

**HRYHORIY SKOVORODA'S PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION:  
THE DIFFERENCE OF THE MODERN VISION  
OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE HEART**

**Gomilko O. Ye.**

*“Apart from that, I am working a bit on Skovoroda’s language. I have this feeling, without trying to indulge in patriotic exaggerations, that he might have been the most interesting figure in all Slavonic literatures of the 18<sup>th</sup> century”*  
(G.Y. Shevelov)

*“Xenophobia<sup>1</sup> became the word of 2016”*  
(Dictionary.com’s 2016 Word of the Year: Xenophobia)

**INTRODUCTION**

One would think that the figure of Hryhoriy Skovoroda implies ubiquitous honor and recognition in Ukraine. Being a renowned philosopher of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, enlightener, musician and singer, he was known not only within the academic circles, but also to the general public. Regular scientific and practical conferences, seminars and readings take place, for instance, in Kharkiv and Pereyaslav-Khmelnyskyi. Since its creation in 2012, the international Skovoroda colloquium has been taking regularly place at the Institute of Philosophy of the Ukrainian National Academy of Sciences. The scientific and research program “Scovorodianum” is still in place. It’s not for no reason that the Institute of Philosophy, pedagogical universities in Kharkiv and Pereyaslav-Khmelnyskyi, charitable foundations, international literary prize, parks and streets bear his name. Moreover, Skovoroda’s portrait graces the 500-Hryvnia note.

However, at times Skovoroda’s fame obscures the luster of his works, in particular, through a wide range of hackneyed clichés and stereotypes of its assessment, among which the juxtaposition of mind and heart as its key

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<sup>1</sup> Dictionary.com annually announces the word that defines the main trend in culture. As it turned out, in 2016 a significant portion of attention in the news stories was paid to the “other”. A distinctive attitude towards the “other” was fear. Xenophobia is a relatively new word that comes from the Ancient Greek *xénos* meaning “a foreigner” and *phóbos* meaning “fear, panic”. It means fear or hatred of people belonging to other cultures and customs, being of other origin, i.e. of those who are different, “other”. URL: <https://www.dictionary.com/e/xenophobia/>

principle is particularly popular. This juxtaposition has widely penetrated both academic and mass consciousness, making Skovoroda an opponent of the modern European philosophy. The issue at hand is the psychological school of Ukrainian philosophical studies that considers the Ukrainian cordocentrism as a unique phenomenon, which presents studies of the human being as of a dichotomous irrational being. It is worth mentioning, though, that there are also other interpretations of the Ukrainian cordocentrism, particularly in the culturological school of Ukrainian philosophical studies, which regard it as a version of biblical interpretation of human wholeness, where soul and body are united by spirit, e.g., in the research conducted by Y.S. Hnatiuk. Whereas, in our opinion, he was rather its supporter yet with a different vision of the rational in the human being. Hence, fundamentally, sharing the modern view on the humans as rational beings, Skovoroda extended the borders of the rational in them, having involved the concept of heart. Thus, for him it was not only mind that was able to be rational, but heart as well.

The coverage of the rational in the field of the sensible exerts a significant impact on Skovorodean vision of education. Since it is then that the latter is also supposed to deal with the issue of attaching mind-like qualities to heart, which will inevitably drive it into the realm of morality. Such take on education does not correspond with its modern paradigm, where knowledge gets out of touch with practicality of life, limiting itself to academic walls, hence becoming indifferent to morality. The difference of the modern vision of Skovoroda's philosophy of education lies in the fact that he does not deprive education of morality, but he does so with heart, depriving it of mind. Therefore, the task of education lies in a practical realization of knowledge, i.e. turning it into a tool of improving human life. In the modern conditions "the context of globalization as well as informational and communication revolution require us to come up with a new understanding and definition of the role and content of education in a society undergoing profound transformational changes, no matter where exactly this society is located. Education in the society of permanent transformation is to transform the individual, i.e. to be transformative education"<sup>2</sup>. This is why the discussion of Skovoroda's philosophical ideas may help while searching for such education.

### **1. Skovoroda's paradox**

There are a big number of controversial definitions of Skovoroda's philosophical heritage. In particular, what is meant here is unsystematic and folk manner of his works, their deep religious component, mysticism,

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<sup>2</sup> Горбунова Л. (2017). Трансформативне навчання дорослих: поворот до "цілісного розуміння" людини. / Філософія освіти. Philosophy of Education. № 1 (20), с. 98.

juxtaposition of heart and mind or the so-called cordocentrism, when heart plays a key role in relation to mind, etc. It is not infrequent that Skovoroda is portrayed as “the Russian Socrates”, a wandering sage, a crank, a prophet, the one who is running from life. The slavophilian vision of the Ukrainian philosopher’s works is quite common, which constitutes an integral part of the modern Skovorodean myth popularized thanks to the widely known interpretation proposed by V. Erna.

