



—— 周建新 著 ——

艾米莉·狄金森诗歌  
文体特征研究

Emily Dickinson's Poetry  
*The Style Speaks*

广西人民出版社

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# 文体特征研究

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周建新

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周建新 著

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风格,即其人

## 风格,即其人

江 枫

周建新博士要我为他的书写一篇序言,我当然乐于从命。我有幸见证了这篇论文的开题,正可借此机会为作者顺利获得博士学位道贺,同时,也为我国狄金森研究取得新的成果称庆。

美国女诗人 Emily Dickinson 最初是以狄更生的名字出现在中国读者面前的。1979 年已故翻译家杨熙龄约我翻译的那几首诗,虽然我已经把作者名译为狄金森,但是在《世界文学》上发表时,用的标题却仍然是“狄更生诗选”,因为那是她在《中国大百科全书·外国文学卷》上的译名。

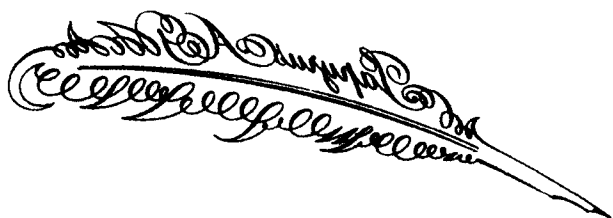
1982 年,是艾米莉·狄金森这个译名在中国正式诞生并被接受的一年。这一年年初一期《诗刊》发表的两首译诗的原作者名,我就坚持了这个译名。按照译诗必须力求形神皆似的观念,对这两首诗的翻译,我已经注意着力于原作形式的再现。于是中国的读者也就看到了面貌独特的狄金森诗。

这两首诗是《暴风雨夜,暴风雨夜》和《灵魂选择自己的伴侣》,发表后居然引起轰动,有人传抄,有人背诵。当时在为《诗刊》编选外国诗歌的女诗人陈敬容,尤为高兴,她面有喜色地对我说:那是我选用的。

但是,《狄金森诗选》的出版并不顺利。20 世纪 80 年代之初,“文革”不远,遗风犹存,“左”的阴影仍像达摩克利斯之剑高悬。一套译诗丛书名义上的主编,唯恐狄



Emily Dickinson's Poetry: The Style Speaks



风格，即其人



Emily Dickinson's Poetry: The Style Sheet

2

金森带有精神污染病毒，坚决要把她从既定的选题中除名，亏得实际上其主事的是我的责任编辑，经过多番力争，才有了这本诗选在1984年问世。毕竟，背负沉重的中国，已经进入了改革开放的新时期。

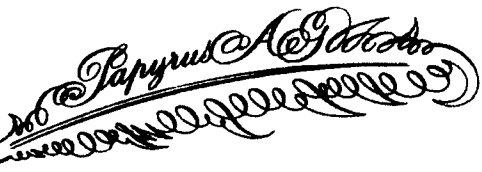
而在此以前，我还为托人从美国买来《狄金森书信全集》而等了半年多，因为不读过这部书信集，我就无法写完我的序言。

《狄金森诗选》问世后的反响和我的《雪莱诗选》不同，《雪莱诗选》发行时，曾有一种就像诗人杨山所说“奔走相告”的响动，而狄金森的来到，好像有润物细无声的效果。从这一时期出现的年轻诗人笔下，可以看得出这位美国女诗人的影响。而小说家，特别是女作家，比如说，蒋子丹，曾用我译狄金森的诗句“昨天已经古老”为题写了一个短篇（后来又用做一个短篇集的集名），她告诉我，另一位女作家竹林以同一诗句为题写了一个中篇，叶文玲则写了一个诗人翻译家在不到十平方米的蜗居内潜心翻译狄金森诗文的故事。现在我译的狄金森诗已经被选入了中学和大学教科书，包括含有诗句“昨天已经古老”的那一首。

