THE PHILOSOPHY OF HRYHORII SKOVORODA IN THE CONTEXT OF HUMANCENTRISM

Vasyl Kremen, Dr. Sc., Prof.
President,
National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine
Kyiv, Ukraine
president@naps.gov.ua
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5459-1318

To cite this article: Kremen, V. (2022). The philosophy of Hryhorii Skovoroda in the context of humancentrism. Education: Modern Discourses, 5, 75-84. https://doi.org/10.37472/2617-3107-2022-5-04

Abstract. Through the prism of the Ukrainian philosophical thinking issues, the article highlights the philosophical position of Hryhorii Skovoroda, which is based on clarifying the specifics of a particular human personality and focuses on the inner world of a person, the world of the “soul” and “heart”. According to H. Skovoroda, the “philosophy of the heart” is a statement of a new approach to understanding a person, the meaning of his existence and destination in the world. It is proved that such a cordocentric approach has a long national tradition and was initiated in the early literature of the proto-Ukrainian society of Kyivan Rus. It is substantiated that a characteristic feature of H. Skovoroda’s philosophical system is the joining of a man and the world. This means creating a coherent philosophy that integrates ethics, ontology, philosophical wisdom, and moral behaviour in the philosophical dimension. H. Skovoroda appeals to the “voice of the heart”, which confirms the begin of developing his humancentrism on the national ground and acts as an alternative to the rationalist and objectivist method precisely in defending the fundamental importance, the primacy of the individual and personal, and cultural and multivocal uniqueness of human existence.

Keywords: humancentrism; philosophy of the heart; Ukrainian philosophical thinking; value system.

INTRODUCTION, PROBLEM STATEMENT

The article is dedicated to the 300th anniversary of the birth of Hryhorii Skovoroda – a prominent Ukrainian philosopher, theologian, poet, teacher. Hryhorii Skovoroda had a significant influence on his contemporaries and future generations with his fables, songs, philosophical works, as well as his way of life, which is why he was called “Socrates”.

Against the background of the culture in general, the philosophical culture of the eighteenth century, in which the thinker’s work unfolds, is characterized by the final establishment of rationalist philosophy both in Western Europe and in Ukraine – primarily within the walls of the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy. On the example of the philosophical courses of its teachers, one can trace how the religious sphere is narrowing in the national philosophy, how the spirit of
free research gradually penetrates into this sphere, which eventually leads the national philosophical thought to the path of rationalism and enlightenment.

The problems of Ukrainian philosophical thinking, starting from the Renaissance, had somewhat different dimensions. It was expressed in areopagitic mysticism, hysychasm, irrationalism, transcendence. But over time, with the growth of the general trend towards secularization of public life, these problems lose their self-evidence. In this situation, the philosophical position of Hryhorii Skovoroda is not reduced to purely cognitive problems, but is close to clarifying the specifics of a particular human personality. The Ukrainian thinker “does not limit himself to certain isolated human abilities, but proceeds from the integrity of the personal structure, clarifying through its prism the specifics of other levels of human existence” (Ilin, 2005, p. 105). Moreover, the main attention of the thinker is focused on the inner world of man, the world of “soul” and “heart”.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The philosophical heritage of Hryhorii Skovoroda occupies a prominent place in the history of intellectual culture of Ukraine. Over the past two centuries, it has been the focus of attention of many researchers. Each of them offered their own vision of his work: as a predecessor of existential philosophy (W. Ern); as a phenomenon of baroque culture (D. Chyzhevsky); as a representative of Ukrainian cordocentrism (“philosophy of the heart”) (E. Malanyuk). In the last period of the Soviet era, a concept was formulated according to which Skovoroda belonged to the age of Enlightenment and represented its peculiar peasant form (V. Shynkaruk). Taking into account the baroque character of the style of the Ukrainian thinker, it was proposed to consider his work in the context of European philosophy, in particular ancient (I. Drach, S. Krymsky, M. Popovych). The study of the heritage of the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy made it possible to consider Skovoroda’s work through the prism of philosophical and theological education of the 18th century (I. Ivanyo, V. Nichyk). A proposal was also formulated to consider Skovoroda primarily as a representative of “apocryphal apocalyptic” (Popovych, 2003, p. 31). In the voluminous work of V. Shevchuk (2008), the Ukrainian thinker appears in the image of the known and at the same time unknown Sphinx. In the monograph by H. Vasyanovych (2022), Skovoroda’s work is presented as Christian-philosophical personalism.

