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THE SYMBOLS OF H.S. SKOVORODA
A DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

by

Jaroslav R. Pinczuk

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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.

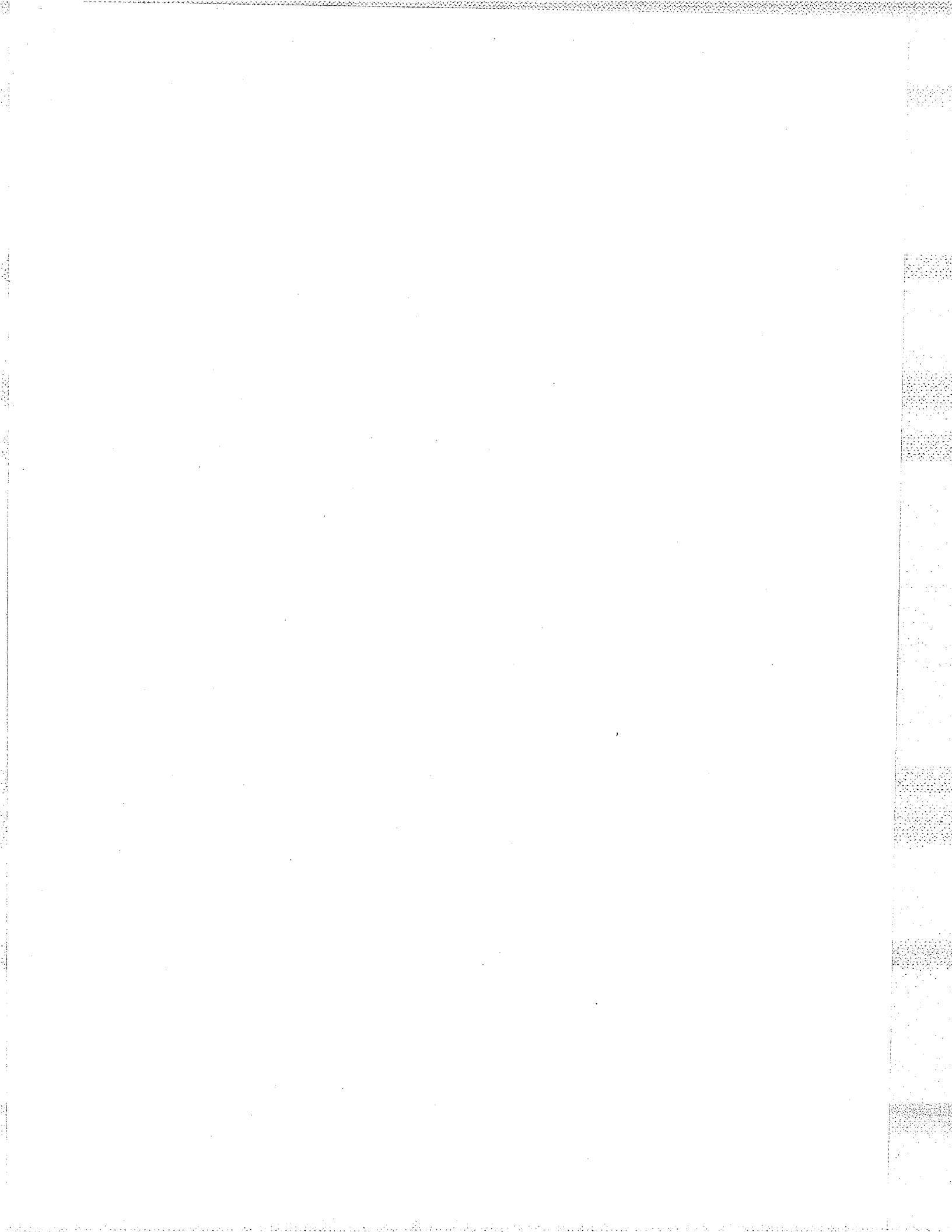
On the basis of these investigations, it was found that substantial evidence conclusively supports the contention that the philosophy of Skovoroda is greatly simplified and more easily comprehended whenever he is approached from the symbolic point of view and in accordance with his personal method of 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 250th anniversary of his birth, many important scholarly seminars and publications re-focussed worldwide 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" ¹ 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." ²

¹ 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.

