

**Title:** *Ostranenie* in Retrospect: Viktor Shklovsky's *Energy of Delusion*  
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Viktor Shklovsky's concept of *ostranenie* [estrangement] has proven to be one of the most durable contributions of Russian Formalism to modern literary theory, but our understanding of what this concept meant for Shklovsky tends to be limited to readings of his early works, such as "Iskusstvo kak priem" [Art as Device] (1917) and *O teorii prozy* [On the Theory of Prose] (1925, 1929). My paper analyzes Shklovsky's conception of *ostranenie* as he revised and clarified it in his final work, *Energiia zabluzhdeniia* [The Energy of Delusion] (1981), which has received very little critical attention. Here, Shklovsky returns to his theories about the evolution of plot – and of literary form in general – but in a more organic context than he provided in his earlier work. For the mature Shklovsky, art is inextricably connected with the world, with life, and with the individual; the relationship is reciprocal, so changes in literary form reflect and/or cause changes in the world. The subtitle he has chosen for *Energiia zabluzhdeniia* is *Kniga o siuzhete* [A Book about Plot], but *siuzhet* takes on a surprising meaning here. It is now for Shklovsky something like an intimation of a more "real" reality that always eludes us but gradually becomes clearer as we apprehend it through our constantly evolving art. In this context, *ostranenie* turns out to be simultaneously an artistic device and an effect art has on the world. I argue that this expanded definition of *ostranenie* accounts for the inconsistencies several critics have pointed out in Shklovsky's earlier writings. I also examine the roles of author, text, and reader within the revised schema Shklovsky puts forth in *Energiia zabluzhdeniia* and suggest that Shklovsky's mature thought offers some new ways to conceptualize the "meaning" of a literary text within the Formalist framework.

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