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THE HORSE AS A CHARACTER IN RUSSIAN LITERATURE:  
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF "KHOLSTOMER", "IZUMRUD"  
AND FAREWELL, GUL'SARY!

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## ABSTRACT

In a number of important works in Russian literature one of the central characters is a horse. This animal symbolizes beauty and speed, pride and humility, the virtues of faithfulness and loyalty, and is the personification of submissive suffering. The horse as an image occurs in poetry and prose. By making the horse the principal character authors are able to compare and contrast the animal with their human characters. In order to give the reader the illusion that he is seeing things through the horse's eyes the authors use many different conventional techniques and devices, such as "ostranenie" ("making it strange"), flash-backs, dreams, memory, colour, and the senses.

Tolstoi established a tradition with his story "Kholstomer", the central part of which is seen through the eyes of the horse. Kholstomer is Tolstoi's spokesman. He is more human than horse, and uses his fantastic memory to recount all the events of his long life. He is extremely verbal and expounds his, and Tolstoi's, views on the evils of "property", in particular, ownership of human beings and

## ABSTRACT

animals. The horse is the analog of the serf and we see how the horse's fate depends upon ownership. Tolstoi draws a parallel between the lives and deaths of Kholstomer and the main human character, Serpukhovskoi. In all respects the man falls far short of the horse's level of excellence. "Kholstomer" is an epic of the horse's whole life which is set within the framework of five nights. It is a didactic tale in which the horse preaches, emphasized by the use of the first person.

Kuprin's "Izumrud" is a short story and is concentrated mainly on one dramatic event, a race, in the horse's short life. There is no message, only a mild criticism of people's insatiable greed. Kuprin, like Tolstoi, gives the reader the illusion that he is seeing events through the horse's eyes. Kuprin was a naturalist and a keen observer of animals and people in all walks of life. He writes knowledgeably about racing and about his equine hero, the racehorse Izumrud. The influence of Tolstoi is clearly seen, beginning with the dedication to Kholstomer.

Aitmatov's Farewell, Gul'sary! can be considered the third in a sequence of stories in which a horse is a principal character. This too is an epic of the horse's

ABSTRACT

life but with the addition of Kirghiz folk-lore. The story is framed within the space of one night - the night Gul'sary dies. A parallel is drawn between the horse and his master, Tanabai. Both experience good times and bad, together and apart, and are re-united in old age. Aitmatov, like Tolstoi and Kuprin, endeavours to make the reader think that he is seeing things through the horse's eyes, and like them, is successful in achieving this end. Gul'sary does not preach. His story and that of Tanabai are told in the third person and together with these there is an added message. Aitmatov exposes the injustice, dishonesty and bureaucratic bungling in the kolkhoz as they affect both animals and men.

The conclusion reached is that there is a genre in these three stories. They form a set and follow one another in sequence, separated in time by many years. The influence of Tolstoi, who established the tradition with "Kholstomer", can be clearly seen in "Izumrud" and Farewell, Gul'sary!

## FOREWORD

Quotations from Tolstoi are from his Sobranie sochinenii [Collected Works], M., 1960, hereafter referred to as Tolstoi. Quotations from Kuprin are from his Sobranie sochinenii [Collected Works], M., 1970, hereafter referred to as Kuprin. Literaturnoe nasledstvo, M., 1961, will hereafter be referred to as LN.

Translations of the quotations from "Kholstomer", "Izumrud" and Farewell, Gul'sary! are by Bernard G. Guerny, Stepan Aresafan, and John French respectively. In certain cases the translation has been modified slightly for greater accuracy. Translations of the quotations from the 1961 unpublished version of "Kholstomer", Tolstoi's diaries, and other individual quotations, for which there are no translations available, are my own. In cases where the Russian text is judged important for the discussion, it is inserted in square brackets.

The transliteration system used is the one approved by the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Page references in the Notes at the end of each chapter refer to the Russian texts. (See Bibliography).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
I	THE HORSE AS A LITERARY CHARACTER	1
II	KHOLSTOMER - STORY OF A HORSE	10
III	IZUMRUD	38
IV	FAREWELL, GUL'SARY!	49
	CONCLUSION	68
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	76

## CHAPTER I

### THE HORSE AS A LITERARY CHARACTER

Animals have been characters in world literature since the earliest times and the fable was a popular genre. Aesop was famed in antiquity as a teller of short animal fables which he used metaphorically to illustrate a point. These fables are known universally to this day. In the seventeenth century Jean de la Fontaine's fables appeared. All manner of animals were presented and were representatives of human types and the author points up the similarities between human and animal nature. In Russia in the nineteenth century I. S. Krylov wrote his fables in which he used animals of every kind and endowed them with human characteristics - common sense, industriousness, a desire for justice and so on, as well as other less admirable traits.

In the nineteenth century the realist writer Anna Sewell wrote Black Beauty (1877), the autobiography of a horse. As the difference in the psychology of an animal

## THE HORSE AS A LITERARY CHARACTER

and a man presents a problem, authors must imagine how an animal feels and sees things and often use anthropomorphization when ascribing a role to an animal. This is seen in the aforementioned Black Beauty and also in Rudyard Kipling's "The Maltese Cat", the short story of an exciting polo match as told by one of the ponies, which appeared in the author's The Day's Work (1898). Dogs have also been featured as characters in literature. Rudyard Kipling's Thy Servant A Dog (1930) is an example of this. In Russian literature one of the best known stories in which a dog plays a leading role is A. P. Chekhov's "Kashtanka" (1892). The Soviet writer M. M. Prishvin in his Nature's Calendar [Kalendar' prirody] (1932) writes about his hunting dogs and in particular about one especially good dog, Anchar, who is accidentally shot by a hunting companion. Prishvin points up the weakness in the character of the man who refuses to acknowledge responsibility for the deed. I. P. Kazakov in his story "Arktur, the Hunting Dog" [Arktur, gonchii pes] (1959) tells of a dog, who although blind from birth nevertheless triumphs over his misfortunes.

Stories have been written about many kinds of animals but this study focuses on the treatment of the horse as a character. Horses have been a part of people's lives the

## THE HORSE AS A LITERARY CHARACTER

world over and especially in Russia where they have always played an important role - not only in the military and sporting field and as a means of transport, but most importantly, as the main factor in the peasant economy. It is therefore not surprising that horses have appeared in the works of many of Russia's greatest writers. Horses can be found in the early Chronicles, folk tales and fables, and writers have continued to use them as characters and images in prose and poetry up to the present day. Some writers chose to make the horse the principal character and have combined their knowledge of this animal with their literary craftsmanship to illustrate and emphasize human character and behaviour and to express their own views on a variety of subjects. In the works of other writers horses play minor but supporting roles, but once again they throw light on the actions of the people surrounding them. They symbolize beauty and speed, the virtues of faithfulness and loyalty, discipline and obedience, pride and humility, and are a personification of submissive suffering. At the beginning of the 1840's the horse theme, and in particular biographies of horses, became one of the most popular themes of that epoch. In this tradition was "An Adventure of a Piebald

## THE HORSE AS A LITERARY CHARACTER

Gelding" [Pokhozhdeniia pegogo merina] (185-), a story conceived by M. A. Stakhovich about a famous Orlov trotter who ran 200 sagues in 30 seconds at the beginning of the 1800's in Moscow. This story was never written because of Stakhovich's death in 1858.<sup>1</sup> The idea of this story was passed on to Lev Tolstoi a year or so later. In the 1840's I. S. Turgenev wrote a series of physiological sketches, one of which was about horse racing on the Neva in the winter and entitled "A Race on the Neva" [Beg na Neve]. In 1848 "Lebedian", the story of a horse sale at a country fair, appeared in his A Sportsman's Sketches [Zapiski okhotnika]. Horses in F. M. Dostoevskii's works function as a metaphor for the human condition. In Crime and Punishment [Prestuplenie i nakazanie] (1866) the night before he murders the old woman, Raskolnikov has a terrifying dream about the brutal beating to death of a defenceless little mare. The little horse functions as the metaphor for the equally defenceless old pawnbroker. Later, in The Brothers Karamazov [Brat'ia Karamazovy] (1879-1880), the episode of the little mare is repeated by Ivan to Alyosha in order to emphasize the cruelty of man, especially to children. It also points up the affinity between animals and children. In

### THE HORSE AS A LITERARY CHARACTER

A. P. Chekhov's "Melancholy" [Toska] (1886), the old cab driver tells his troubles to his horse, the only one with time to listen. In the 20th century in A. I. Solzhenitsyn's "An Incident at Krechetovka Station" [Sluchaĭ na stantsii Krechetovka] (1963) the writer draws a parallel between men and horses in wartime and emphasizes the futility for both. In F. A. Abramov's short story "What the horses are crying about" [O chem plachut loshadi] (1973) he emphasizes the changed lot of horses in the kolkhoz from the time when they were an honoured member of the peasant family. He shows that when the State takes over both men and animals suffer.

Horses have also been used as characters and symbols in Russian verse. In A. S. Pushkin's "The Lay of Wise Oleg" [Pesn' o veshchem Olege] (1822), the faithful steed is unwittingly the instrument of Oleg's death. Pushkin revives an old myth from The Primary Chronicle [Povest' vremennykh let]. In his poem "The Horse" [Kon'] (1834), the horse is the premonitor of a battle and changes soon<sup>2</sup> to come. N. A. Nekrasov in his poem "Before Twilight" [Do sumerek] (1859) describes the unmerciful beating of a peasant's horse and its submissive suffering, and the peasant's feeling of being able to do whatever he likes with his own property. This

## THE HORSE AS A LITERARY CHARACTER

episode, as we have seen, appears in Raskolnikov's dream and in Ivan's conversation with Alyosha, although it is taken a step further in the little mare's death. The question of the right of property foreshadows one of the main themes of "Kholstomer". Later, in the 20th century, a new theme appears in S. A. Esenin's "Sorokoust" (1920). The fear is expressed that the mechanization of the city will overcome the beauty and serenity of the village. This unequal struggle is symbolized by the image of a little foal trying to overtake a train.