All these approaches are qualitatively different from each other, which indicates both the polysemousness of the spiritual world of the Ukrainian philosopher and the originality of his thinking. The latter is a significant characteristic of every outstanding personality. At the same time, it is important to reconstruct the cultural environment (“context”) in which the philosopher’s thought was carried out. After all, culture is a carrier of historical memory, a factor of national self-awareness and self-expression, the integrity of the creative forces of the people, a condition for the historical development and viability of the nation.

MAIN RESULTS

The complex inner, spiritual world, reflected in the polysemantics of the images used by Skovoroda, allows us to call him first of all a philosopher of the “existence of the heart”. After all, the thinker rejected the “spirit of abstractions”, the general concepts of rationalist philosophy, the separation of man from the personal “I”. The Ukrainian philosopher felt and understood that abstraction is not able to “testify” about a person, does not reveal its specific essence. The power of abstraction, which “fanatizes” consciousness, leads to ignoring the value
of human life. In contrast, Hryhorii Skovoroda through the “heart” seeks to restore the feeling of fullness of life to a person. That is why in the centre of his reasoning is a passionate search for the road to happiness. And it is contained in the person himself, in the “human heart”, in the “world of the soul”. In the philosopher’s interpretation, the “heart” is the guarantor of a person’s own value (Ilin, 2005, p. 106).

Hryhorii Skovoroda’s emphasis on the “heart” has a long national tradition. The cordocentric approach (focused on the “inner”, “soul” essence of a person) is formed already in the early literary monuments of the pre-Ukrainian society of Kyivian Rus. According to V. Gorsky, the “heart” in them is one of the “hypostases” of the image of a mediator, an intermediary between a person and the outside world. The “heart” is considered to be the organ that connects all the essential forces of man, i.e. thought, will and faith. Concentrating in itself the mind, faith, feelings and will of a person, the “heart” turns out to be the center of teaching, involvement in the sacred, extraterrestrial (Horskyi, 2001).

For Skovoroda, man is not just a rational being or a mechanism (“machine”), as the most radical leaders of the Enlightenment believed. On the contrary, he is a complex being, belonging to different worlds and subject to the influence of various spheres. Thus, the spiritual life of man depends, on the one hand, on the bodily sphere, and on the other hand, it is capable of rising to the irrational. Man is simultaneously full, like the whole world, of mysterious forces. This is the mysterious, “unconscious”, all sorts of deviations from the “normal” rational course of life: inspiration, premonition, ecstasy, inner, spiritual “vision” of the world, feeling of what cannot be explained by words. All such experiences are revealed to a person through the “heart”, which is an exit from the sphere of ordinary life to other spheres, and therefore have a deep meaning. The “heart” of the Ukrainian thinker is the “inner” self-consciousness, the moment of free desire for love, creativity. “Heart” is a reasonable vision and at the same time – reasonable activity (Ilin, 2005, p. 108).

Such an approach is a manifestation, without exaggeration, of an existential sense of freedom, a protest against the destructive effect of “external pressure” on the individual. This feeling is realized by philosophy, which, as “wisdom”, directs the whole circle of its affairs to the result that gives life to our spirit, nobility to the heart, luminosity to thoughts (as the “head” of everything). Philosophy activates thought, which “is in continuous excitement day and night. It reflects, advises, defines, enslaves” (Skovoroda, 1994a, p. 156).

The problem of the “heart” in opposition to the “mind” as a new line of humanism was raised by the French thinker Blaise Pascal in the modern era. According to him, the truth is known not only by the mind, but also by the heart. It is with the heart that a person cognizes the initial concepts, and the mind (not involved in this) tries in vain to refute them. But if for Pascal the world appears chaos and terrifying infinity, the philosophical system of H. Skovoroda integrates man and the world. In philosophical terms, this means creating a holistic philosophy that combines ethics, ontology, philosophical wisdom and moral behavior. Thanks to this, such a position allowed the thinker to practically, using his own life experience, to test and formulate theoretical positions, to vitalize the truth for himself and for people “spiritual”, “wise” (Kremen, 2012, p. 20). “For a wise man, any shore, any city, any land and any house will become a paradise” (Skovoroda, 1994b, p. 298).

