1</sup>, is a carefully organized exposition characterized by invented conversation and contrasting philosophical or intellectual attitudes. Its ultimate purpose, by examining statements logically and systematically as by question and answer, is to establish validity which would eventually lead to truth.

Skovoroda's dialogues are highly original even though they appear to be strongly influenced by the "Socratic method", which was not designated for the communication of a system, but for the education of the subject in philosophical thinking and life. <sup>2</sup> Albert Schegler in his History of Philosophy explains that the "Socratic method" had two sides, a negative and positive, and it appears as if the Ukrainian philosopher-writer utilized both of these in his works. Schwegler describes the negative side as

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The oldest known dialogues are the Sicilian mimes, written in rhythmic prose by Sophron of Syracuse in the early 5th century BC. Although none of these have survived, their nature may be inferred from the verse mimes of Herodas (Herondas), an Alexandrian of the 3rd century BC. They depict brief, realistic scenes of everyday life involving common character types. Although Plato knew and admired the Sicilian mimes, the form of philosophic dialogue that he perfected by 400 BC was sufficiently original to be an independent literary creation. With due attention to characterization and the dramatic situation from which the discussion arises, it develops dialectically the main tenets of Platonic philosophy. . . The revival of interest in Plato during the Renaissance encouraged numerous imitations and adaptations of the Platonic dialogue. (The New Encyclopaedia Britannica in 30 Volumes (Chicago, William Benton, 1043-1973, Helen Hemingway Benton, 1974), Micropaedia, III, p. 518.

2

Albert Schwegler, A History of Philosophy (New York, D. Appleton and Company, 1906), Translated by Julius H. Seelye, p. 74.

characteristic of Socratic irony:

"The philosopher takes the attitude of ignorance, and would apparently let himself be instructed by those with whom he converses, but through the questions which he puts, the unexpected consequences which he deduces, and the contradictions in which he involves the opposite party, he soon leads them to see that their supposed knowledge is only a source of confusion and contradiction. In the embarrassment in which they now find themselves placed, and seeing that they do not know what they supposed, this supposed knowledge completes its own destruction, and the individual who had pretended to wisdom learns to distrust his previous opinions and firmly held notions. 'What we knew, has contradicted itself', is the refrain of the most of these conversations".

Typical of such a method of philosophical expression in the works of Skovoroda is his dialogue entitled "A Conversation Among Five Travelers Concerning Life's True Happiness". During his conversation with Athanasius and James, Gregory (Skovoroda) attempts to bring his colleagues to an awareness of happiness on a spiritual level rather than on the basis of fleshly lusts and desires. After being accompanied by Yermolai and Longinus, the various theories concerning man's quest for happiness are considered according to their individual merits until, with the help of a number of appropriate symbolic illustrations, the obvious conclusion is spelled out by Gregory (Skovoroda) for their combined benefit and learning:

"Let us give thanks to our Heavenly Father for having opened our eyes. Now we understand in what our true happiness consists. It lives in the inward peace of our own heart, and peace lives in harmony with God. The greater the harmony the greater one's blessedness. The health of the body is nothing else than the balance and harmony of fire, water, air and earth; and the quieting of the soul's rebellious thoughts is the health of the soul, and life eternal. A man who is in harmony with God has just as much peace in his heart whether he has three

pieces of gold, or fifty, or a hundred. As the shadows flee away, the light enters in. Blessed is he who from day to day mounts ever higher upon the mountain of this most radiant City of Peace . ." 1

By his assiduous questioning and by his interrogatory dissection of the notions of him with whom he might be conversing, Skovoroda knew how to elicit thoughts from his colleagues of which they had previously been unconscious, and how to help them give birth to other new and deeper ideas. This philosophic operation has been described by Schwegler as the method of "Socratic induction" which he describes as follows:

"The philosopher, thus, starting from one individual, concrete case, and seizing hold of the most common notions concerning it, and finding illustrations in the most ordinary and trivial occurrences, knew how to remove by his comparisons that which was individual, and by thus separating the accidental and contingent from the essential, could bring to consciousness a universal truth and a universal characteristic, - in other words, could form conceptions. In order, e.g., to find the conception of justice or valor, he would start from individual examples of them, and from these deduce the general nature or conception of these virtues. From this we see that the aim of the Socratic induction was to gain logical "definitions" 2

Skovoroda's Socratic method of "induction" is clearly demonstrated in his dialogue, "Narkiss" where the characters Cleopas, Luke and a friend engage in an interesting discussion concerning the nature of the true God. From an initial concept of God Who possesses the general form of "nature" 3, the discussion proceeds systematically with the subsequent elimination of irrelevant commonly held notions of Deity, until the final conclusion is reached. "Isn't He the being in everything? He is the true tree in the

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1 Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, I, pp. 231-232. Quoted after George L. Kline's translation. Cf. Edie, op. cit., p. 45.

2 Schwegler, op. cit., p. 75.

3 Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 84.

tree, the grass in the grass, the music in the music, the house in the house, . . . He is everything in all".<sup>1</sup> Far from assigning a pantheistic concept to God, the Ukrainian philosopher merely maintains God's immanence in the world stating that, " . . . God penetrates and sustains all creation: He was, is, and will be always and everywhere".<sup>2</sup>

The art or practice of examining statements logically to establish validity and truth is a basic technique Skovoroda employs in his metaphysical discourses which must be understood, otherwise his thoughts and conclusions will appear to be, not only confusing, but contradictory and uncertain.

Another rhetorical style borrowed from the philosophers of antiquity by the Ukrainian sage was the principle of "antithesis" where irreconcilable opposites or strongly contrasting ideas are placed in sharp juxtaposition and sustained tension one against the other. Only a brief acquaintance with Skovoroda's thought will show that this technique of expression was basic to his entire philosophy.

The Greek philosopher Heraclitus (535?-475? B.C.) is often considered as being among the first to adopt the antithetical style in his theoretical reflections when he mused that "God is Day, Night, Winter, Summer, War, Peace, Satiation, Hunger", etc.<sup>3</sup> Chyzhevs'kyi's research has shown that this mode of philosophic thought was, in fact, not only widely used by Plato and Aristotle, but was popular with the Church Fathers, the mystics of the Middle Ages, and more especially with the German philosophers of more modern times.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 86.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>3</sup> Chyzhevs'kyi, Narysy, op. cit., p. 41.

<sup>4</sup> Chyzhevs'kyi, Fil'osofia, op. cit., pp. 10-11.

For Skovoroda, the function of antithesis served to illustrate or explain two major realities existent in the universe. In the first place, it was his contention that life, as man knows it to be, could not exist apart from the reality of antithesis. Secondly, it would be impossible to define any human reality, concept or emotion, without the presence of the antithetical principle:

" . . . тогда вижу въ семь цѣломъ Мірѣ два Мира, - единый Мірѣ составляющие. - Мирѣ видный и невидный, живый и мертвый, цѣлый и сокрушаемый. Сей риза, а тотѣ тѣло. Сей тѣнь, а тотѣ древо. Сей вещество, а тотѣ ипостась, сирѣчь основа-  
іе, содержащее вещественную грязь, такъ какъ рисунокъ держитъ свою краску. Итакъ, Мірѣ въ Мірѣ есть-то вѣчность въ тлѣни, жизнь въ смерти, востаніе во снѣ, свѣтъ во тмѣ, во лжѣ Истина, въ плачѣ радость, въ отчаяніи надежда".

In the above-mentioned quotation Skovoroda attempts to elucidate the dual role of his antithetical thought. In the world you have - "eternity in perishability, life in death, awakening in a dream, light in darkness," while in human life you see "in falsehood truth, in weeping laughter, in desperation hope". Similar themes that illustrate the antithetical style can be found interwoven in many of the Ukrainian philosopher's metaphysical creations. In nature "you will not find a day without darkness and light, a year without heat and winter".<sup>2</sup> "By night you have also the morning day of the Lord".<sup>3</sup>

According to Skovoroda, antitheses create an essential unity of many apparently unlike elements in the world. For example, hunger and satiation stem from food, winter and summer yield a harvest, darkness and light

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<sup>1</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 368.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 346.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 318.

develop into a day, life and death is the lot of all flesh.<sup>1</sup> And, "God created good and evil, poverty and riches, and fused them into a unity".<sup>2</sup>

The same principle applies in spiritual life: "You will not discover any situation not mixed of misfortune and sweetness" -- "Sweetness is the reward of bitterness, and bitterness -- the mother of sweetness".<sup>3</sup> "Crying leads to laughter, and laughter is concealed in crying. Proper crying is the same as opportune laughter. These two halves constitute a unity".<sup>4</sup>

Many of the values of human life are known to be paradoxically antithetical: "Fortunate is the one who was lucky enough to discover in the heartless tenderness, in the bitter sweet, in savagery kindness, in the toxic edibles, in death life and in disgrace honour".<sup>5</sup>

For the Ukrainian philosopher-writer the whole of creation is, in reality, kept in motion on the basis of existing antithetical laws since it is well known that that which has served its purpose eventually deteriorates and dies giving place to the newborn.<sup>6</sup> In this special sense, Skovoroda paraphrases the Apostle Paul saying (human life) is "sown in corruption it is raised in fragrance, sown in hardness it is raised in tenderness, sown in bitterness it is raised in sweetness, sown a natural body it is raised a spiritual body, sown in foolishness and blindness, it is resurrected in great wisdom and sagacity".<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 520.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 346.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 520.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 394-395.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 263.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

Often, when Skovoroda employs his antithetical style by placing one word or phrase in direct opposition to another, he intends to magnify and amplify the initial impact it projects by being viewed in explicit contrast to the other. This unique effect was often achieved by Biblical writers as they endeavoured to compare and contrast the enormous advantages of spiritual blessings over that promised by the flesh. Paul, for example, often emphasized his joy in serving God especially when it involved personal hardship on his part in remaining in a state of faithfulness. " . . as dying, and behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things". <sup>1</sup>

In another instance that same apostle exclaims, "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." <sup>2</sup>

Similarly, the blessings of salvation and immortality far outweigh the rewards of sin and corruption: "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we should walk in newness of life". <sup>3</sup> And again, "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality . . For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive". <sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Corinthians 6:9-10.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Corinthians 4:10-11.

<sup>3</sup> Romans 6:4.

<sup>4</sup> I Corinthians 15:53, 22.

God's eternal scheme for redeeming lost man through Christ was based upon a definite principle of antithesis: "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich".<sup>1</sup> "For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant".<sup>2</sup>

Examples such as those already mentioned from Skovoroda and the Holy Scriptures are far too numerous to examine in any further detail at this point. It suffices us to know, however, that the principle of antithesis was often used by Skovoroda as one of his most favourite and fundamental methods of expressing his philosophical thought.

While bidding farewell to his close friend Kovalens'kyi, the now aging philosopher stressed the importance of remembering that the principle of antithesis was basic to understanding the key issues of life:

"Perhaps I will not see you again. Goodbye! Remember always, during all your life's adventures, the things we have often discussed: light and darkness, head and tail, good and evil, eternity and time. My spirit has recognized you as most capable of receiving the truth and loving it".<sup>3</sup>

A failure to comprehend the meaning and purpose of this significant rhetorical technique often serves to confuse the sense of Skovoroda's dialogues in the mind of the reader. However, once this teaching on the "unity of opposites" is grasped, then many of that philosopher's more obscure thoughts and concepts suddenly appear to crystallize into clearer focus.

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<sup>1</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Corinthians 8:9.

<sup>2</sup> <sup>1</sup> Corinthians 7:22.

<sup>3</sup> Skovoroda, *Tvory*, 1961, II, p. 530. Quoted after Scherer's translation, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-43.



Inseparably linked with Skovoroda's above-mentioned theory of "coincidentio oppositorum" was his hypothesis that the world functions on the basis of a definite perpetual cycle ("rukh") that exists between all antipodal forces within the universe. In other words, such antithetic realities as "light" and "darkness", "good" and "evil", "summer" and "winter", "life" and "death", etc., do not exist in an isolated state of complete quiescence, but have a definite relationship one to the other. This "relationship" may be either antagonistic or assume a form of harmonious co-existence where one force becomes dependent upon the other in order that it may perpetuate its own function.

In Skovoroda, antithetical forces do not clash because such a phenomenon would disrupt the perpetual cycle of nature and result in absolute chaos. Rather, the reconciliation of these opposing entities is realized by nature when they are "set in motion" in a circular function where, after a given length of time, everything eventually returns to its initial point of origin. Thus, "the last and the first point is one and the same, for where it began, there it ends".<sup>1</sup>

Since Skovoroda recognizes God, not only as the Creator of the universe, but as the "Beginning" of all existence<sup>2</sup>, he concludes that all things God has created (including the soul of man), inevitably returns to Him during the process of this cyclic "motion" in the world:

"Когда вся тварей смѣсь проистекаетъ изъ Божьяго источника тогда да возвращается къ тому же, кой есть начало и конецъ и насъ за собою да ведетъ отъ смерти къ жизни и отъ земли къ небеси . . . Тогда все возвращается къ безначальному концу, какъ кольцу и къ безначальному началу . . ." <sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 366.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 277.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 270, 277.

This "cyclical motion" which Skovoroda defines as the principle of "Kolovorot" <sup>1</sup> is seen not only in the natural world but also in the spiritual realm. In the physical world the cycle of nature is clearly observed by the perpetual "dying" and "regenerative" processes of life: "When the old seed decays in the field new greenery springs from it, and the death of the old is the birth of the new, so that wherever the fall, here exists the rebirth". <sup>2</sup>

No matter what the form of the flesh may be: man, beast, bird, reptile or fish, the same law applies equally to all: "One thing's decay brings forth another creature". <sup>3</sup> Although they are not acknowledged as such, the preceding quotations from Skovoroda appear to be paraphrased illustrations of the Biblical thought that " . . . except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit". <sup>4</sup>

Not only was this true within the physical realm, but the same principle of antithesis in circular "motion" is demonstrated by man's spiritual death and regeneration, for, "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive". <sup>5</sup>

Paul's thesis concerning man's fall and redemption (as expounded in Romans 5:12-21), can be easily illustrated as shown by the diagram (Figure # 22) in the Appendix. Through Adam sin entered the world and death by sin. With God's introduction of the Old Testament Law into the affairs of men, sin increased, and man was now exposed to the judgment of God. This

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<sup>1</sup> Skovoroda probably derived this designation from "Kolo" (circle) and "povorot" (turning). Thus "Kolovorot" would mean "to turn in a circle".

<sup>2</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 366.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 368.

<sup>4</sup> John 12:24.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:22.

negative downward trend was reversed in Christ Who is the "new Adam". Through Him, man received grace, new life, justice and final exoneration from his former sins such that "the last and the first point is one and the same, for where it began, there it ends".

From the same diagram we can see that in the spiritual aspect, grace is the antithesis of sin, life of death, justice compared to Law, and exoneration in the place of judgment. Taken as a whole, one can readily discern the "unity of opposites" and the fulfillment of the Divine regenerative process according to the law of "cyclic motion".

There are a number of specific symbols Skovoroda often employs in an effort to define these difficult concepts more clearly, and among these, the circle ("kolo") would be his most favourite:

"Убо благокругла есть истинна, аки дуга  
вѣчная". . . "Конечно, циркуль есть на-  
чальная фигура, отецъ квадратовъ, тре-  
угольниковъ и другихъ безчисленныхъ". <sup>1</sup>

Skovoroda argued that in a circle the "beginning and ending is one and the same" <sup>2</sup> and therefore the "circle is a symbol which conceals within it-  
self the infinite circle of God's eternity". <sup>3</sup> In addition, within the circle the "heavenly is hidden in the earthly, and the imperishable in the perishable". <sup>4</sup>

Similar to the original concept of the circle ("kolo"), the "symbol of symbols", one may encounter many other circular symbolic objects in the philosophy of Skovoroda such as a ring ("kil'tse"), chain ("lantsiuh"), ball ("kulia"), plate or dish ("myska", "tarilka"), and wheel ("koleso"). Additional derivatives such as (round) bread ("khlib"), coins ("monetu"),

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<sup>1</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., pp. 457, 288.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 162, 366.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 271.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

crown ("korona"), necklace ("namysto"), apple ("iabluko"), the sun ("sontse") and others, are used at will by the philosopher to explain the nature and function of the "antytetyka" and "kolovorot" principles found in his philosophic works.<sup>1</sup>

Forming a close association with the circle-symbol is the Skovorodian "serpent" image described earlier which, "when it hangs coiled in a circle is a symbol of eternity": Accordingly,

"... змій, держачій во устахъ своихъ хвостъ приосъняеть, что безконечное Начало и безначальный Конецъ, начиная кончить, кончая начинается. Но безчисленный есть тайно-образный мракъ Божественныхъ гаданий."<sup>2</sup>

For Skovoroda, the serpent-image symbolized eternity because,

"... что хитръ и въется въ кольца такъ, что не видно, куда думаетъ, если не при-мѣтитъ голову его. Такъ и вѣчность вездѣ есть, и нигдѣ ея нѣтъ, тѣмъ что невидна, закрывая свою уюность..."<sup>3</sup>

The Ukrainian philosopher's attempts to portray his thoughts concerning the perpetual regenerative cycles evident in the world found further expression in his skillful exploitation of the "seed" symbols ("simia", "zerno") that are cleverly adapted to his philosophy in many of his works.

For example, "The decrepit straw on the ear of grain does not fear destruction. As it sprang from the seed, so again it is concealed in the seed, which, though it decays externally, maintains its strength eternally".<sup>4</sup> And again, "The whole world, as a beautiful tree in bloom, is concealed in its seed from which it later reappears".<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Chyzhevs'kyi, Fil'osofiia, op. cit., p. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 369.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 505. See Appendix, Figure # 11, Sketch # 1.

<sup>4</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 103.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 216.