The purpose of this thesis is to make a comparison of L. N. Tolstoi's "Kholstomer" (1885), A. I. Kuprin's "Izumrud" (1907) and Chingiz Aitmatov's Farewell, Gul'sary! [Proshchai, Gul'sary!] (1966), three of the best known and important works in Russian literature in which a horse plays a leading role, i.e. where the horse is a character on an equal footing with the human characters. Since "Kholstomer" initiated the tradition, both the initial version and the final version which Tolstoi published are analyzed in detail and the differences examined.

The study will examine the role of the horse as a literary character in these works, the similarities and

## THE HORSE AS A LITERARY CHARACTER

differences in the narrative techniques, the set of motifs (man-horse relationship, the race, gelding and the death of the horse). The devices and techniques examined include flash-backs, framing, "ostranenie" and first and third person narration.

In my research I found that little has been written by Western critics about these stories and not a great deal more by Soviet critics. (See annotated bibliography). First, L. N. Tolstoi's "Kholstomer". Basically it is the story of the famous Orlov trotter of that name who was renowned in Russia for his enormous stride and speed. On May 31st, 1856, Tolstoi wrote in his diary: "I would like to write a story about a horse".<sup>2</sup> The thought which prompted the entry in his diary may have been occasioned by a visit to Turgenev's estate where he and Turgenev saw an old broken-down gelding standing in a field, and Tolstoi began to describe what he imagined were the thoughts and feelings of the horse at that very moment.<sup>3</sup> This was the beginning of the idea which later was combined with another incident - a conversation with A. A. Stakhovich, the brother of the writer M. A. Stakhovich and a friend of Tolstoi's and owner of a large stud farm. According to B. M. Eikhenbaum, A. A.

THE HORSE AS A LITERARY CHARACTER

Stakhovich recalls: "In 1859 or 1860 I went by post-chaise from Moscow to IAsnaia Poliana with Lev Nikolaevich. Along the way I recounted the plot of the story "An Adventure of a Piebald Gelding", which my late brother was not able to finish writing. It seemed to me that my story aroused the Count's curiosity".<sup>4</sup>

In 1861 Tolstoi began to write the first version under the title "Khlystomer". In 1863 he abandoned the work and did not return to it until 1885 when he revised and augmented the original manuscript. In this thesis the intention is to examine the first and final versions of "Kholstomer".

Twenty two years later, in 1907, A. I. Kuprin wrote "Izumrud". Kuprin regarded Tolstoi very highly and prefaced this story with the words: "Dedicated to the memory of Kholstomer, the incomparable piebald trotter". According to the writer N. D. Teleshov, Izumrud's death by poisoning is based on something which is supposed to have actually happened to a racehorse by the name of Rassvet, who was considered to be unbeatable. The newspapers hinted that he had met his untimely death at the hands of a rival horse breeder.<sup>5</sup>

## THE HORSE AS A LITERARY CHARACTER

Then in 1966 Farewell, Gul'sary! [Proshchai, Gul'sary!] appeared, written by the Soviet writer Chingiz Aitmatov from Kirghizia. This subject may have been suggested by the fact that Aitmatov, in addition to being a writer, is a veterinarian and livestock specialist. A horse and a man in traditional Kirghiz life are one unit. They are inseparable and necessary to one another, and this story bears this out. Prior to this Aitmatov's stories had all been written in his native Kirghiz language. Farewell, Gul'sary! is the first to be written originally in Russian. Although this did not meet with the approval of his fellow Kirghiz writers, it made his work available to a much greater reading public. It is important also because it returns to a theme which had been neglected in Soviet literature. The theme of man, animals and nature had been overshadowed by the themes of men and technology or the ever popular theme of the Great Patriotic War.

All three stories have a racehorse as the principal character, although in the case of Farewell, Gul'sary! the horse shares the main role with his master Tanabai. A race plays an important part in all of the stories, but the outcome in each receives a different treatment. The youth of

## THE HORSE AS A LITERARY CHARACTER

the three horses is depicted as happy and carefree but their deaths are quite dissimilar. Kholstomer - resigned at the end to whatever Fate has in store for him, Izumrud - bewildered and lonely, finally dies an agonizing death by poisoning, and Gul'sary - dying a natural death at the end of a long life of hard work but comforted by the presence of his friend and master.

These stories can be considered as a "set". Tolstoi established a tradition with "Kholstomer" and the influence of this work can be seen in "Izumrud" and Farewell, Gul'sary! Both Kuprin and Aitmatov, however, give the theme their own individual treatment.

## CHAPTER I - NOTES

- 1 B. M. Eikhenbaum, Lev Tolstoi, Munchen, W. Fink, 1968, p. 154.
- 2 Tolstoi, XIX, 165.
- 3 Ibid., p. 501.
- 4 Eikhenbaum, p. 155.
- 5 Kuprin, IV, 495.

## CHAPTER II

### KHOLSTOMER - STORY OF A HORSE

In 1861 L. N. Tolstoi began to write the first version of the story whose original title was "Khlystomer" with a sub-title "An essay in the fantastic genre of 1861" [Opyt fantasticheskogo roda 1861 goda]. It appears that the result did not satisfy him, since two years later, on March 3rd, 1863, he wrote in his diary: "The gelding story isn't turning out right - it sounds wrong. And I don't know how to change it.... In "The Gelding" nothing works except for the scene with the whipped coachman and the race." <sup>1</sup> In May of that same year he wrote to A. A. Fet: "Now I am writing the story of a piebald gelding and think that I will publish it in the autumn." <sup>2</sup> This would indicate that he felt that he was making progress. Also in 1863 he sent a copy of his story to V. A. Sollogub and received a rather negative response. He advised Tolstoi not to use the term "gelding" [merin] as it was considered unpleasant. He considered also that references to "sucklings" [sosunchiki],

## KHOLSTOMER

"gelding" [kholoshchenie] and particularly "breeding" [sluchka] were more suited to reading material of owners of stud farms than readers, especially female readers, of literature. He did, however, approve of the structure of the story and offered the following advice: "Call the article by the name of the gelding and don't call it a tale but a fable. This term will be new in prose." <sup>3</sup> Tolstoi took the first part of this advice but called his work a story [istoriia] and not a fable.

Tolstoi had hoped to publish his story in the autumn of 1863 but as noted in the first chapter this was not the case. He was experiencing great difficulty with his writing at this time, as indicated by another entry in his diary on June 18th, 1863: "Again for the third time I am sitting down to write. It is terrible, awful, senseless to connect your happiness with material things - a wife, children, health and wealth. The fool in Christ [Iŭrodivyi] is right. You may have a wife, children, health and so on but that is not the point. Lord, have mercy and help me." <sup>4</sup> In this entry we have an insight into the inner conflict which Tolstoi was beginning to experience. He lost interest in the work and gave up any idea of publishing it.

## KHOLSTOMER

He did not return to his manuscript for 22 years, when he made numerous revisions and additions, and it was finally published in 1885. At this time Tolstoi dedicated his story to M. A. Stakhovich, the originator of the idea. However, only the basic parts of Stakhovich's plan were retained - the birth and early days of the piebald horse, Muzhik I, at the Khrenovo stud farm, the gelding, the horse's later days with the hussar and his final days as the horse of Nester the drover. The title of the final version was changed to "Kholstomer" on the advice of the son of A. A. Stakhovich: "... the name Kholstomer was given to a horse with a sweeping stride - he, as it were, measured cloth [kholsty meriaet].<sup>5</sup> Therefore there are available to us two versions of the story, and in this chapter both will be examined and the similarities and differences noted.

In structure the first and final versions are basically similar, but the final version is considerably longer. The first part - the setting of the stage - is a lively scene in the stable yard in the early morning which introduces the main character, the horse Kholstomer, already old and decrepit, and the other supporting players, human and equine. This is followed by the events of a typical day.

## KHOlstOMER

Few changes were made in the first part. The central part is the life story of the horse as told by himself. In the first version the narration covers two evenings and in the last version five nights. In this section the reader meets the other main character, Serpukhovskoi. He is the person who has the greatest influence on the horse's life, and there are many differences in Tolstoi's treatment of him in the two versions. The final part, which describes Serpukhovskoi's visit to the stud farm owned by his friend and his meeting with Kholstomer, as in the case of Kholstomer's story, was revised and greatly enlarged. The end describing the deaths of the horse and the man was completely re-written.

The text of the first version of "Kholstomer" differs significantly from that of the final version. Twenty two years had elapsed between the two and in that time Tolstoi had changed radically. In the first version his accusing finger and his social criticism are not so obvious. These were to become characteristic of his later works.

For example, in the first version Tolstoi, through Kholstomer, comments on the strangeness and the unnatural behaviour of people who like to call things and even people and animals their own. "There are people who call other

## KHOLSTOMER

people theirs although the latter are stronger, healthier and more carefree than the owners." <sup>6</sup> In the final version this was changed to: "There are people who call other people theirs although have never set eyes on the other people, and their sole relation to those other people consists of doing them evil." <sup>7</sup> Further, "And men do not strive in life to do that which they consider good, but toward calling as many things as possible theirs." <sup>8</sup> This had appeared earlier as: "And men are happy by and large when they obtain the exclusive right to call something theirs." <sup>9</sup>

In the first version written in 1861 Tolstoi criticizes the system of possessing individuals, namely, the owning of serfs. In the second he exposes the unlawful "right" of ownership, whereby the owners have the right to exploit others whom they never or rarely see and to treat these individuals inhumanely. In both versions Tolstoi points up the injustice of such a system but he is much more emphatic in the second. The emancipation of the serfs took place in the 1860's and therefore in the 1861 version it is clear that Tolstoi is writing about the owning of serfs. In the 1885 version we must assume that he is writing about having servants in general, in other words, employing people to do what Tolstoi

## KHOLSTOMER

considers a person is perfectly capable of doing for himself. Kholstomer, as the spokesman and victim of ownership, symbolizes the way some people possess others and is the analog of the serf (hence his name: Muzhik = serf). In his narrative we see how a horse's, or human's, fate depends upon ownership.

