

## Mythological Three Coloring's Semantics and Horse Archetype in Slavic and Eurasian Traditions

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**Abstract:** The present article considers the ratio of color semantics with and image archetype of a horse in Slavic and Euroasian folklore and literature. The authors of the article managed to show that in the course of emotional coloring of *archetypical* image in different cultures mainly three basic colors were used: red, white and black. These colors have vital and mythological values among all the nations. The semiotics of horse image bases on traditions of pagan mythology, folklore figurativeness and bible mythology. In fiction it partially transforms, but the folklore and mythological symbolics of this bestiary image fixes as well. Russian and Kazakh poetry and prose of romanticism, realism and modernism indication of the horse color coexists with indication of pure colors. The black horse personifies night and certain disturbing essence of world harmony. The white horse symbolizes beauty, purity and death in different contexts. The red horse was perceived as antithesis to white and black horses and becomes a symbol of the sun, fire, war or new life. The analysis of color symbolics allows to specify ideological sense of literary image. The authors of the article note similarities and distinctions in the process of defining identical three-colored coloring of horse image in Slavic and Asian traditions.

**Key words:** Archetype % Horse % Mythological consciousness % Color symbolics

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### INTRODUCTION

Ideas of initial "coloring" of the world and perception nature of each nation are specific, but they are expressed generally through three colors: red, white and black. These are the first colors which the eye of the primitive person was able to see and as they had the vital value, he defined them in a particular way which exist and affect still subconsciousness of people. Brent Berlin, Paul Key and MacDaniel's researches affirm that these \*base categories of color are at the same time a product of neurophysiology and cognitive real operations+ and \*are partially caused by human biology+ [1, 49-50]. The union of three coloring with archetypic images leads to creation of bright informative images of archetypes.

Considering the most ancient mythological and archetypic image of a horse we will observe through folklore and modern works what new things are brought in its semantics and symbolics by color components. Beverly Kane writes: \*There is an interesting difference here between the horse's physical capacity as a somarchtype and as an archetype. When I look to a horse, typically a stalwart, older gelding, to take care of me of the

train, I am projecting onto the archetype Wise Father of physical protector+ [2, 19].

In mythological consciousness the animal acts as a certain code on the basis of which the whole messages, in particular, myths, fairy tales on animals were created. In many religions and legends the horse is represented as \*sepulchral, doleful animal+ [3, 54]. In Scythian barrows horses were buried together with the dead person. The horse is an animal used for riding therefore \* a custom to bury a horse with his dead owner is a consequence of its function of carrier to the best+ [3, 155]. Originally it was considered that the soul of the dead person did not fly anywhere, it continued to exist in the world of people. Later, with development of the spatial representations, a dead person was believed to have a long journey and distant flight, exactly here the need for a role of a horse as a guide arose [4]. For the domestication of a horse transferring function in space was carried out by birds (in fairy tales, for example, it was an eagle). Gradually the horse acquired bird's image. There is a transformation of one animal into another. In such a way the image of a winged horse (Tulpar, Pegasus) is created. The image of a horse is connected in the Euroasian hunting epos and

mythology, with a cult of male and female gods. In the article \*Euroasian epic mythological motives+ Vyach. Bc. Ivanov writes: \*Ancient Greek and Mycenaean images of the goddess riding a horse are comparable with similar ancient Middle East and with Hittiti god Pirva on a horse, they also allow to identify rather wide borders of cult distribution + [5, 33].

The tendency of accepting a horse as a chthonian animal is reflected not only in mythology and folklore, but was quite common in literature. If to consider A.S. Pushkin's poetry a number of his early poems lyrical plot of which is under construction on pair of a *person and a horse*, the aura of romantic mystery is obvious. In the poem "Equestrians" (1816) one of horse riders is a sad singer having a presentiment of his fast end in the last fight, tells his horse fortunes as well.

The further destiny of the horse rider as if has its continuation in other Pushkin's poem - \*The struck knight + (1815). The body of the owner is not left alone \*by the friend – a horse+. The helmet is already corroded and bones are knocked in a chain armor, only the horse goes and goes round a hill. The ceremonies which are described by V.Ya.Propp, \*if the dead man has a favourite horse relatives killed this horse on a grave, thinking that it would take him to the world of the dead+ [3, 170]. In Pushkin's romantic ballad the horse sacrifices itself. Without leaving a hill where the body of his owner lies, it thereby dooms itself (himself) to slow death: \*In eyes pride fire is seen, / He bows his head+. Here it is possible to remember once again that archetypically the horse is connected with the other world according to the representations of ancient people it was chthonian and sacrificial. The loneliness of Pushkin's horse grows out of the fact that his owner, soldier perishes in a fight. The horse without the horseman in military symbolics is used as a bitter symbol of funeral. In "Equestrians" (1816), \*The struck knight+ (1815) mythological condition is observed: the death of the person involves potential death of a devoted animal.