From these and other similar quotations, Skovoroda's observations of this dynamic and cyclical activity of nature led him to conclude that however insignificant the world may have been, it existed necessarily and infinitely:

"If you tell me that the external World ends in any time and place, having in itself a determined limit, I say that it ends, namely, it begins. You see, one place's limit is another's door, which opens a field of new spaces, just as a chick begins when the egg is ruined. And so everything always goes to infinity".

It was only in this special sense of nature's endless regenerative cycle (according to the aforementioned principles of antithesis and "kolorot"), that Skovoroda had propounded his controversial theory concerning the eternal nature of all material things.<sup>2</sup> Since God was immanent in the material world, and the material world was the shadow of the true invisible world, then it was obvious that in a very unique sense the philosopher's theory of "materia aeterna" contained certain principles of validity as we shall discuss more fully in the next chapter.

Before proceeding to examine the relation of Skovoroda's symbols and figurative terminology in some of his more popular philosophic themes, it would be well to examine how his symbols need to be approached in order to understand their relation and meaning in his thought.

Chyzhevs'kyi has shown that the symbols of Skovoroda are primarily intended to translate idealistic, abstract, and general concepts into concrete, tangible and specific realities, a process which demands keen insight and a special ability to "think in symbols":

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<sup>1</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 368. Quoted after the translation by Scherer, op. cit., p. 145.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 382, 551-552.

"До того ні одного символу не можна розв'язати "однозначно", себто в якомусь одному певному сенсі. Але, на думку Сковороди, це є саме позитивна риса символічного пізнання, що в ньому ми постійно мусимо щось витовкмачувати, інтерпретувати, аналізувати: таким чином, ми змушені проходити глибше в суть речі, ми змушені не суто пасивно приймати об'єкт пізнання, а навпаки, освітлювати цей об'єкт, доповнювати його при допомозі живої активності нашого духа . . . Символічна форма мислення має в Сковороди тенденцію захопити цілу сферу думки, при-нявши в себе все поняттєве, "сухе", стисле, термінологічно окреслене . . ." <sup>1</sup>

As far as Chyzhevs'kyi is concerned, Skovoroda's entire philosophy is saturated with symbols: all concepts, historical (or given as historical) occurrences, Biblical dates, manifestations of existence, worldly phenomena (both animate and inanimate), and that of culture. Anything visible or apparent is an image, substance and perishable. <sup>2</sup> In other words, " . . . "фігури", "символи" - лише тлінне лушпиння правди, яка має від цього лушпиння визволитись, скинути його з себе . . . Фігури - лише "торбинки для золота та лушпиння зерна божого". <sup>3</sup>

As a result, the Ukrainian philosopher-writer urges his readers to:

" . . . Оставь физическія сказки беззубымъ младенцамъ. Все то бабье, и баснь и пус-тошь, что не ведетъ къ гавани. Съки скорѣ всю плоть по израилски. Сержусь, что мед-лишь на скорлупѣ. Сокрушай и выдѣрай зер-но силы Божія . . ." <sup>4</sup>

Every symbol, according to Skovoroda, is composed of three basic components: an ordinary outward form, an intermediary descriptive function and the essential concealed sense of the image. A failure on the part of the reader to "breach" or penetrate these outer layers ("husks") which

<sup>1</sup> Chyzhevs'kyi, Fil'osofiia, op. cit., p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 199.

conceal the true nucleus of the symbol means that its hidden truths have not been successfully fathomed or resolved:

"Ты же, сыне мой, читая книгу видимаго и злаго сего міра, возводь сердечное твое око во всякомъ дѣлѣ на самую главу дѣла, на самое сердце его, на самый источникъ его, тогда, узнавъ начало и сѣмя его, будешь правъ судія всякому дѣлу, видя главу дѣла и самую исту, истина же избавитъ тя отъ всякія напасти . . . Сія то есть истинная авраамская богословія - прозрѣть во всякомъ дѣлѣ гнѣздящагося духа: блажь ли онъ? или золь? Не судить по лицу, якоже лицемѣры. Часто подъ злобнымъ лицомъ и подъ худою маскою Божественное сіяніе и блаженное таится сердце въ лицѣ же свѣтломъ, ангельскомъ - сатана".<sup>1</sup>

The philosopher describes the "hidden truths" within the symbol as similar to the living soul of man that is clothed in the outward and perishable fleshly body, and which must be resurrected from the dead:

"Сей одинъ всесильный сходящій отъ вышняго духъ: какъ сотворилъ всю сію небесныхъ и земныхъ и преисподнихъ и морскихъ /свѣтила, звѣри, золото, перла/ образовъ тьму, такъ и вывестъ можетъ изъ мертваго живое, изъ пустыни изобиліе, изъ обуялаго вкуса, изъ тьмы просвѣщеніе, и рече Богъ да будетъ свѣтъ! и бысть свѣтъ . . ." <sup>2</sup>

Following an extensive detailed study of symbols as they are used by Skovoroda in his literary and philosophic works, Chyzhevs'kyi has summarized (in five different categories) some of the more popular types of symbols and emblems used by that philosopher in explaining his thought.<sup>3</sup> These he has listed, along with their respective page locations in Bonch-Bruevich, as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 485.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 271.

<sup>3</sup> Chyzhevs'kyi, Fil'osofiiia, op. cit., p. 37.

- I. Звіри та птиці: "віл-молотник" /165/, змій /скрізь/, пор. 268, 385/, бусел . . /200, 268, 470/, малпа /341/, голуб /268/, олень /скрізь/, верблюд /207/;
- II. Фантастичні тварини: сфінкс /268/, сирени /258, 193 та далі/, фенікс /268/;
- III. Ростина та ростинний світ: колос /101 та далі/, процвіла паличка-посох /147/, яблуня /204/, яблуко /205/, квасоля /268/, зерно та сімя /268/, хворост /299/, хліб /409/;
- IV. Мертва природа: магнет /247, 360, 367, 370/, веселка /270/, сонце /268/, вода /287/, джерело /414/, потік /скрізь/, криниця /скрізь/, скеля /415/;
- V. Продукти людської праці: трикутник /511 та далі/, лабіринт /167/, перстень /184, 268, 366/, жорна /220/, годинник /119, 239/, аптика /235, 263/, якір /268/, колеса /271, скрізь/, коло/"циркуль": 288 та далі/, ців /299/, сітка/рибальчача, для лову птиць: 301, 483/, і т.д.<sup>1</sup>

In Skovoroda, each of these symbols is to be considered as a bridge between his "inner" experiences and the "outer" world, where the symbol itself becomes a "perishable gate leading to the imperishable source".<sup>2</sup> As mentioned earlier, it is not the symbol which is important, but what the philosopher is trying to say through the symbol.

Summary - Like many other world-renown philosophers, Skovoroda employed a system of symbolic images and a new philosophic vocabulary in his works in order to describe the intense metaphysical thoughts and emotions he experienced deep within his inner man.

According to Skovoroda, symbolic thinking appeared to originate in

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<sup>1</sup>

Chyzhevs'kyi, Fil'osofiiia, op. cit., p. 37.

<sup>2</sup>

Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, II, p. 125.



Egyptian, Greek, and Persian antiquity in the form of emblems and hieroglyphics and were designed to express profound religious thoughts and feelings into a tangible comprehensible form. It was not long, however, before this art deteriorated into superstitious idol-worship when later generations lost their "double-vision" and began to consider the image as an end in itself, rather than as the intended means to an end.

Under the influence of Platonic and Biblical thought, the ancient method of symbolizing metaphysical ideas was revived and later widely used by the Alexandrian School and the philosophers of the West. By the time of Skovoroda, symbols had become a popular form of meditation and contemplation in Ukraine, but with the arrival of the Romantic movement in the beginning of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century, they soon disappeared into rapid obscurity.

As an ardent student of philosophy and theology, the Ukrainian philosopher-writer was naturally greatly influenced by the symbolic thought of the ancient Greek and Roman mystics, the Church Fathers and the Western philosophers. Yet, besides the Bible, no other single work appears to have influenced Skovoroda's overall creativity more than the Symbola et emblemata published by Vetstenyi Henrykh in Amsterdam in 1705.

Coupled with his emblematic images (which were often depicted graphically), Skovoroda's philosophic vocabulary, along with his dialogues, antitheses and principle of "cyclic motion" (Kolovorot), greatly simplified the more difficult aspects of his complex philosophy.

## CHAPTER THREE

### SKOVORODA'S SYMBOLIC THOUGHT

#### Introduction:

Much has already been written by scholars of Slavic thought concerning many of the various major thematic aspects of Skovoroda's philosophical thought. The following pages, therefore, will be devoted primarily as an attempt to describe and analyse the relationship of some of the more common symbolic images and terminology used by the Ukrainian philosopher to elucidate his metaphysical ideas.

For the purpose of convenience and simplicity, this chapter has been divided into five basic divisions in an effort to represent a reasonable spectrum of Skovoroda's philosophy in this discussion. Each of the five sections (God, the Material World, the Bible, Man and Happiness) will be approached systematically according to a basic three-point outline. First, a short, general summary embodying the philosopher's main thoughts and views will be considered followed by a description of some of the similes and antithetical relationships he often employs to infuse additional emphasis and meaning to his work. Finally, a brief survey will be made of some of Skovoroda's special symbols as they are commonly employed to illustrate and explain the more abstract meanings and implications of his various philosophic themes.

The specific aim of this approach is primarily intended to underscore the importance and place of symbols in the philosophy of Skovoroda. Once their significance and meaning is grasped, it is believed that the more difficult aspects and implications of his thought will be greatly simplified.

## GOD

Basic to Skovoroda's entire metaphysical thought is the doctrine that everything in the universe, by nature, is composed of two separate and distinctive characteristics which, when taken together, compose one inseparable and total unity: " . . . the whole world consists of two natures, one visible, the other invisible. The visible nature is called creation, and the invisible one, God. The invisible nature or God penetrates and sustains all creation". <sup>1</sup>

In every case, the invisible nature occupies a definite position of pre-eminence over the visible material form, for under no circumstance can these two natures be mixed or confused where no clear distinction is made between them:

"Язычники всѣ означаются симъ именемъ "Вавилонъ", а сіе значить, смѣшеніе, или сліянiе. Одну они наружную плоть видять, и ей вездѣ удивляються, описують, измѣряють, и находящуюсь во плоти духовную истину, не зная ея, смѣшиваютъ съ плотію и называють мечтою". <sup>2</sup>

Skovoroda asserts that "if both of these natures are fused into one, where only the visible substance is recognized, then this would denote complete idolatry". <sup>3</sup>

For the most part, the Ukrainian philosopher-writer was more interested in devising means to simplify the complex traditional concepts of God and becoming "God-like", than in creating a new system of thought that would add to the multitudinous theology already written on that subject.

Reference has already been made to some of the primitive attempts devised by the ancients to describe the "invisible nature" (or, God) in

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<sup>1</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 63.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 182.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 243.

general human terms. "The ancients", Skovoroda noted, ". . . had various names for Him. For instance, nature. The essence of things. Eternity. Fate. The indispensable fortune and so on".<sup>1</sup> From the Christian point of view, God was more commonly described as "Spirit, Lord, Ruler, Father, Mind, and Truth".<sup>2</sup>

As far as Skovoroda was concerned, however, man could not name or describe the transcendent God in positive human terms because the essential nature of metaphysical Divinity was beyond imperfect human comprehension. For him, all words (being of imperfect nature and origin) were themselves imperfect and therefore incapable of expressing the ineffable nature of Divinity. Having arrived at this fundamental conclusion, Skovoroda proceeded to describe God, however imperfectly, with the aid of a specially devised philosophical vocabulary which was loaded with symbolic connotations:

"In the Bible God has many names: He is called "fire", "water", "wind", "iron", "stone", and given other names without number. When then should He not be called "Nature"? In my own opinion it would be impossible to find a more important and more seemly name for God than this one. "Natura" is a Latin word: in Russian we call it "priroda" or "yestestvo". This word refers to everything that comes to birth within the mechanism of this world, and also to what is unborn, like flame . . ."<sup>3</sup>

The all-important symbolic meanings "concealed" within the exterior "husks" of the term, "Natura" (Nature) clearly illustrate a more simplified concept of God than was normally defined by words alone:

"But why should not all of creation be called by that inclusive name, "Nature"? The whole world, with

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<sup>1</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, I, p. 213. Quoted after the translation by George L. Kline, Edie, op. cit., p. 32.

all its comings to birth, is concealed within it like a fine, flowering tree within the seed from which it develops . . . It is called both Father and Beginning or principle . . . since It has neither beginning nor end and is dependent upon neither time nor place . . ." <sup>1</sup>

Perhaps the best positive description of God made by Skovoroda was that which describes Him as the "Beginning" ("Nachalo") Who possesses the characteristic of omnipresence:

"This true Beginning lives everywhere. Because of this It is not a part, nor does It consist of parts. On the contrary, it is whole, steadfast, and therefore indestructible. It does not move from place to place, but is unified, boundless, and constant. And as It is everywhere, so It is eternal. It anticipates and includes everything, <sup>2</sup> and Itself is neither anticipated nor included".

Since God was the "Invisible Nature" in Skovoroda's "dual-natured" concept of the world then He could also be described as the direct antithesis of all that was "visible", "material" and "perishing". From this negative point of view, God could be defined as "infinite, eternal, indivisible, unmoving, uncontained, indestructible, unanticipated, and incomprehensible". <sup>3</sup> Skovoroda could now portray God as "the eternity in perishability, the life in death, the arising in sleep, the light in darkness, the truth in falsehood, the joy in weeping, the hope in despair", <sup>4</sup> etc.

Although a certain pantheistic trait seems to appear in some of Skovoroda's descriptions of the Eternal, it is generally conceded that this was simply an unavoidable conclusion which sprang quite unintentionally from his teaching on the immanence of God in the world. In other

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<sup>1</sup> Skovoroda, *Tvory*, 1961, I, p. 214. Quoted after George L. Kline's translation, *Edie*, op. cit., pp. 32-33.

<sup>2</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 366. Quoted after Shcherer's translation, op. cit., p. 155.

<sup>3</sup> Scherer, op. cit., p. 156.

<sup>4</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 86.

words, Skovoroda plainly taught that "the presence of God pervaded all creation", rather than the doctrine that "the whole universe is God".

The term "visible nature" ("vydymaia natura"), which Skovoroda often uses to denote God in his philosophy, has many interesting and striking similes that are found scattered throughout his works. Among these are:

"натура блаженная, натура Божественная, натура вѣчная, натура господственна; естество Божественное, естество Вѣчное, естество господственное; природа вѣчная, природа господственна, природа главная; мѣр невидимый, мѣр вѣчный, мѣр живой, мѣр первородный".<sup>1</sup>

Each of these specially chosen designations for God have a function predetermined for them by Skovoroda in his creative works.

For example, God the "invisible nature", has been observed by the philosopher-writer as the primary cause of everything's existence, including His own.<sup>2</sup> In addition, Skovoroda indicates that God, as the immaterial base of all things, is eternity ("vechnost"), spirit ("dukh"), truth ("istyna"), invisibility ("nevydymost"), beginning ("nachalo"), the perpetual source and "concealed law" within all material things.

Skovoroda described "eternity" as that which has no beginning or ending because nothing could have existed before "eternity" and nothing after it. Therefore, "eternity" ("vechnost") is simultaneously the beginning and ending of all that exists in the universe:

"Божественные мистагоги, или тайновидители приписывают начало единственно точию

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<sup>1</sup> Kyryk, "Semantychnyi metod v istoryko-filosofs'komu doslidzhenni," op. cit., p. 85. Compare also, Skovoroda, *Tvory*, 1961, I, pp. 16, 57, 193, 194, 205, 243-245, 309, 334, 395, 538-539.

<sup>2</sup> Skovoroda, *Tvory*, 1961, I, p. 259.

Богу . . . Начало точное есть то, что прежде себе ничего не имѣло. А как вся тварь родится и ищезает, так конечно, нѣчтось прежде ея было и послѣ ея остается. И так, ничто началом и концем быть не может. Начало и конецъ есть то же, что Бог, или Вѣчность. Ничего нет ни прежде ея, ни послѣ ея".<sup>1</sup>

It can clearly be observed, as illustrated by the latter quotation, that the words Skovoroda uses to describe the Divine nature are much more than mere nominal designations. They are, in fact, special symbolic creations designated by the Ukrainian philosopher to depict more clearly the intangible nature of God. It was, therefore, only a natural conclusion to identify God with such figurative terms as "Eternity" ("Vechnost"),<sup>2</sup> the "Invisible Nature" ("Nevydymaia Natura")<sup>3</sup>, "Truth" ("Istyna")<sup>4</sup>, and "Idea" ("Ideia")<sup>5</sup>, etc.

According to the principle of antithesis, the concept of "Eternity" was the direct opposite of the material "perishable" nature, and could not be comprehended by physical means for it was invisible. "Eternity" can never have material connotations which are ephemeral, for it is always constant and inalterable:

"Душа. Развѣ Вѣчность и Бог есть то же? Дух. Конечно, Вѣчность есть твердь, вездѣ, всегда во всем твердо стоящая, и всю тлѣнь, как одежду носящая, всякого раздѣленія и осязанія чуждая. Она - то есть Истина и нетлѣніе . . ." <sup>6</sup>

Skovoroda often used the term "Truth" ("Istyna") in an antithetical relationship with "falsehood" ("lzhа") in order to emphasize the omniscient

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1

Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, I, p. 379. All underlinings are my own.

2

Ibid., pp. 57, 379, 536.

3

Ibid., pp. 16, 57.

4

Ibid., pp. 307, 536, 542.

5

Ibid., p. 540.

6

Ibid., p. 536. All underlinings are my own.

and guileless attributes of God. "Truth" was therefore the exclusive antithesis of the material world which is temporal, perishing, and a "lie":

"Истина вѣчнымъ своимъ пребываніемъ совсѣмъ противна непостоянному веществу . . . Никогда еще не бывала видимость истиною, а истина видимостью . . . Что есть вѣчность? - То, что истина. Что есть истина? - То, что пречистое; нетлѣнное и единое. То, что вездѣ всегда во всемъ есть". <sup>1</sup>

Thus, in the philosophy of Skovoroda the term "Truth" ("Istyna") is symbolically employed to portray the meaning of "actual, original existence" having an exclusive ontological content. This "real state of being", according to the philosopher, has nothing in common with its antithetical counterpart, namely, "veshchestvo" ("matter", "substance").

