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## THE BASIS OF FORMALISM AND ITS LIMITATIONS

### Formalizm'in Temelleri ve Sınırlılıkları

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#### **Abstract**

*Many opinions have been discussed about the place of literature in society so far. The overwhelming majority is of the opinion that literature is a mirror of society. On the other hand, Formalism, as a literary theory, argues that the purpose of literature is literariness. Therefore, it is accepted as a rebellion against the understanding of literature dating back to the 1900s. Instead, it is suggested that a literary work should be studied as text-oriented. Furthermore, Formalists argue that the language of the work should be examined in terms of its literary elements, that is, intrinsic rather than extrinsic. That is the reason why they are criticised by other literary critics focusing on biographical, sociological, psychological, religious or historical issues. Their approach draws on those of Ferdinand de Saussure. Combining the views of many theorists, they make text-oriented literary studies. Formalism is often confused with official or legal correspondence. The reason why formalist criticism is associated with official and legal correspondence is linguistics. However, etymologically, Formalism is a word that is not related to formality but form. Formalism is considered a rebellion against the literary understanding of the period in which it was born. Besides, Formalism has different dimensions. Formalism is a criticism applied with varying techniques in both poetry and prose. This study seeks to answer such questions as what formalist criticism is, how it is applied to poetry and prose, and criticism made for and against it. At the end of the study, one is expected to have a reader-level knowledge of Formalist criticism.*

**Keywords:** Criticism, Syuzhet, Fabula, Rhyme, Form

#### **Öz**

*Edebiyatın toplumdaki yeri hakkında günümüze kadar pek çok görüş paylaşılmıştır. Bu görüşlerin büyük bir kısmı edebiyatın toplumun aynası olduğu yönündedir. Biçimci edebiyat akımı ise edebiyatın amacının edebîlik olduğunu savunur. 1900'lü yıllara dayanan edebiyat anlayışına karşı bir isyan olarak kabul edilir. Bunun yerine edebî eserin metin odaklı olarak incelenmesi önerilmektedir. Ayrıca Biçimciler, eserin dilinin sosyolojik, psikolojik, dini, ekonomik gibi*

alanların gözden geçirilmesinden ziyade edebî unsurları açısından incelenmesi gerektiğini savunmuşlardır. Kendilerinden önceki ve sonraki akademik teoriler tarafından bu konularda eleştirilmiştir. Dile yaklaşımları Saussure'e dayanmaktadır. Birçok teorisyenin görüşlerini birleştirerek metin odaklı edebî çalışmalar yapmışlardır. Biçimcilik genellikle resmi veya yasal yazışmalarla karıştırılır. Biçimci eleştirinin resmi ve hukuki yazışmalarla ilişkilendirilmesinin nedeni dilbilimdir. Ancak etimolojik olarak formalizm, formalite ile değil, form ile ilgili bir kelimedir. Bu bağlamda dönemin edebî anlayışına bir başkaldırı olarak değerlendirilen Biçimciliği incelemek değerlidir. Ayrıca formalizmin farklı boyutları vardır. Biçimcilik, hem şiirde hem de nesirde farklı tekniklerle uygulanan bir eleştiridir. Bu çalışma, biçimci eleştirinin ne olduğu, şiir ve düzyazıya nasıl uygulandığı ve kimlerin eleştirdiği gibi sorulara yanıt aramaktadır. Çalışmanın sonunda, Biçimci eleştiri hakkında okuyucu düzeyinde bilgi sahibi olunması beklenmektedir.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Eleştiri, Syuzhet, Fabula, Uyak, Biçim

## 1. INTRODUCTION

According to the Reflection theory, known since Plato, in 19th-century literary criticism, literature has a definition of a social phenomenon that reflects society. It is an academic tool that reflects culture and realities (Moran, 1999, pp. 18-19). With the turn of the 20th century, it abandoned its task of reflection and turned into a kind of literary milieu where linguistics is reflected. The thoughtful writer has already started to come to the fore. However, literature is a tool that directs social life by reflecting the social and economic conditions of the period, which serves as a mirror between society and the individual, both from the perspective of the author and the reader. Literature started with religious works and has developed into fictional works. In time, such genres as prose, poetry, and drama were added into literature as types. It would not be wrong to claim that literature has developed in parallel with social and economic conditions. Literary works until the 20th century were analysed in two parts. The environment of the work before it was written in the background of the author, by whom, in which direction the work was written, and its effects on the work. The second part is the environment where the work meets with the reader after it is written. This part is evaluated according to the reader's social, literary personality, and educational level. To a large extent, the interaction between the second part of the work and the reader is in the foreground. In the 20th century, the belief that it is necessary to evaluate literature with its own rules emerged with the beginning of Formalist criticism. Formalism as a school of criticism may be defined as a way of understanding art or literature primarily through its techniques rather than as a mere vehicle for personal expression

or moral and political doctrines (Drabble, 2000, p. 374).