For Hryhorii Skovoroda, the “heart” is a statement of a new approach to understanding man, the meaning of his being and purpose in the world. This position as an existential reflection was revived by the German thinker M. Heidegger, continuing the efforts of his teacher E. Husserl in the polemic against the supporters of the objectivist-rationalist methodology. As the basis of his philosophy, he adopts the phenomenological method, proclaiming “inten-
tional” (aimed at the subjectivity of the world) not “pure consciousness”, but human existence itself – “existence”. Thus, M. Heidegger overcomes the “dualism” of the subjective-objective situation “not in a rationalistic, but in an irrationalistic way” (Bychko & Bychko, 1997, pp. 21–22). Transforming the subject, he interprets the human being, “existence” as being. Such being, in contrast to the “objectivist” – “closed”, existing, “real” – being turns out to be “open”, “incomplete”, “possible” (Bychko & Bychko, 1997, p. 22).

The Ukrainian philosopher does not delve into such “subtleties” of the analysis of real existence, its “existentiality”, “intentionality”, etc. But he is characterized by an “internal” understanding of the falsity of the very position of rationalism in its search for the meaning of life and happiness, which leads to “forgetting oneself”, to the “incomprehensibility” of the truth of the world and other people, to the departure from one’s uniqueness. After all, according to H. Skovoroda, “oneness” with being is achieved through the “heart”, that is, “inner” visions, which is the basis for overcoming the “dualism” of the subjective-objective situation. In other words, by his speech against the enlightenment rationalism, H. Skovoroda seems to preempt the systematic criticism of the “objectivist-positivist” (I. Bychko) methodology, developed by E. Husserl, M. Heidegger.

Deeply educated H. Skovoroda was familiar with the trends of rationalistic-utopian programs of the Enlightenment and idealistic objectivism. He realized that the natural scientific method cannot reveal the secrets of the spirit, because it ignores the “I”, self-experience. For the Ukrainian philosopher, the reality of the “spirit” as a far-fetched real appendage to the body, it's unreal space-time existence in nature is a false position, which is generated, as E. Husserl noted, “by the naivety of the objectivist sciences, which consider the universe of all things to be what they call the objective world” (Husserl, 1996, p. 89). Due to this, the purely “objective” was removed from the scientific subject, and the active subject itself was forgotten. Because of this, H. Skovoroda is interested not in the rationality of methods and theories, not in the future harmony of man and society, but in a specific person. In this regard, the Ukrainian thinker focuses on the “inner” world of man. To leave the “Copernican spheres”, to escape from the power of “mental” (rational-reasoning) thinking and to find the courage to “seek the truth in oneself” – that is what worries the philosopher. Therefore, his “philosophy of the heart” did not fit into rationalistic ideas about the harmony of man and society, was considered a paradox and absurdity.

In this context, we note that the “philosophy of the heart”, which is related to the theory of “akin” work, is aimed at the individual, at the personality. That is, only thanks to his “inner” world (heart) a person can be himself, and this is the anti-rationalistic individualism of the philosophical concept of the Ukrainian thinker, which is essentially a position of human centrism.

H. Skovoroda’s search through the “heart” of the peculiarities of human existence led him to the “inner” world of man, which is part of the triune world. Skovoroda’s world is not a “rationalistic universe”, but triune, and consists of a macrocosm (nature), a microcosm (man) and a special symbolic world (the Bible). But most importantly, each of these worlds includes two natures – “visible” (sensual) and “invisible” (spiritual). The “invisible” nature of the microcosm is the inner, spiritual man, the “heart”. And it is the same as the soul, which, in turn, is the “thought abyss”. “What is thought if not the root, family and seed of all our flesh, blood, skin and other appearance?” (Skovoroda, 1994a, p. 351). Thus, the heart is not just a spirit, an abyss of thoughts, but a person, a true person. That is, man is interpreted as a specific spiritual-heart type. Hence – the main cognitive instruction of Skovoroda – “know thyself”. That is, know your “inner”, spiritual essence – the Divine Man in yourself (Bychko & Bychko, 2003, p. 68).

