

## **Figurative gaps in poetry according to Yuri Tynianov**

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In his 1923 article "Illiustratsii" Yuri Tynianov polemically discusses the editions of poetic texts accompanied by illustrations. For Tynianov, the specific concreteness of poetry is directly opposed to pictorial concreteness: the more alive, the more tangible the poetic word, the less it can be translated onto the plane of the painting. "The concreteness of the poetic word", Tynianov states, "is not in the visual image behind it - this side of the word is extremely torn and vague [...] it is in a peculiar process of changing the meaning of the word, which makes it alive and new. The main method of concretizing the word - comparison, metaphor - is meaningless for painting". The "literal" translation into the language of illustration is powerless to convey the play of secondary and fluctuating semantic traits coloring the word. Tynianov is declaring both the programmatic principle of Opojaz's formalist theory, i.e. the constitutive specificity of the poetic word, and his theory of poetic semantics which he extensively will soon present in *The Problem of Verse Language* (*Problema stikhotvornogo jazyka*, published in 1924). Here, the scholar explains how words interlocked in a verse sequence redistribute and share their lexical contents, giving place to a new semantic 'realm': the figurative sense - metaphorical, metonymic, or of another trope. It is worth noting, on the one hand, that this "interactive" approach to meaning is quite similar to Max Black's theory of metaphor (1962), and on the other, that this interactive play is conducted by the fulfillment of gaps governed by the rhythmical energy. In this regard, Tynianov introduces the concept of the "equivalent of the text", i.e. any substitution of non-verbal elements in place of verbal ones, a sign designating an orientation toward a sense to be fulfilled. Moreover, for Tynianov the dynamic concreteness of poetry is due to the indeterminacy (*neopredelennost'*) of the poetic image. Poetic indeterminacy contrasts with the "density" or "compactness" (*plotnost'*) of the visual image. As we can observe, indeterminacy is the kernel concept of Roman Ingarden's study *The Literary Work of Art* (*Das literarische kuntswerk*, 1931). Though Tynianov's point of view declares itself programmatically not philosophical, and thus could be considered distant from Ingarden's phenomenological, ontology-oriented proposal, nevertheless, affirming the centrality of gaps in the constitution of the poetic text, the Formalist's theory of verse language shows to open its horizon to aesthetical issues that will be explored by the theories of reception and reader response in the forthcoming decades.