The first problem that stands out in Formalism is the relationship between form and content. The relationship between form and content has always been an essential dilemma in literature and philosophy. It dates back to Hegel's philosophy. Hegel defines philosophy as two aspects of a dialectical whole, not separate form and content. While content expresses existence, form is described as self-reflection. It is argued that the distinction between form and content is not absolute (Chan, 2019, pp. 77-80). Formalists have pointed out that it is necessary to focus on textuality by getting rid of the social message orientation of the literati and the metaphysical bias of the symbolists (Babak, 2019, p. 42). They reject the duty of literature to reflect the problems of society. Rather than society's problems, the Formalists attempted to solve the fundamental problems of literature in close alliance with linguistics and semiotics. Formalism has a close relationship with linguistics (Arıkan, 2008, pp. 418-419). For Jakobson, the central problem is not the interaction between the percipient subject and the object perceived but the relationship between the "sign" and the "referent," not the reader's attitude toward reality but the writer's attitude toward language (Erlich, *Russian Formalism*, 1973, p. 630). Literary work should be considered a text before reflecting on society's problems. It should be examined with the existing ones in the text. The author himself should not search for the work.

First, the fundamental understanding of Formalism and the concepts of *Syuzhet* and *Fabula* will be examined with an example. Then, in the second part, the criticisms that can be made against Formalism will be mentioned. At the end of this study, it is aimed that the reader will have basic information about Formalism and possible criticisms made about Formalism.

## **2. FORMALISM**

Russian Formalism emerged in Russia and Poland in the 1910s as a literary movement and a school of literary theory. In Russia, it was started and developed by linguists such as Roman Jakobson, Grigory Vinokur, and Petr Bogatyrev, and literary scholars Osip Brik, Boris Eichenbaum, and Viktor Shklovsky from Moscow University. Formalism emerged from the discussions between OPOJAZ ( Society For the Study of Poetic Language) in Saint Petersburg and the Linguistic Department of Moscow. The members of OPOJAZ are Victor Shklovsky, Boris Eichenbaum, Osib Brik and Yuri Tynianov. Roman Jakobson was the head of the Moscow Linguistic

Department. In Poland, it dates back to the years between 1911 and 1914. The first literary works of Kazimierz Wóycicki, the founder of Polish Formalism, are accepted as the beginning of formalist ideas in Poland. However, despite Wóycicki's work in the 1910s, Formalism in Poland took a concrete form in the mid-1930s (Garson, 1970, p. 412).

There is no common culture or source that directly affects the Formalists. It is a text-oriented synthesis of views dating back to the 1900s. According to Ingarden at the Tatarakiewica's and Pole's Conscious, Content is everything that is expressed in the work. On the other hand, form is the ways and methods of expression in creation. The form is the way content is described (Dziemidok, 1993, p. 186). Although the Russian Formalists in the 1900s argued that the form was more valuable than the content, Aristotle, in his Poetics written in the 1700s, attributes the poem's success not to the subject but to the way the matter is handled.

*If a poet arranges the tirades denoting the characters, one after the other, in a linguistic expression and thoughts appropriate to them, he will not have fulfilled the duty we set before the tragedy. A tragedy that is weak in terms of all these elements but has a story (mythos) and is based on the [appropriate and natural] connection of events is a far superior tragedy to the other. (Aristoteles, 1993, pp. 24-25)*

As stated above, it emphasises the elements of language use and the inner harmony of the works. According to Saussure, language should be studied simultaneously from the examples available at the time. Saussure, who thinks that language is a system, emphasised that it is unnecessary to know the past to understand and solve this system. The important thing is to reveal the bond between the elements that make up the system (Saussure, 1998, p. 54). Jameson states that “as with Saussurean Linguists, the first movements of the Russian Formalists (...) were aimed at liberating the literary system from other non-essential external systems” (Jameson, 2002, pp. 49-50). The “external systems” mentioned here are fields outside literature, such as History, Psychology, and Philosophy. It is the outside world of the literary work. Saussure's advocacy of synchronicity to look at language and the Formalists' defence that while reviewing a literary work, it is necessary to investigate the work independently from the outside world arises from the same view. Russian Formalists adapted what Saussure did in linguistics to literature. (Yaprak, 2018, p. 9)