The Ukrainian philosopher is sure that the human path runs from the earthly, carnal to the
heavenly, divine. The ideal is Jesus Christ, who in the Holy Scriptures outlines the ways to get rid of “carnality”, indicating that man can also become God. In other words, it became clear to the philosopher that apart from infinity in the past tense and in the unknown supra-universal space, the human soul remained the refuge, the place of God. Nothing can make a thinking and feeling being doubt its subjective presence. But the same inexorable logic “drove” the soul deeper and deeper into the mystical microcosm of the human personality. This mystical microcosm became the “heart”, which as an “organ” of religious perception should be different from the soul, mind, spirit, from consciousness in general. It is deeper and, so to speak, more central than the psychological level of consciousness. The heart is the center not only of the conscious but also of the unconscious, not only of the soul but also of the spirit, not only of the spirit but also of the body, not only of the conceivable but also of the unreachable: in a word, it is the absolute center (Kremen, 2007, p. 334).

The human-centric tendency of H. Skovoroda is the most characteristic part of his mysticism: it reveals the doctrine of the “inner man”, the “heart”, the “abyss and the explosion”, the divine in human nature. The system of moral values – the desire for peace of mind in combination with moral perfection, negation of the “world” with its numerous anomalies as a prerequisite for “deification”, the doctrine of “unequal equality” has a distinct mystical and ascetic color (Kremen, 2007, p. 335).

It should be clearly understood that the presence of the “mystical” in the practical sphere and science is a form of human transcendence, rapprochement with God as an ideal, and not something in general or a separate form of Freemasonry (Kremen, 2007, p. 335). Mysticism is primarily a religious and personal experience that purifies and frees from antinomy, from the struggle of contradictions. It should be noted that the experience of the Divine being in the world is the experience of it as beautiful, as beauty; it (religious experience) is universal, and through it one can understand morality, truth, and beauty. As D. Chyzhevsky notes, “the sphere of religious experience is higher for Skovoroda than philosophy and life. And it determines how philosophy and life choose symbols and images that reveal philosophical ideas” (Chyzhevskyi, 1992, p. 78).

Developing the issue of “religiosity”, we emphasize that for Skovoroda it is an inner concentration, mobilization of spiritual resources, a certain position regarding his own life. “For Skovoroda, in his inherent desire for freedom and happiness, –notes V. Gorsky, – it was essential to realize that the desired goal could be achieved on the way of deepening into oneself, in striving for the innermost, heartfelt depths of one’s own “I”, where a meeting with God awaits as the desired result of the realization of the dream of freedom and happiness” (Horskyi, 2001, p. 132). The path to self-knowledge is the shortest way to God through one’s own heart.

In this context, the understanding of the Ukrainian thinker’s religiosity speaks of the knowledge of his personal originality, his trust or higher, mysterious closeness to God, as well as the groundlessness of any purely objective evidence and regulations in this area. If H. Skovoroda aims to achieve a “second birth” for man, the emergence of a “new Adam”, then this task for him is a specific spiritual and psychological realization, the experience of a spiritually enlightened personality. He understands that if theoretical and philosophical cognition is limited to the realm of rational, intellectual, then mystical experience radically changes the human nature. Taking this into account, the philosophy of Skovoroda’s spiritual heritage is based on the philosophy of more or less distant predecessors (ancient Platonists, medieval philosophers and theologians). She continues the epistemological position of B. Pascal’s epistemological position, in which “only the heart feels God”, and initiates the worldview of modern philosophy, the center of which is a person.
Despite the dominance of an optimistic and rationalistic worldview in the 18th century, which is characterized by atheistic motives, H. Skovoroda has nothing to do with irreligious freethought. On the contrary, his religiosity as the basis of ethical and philosophical position is based on the recognition of the "heart" – the main organ of religious experience. Obviously, for the Ukrainian philosopher it was self-evident that the symbol of the "heart" contains a high religious value (Kremen, 2007, pp. 333–334). It is through the "heart" that Skovoroda seeks to understand the true "Sophia" of the world and its philosophical trinity – goodness, truth and beauty. To know its meaning, Skovoroda considers it necessary to penetrate into the mystery of God. “Isn’t he the whole being? ... He is everything in everything, because the truth is the Lord’s. The Lord, the Spirit and God are one and the same. He alone makes the strange in all things and the new in all things by himself, and his truth abides in all things forever” (Skovoroda, 1994a, p. 162).