The connection of a horse with another world points also to the fact that the hero in fairy tales often extracts the horse from a crypt (a cellar). \*If you go to pure field, there are twelve oaks, under oaks the stone plate lies. Pick up the plate, here and the horse of your great-grandfather will jump out+. \*Under that stone the cellar has opened, in a cellar there are three horses of powerful men, on walls the military harness hangs + (\*Ivan Bykovich+, Russian folk tales). In the Indian tradition the tradition of \*a sacrificial horse+ which \* is identified with the primogenitor of the world+ is presented.

V.Ya.Propp in \*Historical roots of the magic fairy tale+ writes about a horse coming from water [3, 180]. This \*water plot+ can be met in Pushkin's work in the poem \*The sister and brothers+ where the black horse pulling a cradle with the baby on the lake is described.

The Pushkin horse which \*as fast as an eagle+ is often met in an image of a mythical animal – Pegasus's winged horse. In poems \*To the friend - poet+ (1814), "Small town" (1815) repeating rhyming pairs \*Parnassus - Pegasus+ the high symbolic conflicting the general text sense, serve creation of satirical effect.

H.E. Kerlot, the author of \*The dictionary of symbols+, specifies that the horse corresponds to a natural, unconscious zone of instincts [6, 257] therefore in myths, fairy tales it is often allocated with ability to predict and is a wise instructor. So, in the Kazakh epos a horse of Alpamys Baychubar tells his owner what to do to identify the distance of forty days at once.

In Russian epic it is argued that a horse friend is brighter than the person. This situation is illustrated by lines from the Pushkin poem "Cossack" (1814) in which there is so much flashing humour! The horse participates in searches of the girl of whom his horseman dreams. Pushkin in a comic form shows horse "ingenuity": puts spurs by the afflicted owner, \*the horse rushed off, / To log huts it turned+ as if having realized desires of the Cossack. Pushkin's horse differs by its improbable abilities, it is as an epic character can overcome big distance making just one jump. \*The horse has the gift of clairvoyance+ [7, 250]. This gift is shown by the poet in the poem "Horse" (1834) of a cycle \*Song of the western Slavs+ where an animal predicts the death of the owner in fight. Supernatural keenness of horses helps them to guess evil spirit in "Demons" (1830). \*One of the more interesting example of such imagery in Balmont's writing is the poem in which he conveys the process of erotic encounter through the symbols of water and a horse+ [8, 91].

Semantics of a horse image is essentially specified thanks to its color. Thus instructions on breed in works of art is replaced with the instruction on color, pure colors (white, red, black, pink etc.) are generally chosen. Considering mythological three coloring (white, red, black) what will allow to specify considerably archetypical sense of a literary image of a horse. In reality these colors aren't presented in a horse. In this regard it is possible to say that the literary archetype of a horse is formed in the art world, as an imaginary animal even the fantastic one. Thus the image of a horse relies on mythological, folklore and bible traditions. The literary archetype can fix

tradition, but can also transform it. On the Old Russian icons representing a fight between snakes a horse is almost always either absolutely white or bright-red.

Everywhere, where the role of a horse as a creature of another world is emphasized it has white color. The beings which have lost corporality are painted in this color, therefore ghosts are white. In the Yakut myth snakes derisively invite the hero to sit down \*on a posthumous horse+ of purely white color. The Greeks sacrificed only white horses. In Germany and England to see dreams with white horses meant death [9, 256]. In the Apocalypse four colors of the horse are presented:

I looked and here I saw a white horse and there is a rider on having bows and he was given wreath; also there was he victorious to win...

Also there was other horse, red; and a person riding it is allowed to take the world from the earth and a big sword is given to him to kill others and...

I looked and here, a black horse and there is a rider on it having measure in the hand...

Finally I looked and there is a pale horse with a rider whose name is death; and the hell followed him and the power over the fourth part of the earth is given to him - to destroy both by hunger and pestilence and animals (Revelation 6:2-5).