Russian Formalists rejected many nineteenth-century assumptions of textual analysis, especially the belief that a work of literature was the expression of the author's worldview and their dismissal of psychological

and biographical criticism as irrelevant to interpretation (Tutaş, 2015, p. 8). Instead, the Russian formalists emphasised that literature study should be based on a text-oriented method separate from other studies. In the 19th century, literary review and criticism were not directed at work. Instead, it took art as the expression of emotion, put the artist in the centre, and turned to History, Sociology, and Politics to explain literature by telling that it reflects the non-art world.

Formalist Literature does not have an interdisciplinary didactic mission. The important thing is the form, not the subject. For Clive Bell, the creator of the concept of "the aesthetic part of Formalism is only its standard features" (Barret, 2003, p. 188). On the other hand, formalists favoured moving from the work, and firstly, they sought an answer to the question of what literary is one of the standard features that distinguish a literary work from other works. What they do can be described as the "destruction of the habit."

For Formalists, the author's attitude toward reality is not necessary. Instead, his attitude towards language is essential. The materials of the work are the literary text's feelings and thoughts. Formalists focus only on the formal qualities of literature because they are the only ones providing the literature. For them, the purpose of literary work is not to reflect reality but to make it perceived differently. This understanding, in a way, reminds us of the concept of "alienation/defamiliarisation" that Brecht introduced later. For Roman Jakobson, this subject is handled best by distinguishing the aesthetic function of language from its other functions.

The main view of the Formalists is based on Mallarme's famous idea that poetry is written with words, not ideas. Formalism focused on poetry in its early periods. In later periods, they started to examine other literary works. Just as the poet's power to break habit stems from its linguistic arrangement, not from the fact that it refers to something outside itself, the novel's power to break habit stems not from its reflection on life but from its pure literary arrangement. Literariness arises from the strange structure of the use of language. Still, the text of a novel speech is not a feature that gives it literariness, so the opposition that prevails this time is not between the functional language/poetic language but between Syuzhet and Fabula (Moran, 1999, p. 177). The author changes the order of events according to real life and places the events in an order that does not fit the energy flow. It transforms the chronological sequence of events into a plot by changing the chronology. Thus, he breaks the habit. The author does not have to change the chronology. It can continue the chronology. However, the time of the

narrative will be affected. The author will not only describe some events, but he will describe some events in detail. Even if the chronological order is the same, it will be given with missing and redundancy in work. The perspective intended for the reader to use given in Syuzhet. From which point of view the reader will read the work is predetermined. The reader is not allowed to contribute. Syuzhet is used in the sense of plot, which is the sequence of events in the order and form presented by the author in the text. Fabula can also be translated as a "story" (Yaprak, 2018, pp. 32-35). Fabula is events that develop in parallel with real life. It is chronological. It would be correct to logically analogy between birth, life, and death. In this context, "story" does not refer to a type of narrative but to how the author's events are arranged to what they should follow in real life.

After reading the novel, the reader can set up this order himself if he wishes. Among the contributions of Formalists to Literary Theory, this distinction between Syuzhet and Fabula has been among the most influential. Formalists did not look at historical, social, and economic reasons while explaining the reasons for the emergence of new movements, styles, and forms. Instead, they resolved the problem for legal reasons. For prose, Formalism also tries to analyse structurally such textual elements as characters in a plot, which older schools traditionally explain on a merely thematic level (Klarer, 2004, p. 4). When the text is analysed from a formalist point of view, it is not seeking an answer to the question "What". Instead, it is seeking an answer to the question of "How" The literary value of the text is directly proportional to how the content is added to the format rather than the content. In this context, how the concepts of Fabula, Syuzhet, and Alienation have been applied plays an essential role in revealing the value of the texts examined with a Formalist perspective (Sherwood, 1973, p. 39).