Tolstoi made changes in the attitude of the horses who surround Kholstomer when he begins to relate his story. In both versions Kholstomer has up to this time been treated cruelly on account of his age and infirmities. "The horses crowded around him, snorting and breathing, as though they had seen something new and unusual in him."<sup>10</sup> This becomes in the final version: "The horses stood around him without stirring and in profound silence, as though they had learned something new from him, something out of the ordinary."<sup>11</sup> In the latter Tolstoi endows the horses with more serious humanoid thinking capabilities; in the former the horses behave in a more horse-like manner, snorting, breathing and milling around. Tolstoi also emphasizes the difference between the attitude of horses and people towards Kholstomer's colouring - namely, his being a piebald. "My piebaldness proved very much to the liking of all [the horses]."<sup>12</sup>

## KHOSTOMER

This became in the final version: "My piebaldness, which men disliked so, proved very much to the liking of all the horses." <sup>13</sup> This attitude of human beings adds to the horse's confusion. Discrimination on account of his natural colouring is incomprehensible to Khostomer.

Most of the changes and additions were made in the second and third parts of the story. After Khostomer becomes the property of the head groom, little is made in the early version of the episode where Khostomer beats the Count's horse Lebed' in a spur of the moment race. The race over, Khostomer simply states "they sold me to a horse dealer". In the final version Tolstoi enlarges on this event and describes the race in detail and the general reaction to the outcome. Khostomer's fate after this is also portrayed in more detailed form.

In the final chapters of the published version it can be clearly seen that Tolstoi's attitude towards Serpukhovskoi and the young couple at the stud farm had changed greatly. In the earlier version the reader does not get the impression that Tolstoi disapproved of the young, reckless and devil may care Serpukhovskoi, who lived according to the maxim "whoever is happy is right" - a sentiment expressed by

## KHOSTOMER

Tolstoi in his diary on March 3rd, 1863. Serpukhovskoi's love affairs and his passion for racing - even the fact that he ruined Khostomer - are not censured and his physical deterioration is not emphasized until the final version, when the adjective "bloated" [obriuzgshii] is constantly used. The handsome hussar has become the "tall [vysokii], stout [tolsty], bloated [obriuzgshii] military man". His face is no longer "kind" [dobroe] but "bloated" [obriuzgshee]. This corresponds to an increased emphasis on the physiology of animals and people in the later version. People are meat too. A contrast is pointed up in the descriptions of Khostomer's meal of natural food and the meal of unusual delicacies served in the manor house. "Meat" is emphasized again in the deaths of Khostomer and Serpukhovskoi - the first being put to good use and the second being of no use to anyone.

When Tolstoi first wrote the story the meeting of Khostomer and Serpukhovskoi, after many years, was a bitter-sweet affair. They both recognize each other. The host is showing off his well-bred horses and much to his astonishment Serpukhovskoi appears to be only interested in the drover's old piebald gelding, whose bony head Serpukhovskoi is patting.

## KHOSTOMER

Khlystomer recognizes his master and "tried to neigh, something he had not done for a long time. 'You see, he recognized me! We have both grown old, Khlystomer, old boy!' the guest said sadly, slapping the horse's croup with his large hand....." 14

This passage is completely changed in the final version. The new Serpukhovskoi does not recognize his old friend in the worn-out old horse ridden by the drover, but Khostomer remembers him. "...the guest slapped the croup of the piebald with his big puffy hand. 'There's a painted fellow' said he. 'I had just such a piebald - remember, I was telling you about him?' ..... Suddenly, over his very ear, he heard a stifled, weak, senile neighing. It was the piebald who had sent up this neigh, then paused, and, as though becoming ashamed, cut it short. Neither the guest nor the host paid any attention to this neigh and went on to the house. Khostomer had recognized in the bloated old man his beloved master, Serpukhovskoi, the erstwhile brilliant Croesus and Adonis." 15

This is a brilliant stroke by Tolstoi. It is unexpected and surprises the reader. In addition, it heightens the contrast between the horse and the man - the one loyal and constant in his feelings, the other an example of human

## KHOLSTOMER

inconstancy, superficiality and egoism. Tolstoi allows Kholstomer when neighing to act in a manner more horse-like than human but he still cannot resist adding "as though becoming ashamed" which is a purely human reaction, but in keeping with Kholstomer's human-equine character in this story.

When comparing the two versions we note changes in the second of the more general observations and Tolstoi's acceptance of things as they are when he is describing the young owner of the stud farm and his mistress and their surroundings. For example, initially, after describing the host as a handsome young dandy and sportsman with a moustache with mouse-tail tips in the Parisian fashion who likes the good life, and his mistress, a pretty woman wearing too much jewellery, albeit fine, he added: "... but the point is that the people about whom I am talking were so obviously happy, kind from good fortune that, looking at them, the heart rejoiced, despite the fact that the husband had a small French beard with tails and his mistress had many unnecessary and inferior brilliants." 16

If we compare this with the 1885 version, we find that the above is left out entirely. The description of the

## KHOLSTOMER

host remains basically the same but some new critical additions have been introduced. He is now one of those who "toss expensive [dorogie] bouquets to actresses, drink the most expensive wines ... in the most expensive hotels, give prizes in their name and keep the most expensive mistress." 17

In matters of dress, on the husband's watch chain were "lovely charms" [chudnye breloki], later changed to "large expensive charms" [krupnye dorogie breloki]. The hostess' jewels are no longer "fine" [prekrasnye], merely "expensive" [dorogie]. Tolstoi used repetition very frequently to drive home a point.

The description of the furnishings of the manor house does not differ greatly, and in both versions Tolstoi describes sumptuousness and plenty and an absence of intellectual interests. In the first, however, there were the additions of "there were no books" [knig ne bylo], "there is plenty of money" [nekuda den'gi devat'] and finally "Live and let live" which was written in French. All of these were later left out. The last deletion in particular indicates the change in the course of Tolstoi's thinking. Throughout the whole of the final version his moralistic and less than tolerant outlook can be clearly seen.

## KHOLSTOMER

All of the foregoing is mentioned in order to point up Tolstoi's view of the superficiality of people in their materialistic surroundings as compared with the innocence and honesty of an animal in its natural environment. As Tolstoi wrote in one of his last diaries "One cannot be a good person if one does not live honestly". Thinking along these lines, he deprived his human characters of many of the "good" qualities in the final version which he had allowed them in the original. Again the result is to heighten the contrast between animal and man.

The evening Serpukhovskoi spends with his young host is also enlarged in the 1885 edition. Tolstoi makes no attempt to hide his contempt for both men. Neither is interested in the other's affairs, only in his own. Both barely tolerate each other, waiting only for the opportunity to take the floor and boast about themselves - in Serpukhovskoi's case the past and in the host's the present. Neither makes any effort to hide his boredom. In the whole conversation Kholstomer appears as the only true and noble being. Amongst all of Serpukhovskoi's lies, only his remarks about Kholstomer ring true. "I never had, and you too haven't, and never will have, a horse like that. I never knew a horse better for riding, or for strength or beauty." 18

## KHOLSTOMER

The greatest change however is in the description of the deaths of Khlystomer and Serpukhovskoi. In the first version this comprises only a few sentences. In the case of Khlystomer: "The herd went to the field. Khlystomer remained. A frightful man came and led him away. He killed him. The dogs tore at the flesh, especially the male dog. The horses shied." <sup>19</sup> This is clearly not a final text but rather just preliminary jottings. Serpukhovskoi's impending death is recorded thus: "Several months passed. The host said to his mistress: "Can you imagine, Serpukhovskoi is drinking vodka non-stop and has fallen ill. They say he doesn't have long to live." <sup>20</sup>

Quite different is the final version when Kholstomer's horrible death is described in realistic and physiological detail. In dying as in living he accepts the inevitable with resignation and dignity. He had led a useful life and after his death even his carcass serves a purpose - the flesh feeds a starving she-wolf and her cubs and the dried up bones are put to good use by a peasant months later. Serpukhovskoi's sordid death is also dealt with in detail, but in complete contrast to that of Kholstomer; Serpukhovskoi's body is laid to rest amidst all the trappings and ceremonial. Tolstoi

## KHOLSTOMER

underlines the hypocrisy of it all. The man was of no more use dead than he had been alive. "Neither his hide, his flesh, nor bones were found to be of any use." <sup>21</sup> Death is the great leveller - all are simply meat and bones.

The English critic John Bayley has written: "... at any time during his writing life [Tolstoy] was liable to take over his characters in the interests of some fixed idea ... But it is easy to forget that Tolstoy is quite capable of choosing exactly the right person to carry his message and illustrate the parable, and when this happens we are hardly more aware of the use which is being made of him than if he seemed an entirely free person." <sup>22</sup>

In the case of the work under study Tolstoy has chosen a horse to be his spokesman. He had a great knowledge of horses and understood their behaviour and habits. As Turgenev remarked: "Lev Nikolaevich, truly you were formerly a horse." <sup>23</sup> Tolstoy writes about Kholstomer and the other horses in the herd, as he would write about human beings, in a very convincing way. "The horses were not in the least frightened and took no offense at the drover's mocking tone; they made believe they were utterly indifferent." and "The piebald gelding ... without stirring,

## KHOLSTOMER

contemplated Nester for a long time. He did not laugh, did not get into a temper, did not frown...." <sup>24</sup>

"Convincing" - in fact because he writes as if about a human - laugh, frown and so on.

The technique of "ostranenie" ("making it strange") is a favourite device of Tolstoi's and is used to great advantage in this story where a horse is the main character. Because the narrator is a horse and therefore an unusual vehicle for expressing opinions, the reader is made more aware of the author's position regarding certain subjects, in this case, ownership and greed. Ewa M. Thompson writes apropos the description of the theatre in "War and Peace": "Shklovskii maintains that the artist makes the 'materials' of art 'look strange'. He achieves this objective by removing things from their customary contexts and putting them into unexpected configurations. In Shklovskii's words, without making the thing look strange we would fail to SEE the theatre stage or the phenomenon of property as Tolstoi felt it." <sup>25</sup> Kholstomer looks at the social customs and institutions of his owner and others with whom he comes in contact with the naive eyes of a horse or a child, who, not understanding what he sees, is perplexed and asks the

## KHOLSTOMER

reason why. Kholstomer in his simplicity is astonished by the inconsistency and hypocrisy of human beings. It is incomprehensible to the horse that one person can own another person or animal - in his opinion, and Tolstoi's, every creature belongs to God alone. By making Kholstomer, and not a person, monologize upon human and equine matters, Tolstoi achieves a much greater impact. This opinion of mankind from the point of view of a horse provides Tolstoi with the opportunity for satire and some well-aimed social criticism. It also sharpens the reader's awareness of the injustice of the situation.