² 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.¹ Furthermore, besides one or two rare exceptions² any attempt to systematically analyze the works of Skovoroda was, for some reason, avoided.³

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.⁴

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.

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

² 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.

³ Ibid., p. 3.

⁴ 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".¹ This would explain why so few of Skovoroda's works were known in the nineteenth century.² Vladimir Ern suggests that the Ukrainian philosopher actually "guarded his manuscripts from his literary enemies" by specially preserving them for his closest friends.³

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.⁴ 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."⁵

¹ 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".

² Olianchyn, op. cit., p. 694.

³ Ern, op. cit., pp. 170-171.

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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.¹ 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.²

Rudnyč'kyj suggests that "the lack of comparative philosophical

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

² 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".²

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.³

1
Rudnyc'kyi, op. cit., pp. 16-17.

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

3
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 Makhnovets¹, it was stated that in 1972 there were approximately 1,442 studies published on Skovorodian topics. 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.

1

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" ¹ 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." ²

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." ³

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

² Ibid., p. 54.

³ 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"¹, 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."² That Fuhrmann considers Skovoroda as "Russian" rather than "Ukrainian" is illustrated by such statements as "Skovoroda stands forth as the first true Russian philosopher"³ and, ". . . Skovoroda, the most learned Russian of the period".⁴

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,⁵ dissatisfaction in being a "Russian subject".

¹ 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.

² Ibid., pp. 33-34.

³ Ibid., p. 34.

⁴ Ibid., p. 36.

⁵ 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 Bahalij, 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 Biobibliohrafija 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." ¹

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

M. I. Kovalens'kyi ³, 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-

¹ 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.

² Ern, op. cit., p. 48.

³ 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. ¹ Ivan Franko spoke of Skovoroda as "probably the greatest figure in the spiritual circles of Ukraine in the eighteenth century". ² After a brief sojourn in the West and a short visit to Moscow, Skovoroda remained within the borders of Ukraine until his death. ³ 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". ⁴

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

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:

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

² Ivan Franko, "Bibliohrafiia", Zapysky naukovooho tovarystva im. T. H. Shevchenka (L'viv, 1895), T. v, I, p. 79.

³ Ibid., p. 80.

⁴ Quoted after Joseph T. Fuhrmann, op. cit., p. 44. Text translated by Fuhrmann.

⁵ Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, I, p. XI.

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

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

"Мислитель філософ, художник слова, педагог, музикакомпозитор Григорій Савич Скворода 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".² 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".³

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".⁴ 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".⁵

1 Makhnovets', op. cit., p. 3.

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

3 Lev, op. cit., p. 12.

4 Dziuba, op. cit., p. 68.

5 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.¹ 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 17th 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")".²

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".³

¹ 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.

² Dziuba, op. cit., p. 69.

³ 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 історично, 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".¹

Finally, the well-known Soviet scholar, A. M. Nizhenets¹ 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'".²

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.³

1

Popov, op. cit., p. 40.

2

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'.

3

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" ¹, while James M. Edie asserts he wrote exclusively in the so-called "Russian idiom" of his time and milieu. ² 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. ³

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 . . ." ⁴

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. ⁵ Similarly, Ivan Franko

¹ Fuhrmann, op. cit., p. 35.

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

³ Mirchuk, op. cit., p. 30.

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

⁵ 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".¹ 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.²

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".³

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. . . Українізми є органічним елементом мови Сковороди, який пронизує всі його твори і виявляється у всіх мовних засобах викладу його думок і почуттів".⁴

1 Derkach, op. cit., p. 69.

2 Ibid.

3 Dziuba, op. cit., p. 70.

4 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"/".¹

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 переходовий період - в одному напрямі до повної русифікації вживаної літературної мови, а в другому - до зародження нової української літературної мови . . ."

