

*A Critical Study of John Donne's Allegorical Poetry with the Concepts of Yin and Xiu in Wenxindiaolong*

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**Abstract**

Widely hailed as one of the greatest achievements in Chinese literary criticism, Liu Xie's *Wenxindiaolong* has benefited generations of writers and critics afterwards, and today it has been the very object of study in 'Dragonology' and related subjects. Although its ideas have been investigated and elucidated to a great extent, its application, particularly in the appreciation and criticism of Western literary writings, has yet to flourish.

The current study highlights two concepts originating from the work, Yin ('Latent') and Xiu ('Out-standing'), and explores the feasibility of their applications in the appreciation of Western literary writings, in particular, the allegorical poetry of the metaphysical poet John Donne. The richness of allegorical meanings in Donne's poetry epitomizes Liu's 'latency', and the striking lines in his poetry, like those with his conceits, are 'out-standing' in Liu's terms. The only limitation of Donne's work could be his flowery language and imagery, which falls short of the emphasis on 'naturalness' in Liu's terms.

Keywords: Poetry, Allegory, John Donne, Yin(隱), Xiu(秀), Liu Xie (劉勰), *Wenxindiaolong* (文心雕龍)

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## Introduction

The ‘veil’ in the title of my study refers to an ancient symbol used by scholars to describe the allegorical rhetoric maneuvered by generations of writers, namely, the ‘veil’ of allegory. Its earliest appearance can be traced back to the Scriptures, in particular the Second Letter to the Corinthians written by St Paul (Tambling, 2010). Whether understood in a literal sense, as that covering Moses’s face, or figuratively, like that veiling over Israelites’ hearts, the veil is a symbol that always possesses some magnetic mysteriousness, awaiting anyone who wishes to uncover the ultimate truth or the sublime beauty behind.

Interpreting literary works, especially those which are allegorical, then, is equivalent to drawing the veils set forth by writers. This essay is an attempt at the application Chinese literary theories, in particular, Yin and Xiu originating from *Wenxin diaolong*, in the examination and appreciation of Western literary writings, namely, the allegorical poetry of John Donne. I will begin by a careful analysis of Yin and Xiu/Yinxiu (隱秀) in Liu Xie’s terms, with a close reading of relevant passages in *Wenxin diaolong*. After that, Donne’s poetry will be examined in great detail.

## Research motives

The study of *Wenxin diaolong* has long been a hot topic in Chinese literary scholarship, ancient and modern. As is often the case in which classical Chinese literary works are studied, the study of the magnum opus has switched from a traditional verbal commentary and textual criticism (傳統訓詁、考據) to a more contemporary theoretical, systematical study, by way of the methodologies from various disciplines, namely, the study of Chinese Classics, History, Culture, Literature and Aesthetics, and so forth<sup>1</sup>. More recently, an inter-disciplinary or inter-cultural approach is advocated, with the hope of integrating into international scholarship<sup>2</sup>. Nevertheless, few studies have ‘shed new light on the significance of *Wenxin diaolong* in the history of Chinese literary criticism’ (Zhang 234). The current study is an attempt to show the applicability of Liu Xie’s theoretical concepts in the appreciation of Western literary works. It is a shot at the applicability, or to some extent the universality, of the two concepts, Yin and Xiu, the research of which long hindered by the problem of originality in chapter *The Latent and the Out-standing*<sup>3</sup>, in

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<sup>1</sup> See Ling Dong, 《《Wenxindiaolong》Xiandaiyanjiu zhi fansi》(160).

<sup>2</sup> See Yazhi You 《Wenxindiaolong zhi zuopinjiegoulilunchanweipo – qujing yingjiadeng zhi xianxiangwenxuelun》.

<sup>3</sup> For instance, Zhongming Lin, in his article 《Qiaoyisi de 「wenyuan」 、 「wenxin」 yu 《youlixisi》

explicating and appraising John Donne's allegorical poetry.

### On Yinxiu (隱秀)

The words Yin and Xiu appeared separately a lot of times in Liu Xie's *Wenxin diaolong*<sup>4</sup>. However, the chapter *Latent and Out-standing* (Yinxiu, 隱秀) is the first to put the two critical idioms together for discussion and, most critics will agree, the one from which the critical literary terms originate. Therefore, it is worth examining the chapter in detail for the start of our discussion<sup>5</sup>.