A considerable number of interpretations of Skovoroda’s work, on the one hand, speaks of a keen interest taken in them by others, but on the other hand it causes multiple problems, in particular, controversial thoughts regarding the tendencies (expressed in those works) of the modern development of the Ukrainian culture in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. For instance, the bibliography of Skovoroda’s work and works on him, published in 1968 and 1972 in Kharkiv, contains about fifteen hundred titles, and this excluding numerous books and articles published outside the USSR. It is well worth mentioning the following Ukrainian researchers who took interest in Skovoroda’s work: M. Popovich, S. Krymsky, T. Sukhodub, O. Syrtsova, M. Koshub, Y. Chornomorets, V. Chernyshov, L. Ushkalov and others. Their works made a noteworthy contribution to the interpretation of Skovoroda’s teachings as of a modern thinker.

However, the greatness of the prominent Ukrainian thinker is based on the possibility of multiple rethinking of his legacy. This is true thanks to the fact that Skovoroda thought of his philosophy as of a tool of human life, and its resource he saw in the practice of life. The potential of such philosophy is unlocked by the practical question of *how one can learn to be human*. This question defines the creative center of Skovoroda’s philosophy. Since for him philosophy is the main study of the human beings and their happiness. The question about how one can learn to be human has not become obsolete for modern philosophers, either. For example, the 24<sup>th</sup> World Congress of Philosophy that took place in 2018 in China, was also dedicated to the Skovorodean problem, i.e. that of learning to be human. The official title of the Congress was *Learning To Be Human*<sup>3</sup>. Thus, the appeal of Skovoroda’s work lies not in its originality or intricacy, but in the openness to the daily practice of humans, in their constant willing to be humans, in their permanent struggle for their own happiness.

## 2. The “insane” way of philosophy?

The fact that the title of the World Congress of Philosophy is in sync with Skovoroda’s definition of philosophy is not a sheer coincidence. Both Skovoroda and modern philosophers take a look at philosophy in the context

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<sup>3</sup> XXIV World Congress of Philosophy. Learning to be Human. Beijing 2018. Program. URL: <http://wcp2018.pku.edu.cn/yw/index.htm>

of solving problems of the practice of life. This is why nowadays there is more talk of the necessity to bring philosophy back to the practice of life. For instance, the authoritative *The New York Times* has launched the forum of modern philosophers “The Stone” moderated by Simon Critchley<sup>4</sup>. It mainly focuses on discussion of eternal and timely philosophical problems and then in the context of their relation to the practice of people’s lives. The article by Robert Frodeman and Adam Briggle published on the forum is dedicated to the problem of lost connection between philosophy and the practice of life. The authors contend that it is philosophy getting out of touch with the practice of life that has led it astray<sup>5</sup>.

The reason for this “insanity” of philosophy’s evolution they see in the modern form of institutionalization of philosophy. In their opinion, for example, the history of the Western philosophy can be represented in different ways. It can be represented through its periods (antiquity, Middle Ages, modernity), competitive traditions (empiricism versus rationalism, analytical philosophy versus continental) or domains (metaphysics, epistemology, ethics). The history of philosophy can also be viewed by singling out its certain research directives such as gender or race ones, etc. However, the authors of the article claim that despite all the divergences present in philosophical directions and all the problems, a turning point that united them all was the modern institutional establishment of philosophy as a scientific structure of the research university at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This institutionalization of philosophy turns it into the cause that could be implemented solely in the academic environment, i.e. within the research structures.

The authors of the article see in the transformation of philosophy into a research activity and educational subject one of the main reasons why the modern philosophy keeps losing its own credibility, for before philosophy was taught at university, it had been free in its presence in culture. One could meet philosophers in the ranks of diplomats, lens polishers, university professors, etc. It was institutional “freedom” of philosophy, if the authors of the article are to be believed, that facilitated philosophy’s realization of its vocation as a domain of raised questions and doubts. It is exactly this nature of philosophy that Socrates used to talk about, and this is exactly this philosophy that Skovoroda practiced. The modern institutionalization of philosophy deprives

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<sup>4</sup> Simon Critchley is a British philosopher, professor of philosophy at the New School for Social Research (NCSR), author of the book “Introduction to continental philosophy”, whose Ukrainian translation by V. Menzhulin came out in the publishing house “Stylos” in 2008. The New School for Social Research. Simon Critchley. URL: <https://www.newschool.edu/ncsr/faculty/simon-critchley/>

<sup>5</sup> Frodeman R., Briggle A. (2016). When Philosophy Lost Its Way./ *The New York Times*, January 11. URL:<https://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2016/01/11/when-philosophy-lost-its-way/>

it of freedom, effectively transferring it from the domain of doubts and raised questions into that of expert knowledge.