The triumphal march of science, which anesthetized the intellectual sphere of European culture, the collision of the Christian ideal, humanistic and ethical sphere with rationalistic optimism (which led to the "splitting" of human souls), forced H. Skovoroda to take the path of painful experiences for man. Obviously, that is why he appeals to God, seeks to find him in the human soul. It is important that the "Sophianism" of the philosopher’s worldview stems from the concept of the "symbolic world", which goes far beyond the Bible. Spirituality, expressed in the Holy Scriptures in a symbolic form, is inherent in all spiritual culture. Skovoroda’s understanding of the unity of the spiritual foundations of the entire culture of mankind follows organically from his doctrine of man as a spiritual being who has God and the “kingdom of God” in himself.

Bringing together the Bible and spiritual culture, in particular the culture of antiquity, H. Skovoroda seeks to identify them as a symbolic form of expression of the essential content. This gives grounds to conclude that by the “symbolic world” he understands the Bible in the broadest sense, as the whole spiritual culture and thus approaches the comprehension of the symbolic nature of human culture as such in general and man in particular.

Of particular importance is the fact that the range of human determinations for H. Skovoroda is very wide, and this leads him to a moral and humanistic concern – not to be limited in its characterization and definition. Not “corporeality” (i.e. “external” man) defines his essence, but “spirituality”, which he calls "the truth of God". The “true” man is in "divine power, from which “truth”, “truth”, “virtue” arises, and most importantly – he is in “himself”, in his “inner” essence (Kremen, 2012, p. 19–20). “This man makes up everything! He is the one who establishes your fleshly hands and feet. He is the head and strength of your eyes and ears” (Skovoroda, 1994a, p. 163). This person is the presence of God in the shell of the earthly body. It must be known and discovered in oneself. And the knowledge of oneself is the comprehension of God, because “the true man and God are one and the same” (Skovoroda, 1994a, p. 168).

Reflecting on this question, the thinker directs all searches of the true man not to wealth and ranks, not to high "worldly honors, money", “centuries of health”, not to “houses”, “ceremonial tables”, the whole “starry slope”, the Sun, the Moon, “all Copernican worlds” (Skovoroda, 1961, pp. 8–9). All of this, in his opinion, is “paganism”, “decay”, the scribes” rummaging in the “kingdom of the dead”. The philosopher extends the search for the essence of man to the wisdom of the heart, charity, moral and ethical standards. The main thing is that the thinker is looking for a man not outside the man, but in him, in his inner essence. The inner nature of man "makes us from wild and ugly monsters, or freaks, into human beings, that is, beasts, suitable for the commonwealth and the aforementioned cohabitation, not malicious, restrained, generous and just” (Skovoroda, 1961, pp. 18–19). The inner spiritual nature seems to be “out-
wardly unassuming and disdainful”, but it is “respectable and beautiful” (Skovoroda, 1961, p. 19). The spiritual essence of man is expressed by the philosopher in different names: “image of God”, “glory”, “light”, “resurrection”, “life”, “path”, “truth”, “world”, “destiny”, “truth”, etc. And in Christ himself he saw not the son of God, but the “son of man”, the true man, and the true man is his spiritual essence (Kremen, 2012, p. 20).

“Faith in Christ with the heart, as religious faith, is an act of “volitional intelligent human spirit, which in its activity strives to cognize the divine secrets – the secrets of the spiritual world,” notes H. Vasyanovych, “These acts of divine-human creative and volitional activity elevate a person (as a personality) to the supernatural order of being, help to enter this being” (Vasianovych, 2022, p. 67). That is why such acts of union of faith are the beginning of human faith consciousness, the beginning of comprehension of Truth, Good, Beauty. And without them, human life loses its meaning and value.

For Hryhoriy Skovoroda, God is “not a figurative substance, but a being identical with nature, and his action is an amazing natural order established in that nature,” notes V. Shevchuk. “Therefore, heaven and hell are not settled in space or on earth, but in every human being, where there is an eternal competition; therefore, peace of mind is the victory of heaven over confusion (hell), and the movement to God is the desire of people to build a harmonious society, so God does not exist outside of man, but in him, as in all living things” (Shevchuk, 2008, pp. 12–13).