The ways of mind go far indeed; and the mutations of the affections in literature<sup>6</sup> go deep. When the source is profound, branching streams go from it; when the root flourishes, the ear of grain stands lofty. Thus, in the bright flowering of literature, there are latent elements and elements that stand out. The latent is the layered significance that lies beyond the text; the out-standing is that which rises up uniquely within the piece. The latent is fully accomplished in complex and multiple concepts. The out-standing shows its craft in preeminent superiority. These are the splendid achievement of old works, an excellent conjunction of talent and the affections.

(夫心術之動遠矣，文情之變深矣。源奧而派生，根盛而穎峻，是以文之英蕤，有秀有隱。隱也者，文外之重旨者也；秀也者，篇中之獨拔者也。隱以復意為工，秀以卓絕為巧。斯乃舊章之懿績，才情之嘉會也。)

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de wentiwenhu》, wrote: The fragmentary chapter Yinxiu, although had the attention of a number of scholars of textual criticism, receives relatively little attention as to its application in terms of practical, aesthetic criticism and hence the way it may catch up with world literature and art.<sup>7</sup>

(‘殘缺的〈隱秀篇〉，雖然受到不少喜歡考證文獻者的注意，但是如何在實際文藝應用上發揮，並與世界文藝接軌，卻相對的未受到積極的重視。’) (p. 62).

On this point, Mei Liu (《Taiwanjinwushinianlai》《Wenxindiaolong》xue yanjiu)) expresses a similar view: ‘Since scholars mostly treat it as counterfeit, through the course of collation and annotation they often neglect the textual problems of the roughly 400 words in between the chapter; as a result, the meaningful chapter receives relatively little research.’

(‘由於學者多判此篇為偽作，校注時對其中四百餘字的補亡多略過不論，故此篇精義雖多，研究者卻較少。’) (p. 407).

The English translation of the chapter's title is that of Stephen Owen.

<sup>4</sup> Yin appeared a total of fifty times while Xiu, nineteen times; the figures are calculated based on the Concordance of Chen, He & Lau.

<sup>5</sup> There are altogether three translations available to the author of this essay: Stephen Owen's (*Readings in Chinese Literary Thought*), Youzhong Shi's (*The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*), and that by Siu-kit Wong, Allan Chung-hang Lo and Kwong-tai Lam (*The Book of Literary Design*). As for the concept of Yin and Xiu, after considerations about the three renditions (Youzhong Shi's translations are ‘the recondite and the conspicuous’, while the translation by the three scholars are ‘hidden grace and the visible flower’), the author thinks that Stephen Owen's renditions are most thoughtful and literary (‘latent and out-standing’). Unless otherwise specified, the translation is that of Owen's.

<sup>6</sup> 文情 is rendered into ‘affections in literature’. It should be noted that in Liu Xie's times, there is no such concept as literature as we understand it today.

Liu Xie begins his chapter by focusing on the relationship between the ways of mind and their manifestations in literature. This in a way hearkens back, although not explicitly, to the *Major Commentary to the Book of Poetry* (詩大序)<sup>7</sup>: ‘Poetry is where the intention goes. At heart it is intent, and let out in words, it is poetry.

When emotion is moved inside, it takes shape in words.’ Yet what the *Major Commentary* focuses on is poetry, while in this passage Liu Xie discusses the more general concept of 文. According to chapter forty four, *The General Technique* (總術), Liu Xie gives out the following distinction between 文 and 筆: ‘In common parlance these days, a distinction is made between wen (文) and pi (筆), with pi as writing without rhyme and wen as writing with rhyme’. Hence, 文 is rhymed writings, including poetry (although poetry can be unrhymed). Liu Xie explained why there are two types of elements, the latent and the out-standing: it is because of the complexity of human affections. Through the metaphor of flower and roots (the metaphor of river source and its streams also plays a part), human affections and the styles and contents in literature are seamlessly tied together. Next appear the important definitions of Yin and Xiu: the former, layered significance beyond the text; the latter, the elements that stand out within a piece (hence translated as ‘out-standing’). Yin, the latent, is therefore concordant with allegory. Whether Xiu is the same case will be discussed later. From this passage alone Yin and Xiu seem two contrasting elements: one associates with complex and multiple meaning and is thus obscure, another is prominent. This is the first property of the two concepts.