Similarly, the word "forma" ("form") is another fundamental characteristic of the "invisible nature" (God) which is often cast in a contrasting role with "materiia" ("material"), the typical designation for the "visible" world.

On the other hand, "forma" has been used in the same sense as "Ipostas'" ("Hypostasis") <sup>2</sup>, a specially devised Skovorodian concept depicting Divinity, which possessed the intrinsic meaning of "truth" ("ista"), "being" ("sushchestvo"), "essence" ("sushchnost'", "essentsiia"), "head" ("glava"), "principle" ("glavnost'"), <sup>3</sup> and so on.

Having briefly considered some of the more common symbolic connotations inherent in the terms used by Skovoroda to describe the "invisible nature" of God, we find that the meaning of his metaphysical rhetoric is

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<sup>1</sup> Skovoroda, *Tvory*, 1961, I, pp. 16, 47, 307.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 381-382, 550. "Hypostasis": A logical distinction or entity conceived as a self-subsisting object. It pertains to, or exists as the essential substance or personality, especially as regards the nature or personality of God.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 33, 49, 523.



thereby considerably simplified. For example, Skovoroda taught that the world was essentially composed of two natures ("estestv"), - material and immaterial, or ("materiia") and ("forma"). The material nature was volatile and ephemeral, while the immaterial form was eternal. In other words, "Forma" was none other than "God's nature", (invisible and intrinsic in all things, eternal), while "materiia" was the outward, visible and perishable substance which concealed within itself its own form:

"Всѣ три мѣры состоятъ изъ двухъ едино составляющихъ естествъ, называемыхъ матеріа и форма. Сіи формы у Платона называются идеи, сиречь видѣнія, виды, образы. Они суть первородныи мѣры нерукотворенныя, тайныя веревки, переходящую сѣнь, или матерію, содержащія. Во великомъ и маломъ мѣрѣ вещественный видъ даетъ знать о утѣенныхъ подъ нимъ формахъ, или вѣчныхъ образахъ. Такожъ де и въ символичномъ, или библичномъ, мѣрѣ, собраніе тварей составляетъ матерію. Но Божіе естество, куда знаменіемъ своимъ ведетъ тварь, есть форма. Убо и всемъ мѣрѣ есть матеріа и форма, сиречь плоть и духъ, сѣнь и истина, смерть и жизнь".<sup>1</sup>

Here, Skovoroda's term "forma" is used synonymously with the term "ideia", a popular designation for God employed by Plato in his philosophic works.

It was the Ukrainian philosopher's conviction that the "invisible nature" (God, Spirit, Idea, Hypostasis, Form) permeates the entire material realm and actually determines its existence, whereas the "visible nature" (matter, substance, visibility, creature) was only a shadow of the former nature.<sup>2</sup>

During the course of this study we have already determined that Skovoroda often introduced symbolic images into his philosophy in an effort to more vividly portray his metaphysical thoughts and concepts to his

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<sup>1</sup> Skovoroda, *Tvory*, 1961, I, p. 539.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 175, 192, 382, 537, 551.

readers. The "invisible nature", for instance, was variously described as a tree ("derevo")<sup>1</sup>, a living tree<sup>2</sup>, an eternal tree<sup>3</sup>, a tree of life<sup>4</sup>, and even an apple tree.<sup>5</sup> Designations for God such as the circle-symbols<sup>6</sup> have already been examined in some considerable detail.

As the source of all existence, God was aptly symbolized as the east ("skhid"), heart ("sertse"), a fruitful tree ("plodiuche derevo"), mouth ("usta"), along with such other miscellaneous designations as: a cloud ("khmara"), spark ("iskra"), father ("bat'ko"), mother ("maty"), and so forth.<sup>7</sup>

Chyzhevs'kyi has summarized an interesting list of some of the more common symbolic images depicting God that are frequently found to reappear in the works of Skovoroda which are worth noting at this point.<sup>8</sup>

Skovoroda often compared God to the sun ("sontse"), where the true meaning of Divinity was found not so much in the image of the "material sun" as in the more important "sun-concept", the "other sun" ("sonechko"), which was one of Skovoroda's major symbolic figures depicting the Divine nature:

"Пан усіх створінь, - сонце" . . "блаженне сонце правди" . . "Боже, пане наш! твоя правда живе у світлі. Світло - у твоїй правді. Правда твоя живе в сонці, сонце стоїть на твоїй правді" . . "Палац божий - сонце".<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Skovoroda, *Tvory*, 1961, I, p. 382.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 175, 551.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 551.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 192.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 175, 192, 382, 537, 551.

<sup>6</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, *op. cit.*, pp. 136, 230, 257, 366, 501.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 286 ff.

<sup>8</sup> Chyzhevs'kyi, *Fil'osofiiia*, *op. cit.*, pp. 85-86.

<sup>9</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, *op. cit.*, pp. 77, 231, 427, 503. Quoted after Chyzhevs'kyi's translation.

Related to the "sun"-God concept was the thought that God was like fire or light: "вогняна ріка божа"<sup>1</sup>, "вогняне обличчя боже".<sup>2</sup> God "чхаєт молнією, смотрит денницею, дьішет іскрами и горящим углием".<sup>3</sup> God is Light in that He illuminates truth ("osvitliuiuchy ii) thereby making it accessible to man."<sup>4</sup>

Not only that, but God is also the fountain-source ("dzherelo") or well-spring ("krynytsia") of all things:

"Ріки гинуть. Потоки пересихають. Струмочки зникають. Лише джерело дихає вічною парю, що оживляє та прохолоджує. Люблю лише джерело та зникаю . . ." . . Сонце джерело світла" . . "Вся суміш творіннь тече з божеського джерела".<sup>5</sup>

The philosopher's most popular reference to God in this respect was his well-known graphic symbol (Appendix, Figure # 4), where he illustrates God "like a rich fountain which fills various containers according to their individual capacities. Above the fountain is the inscription, 'equality is not equal for all'. Various streams of water flow from various pipes into different vessels which stand around the fountain".<sup>6</sup> Every man, therefore, performing up to his capacity for meditation and self-knowledge and opening himself completely to Divine nourishment, could come to some understanding of himself and the Divinity buried within himself.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bonch-Bruевич, op. cit., p. 110.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 131.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 174.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 105.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 76, 77, 270. Quoted after Chyzhevs'kyi's translation.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 340.

<sup>7</sup> Scherer, op. cit., p. 72.

In a similar vein, the Ukrainian philosopher has pictured God as a bottomless abyss ("Bezodnia") asking, "Чому ти не хочеш довідитися, як зветься Бог? Чому не достукуєшся, щоб Його побачити? Безодня наповнить безодню", <sup>1</sup>

In Skovoroda's philosophy, God was not only depicted as a circle ("kolo") or sphere ("sfera") as noted earlier, but He was also the centre ("tsentr") of that eternal circumference:

"Саме коло залежить від свого центру, бо цей є поперед нього /кола/. . . Це є . . . безпочатковий, невидний початок". . . "Точка вічності . . . божеський центр . . . стріла всіх думок, спрямована на центр вічності". <sup>2</sup>

According to the popular Biblical symbol, God was frequently compared to a rock ("kamin'"), or crag ("skelia") as illustrated (Appendix, Figure # 9), and often employed in Skovoroda's dialogues: "Бог є камінь, а все инше тлінність, брехня, калюжа . . ." <sup>3</sup>

Finally, the Ukrainian philosopher-writer consistently upheld the traditional Orthodox view that God was both a Unity and a Trinity at the same time. He attempted to illustrate this difficult theological concept by means of a graphic sketch or illustration ( see Appendix, Figure # 8) which was based upon the ancient Pythagorean symbol for God. Circumscribed around an equilateral triangle (which depicted the equality of the Trinity), was a perfect circle representing the eternity of the Godhead with the Greek letters, alpha, beta and omega denoting God's having no beginning or end. The open eye within the triangle was symbolic of Divine life and intelligence, expressing the hidden powers and supernatural vision of the

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<sup>1</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 270. Quoted after Chyzhevs'kyi's translation.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 289, 374, 375, 377.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 203.

Eternal. It was Skovoroda's conviction that, " . . . Хто з Пітагором розкусив символічний /"фігурний"/ трикутник, що символізує правду, той бачить, що в ньому троє, двоє то один є одне й то саме".<sup>1</sup>

On the basis of the above-mentioned symbolic examples, it appears as if Skovoroda relied very strongly upon the intrinsic ability of his philosophic terminology and figurative images to simplify and clarify the metaphysical complexities inherent in his metaphysical thought concerning God's nature and purpose in the universe. A further study of his works will reveal that he adopted this same approach in his examination of the material world and its relationship to God.

#### THE MATERIAL WORLD

It is generally well-known that Skovoroda propounded the theory concerning the "three worlds" and "two natures" around which his entire philosophy is carefully structured. According to this hypothesis, the fundamental physical and spiritual entities (i.e. the "visible" and "invisible" natures) can be found in the "three worlds": macrocosm (material nature), microcosm (man), and the "world of symbols" (the Bible):

"Суть же три мыры. Первый есть всеобщий и мырь обительный, гдѣ все рожденное обитаетъ. Сей составленъ изъ безчисленныхъ мырь мировъ и есть великій мырь. Другіи два суть частныи и малыи мыры. Первый мікро-козмъ: сирѣчь - мырикъ, мирокъ, или человекъ. Второй Мырь символическій, сирѣчь Библия. Во обительномъ коемъ либо мырь солнце есть окомя его; и око убо есть солнцемъ. А какъ солнце есть глава мыра, тогда не дивно, что человекъ названъ микрокосмосъ,

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Bonch-Bruевич, op. cit., pp. 258, 360, 395, 511-512. Quoted after Chyzhevs'kyi's translation.

сирѣчь маленькій мѣрь. А Библіа есть симболичный мѣрь. затѣмъ, что въ ней собранныя небесныя, земныя и преисподныя тварей фигуры, дабы они были монументами ведущими мысль нашу въ понятіе вѣчнаго Натуры, устроенныя въ тѣлной, такъ какъ рисунокъ въ краскахъ своихъ".

The bulk of Skovoroda's philosophic argumentation appears to focus upon the foundational proposition that each of these "three worlds" are made up of spiritual ("invisible") and physical ("material") "ingredients". Man's chief purpose in life consists in being able to distinguish wisely between them and follow after that which is unseen as it alone leads to true human happiness and fulfillment: "Видно нужно вездѣ видѣть ДВОЕ . . . Брось тѣнь, спѣши ко Истинѣ . . . Сокрушай и выдырай зерно силы Божія".<sup>2</sup> Statements such as this are repeated almost endlessly by the philosopher as he attempts to encourage his pupils and readers to look beyond the perishable external appearance of things in an effort to discover the precious truths concealed within: " . . . вмѣсто мѣди - золото; вмѣсто желѣза - серебро; вмѣсто дровъ - мѣдь; вмѣсто каменія - желѣзо; вмѣсто пѣсочнаго фундамента - Адамантъ, Санфиръ и Анфраксъ . . ." <sup>3</sup>

With specific reference to the material world, Skovoroda affirmed that if man wanted to understand the "great world" correctly, he had to consider it (not as a thing in itself), but as a "veil" which concealed the Divine essence:

"All men consider it, (the world, JRP) but thoughtlessly. They observe its heel, . . . they gaze on its feet, but they do not look on the real world,

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<sup>1</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 496.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 199.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 202.

namely, on its head and heart. Seeing only the heel in this business, but not the head, one, seeing does not see, sensitive of body, but blind of heart. The body is seen by the body, but the heart by the heart . . . In this fashion all the mindless people read the book of this world. And they do not profit by it, but rather become entangled in its net".

As seems to be his general custom, Skovoroda proceeds to compare the nature of the material world with that of the spiritual by means of another interesting array of symbolic similes, antitheses and figurative images. These are all primarily used as negative reflections of the "invisible" spiritual world rather than bitter adjectives expressing presumed animosities harboured by the philosopher-writer against the material realm.

Paralleled, therefore, with the term "visible nature" ("vydymaia natura") which Skovoroda most often uses in reference to the great world, are the symbolic expressions: "натура тлѣнная, натура тѣлесная, естество глиняное, естество пепельное, естество тлѣнное; природа низшая, природа тѣлесная; мѣир видимый, мѣир временный, мѣир мертвый . . ." <sup>2</sup> Skovoroda defined the physical and material realm as the "visible world" because it consisted primarily of all perishable substance and matter. Inasmuch as the "material world" was ephemeral by nature, it could never be considered as spiritual, for the "invisible" realm, according to Skovoroda, was eternal. For this reason, it was deemed necessary by the philosopher to portray the "great world" as "a shadow" ("tin"), "grass" ("trava"), a "disappearing world" ("znykaiuchy svit"), and "nothing" ("nishcho"). <sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., pp. 484-485. Quoted after Scherer's translation, op. cit., p. 134.

<sup>2</sup> Kyryk, "Semantychnyi metod v istoryko-filosofs'komu doslidzhenni", op. cit., p. 85. Compare also, Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, I, pp. 16, 57, 193, 194, 205, 243-245, 309, 334, 395, 538-539.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 86.

The Ukrainian philosopher often contrasts the physical world with the spiritual claiming that the latter, which is eternal, constant and invariable, is actually concealed within the "visible nature". It is therefore the creative power behind all material substances, forming and changing them at will. Although this operation cannot be seen, it nevertheless exists as the sustaining function of the invisible and eternal nature of God Himself: "Сія невидимая натура или Бог всю твар проникает и содержит . ." <sup>1</sup> The Divine immanence in the world thereby adds the concept of reality to all existence, for it alone is the unchanging and eternal basis of all being. <sup>2</sup>

We have already seen that the philosophy of Skovoroda contains the term "Truth" ("Istyna") which is symbolically employed to portray the meaning of "actual, original, genuine existence", as was characteristic of the "invisible nature".

To describe the antithetical quality in the material world, the Ukrainian philosopher devised the terms "tvar" ("creature") and "lzha" ("falsehood") which, (being visible, material, variable, and lacking real existence), was only "deceptive" in that it "concealed the genuine base of all existence", namely, the "invisible nature" or divine "Truth":

"Вся же тварь есть ложь непостоянна и обманчива, и вся тварь есть то поле следов Божіих. Во всѣх сих лживых терминах, или предѣлах, таится и является, лежит и восстает пресвѣтлая истина . ." <sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 63.

<sup>2</sup> Skovbroda, Tvory, 1961, I, pp. 38, 46, 55-56.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 357. All underlinings are my own.



The material world, as the outer covering or "husk" concealing the true essence of "Truth", is further symbolized as, " . . . Вък нам есть то лжа, мечта, суета, пара, ничто же, а истина господня пребывает воъвки".<sup>1</sup> Like its counterpart "lzha", the symbolic term "tvar'" (a derivative of "creature") which Skovoroda used to describe the perishing nature of the material world, had many meaningful and figurative connotations such as: matter, substance ("veshchestvo", "materiia"), element ("stykhia"), earth ("zemlia"), flesh ("plot'") and shadow ("tin'").<sup>2</sup>

In his philosophic creations, Skovoroda makes an interesting distinction between "nichtos'" and "nychto". Contextually, it appears as if the philosopher purposefully chose these antithetical terms (not only to emphasize the difference between the two antipodal worlds), but as a unique "play on words".

From all apparent indications, "nichtos'" appears to be a clever symbolic derivation of "nechto" ("something"), while "nychto" would mean ("nothing"). When applied to Skovoroda's philosophic distinctions between the two worlds, we find that "nichtos'" is always used to denote the "invisible real world" denoting God, Spirit, Eternity, Truth, etc., whereas "nychto" is consistently rendered as the antithetical counterpart describing the "visible nature", namely, creature, matter, substance, flesh, shadow, and falsehood as described above.<sup>3</sup> In short, "Nichtos'" in Skovoroda means "immaterial," "spiritual", or "invisible", while "nychto" denotes the "material" or "substance" as indicated by the following quotations:

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<sup>1</sup>

Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, I, 192.

<sup>2</sup>

Ibid., pp. 16-17, 57, 193-194, 205, 245, 539.

<sup>3</sup>

Ibid., pp. 33, 37, 82, 192, 284-285, 379.

" . . все имѣли и все разумѣли, кромѣ что, узнавъ нефизическаго, нетѣльнаго Бога, с ним потеряли нѣчтось, разумѣй "мир душевный" . . "Плоть ничто же. Но когда сія плоть из ничтожности своей выходит в точное свое начало, тогда создается из ничтожности в нѣчто и перестает быть ничто, т.е. плотію і тьмою." . . "Всякая внѣшность есть трава, тѣнь, ничто." . . "Всякая видимость есть образ, а каждый образ есть плоть, сѣнь и ничто." . . "Видишь в себе одну землю. Но сим самым ничего не видишь, потому что земля и ничто — одно и то же." <sup>1</sup>

Among the many symbolic similes used by the philosopher-teacher to define the material world were such vivid terms as dirt or filth ("hriaz"), heel ("piata"), canopy ("sen"), and tail ("khvost"). <sup>2</sup> As an antithetic reality of the invisible spiritual world, Skovoroda emblemized the elemental realm as "physical matter" <sup>3</sup>, "nothing" <sup>4</sup>, an "idol" <sup>5</sup>, and something "which passes momentarily" <sup>6</sup>.

Naturally, there are numerous appropriate symbolic images associated with Skovorodian descriptions of the "great world" which deserve recognition at this point.

