

Title: The Illustrator as Commentator: *The Queen of Spades* in the Eyes of Benois and Protazanov
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Born as a piece of Russian prose, Pushkin's *The Queen of Spades* (1834) became the darling of all media. In 1890 the eponymous opera by Tchaikovsky premiered; Sergei Eisenstein last project (the end of the 1940s) was to turn Pushkin's story into a ballet; several dramatizations of *The Queen of Spades* exist. As any translation, transmutations (Roman Jakobson's term for transfers between media) both discard of some elements of the original and add their own elements to it. Purists call this a betrayal: anti-Tchaikovskyism is a whole separate discourse among Russian writers from Bely to Nabokov. Others claim that each new embodiment of a story in a different medium empowers rather than weakens the semantic field of the text. Yuri Tynianov condemned the genre of book illustrations; Aleksandr Benois defended it as a visual commentary to the text. The aim of this paper is to find out what changed and how about Pushkin's *Queen of Spades* when, in 1911, the story saw the light as a book illustrated by Aleksandr Benois, and, once again, in 1916, when not only the story by Pushkin, but also Benois' pictures were transmuted into yet another medium: the medium of film. What is the give-and-take between the verbal text and still pictures that illustrate it, and between the text, the pictures, and the moving pictures that illustrate both? This is what we will be talking about in our paper.

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