The following is an example of Fabula and Syuzhet with a story from Refik Halid Karay's *Yatık Emine*:

*He discharges early from the military as a veteran. When he returns home, his family, friends, and relatives proudly greet him as a hero. He will continue his life with one leg. The pride of being a veteran can keep his psychology intact for a year. It is so hard adjusting to his one-legged life. At the end of a year, he still could not get used to his new life as a civilian and one leg. The veteran's salary is not enough for him, and he wants to work. Sitting all the time for someone working since primary school has been difficult financially and morally. He begins to have psychological problems. He is constantly in conflict with his environment. He gets along with all his friends. They fight with his fiancée, who is preparing for the*

*wedding, and they break up. Ultimately, he pushes everyone he loves away from himself and continues to live alone. His loneliness only makes him worse. He has schizophrenia and is no longer connected. Finally, one day he goes insane. He commits suicide by shooting himself with a gun at home.* (Karay, 2016, p. 1-197)

When the novel is summarised to someone, it is told in the above order. Fabula is a sequence of events in real life. However, the author's way of telling this story does not have to be in this order. The author can start the story by describing the event that he became a veteran at home and can go back and continue with sections from his military life first and then from his civilian life. There is no monotonous, chronological obligation to tell, which is Syuzhet.

One of the most important literary devices that the formalists deal with is the device of "defamiliarisation" (ostranenie) that Shklovsky describes in "Iskusstvo kak priem" (original title)

*The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects 'unfamiliar,' to make forms difficult to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged.* (Shklovsky & Sher, 1991, p. 6)

Defamiliarisation means people experience the ordinary through artistic language every day. The artist changes the routine and anticipated form of perception and reveals the world as a work. This literary device emphasises the distinction between literary language and everyday language. It is a complex mosaic because it is a field of criticism that analyses the work by dividing it into many literary pieces. It deals with the structure of the work. It is broad to deal with every piece that composes the work but narrow to analyse those pieces without adding the writer or the reader.

On the topic of the poem, in contrast to traditional, extrinsic methodologies, Russian formalism privileges phonetic structures, rhythm, rhyme, meter, and sound as independent, meaningful elements of literary discourse (Klarer, 2004, p. 79-82). Expressions in daily language, daily conversations, and presentations in poetic language, terms in lines of a poem may be similar. However, according to Formalist critics, phrases in the language of poetry should be looked at only based on poetry. Its literariness should be revealed by examining it with literary techniques, similes, and repetitions, contrary to the ordinary world. In a formalist study of poetry, it will be correct to mention that pure poetry is being studied. "Defamiliarization" is used to eliminate daily language, destroy everyday

perceptions, and break the usual meaning. Below is a short example of the analysis of a poem from a formalist perspective: Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken"

Two roads diverged in a yellow *wood* (A)  
 And sorry I could not travel *both* (B)  
 And be one traveller, long I *stood* (A)  
 And looked down one as far as I *could* (A)  
 To where it bent in the under*growth* (B)

There is various assonance which is the repetition of vowel sounds in the poem. The "Road Not Taken" uses assonance such as "o" and "ō". It can be seen assonance "o" in the words "two", "wood", "stood", "looked", and "took" means that the speaker sees the two roads in the wood and he stands to look, which is the road that he should choose. Next is the "ō" sound in the words "sorry", "not", "both", "for", "morning", "no", and "trodden" it means that the speaker emphasises that he cannot choose both roads and finally he choose one of the roads that person is rarely passing there.

As to the limitations of Formalist Reading, formalists have often been criticised for being incomprehensible. Boris Eichenbaum mentions that representatives of the formal method were frequently accused by various groups of their lack of clarity or the inadequacy of their principles —for indifference to general questions of aesthetics, sociology, psychology, and so on (Eikhenbaum, 1926, p. 2). Criticisms of the Formalist Theory are generally within this framework. This deficiency is included in the descriptions, side areas used, and social issues. What is Formalism's fundamental research question on literary work? The explanations given to this question are insufficient and confusing. According to Roman Jakobson, the aim of literary science is not literature; it is literate (Rifat, 1998, p. 292). While the Formalists defended that the focus of literature was on the literary, their desire to make it independent from other sciences was perceived as isolating literature. Because they wanted to make literature a single-disciplinary approach, they were criticised for being indifferent to local problems such as psychology, History, Sociology, Aesthetics, and Philosophy. Because critics accept that Literature has always been involved not only with artistic values but also with other value systems, which it would fight or uphold, develop, or transform. It is one of the reasons why people have always needed literature (Dziemidok, 1993. p. 191). According to Formalists, literary studies do not have to be based on sociological foundations. According to them, it should be based on literary and linguistic studies. It is necessary to set aside mechanised and obsolete terminologies.



Formalists describe theories as mechanised and outdated other theories existed before and after Formalism. If literature mentions people, it is an unusual approach to ignore the period's social, economic, and political atmosphere while examining the literary work. Formalists declare that it is not necessarily deal with social events. While analysing the work, they are not to mention the effect of an economic crisis that existed at that time, or it is not to note a trauma experienced by the author while constructing the work that has received criticism in this context. This situation draws criticism.

