

## DMYTRO CHYZHEVSKY AND THE TRADITION OF UKRAINIAN “CORDOLOGY”

*My decision to address this subject is prompted by two circumstances: on the one hand, the fact of the triumphant establishment in our philosophical (and not only philosophical) literature of the concept of “Ukrainian cordocentrism,” whose sources go back to the work of Dmytro Chyzhevsky, and, on the other, the realization that perhaps the very first characteristic of philosophical thinking is a critical attitude toward stereotypes of all kinds and adherence to those elementary demands of rationality beyond whose bounds the work of the philosopher and, a fortiori, the historian of philosophy, loses its purpose.*

I shall begin with the first point. Those who follow the development of historical and philosophical work in post-Soviet Ukrainian studies need no extended account of the particular place assumed by the so-called “philosophy of the heart” in textbooks, scholarly articles, monographs, and academic dissertations on the history of Ukrainian philosophy. It may be said without exaggeration that the number of publications devoted directly to Ukrainian cordocentrism or its representatives now defies all enumeration. Considering only the most recent years, the most notable achievements in the sphere of Ukrainian “knowledge of the heart” include the anthology *Sakralnaia pedagogika serdtsa Pamfila Iurkevicha* (Pamfil Yurkevych’s Sacral Pedagogy of the Heart, 2000), published in Luhansk by Valerii Ilchenko; the textbook *P. D. Iurkevich i ego filozofia ‘serdtsa’* (Pamfil Yurkevych and His Philosophy “of the Heart,” 2001), published by the Dnipropetrovsk author Liudmyla Kostriukova; and Yaroslav Hnatiuk’s dissertation “Ukrainskyi kordotsentryzm: istoryko-filosofskyi analiz” (Ukrainian Cordocentrism: A Historical and Philosophical Analysis), defended in 2005 at the Ivan Franko National University of Lviv. Not only keeping pace with “cordological” research publications but even occasionally outdoing them in rhetorical competition are the authors of current Ukrainian philosophy texts. In the textbook *Liudyna i svit* (Man and His World; Kyiv, 1999), for example, prepared by specialists at the Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, one may learn of the “cordoanthemism” of Ukrainian philosophy, which is claimed to be the Ukrainian people’s “original system” and “original method” of philosophizing.<sup>1</sup>

Given the considerable number of publications devoted to the subject of “Ukrainian cordocentrism” over the last fifteen years, it is quite natural to

expect a thorough analysis of it, or at least a clear definition of the concepts of “Ukrainian cordocentrism” and “philosophy of the heart.” Unfortunately, most Ukrainian “cordologists,” making free with these concepts, consider them so self-evident and axiomatic that they show no concern for constituting their meaning. As for the insignificant number of scholars in this field who do, after all, make an effort to reflect on these concepts, in reading their work we sometimes encounter such oddities that it is embarrassing even to speak of them in a professional context. How, for example, is one to take seriously an explanation of Ukrainian cordocentrism as a “theory of the identity of human and spiritual reality”?<sup>2</sup>

It is telling that scholars of both categories draw inspiration (and quite often the content of their articles) from one and the same source—Dmytro Chyzhevsky’s *Outlines of the History of Philosophy in Ukraine*. They try to outdo one another only in the intensity of their apologetic and reverential attitude toward the views of this eminent Slavist, whose suppositions (hypothetical by his own account) about a Ukrainian national type and its manifestation in the philosophical works of a number of figures, set forth in the *Outlines*, have taken on almost dogmatic status in post-Soviet Ukrainian studies.

What, then, is the essence of Chyzhevsky’s view, from which present-day Ukrainian “cordology” has drawn such inspiration? Convinced of the existence of national “styles” of philosophizing<sup>3</sup> and of the presence of a direct link with the “nontransient” elements of the national culture in whose depths it had originated, Chyzhevsky affirms that a description of the historical development of any philosophy must

<sup>1</sup> See *Liudyna i svit*, ed. L. V. Hubersky (Kyiv: Ukrainskyi tsentr dukhovnoi kultury, 1999), 501.