In the first place, the physical realm was commonly depicted as a "shadow" of the "apple tree", a figure characterizing the invisible world. Skovoroda implemented the "shadow" symbol primarily to emphasize the variability and transiency of the material world. "This world," wrote the

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<sup>1</sup> Skovoroda, *Tvory*, 1961, I, pp. 325, 284, 82, 285, 33. All underlinings are my own.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16, 382, 540

<sup>3</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, *op. cit.*, p. 406.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 408.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 318.

philosopher,

"Is the shadow of God. It disappears from view partially, it does not stand constantly, and it is transformed into various shapes. Nevertheless, it never removes itself from its living tree, and as a result those who are enlightened have been saying for a long time, 'Materia aeterna'. Matter is eternal".

Having misunderstood Skovoroda's application of the "shadow" symbol in relation to the invisible world (or, "apple tree"), many had reached the conclusion that Skovoroda was a "materialist"<sup>2</sup> in that he observed matter as "eternal". The philosopher, however, had merely stated that the invisible world (God, Idea, Form, etc) was eternal and unchanging,<sup>3</sup> and, like a tree, was unmoveable by remaining in a state of perfect constancy. As long, therefore, as the tree existed it would always have its potential shadow.

Inasmuch as the tree is the invisible world and is eternal by nature, then its shadow or visible world has the potential of being "eternal". In short, the visible material world is absolutely dependent upon the invisible spiritual realm for its complete existence, and only in this unique relationship was Skovoroda prepared to defend his thesis concerning the controversial "materia aeterna" concept. It was in this conditional respect that he wrote,

" . . . вижу в сем цѣломъ мирѣ два мира, единъ міръ составляющія: міръ видный и невидный, живый і мертвый, цѣлый и сокрушаемый. Сей риза, а тотъ — тѣло, сей тѣнь, а тотъ — древо; сей вещество, а тотъ ипостась, сирѣчь: основаніе, содержащее вещественную грязь такъ, какъ рисунокъ держитъ свою краску . . . Вся исполняющая начало и міръ сей, находится тѣнью его, границъ не имѣетъ. Онъ всегда

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<sup>1</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, *op. cit.*, p. 507. Quoted after Scherer's translation, *op. cit.*, pp. 137-138.

<sup>2</sup> Markov, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

<sup>3</sup> Skovoroda, *Tvory*, 1961, I, pp. 379, 406, 536, 542.

и вездѣ при своем началѣ, как тѣнь при яблони. В том только разнь, что древо жизни стоит и пребывает, а тѣнь умаляется: то переходит, то рождается, то ищезает и есть ничто. *Materia aeterna*".<sup>1</sup>

There can be no doubt that in this and other similar passages<sup>2</sup>, Skovoroda considered matter and substance as representative of the perishable material nature that was completely sustained by the superior invisible nature, or God.

Mutually related to the "shadow" symbol, by which the physical world was depicted in the philosophy of Skovoroda, is the concept that this world "is the smoke of eternity and eternity is the fire which consumes everything".<sup>3</sup> Here, again, the philosopher seeks to symbolize the logical reality that just as the shadow and smoke is dependent upon the existence of the tree and fire, so also the world of matter was dependent upon the existence of God.

Similar relationships could be examined from the symbolic point of view concerning the relativity of many other Skovorodian figures which were often used by the philosopher to portray, explain and define the material world. Among these we could list the figurative images of death ("smert")<sup>4</sup>, lies ("brekhnia")<sup>5</sup>, curtain ("zavisa")<sup>6</sup> and ashes ("popel")<sup>7</sup>, which are only a few of many scattered throughout his literary and philosophic creations.

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<sup>1</sup> Skovoroda, *Tvory*, 1961, I, p. 382.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 551-552.

<sup>3</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, *op. cit.*, p. 392.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 62, 98, 110, 214, 379.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 53, 59, 203, 362.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 52, 521.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 60, 100, 143, 245.

It now has become apparent that most of Skovoroda's thought was structured upon a sound symbolic base in order to illustrate and explain his intangible philosophic concepts more clearly and simply to those who wished to understand his views.

The Bible was the primary source and inspiration for most of his symbolic imagery, and it was this Book (the "world of symbols") that evoked from that philosopher his most colourful and controversial emblematic expressions.

#### THE BIBLE

Anyone familiar with the philosophy of Skovoroda will readily acknowledge that the Bible occupies a central role in that philosopher's metaphysical thought. From the earliest days of his childhood he was profoundly influenced by a "mystical attraction" to the Holy Scriptures which served to sustain him throughout his adult life even until his death:

" . . . this splendid Book won out over all my other loves, slaking my long hunger and thirst with the bread and water of God's truth and justice, which were sweeter to me than honey and the honeycomb. I feel my nature especially drawn toward them. I have fled, and I flee, under the guidance of my Lord, all the obstacles of life, and all carnal lovers, so that I might find peace and joy in the pure embrace of this daughter of God who is fairer than all the daughters of men . . . The more profound and unpeopled is my solitude, the happier is my life with her who is beloved among women. I am content with the fate which the Lord has given me. I was born a man, a complete and true human being, and I shall not die childless . . ."

Not one of his philosophic works was written without either direct

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<sup>1</sup>  
Skovoroda, *Tvory*, 1961, I, pp. 246-247. Quoted after the translation of George L. Kline, Edie, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-57.

or indirect reference to that eternal Book.<sup>1</sup> Skovoroda considered the Bible as the genuine source of all wisdom for it alone was sufficient to lead man to "know himself", to understand his material world and to discover the essence of ultimate human happiness and fulfillment.<sup>2</sup>

Consistent with his basic hypothesis concerning the dual nature of all things within the universe, Skovoroda argued that the Bible was no exception in that it was also primarily "visible" and "invisible" by nature. In addition, the only possible way to fathom its immaterial depths was through the use of symbols, for they alone could successfully span the murky Biblical "exteriors" that concealed the true meaning and essence of God's Word. "The Bible", he said,

" . . . contains figures from creation which are heavenly, earthly, and infernal, designed to serve as monuments to lead our thought to an understanding of the eternal nature hidden within perishable (exterior reality) as a painting (is hidden) within its colors".<sup>3</sup>

Since "every last sound and word breathed symbolically and was dependent upon it" in the Bible<sup>4</sup>, man's biggest assignment in life consisted in making a serious attempt to correctly interpret these images in order to discover the revelation of God's truth to the world.<sup>5</sup>

It was Skovoroda's contention that since the Biblical symbols originated in the first book of the Bible, then the entire Bible must be examined symbolically, otherwise many inconsistencies and contradictions will result from careless literal interpretations:

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<sup>1</sup> Kyryk, "Svit symboliv H. S. Skovorody", op. cit., p. 121.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 121. See also, Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, I, pp. 224-225.

<sup>3</sup> Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, I, p. 536. Quoted after the translation by Fuhrmann, op. cit., p. 46.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 312.

<sup>5</sup> Chyzhevs'kyi, Fil'osofia, op. cit., p. 53.

"On the first day six figures appeared: darkness, light, night, day, evening, morning. From these six figures come three symbols: Darkness and light; Night and day: Evening and morning. The symbol consists of two or three figures which signify corruption and eternity . . . For instance, evening and morning . . . Evening is the corruption, but morning is the city of eternity".

Following the example of the ancient Greek philosophers, the early Church Fathers and certain thinkers of his own time, Skovoroda proceeded to define and explain his understanding of Biblical truths by means of figurative words and symbolic images. For him, the Bible was the "third world", a unique "world of symbols", that was intimately interrelated with the "material world" (the macrocosm) surrounding man, and the private "little world" of the human individual, the microcosm.<sup>2</sup>

In his philosophy, the Ukrainian philosopher-writer often describes the Bible as a "fiery tongue", a "river", "sea", or "seed". He spoke of it as a "new world", a "new life", or a "figurative world" as the following excerpts readily show:

"Библия есть слово Божіе и языкъ огненный"  
 . . . Священное писаніе подобно рѣкѣ или морю.  
 Часто въ томъ мѣстѣ глубина и самымъ ангел-  
 скимъ очамъ неудобозримая закрывается, гдѣ  
 по наружности показывается плохо и просто."  
 . . . Знай другъ мой, что Библия есть, новый  
 міръ и людѣ Божій, земля живыхъ; страна и  
 царство любви; горній Іерусалимъ . . ." "Еже-  
 ли во фігуралномъ бібличномъ семъ мѣрѣ . . ." <sup>3</sup>

The Ukrainian philosopher's attempts to distinguish between the outer form and the proper contents of the Bible created the need for the introduction of many striking antitheses which are closely related to the symbolic method of Skovoroda's philosophic expression.

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<sup>1</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, *op. cit.*, p. 373. Quoted after the translation by Scherer, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

<sup>2</sup> Skovoroda, *Tvory*, 1961, I, p. 536.

<sup>3</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, *op. cit.*, pp. 261, 115, 399, 505.

In this respect Skovoroda symbolized the Bible as a "snake" or a "seven-headed dragon who covered the earth with his superstition".<sup>1</sup> The Bible was simultaneously "God and serpent"; it was "flesh and spirit, witless and wise, an ocean and port, a flood and an ark".<sup>2</sup>

The distinctive impact of the philosopher's antithetical concepts can be more easily appreciated by referring to Chyzhevs'kyi's translation of the original text:

"Вона є змий, але заразом і Бог. Брехлива, але й правдива. Дурна, але й премудра. Зла, але заразом і добра". . "Бачиш, що змий повзе по брехні, жере брехню, блює брехнею . . Поглянь на всю земну кулю та на весь нещасний рід людський. Невже не бачиш? Який мучильний, нещасний потоп єресей, сварок, суєвір, многовір та різновір її хвилює, охоплює, потоплює! Але весь цей потоп не даний нам ізгори, а його одригнула, вибльовуючи, виблювала паща змий".<sup>3</sup>

Keeping in mind the dual-role of the "serpent-symbol" in the works of Skovoroda, the philosopher argues that the serpent must be "raised from the earth", that is to say, the serpent (Bible) must be interpreted symbolically and not literally or superficially.<sup>4</sup> Just as Moses "lifted up the serpent" in the wilderness of Midian (Numbers 21:6-9) and provided healing for those who beheld it, so also a symbolic interpretation of the Bible will bring life to those who will be prepared to view it beyond its superficial exterior form.

For those who were unable, or unwilling to view the Bible through Skovoroda's symbolic prism, it quickly became a book of confusion leading

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<sup>1</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 361.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 506.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 512, 508-509.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 513. Cf. Chyzhevs'kyi, Fil'osofiiia, op. cit., p. 52.



those who were content with inadequate literal interpretations into heresy and superstition. After all, since the Bible shared the duality of man and nature then its contents (while they could lead to true knowledge) were worthless and even deceptive. As a result, Skovoroda introduced the fascinating but valid antithetical concept that the Bible was a Book of Truth and "lies" at the same time:

"The Bible is a lie and an insult to God not so that it may teach us lies, but rather that it may print in the falsehoods the tracks and paths which lead the slowly creeping mind to the highest truth".<sup>1</sup>

Man's contentment to accept the Biblical narratives as mere historical or parabolic accounts (without attempting to understand the concealed meaning inherent in them) led the philosopher to portray these stories as "buffoonery" ("durachestvo"), a "corpse" ("trup"), as "filth" ("hriaz"), "rubbish" or "trash" ("drian") and even as "human excrement" ("hnoi chelovecheskii"):

"Трупъ есть всякъ бренный челоуѣкъ и Библия есть челоуѣкъ и трупъ" . . . "Библия всяма есть дурною и несложною дудоу, естли ее обраѣаемъ къ нашимъ плотскимъ дѣламъ, бодущій терновникъ, горькая и невкусная вада, дурачество, естли съ Павломъ сказать Божіе: или скажу лайно, мотыѣка, дрянъ, грязь, гной челоуѣческій" . . ."<sup>2</sup>

Scherer observed that "it was foolhardy in Skovoroda's opinion to consider the material details of the Bible for their own sake. Such consideration could only lead to atheistic rejection of the Bible on the one hand or its superstitious acceptance on the other . . . In either case

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<sup>1</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 362. Quoted after Scherer's translation, op. cit., p. 76.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 202, 179, 261.

man failed to find true knowledge in the Bible because he could not penetrate its externality and find the Divine truth hidden within".<sup>1</sup> Skovoroda, however, provides a logical solution:

"Когда въ Божіихъ книгахъ читаешь: піянство, наложничество, кровосмѣшеніе, амурѣи и подобное, не мѣшай на содомскихъ сихъ улицахъ; но проходи не задумываясь на нихъ, и на пути грѣшныхъ не стой. Вить Библиа не къ симъ улицамъ, а только чрезъ сіи улицы, ведетъ тебе въ горнія страны, и чистый край не въ плотскія мудрованія, и исходитъ къ вѣчному. Библии нѣтъ нужды до брюха, до нижняго сего нашего Бога, ни до брака, ни до царя плотскаго. Она вся въ вышнемъ Богѣ . . . Библиа есть Пасха, проходи, переходь, исходи и входи . . . Къ сему переходу Библиа тебѣ есть, и мость и лѣствица".<sup>2</sup>

From the above quotation we learn that the Ukrainian philosopher considered the Biblical narratives as the "lower rungs of a ladder" which enable one to climb higher toward a more perfect understanding of eternal truths. The Bible, in fact, was the only means by which men could come to know God<sup>3</sup>, and it was therefore variously symbolized as "wings" ("kryla"), a "door" ("dvery"), or a "harbour" ("havan"), and "bridge" ("most"), etc.<sup>4</sup>

Although Skovoroda employed many striking negative symbols in his philosophy in an effort to denounce the literal interpretations of Biblical narratives, this did not imply that he held them in contempt or did not believe they actually came to pass. On the contrary, "many people," said Skovoroda,

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<sup>1</sup> Scherer, op. cit., pp. 76-77.

<sup>2</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., pp. 404-405.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 364.

<sup>4</sup> Chyzhevs'kyi, Fil'osofiiia, op. cit., p. 53.

" . . . not understanding me, or not wishing to understand me, have slanderously declared that I reject the stories of the Old and New Testament, because I acknowledge and preach the spiritual meaning of these stories, because I perceive the God-given law and discern the essential meaning through the literal meaning. I thus enrich these stories rather than nullify them, for, just as the body without the spirit is dead, so is Holy Scripture without faith dead; but faith is the evidence of things unseen . . ." <sup>1</sup>

Whenever Skovoroda discussed the Bible in his various works, he simply kept on repeating this same general argument, namely, that a Divine essence was concealed beneath the external appearance of all things, and in this case it was to be found beneath the "superficial" Biblical narratives:

"Reading the Holy Scripture with the aim of being instructed in the worship and fear of God, love for one's neighbour, obedience to authority, submission to the powers that be, and perfection of the heart in all its dealings, and when, for example I find the story of how the high-priest Aaron took the golden calf of the Hebrews which they had made and begun to worship during his absence, and threw it into the fire and melted it, I am not concerned with the chemistry of this event, since I always keep in mind that the Bible is not a chemist's handbook but a Holy Book, which instructs men who are capable of grasping its teaching in holiness of conduct. I learn from this story that the heart of man cannot remain idle and that when holy thoughts, understanding of the truth, and the spirit of reason are absent from it, it instantly turns to base activities unworthy of its high birth --honouring, glorifying, and deifying what is contemptible, insignificant and vain. This meaning of the story is much more edifying to me, and facilitates my inner perfection much more, than if, having discovered how to make gold instantly out of all things, and turn all things into gold, I should give myself up to the desire for wealth or the practice of chemistry". <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 36. Quoted after the translation by George L. Kline, op. cit., pp. 23-24.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 37. Quoted after the translation by George L. Kline, op. cit., pp. 24-25.

Throughout his philosophic works, therefore, we may find numerous emblems and symbols depicting the concealed "Divine essence" that exists beneath the exterior narrative form of the Bible. It was the "seed" or "kernel" hidden beneath the "husk" or "shell" which formed the exterior covering; <sup>1</sup> the eternal contents which are hidden in a trunk or chest; a pearl found within the outer shell. <sup>2</sup> Furthermore, the Bible was like a drawing or painting etched within a cave <sup>3</sup>, or a beautiful garden surrounded by an impassable outer hedge or fence. <sup>4</sup> Along with many other similar examples <sup>5</sup>, Skovoroda insists that the outer "visible" forms must be successfully penetrated before the "invisible" spiritual truths concealed within the Bible can be genuinely understood and appreciated.

Despite the danger inherent in the use of the Bible, Skovoroda considered its employment and correct understanding absolutely necessary for a greater knowledge of God. <sup>6</sup> He quoted the Bible itself to underscore the necessity of diligent study and meditation, as man must "search the scriptures . . . It is they who bear witness to me". (John 5:39). <sup>7</sup>

In each of the three sections examined thus far: God, the material world, and the Bible, Skovoroda's major philosophical premise that "everything was composed of corrupt appearance and Divine essence", has been clearly illustrated by his figurative terms and symbolic images. For him, true knowledge consisted in understanding the Divine principle hidden

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<sup>1</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., pp. 271-272, 274, 285, 290, 363.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 265.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 172.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 176.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 287-290.

<sup>6</sup> Scherer, op. cit., p. 89.

<sup>7</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 364.

within the deceptive externality. This same approach has been effectively adapted to his teaching concerning the dual nature of man.

#### MAN

Just as "the whole world consists of two natures, one seen, and the other unseen" <sup>1</sup>, so also man, the "microcosm," was composed of a dual nature, namely, the "outer" and "inner" man. <sup>2</sup> Skovoroda, who considered the study of man as central to his entire metaphysical thought, contended that man's preoccupation with his external features had blinded him to an acute awareness of his spiritual counterpart hidden deep within his own personality. "You have seen and loved the dolt and idol in yourself, but not the true body . ." <sup>3</sup> It was the contention of the Ukrainian philosopher that he "who has fallen in love with his fleshly appearance is unable to pursue beyond this appearance . ." <sup>4</sup>

Following the example of the Apostle Paul (Romans 7), Skovoroda declared that man's visible physical nature was devilishly deceptive and that he must first "fathom himself" for "if we do not find the measure within ourselves, then with what can we measure?" <sup>5</sup>

Concerning this "outer man", Skovoroda employed a striking array of negative symbolic terms which described his mistrust and contempt for the visible nature as compared to its inner spiritual counterpart:

"You are the shadow, gloom and decay! You are a dream of your true self. You are the cloak, but it is the body. You are an apparition but it is

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<sup>1</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 100.