Following such transformations philosophy is “purified”<sup>6</sup> from the practice of life. According to the authors, such “purification” occurs for two reasons. First, a vigorous development of natural sciences leads to their definitive dissociation from philosophy and enhances the emergence of social sciences. It is worth noting that such division had not existed before, so naturalists felt comfortable being among philosophers. They used to call themselves “natural philosophers”, i.e. philosophers that studied nature. Philosophers, who were rather interested in social problems, would refer to themselves as “moral philosophers”. Second, the modern institutionalization of philosophy as educational subject places it on a par with other disciplines, which leads to the philosophy being deprived of the title “the science of sciences”. The previous hierarchy of knowledge spearheaded by philosophy is now being ruined. It is succeeded by the division of knowledge into natural sciences and humanities, which has fostered their transformation into a complex of independent and equivalent subject areas. Philosophy has become one of them.

The fact that philosophy has been knocked off its pedestal as mistress of knowledge weakens its motivation to deal with fundamental questions of human existence. At the modern (research) university the function (that first universities had inherited from church schools) of reflection on these questions is losing its relevance, whereas the questions regarding the nature of human beings and paradigms of their lives defined the centerpiece of education at the first universities. Such university disciplines as philosophy, theology, medicine and law were not counterposed. Quite the reverse, they found themselves in close cooperation within a single research paradigm offered by philosophy. The strengthening of discipline specialization at the modern university undermines this harmony and cooperation.

The processes going along with the development of the modern university keep increasingly weakening the status of philosophy, compelling it to permanently defend its ground. This process is further complicated by the requirement for the philosophy to comply with the structure and standards of the modern university, in particular, with the strengthening of specialization. Only a “disciplined” philosophy, as it is referred to by the authors of the article, i.e. the one that can be diligently subordinated to these requirements, is considered “the real one”, and it is this philosophy that defines the standards of philosophizing as such. Apparently, such “purified” philosophy finds it difficult to be competing with natural sciences. The practical meaning of achievements of the latter is not thrown into doubt by anyone, whereas philosophical success is predominantly known to philosophers themselves.

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<sup>6</sup> In the article the definition of a French philosopher, Bruno Latour, is used.

Frodeman and Briggie opine that philosophy is by no means to be “purified”. Instead of considering “dirty hands” of philosophy as a problem, we are to regard them as a precondition for philosophical thought. Since philosophy’s hands get “dirty” as a consequence of its contact with the real world. The two authors speak of the interstitiality of philosophy, which manifests itself in the inter- and transdisciplinary character of the latter. They compare it to the mangle, for like the mangle it appears as a necessary tool in everyday life. If the mangle was used to wash the laundry, philosophy is also meant to wash, however, not laundry, but human nature. That is why philosophy is closely connected with morality.

However, there is not only the division of knowledge into different domains happening at the modern university, but also their dissociation from moral virtues. Before, morality and knowledge used to form a unity, which was especially true of philosophy. It was no coincidence that philosophers would think of themselves as of a more morally responsible breed. In their article Frodeman and Briggie also mention the British thinker of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Joseph Priestly, who believed that a philosopher had to be better than other people. Priestly regarded philosophy as a *vocation* that requires significant moral virtues, especially honesty and self-commitment. Summing up their reflections on the connection between philosophy and morality, Frodeman and Briggie come to a conclusion that it has always been important for philosophy to be good (meaning “useful” for human life) rather than an abstract domain (independent from real human needs) for producing knowledge.

### **3. Skovoroda: a modern philosopher or a critic of the modern philosophy?**

Presentation of ideas in this article proves useful for understanding not only the current state of philosophy, but also the legacy of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Ukrainian philosopher, H. Skovoroda. It was exactly at that time that the modern philosophy, or the philosophy of the modern time, as it is sometimes referred to, prospered. Interestingly, this philosophy regards mind as a fundamental feature of human existence. Hence, it is to great extent thanks to its efforts that rationalism became in widespread use: 1) as an ontological characteristic of a human being, 2) as gnosiological sureness of a human mind’s ability to learn about the world and 3) as a practical ability to change the world based on acquired knowledge. Modern rationalization has enabled a rapid scientific and technical development as well as a modernization of culture on a massive scale. However, the powerful legitimization of the rational by the modern philosophy has failed to provide its deep explication, since

outside the rational modern philosophers have left out a decent number of domains of human existence, particularly, morality and corporality.

Skovoroda, just as his contemporary J. Priestly, does not settle for an abridged understanding of the rational. For them both philosophy and morality are inseparable. Into the domain of the rational cause Skovoroda included “heart”, which was traditionally equated with a sensible domain of the human essence. Therefore, the connection between philosophy and morality becomes possible thanks to the whole human being, whose mind and heart form a single essence. This is why Skovoroda could barely have accepted the role played by philosophy at the modern university as a research facility, since in the territory of what was then Ukraine there was no modern university yet.