对于狄金森诗歌的比较研究和深入解读，也在上个世纪八九十年代的高等院校中展开，并且成了不少学者和研究生的研究课题。有人把她和李清照相提并论，有人对她的作品进行弗洛伊德精神学说分析。诗人唐祈曾介绍他带的研究生和我讨论过难解的狄金森诗作。

20世纪90年代初的一天，戴镗龄教授指导下毕业的中山大学的一位研究生，带着他的硕士毕业论文前来找我，尊我为“权威”，我问他论文后面开列的一长串参考书目是否全都读过，我说你花了两三年时间读了这么多书读了一个狄金森学位，在狄金森研究的领域内你比我有学问，比我权威。他说，您的那篇序言写得好，给了我很大帮助。我说，这倒有可能，因为这是我国第一篇较系统较全面介绍狄金森其人其作的一篇论文。著名评论家雷达曾评价道：专业评论家写好了也不过如此。我所在工作单位一位很有才华但是目空一切的学者，在读了最后一稿时，也曾盛赞该文，虽然他补充道：你就这么一下，我可有好几下！

那位硕士还说，狄金森诗我也译过几十首，但是读了您的译诗集，我就放弃了。我说，放弃，大可不必，因为还有许多好诗，尚有待翻译。



但是要译好,却不能不认真下足功夫。

我很高兴,作为向中国读者较系统介绍了狄金森的第一人,我看到也体验到,我为此而倾注的心血并非徒劳,在互联网尚未出现和相关资料贫乏的条件下,我的译诗和译序曾经孤独地发挥过些许导游的作用,但是今后,由于有了周建新博士这样的论著,阅读和研究狄金森的读者和学者,将会得到更有力而且有效的帮助。

我虽然曾在译序中指出狄金森的诗“自成一格”,但是,诚如建新所言,“时至今日,在世界范围内对艾米莉·狄金森其人其诗的研究已连篇累牍,然而对其诗最显著、最感人的特征——文体风格的研究……至今仍欠深入及全面”。

而且,也如他说,“狄金森诗歌之难懂难读,原因多多,但其诗怪异的文体风格困阻了读者的阅读,应是首因,若有对其诗歌文体特点及意义作系统的分析研究,则将对广大的外国文学教师和狄金森诗歌爱好者的欣赏殊为有益”。

建新博士这部论著正是这样一位有心学者对狄金森诗歌文体特点及意义进行了深入系统分析研究的出色成果。他邀请我为这部论著写一篇序言时,曾经给我写过一封信,其中有这样一段话:

在我看到的大陆出版的五个狄金森诗歌中译本里,我对于您感觉狄金森诗歌灵魂的能力异常佩服,所以我说您的译文最到位。您的感觉能力是您诗歌才气的体现,是其他译者所没有的。而且是熟读狄金森原诗的人才看得出来。您是真正的诗人,因为您有对诗魂的真正的领悟能力,而不仅是有关于诗歌的学问。

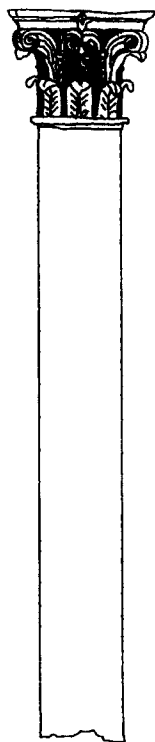
其中有几句他早先就曾说过,但是在他熟读了狄金森原诗并且进行过深入细致的研究之后,同样的话语再由他说出来,就是研究的成果了。我加以引述,当然不是为了满足虚荣,要满足一个外国文学工作者的虚荣,一项终身成就奖就已经足够,我引述是因为我认为这样一段话,不仅仅是涉及对我的一种评价,更重要的是,涉及了诗歌翻译的核心要领。

能不能译好狄金森的诗,取决于能不能“感觉”和“领悟”“狄金森





风格，即其人



Emily Dickinson's Poetry: The Style Book

诗歌灵魂”。周建新的动词用得准确，是“感觉”，是“领悟”，而不只是“理解”，他对宾语也把握得完全正确，是“灵魂”，是“诗魂”，而不只是“意义”。有人鼓吹和夸大“文本意义不确定”，尽管对于文化的传承和文本的翻译而言，这种“不确定”都可以忽略不计，但我们仍然可以回答：只要文本确定，我们就可以使用译入语再现原作文本，以再现原作之魂——传达原作认知的和审美的、言内的和言外的全部信息。