<sup>2</sup> Ia. S. Hnatiuk, *Ukrainskyi kordotsentryzm: istoryko-filosofskyi analiz*, abstract of dissertation for the degree of candidate of philosophical sciences (Lviv, 2005), 1.

<sup>3</sup> Dmytro Chyzhevsky, *Narysy z istorii filozofii na Ukraini* (Kyiv: Orii, 1992), 10.

begin with “an outline of the national foundations on which that philosophy develops.”<sup>4</sup> He regards those foundations as a “national world view,” which he defines as “the nationally determined outlook of a given people on the world and on life.”<sup>5</sup> Distinguishing historically determined elements of a “national world view” from elements “determined by a nation’s particular psychic makeup,”<sup>6</sup> Chyzhevsky pays particular attention to the latter, and even though he is well aware of the complexity involved in establishing a psychological profile of any national type,<sup>7</sup> he ventures to define a number of characteristics of the “Ukrainian psychic makeup” that find expression in the national world view, to wit, emotionalism and sentimentalism, sensitivity and lyricism, individualism and striving for freedom, restlessness and liveliness (these characteristics are “more psychic than external”).<sup>8</sup> Chyzhevsky discerns the philosophical correlative of the “emotionalism” characteristic of the Ukrainian national world view in “the high valuation of the life of the emotions,” which is conceived as “a way of knowledge.”<sup>9</sup> Thus the emotionalism of the national world view, transferred to the sphere of philosophy, becomes a “philosophy of the heart,” which, as Chyzhevsky affirms, “is characteristic of Ukrainian thought.” To substantiate this thesis, he appeals to notions of the “heart” as the deepest subconscious wellspring of the human psyche and to the recognition of the human being as a “microcosm.” In this connection he mentions the names of Kyrylo Stavrovetsky-Tranquillon, Hryhorii Skovoroda, Mykola Hohol, Panteleimon Kulish, and Pamfil Yurkevych, whom we are obviously meant to honor as exponents of the “philosophy of the heart.” In his lecture on “Ukrainian Philosophy” included in the well-known anthology *Ukrainska kultura* (Ukrainian Culture), Chyzhevsky adds the names of Paisii Velychkovsky and Semen Hamaliia to this list but offers no additional explanation concerning the essence of the “philosophy of the heart” and repeats the corresponding passage of the *Outlines*,<sup>10</sup> written ten years earlier, almost verbatim.

Thus, if we summarize what Chyzhevsky wrote about the “philosophy of the heart,” it amounts to the

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> “In every nation,” we read in the *Outlines*, “there are always a variety of psychological types of people; there are certain variegated social types; there are, finally, local variations that we may call tribal. All such variations greatly complicate a people’s national face, making its characterization an extraordinarily complex task” (18).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 21-22.

<sup>10</sup> See Dmytro Chyzhevsky, “Ukrainska filosofiiia” in *Ukrainska kultura: Lektsii*, ed. Dmytro Antonovych (Kyiv: Lybid, 1993), 187.