Kholstomer is unable to grasp the significance of the words "his own colt" which imply some connection between himself and the head groom. This connection makes no sense to him even though he knows that because of it the head groom has the right to horse-whip another groom. To Kholstomer, a living, breathing horse, to say "my horse" is as strange as to say "my land" or "my air". The phrase "a living, breathing horse" was added in the final version and emphasizes the unnaturalness of the word "my" in connection with a living creature. He finally reaches the conclusion that men play a game among themselves to see who

## KHOLSTOMER

can apply the word "my" to the greatest number of things. The result is equated with happiness. In Kholstomer's eyes, men are guided in life not by deeds but by words, and therefore horses are superior to men in that their activity in life is guided by horse sense. As Kholstomer is extremely eloquent and verbal, it must be assumed that he is speaking for other horses. As noted earlier, the second version is more emphatic than the first. After his conversion Tolstoi published in 1886 "What Then Must We Do?" [Tak chto zhe nam delat'?), a work which had engaged his mind for quite a number of years. In this work he discusses at length property, which to him represented the exploitation by some of the labour of others and therefore was the root of all evils. The most powerful example of "ostranenie" however is the death of Kholstomer. He does not understand what is happening and observes only the actions of the knacker. The dogs understand. There is "ostranenie" also in the description of Serpukhovskoi's body - skin, meat, bones. This physiological description is estranging, and Tolstoi puts himself on the horse's side.

Tolstoi's power of satire and irony can be seen in Serpukhovskoi's behaviour towards his host's mistress. He

## KHOLSTOMER

uses a polite and friendly tone but lacking the respect he would accord the wife of one who was his equal, with whom he would always be respectful, not because he shared any of the so-called convictions about respect of the individual and the insignificance of marriage but "because all decent people act like that, and he was a decent person, even though a fallen one." <sup>26</sup> Here Tolstoi emphasizes the insincerity of people compared to the honesty of an animal.

Tolstoi makes an ironical reference to the grey-hound bitch with the English name belonging to the owner of the stud farm. The name was unusually hard to pronounce and especially so for the owners who spoke no English. In Tolstoi's opinion the use of such a non-Russian name was obviously an affectation. His point of view reflects that of Kholstomer. To the horse, a dog with a ridiculous foreign name wearing a tinkling silver collar and lying around in a drawing room symbolizes all that is artificial, snobbish and useless. To him, it is degrading that a beautiful natural animal should be so corrupted by association with human beings. Tolstoi's satire against the aristocracy was to become stronger and harsher as his indignation against social injustice grew, climaxing in his novel "Resurrection".

## KHOLSTOMER

One of the literary devices used effectively by Tolstoi is contrast. We find it in the description of the old Kholstomer. "There is an old age which is majestic, there is a vile one, and there is a pitiful old age. There is an old age which is both majestic and vile. The old age of the piebald gelding was precisely of the last sort." <sup>27</sup> Old age, for men and horses, comes in many guises. The following comparison of Kholstomer with the other lively members of the herd can easily apply also to humans and points up mortality. Men, like horses, must die. "He was old, they were young; he was gaunt, they were well fed; he was woebegone, they were gay." <sup>28</sup>

Later when Kholstomer is banished from the stud farm and is being led away from all those who are familiar and dear to him Tolstoi writes: "Before them lay love, honours, freedom; before me - work and humiliation, humiliation and work, to the end of my life!" <sup>29</sup> Here Kholstomer, in true human fashion, asks himself the reason for the injustice of it all. Why? He is a piebald and therefore different. He had to become somebody's horse and because he is the head groom's, not the Count's or the General's, his chief merit, a tremendous stride and great speed, is the cause of his misfortune. This episode was not present in the original version.

## KHOSTOMER

Tolstoi uses contrast to introduce the scene in the manor house and to point up the difference between the situation of Khostomer and the other horses and that of the human characters. "The rain kept on drizzling. It was gloomy in the paddock, but it was quite otherwise in the manor house." <sup>30</sup>

And finally the greatest contrast of all - the contrast between the exemplary life and death of Khostomer and the useless life and death of Serpukhovskoi.

Ronald Hayman writes: "But just as he [Tolstoy] aimed at describing a button left half undone in terms of a character's inner life, his chief interest in landscape is in its correlation with the inner landscape." <sup>31</sup> In "landscape" can also be understood the "elements", and Tolstoi treats Khostomer as he would a human character, upon whose mood the weather often has a great effect. In the first version, on the second evening, Khostomer declines to continue his tale until later. "The weather began to change. It was cloudy from morning on....'You will continue your tale?', they asked. 'I shall', he replied, sighing, 'but at the moment I am sad.'" <sup>32</sup> The first part appears in the final version on the fifth night, but the second part is changed to: "My happy life soon came to an end." <sup>33</sup>

## KHOLSTOMER

Ronald Hayman also writes: "His narrative method works like a super-subtle camera lens which can narrow its focus to a close-up on private feelings and thoughts, then, an instant later, open out to a panorama of the social and political situations."<sup>34</sup> Although the second half of this quotation applies more to Tolstoi's great major works, it can be said that Tolstoi uses his camera lens on Kholstomer. His physical description of Kholstomer gives clear pointers not only to his present unhappy situation and the rough treatment he has suffered at the hands of men, but to his original fine breeding and inner beauty and nobility. "The expression of the face was austerely patient, deeply thoughtful, and betrayed suffering" because as Kholstomer himself says, it is nothing new for him to suffer for the pleasure of others. "The expression of self-confidence and serenity due to a consciousness of beauty and power" indicate his noble character and good breeding.

"Kholstomer" is not only the story of a horse but of a man. As I. A. Bunin remarked: "'Kholstomer' with good reason could have been entitled 'Two Lives and Two Deaths'".<sup>35</sup> Tolstoi contrasts the life and death of the horse and the man to the detriment of the latter. Kholstomer, as the

## KHOLSTOMER

personification of nature and work (i.e. the peasant whom Tolstoi idealized) is shown in death as in life to be majestic and noble. Not without reason was he originally called "Muzhik I". On the other hand, Serpukhovskoi the aristocrat receives harsh treatment from Tolstoi. He is depicted as neither majestic nor noble in life or in death. Tolstoi grants that "he must have been very handsome at one time" but in old age he is described as "reeking of tobacco, wine and filthy senility" and in death "even the putting away of his body in the earth was only an extra hardship for people."

Tolstoi draws attention to man's insensitiveness in his treatment of animals in his description of Serpukhovskoi's wild and futile chase after his mistress.<sup>36</sup> In the heat of emotion Serpukhovskoi has no thought of sparing Kholstomer and thereby wrecks him. Tolstoi also points this out in "Anna Karenina" when Vronskii breaks the back of his mare in a steeplechase. The difference lies in the fact that Serpukhovskoi is unrepentant and Vronskii never forgives himself. Also, Frou Frou's fate would appear to presage that of Anna herself. The symbolic potential of Kholstomer's ruining by Serpukhovskoi is unrealised.

## KHOLSTOMER

Tolstoi's repetition of adjectives appears very often and has a compelling effect on the reader. These can indicate approbation or criticism. In both versions, when describing Kholstomer, the coachman and Serpukhovskoi, he writes: "... and the common folk would hug the wall and stop and crane their necks, looking around at the handsome [krasavets] gelding, the handsome driver, and the handsome master." <sup>37</sup> For once in his life, Kholstomer despite being a piebald and a gelding is treated on an equal footing.

Later Tolstoi emphasizes the luxurious air of the manor house. "A sumptuous [roskoshnyi] evening tea was set on the table in the sumptuous reception room." <sup>38</sup> "In the dining room under a lamp stood a table set with candles and the most unusual [neobyknovennye] delicacies; siphons with tiny dolls for tops, unusual wines in carafes, unusual appetizers and vodka." <sup>39</sup>

Finally, in regard to Serpukhovskoi's dead body: "... they found it necessary to clothe this puffy body, which had immediately begun to putrefy, in a well made [khoroshii] uniform and well made boots, and to lay it away in a new, well made coffin...." <sup>40</sup>

## KHOLSTOMER

These last three passages were added in the 1885 version, as was the constant repetition of the adjectives "expensive" [dorogoi] and "bloated" [obriuzgshii], in order to underline the hypocritical behaviour of human beings and their materialistic approach to life. In the case of Serpukhovskoi, Tolstoi uses satirical detailing to gain this effect. All are in direct contrast to the unspoilt and noble character of the horse.

Nature creates a background for the characters and action at the beginning of the story. Tolstoi uses comparative adjectives effectively to describe the early morning in the stable yard. "Ever higher and higher rose the sky, ever wider spread the dawn glow, the dull silver of the dew turned paler and paler, there was less and less life to the sickle of the moon, the forest was becoming more and more resonant.... one heard more and more frequently equine snorting,..."<sup>41</sup> All of this is an introduction for the main character, Kholstomer, the piebald gelding with the "serious and thoughtful air", and emphasizes the closeness of an animal to nature and the natural life.

The passage of time is noted throughout Kholstomer's tale by references to the celestial bodies, particularly,

## KHOLSTOMER

the moon, which floods the stable yard with bright light as if lighting up the stage on the first night for Kholstomer's performance as an orator. On the third night the moon is new and its slender narrow sickle once again lights up the gaunt and imposing figure of the narrator. Tolstoi ends Kholstomer's tale with a change in the weather which symbolizes Kholstomer's life, which like the weather has changed for the worse.

Kholstomer is depicted in this story as the uncomplaining victim of man's inhumanity, prejudice and cruelty, relieved somewhat by the brief happiness he enjoyed with Serpukhovskoi. Tolstoi endowed his equine hero with many good qualities, qualities which are singularly lacking in his human characters. Tolstoi uses Kholstomer as a yardstick (the English title of the story) against which he measures the character and behaviour of people. In all cases the latter fall far short of the horse's level of excellence. This is a didactic tale, and Tolstoi's anger is directed at man, particularly men of his own class. In portraying his human characters, his disapproval is obvious and there is an implied plea for better treatment for horses.