我的译本确实较之其他译本略胜一筹，就因为是在领悟原作的基础上，还采取了符合“形似而后神似”规律的立形以传神的方法。而略胜一筹的译本也是可以超越的，但是，只能以这样一种方式超越。

这也能算是序吗？是的。

是为序。

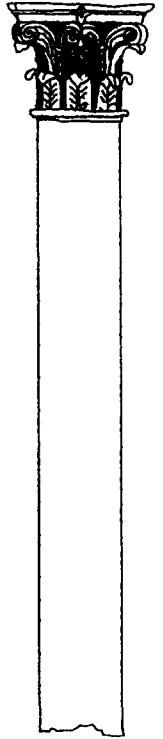
## Preface

Nowadays, with the voluminous publications on Emily Dickinson, the study of the most prominent, most puzzling aspect of Dickinson's poetry—her style, still lacks profundity though some tentative efforts have been made; while in China, the study of her style is all but a blank.

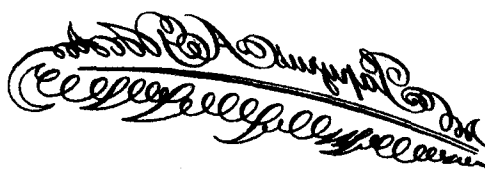
The notorious ambiguity of Emily Dickinson's poetry is due to various reasons, of which the first is possibly her "queer" style that is said to have stunned back numerous readers. Facts call for a comprehensive, in-depth study on the characteristic features of Dickinson's poetry to prove beneficial both to foreign literature teachers in general and to Dickinson lovers in particular. Hence the present book, of which the author flatters himself by thinking that the efforts he has made have been worth it.

Style speaks authorial intention; it speaks itself (from the other, of course) as well. French naturalist Georges-Louis Leclerc Comte de Buffon (1707 – 1788) observed, "Le style c'est l'homme meme" ("Style is the man himself") (de Buffon, 1753), which the present book values as its rationale.

Since the publication of Dickinson's *Poems*, First Series in 1890, more than one century has passed, and critical works have mainly been incited by and directed to







## Preface



# Emily Dickinson's Poetry: The She Speaks

Dickinson's "strange" style, which may be considered sort of style-speaking, that is, her style speaks through the critics.

Emily Dickinson was hailed by the public in 1890s, although in the meantime she was fiercely criticized by most critics for her bizarre style. But after a pouring of divergent criticisms in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, she was almost "forgotten" (Price, 1912) in 1912. Then, with the publication of *The Single Hound* (1914), Emily Dickinson was again heatedly discussed since 1915. The major concern of the 1920s is with the reasonableness of her irregularities, and Emily Dickinson was so much defended by the growing number of critics that some complained that she was "overrated" (Harold Monro, 1925). Up to the 1930s, with many books of her poetry published and studied since the 1920s, the significance of Emily Dickinson has been universally confirmed—she was now regarded as "a major American poet" (A. C. Ward, 1932), "among the finest poets in the language" (Conrad Aiken, 1935), and a "poetic genius" (Yvor Winters, 1938). Only one anthology of Dickinson's poetry was published in the 1940s (*Bolts of Melody*, 1945), when critics who had got accustomed to her style undertook a diligent but calm study. The publication of *The Poems of Emily Dickinson* (variorum edition) in 1955, edited by Thomas H. Johnson, touched off an unprecedented fruitful Emily Dickinson criticism and studies, which are still going on vigorously. In the 1950s, Dickinson was recognized as "perhaps the greatest of all women poets" (Spiller, 1955); in 1960s, a poet who "bridged the gap" between other important poets (Waggoner, 1965); and in 1970s, she was even seen as more influential than Walt Whitman (1819 – 1892) in the second quarter of the twentieth century (Thurley, 1977). By 1980s, her literary status as one of the major poets ever writing in the English language had been firmly established (Reeves, 1980), and critics in this decade tended to find greatness even in Emily Dickinson's supposed deficiencies or apparently queerness. The trend dominant in 1990s was the manuscript criticism which concerned emphatically with the textual importance of Dickinson's poetry. This trend