affirmation of that philosophy as a characteristic feature of Ukrainian thought (a subject of which Chyzhevsky, a rather eloquent thinker, managed to dispose in a few sentences) and the illustration of that thesis with a selection of quotations that disclose the meaning of the “heart” as a concept in the writings of Skovoroda, Kulish, and Yurkevych but unfortunately cast no light on the concept of the “philosophy of the heart” itself. Gathering together all that Chyzhevsky wrote about the concept of the “heart,” we cannot scrape up even ten pages’ worth, but even that has proved quite enough to stimulate a tradition of Ukrainian “cordology” to whose creation a number of diaspora historians of Ukrainian philosophy have contributed, joined subsequently by post-Soviet colleagues. Chyzhevsky’s imitators very quickly lost sight of his cautions about the hypothetical nature of his characterizations of the Ukrainian national world view, which he himself considered “very general.” “Without a great deal of elaboration,” wrote Chyzhevsky, “they can hardly be considered a basis for a ‘characterology’ of the Ukrainian people.”<sup>11</sup> In order to create the myth of Ukrainian cordocentrism as an “original” philosophy, however, it proved quite enough to invoke the confidence with which the younger Chyzhevsky wrote of Skovoroda, Hohol or Yurkevych as “typical representatives of the Ukrainian national character”<sup>12</sup> and, consequently, of national philosophy, as well as the equals sign that, in effect, the *Outlines* placed between Ukrainian national philosophy and the Ukrainian national world view. Breaking down all boundaries between philosophy and the “national world view” and appealing to the “Ukrainian soul,” “Ukrainian spirituality,” and “the Ukrainian people’s sense of the world,” the present-day “cordologists” find the sources of philosophical cordocentrism in folk customs, folklore, traditional Ukrainian hospitality,<sup>13</sup> or even in the embroidery of shirts covering the chest, whose function was to protect the “heart” from corruption.<sup>14</sup> However strange it may seem, the conviction that Ukrainian cordocentrism may be “characterized as a teaching about the dominance, firstly, of irrational community (the population of a village or farmstead) over rational association (an urban population) and, secondly, spiritual experience (mystical encounters; leaps of intuition) over logical and discursive thinking”<sup>15</sup> does not prevent some scholars from discerning a “historical type

<sup>11</sup> Chyzhevsky, *Narysy*, 18.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>13</sup> See Stepan Iarmus, “Pamfil Danylovych Iurkevych (1826-1847) ta ioho filosofska spadshchyna,” in P. D. Iurkevych, *Tvory* (Winnipeg: Tovarystvo Volyn, 1979), 28.

<sup>14</sup> See L. O. Kostriukova, *P. D. Iurkevich i ego filosofiiia “serdtsa”* (Dnipropetrovsk: V-vo Dnipropetrovskoho universytetu, 2001), 15.

<sup>15</sup> Hnatiuk, *Ukrainskyi kordotsentryzm*, 1.

and paradigm of philosophizing”<sup>16</sup> in that selfsame Ukrainian cordocentrism.

Understandably, the present-day “cordologists” have had to make serious exertions in order to substantiate the latter thesis. Highly symptomatic in this regard are Yaroslav Hnatiuk’s complaints about the lack of a source base or the fragmentary nature of the “text of Ukrainian cordocentrism” (“As far as form is concerned, one may encounter treatises, letters, and poems; as for content, one finds thoughts presented in a disorderly, chaotic manner”) and about the complications involved in establishing “where exactly one finds original, independent Ukrainian philosophy and where one encounters literal or fairly free paraphrase of biblical subjects and works of the holy fathers.”<sup>17</sup> But complications do not daunt those bold scholars who aspire, in the words of the same Yaroslav Hnatiuk, to complete the “unfinished philosophical project” of Ukrainian cordocentric philosophy or, in actual fact, to invent what never existed. This is the aspiration that gives rise to the myth of a continuous Ukrainian cordocentric tradition in which Yurkevych is proclaimed the “spiritual son of Hryhorii Skovoroda”;<sup>18</sup> it shapes the “sacral pedagogy of the heart” that endows the pedagogue with powers rivaling those of the Almighty;<sup>19</sup> finally, it is the source of the “varieties of Ukrainian cordocentrism”—creative, actional, and introspective.<sup>20</sup> The latest oddity brought forth by Ukrainian “cordology” is, in our view, a production in the finest traditions of pseu-