J. Folly defining color meanings of four horses of Apocalypses states that white horse symbolizes plague, bright red - war, black one - famine and pale one - death [10, 288]. Manley P. Hall interprets four horse riders as four main periods of a human life and color in this case reflects the characteristic features of each age stage. So, \*The birth is presented by the horse rider on a white horse and he comes to win; the requiredness of youth is presented by the horse rider on a red horse; the maturity is presented by the horse rider on a black horse and he considers all acts on reason scales; the death is presented by the horse rider on a pale horse+ [11, 729]. In S. Yesenin's poem \*I am not sorry, I do not call you, I do not cry ...+ (1921) an image of a pink horse also characterizes age which is a symbol of youth: \*My life? Or I saw you in my dream? / As if I am a morning of booming spring / I galloped on a pink horse ...+<sup>1</sup>.

In Pushkin's poem "Dream" (1816) an image of the called bible four is shown: \*On the quick four horses, / Knocking, rattling golden wheels, / the arrogance slides under my windows+. \*Four horses of the Apocalypse create eschatological motive of a doomsday+ [7, 249]. And these four horses govern that world which is strange and

alien to the poet.

It is important to emphasize that the first horse from the Apocalypse has color, or rather a light, from here and it has its positive value. The last horse has no color is that makes it a death symbol.

V. Bryusov in the poem \*The Horse Pale+ gives a bright picture of doomsday. The color of a horse does not appear in the work, but fiery details are underlined in the description and its destructive force as well:

The horse rider of fire appeared from turning,  
The horse fled promptly and stood with fire in his eyes ...  
There was a long roll in the horse rider's hands ,  
Fiery letters announced a name: Death ...

In the end the author plays with the semantic characteristic of a horse color. The horse is pale, it has no color (other variant in folklore it is a horse of death so it is transparent, invisible). And, probably, it does not exist? Therefore, when the horse disappears, dissolves, nobody can tell, \*was it an image from above or just a dream?+. S. Yesenin wrote in his poems about the "steel horse" [12].

In I. Bunin's story \*White horse+ the death comes in an image of a white jade to the land surveyor – \*the land surveyor saw a big white horse in easy lunar light, old, cradle back, in buckwheat, with loose-hanging lips+; or as a young, strong, flying white mare – \*a white horse as light as feather it moved through a ditch near an edge and jumped out on its high shaft ... The white horse which has jumped out on a shaft, seemed like a silver one+; or as a beggar shrouded in light smoke – \*on cart drags, having crossed long, thin legs in the old, worn out bast shoes and having turned to the land surveyor the toothless beggar half shined by the moon sits+. Transformation of an image of a horse is connected with traditional representation of death as women (old woman) in white, the analogy on color symbolics between \*a pale horse + and \*the old woman in white+ led to change of gender of an animal image and after to appearing of the traditional female image of death.

The love of the Kazakhs to a horse is reflected in national mythology, fairy tales, epos. This animal, closely connected with nomad history, always possessed a special role which created its mythopoetical symbolics. The horse is a symbol of reliability, diligence, fidelity, impudence and the Kazakh mentality. The well-known Kazakh poet of the XX century M. Makatayev wrote: \*I repeat again and again, / I am the son of the racers'

<sup>1</sup>All poetic texts are in interlinear translation Z. Zhakhanova

earth+. For the Kazakh culture the image of a horse is always positive, unusual unity of the person with a horse is a common characteristic. It is reflected in folklore as well. For example, in the epos \*Kozy Korpesh and Bayan-slu+ fine, pure soul of the heroine has a horse of white color: \*Bayan-slu rushed ahead riding the horse as white as milk + and malicious, two-faced Kodar liked a gray horse: \*Kodar-kul got up on a gray stallion+ which he chose from Karabaya's herd.

In M. Makatayev's poetry twenty names of horses are given among which color names are quite common: light-brown, chestnut, black brown, bay with yellowish markings, red, spotty. His horses can be tired, sweaty, unfortunate, they can doze or be playful, shy or graze on meadows, rebellious or peacefully drinking water from the river. The horse of the Kazakh poet has many symbols and one of them is a symbol of youth: \*What to do with the youth of a bay racer / I have bridled, having concluded it in a stone fortress+. In vital competition the winged horse which is symbolically connected with poetry takes the poet out from difficulties.