Skovoroda dealt with educational institutions of the Russian Empire, which were fundamentally different from the European ones. Nevertheless, even in such conditions he was able to keep the modern spirit of philosophy, pulling it into a different direction, into that of practice of life, not of a scientific truth, which was the case at the modern university. In so doing, Skovoroda pointed at the escape routes for cognitive and practical rehabilitation of philosophy, for his philosophy teaches people to be guided by reason not only within university’s walls, but also in other domains of their lives. This is why Skovoroda does not only speak of philosophy, but of “philosophy of the heart”.

In the foreword to the new edition of Skovoroda’s works, A. Liubka states that the Ukrainian philosopher was a “heart lover”, not a “heart breaker”. For example, in all his works Skovoroda used the word “heart” 1146 times in different forms<sup>7</sup>. Skovoroda’s love of heart was conducive for projecting his image as a critic of mind and opponent of the modern philosophy. However, his keen interest in the problematics of heart attests to his will to make the human heart rational. Drawing on his personal experience, Skovoroda proves that it is not only mind but heart as well that can be taught to live rightly, subduing “inner demons”. In order to better understand this experience, let us consider some aspects of the philosopher’s historical context. Without taking into consideration the life practice, Skovoroda’s thinking grows stiff in clichés and stereotypes.

*Historical context.* Let us not forget that the Left-bank Ukraine of the 18<sup>th</sup> century found itself in conditions of great motion and unrest. On the one hand, the threat of possible raids by the nomadic tribes of the Nogais was still looming. On the other hand, agricultural population began the process of colonization and reclamation of the steppe lands. Ukrainian peasantry was inclined to stick to the archaic system of family and clan unions. However, the

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<sup>7</sup> Сковорода Г. Найкраще. (2017). К.: Terra Incognita, с. 5.

vast majority of the then population of Ukraine was made up of Cossacks. For example, the “Census of Left-bank Ukraine” contains data on population of the Lubny region: Cossacks made up 54% of adult population, serfs – 39%, state-owned peasants – 5%, gentry, clergy and petit bourgeois – less than 2%. The surname “Skovoroda” is thought to have Cossack roots, although it was quite uncommon at that time. There is evidence that the philosopher’s father belonged to the class of common Cossacks tilling land.

The Cossacks held the concepts of the individual honor and inner freedom in high esteem. Being of the Cossack origin stood for inner freedom, ability to determine one’s fate and the obligation to strictly adhere to the code of a specific knightly honor. These were the Cossacks who displayed a greater disposition to openness that would allow them to adopt modern paradigms of the then culture than other social groups. A noticeable impact of the European culture can be attested to by the application of the Magdeburg rights and the functioning of a system of workshops. Basically, the Cossack community modelled itself on the workshop fellowship. At the same time the Magdeburg rights that went on to exist well into the 1840s were a form of municipal government, autonomy and solidarity, which enabled the development of individualism and urbanistic culture. At those times the Magdeburg rights in Ukraine got complicated and with time abolished by the bureaucratic government system of the Russian Empire, in particular, by the “Table of Ranks” introduced by Peter the Great.

The transitional or threshold state of the then-existing Ukrainian culture can be attested to by a special status of journeys undertaken mostly by schoolchildren and dyaks (teachers). Those journeys in the then Ukrainian culture took on a ritual, or even sacred meaning. Little wonder, why Skovoroda was hoping to find salvation from the conflict with reality while undertaking those journeys. In the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century a limitation of Ukraine’s political autonomy occurred, having transformed the country into a Russian colony. As a result, the usage of the Ukrainian language in the domain of culture was also limited, as was the printing of Ukrainian books. The state’s censorship in the domain of education as well as a dependence of the Ukrainian church on the Moscow patriarchy gained in strength. The 1782 census in the Russian Empire put paid to the institution of wandering dyaks. From then on, in order to carry on teaching they were forced to anchor themselves to a particular place. Simultaneously, Peter the Great regularized the official names of the Russian Empire (which was to replace “Muscovy”) and of Little Russia (to be used instead of the “Cossack Hetmanate”). This was the historical context in which Skovoroda lived.

