**Tynianov, Yuri (1894-1943)**

Born in Vitebsk, present-day Belarus, Yuri Nikolaevich Tynianov (Юрий Николаевич Тынянов) was a leading Russian and Soviet literary theorist, historian and novelist as well as a member of the Russian formalists. Alongside Roman Jakobson, Vadimir Propp and Viktor Shklovsky, Tynianov worked towards a description of literature by reference only to the formal characteristics and language of the work itself, without relying on historical or biographical descriptions to generate meaningful readings. This stance is similar to the influential one held by New Criticism. Russian formalism detached literary scholarship from sociology and psychology, proposing instead to focus on a scientific analysis of a literary work’s linguistic elements. This formalist methodology is in direct conflict with the historical materialism of their contemporary Soviet Marxist theorists. Tynianov’s most notable contributions to formalist thinking were his 1924 book *Проблема стихотворного языка* (*The Problem of Verse Language*), which theorizes the variations in the meaning of words based on their placement in ‘verse construction’ (29); and his work with Jakobson on ‘Проблемы изучения литературы и языка’ (‘Problems in the Study of Language and Literature’), which attempts to reconcile formalism with structuralist principles of systematic evolution of literary forms.The linguistic-literary focus of Tynianov and the Russian formalists notably influenced the theories of Mikhail Bakhtin, and subsequent generations of philosophers and critics.

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**List of works**

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**References and further reading**

Erlich, V. (1965) *Russian Formalism: History, Doctrine*,London: Mountain and Co.