doscholarly literature and is distinguished by extraordinary artificiality and pointlessness. Even if one leaves it to the author’s conscience to deal with passages about “biological personality,”<sup>21</sup> the proclamation of Ukrainian cordocentrism as a factor in the religious and philosophical renaissance in Russian culture of the Silver Age,<sup>22</sup> and the identification of the gospels of Luke, Matthew, and Mark as the “religious precursors” of Pamfil Yurkevych, while Aristotle, Adam Smith, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Madame de Stael<sup>23</sup> figure as his philosophical forerunners, what is one to make of a typology of Ukrainian cordocentrism derived by juggling the concepts of the “spiritual heart,” feelings, “affect,” and will in a variety of combinations, followed by the construction, for example, of “affective,” “voluntarist,” “affective-voluntarist,” and “voluntarist- emotive” varieties of cordocentrism, while one and the same thinker turns out to be an exponent of two different types of cordocentrism: for example, Skovoroda is a bearer of creative (philosophical and theosophical) and introspective (voluntarist) cordocentrism, while Yurkevych’s creative (philosophical) cordocentrism is reconciled with his actional (affective) cordocentrism?

The obstinacy with which the myth of “Ukrainian cordocentric philosophy” continues to be propagated today is particularly surprising, given the existence of well-founded reservations both with regard to the appropriateness of singling out “some particular” tradition of cordocentric philosophy on Ukrainian soil and about the “Ukrainian” origins of the very idea of cordocentrism—assertions encountered in current historical and philosophical literature. In this connection, let us recall particularly the conclusion drawn by Taras Zakydalsky on the basis of a comparative analysis of the concept of the “heart” in the works of Skovoroda, Yurkevych, Gogol, and Kulish: “Although each of these thinkers used the word ‘heart,’ it played a different role in the thinking of each of them.”<sup>24</sup> In one of his later articles, Zakydalsky expressed himself even more categorically: “The thesis that Ukrainian philosophy is ‘cordocentric’ cannot withstand criticism: first, because the theme of the heart is restricted to just a few thinkers; second, because even among the few thinkers discovered by Chyzhevsky, it is not the principal subject of their reflections; and, finally, because those thinkers do not constitute a philosophical tradition: their teachings about the heart

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>18</sup> The logic employed by those who regard Yurkevych as Skovoroda’s “son in spirit” is quite symptomatic: “it would be strange if...the philosopher Pamfil Yurkevych had not heard of Hryhorii Skovoroda or remained indifferent to him. Anyone incapable of appreciating the greatness of Skovoroda is no philosopher!... It is therefore most probable that there was indeed a time and place when some work of Skovoroda’s or an article about him came into the hands of Pamfil Yurkevych, arousing his acute interest, and he went on to read all the ‘Skovorodiana’ of his day!” (V. [NAME] Bilodid, “Filosofia ‘liudyny utaiemnychenoho sertsia,’” *Ukrainskyi svit*, 2002, nos. 7-12: 25).

<sup>19</sup> It was V. [NAME] Ilchenko who discovered the existence of this current in our country’s nineteenth-century pedagogy and proclaimed Pamfil Yurkevych and Konstantin Ushinsky creators of the “sacral pedagogy of the heart.” Whether those thinkers would rejoice at such a “discovery” may easily be conjectured on the basis of a passage such as the following: “the concept of the **sacral** derives from the Latin *sacri*, *sacer*, *sacrum* (holy, sacred, object of worship, venerable, inviolable, noble, religious rite; endowing people, objects and phenomena with sacred content). It follows from this definition that pedagogues, tutors, and teachers should be bearers of divine, sacred faith, the advanced arts, *scientific knowledge of miracle-working* [emphasis added], and the ability to influence their charges, offering them protection and assistance in the course of their personal development. Creating those blessed conditions is the aim and task of sacral pedagogy” (V. I. Ilchenko, “Vvedenie” in *Sakralnaia pedagogika serdtsa Pamfila Yurkevicha. Khvestomatiiia nauchno-khristianskoi pedagogiki* [Luhansk: LOT, 2000], 37).

<sup>20</sup> Yaroslav Hnatiuk is responsible for this latest invention of Ukrainian “cordology” (cf. his *Ukrainskyi kordotsentryzm*, 7-15).