## KHOLSTOMER

"Kholstomer" is an imaginative and unusual story. It is a classic in Russian literature and has established a tradition, which has been passed on to the other writers whose works are under study.

## CHAPTER II - NOTES

- 1 Tolstoi, XIX, 259-260.
- 2 LN, LXIX, I, 259.
- 3 V. B. Shklovskii, Lev Tolstoi, Moskva, Molodaia gvardiia, 1967, p. 276.
- 4 Tolstoi, XIX, 261.
- 5 LN, LXIX, I, 261.
- 6 Ibid., p. 279.
- 7 Tolstoi, XII, 26.
- 8 Ibid., p. 26.
- 9 LN, LXIX, I, 280.
- 10 Ibid., p. 275.
- 11 Tolstoi, XII, 18.
- 12 LN, LXIX, I, 277.
- 13 Tolstoi, XII, 20.
- 14 LN, LXIX, I, 282.
- 15 Tolstoi, XII, 36.
- 16 LN, LXIX, I, 287.
- 17 Tolstoi, XII, 36.
- 18 Ibid., p. 40.
- 19 LN, LXIX, I, 290.
- 20 Ibid., p. 40.
- 21 Tolstoi, XII, 44.

## CHAPTER II - NOTES

- 22 John Bayley, Tolstoy and the Novel, London, Chatto & Winders, 1966, pp. 91-92.
- 23 Tolstoi, XII, 501.
- 24 Ibid., pp. 7-8.
- 25 Ewa M. Thompson, Russian Formalism and Anglo-American New Criticism, The Hague, Mouton, 1971, pp. 68-69. For further discussion on the use of "ostranenie" by Tolstoi see V. Erlich's Russian Formalism; History - Doctrine, p. 76, pp. 176-177, D. S. Mirsky's A History of Russian Literature, p. 268, V. B. Shklovskii's O teorii prozy, p. 14.
- 26 Tolstoi, XII, 37.
- 27 Ibid., p. 11.
- 28 Ibid., p. 16.
- 29 Ibid., p. 28.
- 30 Ibid., p. 35.
- 31 Ronald Hayman, Tolstoy, New York, Humanities Press, 1970, p. 48.
- 32 LN, LXIX, I, 281.
- 33 Tolstoi, XII, 32.
- 34 Hayman, p. 1.
- 35 Tolstoi, XII, 480.
- 36 Cf. Lermontov's A Hero of our Time in which Pechorin rides his horse to death in his frantic attempt to reach Piatigorsk to see Vera for one last time.
- 37 Tolstoi, XII, 31.
- 38 Ibid., p. 35.
- 39 Ibid., p. 39.
- 40 Ibid., p. 44

## CHAPTER III

### IZUMRUD

A. I. Kuprin wrote many animal stories, but one of the most famous is "Izumrud" - the story of a racehorse which, as noted in the first chapter, is based on an actual incident and is dedicated to Kholstomer, "the incomparable piebald trotter." This dedication invites comparison and it can be seen that Kuprin is setting his work in the tradition established by Tolstoi. But although this work can be considered part of a sequence of stories in which a horse is the main character, Kuprin is not merely a follower of Tolstoi and does have his own point of view. Their treatment of the theme varies and the similarities and differences will be discussed.

"Izumrud" is a much shorter story than "Kholstomer", and while "Kholstomer" is an epic of the horse's whole life, "Izumrud" is concentrated on one dramatic event in the horse's short life. "Kholstomer" is framed within a period of five nights and "Izumrud" is compressed into one day for the main

## IZUMRUD

action of the plot. Kholstomer is old and, although an aristocrat by birth, has become, on account of his piebaldness, a proletarian who works for a living, as his original name "Muzhik I" implies. Izumrud, on the other hand, is a 4 year old stallion and an aristocrat, bred to provide entertainment and gain for humans. His name "Izumrud", meaning "Emerald", is also in keeping with his life-style.

As has been seen, "Kholstomer" is a very didactic tale and Tolstoi sermonizes through the horse. This is not the case in "Izumrud", where Kuprin is content to write a good story and limits himself to only one instance of moralizing, this appearing after the race which is the high point of the story. Kuprin uses the surprising turn of events to point up the fact that the beauty and speed of the horse and the skill of the driver mean nothing to people who feel that they have been cheated. Money is the all important thing and men appear much less noble than horses.

Both Tolstoi and Kuprin want to make the reader think that he is seeing things through the horse's eyes, but use different methods to attain this. Izumrud's story is told in the third person whereas Kholstomer's is in the first person. This is an important distinction. Kholstomer, being Tolstoi's

## IZUMRUD

spokesman, is much more human than horse. He is extremely verbal and expresses his views and tells the story of his life eloquently. He appears to think like a human being and this is emphasized by the use of the first person. Izumrud behaves in a much more horse-like manner. He "perceives" through all his senses, as horses do, and Kuprin uses all five effectively. "Reality" for Izumrud is represented by sensations and images. Kholstomer has a tremendous memory and is able to recall everything that has happened during his lifetime down to the most minute detail, but Izumrud has only occasional flashes of memory. "Meanwhile slow indifferent thoughts drifted through his mind, and swam together as memories of images, smells and sounds before they sank for ever into the black abyss which yawned before and after the present moment." <sup>1</sup> A particularly succulent wisp of hay produces an instinctive, associative memory. "An uncertain far-away memory flitted across his mind." <sup>2</sup> In the days of his incarceration in the unfamiliar stall far from the other horses he occasionally recalls his past - the races, the Englishman and the grooms - but soon even these fade from his memory.

## IZUMRUD

Both Tolstoi and Kuprin use the technique of "flashbacks". In Kholstomer's case the horse uses his astonishing memory to relate his early life. In Izumrud's case Kuprin presents this through a dream. Both horses have a happy foal-hood, but their relationship to their mothers is treated quite differently. Izumrud's mother is represented as a normal broodmare - at times loving and anxious, and the provider of "exquisite, slightly sour milk". To Izumrud she represents security, and he responds to her individual neigh when he wanders off. Kuprin simply depicts the usual uncomplicated mare and foal relationship. Kholstomer's relationship to his mother is much more complex. Tolstoi indulges in much psycho-analysis regarding the bad effects on Kholstomer of the inconstancy of his mother's love, and the mare's behaviour is portrayed in a human and not horse-like manner. Kholstomer and Izumrud enjoy the companionship of other young horses and both are attracted to a young beautiful filly. In Kholstomer's case his infatuation results in his third misfortune - he is gelded. In Izumrud's case, his interest merely arouses the temporary wrath of a jealous stablemate.

Both authors emphasize the bond between a young horse and nature. Izumrud is in his stall: "Just before daybreak

## IZUMRUD

he dreamed of an early morning in spring, the red glow of dawn above the earth, and a fragrant meadow. The grass was so thick and lush, so brightly and fascinatingly green, with a slightly pink tinge of the new daylight, as man and beast see it only when they are very young, and all over it the dew glittered and sparkled. In the light, crisp air, all kinds of smells carried amazingly. Through the morning cool the smoke rising in a blue, transparent curl from a village chimney pricked your nostrils; every flower in the meadow had a scent of its own, and on the rutted damp road beyond the fence, a multitude of smells blended together - of people and tar and horse dung and dust, and fresh milk from passing cows, and the balmy resin from the fir poles of the fence." <sup>3</sup>

In this passage smells, so important to a horse, play an important part, and Kuprin notes the affinity between young animals and children. Only in youth do we see things so clearly, "as they really are". Later our vision is less acute, we lose our awareness of the importance of natural things, and our imaginations are dulled by sophistication. Izumrud, like a child, embodies all that is good in nature. His youth, exuberance, vitality and good looks are in tune

## IZUMRUD


with the natural beauties of his surroundings. "The white fragrant camomile flowers raced away from under his feet... The blue sky, green grass, the golden sun, wonderful air, the heady ecstasy of youth, strength and swift running!"<sup>4</sup> Kuprin portrays the surroundings vividly with his use of colours, white, blue, green, red, pink and gold. As it is a generally accepted fact that horses are colour-blind, it must be assumed that Kuprin by stressing colour is trying to make the reader think that he is actually seeing things through Izumrud's eyes. The use of colour is thus a conventional literary device.

As noted in "Kholstomer", "ostranenie" is the major advantage of the device of using a horse as the main character; and it plays a large part in that story. "Ostranenie" also appears in "Izumrud". The camera which is used after the race to photograph Izumrud, the winner, appears to Izumrud as "a three-legged box covered with a black cloth, and a man in grey ducked under it and got busy doing something," The crowd is "a black straggling mass."<sup>5</sup> The scene which follows and the crowds shouting "It's a counterfeit horse! A fake trotter! It's all a swindle! Give us our money back!"<sup>6</sup> astonish the horse. What was all the

## IZUMRUD

fuss about? He had run well and won. The reason is unclear since we perceive the events through the horse's uncomprehending eyes. The reader must reconstruct what happened for himself. The most obvious reason for the disqualification of the horse is the fact that he became excited and momentarily broke from a trot to a gallop which is against the rules. His driver quickly checks him, but this may have been seen by the stewards or reported to them by some rival horse owner. In view of the fact that the story is based on the poisoning of a racehorse by a rival horse breeder, this latter supposition is a possibility. Maybe Izumrud is a "ringer", in other words a substitute horse, as after the race it is plain that there is doubt about the horse's authenticity. People crowd around rumpling his coat and examining his brand mark. It is possible that something had been done to alter his appearance, as more strangers come later to his stall and examine him thoroughly. In any event, Kuprin gives clues and expects the reader to solve the puzzle for himself.

In "Kholstomer" and "Izumrud" the outcome of a race plays a major role and for both winners is very significant. In Kholstomer's case, it is one more injustice to add to



## IZUMRUD

being a piebald and the head groom's horse. It is the cause of his banishment from the stud farm and the beginning of his chequered career. For Izumrud the outcome is much more tragic. He also is removed from the stud farm but is kept hidden in an unfamiliar stable where he is poisoned shortly after.