1

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

2

Chaplenko, op. cit., p. 651.

It's interesting to note that Skovoroda often intentionally differentiated between his use of "Ukrainian" and "Russian" terminology ¹, but for the most part his basic communication with the Ukrainian population was in Ukrainian ², 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". ³

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

1
 Chaplenko, op. cit., p. 652.

2
 Derkach, op. cit., p. 69.

3
 Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, II, p. 32.

4
 Popov, op. cit., p. 67.

5
 Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, I, pp. XXXV-XXXVII. For a more comprehensive treatment of this subject see, V. Chaplenko, "Movna Pozytsia i Mova Hryhorija Skovorody", Vyzvol'nyi Shliakh, op. cit., pp. 649-671; and P. A. Morgun, "Mistse H. S. Skovorody v Istorii Rozvytku Ukrains'koj Literaturnoi Movy", O. O. Potebnia i Deiaki 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".¹

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 ч у ж а мова, таксаме, 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 ні ч о г о с п і л ь н о г о".²

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 розуміннї 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"², 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 повтаряють "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 філософичного боку звичайно доволі поверховне трактування справи".³

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".⁴

1
Mirchuk, op. cit., p. 25.

2
Ibid., p. 24.

3
Ibid., p. 23.

4
Quoted after Zenkovsky, op. cit., p. 55. See Gustav Shpet, Oчерк 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." ¹

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." ² 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". ³

¹ Dziuba, op. cit., p. 67.

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

³ 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. ." ¹

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 Russkogo 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 Цицерона. Зацікавленість Сквороди спадщиною античних мислителів відбилася на змісті його власної філософії".¹

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.²

As a student of philosophy and theology at the Kievan Academy³, who was ranked among the top students in his class⁴, Skovoroda was destined to become one of the most enlightened individuals of his era.⁵ He was, in fact, often referred to as the "Ukrainian Socrates"⁶ 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",⁷

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

² Chyzhevs'kyi, Fil'osofia, op. cit., p. 6.

³ Makhnovets', op. cit., p. 23.

⁴ Ern, op. cit., p. 51.

⁵ Istoriia Ukrains'koi Literatury, op. cit., II, p. 111.

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

⁷ Iurii Lavrinenko, Vasyl' Karazyn: Arkhitekt Vidrodzhennia (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".¹

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"², but that he "arrived at a philosophy which was eclectic rather than original".³ 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.

¹
Quoted after Derkach, op. cit., p. 60.

²
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.

³
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.¹ 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."²

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".³ Ivan Franko appears to support this evaluation, having spoken of Skovoroda as "pouring new wine into the old skins" of philosophic thought in Ukraine.⁴ 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.⁵

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",⁶ while many of his

¹ I. V. Ivan'ov, op. cit., p. 131.

² Zenkovsky, op. cit., p. 55.

³ Ern, op. cit., p. 209.

⁴ Franko, op. cit., pp. 79, 81.

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

⁶ Ern, op. cit., p. 210.

philosophic works were classified as too "dangerous" for publication. ¹

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". ² This opinion was shared to some extent by E. Radlov in his Ocherk istorii russkoi filosofii. ³

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". ⁴

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". ⁵

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". ⁶ 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. ⁷

¹ Olianchyn, op. cit., p. 692.

² Shpet, op. cit., pp. 70, 74.

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

⁴ Ern, op. cit., p. 210.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 210-211.

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

⁷ Ern, op. cit., p. 54.

Early in his childhood Skovoroda demonstrated a remarkable talent and thirst for learning. ¹ 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." ² 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". ³

Along with his books, nature played a significant role in the formation of Skovoroda's character and education. ⁴ The scope of his knowledge extended from philosophy and theology to music, history, mathematics, and science. ⁵ 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". ⁶

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:

¹ Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, II, p. 488.

² 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).

³ Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 245.

⁴ Mykhailo Vozniak, Istoriia Ukrain's'koi Literatury (L'vov, "Pros-
vita", 1924), III, p. 77.

⁵ Ern, op. cit., pp. 61-63. See also, Vozniak, op. cit., pp. 78-
79.