<sup>21</sup> See Hnatiuk, *Ukrainskyi kordotsentryzm*, 9.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>24</sup> Taras Zakydalsky, “Poniattia sertsia v ukrainskii filosofskii dumtsi,” *Filosofska i sotsiologichna dumka*, 1991, no. 8: 137.

are not mutually related, and each of them approaches the subject from a different perspective and with a different purpose.”<sup>25</sup>

As for the thesis of the “Ukrainianness” of the idea of cordocentrism, its refutation does not even require a textual comparison of Pamfil Yurkevych’s well-known article on “The Heart and Its Significance in the Spiritual Life of Humanity According to the Teachings of the Word of God” (1860) with the article on “The System of Biblical Psychology” (1855), no less well known in its day, by the German theologian Franz Delitzsch, as proposed by Roland Pietsch.<sup>26</sup> Many such comparisons (entailing the establishment of textual coincidences) may be made not only with Protestant but also Catholic theological literature with reference to biblical teachings about the heart and commentary on that subject grounded in the works of the church fathers. In this connection, finally, it is worth attending to the affirmation with which Yurkevych begins his article on “The Heart”: “Whoever reads the word of God with due attention can easily note that *in all the sacred books and all authors inspired by God* [emphasis added] the human heart is regarded as the center of all human bodily and spiritual life; as the most important organ and the most proximate location of all human powers, functions, movements, desires, feelings, and thoughts, with all their directions and gradations.”<sup>27</sup> For confirmation of the rightness of Yurkevych’s words, one need only look into the Bible, where the concept of the “heart” is to be encountered at almost every turn, as well as at the patristic texts, in which its significance as a key concept of Christian anthropology and teachings about the knowledge of God is perfectly obvious. Moreover, the significance of the concept of the “heart” is not limited to the Christian tradition, and here once cannot help agreeing with Boris Vysheslavtsev, who stressed its “central place in the mysticism, religion, and poetry of all peoples.”<sup>28</sup> Is it love of truth, then, that gives rise to the desire of the apologists of “Ukrainian cordocentrism” to present the “philosophy of the heart” as grounded in “the most characteristic particularities of Ukrainian national psychology and world view”?<sup>29</sup>

The search for an answer to this question inevitably brings us back to Chyzhevsky and his model of “Ukrainian philosophy” rooted in the “Ukrainian national world view” and, more precisely, in the “Ukrainian psychological makeup.” The nonviability of this model later became apparent to the philosopher himself, who, judging by his later works, distanced himself from the ethnopsychological approach and “impressionistic characterizations” based on “study of the soul.”<sup>30</sup> Perhaps this metamorphosis was not uninfluenced by those of Chyzhevsky’s scholarly contemporaries who came to the conclusion that there is no such thing as national character; that it is no more than a myth and an illusion.<sup>31</sup> It is also worth considering that Chyzhevsky’s retreat from ethnopsychologism took place after the Second World War, which revealed the content and logic of the development of any “national idea” better than any theoretician and showed what evils may be perpetrated “in the name of the people.” Finally, the tenuousness of the link established between philosophy and ethnopsychology in Chyzhevsky’s early works could not fail to become apparent to him in the course of his intensive historical and philosophical studies of the 1930s and 1940s. A heightened “emotionalism,” unwillingness to engage in self-reflection, and the absence of speculative interest in the level of universal characteristics of the Ukrainian mentality are themselves sufficient to negate the possibility of a Ukrainian philosophy: after all, one of the constitutive features of philosophical thinking is *rationality* (not to be confused with rationalism or scientism), or, to cite the words of Vladimir Soloviev, “the unconditionally independent and self-assured activity of human reason.”<sup>32</sup> This logical contradiction inherent in the model of Ukrainian national philosophy as it took shape in Chyzhevsky’s early writings is particularly apparent in the works of his successors, who asserted the tremendous dominance of the “element of feeling and emotion over the intellectual, rational factor”<sup>33</sup> in the Ukrainian mentality, discerning in it a “feature of our national supremacy”<sup>34</sup> and maintaining that Ukraine was characterized by a “high

<sup>25</sup> Taras Zakydalsky, “Doslidy v diaspori nad istorieiu vkrainskoi filosofii,” *Filosofska i sotsiologichna dumka*, 1993, no. 4: 95.