When the latent is a normative form, a truth is dominant<sup>8</sup> beyond the text; mysterious resonances get through all around, and hidden coloration emerges from the sunkenness. One may compare it to the way in which the lines and images in a hexagram mutate to form another hexagram, or how rivers may contain pearls and jade. Thus when the individual lines mutate in the form of a hexagram, they transform into the Four Images [the four component diagrams]. Pearls or jade sunken under the water will form round or square ripples.  
(夫隱之為體，義主文外，祕響傍通，伏采潛發，譬爻象之變互體，川瀆之韞珠玉也。故互體變爻，而化成四象；珠玉潛水，而瀾表方圓。)

This passage extends further the elaboration on the concept of Yin, and compares it with hexagram. Meaning changes as readers move from a literal to an allegorical reading, and this is comparable to the mutations of the lines on a hexagram (to form another new hexagram). The next few hundred words are counterfeit according to a lot of eminent scholars on *Wenxindiaolong*; however some scholars maintain that they are original. For the sake of a succinct discussion, the passage from ‘始正而未奇’ to ‘此閨房之悲極也’ is excluded here.

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<sup>7</sup> See also 禮記樂記 and 莊子天道 (Liu & Zhan, 1989).

<sup>8</sup> There is a textual variant to ‘主’: in another version the word becomes ‘生’. According to Ji Jun, ‘生’ is the proper word in the paragraph (Liu and Zhan, 1989). ‘生’ makes more sense in the reading of this passage, yet it does not mean that ‘主’ is inappropriate. ‘義生文外’ can perhaps be rendered as ‘a truth extends beyond the text’.

North wind moves autumn grass;

Horses at the border think of returning home.

These lines speak of cold weather and sad events, the lament of a man who finds himself exiled from home.

(“朔風動秋草，邊馬有歸心”，氣寒而事傷，此羈旅之怨曲也。)<sup>9</sup>

This is the very first as well as the only practical criticism provided by Liu Xie in this chapter. This, without any doubt, serves as an exemplar of an out-standing line (viewing the two lines into one) (Xiuju 秀句) in the poem by Wang Zan (王讚) according to Liu Xie. From *Sui-han-tang Poetry Remarks* (歲寒堂詩話) we know that Xiu can not only mean epigrammatic but also ‘presenting right in front of the eye’ (狀溢目前). Here the two opening lines present an eye-catching scene to readers. However, the lamenting effect of these two lines is achieved through personification: instead of saying the man suffers from nostalgia, it says the horses think of going home. It opens the whole poem with a sad atmosphere, and the nostalgic thought of the man is not directly revealed (it is revealed indirectly and wonderfully) until a few lines later: ‘人情懷舊鄉，客鳥思故林’. Hence, the opening line is also a line which contains latent meaning and is thus allegorical, i.e., it is in line with the definition of Yin (隱). At this point it is worth pointing out that Yin and Xiu are not two absolutely oppositional, contradictory concepts; they should by no means be understood as that of a thesis and an antithesis, without any resolution of synthesis, in Hegel’s terms. Rather, they are complementary concepts<sup>10</sup>. A line which is latent can also be one that is out-standing in the poem<sup>11</sup>. This is the second property of the pair.

Excellent works usually do not make up even a tenth of a literary collection; and within a work, the out-standing lines are scarcely two in a hundred. In both cases [whose works and out-standing lines], we happen on them by a peculiar conjunction of thought; they are not to be sought by studious reflection.

(凡文集勝篇，不盈十一，篇章秀句，裁可百二。並思合而自逢，非研慮之所求也。)

This passage points out the rarity or preciousness of out-standing lines in a work. They are almost like inspired by the Muse<sup>12</sup>, not to be sought after by anyone of the

<sup>9</sup> The English translation here is Youzhong Shi’s.

<sup>10</sup> It is worth a digression on a mode of ancient Chinese philosophical thinking, or if I can put it by the following way, the ‘Chinese dialectical method’: the emphasis on striving for harmony and unity among disunity and disagreement; this, compared to the cliché ‘agree to disagree’, is perhaps a step forward. That Yin and Xiu and two contrasting and yet complementary concepts can be an example of this thinking. Zhang Zai, an ancient Chinese philosopher, observed once: ‘太和所謂道，中涵浮沉、升降、動靜、相感之性’ (《正蒙·太奇》) (qtd. in Changqing Zhang, 2014).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *Wenxindiaolongjiaoshi* (Xie Liu and Yongji Liu): ‘文家言外之旨，往往即在文中警策處，讀者逆志，亦從此處入。蓋隱處即秀處也。’ (1962). Consider also *Wenxindiaolong de feng’gexue* by Ying Zhan (1989, p.146-148).