What kind of *education* could he receive at that time? The inaccurate dating with regard to Skovoroda’s education is explained by a virtual lack of

any documents that might attest to it. Nonetheless, it is possible to single out the main periods thereof. Skovoroda spent 4 years at a parish school in the village of Chornukhy. His admission to Kyiv-Mohyla Academy is dated 1738. His curriculum there consisted at first of five classes: infima, grammar, syntax, poetics and rhetoric. First three classes dealt with the study of Latin, Greek, Church Slavonic, Polish, arithmetic, singing and catechism. Further education entailed classes in philosophy and theology. Courses on philosophy (logic, physics, metaphysics, ethics) took three years of curriculum time, whereas theology only two. There is still no agreement among scholars regarding the dates of Skovoroda's presence in Kyiv. It is thought that he studied there from 1738 to 1742. However, there is no mention of his name in the lists (now available in archives) of students.

At the behest of Elizabeth of Russia, Skovoroda took himself to Saint Petersburg in 1742 as a Kapellmeister. In 1744 he might have resumed his studies, attending classes of M. Dovhalevsky, followed by classes in rhetoric in 1745–1746, in philosophy in 1746–1748, and in theology in 1748–1750. H. Skovoroda is considered to have studied in Kyiv from 1734 to 1741. His language teacher there was S. Todorsky, and his philosophy teacher was M. Kozachynsky. In 1742 Skovoroda moved back to Saint Petersburg with a view to continuing to study philosophy with Kozachynsky. In 1745 he interrupted his studies once again.

Accompanying the general F. Vyshnevsky to Hungary, Skovoroda was getting to know “foreign lands”. According to one assumption, Skovoroda visited Germany and Vienna. It is considered that it was his trip to Hungary and possible travels to other European countries that helped the Ukrainian thinker to get acquainted with contemporary Western philosophical thought. He mastered Latin, Greek, German and Hebrew. It is known that in 1751 Skovoroda frequented courses on theology conducted by H. Konysky. This short summary of Skovoroda's education may attest to the fact that the level of his professional preparation was quite sufficient for him to be able to critically assess contemporary education and philosophical thought.

Skovoroda's works are closely linked to his *pedagogical legacy*. Apparently, it was unacceptable for Skovoroda to institutionally incarcerate philosophy or any other knowledge within the walls of educational institutions. However, it is a known fact that he yearned to teach at an educational institution. This was a wish of his that he never fully managed to realize. It transpired that Skovoroda could not adjust to the requirements imposed on lecturers in the Russian Empire. On his return to Kyiv in 1750, Skovoroda was invited to lecture at the Pereyaslav Collegium. Yet due to the conflict that ensued upon his introduction of some innovations, Skovoroda was made to leave the Collegium. He then made several attempts to renew his

teaching profession. In 1759, 1762 and 1768 the philosopher lectured poetics, Greek, syntax and ethics at the Kharkiv Collegium. Interestingly, he was there a sole layman among all the lecturers. However, after he was twice urged to take a vow and begin a career of a clergyman, Skovoroda left the Collegium once again. It is held that it was at the Kharkiv Collegium that Skovoroda met his future biographer and friend, the student of the Collegium M. Kovalynsky. However, after Skovoroda's last return to the Collegium, he was fired once again, this time because of disagreements on doctrine. The experience obtained at the educational institutions of the Russian Empire gave Skovoroda an incentive to work up his own path of education, that of journey or, as we would put it, of a mobile education. His pedagogical "journey" was to last 25 years! The thinker became a good mentor for children of landowners and gentry, as many of them were to subsequently play a noticeable role in the development of Ukrainian education. In particular, it was not without their sponsorship and ideological inspiration that the first modern university was founded in 1805 in Kharkiv.

It is conceivable that Skovoroda's European-like thinking, which was driven by the ideas of freedom and reason, did not let him be subordinated to the imperial and Orthodox system of education. Obviously, his "journey" pedagogy was putting up a final resistance. That being said, it did not correspond to the educational trend reigning in the contemporary Europe, which was expressed in the emergence of the research and study institutionalization of knowledge through establishment of the classical modern university. Skovoroda showed that the modern development of philosophy and education could be realized in different ways depending on the cultural and historical context, as his "journey pedagogy" was laying foundation for the modern thinking. For Skovoroda, an important task of education was to teach a human being to be a rational being in all domains of life without limiting the rational solely by the sphere of consciousness.

*Skovoroda's main ideas about philosophy of education.* Skovoroda's philosophy of education positions itself in the context of the then European philosophy, whose priority lay in justifying the rational nature of the human being. While reflecting on Skovoroda's modern otherness, one should pay attention to those thinkers who wielded influence upon him. Kovalynsky compiled a list of Skovoroda's favorite works. Among these we can find works by Plato, Plutarch, Philo Judaeus, Cicero, Horace, Lucian, Clement of Alexandria, Augustine of Hippo, Origen, Nilus of Sora, Dionysius the Areopagite, Maximus the Confessor. However, the main source of wisdom for him was the Bible. According to Skovoroda's interpretation, the Bible moved beyond confessional and doctrinal borders, entering the realm of ecumenism.