On the example of his life, H. Skovoroda offers a sample, a variant of human existence. After all, the philosopher not only writes about the perishability and insignificance of everything “external” as opposed to the creative and spiritual “internal”, but also frees himself in his being from all the attributes of secular life, with its cult of wealth, “bastard gold coin”, idleness and spiritual weakness. It should be noted that the diversity of Skovoroda’s life biography did not prevent him from forming a holistic biography of the “soul” (biography of the “soul”) (Kremen, 2012, p. 20).

The position of the Ukrainian philosopher “fell out” of the framework of the rationalist methodology of that time. H. Skovoroda in metaphorical phrases and expressions shows that the specificity of man as a unique being in the world is not in his “positive” (sensually perceived) characteristics, such as, for example, “body” (from the point of view of “bodily”, anatomical and physiological, all people are “built” the same, “consist” of the same organs). A human individual, a personality differs from all other people by its inner, spiritual world, which is fundamentally not “grasped” by any (even the most attentive) objective “observation”, even if “armed” with the latest means of modern technology. After all, the “inner world” of the human personality is, firstly, its individual life experience, memory, that is, its past – something that no longer exists; secondly, the “inner world” includes desires, ideas, projects, plans, dreams, etc., that is, the future – something that does not yet exist (Kremen, 2012, p. 21).

With his philosophy, H. Skovoroda was ahead of his time and knew well that a person must go through the evolution of self-knowledge in order to achieve the highest spirituality. Therefore, reflecting on the essence of man, the thinker refers not so much to the mind, charity, moral and ethical norms, but primarily to the “heart” (Kremen, 2012, p. 21). If considering the “macrocosm”, H. Skovoroda identifies God and nature, then studying the “microcosm”, he identifies God with man: “...True man is also God” (Skovoroda, 1961, p. 47). But for him the inner “divine” essence of man is not something supernatural, but quite natural, earthly, human: “The true man is the heart and the man” (Skovoroda, 1961, p. 49).

Deep penetration into the depths of human nature, into the “soul” and “heart” allows H. Skovoroda, contrary to the popular radicalism of the French rationalist enlighteners of the
18th century, not to make revolutionary democratic generalizations of the essence of social relations. He is a philosopher, so he does not protest against the existing order, but constantly seeks happiness for man. Even at the beginning of his creative activity, the thinker laid the foundations of his theory of happiness, arguing that God “made the necessary easy and the difficult unnecessary”, and therefore the most necessary thing for a person is happiness. Often emphasizing that happiness is “the kingdom of God”, H. Skovoroda at the same time points out that it is “inside us” and does not depend on place and time, it must be sought in the soul, heart and love (Kremen, 2012, p. 22). “Happiness is in the heart, the heart is in love, and love is in the eternal law. It is continuous bad weather and the sun that does not set, illuminating the darkness of the heart abyss” (Skovoroda, 1994a, p. 140).

These thoughts characterize H. Skovoroda’s understanding of universal alienation, which leads to the spiritual and moral devastation of man, the loss of his “I”. He saw well that the accumulation of knowledge and material wealth does not mean anything – it does not save a person, but, on the contrary, accelerates the destructive process and its disintegration. Philosophy in this situation becomes a technique. Obviously, the concern about the fate of “true wisdom”, the rejection of the transformation of philosophy into a “technique” makes H. Skovoroda attach decisive importance to the “heart”, analyzing its depth from all sides. In this context, he distinguishes two natures in man – “slave” and “noble”. It is the latter that is characterized by “self-knowledge”, “charity”, and happiness should be sought not in other countries, not in other times, not in other places, not outside oneself, but in oneself, in one’s thoughts and one’s “heart” (Kremen, 2012, p. 22).

H. Skovoroda’s appeal to the “voice of the heart” is the beginning of the formation of his human-centrism in the field of national soil, which is an alternative to the rationalistic-objectivist method in defending the fundamental importance, primacy of individual-personal and culturally multivoiced uniqueness of human existence. Based on these positions, the thinker emphasizes the need for a person to understand his place in the world, his purpose. He must find in his life what is universal and what gives his life meaning. The loss of a person’s self is not in caring for “bodily” needs, but in their oversaturation, in forgetting moral needs. Therefore, an essential feature of the Ukrainian philosopher’s human centrism is “measure”, “gratitude”. To have a sense of proportion means to be content with little. If envy is the source of all passions and illegal acts, then the sense of proportion is the source of a reasonable and honest way of life, it “is the hardness and health of the heart” (Skovoroda, 1961, p. 409; Kremen, 2012, pp. 22–23).

