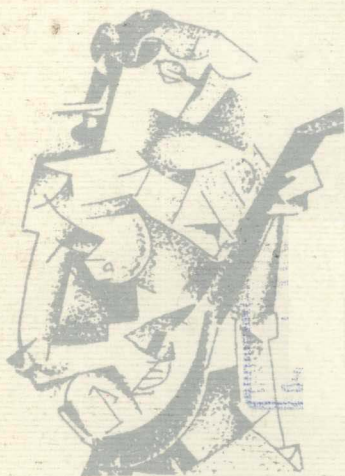


DEFAMILIARISATION:
THE POETIC ART OF JOHN DONNE

陌生化：
约翰·邓恩的诗歌艺术

李正栓 著 Li Zhengshuan



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内容提要

本书采用维克多·什克洛夫斯基的“陌生化”理论，对约翰·邓恩的诗歌艺术进行研究。邓恩生活在一个戏剧繁荣、抒情诗盛行并带有彼特拉克风格以及希腊、罗马神话深刻印记的时代。然而，他做出不懈的努力，旨在摆脱业已确立的传统，标新立异，对传统诗歌表现手法加以陌生化。本书共分三章，从思维模式、意象运用和表现形式三个角度深入探索与分析邓恩的诗歌艺术。

第一章将陌生化视为一种思维模式，而非技巧，探讨邓恩在思维模式上的陌生化。邓恩的陌生化思维首先表现在他对人的非人格化，以及对人和物的奇想妙喻方面。将世俗与神圣融为一体、把玄学思想与感情铸为一炉，这是邓恩陌生化思维的另外两个方面。

第二章阐述邓恩在诗歌意象上的陌生化，集中研讨他如何从科学领域摄取意象来表现爱情和宗教主题，对整个诗歌传统进行陌生化。

第三章考察邓恩如何利用口语体语言和不规则标点与缩进，以期造成阅读受阻现象，延长感知过程，从而使读者有充分时间领悟其诗歌的艺术性。本章还考察邓恩如何创造新的诗歌形式，详细分析了《歌与短歌》集里的音韵格律，以及邓恩对传统诗歌形式的陌生化。最后，本章对邓恩诗歌的戏剧性特征进行了考察。邓恩的戏剧性特征极大地丰富了诗歌的表现技巧。他将诗中说话者的感情戏剧化，使其诗歌所表现的内容更为生动、具体。邓恩开创了非戏剧诗领域中戏剧化表达的风格。

后记首先对什克洛夫斯基的“陌生化”理论进行重新评价，指出这一理论的优点与不足之处，然后对邓恩的诗进行了总体评价，确认邓恩实质上是一个不折不扣的现实主义诗人，最后简述邓恩在不同方面对17世纪、19世纪和20世纪一些大诗人所产生的影响。后记还对邓恩研究的方向提出若干建议。

关键词：约翰·邓恩 诗歌艺术 陌生化

序

约翰·邓恩在创作上标新立异,反对确立的传统。他的诗歌充满了奇思妙喻,带有说理思辩的色彩,富于戏剧性,这些主要特色都激发了当代学术界的浓厚兴趣。然而,究竟是什么赋予他的诗歌以内在的统一性,并使读者强烈感受到他的艺术魅力?对这些问题的回答恐怕是仁者见仁了。本书作者独辟蹊径,将20世纪俄国批评家什克洛夫斯基的陌生化理论用于邓恩诗歌的研究。作者首先将陌生化视为一种思维模式而非技巧,并以此研讨邓恩在思维模式方面的陌生化。作者接着阐明邓恩在诗歌意象方面的陌生化,最后又审视了诗人如何利用口语体语言和不规则标点与缩进,以期造成阅读受阻现象,延长感知过程,使读者有充分时间领悟其诗歌的艺术性。总之,以陌生化理论为基础的剖析,不仅使邓恩诗歌的诸多特点获得了内在的统一性,也阐明了他的诗歌之所以产生艺术感染力的缘由。迄今为止,国内外尚无人作过类似的尝试。作者的探讨是有益的,成功的,可资参考与借鉴的。

本书是正栓数年寒窗苦读的结晶。他于1996年考入北京大学,专攻17世纪英国玄学派大师邓恩的诗歌,获得博士学位。他勤奋好学,锐意进取。进入北大之后,尽管他阅读量大,涉猎颇广,但他每天都必读邓恩的某些代表诗作,反复吟咏,从不间断,而每读一遍又都有某些新的发现或新的体会。在研究过程中,他时刻关注国内外涌现的最新资料,千方百计查询,惟恐遗漏,并通过各种可能的渠道加以收集,而且不惜工本。在日常生活中,只要谈起