⁶ 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".¹

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.² 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".³ 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.⁴ 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",⁵ since, according to Bilych and Popov, he was basically

¹ Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 462.

² Vozniak, op. cit., p. 84.

³ Ern, op. cit., p. 325.

⁴ Bonch-Bruevich, "Zamitka ot redaktsii", pp. vii-xv.

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

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

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".³ A. P. Markov reflects Kyryk's conclusions stating that "to conclude that Skovoroda was an atheist or an idealistic opponent of religion is unfounded".⁴

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".⁵ 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".⁶

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

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

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

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

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

⁵ Zenkovsky, op. cit., p. 57.

⁶ 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 баястом".²

According to Franko, Skovoroda's philosophy of life along with his interpretation of morality, precluded any intimate association with the existant hierarchy.³ 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 leadership⁴, its monasteries as nests of indulgent pharisees⁵, and its membership as a crowd of unreflective and superstitious louts.⁶

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

² Mirchuk, op. cit., p. 32.

³ Franko, op. cit., p. 80.

⁴ Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 72.

⁵ Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, II, p. 498.

⁶ Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 362.

These views and attitudes have caused some writers to see him as the "forerunner of Ukrainian evangelism".¹ 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".²

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.³ 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.⁴ 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 звявували і з найрізноманітнішими філософічними традиціями: з Сократом, Плятоном, Арістотелем, стоїками, Плотіном, отцями церкви, Спінозою, Мальбраншем, Хр. Вольфом, філософією просвічености /французька просвіченість, Раймарус/,"

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

² Scherer, op. cit., p. 51.

³ Chyzhevs'kyi, Fil'osofia, op. cit., p. 5.

⁴ Ibid.,

та навіть із мислениками, що жили по Сквороді - 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 ², Ern strongly rejects the validity of any argument to uphold that belief. ³

Last, and by no means least, a number of scholars have classified Skovoroda as "a late representative of Baroque mysticism" in Ukraine. ⁴ 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". ⁵

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 Скворода 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-

¹ Chyzhevs'kyi, Fil'osofia, op. cit., p. 5.

² Ibid., p. 6.

³ Ern, op. cit., pp. 55-59.

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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 особистости та його життє-
вого шляху? Як зясувати його глибокий
вплив на сучасників та той факт, що укра-
їнська духовна історія все, як зачарована,¹
повертається до "Сковородинства"?

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. Lysenkov², as well as

1

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

2

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 ¹, and V. D. Bonch-Bruevich ² (which are now recognized as "biographical rarities" ³) 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" ⁴, cites a series of interesting Skovorodian sources by Russian authors including Khidzheu ⁵, Father Superior Gavriil ⁶, N. Stelletskii ⁷, A. S. Lebedev ⁸, 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.

1

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).

2 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.

3 Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, I, p. VI.

4 Fuhrmann, op. cit., pp. 67-72.

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

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

7 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.

8 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"¹, 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"², 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",

¹ Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, I, p. VI.

² Ibid., p. VII.

" i " and " Ъ1 " have been retained "as dictated by the original" ¹),
the following difficulties arise in the text:

- a). Original phrases such as "ТО Я И САМЪ, ТОТЪ ЧАС ВСТА́НУ" ²
are altered by the contemporary translation to read, "ТО Я И
САМ ТОТЧАС ВСТА́НУ . ." ³
- b). Having already made such a drastic change, the phrase render-
ed 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 orthog-
raphy. Skovoroda often employed these "stress" signs in his philosophic
and literary works as they were very unique in Ukraine ⁵ and were widely
used to differentiate between Ukrainian and Russian speech forms. There-
fore, 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 con-
temporary usage - or where the stress more accurately defines the meaning
of the word". ⁶ Having thus omitted the all-important stress signs from

¹ Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, I, p. VII.

² Ibid., p. 65. See Appendix, Figure #3.

³ Ibid., p. 66.

⁴ Ibid., II, p. 7.

⁵ 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.