The criticisms levelled at the formalists are generally that the formalists break away from the essence of literature. In the process, from the first oral and written works of literature to contemporary literature, writers have used literature as a tool to represent society. The first literary works in which the foundation of civilisation was based on religion were religious books and hymns. The Old English period was based on faith. Caedmon's Hymn is a good example. The rise of romanticism can be seen as literature's reaction to the Industrial Revolution. Fleeing from smashing modernity and the rise of technology, factories, and cities, the Romantics focused on nature, rural life, and subjectivity (Zuhurudeen, 2013, p. 1-4). It was the main subject of literary works for that period. It can be reproduced with examples, but that is the problem. Literature is fed by society, and literature is produced and understood with an interdisciplinary approach. They argued that these disciplines should be used to analyse and understand the works containing disciplines such as Psychology, Sociology, and History. Boris E. mentions in the essay on the Theory of the Formalist Method, Without reference to Socioaesthetic premises, it raises questions about the idea of artistic form and its evolution (Eikhenbaum, 1926, p. 2). "With accelerating frequency, legal decisions and theories are condemned as "formalist" or "formalistic" ... use of the word in the same meaning in Law and Literature "formal" seems almost a linguistic error" (Schauer, 1988, p. 510).

The confusion of legal correspondence with Formalism in Literature is since the principles of the Formalists are not clear enough. Due to the misunderstanding of the definition of Formalism, Formalism and legal writings are seen as equivalent. However, this is a wrong decision. Formalism does not include emotions, economics, or religion but does not advocate formality. Legal decisions are "official," not formalist. The criticisms made because the form is used in narrow meanings are not enough to express the inadequacy of the theory alone. Contrary to critics, Formalists emphasise that "In this sense, we talk not about the form of an artwork, but

about an artwork as an artistic form” (Dziemidok, 1993, p. 186). Marxists inform literature as a tool used to achieve their goals. These goals point to a social phenomenon. According to Marxists, Formalists criticise only for analysing literary work and not doing anything else about literature (Babak, 2019, pp. 41-53).

Some theoreticians postulated that an artwork should be an open structure, each time co-created by the audience in the process of reception [...]” (Dziemidok, 1993, p. 191). It is not wrong to say that Roland Barthes’ article “The Death of the Author” supports this view of theorists. According to them, the work begins with the death of the author. All possible meanings and messages from the work are born in the reader's mind. Beyond Formalism, the search for meaning in art comes to the fore. However, in the broadest sense, formalist criticism is a “Text oriented approach” (Sulistyorini, 2007, p. 2). It focuses on the artwork by ignoring the author and reader's background information and historical, political, and social context. From a more detailed point of view: Formalism looks for the aesthetic value of a text in its power as a conveyer of meaning; it deals with the text's power, like narrative techniques, irony, ambiguity, symbolism, and reflections on characters. However, one of the Anti-formalists, Karol Irzykowski thinks that, of the opinion that, in evaluating a work of art, we not only are allowed to but also should take into consideration not only the formal properties of a work of art but also such elements as the ideas contained in the work, emotional expressiveness, the fidelity to the represented external reality (in the case of figurative art), the depth of insight into, and analysis of, the moral and psychological problems of man ” (Dziemidok, 1993, p. 187). In the reception and evaluation of an artwork, we are unable, and we do not need to, limit ourselves to the appreciation of its formal properties; of interest are also its possible cognitive and moral merits. “Are we to assume that all forms of art exist only to “bare their own devices,” only to give us the spectacle of the creation of art itself, the transformation of objects into art, they are being made art? or we to assume some more metaphysical “making” activity?” (Jameson, 1974, p. 79).

Since the content's social, economic, and biographical components are not included in Formalism, it is clear that the technique is used. Eichenbaum criticises the idea that “technique” is the most crucial element that makes up the work of art. According to him, it is not accepted the claim that the primary purpose of the artwork is to “show the expression of technique.” Apart from the formalists, the critics, who defend that the content combines with many disciplines such as sociology and history,

cannot be expected to accept that the essential element is “technique”. It has been a matter of criticism that formalist critics assume Formalism above other literary criticisms. It will be correct to mention that the birth of each academic period emerged as a criticism of the previous period. The Formalist Literary Theory also emerged from the opposition to the last period, Social, religious, emotional, economic, historical, etc., sub-fields to be included in literary criticism. For this reason, it should be considered normal for them to see Formalism above other periods. Then the lack of explanations by the formalists is a matter of dispute. Because definitions are new terms in literature, it takes time to be understood by people, including literary critics. The Use of Formalism in poetry and prose separately has led to confusion. While focusing on formal features such as going beyond the usual meanings of words, rhythm, rhyme, and sound events in poetry, the focus is on narration with Fabula and Syuzhet in prose. This duality delayed the understanding of Formalism.