The race which is briefly described in "Kholstomer" constitutes the main plot of "Izumrud". On the day of the race Kuprin describes in great detail all the preparations prior to going to the race track. At the course he draws a realistic and lively picture of the beautiful horses and the spectators in the stands. But it is the race itself which plays such an important role in the story, and Kuprin demonstrates his knowledge and appreciation of professional skill by describing every move made by the horse and driver. This is not only interesting but also helpful when trying to reconstruct the cause of the horse's disqualification. Kuprin emphasizes the bond between the horse and the man; the commands are transmitted through the driver's hands and are obeyed immediately by the well-trained and willing horse. Here we have a convincing picture of a horse and a man who are both in top physical condition, but, most importantly, in tune with one another and working in harmony towards one goal - to win the race.

## IZUMRUD

In "Izumrud" hands are mentioned frequently as they are of great importance when riding or driving horses. Horses react to sounds and movements, but most of all they are affected by skilful or clumsy hands. Kuprin uses this sense of touch to characterize the people with whom Izumrud comes in contact. He is able to show that none but the English driver, the other main character in the story, has good hands. "He was altogether like a marvellous horse - wise, strong, fearless. He never got angry, never used his whip or even threatened you with it, and when he was driving the sulky, how exhilarating, how uplifting and wonderfully awesome it was to obey every hint of his strong clever fingers which knew everything. He alone could reduce Izumrud to the happy, harmonious state in which every muscle of his body strained in the swift race, and he felt so light and gay." <sup>7</sup>

Both "Kholstomer" and "Izumrud" end with the death of the horse, and once again the treatment is quite different. Kholstomer is old and his death is horrible, as had been many experiences in his life. His death at the hands of the knacker is the culmination of many terrible events, and he meets this with his usual resignation and stoicism. By

## IZUMRUD

contrast, Izumrud is young and in the prime of life which makes his senseless death by poisoning perhaps even more shocking.

Yellow is a colour which in this story is connected with a feeling of impending doom. Izumrud after the race is filled with terror when he sees the big yellow moon rising behind the fence in the yard. Later in the railway wagon with all its attendant terrifying noises and smells he sees a swinging lantern with a yellow light. Another swinging lantern is in his new stall and it reminds him of the yellow moon with its air of foreboding. This lantern is the last thing he sees before he dies. Izumrud's acute sensual awareness is emphasized in these last few sentences. "The swinging yellow light of the lantern stung his eyes for a moment and went out as his sight failed. His ear caught a rough shout, but he could no longer feel the heel that kicked him in the flank. Then everything was gone - for ever." 8

Whereas Kholstomer is more human than horse and delivers Tolstoi's message, Izumrud is all horse and does not preach. There is no message in "Izumrud". Kuprin was a naturalist. He, like Chekhov, was a keen observer and recorder of the human and animal scene. He does not resolve problems and is content to write a good story.

## CHAPTER III - NOTES

- 1 Kuprin, IV, 437.
- 2 Ibid., p. 438.
- 3 Ibid., pp. 439-440.
- 4 Ibid., p. 440.
- 5 Ibid., p. 449.
- 6 Ibid., p. 449.
- 7 Ibid., p. 438.
- 8 Ibid., p. 451.

## CHAPTER IV

### FAREWELL, GUL'SARY!

Farewell, Gul'sary! was written by the Kirghiz author Chingiz Aitmatov almost sixty years after Kuprin wrote "Izumrud" and eighty years after Tolstoi wrote "Kholstomer". It is clear that Aitmatov is writing with "Kholstomer" in mind, and that this work can be considered as the third in the sequence of stories in which a horse is a principal character. But Aitmatov, like Kuprin, cannot be called simply a follower of Tolstoi as the plot and treatment of Farewell, Gul'sary! are quite different from those of "Kholstomer".

In his childhood Aitmatov assimilated two cultures at once, absorbing Kirghiz traditional folk-lore from his grandmother and Russian language and literature from his mother. These in later life combined with a creative imagination and writing talent, reinforced by his expertise as a veterinarian, enabled him to write a story of the quality of Farewell, Gul'sary!

## FAREWELL, GUL'SARY!

Farewell, Gul'sary! is the story of a horse and a man - the beautiful pacer Gul'sary and the idealistic communist Tanabai - whose lives are inextricably intertwined. It is also the story of one man's struggle against the bureaucratic mismanagement of a collective farm after the war, set against a background of life and work in Kirghizia.

"Kholstomer" is an epic of the horse's whole life. Farewell, Gul'sary! can also be said to be an epic but with Kirghiz folk-lore features. The horse and the man weave a chain out of their combined memories. "A Kirghiz on a horse- it is one life, something whole, inseparable." <sup>1</sup> In both stories the horse functions as a metaphor for man. The framing of the stories differs - "Kholstomer" is set within the period of five nights, Farewell, Gul'sary! within one night. By refining this device Aitmatov accelerates the memory of Gul'sary's and Tanabai's lives. Aitmatov uses an effective technique to bind the story together. The old man and the old horse are making their last journey together, and during one long night time is compressed from the years after the war up to the present, for while Gul'sary is slowly dying Tanabai recalls the events of their two lives.

## FAREWELL, GUL'SARY!

The narrative is punctuated throughout by the passing of the hours during this last night and by the gradually decreasing speed of the journey. In both stories, as in "Izumrud", the authors are attempting to make the reader think that he is seeing things through the horse's eyes.

Gul'sary and Kholstomer, unlike Izumrud, are old horses and have worked all their lives for many different masters. They enjoy happy times with one master, are separated and are later re-united, but here lies a great difference. We have seen that Kholstomer recognizes Serpukhovskoï but Serpukhovskoï does not recognize his old friend. Gul'sary and Tanabai recognize one another, and the horse remains with his master to the end. A difference is also shown in the deaths of the three horses. Kholstomer and Izumrud die lonely and friendless, while Gul'sary dies comforted by Tanabai, his friend and master. The close relationship of the man and the horse is evident in Tanabai's words "I won't desert you" [IA ne broshu tebiâ]. These words gain more emphasis a short time later when Tanabai refuses to abandon Gul'sary on the roadside and to accept a lift from a passing truck driver. His devotion is scoffed at and Aïtmatov points up the fact that in this age of technology machines have taken over from the horse.

## FAREWELL, GUL'SARY!

A difference noted in the comparison of "Kholstomer" and "Izumrud" is repeated in Farewell, Gul'sary! The latter is written in the third person, not the first person. Farewell, Gul'sary!, unlike "Kholstomer", is not a didactic tale with the horse delivering the author's message. Gul'sary, like Izumrud, is much more horse-like than Kholstomer and does not make speeches. There is a message in Farewell, Gul'sary!, however, and Aitmatov points up the weaknesses and injustices of a bureaucratic system as they affect both animals and men. In particular, when Tanabai is sent to the sheep station he is on his own with completely inadequate facilities. There is no shelter for the sheep and in the winter the loss of life among the ewes and lambs is enormous, for which Tanabai is held responsible. No help is forthcoming from the administration which is much too busy furthering its own ends.

Once again the technique of the flash-back is used, and we see through Gul'sary's eyes his happy youth. He, like Kholstomer and Izumrud, had glorious and happy days as a foal, but unlike them, even happier days as a stallion with the herd. Aitmatov, following in the footsteps of Tolstoi and Kuprin, focuses on the relationship between mare and foal, but his treatment of this subject is much closer to Kuprin's.

## FAREWELL, GUL'SARY!

As in the other stories, the horse's bond with nature is emphasized. "As a silly young foal he had raced after the sun across the meadow, across the stream, through the bushes until the stallion of the herd, with his angry lowered ears, had caught up with him and turned him back. In those far-off days it had seemed that the herds were walking upside down in a deep lake, and his mother - the big mare with the heavy mane - seemed to turn into a warm milky cloud." <sup>2</sup> The taste of milk, so important to Izumrud as well, is Gul'sary's whole world - the sun, the earth and his mother.

Aitmatov reverses everything to indicate Gul'sary's growing up. The herd no longer walks upside down, the earth is stony and his mother, before a gentle snorting cloud, becomes a strict disciplinarian.

Memory is a device used by Aitmatov as well as Tolstoi and Kuprin. We have seen that Kholstomer has a phenomenal memory and Izumrud a fitful one. Gul'sary remembers on the last night when he is dying. At first he remembers his days as a foal, the mountains, the meadow, the herds of horses and his mother, the big mare with the mane. A few hours later he recalls the night of the storm

## FAREWELL, GUL'SARY!

when he and Tanabai rode frantically searching for the herd. His last memory is of being fettered and trying desperately to run, even to walk, with the blood running down his legs. All these memories emphasize important events in Gul'sary's life.

Man's mastery over an animal is shown when Gul'sary is broken to the saddle. Both Tanabai and Gul'sary are strong willed but it is inevitable that in the end the horse will have to give in to the master. Aitmatov describes in vivid detail the clash of wills and the subsequent submission of the horse, which is arrived at not without mental and physical pain. How different this is from Kholstomer's own description of his first time in harness. With his more human than horse-like character he explains this most reasonably. "I remember how the first time the head groom himself, who imagined that I belonged to him, began to harness me amid a crowd of grooms, expecting me to be obstreperous or to balk. They tied ropes all over me before backing me in between the shafts; they put a broad cross of leather on my back and tied it to the shafts, so that I might not throw myself back on my croup, whereas all I was waiting for was to show my eagerness and love for work." <sup>3</sup>

## FAREWELL, GUL'SARY!

Typically Kholstomer, he does not miss this opportunity to make a reference to man's "right" of ownership. Izumrud cannot be quoted as he is already a trained horse when the reader meets him.