⁶ 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 немощствѹю . . ." ¹ is rendered on the opposite page as "Егда немощствую . . ." ² 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 XIVth century, that "every letter within each word has its own meaning", which can easily be lost in translation. ³ "Heresies often result", he says, "from omissions and additions to the original text" ⁴ and this is even more applicable to the translation of religious manuscripts.

¹ Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, II, p. 409. See Appendix, Figure # 5.

² Ibid., p. 408.

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

⁴ 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".¹ 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 Bible², 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.³ He studied the Holy Scriptures fervently both day and night and committed most of the Bible to memory. Seldom

¹ Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, I, pp. VII-VIII.

² Ibid., II, p. 488.

³ 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".¹ When he died, he rested his head upon the Bible - as a symbolic gesture of its importance to his life and works.²

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.³

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 возсіяет чистый, а

¹ Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, II, p. 502.

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

³ 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.²

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 ошастливить васъ истинь?"²

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"³, 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

¹ Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, I, p. 223.

² Compare, Luke 12: 54-55.

³ A. P. Markov, "Spivvidnoshennia Dukhovnoho i Material'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': $\overline{r\overline{ng}t\overline{z}}$, $\overline{r\overline{ng}a}$ = $\overline{glagoletz}$, $\overline{glagolje}$, 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

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

upheld by the grammatical laws of the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries in Ukraine, until the beginning of the XIXth century when, according to the orthographic reforms of Ja. K. Grot¹, 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".² 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 при́ду,
и явлюся Лицу Б/о/жю? . . . к Царю Небесному
Дѣвы . . . Отверзите мнѣ Врата Правды . . .
Б/о/г Г/о/с/по/д/ь"³, "Царствія Божія . . .
Б/о/гъ . . ." ⁴ "Слово Б/о/жіе . . ." ⁵ "Ты
святый Боже, и въковъ Творецъ . . ." ⁶ "О Б/о/же
. . . и насладитися Бесѣдою во Хр/и/стѣ, иже
мя въсть, и азъ бо . . ." ⁷

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

² Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, I, p. VIII.

³ Ibid., p. 65. See Appendix, Figure # 3.

⁴ Ibid., p. 347. See Appendix, Figure # 4.

⁵ Ibid., p. 435.

⁶ Ibid., II, p. 63.

⁷ 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 . ." ¹ (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". ² (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 . ." ³ (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

¹ Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, I, p. 213. All underlinings are my own.

² Ibid., p. 214. All underlinings are my own.

³ Ibid., p. 221. All underlinings are my own.

text but severely clouds the meaning of its contents.¹ For the average reader, the statement: "Посла духа сына своего в сердца наша . ." ² 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 вами не бесѣдую . . потщуся видѣти вас . ." ³ 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

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

² Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, II, p. 12. All underlinings are my own.

³ 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." ¹

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 каждых мельчайших особенностей 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. ." ²

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

1

Lykhachev, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

2

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.¹ 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 природи".²

Although a brief listing of archaic and little known words is given with short explanations in the 1973 edition of Skovoroda's works³, 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.

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

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

³ 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 ¹, 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 ² and 1972 ³ 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. ⁴ 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-

¹ Makhnovets', op. cit., p. 5.

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

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

⁴ 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.¹ 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." ¹ 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*, ² 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". ³ Skovoroda explains the use of these signs, words or names in this way:

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

¹ Skovoroda, *Tvory*, 1961, I, p. 213.

² *Ibid.*, p. 214.

³ *Ibid.*, II, p. 267.

⁴ *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. ¹

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). ² Thus, Hugh of Saint-Victor describes the symbolic process as "a comparison of the

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

² 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".¹

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 un-reachable 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."²

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."³

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.

¹ Somerville, op. cit., p. 860.

² Quoted after Rene Welleck and Austin Warren in Theory of Literature (New York, Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1949), pp. 193 ff.

³ 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".²

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."³

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-

¹ Scherer, op. cit., p. 80.

² Ibid., p. 80.

³ 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".¹ 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.²

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".³

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.⁴ 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

¹ Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, II, p. 102.

² Scherer, op. cit., p. 82.