### 3. CONCLUSION

As a text-oriented approach, Formalism is known to be focusing on form rather than content in literary work. Formalism contributed significantly to the development of art, the defence of art’s right to autonomy and innovation, and the protection of discovery. Formalist Literary Criticism has been evaluated in terms of its formation, purpose, and missing parts in this study. The main problem of this article is that the reader has only some basic knowledge of Formalism. In this direction, a brief history of Formalism and the concepts of Fabula and Syuzhet, which are its essential elements, are explained with examples. Formalism as a literary critical theory begins with examining poetry and later prose in the 20th century with different methods. Formalism is a text-centred criticism supported by various references. It has been concluded that linguistics examines literary work based on some literary principles. It is based on the views of scientists such as Aristotle, Hegel, and Saussure. What all three scientists have in common is the emphasis on language. Therefore, language is emphasised in studying the work. Formalism is a style that advocates the belief that art is for art's sake.

Although there are many supporters of Formalism, it is also criticised as a theory seen as incomprehensible and incomplete per se. Formalists are claimed to speak up. For this reason, the opinion that it cannot gain a permanent place in literature emerges. The formal method has attracted widespread attention. It has become controversial not because of its unique methodology but because of its attitude toward understanding and

studying the technique. It is argued that literary works should be examined only in terms of literature. Some critics also criticise it for the lack of information about art history, the artist's biography or intentions, the time when the work was created, or society which are seen indispensable for the analysis. Unlike Freud's critique of Psychoanalysis, Saussure's linguistic approaches are essential to the Formalists. Formalists focus on the language of the work. They examine the literary elements objectively around the work. The "form of discourse", which originates in Aristotle's *Poetics* and *Rhetoric*, is essential for the Formalists. Aristotle, like the Formalists, emphasises how the subject is handled, not what it is handled. The harmony between the elements that make up the narrative is the point that the Formalists seek in work.

#### 4. SUMMARY

Literature is an art that is created by society to represent society. The cultural reflections of society have been desired to be seen in literary works by all those who are interested in literature. The purpose of literature differs in terms of readers and authors. While the reader reads to understand, the author wants to be understood. This understanding remained unchanged until the 20th century. However, in the 20th century, the defenders of the Formalism movement emphasized the slogan of art for art's sake with Linguistic reasons. Russian Formalism emerged in Russia and Poland in the 1910s as a literary movement and a school of literary theory. According to the Formalists, literature does not have a purpose to reflect or represent society. Formalists felt that literature should be based on a distinctive method, distinct from other kinds of studies. They have tried to adapt the question of what is literary to literary studies. This adaptation process has been called the "habit-breaking" process by the Formalists. It is understood that Formalism is a school that teaches an objection to all manner of impertinent convention, feudalistic ritual behavior, aesthetic ornamentalism, and empty rhetorical abstraction. (Chan, 2019, p. 77) Formalism was first initiated in the genre of poetry. Later, it was adapted to prose. The work has been accepted as a world in itself, it has been requested to be accepted. Since this request was brought forward by linguists, it was brought to literature with linguistic explanations. In this study, information about Formalism is given, and what the Formalists defend has been explained. The concepts of *Fabula* and *Syuzhet*, which are the basic elements of formalist analysis, have been explained through an example. It is accepted that Formalism is tied very directly to estrangement. In *Alienation*, another Formalist element, the Formalist author open up his or her worldview by estranging the subject.

Syuzhet is used in the sense of plot. It is the plot that the author presents in the text. Fabula is accepted as a story. The story is not a type of narrative, it is a chain of events that follow the sequence in life. However, the author's way of presenting this story can not be like that at all. Fabula has been stated to be the logical ordering, while Syuzhet is the author's fictional ordering. In addition to this situation, the limitations of Formalism are discussed. Aristotle, Hegel, and Saussure were a source of inspiration for the Formalists. However, the fact that literature is closely related to society has caused academic and philosophical explanations and expectations to not be accepted enough. Formalists advocating text-centered literature were not understood by readers and critics. The reader preferred that literature exists not for art, but to represent society. For this reason, Formalism has not been a long-term criticism.

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