<sup>12</sup> In Western epic poetry writing there is a tradition of invoking the Muse, a practice not normally seen in Chinese poetry writing. For instance, Edmund Spenser begins his *Faerie Queene* in the following manner, alluding to *The Aeneid* by Virgil: ‘Lo I the man, whose Muse whilome did maske,/As time her taught, in lowly Shepherds weeds,/Am now enforst a far vnfitter taske,[...]Fierce

literati. That is why it is said below ‘Only Nature can bring together these subtleties’.

Sometimes mere obscurity and concealment are considered to be depth; though there may be some quality of mysterious profundity, it is not ‘the latent.’ Or intricate craftsmanship may aim at the artful; though it is lovely, it is not ‘the out-standing’. Only Nature can bring together these subtleties, like plants and trees that are splendid in their flowering. A beauty obtained by added colors is like dying plain silk red and green. The silk dyed red and green is deeply colored, rich and fresh. But the flowers that gleam on the trees have a shallow color, yet a glorious one—this is the way an out-standing line shines in the garden of letters.

(或有晦塞爲深，雖奧非隱，雕削取巧，雖美非秀矣。故自然會妙，譬卉木之耀英華；潤色取美，譬繒帛之染朱綠。朱綠染繒，深而繁鮮；英華耀樹，淺而煒燁。<sup>13</sup>秀句所以照文苑，蓋以此也。)

The main point for Liu Xie in this passage, following up on the last one, is to remind writers not to take great pains to craft their writings<sup>14</sup>. From a compositional perspective, to be too obscure or too crafty at composing is to go against Nature and thus pushing a literary work out of the realm of Yin and Xiu. Sir Herbert Read, in his *English Prose Style* (1980), once remarked: ‘[t]he end of a composition should be natural. There should be a sense that the end is due; that enough, and no more than enough, has been said on the subject’ (p. 72). While he was elaborating on how to clinch a conclusion in prose writing, the essence of his thoughts—the emphasis of naturalness, is in harmony with that of Liu Xie on Yin and Xiu. The term 英華 is roughly equivalent to 英蕤 at the beginning of this chapter. The metaphor of flowering is repeated. The third criterion for Yin and Xiu is that of naturalness. This passage is followed by a Supporting Verse (贊), which concludes the chapter by indicating the effects of Yin and Xiu: the former, leaves readers with a lingering flavor, the latter stirs the mind and the ear, ‘like the lofty resonance of a sheng or pao’.

In summary, Yin and Xiu are two distinct concepts concerns the writings of literary work; they can refer to two styles which are quite contrastive with each other: one remains hidden and one stands out. However, the two concepts are not entirely contradictory; they are complementary to each other; hence both can be understood and placed within the model of the Chinese allegorical tradition (the overlapping area)<sup>15</sup> and as critical idioms, be applied to investigate Western literary works. Thirdly, to be natural is an important criterion of Yin and Xiu, much related to the

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warres and faithfull loues shall moralize my song.’ Comparing the Spenser’s opening with the starting lines of the great poem, 離騷, by 屈原, it is not difficult to notice that both poets strive to elevate the status of the self (the personae or the poets), yet through very different means. 屈原 assumes himself with the identity of a great king’s descendant, and compares himself with the symbol of 香草.

<sup>13</sup> It is worth noting that in one version, the whole sentence is ‘隱篇所以照文苑，秀句所以侈翰林’ (Liu & Zhan, 1989, p. 1508). This is shortened into ‘秀句所以照文苑’ in the Owen’s and Shi’s translations, yet the translation by Wong, Lo and Lam (1999) retains the longer version: ‘This is the reason why pregnant writing lights up the garden of literature, and beautifully constructed sentences enrich the Muses’ woods.’ (p. 150).

<sup>14</sup> Cf. 文章 by 陸游: ‘文章本天成，妙手偶得之。粹然無疵瑕，豈復須人為。’

<sup>15</sup> Sometimes Yinxiu is understood as a whole term and translated as ‘hidden beauty’ (Shaokang Zhang, 2001, p. 233).

creative aspect of writers who set up the veil for readers to draw.