³ Ibid.

⁴ 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.²

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,

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

² *Ibid.*

³ *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". ¹

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." ²

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. ³

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. ⁴ 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". ⁵

¹ Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 332.

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

³ Ern, op. cit., p. 227.

⁴ Scherer, op. cit., p. 84.

⁵ 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 XVIIIth 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 . . ." ¹

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 ² piety. Seed and grain - thought and ideas . . ." ²

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Ern, op. cit., p. 223.

2

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 - гєратичного письма, що вживається в святих книгах, відтак, на-решті, гєрогліфічного письма. Це останє поділяється, зі свого боку, на два роди: перше подає безпосередньо знаки згуків, 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 коровячого кізьяку 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, фєнікс, семиголовий змий 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 *Σύμβολον*, 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,"¹

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".² These primitive forms of symbolism Skovoroda often described as "pagan theology".³ 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 построеныя храмы Христовой школы. Въ ней обучается весь родъ человеческій сроднаго себе щастія и сія то есть католическая, то есть всеродная наука. Языческіе кумирниці, "божниці" или капища есть тожь храмы Христова ученія и школы . . ." ⁴

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:

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

² *Ibid.*, p. 373.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 75, 146, 328, 355.

⁴ *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. ²

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. ³

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". ⁴ Similarly, Origen

¹ Chyzhevs'kyi, Fil'osofia, op. cit., p. 29.

² Ibid.

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

⁴ Chyzhevs'kyi, Fil'osofia, 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" ¹, while Tertullian had devised a classification of symbols: *figurae*, *aenigmata*, *allegoriae*, *parabola*e. ²

In the Middle Ages, symbolism in religious art and literature became progressively more exuberant. ³ By the XVIth and XVIIth 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. ⁴

The beginning of the XVIIIth 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. ⁵ It is important to note, however, that during the XVIth and XVIIth 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. ⁶

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. ⁷ F. Prokopovych, the distinguished Ukrainian professor of rhetoric and religion

¹ Chyzhevs'kyi, *Fil'osofii*, op. cit., p. 29.

² Ibid.

³ A. Dulles, op. cit., p. 862.

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

⁵ Chyzhevs'kyi, *Narysy*, op. cit., pp. 41-63.

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

⁷ Ibid.

at the Kievan Academy during the years 1704-1715¹, wrote that the teachings of the Holy Scriptures would not impede scientific discoveries because these texts are to be "understood allegorically and not literally".² 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 . . ."³

That the symbol was popular in Ukrainian literature during the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries is not so unusual for this period generally denotes the epoch of Ukrainian Baroque.⁴ With the approach of the XIXth 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 circles⁵, it had clearly lost its appeal in the Ukraine by the XIXth century as Chyzhevs'kyi explains so well:

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

² 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.

³ Ibid., pp. 117-118.

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

⁵ 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 XVIIIth 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.²

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.³

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.

¹ Chyzhevs'kyi, Comparative History of Slavic Literatures, op. cit., p. 121.

² Pohorilyj, op. cit., p. 98.

³ 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.¹ 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.² "You cannot love a man's heart", says Ern by quoting that same philosopher, "unless you appreciate his mind".³

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 Сквороди поняття ніби жевріють тільки, дримають 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 перехрещують-ся, почасти цілком різні . . . Символіка живе тут повним життям і стремить вібрати в себе понятійне, означе, "сухе". Скворода 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".⁴

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

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

² Ern, op. cit., p. 223.

³ Ibid., p. 211.

⁴ 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".¹

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 свитьи, - вѣчность. Якорь - утверждение или совѣтъ. Голубь - стыдливость. Птица бусель - богочтение. Зерно и сѣмя, - помышление и мнѣніе. Были и вымышленные образа, наприм.: Сфинксъ, сирена,² фениксъ, семиглавный змій и прочая . . ." ²

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".³ It was the Bible, his "world of symbols" and ancient philosophy which, for the most part, formed the basis of his philosophy.⁴

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,

¹ Bonch-Bruevich, op. cit., p. 355.