For Gul'sary and Tanabai the outcome of this struggle is the beginning of a long and lasting friendship. There is understanding in Tanabai's words: "Don't be angry, my friend. You cannot spend your whole life wandering around doing nothing. You'll get used to work, it'll be all right. I know what you suffered but you cannot avoid that. Life, brother, is what puts shoes on your four hooves." <sup>4</sup>

Aitmatov's knowledge of horses and the life and customs in Kirghizia enable him to write very convincingly about the race, which as in "Kholstomer" and "Izumrud" plays an important part in the story. Just as Izumrud understands every wish and command of his English driver, so does Gul'sary respond to every signal given by Tanabai. This, combined with their courage, daring and competitive spirit, brings victory to them. In all three stories the horse wins a race and pays dearly for it. Kholstomer is banished because he belonged to the head groom and beat the Count's horse, Izumrud is banished to a lonely death because he was

## FAREWELL, GUL'SARY!

disqualified after winning the race, and Gul'sary is coveted by the president of the kolkhoz and is taken away from his master Tanabai. "What happens after he is removed provides Aitmatov with an opportunity to underline the loyal devotion of an animal to an understanding human as well as the similarity between Gul'sary and Tanabai.

In "Kholstomer" Tolstoi emphasizes the contrast between Kholstomer and Serpukhovskoi, the one so natural and selfless and the other so sophisticated, superficial and egotistical. In "Izumrud" we see the similarity between Izumrud and the driver. Both are disciplined, physically fit beings completely in tune with one another while accomplishing a task. Aitmatov focuses on the similarity between Gul'sary and Tanabai throughout their lives. Both in their youth are impetuous and impatient, always wanting to go faster; they never outgrow this compulsive feeling. When Tanabai was young, his friend Choro used to say: "Do you want to know, Tanabai, why you never get anywhere? You're too impatient for God's sake, you always have to go faster and faster. You want world revolution at once! Not only the normal pace of revolution, but even the ordinary road, the slope out of Aleksandrovka is too much for you. Every-

## FAREWELL, GUL'SARY!

one else just rides quietly along, but you must jump out.... and race up the hill as if wolves were at your heels. And where does it get you? Nowhere!" <sup>5</sup>

When Gul'sary was young the same urge for speed filled him. "Only one passion gripped him as yet - his passion for running. Leading on his rivals, he raced amongst them like some golden comet. Up the mountain slopes and down again, along the stony bank of the stream, up the steep paths along the hollows, an inexhaustible force drove him untiringly on." <sup>6</sup> Together with this vivid description of Gul'sary's speed we get a picture of the Kirghiz terrain. 7

Another characteristic which Gul'sary and Tanabai have in common is their inability to compromise. When things go wrong at the sheep station and Tanabai is called to account for the enormous losses of the ewes and lambs, he speaks out regardless of the cost, and it costs him dearly. He is branded an enemy of the people and expelled from the Party. Gul'sary, who is taken away from Tanabai by the new president of the kolkhoz, refuses to stay and returns many times to his master even with painful fetters on his legs. He too pays dearly for his independent spirit. He is gelded and his running away days are over.

## FAREWELL, GUL'SARY!

As in "Kholstomer", in which the coachman, the horse and Serpukhovskoi form a handsome trio and provoke the admiration of the crowds, so in Farewell, Gul'sary! there is a similar reaction from the crowd when Gul'sary and Tanabai win the race. "Proudly and impetuously he [Gul'sary] entered the arena with his head high and blazing eyes. Drunk with his triumph, Gul'sary began to dance. He walked sideways and broke into a new step. He knew that he was beautiful, powerful and famous." <sup>7</sup> Tanabai is equally triumphant: "Tanabai rode around the spectators with his hands stretched out as a conqueror and again from all sides there rose the sound of the words of the people's blessing 'O-O-miin' and once more hundreds of hands were raised to foreheads and were lowered over the faces like flowing streams of water." <sup>8</sup> A contrast can be made also with the actions of the unpleasant crowd of furious people who crowd around Izumrud at the end of his race, waving their arms, shouting and demanding their money back.

Aitmatov appears to share Tolstoi's Rousseauistic view of the horse, as Gul'sary is depicted as an example of goodness, a simple creature with naturally good instincts. Tolstoi's anger is directed against his own kind, as

## FAREWELL, GUL'SARY!

compared to animals and peasants. Aitmatov's indignation is directed at the president of the kolkhoz, his underlings and their bureaucratic bungling. He draws a very clear picture of the president, a man who needs something to bolster his ego and to cover up his inadequacies. He takes Gul'sary away from Tanabai in order to show off in front of the workers. To Gul'sary his new master with his perpetual smell of drink (emphasizing, as in "Izumrud", a horse's acute sense of smell) represents everything bad. We can also compare this with Serpukhovskoi's drinking in "Kholstomer" and the description of him as "reeking of wine". When the horse is about to be gelded and is lying tied and helpless on the ground the president approaches and "smiled with open hate and triumph, as if there lay before him not his horse, but his most loathed enemy." <sup>9</sup>

The chapter on Gul'sary's gelding is very well done and is in direct contrast to Kholstomer's gelding which Kholstomer himself describes thus: "I did not understand a thing, but I saw that they had something or other in mind for me ..... The day after that my neighing days were over and done forever." <sup>10</sup> And then Kholstomer describes his very unhorse-like behaviour. He indulges in self-analysis.

## FAREWELL, GUL'SARY!

In Tolstoi's day, as we have seen from Sollogub's letter to him, it was not considered "proper" to discuss this normal horse operation, which is covered by a line of dots, as if a passage had been omitted. In general Tolstoi transposes into the horse's psyche his own sexual complexes. Sex (e.g. between Kholstomer's dam and Dobryi I) is bad, alienating, but gelding is no better.

We have seen in "Kholstomer" and "Izumrud" that a most important device in the depiction of the character of an animal is "ostranenie". This device appears in the gelding scene in Farewell, Gul'sary!. Gul'sary is surprised to see so many people around when he is led out of the stable. One of them is laying out "some shiny metal objects on a white cloth." The sun is shining on them and the glare hurts his eyes. A rope is thrown over his head and his legs are hobbled and he is thrown to the ground. He looks up and the faces of the people appear "so long and drawn out". He stiffens from "the touch of something cold". There is "a terrible pain" and "there seemed to be a bright red flash and then everything went black, quite black...." 11

## FAREWELL, GUL'SARY!

As in "Kholstomer" and "Izumrud", Aĭtmatov introduces a young and beautiful filly, but her part in the story is quite different. She comforts Gul'sary in his misery after being broken to the saddle and he remembers her forever. She functions as a metaphor for the woman his master Tanabai loves.

We have seen in "Kholstomer" man's insensitiveness in the treatment of an animal in the heat of emotion. Aĭtmatov also focuses on this. He describes how Tanabai, enraged at the harsh criticism and impossible demands of a superior, attacks the man with a pitchfork, only to strike the horse the man is riding, in this case Gul'sary. In his blind rage Tanabai cannot stop raining blow after blow on the innocent horse's head. Later, Aĭtmatov demonstrates Gul'sary's forgiving nature and thus his superiority to man.

One of the most striking techniques which both Tolstoi and Aĭtmatov use is repetition. In "Kholstomer" we have seen many examples of adjectives being repeated. Aĭtmatov uses phrases to achieve the same effect and they appear in the chapters devoted to Gul'sary's dying hours. "Old man and old horse" [staryĭ chelovek i staryĭ kon'],

• FAREWELL, GUL'SARY!

"The flames rose and fell with the wind" [Plamîã to padalo, to vstavalo na vetru], "Light, darkness, light, darkness..." [To svetlo, to temno, to svetlo, to temno...]. These phrases appear like a refrain in a song and evoke memories of Gul'sary's and Tanabai's good and bad days. Repetition in "Kholstomer" is not like a refrain but is a realistic narrative device and is used for emphasis. In Farewell, Gul'sary! there is the rhythm of the pacer running through the story which combined with repetition is very effective. "Years, years, years, like the running of a pacer" [Gody, gody, gody, kak beg inokhodtsa], "The pace of a horse, the running of a horse along the steppe road" [Khod koniã, beg koniã po stepnoi doroge] and Gul'sary's heart which beats "tum-tam, tum, tum, tum-tam, tum... as if the herd were running in panic from pursuers, who were hot on their heels." [...budto tabun ubegal v panike ot nastigãvshikh ego presledovatelei]. <sup>12</sup> Here we have a possible echo of a Kirghiz folk epic.

Tolstoi and Kuprin both use celestial bodies in "Kholstomer" and "Izumrud". The moon and sun are used to create effects or to attach significance to events in the lives of the horses. Aitmatov also introduces the sun very

## FAREWELL, GUL'SARY!

frequently in connection with events in Gul'sary's life and ties it in with nature and the horse's natural surroundings. Aitmatov's vivid imagination creates living pictures of the sun in all its many facets. As a foal Gul'sary hears the sun "neighing" [rzhalo] and sees it "jumping over the mountains" [skakalo po goram], and he races after it. Gul'sary thinks of the sun as another horse. When he is growing up the sun "stopped neighing in the sky and jumping over the mountains, it rose sedately in the east and went unerringly round to the west." [Solntse v nebe perestalo rzhata' i skakat' po goram, ono vskhodilo strogo na vostoke i neuklonno shlo na zapad]. In the first, we see an affinity between young animals and children, for whom everything is new and exciting and here is a similarity to Izumrud's youth. In the second passage we see that life, for human beings and animals, becomes humdrum and workaday. In the race when Tanabai is holding Gul'sary back against his will "the sun raced towards him like a ball of fire" [solntse katilos' navstrechu, padaia s neba ognennym sharom]; then as he is urged forward "the sun came more quickly toward him ... shone even brighter in his eyes" [i solntse eshche bystrei pokatilos' navstrechu ... i eshche iarche bryznylo

## FAREWELL, GUL'SARY!

solntse v glaza]. On the day of the game of alaman-baiga the sun was "like an egg yolk, bulging and thick. One could look at it without squinting" [Ono bylo kak zheltok, vypukloe i gustoe. Na nego možno bylo smotret' ne shchurias']; in the chase after the Kazakh on the brown stallion, "it seemed as if at any moment he would fly off into the sun and be consumed in red smoke" [kazalos', eshche nemnogo - i on vletit v eto plameneishchee solntse i rastaet tam krasnym dymom]. The horses, linked together by the single combat of their riders, race on enraged "trying to catch up with the blood-red sun" [toropias' nastignyt' bagrovoe solntse]. Finally, before he is gelded and he is thrown to the ground, "the sun twisted over...." [solntse kuvyrknulos']. Helpless, and at the mercy of these men, Gul'sary realizes that his days of freedom are over. "The sun was still shining and for the last time he saw in his imagination the great steppe, saw how the herds wandered there at liberty" [Solntse vse tak zhe svetilo. I videl on v posledniĭ raz bol'shuiu step', videl, kak brodiat tabuny tam po razdol'iu]. After the gelding, a day of horror for Gul'sary and triumph for his new master, Aitmatov writes: "It was a bright sunny day..." [Stoial svetlyĭ, solnechnyĭ den'..]