<sup>26</sup> See Roland Pietsch, *Beiträge zur Entwicklung der Philosophie bei den Ostslawen im 19. Jahrhundert—Pamfil D. Jurkevych (1826-1874)* (Ulm: Humboldt-Studienzentrum Universität, 1992), 81-98.

<sup>27</sup> P. D. Iurkevych, “Sertse ta ioho znachennia u dukhovnomu zhytti liudyny, zhidno z uchenniam slova Bozhoho,” in his *Vybrane* (Kyiv: Abrys, 1993), 73.

<sup>28</sup> B. P. Vysheslavtsev, “Vechnoe v russkoi filosofii,” in his *Etika preobrazhennogo Erosa* (Moscow: Respublika, 1994), 271.

<sup>29</sup> *Rozvytok filosofskoi dumky v Ukraini* (Lviv), no. 1 (1991), 91.

<sup>30</sup> See especially Dmytro Chyzhevsky, “S. L. Frank iak istoryk filosofii i literatury,” *Filosofska i sotsiologichna dumka*, 1990, no. 11: 33-45.

<sup>31</sup> See, e.g., Hamilton Fyfe, *The Illusion of National Character* (London: Watts, 1940).

<sup>32</sup> V. S. Solovev, “Natsionalnyi vopros v Rossii,” vyp. 1, in his *Sochineniia*, 2 vols. (Moscow: Pravda, 1989), 1: 348.

<sup>33</sup> Ivan Mirchuk, “Istoriia ukrainskoi kultury,” in Viktor Petrov, Dmytro Chyzhevsky, and Mykola Hlobenko, *Ukrainska literatura*; Ivan Mirchuk, *Istoriia ukrainskoi kultury* (Munich and Lviv: Ukrainisches Technisch-Wirtschaftliches Institut, 1994), 300.

<sup>34</sup> Ievhen Onatsky, “Ukrainska emotsiiniist,” in *Ukrainska dusha* (Kyiv: Feniks, 1992), 39.

level of philosophical creativity among the broad masses of the people.”<sup>35</sup>

Unfortunately, the present-day “cordologists” are by no means preoccupied with such “trivia” as the logically contradictory and illusory nature of the Ukrainian cordocentric philosophy that they never tire of affirming and propagating. They care only about what is “exalted”: after all, in their imagination, Ukrainian cordocentrism as a “historical type and paradigm of philosophizing” functions as a “traditional symbol of the national self-awareness of the historical Ukrainian movement, secures its national identity, and promotes the consolidation of the Ukrainian nation.”<sup>36</sup>

But somehow the path being marked out by those who have set themselves to the task of completing “Ukrainian cordocentric philosophy” strikes

one as less than attractive. There is room for doubt about the great future of a world view that speaks through the lips of our “cordologists,” proclaiming “the movement of feelings,” “the spiritual heart penetrated by affect,” “will,” and “emotion”—in a word, everything but reason—as the wellspring of morality and ethical action. “Reason,” we are now told, “...is the servant of necessity; hence the individual who relies on it knows only lack of freedom and enslavement, and mere rational cognition only multiplies the chains that fetter human beings to existence.”<sup>37</sup> Instead of reason, our “cordologists” propose that we make exclusive use of a “home-grown” product, Ukrainian cordocentrism, which affirms the “dominance of heart over intellect,” and thus the “dominance of freedom over necessity.”<sup>38</sup>

As they say, no comment required.

<sup>35</sup> Mirchuk, “Istoriia ukrainskoi kultury,” 300.

<sup>36</sup> Hnatiuk, *Ukrainskyi kordotsentryzm*, 1.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*