² Ibid., pp. 268-269.

³ Ibid., p. 16.

⁴ 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. ¹ 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. ²

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". ³ 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. ⁴ This exposure, while doubted by some scholars ⁵, obviously broadened the scope of his learning, forcing him to re-evaluate much of his former, largely theological education. ⁶

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

¹ Vozniak, op. cit., pp. 77-78.

² Ibid., p. 78.

³ Skovoroda, Tvory, 1961, II, p. 490.

⁴ 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).

⁵ Ern, op. cit., pp. 55-59.

⁶ Scherer, op. cit., p. 11.

⁷ 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. ¹

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. ² 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 еблематичних малюнків це видання подає короткий текст вісьмома мовами /церковнословянською, до речі, з незначними українськими елементами, латинською, французькою, італійською, еспанською, англійською, голянською та німецькою." ³

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". ⁴ Chyzhevs'kyi goes on to show that the influence of the

¹ Chyzhevs'kyi, Fil'osofia, op. cit., p. 6.

² Compare, Dr. Dmytro Chyzhevs'kyi, "Pro Deiaki Dzherela Symvoliky Hr. Skovorody", Pratsi Ukrain's'koho Vysokoho Pedagogichnoho 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.

³ Chyzhevs'kyi, Fil'osofia, op. cit., p. 37.

⁴ 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.¹ While many such instances have been cited and verified by Chyzhevs'kyi², 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 Сквороди: бусла /104, 491, 283/, малпу /557/, голуба /372, 769/, оленя /834/, сирени /577/, фенікса /57, 135, 320, 649/; рoстинна символіка Сквороди має, як ми побачимо далі . . . інше джерело, але знайдемо в "Symbola et emblemata selecta" колос у схожому до Сквородиноного 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

¹ Chyzhevs'kyi, Fil'osofia, op. cit., p. 38.

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

³ 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. ¹

During the XVIth, XVIIth and XVIIIth 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. ²

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 Sergejevich Turgenev (1818-1883), a leading Russian novelist and playwright of the XIXth century, specifically mentioned a certain "Symbola et emblemata" in his novel, A Nest of Gentlefolk ³ 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 XVIIIth century, V. Zhukovs'kyi (1783-1852), a leading Romantic poet and translator of the early XIXth century, and Fyodor Tiutchev (1803-1873), one of Russia's greatest poets, as having been

¹ Chyzhevs'kyi, Pratsi, op. cit., p. 416.

² Chyzhevs'kyi, Fil'osofia, op. cit., p. 41.

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

directly or indirectly influenced by those same symbols and emblems. ¹

A comparable trend was evident in the works of Herzen (1812-1870), a leading Russian revolutionary thinker and philosopher of the mid-XIXth 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 XXth century. ²

Since the use of symbols in art, literature and philosophy was not an unusual phenomenon in Ukraine, (especially between the XVIth and XVIIIth 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". ³ It was, in fact, a damnable heresy. ⁴ 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. ⁵

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

2 Ibid., p. 419.

3 Ern, op. cit., p. 228. See also, Likhachev, op. cit., pp. 83-90.

4 Ibid.

5 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 ¹! How magnificent you are in your stoic indifference to everything earthly . . ." ² 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." ³

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 Сквороди 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 Сквороду матеріалістом і атеїстом. В інтерпретації І. А. Табачникова він - дуаліст. Деякі роботи Сквороди З. Мелещенко називає теологічними. М.П. Редько характеризує філософа як ідейного противника релігії та ворога офіційної церкви. В питаннях онтології Скворода нібито

1

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).

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

³ V. Nikolskyi, "Ukrains'kyi Sokrat", Istoricheskyi 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. ." ¹

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. ²

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. ³ 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. ⁴

¹ 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 Istorii Filosofii Na Ukraini (Kyiv, Akademiia Nauk Ukrain's'koi RSR, 1967), pp. 82-91.

² Ibid., pp. 110-111.

³ Ern, op. cit., p. 43.

⁴ Dziuba, op. cit., p. 70.