Skovoroda's main philosophical idea was ingrained in the assertion that the world is of dual nature, consisting of the corporal ("flesh nature") and the inner eternal nature that is the origin of all things. The thought on the primacy of the principle ("the origin") over the material world, of "the invisible" over "the visible" is far too general. However, as a philosophical stance it has closer connections to Platonism. According to a famous researcher of Skovoroda's work, M. Popovich, "Skovorodean Platonism is exhausted by the general principles of the primacy of the wholeness over elements. This "Platonism" may be called "Aristotlism", for it can entirely be translated into the language of Aristotle's teachings about *matter and form*"<sup>8</sup>. Accordingly, the essence of the human being is the spiritual one, the so-called *inner human*, which represents the spirit of God in the human being. However, the spirit of God may be present in the human being in different ways. This is why humans differ from one another in talents and aptitudes for different activities. Exploiting potential of the "inner" human being constitutes a condition on which humans may reach happiness.

It is fair to assume that Skovoroda represents the tradition of the *practical philosophy* that has held the problem of reaching happiness by the human being as its key objective since the times of Aristotle. Thus, the practical philosophy is prevailingly focused on the knowledge that is changeable and ad hoc and is determined by morality, since happiness is always a specifically personal occurrence. Skovoroda saw in education an important factor for the human being to reach happiness. It is exactly education that helps humans unlock the inner human being in themselves, i.e. their existence as a totality of their talents and abilities. Therefore, according to Skovoroda, happiness is an ability to reach self-fulfillment. However, he opines that *self-fulfillment* of the human being can be realized on condition of *self-cognition*. Self-cognition and self-esteem define the way of philosophical understanding of the sense of human existence. Skovoroda claimed that "self-love is truly blissful! if it is holy; it is holy indeed! if it is true"<sup>9</sup>.

The idea about the "*three worlds*" defines his ontological views and educational strategies. Skovoroda places the Bible into a special "world" along with the macrocosm of the Universe and the microcosm of the human being. Nevertheless, in his opinion, every philosopher has to answer the question of a number of worlds on their own. Being a modern philosopher, he referred to the world of the Bible not as of sacred, but as of symbolic. Hence,

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<sup>8</sup> Попович М. (2007). Григорій Сковорода: філософія свободи. – К. : Майстерня Білецьких, с. 206.

<sup>9</sup> Сковорода Г. (2011). Наркисс. Разглагол о том: Узнай себя // Сковорода Григорій. Повне зібрання творів у 2-х т. Т. 1. К.: Богуславкнига, с. 81.

such world requires understanding. The task of education is to help the symbolic understanding to mature. That way Skovoroda expressed the position of supporters of critical thinking in Orthodox theology: without denying the character (inspired by God) of the Bible, he dismissed its literary (direct) sense. A critical attitude towards a theological tradition is a common feature of Skovoroda's philosophy and European Protestantism. It reveals openness to ecumenical thinking. As is known, ecumenism implies cooperation and mutual understanding between Christians of different denominations on the ground of mutual practical act that leads them to unity. According to M. Popovich, "it may be affirmed that the specific *biblical fundamentalism* was on the whole an alternative to both the Orthodox and Catholic theology. Orientation to the Bible as an exceptional in its value source of knowledge and worldview is inherent in all reformation movement..."<sup>10</sup>.

"*Philosophy of the heart*". Skovoroda transposes development of knowledge of God inside the human beings, into their spiritual hearts, or to put it in other words, into metaphysics of the body. The philosopher wrote, "The heart of the human being is deep, deeper than anything, and who will come to know this human being?"<sup>11</sup>. The task of every human being is to find their own path to God through the rational heart, which is capable of directing its sensitivity towards the streambed of the life-affirming action, overcoming destructive and aggressive predisposition inside. Hence, the Skovorodean philosophy of the "heart" is not a philosophical paradigm of counterposing mind and heart. This philosophy is more like an educational "training", development of certain mental and corporal knowledge, skills, habits and abilities by the human being to achieve happiness. M. Popovich urges caution in this regard, arguing that "here we should take a closer look at the danger of modernization of the Skovorodean "teachings on the heart" in the spirit of the so-called "Ukrainian cordocentrism". Skovoroda is driven by the biblical understanding of the word "heart" that did not correspond to the romantic image of counterposing "heart" against "mind". According to the language used in the Bible, heart and kidneys are thought the "center of mind"<sup>12</sup>.

The logic of the "philosophy of the heart" as a rational training of spirit leads Skovoroda to lay a foundation to the idea of the human being acquiring an "eternal" and "new" body. The human beings can perform such

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<sup>10</sup> Попович М. (2007). Григорій Сковорода: філософія свободи. К. : Майстерня Білецьких, с. 189.