In modern Kazakh literature the image of a "light" horse is not so monosemantic, it underwent big transformation though archetypical roots are not lost. In O. Suleymenov's poem \*Someone slowly skips and skips in a dream...+ influence of mythological traditions is obvious.

Someone is riding in my dream  
A light and tired horse from far  
Keeps silence. Only clatters long  
Riding you or moving slowly towards me?  
Why cannot I see kamcha over the horse croup?  
Why are not you seen in my dreams ?  
I would believe,  
I know you are a kind messenger  
Why do clatters long so quietly?

We see that a color epithet of a horse is "light", allowing to speak about presence of double semantics: the light can be obviously white or pale. The first meaning of color image is positive which is common in the myths of ancient Turk people: \*For people edification Tengri sent to the earth two messengers, one riding a white horse, another the black one. If the divine horse rider on a white horse meets on his way a person, it is considered as a kind sign, the traveler will have good luck, a child will be born, the crop will be plentiful. But if the horse is of black color be ready for misfortune, the death is near you, think, whether you have offended anyone if yes it is necessary

ask for forgiveness and return all the money you have borrowed appear before God without any sins+ [13, 118]. The second possible meaning of color image in O. Suleymenov's poem is closer to a bible image of a horse pale. The lyrical hero in his dream sees someone on \*a light, tired horse+. The author allows the definition of the horse rider on a horse and as good news and, it is possible, as the messenger of death.

O. Suleymenov's choice of epithet for a horse image in the poem can be explained by its linguistic feature: in the Kazakh language expression \*ak at+ (a white horse) usually is not used. More often used the expression \*akboz at+, where boz - a light gray shade of white color. Though the poem is written by the author in Russian, language traditions of the Kazakh language, possibly, affected a color component of a poetic image.

Movement, running of a horse allows to compare it with course. The horse can symbolize both human life stages and time of day, recurrence of the world development. In the Russian fairy tale "Vasilisa Prekrasnaya" Vasilisa on the way to the house of Baba Yaga meets three horse riders: \* suddenly a horse rider skips: white, dressed in white, a horse under it is white and a harness on a horse is white as well, - the sun began to dawn. Further she moves and sees another horse rider skipping: red, dressed into red and on a red horse, - the sun disappeared ... Again the horse rider suddenly passes by: black, dressed into black and on a black horse, - night came+. To Vasilisa's question: \*Who are they?+. Baba Yaga answered: \*White rider is my clear day, red is the sweet sun, black is my dark night +. Thus, each horse symbolizes a certain time of day, incorporating in color time characteristic and parts of the day.

The red color represents a flame that corresponds to the fiery nature of a horse: from its nostrils sparks are strewed, fire and smoke come out from ears. The main function of a horse is to be the intermediary between two realms: it carries away the hero in far distance lands, soul of the died to another world. Fire was the same intermediary as well. In myths of America, Africa, Siberia the hero without any help of animals, only by means of fire was transferred to the sky. Burning of corpses and victims is based on this phenomenon. When the horse appeared, the role of fire was transferred to it. The best examples of it are fairy tales and religions. So, in Vedic religion development of a horse fire in the image of god Agni is seen. The horse in V. Mayakovsky's poem "Horse fire" has fiery character and appearance:

What a horse,

what a horse –  
Hotter than fire!

In legends the horse appears from fire. From there a mythological meaning of a red horse as the sun symbol is clear (fire plus movement). \*In the empirical tradition, the imagination had always held an inferior rank+ [14, 115].

In fine and verbal arts the image of a red horse is taken out even in the title of works: M. Tsvetaeva \*On a red horse+, V. Petrov-Vodkin \*Bathing of a red horse+, S. Seyfullin \*Kyzyl at+ (\*A red horse+).

The picture which appeared in 1912 of V. Petrov-Vodkin \*Bathing of a red horse+ has some definitions: folklore, mythological and sociopolitical. According to the first definition a red horse is a symbol of the sun, its cyclic movement. Elements of water and a form of the lake symbolize the sky. From the mythological point of view a horse figure and an arrangement of them around in a picture personify the sun motion in the sky.