<sup>2</sup> Chyzhevs'kyi, Narysy, op. cit., p. 53.

<sup>3</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 96.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 91.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 88.

the truth in you. You are nothing, while it is your essence. You are dirt, but it is your beauty, form, and plan; neither your form nor your beauty issues from your physical appearance, rather it is in you and sustains you. O Filth and nothingness! You won't know the true man unless you acknowledge along with Abraham that you are only dirt and ashes".<sup>1</sup>

As was true in every other instance, it was the inner spiritual man who strengthened and sustained the outward physical form,<sup>2</sup> and thus, it became essential for man to look beyond the superficial external image of himself in order to discover his true spiritual identity: "How long . . . until you understand that all flesh is nothing, a shadow which conceals the highest amount of wisdom . . .?"<sup>3</sup> And again, "You have loved yourself, i.e. the rubbish, but not the hidden Divine truth in yourself, which you have never seen, nor considered as being."<sup>4</sup>

Skovoroda insisted that unless man could first "know himself" it would be useless and even impossible to know anything outside himself:

"You see in yourself only the earth, and because of this you see nothing, for the earth and nothing are one and the same. It is one thing to see the shadow of the oak tree it is another to see the tree itself. You see your shadow, to put it simply, your waste land and nothing else. But you have never seen yourself".<sup>5</sup>

Placed in contradistinction to the perishable outer man was the spiritual "inner man" that Skovoroda symbolized as a "seed" concealed within its external "husk":

"Like a good and full ear of wheat. Judge for yourself: an ear is not the stem with its branches,

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<sup>1</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 84. Quoted after the translation by Scherer, op. cit., p. 101.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 82.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 96.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 80. Quoted after the translation by Scherer, op. cit., p. 68.

nor its straw, nor the outer skin, which covers the grain: rather the ear is that very power, which generates the stem, the straw, the body of the grain and so on, in which power all of these are invisibly contained".<sup>1</sup>

On the basis of the abovementioned symbol, Skovoroda showed that "just as a hidden power sustained the stem, straw and skin of the wheat, so a hidden power, true man, supported all of a man's external members".<sup>2</sup> In other words, once man was able to discover the Divine nature concealed within his external physical being, it was the same as if he had "uncovered a spark in his own ashes".<sup>3</sup>

During this process of "self-discovery", Skovoroda recalls the difficult struggle he encountered by warring with the flesh:

"Oh my Father! It is difficult to sever my heart from the sticky, elemental filth. Oh it is difficult! I have seen the image of a winged youth. He yearned to fly into the celestial regions, but his foot, attached by a chain to the earth, impeded him. This image is my own".<sup>4</sup>

It was Skovoroda's personal life-long ambition to gain a complete victory over the flesh in order to enjoy the sweet fellowship that issued from an intimate union with the inner man: "Crucify my body, nail it to the cross; Let my body suffer, that my spirit may have room. Let my outer self grow dry, that my new inner self may bloom".<sup>5</sup> The life of the Ukrainian philosopher was totally divorced from the material and fleshly pleasures offered by the earth<sup>6</sup> except for those things that were necessary for normal physical survival: "I want no new sciences, only

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<sup>1</sup> Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, II, p. 506. Quoted after the translation by Scherer, op. cit., p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> Scherer, op. cit., p. 32.

<sup>3</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 496.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 499. Quoted after the translation by Scherer, op. cit., p. 42.

<sup>5</sup> Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, II, p. 16.

<sup>6</sup> Scherer, op. cit., pp. 19, 38.

a healthy mind, and the wisdom of Christ, which will provide me peace".<sup>1</sup>  
 This objective appears to have been successfully realized for upon his tombstone there is engraved the memorable epitaph: "The world enticed, but did not seduce me".<sup>2</sup>

An examination of Skovoroda's works on this particular theme will reveal that he often adopted various symbolic terms such as "soul", "thought", and "understanding" to describe the essential nature of the "inner man".<sup>3</sup> Probably his most popular symbolic designation was the "heart" ("sertse"), which did not denote the fleshly organ but rather the immaterial essence of man.

A selective number of quotations from his "philosophy of the heart" will clearly reveal the interesting assortment of symbolic images that the Ukrainian philosopher-writer utilized to describe the difference between the two natures of man: "Your heart", he once said, "is the ruler of your appearances. While it is the ruler, you yourself are your heart. If you don't come near to, and accompany this which is your ruler, then you will remain a dead shadow and a corpse".<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, "the externality of your body is nothing but a mask which conceals all of your members, which are hidden in the heart as in a seed".<sup>5</sup> Additional symbolic expressions are seen in the statement, "I see your branches but I do not see your roots,<sup>6</sup> your heart . . . I see your outer eye . . . but I do

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<sup>1</sup> Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, II, p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 531.

<sup>3</sup> Edie, op. cit., p. 15.

<sup>4</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 88.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 100.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 169.



not see your essential eye. It has been concealed there (in the heart)".<sup>1</sup>  
 "Man's heart is an unlimited abyss. It is like the air (sic) which carries the floating planets".<sup>2</sup> By his reference to the heart as an "abyss" ("bezodnia"), Skovoroda explains, in vivid symbolic terms, that it is limitless and incomprehensible:

"The profound heart, known to God alone, is nothing else but an abyss which is unlimited by our thoughts . . . i.e. the true essence and the essential truth, our very essence, kernel, and strength in which solely consists our life, but without its mortal shadow, so that it is evident what a perfect vanity it is to lose oneself, though one possessed the entire Copernican universe".<sup>3</sup>

Having realized the eternal nature of the "inner man", Skovoroda exclaimed in obvious awe, "Oh heart! . . . How deep you are! You contain and sustain everything, but nothing contains you".<sup>4</sup> Stephen Scherer has appropriately noted that "Skovoroda, having identified the infinite, all-sustaining, and unfathomable heart's abyss as the true man within the visible man, concluded logically that this infinite and unfathomable true man was divine".<sup>5</sup> The Ukrainian philosopher's final resolution was clear: "There is a single labour in both of these, knowing oneself and comprehending God, knowing and comprehending the actual man . . . know that the true man and God are the same".<sup>6</sup>

After portraying the "inner man" as both God<sup>7</sup>, and Christ<sup>8</sup>,

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<sup>1</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 169.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 420-421.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 94. Quoted after the translation by Scherer, op. cit., p. 105.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 88.

<sup>5</sup> Scherer, op. cit., p. 107.

<sup>6</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 92.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., pp. 101, 486.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., pp. 486, 521-522.

Skovoroda proceeds to describe its Divine attributes in distinct symbolic images:

" . . . He flies without limit into the heights, the depths, and the expanses. Neither mountains, nor rivers nor seas, nor deserts impede him. He sees into the distance, begins to view what is hidden, sees the past, penetrates into the future, moves over the face of the deep, and enters through closed doors. He has the eyes of a dove, the wings of an eagle, the speed of a stag, the daring of a lion, the fidelity of a turtle-dove, the gentleness of a lamb, the quickness of a falcon, and the good cheer of a crane".<sup>1</sup>

In an effort to distinguish between the "inner" and "outer" man, the Ukrainian philosopher-writer employed the use of capital and small letters respectively in order to eliminate unnecessary confusion between the two natures of man.<sup>2</sup>

Among some of the other symbols employed by Skovoroda to portray man in relationship to God was the depiction of man as a dish or container ("posud") which could be filled with Divine nourishment according to its own individual capacity to receive and contain it.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, man was described as a chest ("skrynja") containing holy images<sup>4</sup>, or the garments worn by God.<sup>5</sup>

Skovoroda's symbolic descriptions of man include such phrases as "what the compass is to the boat, so God is to man",<sup>6</sup> or, "man's heart is a lamp where burns the oil of God's divine existence".<sup>7</sup> According to

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<sup>1</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 401. Quoted after the translation by Scherer, op. cit., pp. 109-110.

<sup>2</sup> Chyzhevs'kyi, Narysy, op. cit., p. 54.

<sup>3</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 340 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 359, 387.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 84, 205, 312, 368.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 320.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 251.

Skovoroda man was like the "husk" concealing God as the "seed"<sup>1</sup>, or, man was the refulgence ("siaivo") of God as a reflection from a mirror, since his corporeal body was only the shadow of the real Man".<sup>2</sup> In addition, the Ukrainian philosopher described man's soul as a "magnet" which received its "strength" from God.<sup>3</sup>

As a means of describing his thought concerning man's search for self-knowledge, Skovoroda employed the well-known mythological figure of Narcissus who, beholding his reflected image in a pool, loved himself because he "knew himself". In other words, he was able to see beyond his superficial external appearance to the Divinity concealed within himself. Contrary to the actions of the mythological figure, Scherer has observed that Skovoroda's Narcissus, when asked what he had seen in the water, replied, "I have seen in the supernatural form that which flows through my flesh".<sup>4</sup> This, as far as the Ukrainian philosopher-writer was concerned, formed the whole purpose and duty of man.

By means of his symbols and descriptive terms, Skovoroda was able to show that once man had mastered the difficult technique of bringing the earthly nature into harmony with the "Divine Spark" of the human soul, then true happiness would finally be achieved. Since he also taught that "there is nothing sweeter for man and nothing more necessary than happiness"<sup>5</sup>, it is obvious that this theme would occupy an important place in his philosophy, and that his symbols would play a major role in its explanation and clarification.

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<sup>1</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., pp. 97-98, 102, 169, 248.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 125-126.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 270.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 61.

## HAPPINESS

Skovoroda's passionate emphasis upon the need of man to "know himself" and thereby come to a knowledge of God appears to stem from the fact that he did not believe the physical world had the capacity to bring man the kind of lasting happiness he so desperately desired. His melancholy despair in this regard is clearly reflected in the following verses:

"Woe unto you world! You display laughter outside  
While you sob secretly from the soul inside.  
Your surface is well adorned,  
But inside with tears, you overflow  
Both night and day".

Live for three centuries or even for eternity,  
Is it any good, or use,  
If your heart endures abuse?  
When you are not at ease, no material can appease.

Conquer the world, rule many lands  
Is it any good, or use  
If your heart endures abuse?  
When you are not at ease, no material can appease. <sup>2</sup>

With regard to Skovoroda's basic thesis concerning life's true happiness, it is essential to note that he strongly rejects any suggestion that it can be achieved by anything outside oneself, because such things as worldly goods, fame, health, power, etc., have never been known to permanently satisfy the deepest yearnings of the human heart. <sup>3</sup>

On the contrary, Skovoroda insisted that the secret of happiness lies in accepting all things as they are, for everything is willed by God.

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<sup>1</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 61. Quoted after the translation by Scherer, op. cit., p. 62.

<sup>2</sup> Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, II, p. 51. Quoted after the translation by Scherer, op. cit., pp. 62-63.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., I, pp. 14-15.

In other words, man must first "know himself and then accept the divine order of things by seeking to live in harmony not only with himself, but with God and nature.

Many, however, in seeking life's true meaning and purpose have become confused for they do not know where ultimate happiness can be found:

"Many are those who seek Christ in the sovereignty of Augustus and Tiberius, or who follow the trail through Jerusalem, Jordan, and Bethlehem; there is Christ, they say to one another. I know, the Angel cries out to them, ye are looking for the crucified Christ. He is not there! So they search for Him in the ranks of the mighty, in magnificent houses, at sumptuous feasts . . . staring at the blue firmament, the sun, the moon they try to find Him among the worlds of Copernicus . . . No, He is not there! Then where is He? They seek Him through long prayers, in fastings, in the rituals . . . not there! Then where is He? Surely He must be there where they preach so eloquently, and study the secrets of the Prophets . . . No, neither is He there. The ill-fated scribes, reading the Prophets, sought for man but fell on a corpse, and perished with it . . . No, Christ is not among the dead. If ye have not found Him hitherto within yourselves, it is needless to search elsewhere".<sup>1</sup>

Having rejected all material and vain ceremonial pursuits as possible solutions to the attainment of true happiness, Skovoroda was not thereby implying that one cannot be happy if one is rich, famous, in good health, or in control of great power or authority. He merely insisted that if one happens to be happy in any one (or all) of these circumstances, then it should be remembered that the situation itself was not responsible for the happiness one experienced.

Skovoroda argues that if true human happiness was dependent upon the massive acquisition of external "things", then most men would never even have an opportunity to be happy for the majority do not have an

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Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., pp. 55-56. Quoted after the translation by P. Miliukov, op. cit., pp. 94-95.

over-abundance of material possessions, while those who do are generally ruined by them. The absurdity of such reasoning is considered further in the following statement by Skovoroda:

"What would it be like then if happiness, the most necessary and dear thing for everyone, depended on place, time, flesh and blood? I will speak more clearly: what would it be like if God confined happiness to America, or to the Canary Islands, or to Jerusalem, or to the Tsar's court, or to Solomon's age, or to riches, or to the desert, or to rank, or to learning, or to health?"<sup>1</sup>

Perishable things, in and of themselves, can never bring about happiness because they are transient, therefore the feeling after which man must search should be eternal, the spiritual part of his existence. "Many bodily needs await you," Skovoroda once said, "but happiness is not there. For your heart one thing is needed and there is God and happiness".<sup>2</sup>

As far as the Ukrainian philosopher-writer was concerned, he was content to be an "observer" rather than a "participant" in the world. This was essential because man had a definite need and ability to observe and understand the physical world. Scherer has observed that for Skovoroda, "knowledge of the physical world, by its insufficiency, impelled man to seek a higher spiritual knowledge, and by its organization, pointed the way toward the spiritual essence which underpinned and ordered the material world".<sup>3</sup>

Knowledge of the material world was therefore, according to Skovoroda, only the first step towards a greater, spiritual knowledge. "If you want to know something truly", he wrote, "look first at the flesh, i. e.

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<sup>1</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 62. Quoted after the translation by Scherer, op. cit., p. 112.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>3</sup> Scherer, op. cit., p. 64.

at its externality, and you will see on it traces of God which reveal the unknown and hidden wisdom".<sup>1</sup>

True human happiness and contentment, therefore, was to be found "within oneself" by the formation of an intimate relationship with the "inner man" Who is none other than God and Christ:

"Хочеш бути щастливий? Не шукай щастя за морем, не прохай його в людини, не мандруй по планетах, не тиняйся по палацах, не повзай по кулі земній, не ходи по Єрусалимах. . . За гроші ти можеш купити село, справа важка, бо обхідна, а щастя, як необхідна необхідність, дарується скрізь та завше задурно. ." <sup>2</sup>

Skovoroda taught that "the Kingdom of God" was within each individual and that entrance could only be gained by waging a successful battle against the exterior fleshly nature:

"Щастя наше в нас . . . хай ніхто не чекає щастя від високих наук, від шановних посад, від добутків . . . Царство боже не так приходить як гість до гостей, щоб можна його зустрінути, як воно виникає зза гір, ізза моря, зза хмар. Воно не далеко від нас. Воно в нас самих . . . Скрізь Бог , . . де ж його ближче шукати, як у тобі самому? . . . Море від нас далеко а Бог наш у нас, у серці нашому".<sup>3</sup>

According to Skovoroda, man should be content with the bare necessities of life such as sunshine and fresh air<sup>4</sup>, as most other material wants become as "excess baggage" for the true seeker of God's Truth and righteousness.

By the dedication of one's life to follow after the will and calling ("poklykannia") of God, man will live harmoniously with nature and

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<sup>1</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 309.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 62. Quoted after the translation by Chyzhevs'kyi, Fil'osofia, op. cit., p. 157.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 344, 142, 172, 252. Quoted after the translation by Chyzhevs'kyi, Fil'osofia, op. cit., p. 158.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 62.

thereby receive the fulfillment of all of his wants and needs:

"Щастя залежить не від наук, не від урядів, не від багатства, а лише від того, щоб охоче віддатися волі божій. Це лише може заспокоїти душу . . . Розкусимо трохи це слово: віддатися волі божій . . . Пригадайте моє слово: чим хто згідніший із Богом, тим мирніший та щасливіший. Це значить: жити згідно з природою . . ." <sup>1</sup>

By living in harmony with nature one receives the necessary enthusiasm and strength to enjoy his life's work. <sup>2</sup> On the other hand, those who choose to disregard the career or niche chosen for them by Divine providence, are left to wallow in misery and frustration. <sup>3</sup>

Skovoroda attempted to symbolize this relationship of man, nature, and the principle of Divine calling by depicting the world as a "theatre" where each person "performs" according to a special "role" specially chosen for them by nature which has been designed according to that individual's specific natural talents and character:

"The world is like a theatre: in order to stage a play successfully one must cast the roles according to the aptitudes of the actors. The actors on the stage are praised not by the distinction of their roles, but by their success in playing them. I determined this long ago, and I have seen by many experiences that I can not play successfully on the world's stage any role besides a low, simple, care free, and solitary one. I chose <sup>4</sup> this role, I have taken it and I am satisfied".

The philosopher was not disappointed with the role imparted to him by the providence of nature. He was, however, absolutely content in the knowledge that the life he chose to live was in full accord with the predestined

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<sup>1</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., pp. 322-323. Quoted after Chyzhevs'kyi's translation.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 324.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 334.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 24-25. Quoted after the translation by Scherer, op. cit., pp. 33-34.



will of God:

"If I felt today that I could fearlessly slash the Turks, then from this day I would strap on a Hussar's sword, don a shako, and go to serve in the armed forces. Work which is in accord with one's natural inclinations is satisfying".<sup>1</sup>

On another occasion, Skovoroda wrote,

"Understand that I would be a hundred times happier if I were making clay pans in accord with God, than if I were writing in opposition to nature. But I feel, until now, that the incorruptible hand of<sup>2</sup> the Eternal supports me in my present occupation".