### **On Yin, Xiu and John Donne's allegorical poetry**

The object of this study is Donne's poetry, yet this is not to say that his sermons are not worth reading or of little literary value. In fact, John Donne's sermons are of high regard in the Western literary circle, though they are still of lesser regard than his poetry. The overwhelming attention paid to his poetry in some sense has in some sense shadowed his brilliancy in prose writing. Consider, for instance, the pithiness and wittiness of the following passage, with a tremendous, penetrating force that is not at all less than that of his poetry, as Donne is preaching at people on some martyrs: 'Their death was a birth to them into another life, into the glory of God; it ended one Circle, and created another; for immortality, and eternity is a Circle too; not a Circle where two points meet, but a Circle made at once; This life is a Circle, made with a Compasse, that passe from point to point; That life is a Circle stamped with a print, an endlesse, and perfect Circle, as soone as it begins. Of this Circle, the Mathematician is our great and good God; The other Circle we make up ourselves; we bring the Cradle, and Grave together by a course of nature.'<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, as poetry occupies Liu Xie's system of literary thought greatly, let us proceed to examine some of Donne's famous poems in detail.

Although thy hand and faith—and good works, too—  
Have seal'd thy love, which nothing should undo—  
Yea, though thou fall back, that apostasy  
Confirm thy love; yet much, much I fear thee.  
Women are like the arts: forced unto none,  
Open to'all searchers, unprized, if unknown.  
If I have caught a bird, and let him fly,  
Another fowler using these means as I,  
May catch the same bird; and, as these things be,  
Women are made for men, not him, nor me.  
Foxes and goats, all beasts change when they please:  
Shall women, more hot, wily, wild then these,  
Be bound to one man? And did Nature then  
Idly make them apter to endure than men?  
They're our clogs, not their own: if a man be  
Chained to a galley, yet the galley's free;  
Who hath a plough-land, casts all his seed corn there,  
And yet allows his ground more corn should bear;  
Though Danuby into the sea must flow,  
The sea receives the Rhene, Volga, and Po.  
By nature, which gave it, this liberty  
Thou lov'st, but oh! canst thou love it and me?  
'Likeness glues love.' Then if so thou do,  
To make us like and love, must I change too?  
More than thy hate, I hate't Rather let me  
Allow her change, then change as oft as she;  
And so, not teach but force my opinion

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<sup>16</sup> This is quoted from Mueller (1977).

To love not any one, nor every one.  
To live in one land is captivity:  
To run all countries, a wild roguery;  
Waters stink soon, if in one place they bide,  
And in the vast sea are worse putrified:  
But when they kiss one bank, and, leaving this,  
Never look back, but the next bank do kiss,  
Then are they purest. Change is the nursery  
Of music, joy, life, and eternity.

*(Change)*

At first glance, the blatant misogynist attitude of the persona may stir up feminist critics. The lover of the persona is portrayed almost like a prostitute, such that they 'open' to all searchers, and are of so low a prize. The woman is compared with a variety of things, with a deployment of similes and metaphors; hence, we see the artistry of Donne: to convey the theme of change, or apostasy, he keeps changing the comparison made to the woman, ranging from the arts, a fowler, the beasts, a gallery, a plough-land, the sea. The change is so vast, and faster than that of the effect of montage in a film. A subtle reading leads us to notice that even the numbers of the images keep changing, switching between singular and plural. Yet all these changes point to a single, unvarying fact: women are born with the tendency to change. There are many puns, quite a few sexual, which bring the poem richness in meaning, yet within the limited spaces. For instance, 'fall back' could mean 'to lie down and open the legs', or it could be associated with 'conversion'; in line 6, merely one line, 'open to' can mean 'sexually open to', and 'unknown' can mean 'never have sex before' (Donne, 2011, p. 83-4). Donne sets up numerous veils to be drawn by enthused readers.

According to John Carey (1990), the poem can be read with Donne's anxiety and spiritual agony of his own apostasy (p. 24-5). Donne, originally born into a catholic family, became a Protestant at last, and was made the Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral in 1621. Perhaps, because of his own agony he wanted to downplay his guilt, and have his 'lover' act like a scapegoat and shadow his own faults. This, nevertheless, confers the poem a whole new layer of meaning, and thus renders the poem latent (Yin) in Liu's terms. The last four lines stand out in front of readers' eyes, and is thus out-standing (Xiu): one cannot but feel the ironical tone in the word 'purest', as it is compared with the situation that the woman kisses a man (the bank) after a man; moreover, a paradox occurs at the end, when change is pitted against eternity: is not eternity something stable and immutable? Donne leaves his epistemological question to generations of readers of literature. However, with the constant switch of similes and metaphors, one is prone to feel the craftsmanship of Donne: this could probably be the only tiny blemish, if any, of the skillfully wrought poem.