Papyrus A. G. Webb  
Preface

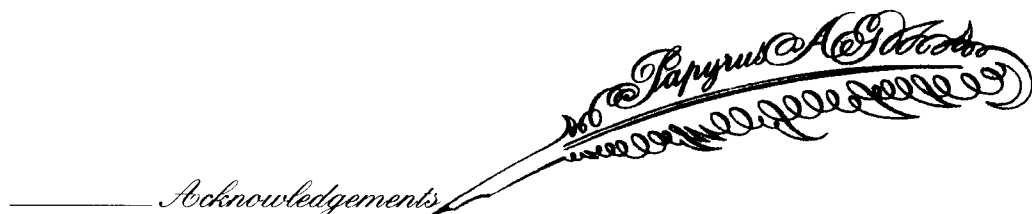
has clearly crossed the turn of the century and is still popular today.

This book is devoted to a detailed analysis of Dickinson's style and its significance in her poetry. Besides an examination of the different styles presented in the major versions of Dickinson's poetry published over the hundred years, and a survey of the development of Dickinson's style, considerations are emphatically paid to the features and significance of her rhyme patterns, punctuation (dash), syntactic habits, wording, and the way she provides her poems with or without titles.

Emily Dickinson was not a feminist, still less a radical one; it was her gender awareness that greatly influenced her selection of style. Being a sensitive woman with a keen love for the world but living in the patriarchal society, she naturally chose to "Tell all the Truth but tell it slant—" (P1129), in order not to be hurt at the same time. As a family-minded, well-educated, normal woman of a middle-or upper-class family, she chose poetry and a unique style as her best means of expression, and expressed herself at the most profound.



Emily Dickinson's Poetry: The She Speaks



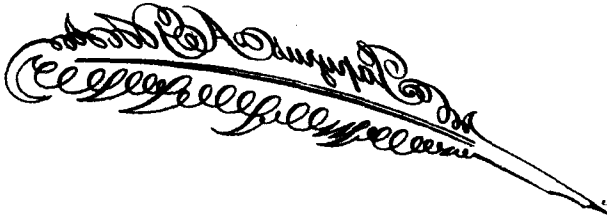
## Acknowledgements

I am deeply indebted to earlier editors and critics of Emily Dickinson, particularly to Thomas H. Johnson for his meticulous work with the Dickinson texts. Johnson's editions of the poems and letters make the complete texts available indispensable to a critical study of the poet. I have transcribed Emily Dickinson's work as it appears in the Johnson editions, including her spelling errors and vagaries of punctuation. I am especially grateful to Cristanne Miller, whose careful readings of the manuscript and insightful comments about matters of substance and detail have been invaluable. Of the many critical voices in books on Dickinson, I have found myself conversing most with those of Brita Lindberg-Seyersted, Robert Weisbuch, Margaret Homans, Judy Jo Small, Barbara Mossberg, Vivian Pollak, Martha Nell Smith, Suzanne Juhasz and Christopher Benfey. I deeply appreciate the precise criticism each of them has offered.

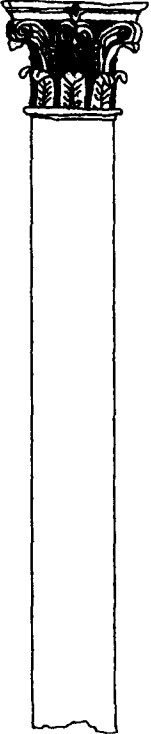
I owe my greatest thanks to my doctoral supervisor, Professor Wang Baotong, who first urged me to undertake the project, guided me through Dickinson studies, and offered unflagging encouragement and sound advice every step of the way. During my three years at Henan University, he has consistently refined my sense of poetry. I want to express my deepest respect and appreciation to him for his enormous contributions in time, energy, and eclectic expert-



Emily Dickinson's Poetry: The Style Speaks



## Acknowledgements



Emily Dickinson's Poetry: The Style Speaks

ise throughout the entire process.