邓恩的诗歌,他总是津津乐道,不知疲倦。重视文本的细读,一丝不苟的学风,锲而不舍的精神,勤于钻研,善于思考,这些都是学术研究当中值得称许和学习的基本品质。的确,《陌生化:约翰·邓恩的诗歌艺术》一书凝聚着正栓数年的心血,它的出版使人不禁想到“书山有路勤为径”这句老话。

正栓是一位年轻的教授,正处于人生的兴旺时期。他已有数种编著、教材和多篇论文问世,科研成绩斐然。但是,希望他以本书的出版作为自己从事英国文学研究的新出发点,踏上新的征程,继续奋斗,寻觅,探索,就像邓恩笔下的“圆规”那样,力争描画出一个美满的圆。

胡家峦

2001年12月20日于北大

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Introduction

The application of Victor Shklovsky's theory to a study of John Donne's poetry is quite an adventure because, so far as I know, such an attempt has never been made.¹ In discussing Donne's poetry, critics have generally devoted themselves to the explication of his images, some of his poetic lines or stanzas, and his rhetorical devices.² With their emphasis on the Petrarchan and baroque qualities in Donne's poetry³ they place Donne among Elizabethan poets. Of course, an Elizabethan poet Donne is. He cannot have totally escaped being influenced by conventions. In fact, he received nurture from literary traditions and his individual talent grew right out of them. The scope of Donne's learning was wide, which helped shape his thought and constantly helped him form new feelings as well. For example, his reading of Persius and Juvenal was partially responsible for his sudden wave of satire.⁴ His adoption of Petrarchan imagery, in Anthony Mortimer's analysis, is also a case in point. Donne parodied the Petrarchan conventions and at the same time, according to Mortimer, used them seriously.⁵ Kenneth Hopkins holds that "Donne's secular poetry belongs almost wholly to the reign of Elizabeth".⁶ But, with the overemphasis on him as an Elizabethan poet, Donne's unique position in the development of English poetry was likely to be overlooked. As a result, Donne's distinctive contribution to the development of English poetry suffer se-

vere undervaluation.

Donne is more than merely an Elizabethan poet. We all know that his literary "career" leapt over the three successive reigns of Elizabeth I, James I and Charles I. Toward the end of the sixteenth century, i.e., toward the end of Elizabeth's reign, the mental atmosphere began to change. Donne's style reflects the changing spirit of his time. The idiom he uses to express his thought and feeling is peculiar. When writing poems he had in fact set his mind on departure from tradition.⁷ In most of Wyatt's poems, the poet is almost always complaining. He is sorrowful; he is his lady's slave; her coldness is a perpetual torture to him. Donne seldom complains, or, to be more exact, he never complains for the mere sake of complaint. The lover in Donne's poems never appears slavish though he may have various kinds of moods. And, the lover in Donne's poems sometimes suffers but seems always able to get the better of his mistress or a person who interferes with his love. Both in form and in content, Wyatt's poems are far simpler than Donne's. Donne's poems bear vast range of reference to life and speculation on many subjects, both secular and divine. Henry Howard maintains more regular normal accent than Wyatt. He is the first English poet to use blank verse—"a strange metre" as his publisher calls it—which enjoys popularity in the succeeding four centuries. Donne is not moved by this verse form. The spirit of Howard's love poems is almost identically that of a patient sufferer from his love's absence or disdain. This sufferer is willing to endure the misery as long as he can think of his love, as in the case described in "Love, That Does Reign and Live Within My Thought": "Sweet is the death that taketh end by love." Howard sometimes praises the physical beauty