Let me pour forth  
My tears before thy face whilst I stay here,  
For thy face coins them, and thy stamp they bear;  
And by this mintage they are something worth,  
For thus they bePregnant of thee.  
Fruits of much grief they are, emblems of more,  
When a tear falls, that thou falls which it bore,



So thou and I are nothing then, when on a diverse shore.

On a round ball  
A workman that hath copies by can lay  
An Europe, Afric, and an Asia,  
And quickly make that which was nothing, all:  
So doth each tear Which thee doth wear,  
A globe, yea, world by that impression grow,  
Till thy tears mixed with mine do overflow  
This world, by waters sent from thee, my Heav'n dissolved so.

O more than Moon,  
Draw not up seas to drown me in thy sphere!  
Weep me not dead in thine arms, but forbear  
To teach the sea what it may do too soon:  
Let not the wind Example find  
To do me more harm than it purposeth:  
Since thou and I sigh one another's breath,  
Whoe'er sighs most is cruellest, and hastes the other's death.

*(A Valediction: of Weeping)*

Thodore Redpath (2009) deems this poem as the most 'tempestuous' among the four Valedictions (p. 254). This is a love poem, as are most other poems in the *Songs and Sonnets*. However, John Donne put forward wonderful conceits in this poem, rendering its meaning profound and its message memorable. The first one appeared in line 3: the parting process, making the persona cry, is like coining, because tears run down his face; secondly, the reflection of the lover's face in the persona's tears is like stamping on a coin. William Empson (1961) notes some few other deductions in the meanings for lines 3 and 4 (p. 167). They are thus allegorical, with latent meaning (Yin) hidden beyond the words. 'Pregnant' tears also constitute a wonderful image: it can refer to the size and shape of the tears, as well as indicating the overwhelming of emotions and feelings. Emotions and feelings, apart from extended meanings, are also important constituents for the latent (Yin). All these indirectly, allegorically, demonstrate the love, and thus grief, on the verge of parting, by the persona for the woman. The phrase 'emblems of more' can be a pun, referring to his wife, Ann More.

From tears to the ball to the globe and finally to the moon, all of which round in shape, Donne wonderfully links up things which seem totally indifferent by sheer metaphors. The first two lines of the third stanza stand out (Xiu) as that with the most intense emotions. These two lines also, again indirectly reflect the persona's painful feelings, and is thus Yin. Hence, we see that Yin and Xiu are complementary. The woman is so attractive to the extent that she possesses powerful force which can draw up the sea. That force can either drown the persona to death, or as in the last line of the second stanza, dissolve the world. Again, Donne's conceits in this poem prompt readers to consider that his poem is carefully constructed, not so much in line with the idea of naturalness, in Liu Xie's line of thoughts.

## Concluding remarks

To conclude, this study brings together two lions from the East and the West. While the great work, such as *Metempsychosis*, a satirical allegory, as well as other allegorical poetry, are not treated and explicated due to a limited work-count, in merely two of his shorter poems we can see evidently that Donne is a witty, skillful artist who strives for his best to achieve his rich poetic effects in as less space as possible. The allegories which he has played with are latent (Yin), and sometimes Donne epigrammatic lines stand out (hence, Xiu). Although Liu Xie would need painstaking efforts to understand the meanings which exist beyond the text and even further beyond the horizons of the East, he would probably agree that Donne is a poet who is capable of conveying the 'hidden beauty' (Yinxiu) (although the nearly flagrant use of sexual puns, in the first poem, will not amuse Liu Xie, who is Confucian, Buddhist, and Taoist in thinking).

Donne's flowery language and imagery perhaps fall short of a sense of 'naturalness', which could be a limitation in Liu Xie's eyes. Moreover, it is hope that the 'ethnocentrism' (Derrida, 1998, p. 3) of Western literary theories, which sweeps international literary scholarship powerfully, can be brought under control. We see here that Chinese literary theories do have some applicability, and perhaps universality, as that of their counterpart, in the appreciation of Western literary works. Finally, it would be the best case if it is like what Donne has said: 'As West and East/In all flatt Maps (and I am one) are one,/So death doth touch the Resurrection'. An equal cultural exchange or cross-cultural communication can at least enliven, if not resurrect, both fields of literary scholarship.

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