Speaking of a former student-friend who was obviously unsuited in his academic pursuits, the philosopher wrote, "I looked with pity and wonder on his lack of ability. But as soon as he decided to be a mechanic he amazed everyone with his understanding, and all without any guidance."<sup>3</sup>

Much to Skovoroda's dismay and regret, most people did not aspire to know God's truths or to live according to the "niche" predestined for them by nature. They were far too preoccupied with empirical knowledge which, having a certain value, did not provide man with the solutions to life's true meaning or purpose. The philosopher therefore lamented, saying, "We have fathomed the sea, the earth, the air the heavens . . . what is it we have not learned to accomplish? But there is sorrow that in all of this there is nothing of greatness".<sup>4</sup>

This did not mean that Skovoroda was opposed to scientific advancement, for he "commended its latest achievements".<sup>5</sup> However, there was an

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<sup>1</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., pp. 24-25. Quoted after the translation by Scherer, op. cit., pp. 33-34.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 326. Quoted after the translation by Scherer, op. cit., p. 129.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 327.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 224.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 226.

inevitable ruinous danger inherent in the exclusive pursuit of knowledge that was divorced from the spiritual realities of life: "Mathematics, medicine, physics, mechanics, music . . . the more copiously we partake of them the more does our heart burn with hunger and thirst, but our rough ignorance can not guess that they (the sciences, JRP) are all handmaidens for the mistress".<sup>1</sup>

Scherer explains that "this mistress of the sciences for Skovoroda was 'Christian philosophy', and it was just this mistress which was, according to Skovoroda, ignored by eighteenth-century scientific thought".<sup>2</sup>

It is precisely at this point that the Ukrainian philosopher introduces another of his valuable symbols which was intended to depict the frustrated dilemma of those people who preferred the empirical above the spiritual in their pursuit of happiness. Skovoroda depicted them as caged birds, "which beat themselves against the cage from one side to the other, but nowhere find room to fly".<sup>3</sup>

Just as the birds were restrained by the cage so were those individuals who were imprisoned by their attachment to "appearances".<sup>4</sup> Such people were, according to Skovoroda, "confused and tormented within their walls," and therefore he was forced to conclude by saying, "What is so narrow and restraining as appearances?"<sup>5</sup>

From all indications it would appear as if it were a simple thing to fly from the cage into the "freedom of the spirit". Skovoroda, however,

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<sup>1</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 225.

<sup>2</sup> Scherer, op. cit., p. 16. Cf. Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 227.

<sup>3</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 97.

<sup>4</sup> Scherer, op. cit., p. 65.

<sup>5</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 97.

recognizes the difficulty of their dilemma and describes it in vivid symbolic terms:

" . . як нам вилетіти до того, чого не вважаємо за буття? Чи вилетить як птах наше серце з її сіток? Ах! не вилетить, бо її серцем наше серце зробилося". . "Бажання є непогасний вогонь, що горить удень та вночі . . Це огнище та ця безодня є вогненне вугілля, куріння диму, що викидає полум'яні хвили, які підіймаються до небес та сходять униз у безодню . ." <sup>1</sup>

A number of symbolic descriptions concerning the loftiness and purity of the human heart have already been examined, yet there is a negative aspect of this "inner man" that needs to be discussed in respect to man's pursuit of happiness. Those, for instance, who choose to wallow in the shallows of empirical knowledge alone, are portrayed by Skovoroda as having hearts that are bad ("zle sertse"), or murky ("temni"). <sup>2</sup>

In its corrupted and "unregenerated" state, a man's heart is depicted by the philosopher-writer as possessing many different meanings: It was, "старе"<sup>3</sup>, "суєвірне"<sup>4</sup>, "попільне"<sup>5</sup>, "тілесне"<sup>6</sup>, "скотське"<sup>7</sup>, "звіряче"<sup>8</sup>, "нечисте"<sup>9</sup>, and so on.

Associated with these miscellaneous descriptions of the heart are many symbolic images borrowed from the animal world such as a camel ("verbliud"), wolf ("vovk"), deer ("olen"), ox ("vil"), lion ("lev"),

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<sup>1</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 97, 427. Quoted after Chyzhevs'kyi's translation, Fil'sofiiia, op. cit., p. 121.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 101, 237, 475.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 88.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 100.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 410.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 421.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. p. 455.

falcon ("sokil"), eagle ("orel"), and dove ("holub").<sup>1</sup> The relationship between the good and bad heart has many popular antithetical connotations in the works of Skovoroda, among which are: "правдиве око", "дійсне око", "око серця", "Око Віри", "око розуму", as compared with: "нічого", "старого", "сліпого", "пустого", and, "необризане око".<sup>2</sup>

A man's heart can be flooded with a bitter sea ("morem hirkym"), in which resides the head of a serpent ("holova zmyia").<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, a clean heart "has no fear before the grave or a lightning flash," for it "belongs to God, and God belongs to it." It is the friend ("pryiatel'") and sacrifice ("zhertva") of God.<sup>4</sup> Thus, Skovoroda cries out, "О, чисте серце! Ти - новий час, вічна весна, прекрасне небо, обітована земля, рай розуму, радість, тиша, спокій божий, субота та великий день Великодня . ." <sup>5</sup>

Since a man's heart has the potential for becoming cold ("kholodne"), dark or murky ("temne"), old ("stare"), and filled with superstition ("suiievirne"), Skovoroda makes an emotional appeal for man to protect his heart ("okhoroniai sertse")<sup>6</sup>, because an "evil man shall lose his heart, namely, lose himself".<sup>7</sup>

There can be only one way to "protect the heart" and that is to apply what appears to have become Skovoroda's cardinal religious commandment to

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Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., pp. 207-209.

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Chyzhevs'kyi, Fil'osofia, op. cit., p. 131.

3

Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 237.

4

Ibid., p. 486.

5

Ibid.

6

Ibid., p. 92.

7

Ibid., p. 94.

"Know Thyself!", for in so doing one will know God and God will know him:

"Пізнай спершу себе самого. Не блукай по планетах та по зорях. Повернись додому. Там твій батько" . . "Бути щасливим - значить, знайти себе самого . . Ви все знаєте та все маєте, лише знайти себе самих ви не вмієте та не хочете . ." <sup>1</sup>

Skovoroda's "theory of self-knowledge" evolved quite naturally from his major philosophical premise that all three worlds (man, nature, and the Bible) were composed of corrupt appearances and Divine essence, and true knowledge consisted in understanding (or discovering) the Divine principle hidden within the deceptive externality. Our study thus far has shown that in each of these "worlds" the intrinsic "sense" of their respective meanings was concealed beneath a shroud of symbolic and emblematic forms, which needed to be successfully penetrated before the sense could be reached and understood. This "sense" could be found not only in the objects themselves, but also in the inner spiritual depths of man himself.

According to Skovoroda, this important act of "self-knowledge" (which was basic to the ultimate realization of true happiness), could be more easily understood if it was viewed symbolically. This, however, was to be preceded by the negative act of "self knowledge" which consisted in the destruction of the "deceptive externality".

Skovoroda symbolized this process by comparing it symbolically to the "chewing" or "mastication" of food:

"Жуй . . розжовуй . . розжовуйте, розкушуйте, розтопчуйте, розбивайте цього ідола, розривайте цього льва-діявола та знаходьте всередині заховану страву та солодкі щільники вічності, невідомої та таємної правди божої . . розжовуйте добре . . розмелюйте їжу зубами . ." <sup>2</sup>

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Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., pp. 179, 227. Quoted after Chyzhevs'kyi's translation, op. cit., pp. 130-131.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 400, 396, 82, 152. Quoted after Chyzhevs'kyi's translation, op. cit., pp. 130-131.

For Skovoroda, "mastication" ("rozzhovuvannia") was the same as the division ("rozdilianniam") of two truths which form the basis of all existence: "Розділяти, розрубувати, або судити є одне й те саме".<sup>1</sup> One must always see "doubly"<sup>2</sup> because self-knowledge is dependent upon one's ability to distinguish between light and darkness,<sup>3</sup> and to discern between the good and the bad.<sup>4</sup>

In some instances, the philosopher-writer symbolizes this ability to "divide" or "separate" with the "cloven hoof" ("rozshcheplene kopyto") of animals that were considered "clean" by Moses (Deuteronomy 14:7): "Розщеплене копито . . йде за правдою божою"<sup>5</sup>, " . . шукай для нового шляху нових ніг"<sup>6</sup>, and so on.

In Skovoroda, ruminants always symbolize true self knowledge, whereby, during the process of mastication, the essential truth or nourishment is extracted from the exterior "husks" or ceremonial "forms" which conceal the true essence or sense:

"перше жування полягає в тому, що розжовують історичну церемоніальну шкіру, лущиння . . Тоді треба перейти до другого жування, щоб знайти в непотрібній лущині горіха захований смак - так як зерно лежить таємно заховане в лущині" . . "що за користь жувати, а не почувати смаку . ." "їсти без зубів та без смаку, то жуєш лише саму просту та гірку лущинку. ."

According to the Ukrainian philosopher-writer, one must "eat less, and masticate more" - for much is lost by improper "eating" habits:

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<sup>1</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 146.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 147.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 175.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 179.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 165.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., pp. 159, 160, 265. Quoted after Chyzhevs'kyi's translation, Fil'sofiiia, op. cit., p. 130-132.

"Іси єдину страву зі смаком, та цього тобі досить . . Візьми лише один горіх . . Розкуси та розжуй його. Водночас ти розкусив усю Біблію . . Учений жере багато. Мудрий їсть мало, але зі смаком. Вченість є не-нажерливість . ." <sup>1</sup>

True happiness, therefore, according to Skovoroda, consisted in living according to truth, because a truthful heart is a merry heart, and a merry heart (disposition) makes for a healthy body. <sup>2</sup> But ultimate happiness through self-knowledge can only be found in God:

"Світло відкриває нам те, що в пітьми лише бовваніло. Так тільки Бог одкриває нам нову правду . . Час . . життя та все інше знаходиться в Бозі . . Початок мудрости розумити Бога. Хто не знає Бога, схожий на бранця у в'язниці. Що може такий у темряві розуміти? Головний та початковий пункт мудрости є знання про Бога . ." <sup>3</sup>

As mentioned earlier, Skovoroda depicted the one who was able to arrive at self-knowledge successfully as symbolic of "Narcissus" who, "loved himself" because he knew himself, in that he was able to see beyond external appearances to the Divinity concealed deep within his own personality. Scherer contends that "Skovoroda used the image of Narcissus to illuminate his own experiences and to incorporate them into his teachings, and this was neither fanciful nor faulty. He used such an image because he could not explain in conceptual terms his profound and ineffable inner experiences." <sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, *op. cit.*, pp. 395, 413. Quoted after the translation by Chyzhevs'kyi, *Fil'osofia*, *op. cit.*, pp. 131-132.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 360.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105. Quoted after the translation by Chyzhevs'kyi, *Fil'osofia*, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

<sup>4</sup> Scherer, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

In the second place, man was now compared to the familiar human "container" ("posud"), which was being filled by Divine nourishment from the eternal fountain of life (God), Who filled each vessel according to its individual capacity to retain His goodness.<sup>1</sup> This fountain which symbolized God's "unequal equality" was graphically illustrated by Skovoroda as shown in the Appendix, Figure " 4.

Finally, Skovoroda often compared human happiness to tranquility ("spokii"), peace ("myr"), and even like the sabbath ("subota").<sup>2</sup> The first of these three concepts was symbolized as a terminal or depot ("kinets"), and harbour ("havan") depicting the end of a long and tedious journey. It follows, therefore, that such symbolic synonyms as light ("svitlo"), joy ("radist'", "radisnist'"), life ("zhyttia"), resurrection ("voskresenya"), path ("shliakh"), paradise ("rai"), and sweetness ("solodoshchi") are often associated with the experience of having finally reached the haven of true human happiness.<sup>3</sup>

Secondly, the graphic symbolic illustration depicting a dove resting on a rocky crag in the midst of a great ocean (Appendix, Figure # 9) denotes true "peace" in many of Skovoroda's works: The dove, ( a Biblical symbol of purity and innocence), rests upon a rocky crag (symbolic of God, as the Rock of Ages), surrounded by a great (boisterous) ocean, a figure of the perishing material world. Taken together it means: "On stability I rest" ("Na nezyblemosti pochivaiu").<sup>4</sup>

And then, after the Biblical basis of creation, Skovoroda constructed

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<sup>1</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., pp. 340-341.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 104, 107, 467.

<sup>3</sup> Chyzhevs'kyi, op. cit., p. 140.

<sup>4</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., pp. 198, 265.



his "sabbath" symbol showing that after six days of "toil" (depicting the process of penetrating the perishable "externaility"), there was designated a day of "rest". (Cf. Genesis, Chapter 1). Thus, after having "toiled" in overcoming the flesh, man can now rest and celebrate his "friendship" with God.<sup>1</sup>

On the basis of these symbols and philosophic descriptions, the Ukrainian philosopher-writer by his teachings and personal living example demonstrated that living in harmony with God and in accord with nature was the only way that man could remain simultaneously detached from and happy in the world.

It would be impossible to separate Skovoroda's philosophy from the manner in which he lived his own life, for the latter was symbolic of everything he believed and taught. Vladimir Ern had, in fact, devoted half of his study on Skovoroda to an examination of the philosopher's personal life because "to know his life was to know his philosophy".<sup>2</sup>

In conclusion, one should be aware that Skovoroda's philosophy was intended not only for careful study and meditation, but more importantly, for practical implementation. Unfortunately, ". . . the average intellectual and youth of our day are inclined to utter the name of Hryhory Skovoroda with reverence, but they are unlikely to become enthusiastic about his sayings or to turn to him for advice in matters of heart and mind."<sup>3</sup> This, according to Skovoroda, symbolizes a return to superstition and idol-worship.

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<sup>1</sup> Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., pp. 55, 224, 232, 238, 310, 486.

<sup>2</sup> Ern, op. cit., p. 29.

<sup>3</sup> Dziuba, op. cit., p. 67.

Summary - Skovoroda's entire philosophy appears to be structured upon the foundational premise that everything in the universe is composed of distinctive visible and invisible characteristics which, when taken together, compose one inseparable and harmonious unity. The invisible nature, often defined as God, penetrates and sustains the visible creation and thereby occupies a place of unquestioned pre-eminence over it.

In each of his philosophic themes concerning God, the Material World, the Bible, Man, and Happiness, Skovoroda seems to be more interested in devising methods to simplify the essential meaning of these various metaphysical concepts rather than creating new systems of thought about them.

By means of vivid similes, striking antithetical comparisons, and appropriate symbolic images and illustrations, the Ukrainian philosopher shows that man can successfully penetrate the deceptive exterior appearances of the visible world and discover the concealed truths inherent in the invisible nature which is immanent in all things.

Skovoroda concluded that man, having solved the mystery of the dual-natured universe, now entered the haven of genuine human happiness for he had experienced spiritual regeneration and thus re-established a long lost friendship and intimacy with God.

## CONCLUSION

The primary objective of this thesis consisted in approaching Skovoroda's creative works from the standpoint of his symbolic images and philosophic terminology in an effort to show that they played a major role in the simplification of his entire metaphysical thought.

An assessment of Skovoroda's place in intellectual tradition revealed that his worldwide recognition was impeded by many obstacles and problems. With the severe censorship of his creative works, no school of thought was able to emerge after Skovoroda's death to preserve his rich legacy for future generations.

Furthermore, a lack of scholarly comparative philosophical studies on Skovoroda seemed to support the view that his thought was too obscure and unsystematic for serious academic consideration. Having underestimated and misunderstood the philosopher's method of philosophic and literary expression, many varied and often falsified interpretations on his life, works, and influence soon began to appear in publication.

In recent years, inadequate translations and reproductions of the philosopher's original texts, along with the lack of suitable Skovorodian dictionaries and lexicons, have hindered the progress of study and research in this area of Ukrainian philosophy and literature. In addition, the current state of limited biographical/archival research and the inadequate editions of Skovoroda's works themselves have done little to simplify the study of that Ukrainian philosopher-writer such that he continues to be denied a place of rightful prominence in world philosophical circles.

Like many other world-renown philosophers, Skovoroda employed a system of symbolic images and a new philosophic vocabulary in his works in order to describe the intense metaphysical thoughts and emotions he had

experienced deep within his inner man.

According to Skovoroda, symbolic thinking originated in Egyptian, Greek, and Persian antiquity in the form of emblems and hieroglyphics and were designed to express profound religious thoughts and feelings into a tangible comprehensible form. It was not long, however, before this art deteriorated into superstitious idol-worship when later generations lost their "double-vision" and began to consider the image as an end in itself, rather than as the intended means to an end.

Under the influence of Platonic and Biblical thought, the ancient method of symbolizing intangible ideas and concepts was revived and later widely used by the Alexandrian School and the philosophers of the West. By the time of Skovoroda, symbols had become a popular form of meditation and contemplation in XVIII<sup>th</sup> Ukraine, but with the arrival of the Romantic movement in the beginning of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century, they soon disappeared into rapid obscurity.

As an ardent student of philosophy and theology, the Ukrainian philosopher-writer was naturally greatly influenced by the symbolic thought of the ancient Greek and Roman mystics, the Church Fathers, and the Western philosophers. Yet, besides the Bible, no other single work influenced Skovoroda's overall creativity more than the Symbola et emblemata published by Vetstenyi Henrykh in Amsterdam in 1705.

Coupled with his emblematic images (which were often depicted in graphic form), Skovoroda's philosophic vocabulary, along with his dialogues, antitheses, and principle of "cyclic motion" (Kolovorot), greatly simplified the more difficult aspects of his complex philosophy.

This dissertation has revealed that Skovoroda's entire philosophy

is structured upon the foundational premise that everything in the universe is composed of distinctive visible and invisible characteristics which, when taken together, compose one inseparable and harmonious unity. The invisible nature, often defined as God, penetrates and sustains the visible creation and thereby occupies a place of unquestioned supremacy over it.