Equally grateful am I to: Professor Xu Youzhi, who first inspired and has continually guided me in the practice of stylistic criticism with his un-failing readiness to induce brainstorming, to offer advice and to give encouragement; in many patient hours of conversation, he helped to refine my ideas about stylistics, and his linguistic expertise and good judgment were a reliable support. Indebtedness also goes to Professor Shirley Wood, who kindly bought books for me from beyond the Pacific, took pains reading my manuscript, and was pleased at any time to talk about Emily Dickinson and her poetry with me, which proved so insightful and greatly helpful.

I would also like to record my admiration and gratitude to Professor Gao Jihai and Professor Lu Changfa, who have given me important leads during my study in Henan University.

I value the persistent support and advice from all the above mentioned persons, to whom my debt of gratitude is without "Circumference" (L268).

Acknowledgements, too, are due to those long-time lovers of Emily Dickinson I found online, especially those fellow enthusiasts of the inner life of Emily Dickinson—the "lonesome Glee" that "sanctifies the Mind" (P774). They share their considerable enthusiasm for Dickinson with me and contribute specific, beneficial suggestions through the Internet. Their practical and spiritual sustenance are also boundless.

In addition, thanks beyond words go to my inherent interest in Emily Dickinson, which about twelve years has steadily driven me to hear the "jingling" (L265) of the words I read.

I am responsible for any mistake in this book.

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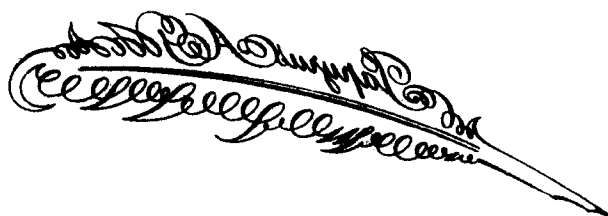


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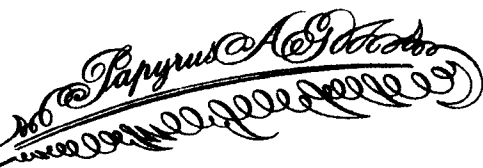
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Emily Dickinson, *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, ed. Thomas H. Johnson, 3 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Belknap P of Harvard UP, 1955). All references to Dickinson's poems from this source are referenced parenthetically as P, followed by the number Johnson assigned to the poem.

Emily Dickinson, *The Letters of Emily Dickinson*, eds. Thomas Johnson and Theodora Ward, 3 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Belknap P of the Harvard UP, 1958). All references to this source will be cited parenthetically as L, followed by the number of the letter.





# Chapter One

## Dickinson the Poet

The Homestead that Samuel Fowler Dickinson built in 1813 on Amherst's Main Street is Amherst's most famous dwelling today. For it was in this house that Samuel Fowler Dickinson's brilliant, peculiar, never-married granddaughter Emily Dickinson was born, lived for the better part of her life, and died at age 56. Today she is assigned to the very first rank of America's poets. Literary pilgrims come from all corners of the world to the Homestead, now a National Historic Landmark maintained by Amherst College, to pay homage to her. And each year since late 20th century in Amherst, May 15, the anniversary of her death, is celebrated as reverently as if it were a saint's day. Before initiating an investigation into her works, it is necessary to first take note of her background.

### 1.1. Biographical Knowledge

Emily Elizabeth Dickinson(1830 – 1886) was born in the village of Amherst, Massachusetts, on December 10, 1830, to a family well known for educational and political activity. Along with her younger sister Lavinia Norcross Dickinson(1833 – 1899) and elder brother Austin Dickinson(1828 – 1895), she experienced a quiet and reserved