## FAREWELL, GUL'SARY!

Life must go on. Aitmatov again points up the memory of the horse and the use of colour which is reminiscent of "Izumrud". As to a horse, being colour-blind, the sun would appear bright or brighter, not yellow or red, the use of colour by Aitmatov is a conventional means of making the reader think that he is seeing everything through the horse's eyes. As horses are normally afraid of fire, the reference to the sun racing towards him "like a ball of fire" emphasizes the excitement of the game in which the horse has become so involved that his natural fears are quelled for the moment. Reference is also made to a horse's fear of fire as Gul'sary lies dying on the roadside. "Gul'sary had always feared a fire burning near him. But now he feared it no more, the warmth and smoke possessed him." 13

Gul'sary's death marks the end of an era for Tanabai, but the horse's death is also the re-birth of the man who is spurred on to carry on alone and to take up again his interrupted work.

Aitmatov endows Gul'sary with all the good qualities, and it can be said that Gul'sary, like Kholstomer and Izumrud, is used as a yardstick by which the author measures the true

## FAREWELL, GUL'SARY!

worth of all the people with whom Gul'sary comes in contact. As in the other stories, the human characters, with the exception of Tanabai, do not rate as highly as the horse. Aitmatov points up the hypocrisy and injustices of a bureaucratic system as it affects animals and men. The idealistic communist, Tanabai, is being trampled on by the self-seeking bureaucrats with their eye on the main chance. The mechanized age is taking over from the horse. Nature is equated with social idealism and the natural and honest horse is equated with his friend and master, the idealist Tanabai.

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## CHAPTER IV - NOTES

- 1 Vera Smirnova, Iz rasnykh let, Moskva, Sovetskii pisatel', 1974, p. 320.
- 2 Chingiz Aitmatov, Proshchai, Gul'sary!, Moskva, Molodaia gvardiia, 1967, pp. 5-6.
- 3 Tolstoi, XII, 27.
- 4 Aitmatov, p. 30.
- 5 Ibid., pp. 3-4
- 6 Ibid., pp. 24, 25.
- 7 Ibid., p. 51.
- 8 Ibid., p. 51.
- 9 Ibid., p. 93.
- 10 Tolstoi, XII, 23.
- 11 Aitmatov, p. 94.
- 12 Ibid., p. 68.
- 13 Ibid., p. 68.

## CONCLUSION

In all three works - Tolstoi's "Kholstomer", Kuprin's "Izumrud" and Aitmatov's Farewell, Gul'sary! - the horse functions as a principal character.

One effect which is common to all is that of drawing a parallel between horse and man. In "Kholstomer" we see a parallel between Serpukhovskoi and the horse, in "Izumrud" between the English driver and the horse, and in Farewell, Gul'sary! between Tanabai and the horse. The treatment of the device differs in each story. Serpukhovskoi and Kholstomer enjoy good times together and at one point Serpukhovskoi calls Kholstomer his friend, but he ruins him nonetheless and does not recognize him years later. Any similarity between them lies in their youthful good looks and zest for living. As regards their character, the sophisticated and jaded Serpukhovskoi cannot compare with the honest and natural horse. The greatest contrast however is in their deaths. Kholstomer had led a useful life and after his death even his carcass serves a useful purpose. Serpukhovskoi, on the other hand, was of no more use dead than he had been alive. Izumrud and the English driver

## CONCLUSION

are a team and this is how the reader sees them in this story. In a race they appreciate each other's skill and work together in harmony to attain their goal. Only with this man is Izumrud completely happy. Gul'sary is not only the servant of Tanabai but his friend as well. He has a quasi-human relationship with his master, and they support one another. There is interplay between the horse's life and Tanabai's. They are separated but re-united in their old age, and the horse is comforted by his master's presence when he dies.

The plot situations in the three works, which are used to portray the horse as a character, have certain similarities. In all three there are memories of early foal-hood and the horses' relationship to their respective mothers. The latter is treated quite differently in "Kholstomer" from "Izumrud" and Farewell, Gul'sary! Kholstomer, being more human than horse in the way he is depicted, analyses his feelings of rejection when his fickle mother deserts him. Not so Izumrud and Gul'sary who are much more horse-like and remember their mothers as large, loving and dependable. Their separation from them does not appear to leave a great impression on them. All

## CONCLUSION

three horses enjoy the companionship of other horses in their youth, and each one is attracted to one particular filly, with varying consequences. Kholstomer is the only one for whom this attachment proves calamitous. He is gelded. Gelding also appears in Farewell, Gul'sary!, but Gul'sary is gelded to prevent him running back to Tanabai when he is forced to be the kolkhoz president's horse, and not because of his association with the little bay filly.

A race is very important in all the stories. The horses are winners and winning has fateful consequences for them all. Kholstomer is banished from the stud farm and sold to a horse-dealer, who sells him to Serpukhovskoi, from whence things go from bad to worse for him. Winning for Izumrud causes an uproar at the race course and he is disqualified. He, like Kholstomer, is banished from the stud farm but shortly thereafter worse befalls him - he is poisoned. A win for Gul'sary causes separation from Tanabai and gelding. In each case there is injustice.

The plot structure of the stories varies. It is expanded in "Kholstomer" and Farewell, Gul'sary! and an attempt is made to tell the tale of the horse's long life.

## CONCLUSION

In "Izumrud" it is compressed and is constructed of one episode in the horse's short life. The chronological structure of all the stories is very significant. Kholstomer's tale is framed within the period of five nights. Aitmatov refines the device and frames his story within one night which accelerates the memory of the horse's and the man's lives. The presence of a double time frame is seen in both these stories. "Izumrud" concentrates mainly on the events of one day with the addition of a fateful epilogue. In all three stories the dramatic tension is heightened by the proximity of death, against which the past events of the horse's life are projected.

The technique of making a horse the principal character presents a problem as the horse is an animal, and we the readers are people. We know how we see things, but we can only imagine how things appear to a horse. All the authors manage to give us the illusion that we are seeing things through the horse's eyes, and all use individual means to achieve the same end. The most important stylistic device in the characterisation of the horse is "ostranenie" ("making it strange"), and all three authors use this in varying degrees. It is most obvious in "Kholstomer", where

## CONCLUSION

we get a horse's eye view of "ownership" and all its attendant evils. In "Izumrud" we see how the horse perceives what happens at the end of the race - the camera (a three-legged box covered with a black cloth) and the crowds (a black straggling mass). In Farewell, Gul'sary! Aitmatov uses "ostranenie" in the chapter on Gul'sary's gelding. The horse sees the instruments (shiny metal objects on a white cloth). Lying on the ground he looks up and the faces of the people are distorted (so long and drawn out). Before the pain he feels the instrument and stiffens (from the touch of something cold). However, in all three stories the most egregious example of "ostranenie" is a horse's lack of understanding of death, and the estranged description thereof.

Other devices and techniques used by the authors include flash-backs, memory and dreams. Taste and smells, particularly in "Izumrud", also evoke memories.

Kholstomer is more human than horse. He thinks, reasons and monologizes and the use of the first person heightens the illusion that we are seeing everything through his eyes. Izumrud and Gul'sary are more horse-like and "perceive" through their senses. They are not as verbal as Kholstomer and their stories are presented in the third

## CONCLUSION

person, but the same result is achieved. "Kholstomer" and Farewell, Gul'sary! are epics of the horse's whole life with, in the case of Gul'sary, the addition of Kirghiz folk-lore. Izumrud, by contrast, is one dramatic event in the horse's short life. Izumrud is an aristocrat. Kholstomer, despite his aristocratic birth, is considered a proletarian on account of his piebaldness, and he works for a living, as does Gul'sary.

The horse and his environment are most important in all these works and there is a great deal of imagery and detailed observation of nature in them all. This is especially true of the natural surroundings which are so important to a horse - the ground in all the seasons - wet spring grass, snow-covered in winter. The elements too play a part, especially in Farewell, Gul'sary! when Tanabai and the horse battle the wild storm to save the herd. The celestial bodies are used very effectively - the moon in "Kholstomer" which is a fighting device when he is, so to speak, "on stage" and which in "Izumrud" inspires terror. The sun in Farewell, Gul'sary! is a very important element in all the events in Gul'sary's life.

## CONCLUSION

The treatment of the theme is very different in each case. In "Kholstomer" Tolstoi is frankly didactic and moralistic. He emphasizes the unfortunate results of being different, and enlarges upon the themes of injustice, alienation and the inconstancy of love. By the method of "ostranenie" he has produced a satire on civilized mankind with its system of ownership as seen through the naive eyes of a horse.

In "Izumrud" there is little if any moral discrimination. There is no message, only a mild criticism of people's insatiable greed. Kuprin was intensely interested in people and animals. He knew life in the stable and on the race course and it is clear that he took great pleasure in describing horses and those who worked with them and appreciated professional skill. In this story, too, the author succeeds in making the reader see things through the horse's eyes.

Farewell, Gul'sary! is the story of a horse and a man, their friendship and dependence on one another for support. Once again a parallel is drawn between the two characters. An important theme, adumbrated by Esenin,

## CONCLUSION

appears here. In this modern age, the horse is being superceded by machines. Aitmatov points up the abuses and injustices in a bureaucratic system as they affect both animals and men and he equates the natural and honest horse Gul'sary with his friend and master, the idealistic Tanabai.

With a reasonable degree of certainty it may be said that there is a genre in these three stories and that they form a set. They follow one another in sequence, many years apart, and the influence of Tolstoi, who established the tradition with "Kholstomer", can be clearly seen in "Izumrud" and Farewell, Gul'sary!

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