Furthermore, in each of his philosophic themes concerning God, the Material World, the Bible, Man, and Happiness, it was found that Skovoroda seemed to be more concerned about devising different ways and means to simplify the essential meaning of these various concepts, rather than in creating new systems of thought about them. Thus, by means of vivid similes, striking antithetical comparisons, and appropriate symbolic images and illustrations, the Ukrainian philosopher revealed that man can successfully penetrate the deceptive exterior appearances of the visible world and discover the concealed truths inherent in the invisible nature which is immanent in all things.

Skovoroda concluded that man, having now solved the mystery of the dual-natured universe, could finally enter the haven of genuine human happiness, for through his spiritual regeneration he had thus re-established his long lost friendship and intimacy with God.

On the basis of this symbolic approach, it was found that there is substantial evidence in the works of Skovoroda to support the contention that his philosophy can be greatly simplified and more easily comprehended whenever he is studied and subsequently evaluated from the symbolic point of view rather than by the superficial means of literal interpretation.

The preceding investigation of the role of symbols in Skovoroda may be considered as a mere introduction to the topic when viewed in terms of its potential research possibilities. There are at least five major areas where additional research would serve to enhance the position of

current studies concerning the place and purpose of symbols in the works of Skovoroda.

In the first place, there is a genuine need for the compilation of a reliable dictionary and lexicon which would explain the intrinsic meanings of the many philosophic and symbolic words and phrases used by Skovoroda throughout his creative works. This could be followed by an in-depth study and explanation of typical symbols as they were employed in the works of Skovoroda's contemporaries during the age of baroque literature in XVIII<sup>th</sup> century Ukraine.

A comprehensive comparison of symbols as they were used by Skovoroda and his contemporaries, together with a study of Skovoroda's works as compared to Biblical symbology would be extremely beneficial. Finally, with the publication of scholarly translations of Skovoroda's collected works into the modern Ukrainian and English languages, where the translation faces the original text and contains appropriate comments and explanations in footnote form, the works of Skovoroda would gain wider readership and popularity thereby enabling him to be recognized as one of the world's leading philosophers.

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0 0 0  
0

## APPENDIX

FIGURE # 1

~~єсть стремління? єсть небаріє побудівіє?~~  
~~єсть творбѣ нѣ своєму мѣсту црковнѣ мѣстѣ~~  
~~звѣщає?~~  
 Г. Се-то дѣлать, составлять мѣръ цркви ма-  
 шинѣ = звѣще давати.  
~~дѣлає мѣръ мѣстоу цркви рѣшеніє.~~  
~~\* мѣръ составляет мѣръ.~~  
 М. Поминаєть окомъ цркви оубѣ въ цркви  
 оубѣ. тогдѣ впускъ цркви рѣшеніє;  
 \*  
 бискупъ. Все подтверждаетъ мѣръ.  
~~Се-то предлаженіє; въ мѣ въ мѣ~~  
~~мѣръ, и мѣтати, не вѣста въ мѣ мѣтати.~~  
~~\* Крѣпка, яно смерть, мѣръ;~~  
~~рестора, яно сѣ, ревностъ;~~  
~~прила єя, прила єя.~~  
~~у мѣ оубѣ, пламѣ єя.~~  
 мѣръ

Сторінка списку діалога «Алфавит, или букварь мира»  
 з викресленнями цензора Голубинського (арк. 82<sub>9</sub>).

(A page from Skovoroda's dialogue, "Alfavyt ili  
 bukvar myra" with deletions by the censor Holu-  
 byns'kyi).

FIGURE # 2



Надгробний камінь на могилі Г. С. Сковороди в селі Сковородинці Золочівського району Харківської області.

**The tombstone on the grave of H. S. Skovoroda**

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Source: Skovoroda, Povne Zibrannia Tvoriv, 1973, II, p. 475.

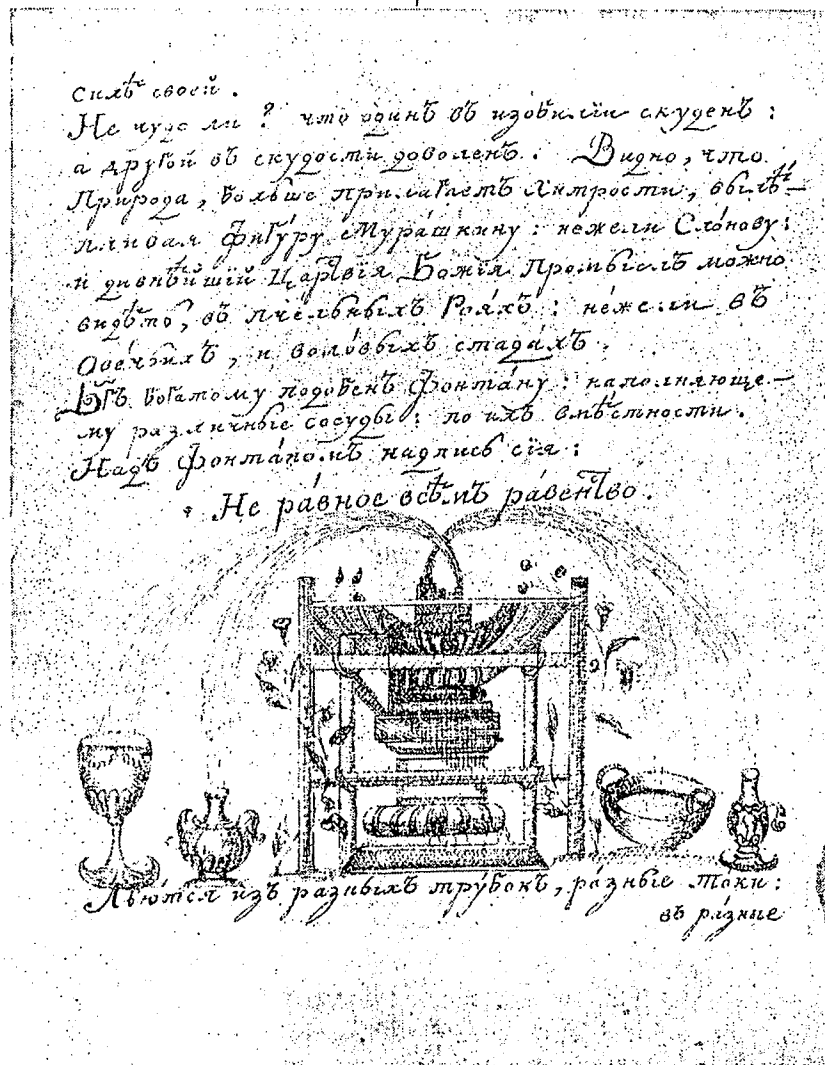
FIGURE # 3

Встанѣ, ты, слазгнѣша мѡя! Десятострунныя —  
Фалспѣръ: и Гусли слазгодоуныя. Еси ты  
только встанѣш: то я и самъ, тобѣ встану. а вѣ-  
ну Раю. Поднялся на Свѣтъ. Долго ли мнѣ во  
Шлѣ жьтѣ? \* Когда прїиду, и явлюся Амау Бжю?  
Кто кроливъ тебѣ, о красновѣшая, вѣзъ Дмѣроу о Мнѣ-  
рѣ, Дѣво! кто воведетъ мѣ во градъ утвержденъ.  
Мѡиоли тоѣко Дверни: и одиѣи тоѣко твоѣи  
Свѣдом: привестися мѡбѣ, к Царю Небѣскому  
Дѣви: сими съ Тобою илѣютъ Дружество.  
Не бѣ, Лѡды же труднѣша Дѣдъ. С колѣнныи  
Восторго кричитъ:  
\* Отверзѣте шлѣ Врата Праады. v  
\* Исповѣся тебѣ: ехо услыша мѣ сѣи.  
\* Сѣи Дѣи возрѣдана, и возвесели мѣи.  
\* Бгъ Дѣ, и лѡися на мѣ.  
\* Призвай Дѣ: и услыша мѣ о Пространствѣ.  
Что тепѣръ сотворишъ мнѣ Цѣлѣк? Никѣмъ не боу-  
си. Ширѣкъ велииѣи сталъ Давидъ. Вѣлѣтелъ на  
/и/ Оссѣвѣ, о Пѣснѣ мѡя, иѣнѣна и Уснѣ Бжю, сѣи бѣ-  
хем: Срѣ, и Срѣ. Аще же Дѣ Дѣбѣлѣстъ Бжюу-  
мѣрѣи лѣтѣи: додѣлѣтъ сошлѣхъ лѣтѣи. Знѣи мѣи сѣи:  
- с. Назрѣлѣ: Аѣ: Аѣ. Пѣт: Пѣт. Брѣл: брѣл.

Сторінка автографа діалога «Наркісс» (арк. 39<sub>2</sub>).

( A page from Skovoroda's dialogue "Narkiss")

FIGURE # 4



Сторінка автографа діалога «Алфавит, или букварь мира» (арк. 39<sub>2</sub>).

( A page from Skovoroda's dialogue "Alfavyt ili bukvar myra" illustrating the fountain - symbol)

FIGURE # 5

1792. го Года, Лєв. 5. го мѣ.  
 Русіи.

Вѣлюбивѣи Друзѣ и братѣ во Христѣ,  
 Іаковѣ.

Радуйся сѣ любезною Христїною, и со Свѣдѣ-  
 нїемъ сего Года.

А, Вже! Ей! лѣтъ оавно Служно, что сѣ вами  
 не бесѣдную. Аще вѣсію Знати или Вѣснѣ не  
 сабѣску моего Вѣлїснаго Брѣннаго Апловнїца.  
 [Схили] потщуся окрѣтити вас, и наслѣпнїся  
 Вѣсвою во Христѣ, кѣмъ мѣ вѣст, и а Бѣд...

Нїи вѣ же Золубнїица Любѣя Христіан вас Покрѣпю.  
 Прости, Любѣзны: что на твоѣ, и на твоего Свѣдѣ-  
 нїи не отовѣтствовалъ. Сердце вѣннїку Желан-  
 ея: по Старостѣ и Слѣдностѣ, ест Слѣдпокрѣпна.  
 Плишу вѣдѣ хѣ вѣ: обаге бѣи. Благословенъ бѣ мо-  
 ехъ неметѣствую, тогда Слѣнн ест сѣ Лѣднѣ.  
 Бо, вѣдѣ моя сѣ, Старостѣ, Ток Хрѣднѣ, и Огнѣ  
 вѣдѣ: не стои и не водержнїя, хѣ и некрѣднїя Лѣднѣ.  
 Шїя

Сторінка автографа листа Сковороди  
 до Я. Правницького

A page from a letter by Skovoroda to  
 Ia. Pravyts'kyi



FIGURE # 6

26

Изъ Тусинскаго листа . 1782<sup>г</sup>  
 2009 окт. 3<sup>го</sup> д.  
*Honorando mihi in christo pater!*  
*partibi in Domino nostro!*

*Latus in Christo. Dico ostam pie Dominus meus mihi*  
*est kaj n' Петра kaj n' Христос kaj o' c'ci'.*

Она мене неостанавливаетъ во время старости, она  
 окупаетъ немощныя мои; она мене спасаетъ  
 отъ отчаянія; утешаетъ въ скорбяхъ моихъ; она  
 счастья не обходитъ. Спешною тучами вьсьхъ тучъ  
 вьсьхъ диавольскихъ; я ни кому не достану; ни Кого  
 не оставлю; вьсьхъ друзей, и вьсьхъ моихъ всегда нота  
 неистощима вьсьхъ моихъ. Но Сіеми есть оный не  
 истощимъ мила и вьсьхъ моихъ? а на то Сіи истощимъ  
 достать; истощимъ вино... Вьсьхъ тучахъ есть Юдаи;  
 Тучахъ и моча. Это же есть тучахъ? а тучахъ  
 вьсьхъ тучахъ... Сіи есть, Сіи есть, не вьсьхъ  
 вьсьхъ. Сіи есть вьсьхъ вьсьхъ. Тучахъ есть тучахъ,  
 Кифа Туча, Траманде вьсьхъ, Матерей  
 земли, Тучахъ, и вьсьхъ вьсьхъ вьсьхъ. Не Сіи  
 ли есть онахъ земли, а тучахъ вьсьхъ вьсьхъ  
 вьсьхъ вьсьхъ? Не Сіи ли есть вьсьхъ вьсьхъ,  
 гай! не вьсьхъ вьсьхъ вьсьхъ вьсьхъ вьсьхъ  
 Сіи тучахъ вьсьхъ вьсьхъ. Не на Сіи ли  
 тучахъ и вьсьхъ вьсьхъ вьсьхъ вьсьхъ вьсьхъ,  
 тучахъ и тучахъ. Оси тучахъ вьсьхъ вьсьхъ... Не  
 на Сіи ли Кифа вьсьхъ вьсьхъ вьсьхъ вьсьхъ,  
 вьсьхъ вьсьхъ вьсьхъ вьсьхъ вьсьхъ вьсьхъ,  
 вьсьхъ вьсьхъ вьсьхъ вьсьхъ вьсьхъ вьсьхъ,

Сторінка копії новознайденого листа Г. С. Сковороди.

( A copy of a newly-found letter by Skovoroda).

Source: Skovoroda, Povne Zibrannia Tvoriv, 1973, II, p. 361.

FIGURE # 7

181

Одинокі тече, дуралі неслим дідів,  
 Рівності, мети, аки, талба в вранді.  
 Діти жмуть тіа ота в шті  
 Каю сімійі грає татняють.  
 (Діти жмуть тіа  
 Діти жмуть тіа)

Додатки! а неслити!  
 Діти неслити, ват Христіане.  
 Пам'ять ват бою наш в рідні  
 И неслити туди, ват діти вшті.

Violino primo  
 Solo

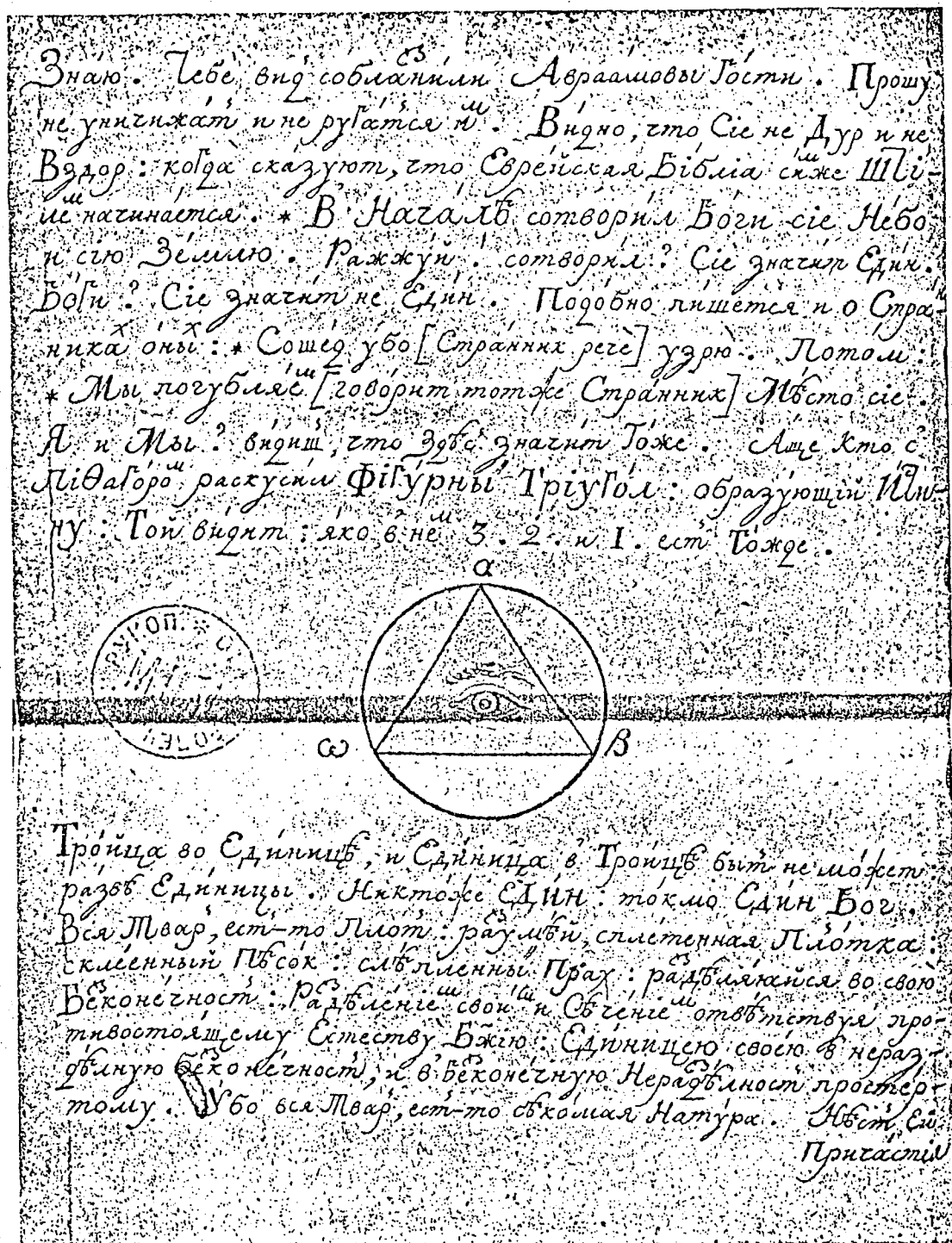
Violino secondo

Конечь твоя.

Сторінка фотокопії новознайдені пісні Г. С. Сковороди.

( A photocopy of a newly-found song by Skovoroda)

Source: Skovoroda, Povne Zibrannia Tvoriv, 1973, II, p. 133.