of his mistress, and feels sorry over beauty's transitory nature. Donne never describes the physical beauty of his mistress, let alone lament its fading away. In essence, the love poems of Wyatt and Howard are largely courting poems whereas the love poems of Donne do not show such courting. In Sidney's poems, there is no expression of a happy, consummated love, at any level. Donne's poetry includes some poems that express great satisfaction in a love relationship. Sidney makes more reference to classical literature and mythology while Donne makes more reference to theology. Donne's early works, paradoxes, epigrams, and elegies, seem like a vigorous reaction to the Petrarchizing and pastoralizing song and madrigal writers. Sometimes, Donne starts a poem in conventional style but he implicitly rejects it as he writes on, as in the case of "The Apparition", "The Message" and some other poems. Spenser's *Amoretti* forms a strict series, expressing and recounting a courtship, a very simple direct type of courtship though it is very long. Donne's poems in *Songs and Sonets*⁸ are nothing of this kind. Each poem has its own mood. Shakespeare's sonnets deal with his relationship with a man and a dark lady. Many of them are concerned simply with expressing the poet's love and regard, or encouraging his friend to get married and to produce children, or proclaiming the immortality of literature as indicated in Sonnet 18. Donne's poems are concerned with more things than Shakespeare's. Shakespeare's sonnets direct attention to nature, mythology and a number of elements in the stock-in-trade of Elizabethan poetry. Donne shuns them. In Shakespeare's sonnets one seldom finds the religious or philosophical references characteristic of those in *Songs and Sonets*. In Donne's *Songs and Sonets*, there is a definitely thicker mixture of imagery and al-

lusion, and a more rapid shift from reference to reference.

This inclination of Donne is also noticed by Mortimer who says that "Donne extends the range of Petrarchan imagery and devices by using them for non-Petrarchan ends, such as the erotic love poems and the religious sonnets."⁹ Donne handled other conventions in a similar way. Despite the fact that he made use of tradition, he initiated, in a sense, a new poetic tradition, which was to be followed by not a few poets of the seventeenth century, though somewhat neglected in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries until rediscovered in the twentieth century. When I first thought about the qualities of his poetry and pondered on how to term them, I found that Shklovsky had already invented a term "defamiliarisation", which fits very well to the description of Donne's poetry.

Donne estranged himself from tradition. C. S. Lewis, is probably unaware of the existence of such a term as "defamiliarisation", yet he does notice the newness of Donne's poetry as he remarks:

Donne creates a kind of poem that had never been heard before. He does so by combining two qualities which, had he not combined them, we might still regard as incompatible. On the one hand, his lyrics are dramatic; they sound like *ex tempore* speech and imply a concrete situation.... On the other hand, he weaves into these seemingly casual utterances the recondite analogies and *discors concordia* which in du Bartas had had no lyric or dramatic function, being used rather to vivify matter the most remote from our daily life.¹⁰

Here C. S. Lewis mentions only two aspects of Donne's poetry: dramaticism and conceit. In fact, the newness of Donne's poetry can be found in many other aspects which I am to discuss in the chapters that follow.

Shklovsky coined the term "defamiliarisation" in his reaction to Alexander Potebnya's maxim that "art is thinking in images." Potebnya actually interprets art as creating symbols, and to this view of his Shklovsky objects, claiming that

images change little; from century to century, from nation to nation, from poet to poet, they flow on without changing. Images belong to no one: they are "the Lord's". The more you understand an age, the more convinced you become that the images a given poet used and which you thought his own were taken almost unchanged from another poet. The works of poets are classified or grouped according to the new techniques that poets discover or share, and according to their arrangement and development of the resources of language; poets are much more concerned with arranging images than with creating them.¹¹

Shklovsky holds that "poetic imagery is a means of creating the strongest possible impression. . . . Poetic imagery is but one of the devices of poetic language."¹² He clearly points out that art is not a totality of imagery, but a technique:

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. *Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object; the object is not important.*¹³

Shklovsky is much more interested in the nature of the devices that may produce certain shock effect. According to him, the purpose of art is to change the mode of perception from the automatic and practical to the artistic. Shklovsky seems to have put forward

the theory of "defamiliarisation" precisely on the basis of summarizing the features of Donne's poetic practice. Indeed, instances of defamiliarisation in Donne's poems, including his modes of thinking, his imagery, language, and verse forms, display quite abundantly a new tendency in poetic creation. Even his unusual punctuation contributes much to the effect of his language and rhythm which are tortuous and impeded. When discussing the nature of poetic language, Shklovsky gives his definition of poetry:

The language of poetry is, then, a difficult, roughened, impeded language. ...we can define poetry as *attenuated*, *tortuous* speech. Poetic speech is *formed* speech.¹⁴

Shklovsky examines closely the works of Leo Tolstoy. He finds that Tolstoy, in many of his novels, makes the familiar seemingly strange by declining to mention the name of the familiar object. He describes an object as if he were seeing it for the first time, or an event as if it were happening for the first time. Shklovsky cites, as an example of defamiliarisation, Tolstoy's description of the scene of flogging.¹⁵

In fact, the idea, not the term, of "defamiliarisation" can be traced back to Aristotle who, in his *Poetics*, thinks that poetic language must appear strange and unusual. Aristotle also points out that by deviating from the normal idiom the language gains distinction.¹⁶ And it can also be found in the Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley who, in his *A Defence of Poetry*, says that "Poetry lifts the veil from the hidden beauty of the world, and makes familiar objects be as if they were not familiar."¹⁷

