A Comparative Analysis of Formalist Terminology in Two Scholarly Articles

Formalism is a school of literary criticism that emerged in Russia in the early 20th century. Formalists argue that the primary object of literary study is the literary work itself, and that the work should be analyzed in terms of its own formal elements, such as its structure, language, and imagery.

Russian Formalism: Comparison of the use of Formalist terminology in two scholarly articles and evaluation of Formalism's contribution to scholarship

by ARX Reads

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Two of the most important formalist critics were Victor Shklovsky and Boris Eichenbaum. Shklovsky's essay "The Formalist Method in Literary Criticism" is considered to be one of the founding manifestos of formalism. Eichenbaum's essay "The Formalist School of Literary Criticism" provides a more comprehensive overview of the formalist movement.

In this essay, I will compare the use of formalist terminology in these two articles. I will identify the key terms that each critic uses, and I will discuss the different ways in which they define and use these terms.

Key Terms

The following are some of the key terms that Shklovsky and Eichenbaum use in their essays:

* **Form**: Shklovsky defines form as "the sum of all the devices that serve to make the material of the work prominent." Eichenbaum defines form as "the organization of the work's elements." * **Device**: Shklovsky defines a device as "any element of the work that is used to make the material of the work prominent." Eichenbaum does not define the term "device," but he uses it to refer to a wide range of literary techniques, such as metaphor, simile, and irony. * **Function**: Shklovsky defines function as "the purpose of a device." Eichenbaum defines function as "the way in which a device contributes to the overall structure of the work." * **Material**: Shklovsky defines material as "the raw material of the work." Eichenbaum defines material as "the content of the work."

Comparison of Terminology

Shklovsky and Eichenbaum use many of the same key terms in their essays, but they often define and use these terms in different ways.

For example, Shklovsky defines form as "the sum of all the devices that serve to make the material of the work prominent." Eichenbaum, on the other hand, defines form as "the organization of the work's elements." This difference in definition reflects the different ways in which Shklovsky and Eichenbaum view the relationship between form and content. Shklovsky

sees form as something that is imposed on the material of the work, while Eichenbaum sees form as something that is inherent in the work itself.

Another example of the different ways in which Shklovsky and Eichenbaum use formalist terminology is their use of the term "device." Shklovsky defines a device as "any element of the work that is used to make the material of the work prominent." Eichenbaum, on the other hand, does not define the term "device," but he uses it to refer to a wide range of literary techniques, such as metaphor, simile, and irony. This difference in usage reflects the different ways in which Shklovsky and Eichenbaum view the role of literary devices. Shklovsky sees devices as something that is used to make the material of the work prominent, while Eichenbaum sees devices as something that is used to create the overall structure of the work.

Shklovsky and Eichenbaum's use of formalist terminology is a reflection of the different ways in which they view the nature of literary texts. Shklovsky sees literary texts as something that is made up of a series of devices that are used to make the material of the work prominent. Eichenbaum, on the other hand, sees literary texts as something that is organized into a series of elements that are used to create the overall structure of the work.

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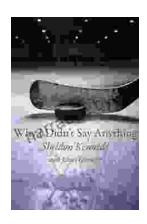
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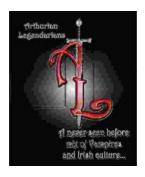|	
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