<sup>11</sup> Сковорода Г. (2011). Наркисс. Разглагол о том: Узнай себя // Сковорода Григорій. Повне зібрання творів у 2-х т. Т. 1. К.: Богуславкнига, с. 87.

<sup>12</sup> Попович М. (2007). Григорій Сковорода: філософія свободи. К. : Майстерня Білецьких, с. 206.

transformation with the help of self-cognition as immersion into their nature. This, in turn, requires a rational improvement of not only mind as a theoretical possibility, but of heart as a practical mind, for heart contains not abstract feelings, but their live concrete embodiments. The philosopher opined that the biggest mistake of human beings is the lack of knowledge of their own body. They see in it only the “bestial”, never paying attention to the fact that “in this flesh of yours there is a treasure hidden, i.e. invisibility and the hand of God are hidden there, which contain this flesh of yours”<sup>13</sup>. This is why he appealed for cultivation of a “new” and “eternal” body. Creation of the “new body” for Skovoroda meant a practical possibility of rational improvement of heart as realization of unity of cognitive and corporal aptitudes of the human being. The task of the human heart is the development of the “new body”, new spirit, and new human being. Hence, according to Skovoroda, the concept of the heart is not counterposed against mind. It is meant to consolidate their unity within the wholeness of the human being. Skovoroda proclaims, “The thing one loves, that thing one becomes. Anyone is that thing, whose heart is in him. Anyone is there, where his heart belongs”<sup>14</sup>.

Speaking of the modern character of Skovoroda’s philosophy of education, we can’t but mention his idea of *kindred work*. It is with the help of this idea that he stated the modern individualism, thanks to which the acknowledgment of the value of interests of a particular human being became possible. Skovoroda saw happiness of human beings in their freely choosing work according to its “kindred spirit” with their own hearts. The emphasis on the individual and independent choice of the occupation by the human being places Skovoroda’s reflections into opposition to the archaic viewpoint, for which the primacy of interests of the collective is quintessential. He believed that the human being’s reaching of happiness is hindered by the human collectivism, which determines the dependence of a personality on the commune and its (personality) being reined in by the latter. It is this fact of Skovoroda working up the idea of individualism that makes his philosophy distinct from the Slavophilian admiration for “collectivism”.

Professional vocation of a particular human being, according to Skovoroda, has to assume a sacred character, which implies the process of its union with God. However, it is not a mythical ecstasy but a rational search of vocation by the human being through self-cognition and self-analysis that enables such union. Hence, through self-cognition the human being forms its

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<sup>13</sup> Сковорода Г. (1983). Вірші. Пісні. Байки. Діалоги. Трактати. Притчі. Прозові переклади. Листи. К.: Наукова думка, с. 206.

<sup>14</sup> Сковорода Г. (2011). Наркисс. Разглагол о том: Узнай себя // Сковорода Григорій. Повне зібрання творів у 2-х т. Т. 1. К.: Богуславкнига, с. 81.

belief in God. Skovoroda said, “It brings happiness to enter the realm of knowledge by the grace of God, when the human being does so not on a whim or upon following someone else’s advice, but by carefully examining his own nature and heeding the Holy Spirit that lives inside him and calls him, by following its secret beckoning, when he accepts and pursues the vocation for which he was born into this world and which was preordained by God”<sup>15</sup>.

This is why a life lived according to the kindred work means a happy life, for as Skovoroda taught, “there is nothing sweeter or more useful for the human being than happiness; there is nothing easier than happiness. God be praised! The Kingdom of God inside us. Happiness in the heart, the heart in love, love is in the law of the Eternal”<sup>16</sup>. The law of the Eternal is revealed by the higher Wisdom that the Almighty imbued every people with. According to Skovoroda, “it is quite like the most perfect architectural symmetry or model that imperceptibly permeates the material and holds together all tools, rendering wholeness stronger and sacrosanct”. The term “model” was used by Skovoroda in the sense of “degree”, “tact”, “manner”, “the scope of commensurability”, i.e. in the sense of a concept that expresses a rational harmony. And so It (wisdom), by furtively spreading across all limbs of the political corpus, consisting of human beings, not from stones, makes it solid, peaceful and untroubled... In all of our most different deeds and in things it acts as a soul, good and beauty. Without It everything is dead and ugly. We are all born without It and for It. Those who are disposed to and willing It are more noble and smarter. The more one deals with It, the more effective (though incomprehensibly) one feels the inner bliss or delight. The special Craft depends on It in creation of the human race. For It is a beautiful image of God which he (after entrenching himself in our soul) subsequently uses to turn us from wild and ugly monsters or bastards into human beings, i.e. little predators, reasonable, kind, magnanimous and fair, fit for cooperation and the aforementioned unity”<sup>17</sup>.