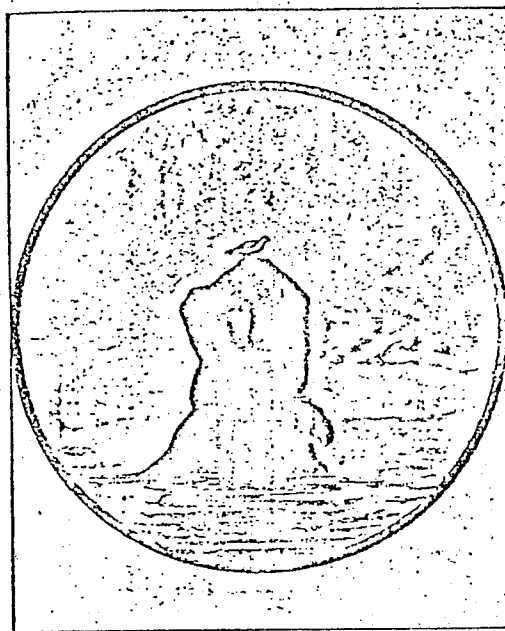


Снимокъ съ оборота 21 страницы рукописи Г. С. Сковороды  
„ПОТОПЪ ЗМІИНЪ“.

(1791 года).

A photocopy from the reverse side of the 21st. page of Skovoroda's manuscript  
"ПОТОПЪ ЗМІИНЪ"  
1791

FIGURE # 9



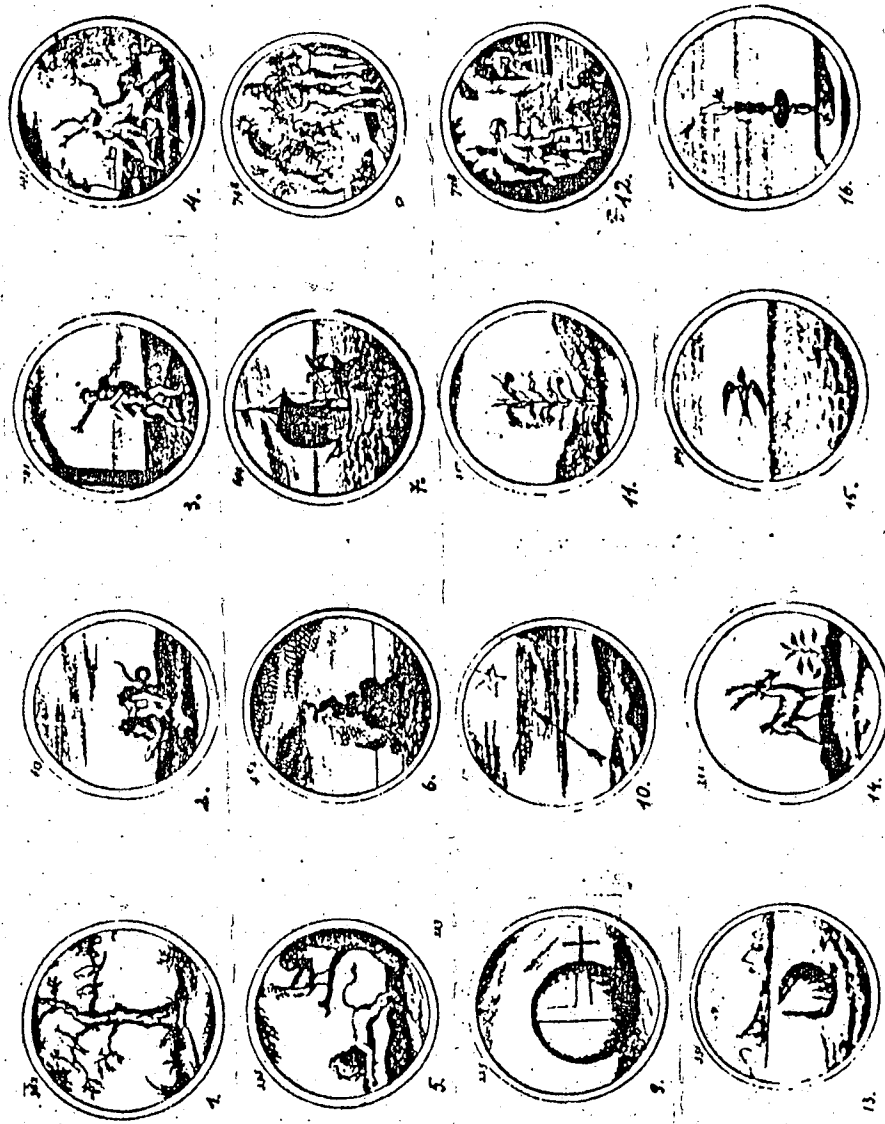
Мал. 19. Малюнок із рукопису «Алфавіту  
миру».

(A dove resting on a crag surrounded by an open sea)

. A symbolic drawing from Skovoroda's manuscript,  
"Alfavyt, ili bukvary myra"

FIGURE # 10

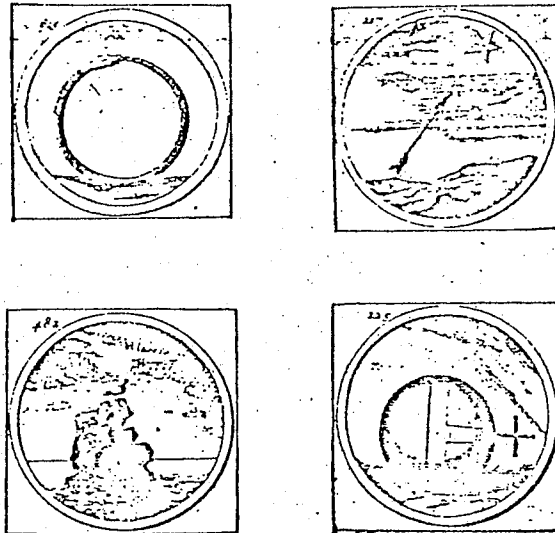
ТАБЛИЦЯ І.



(16 symbolic sketches as they appear in the Symbola et emblemata, 1705).

Source: Chyzhevs'kyi, Fil'osofia, op. cit., p. 40 (a). For a detailed description of these symbols, see p. 210.

FIGURE # 11



Мал. 15, 16, 17, 18. Гравюри із Амстердамських «Символів і емблем», 1705 р.

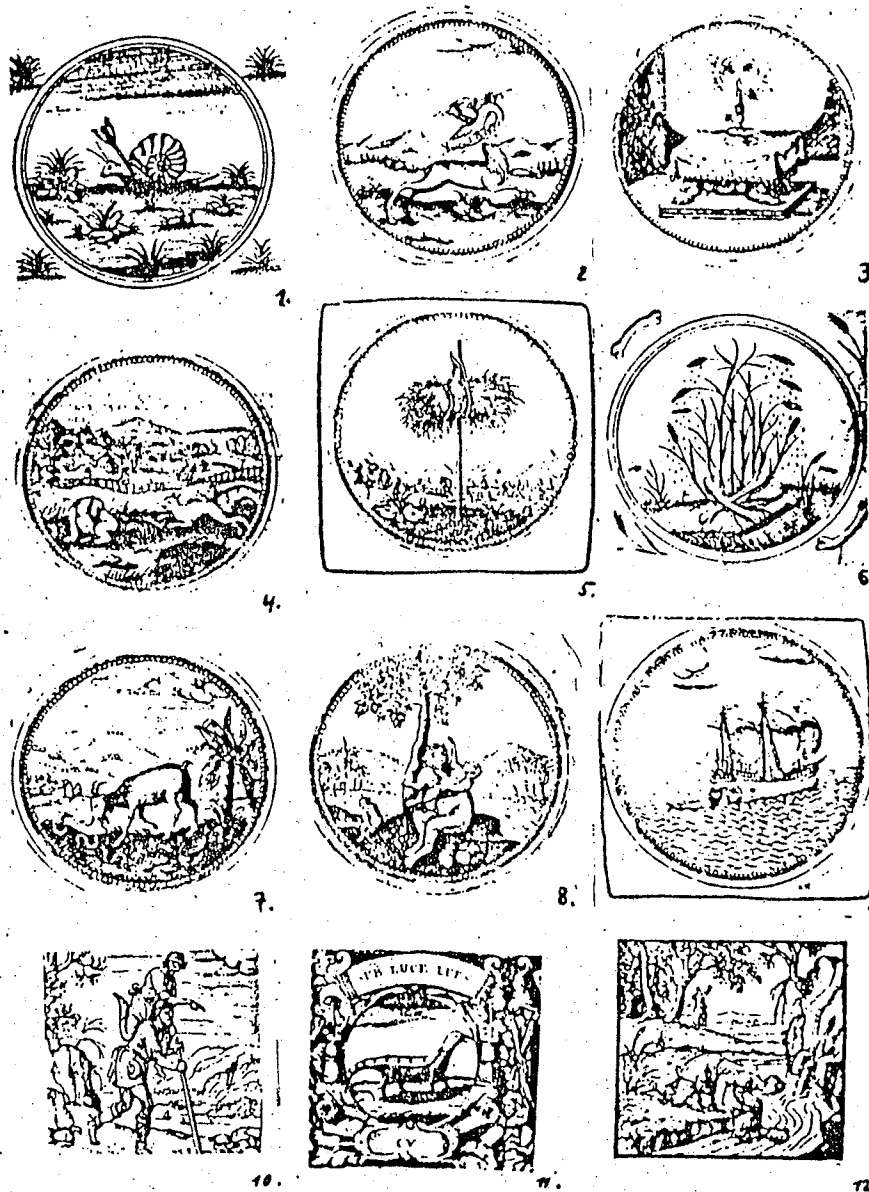
Symbolic engravings from the Symbola et  
emblemata published in Amsterdam in 1705

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Source: Chyzhevs'kyi, Narysy, op. cit., p. 57. For a detailed description of these symbols, see p. 166.

FIGURE # 12

ТАБЛИЦЯ III.



A reproduction of various emblems from Camerarius (1-9), Al'tsiat (10, published in 1608), and Boshiius (11).

Source: Chyzhevs'kyi, *Fil'osofia*, op. cit., p. 96 (a). For a detailed description of these emblems, see p. 211.

FIGURE # 13

трудолюбивъ Упадѣтъ погубъ

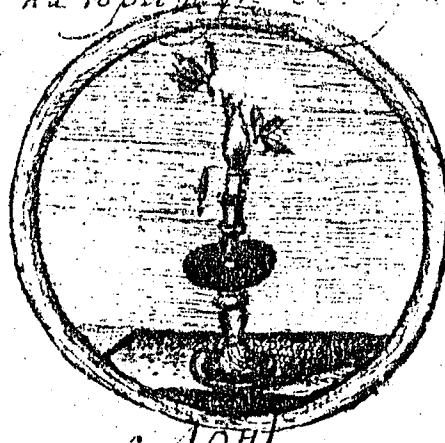


ю на раменахъ таскаетъ. Сіи

«Алфавит, или букварь мира». Амур, удерживающий Землю.

Amur, supporting the earth  
from "Alfavyt, ili bukvar myra".

вотъ на томъ и сидитъ



Мотъ.

«Алфавит, или букварь мира». Свеча и мотыльки.

Moth hovering above a candle  
from "Alfavyt, ili bukvar myra".



FIGURE # 14



а - лички сн҃дѣтѣ, на цвѣтущихъ вѣ

"A nightingale with its offspring: teaching them to sing . ." (Parents are our best instructors).

- from "Alfavyt, ili bukvar myra".

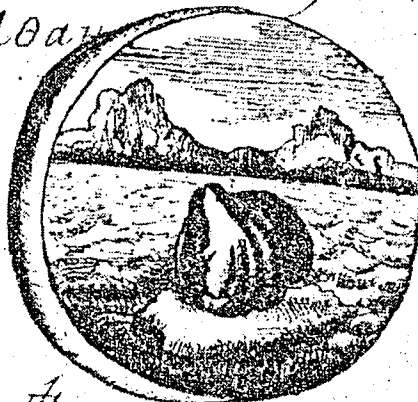


" . . a deer: pierced through the side by an arrow . . eats grass - it will drive out the arrow."

- from "Alfavyt, ili bukvar myra".

FIGURE # 15

оучитѣ! Самѣй Лучшій Учитель.  
Аван



куйте мнѣ: что се за-Лиротѣ...

"A shell or tortoise or oyster".

- from "Alfavyt, ili bukvar myra".

она кушаетѣ?... Слѣбѣ да собою  
Гриѣ.



ице, и здравѣ. И даѣ мною прѣ  
блаетѣ, и скаѣ шастѣя въ Бѣѣ.

An elephant, with trunk raised, faces the east -  
and welcomes the rising sun.

- from "Alfavyt, ili bukvar myra".

FIGURE # 16



" . . unfortunate Narcissus . ."  
- from "Alfavyt, ili bukvar myra".



ваша. Не могу узнать, село какое.

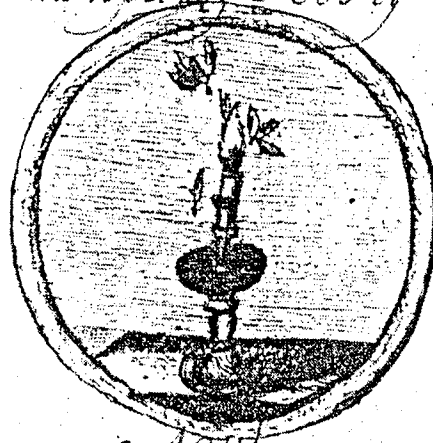
A bushy-tailed animal runs glancing backwards,  
resembling a wolf.

- from "Alfavyt, ili bukvar myra".

FIGURE # 17

Гляньте на горящую свѣчу

Что



Доні

Сей олѣнь

ѣвъ челоуѣкоу

ѣ

A moth hovering above a candle  
- from "Alfavyt, ili bukvar myra".



сей олѣнь, ѣвъ челоуѣкоу ѣвъ челоуѣкоу  
ѣкъ

"... unfortunate Akteon changing into a deer ..."  
- from "Alfavyt, ili bukvar myra".

FIGURE # 18

полнаго азвѣя . Вото что свѣтаето  
человѣку домашній еѣ .

Монѣ



внбій Фаѣтонѣ , съ шумомѣ , пѣ .  
Бѣтъ мѣсто еѣ . 197 7 1 9

" . . . vain Phaeton . . . expelled from heaven . . ."

- from "Alfavyt, ili bukvar myra".

аснбій Холмѣ , прпосѣненнбій



мички сирѣмѣ , на сухихѣ обѣва .  
Монѣ .

A bird with her young ones mourns the death of  
her mate. "I will sing my sweetheart a song".

FIGURE # 19



"three boats . . guided by cupids. ."

- from "Alfavyt, ili bukvar myra".

нби . . . Оди́нб дру́габ, на ра́мена.



же́нб носы́мби, носы́мце му́ благода́ри.

" . . two wonderful boys . . one carrying the other (crippled) on his back . . the bearer is blind, so the one being carried provides sight"

- from "Alfavyt, ili bukvar myra".

FIGURE # 20



Amur, supporting the earth

- from "Alfavyt, ili bukvar myra".

... что убито сердце ему  
сторонѣ, пронзѣнѣ стрѣлами ?



тѣ стрѣла: если не стремление ? Ч

Cupid, shooting the earth through with arrows.

- from "Alfavyt, ili bukvar myra".

FIGURE # 21

не посѣздоватъ сѣну тудѣ : куда в  
и Наслѣвникъ .  
и сѣ Минерва ; когда тоже есть , что



"Bushes, shrubs . . . a fruit-bearing seed, is-  
suing forth above the surface of the earth . . ."

- from "Alfavyt, ili bukvar myra".



FIGURE # 22

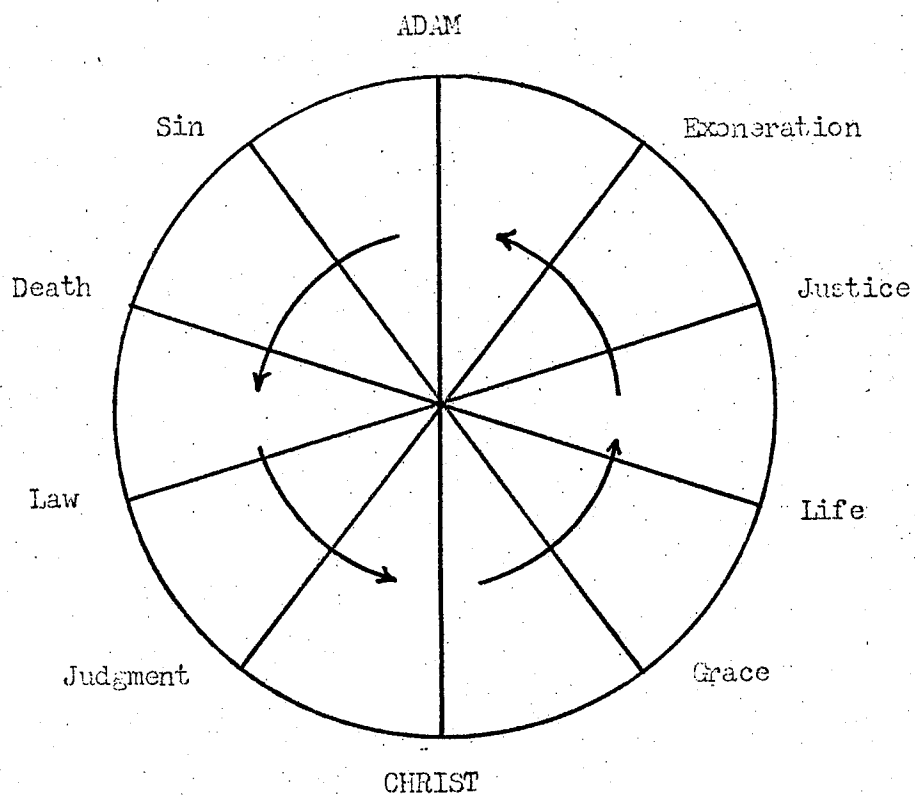


Diagram adapted from H. Leisegang: Paulus als Denker, Lpz, 1923, illustrating the principle of ANTITHESIS and "KOLOVOROT".

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Source: Chyzhevs'kyl, Narysy, op. cit., p. 45.