In reading Donne's poetry, very often, one finds it difficult to

obtain sense through habitual or automatic perception or understanding. There is always more in his poems than meets the eye. One has to think harder in order to catch an effect of defamiliarisation and understand what is conveyed at a deeper level. As Shklovsky says, "Art removes objects from the automatism of perception in several ways."¹⁸ Donne applies quite frequently the technique of defamiliarisation in his poems. In describing love, he seldom pours himself out in a lyrical way as if love did not call for lyricism. In his poems, the speaker would rather try to talk about love and try to persuade a woman to love him, or talk someone into accepting his argument about his love. And quite often, he talks about love in terms of cosmology and religion. Donne is more revolutionary in employing cosmological and religious images for the illustration of love. His application of the technique of defamiliarisation makes it demanding for the reader to understand many of his images including some of the seemingly common ones such as tears and sighs. In his use of stanzaic forms, he is unique in inventing a great variety of forms, almost one for each poem in his *Songs and Sonets*. It is extremely difficult to include him in any of the main currents of past and present traditions. He stands alone. One can hardly characterize his poetry in terms of metre and form. He is forever changing. He experiments with these things just as he tries his luck on various kinds of jobs, none of which really secured him an easy living.

Donne's stanzaic forms show an interesting phenomenon: there is irregularity in regularity and regularity in irregularity. He shows his strange modes of thinking in his *Songs and Sonets*. The poems in it are just a collection of his "visualized" reflections or meditations on love and on a world of change and unsafety. To him, the change

and unsafety in the world is acutely felt. His elegies are not in the usual sense of lamenting for or eulogizing the deceased. They are actually erotic love poems. His divine poems are far from being confined to singing praises of God. There is a mixture of human and divine love. There is respect for God. There is a kind of fear. There is also imagery in which God can ravish. Even in his poems about human love the presence of the Divinity can always be felt. In short, Donne's poems demand a strenuous study. Between the lines, there hides a wounded and suffering heart. His poems, in one way or another, reveal this heart. His ideas, his understanding of the world, his meditation on life, religion, love, and many other things are all embodied in his poems. They even represent different aspects of ideology, politics, religion, etc. Therefore, to understand Donne's poems by habitual methods often encounters difficulty.

Defamiliarisation is an appropriate term to describe Donne's employment of many images, including his numerous descriptions about sex and love. In many places, defamiliarisation is not merely a technique, but a mode of thinking. In most cases, his erotic images are defamiliarised.

Final, though difficult, recognition of Donne's defamiliarised images and their meanings helps us to catch the meaning embedded in his poems through paradoxes and other devices. Our failure to understand immediately what a poem of his means is due to many defamiliarising factors, such as paradoxical expressions and structures, impeded movements on account of unconventional punctuation, different poetic line lengths, and his unique stanzaic forms. Also, in Donne's poetry there abounds lively colloquialism, which is, in fact, a kind of defamiliarisation, as colloquialism helps poetry for the

nonce get away from the literariness of the poetic tradition. Donne's language seems non-poetic and may sound just like ordinary daily spoken language. The deceptive simplicity and deeper intricacy is a result of Donne's defamiliarised use of familiar oral language as poetic language. Such a language, in the context of Donne's poetry, is still a literary language.

The rhythm in Donne's poems is rather difficult to deal with. His use of the stressed and unstressed syllables displays defamiliarisation. Quite often, Donne does not follow the commonly-used metres. He seems not to care much for the conventional iambs. He employs whatever metre he thinks fit for the expression of his strong outbursts of emotion. Donne's syntactical pauses, or caesuras, provide much alienation effect. It slows down the poet's lyrical, and narrative as well as the reader's reading speed, and thus prolongs the process of the reader's perception. It is also quite obvious that Donne's various indentations cause different readings. This "laying bare" technique¹⁹ is just one of the techniques that produce the effect of defamiliarisation.

I do not apply Shklovsky's term "defamiliarisation" in my analysis in its strict sense: I do not do phonetic and lexical study in my reading of Donne's poetry, and I do not object to studying Donne's images. I have come to realize that even discussing the defamiliarisation in Donne's poetry is too big a subject for one book. Therefore, I will concentrate in this book on how Donne achieves defamiliarisation in modes of thinking, imagery, and form.

This book is divided into three chapters, followed by an epilogue.