The second interpretation of a picture was created after revolution of 1917. The adjective "red" was key for Russian language of Soviet period. Red color got a new figurative political meaning "revolutionary", "proletarian". According to it, the red horse was perceived as a symbol of revolution and the boy is a representative of young generation which has come to power. V.G.Bazanov in his work \*Symbolics of the Red horse+ [15] specifies that the red horse in painting and poetry was perceived as an antithesis to a pale horse of the Apocalypse, that is, a certain symbol of new life. But the researcher does not point to a red (red) horse which is also represented at John's Revelation, symbolizing war and death: \*there was other horse, red; and the person sitting on it is allowed to take the world from the earth and a big sword is given to him to kill each other+. The connection of an image of a red horse with war was present in the Roman mythology. The god of war Mars was represented astride a red horse, in honor of it one of the planets was named the color of which reminds blood.

The red horse in S. Seyfullin's poem \*Kyzyl at+ has mythological features as well. The poem is constructed as a dialogue between the hero and a horse. As well as in the national epos, the horse is allocated with human speech and acts as the assistant, its words convey the meaning of actions of the Soviet power. Though the hero convinces a horse that bright future will come, but the speech of a horse is more plausible and sincere.

Authors subjective ideas are distinguished in

symbolics of a red horse in M. Tsvetaeva's poem \*On a red horse+. She does not rely either on bible or folklore motives. The unique reminiscence is the Greek magic winged horse Pegasus, a symbol of poetic inspiration. \*A poetic image must not tell us about something; it must present the thing itself + [16, 28]. The red color is and color of fiery, ardent soul of a poet and color of a dawn, blood. The red horse, the genius of the poet, takes out him from \*a black ditch+:

Until I  
Will not whirl away in azure  
On a red horse –  
My genius!

Original use of double color symbolics (white and red) while creating centaur image of a horse and horse rider is shown in \*The captain's daughter+ by A. Pushkin. In chapter "Attack" solemn appearing of Pugachev among rebels is described: \*Between them went a person on a white horse in a red caftan with a naked sabre in a hand+.

The image of a black horse gets ambivalent and multiple sense. It can act as a symbol of hunger, death in the Apocalypse; in mythology as a daily cycle, as an age embodiment in the maturity period on the contrary to a young pink horse. In I.Brodsky's poem \*That evening near our fire ...+ the black horse unites in itself semantics and symbolics as color and image.

I do not remember anything blacker.  
His legs were like coals.  
He was as dark as night and emptiness.  
He was black from mane to tail.  
However back his was  
Differently back.  
It has not seen the saddle  
It stood still as if asleep,  
The darkness of his hooves frightened.

In the text there is forcing of black color. Describing the blackness of a horse, I.Brodsky compares it to the various phenomena (emptiness, shadows, midnight haze) that makes color is even more black. Having compared color of a horse with external space and having convinced that the horse is more black, the author draws a parallel with internal space, soul of heroes:

As dark as the middle inside.  
As dark as trees ahead,  
As place between the ribs...  
I think it is dark inside us.

The horse paints the space round itself and dissolved in it and he already breathed \*black air+, \*black light streamed from eyes+. K. Yung specifies that black in the most general form reflects an initial, germinal condition of all processes. For V. Hugo and R. Wagner the darkness marks itself the parent beginning [7, 258]. Explaining his picture \*Black square+, K. Malevich said that he drew the thing that did not exist: in the nature there is no accurate geometrical figure of a square and there is no purely black color.

The image of a black horse in I.Brodsky's poem reflects polyphony of black color values. The color of a horse, unexpectedness of emergence and singularity of behavior specify that he is the envoy, the representative of another world. It frightens. But the inner world of heroes coincides with color of a horse. The black horse personifies a certain disturbing essence of world harmony.

Mythological, folklore features of the image of a black horse are shown in recurrence, time of day (\*it was only a midnight +) and in mystical communication with fiery elements: \*That evening near our fire / we saw a black horse+.

In the poem ending all values of color and image incorporate, creating disturbing, frightening and romantic atmosphere at the same time which is strengthened by anaphoric rhetorical questions:

Why did he breathe black air?  
Why did he rustle with boughs in darkness ?  
Why did the black light stream from his eyes?

In the last line the unexpected answer to all these questions is given: \*He looked for the horseback rider for himself among us.

Comparison of works taking place at different times and of different genres allow to argue that the understanding of the maintenance of archetypal image considerably becomes complicated if to pay attention to a color component. A literary image of horse archetype accompanies a little repetition of color images of a horse in the art and it is first of all white, red, black colors. Images of a horse in Slavic and Euroasian tradition essentially approach and are at the same time concretized thanks to a color palette.

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