Along with this, the essential aspect of the views of the Ukrainian thinker is the definition of the system of values. A review of the range of H. Skovoroda’s views shows that his general axiological considerations “are based on a phenomenological approach to values” (Kulchytskyi, 1995, p. 135). But values can be manifested only in those people who “act as persons”, are characterized by the absolute force of obligation, are distinguished by “totality” and “universality”.

The human-centricity of H. Skovoroda’s reasoning can be “summed up” under the differentiated system of ethical values proposed by O. Kulchytsky: basic values (respect, righteousness, love); values related to the “I” (loyalty to oneself, sincerity, chastity); values related to the social environment (justice, charity (H. Skovoroda talks about it a lot); values related to the world and reality (courage, heroism, patience) (Kulchytskyi, 1995, p. 135). In unity, they embrace love for oneself, for others and characterize the unity of a person with the world and social reality.

Affirming “truth”, “charity”, truth, “friendship”, “humility”, “spiritual chastity”, calling “to be human”, “to shun evil”, to seek solitude, to love “poverty”, H. Skovoroda thus offers his own version of a worthy human existence. Its specificity is determined by Ukrainian mental-
ity, "Ukrainian soul". Inseparable from the suffering of his enslaved people, the philosopher dreams of a spiritual man who is guided in his activity by high impulses, free from oppression, who has "eagle wings", "deer essence", "courage of a lion" (Skovoroda, 1961, p. 418). The "new man", the thinker believed, is not in some other realm, but is contained in our "flesh". It only needs to be freed from the shackles of physical and spiritual slavery. The Bible leads to this "new man"; it is a "bridge" and a "ladder". But it is not about the "outside" of the Bible, although its symbols hide the truth, but more about the "heart" of man: "...the heart is the true God" (Skovoroda, 1961, p. 430; Kremen, 2012, p. 23).

The problem of "activity" of the heart goes through all the considerations of H. Skovoroda, through all parts of his philosophical system. In particular, the philosopher believes that one of the main tasks of education is the development of human intellectual abilities. To do this, it is necessary to educate memory, because "memory is the heart’s eye, the sun that does not set and enlightens the universe" (Skovoroda, 1961, p. 525). At the same time, the object of education should also be the "heart" of a person. If the education of intellectual abilities is addressed to the mind, the education of moral qualities is mediated by the "heart" (Kremen, 2012, p. 24).

The concept of "heart" stems from H. Skovoroda’s understanding of the world as an intense dialogue of man with Being. To unravel the essence of everything, the meaning of the inexhaustible, boundless world is too cosmic task. But it is possible to unravel the meaning of the world not in general, but for man. He is considered as the center of the world, the knowledge of the essence of the cosmic world coincides with the knowledge of man himself. What does not belong to man will always be ghostly for him, like the voice of the Echo. A person can penetrate into the hidden essence of things only by knowing himself well. That is, to do what the great Socrates constantly emphasized in his time. But in order to realize this aspiration, it is necessary to "wake up" your "heart". It is necessary to proceed from your "inner", "deep", which is an "invisible essence", but eternal, always alive. The one that does not disappear in the creative existence of man (Kremen, 2012, p. 24).

CONCLUSIONS

The philosophy of "existence of the heart" of H. Skovoroda is a great foresight of the coming of the philosophy of human centrisms, which appeals to the transitive values, seeks to approach the comprehension of the boundary foundations of being. The mystery of man undoubtedly belongs to the circle of eternal problems. The solution of its mystery is outlined in the instructions of the Ukrainian thinker: hear yourself; understand yourself firmly; enter your chamber; return to your home; recognize the second person in yourself (Shevchuk, 2008, p. 443). This means that "love of wisdom" is inextricably linked with "knowledge of oneself" – the main credo of Hryhorii Skovoroda. This is evidenced by the high level of his philosophical reflection on man, which today enhances the importance of the philosophy of human-centrism in all spheres of social, cultural, political and public life.

REFERENCES