The aforementioned excerpt of Skovoroda’s work legitimizes the rational nature of the human being as an operational essence which enables his stable, peaceful and successful life in a commune of his ilk. The Ukrainian thinker had a clear-eyed, free-of-illusion look at the human being. To his mind, the biggest thing human beings could achieve is to learn the divine Wisdom and overcome “monsters” or “bastards” in themselves, thus becoming “little predators”, i.e. creatures that care about their own interests, though at the same time capable of peaceful coexistence with other “little predators” of their ilk.

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<sup>15</sup> Сковорода Г. (1983). Вірші. Пісні. Байки. Діалоги. Трактати. Притчі. Прозові переклади. Листи. К.: Наукова думка, с. 206.

<sup>16</sup> Сковорода Г. (2014). Вхідні двері до християнської добротності. / Філософська думка. № 5, с. 7.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid p. 11.

Skovoroda thought that the way to learn the divine Wisdom lay, to put it in the parlance of our time, in a high-quality life-long education that would meet the needs of life. He also opined (just as contemporary educators) that a mobility principle should lay at the foundation of such education, in other words it should be open to the world. Hence, for him education becomes a transborder and transnational phenomenon. The most important thing that Skovoroda demands from the human being is learning to be human through systematic and assiduous work on self-cognition. By setting an example himself, he proved that good education and kindred work are the key to being human. Thanks to constant and enthusiastic efforts to change themselves, human beings acquire extraordinary features that might appear mystical. Only unflagging education and exhausting training can produce them. Don't modern boot camps (that overcome borders of the modern institutionalization of knowledge) in the Silicon Valley bear resemblance to the educational projects of our renowned philosopher?

## CONCLUSIONS

*What does Skovoroda's philosophy teach us?* 1) Contrary to the Orthodox thought, Skovoroda believed that the human being transforms not through sufferings or faith, but through systematic educational practices capable of extending the realm of the rational at the expense of corporality based on self-cognition and love of oneself; 2) Unlike the modern classical philosophy, Skovoroda did not deem self-cognition a function solely of the mind, or the heart in a dichotomy with the latter. Being in agreement with contemporary theories of education that were based on the idea of an anthropotechnical turn in philosophy, Skovoroda saw in the heart an instrument for strengthening the mind. Involving the heart into the domain of the rational strengthens thinking with knowledge about a concrete situation of its embodiment as well as of cognitive abilities of its carrier. According to Skovoroda, the overcoming of fear and hatred of the "other" is to become an important consequence of such human transfiguration. In that case, the word "xenophobia" cannot become the word of the year, which it, unfortunately, did quite recently, in 2016. Dictionary.com annually announces the word that defines the main trend in culture. As it turned out, in 2016 a significant portion of attention in the news stories was paid to the "other". A distinctive attitude towards the "other" was fear. Xenophobia is a relatively new word that comes from the Ancient Greek *xénos* meaning "a foreigner" and *phóbos* meaning "fear, panic". It means fear or hatred of people belonging to other cultures and customs, being of other origin, i.e. of those who are different, "other". The main thing that Skovoroda's philosophy teaches us is the need to forget this word.

## SUMMARY

The article is devoted to the analysis of the modern character of the Hryhoriy Skovoroda's philosophy of education. Unlike his contemporaries, he focuses on connections of philosophy and moral virtue. This position contradicts the tendency of a modern institutionalization of philosophy in the way of one more discipline of the modern research university. However, Skovoroda's critical position does not put into question the modern content of his philosophy. On the contrary, Skovoroda's understanding of philosophy reveals the salvific ways of its cognitive and practical rehabilitation. It is because his philosophy teaches people to be wise not only on the university campus but in all spheres of their own lives. That is why he speaks not just of philosophy, but of the "philosophy of the heart". Contrary to Christian thought, he believes that human's transformation is possible not through faith and suffering, but through the discovery of a "new body" on the ground of self-knowledge and love for oneself. Unlike the modern classical philosophy, Skovoroda considers self-knowledge, not as a function of mind alone, and the heart as a dichotomy to the mind. In accordance with contemporary educational theories based on the idea of anthropotechnical turn in philosophy, Skovoroda deems the heart an instrument for enhancing the mind. Involving the heart into the sphere of rational increases the thinking of knowledge about the specific situation of its embodiment and the cognitive capabilities of its carrier. According to Skovoroda, an important consequence of such human transformations should be the overcoming of fear and hatred of the "other".

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**Information about the author:**

**Gomilko O. Ye.,**

Doctor of Philosophy, Professor Leading Research Fellow,  
Department of Philosophy of Culture, Ethics, Aesthetics,  
H. Skovoroda Institute of Philosophy,  
The National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine  
4, Tryokhsviatitelska str., Kyiv, 01001, Ukraine