

## EMILY DICKINSON: *THE WOMAN IN WHITE* – A PORTRAIT

Motto: "*If I can stop one heart from breaking, I  
shall not live in vain.*"  
(Emily Dickinson)

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**Abstract.** Emily Dickinson is one of the most remarkable poetical voices of American and worldwide literature. Her name is surrounded by an aura of mystery and myth. Little is known about her life, about this most peculiar poetess people would call "*the woman in white*". Emily Dickinson lived in an epoch defined by the opposition between Christian beliefs and new scientific theories and that is why, in its main articulations, her poetry reflects this phenomenon.

Emily Dickinson began writing as a teenager, avoiding the romantic style of her time while creating concise and sophisticated poems. Although some critics considered that Dickinson belonged to the Metaphysical poetry of the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century, her highly gifted originality makes it difficult to label her within a definite literary movement or genre. Her creation may be divided into three main periods, starting with the sentimental poems and culminating with the middle part, in which she was very prolific. In the last part of her creation, her creative energies diminished, yet she continued writing and corresponding. She wrote *Master* poems, i.e. lines addressed to *Signor*, *Sir*, *Master* which are actually love poems. The presence of an enigmatic lover in her poems was speculated, yet eventually no direct relationship with any love affair of hers could be detected and all such parallelism remained vague and unproven. Very few influences coming from the other poets can be depicted in her poetry. Shakespeare's name is often referred to, together with allusions from the Bible. In terms of themes, technique and style, she is totally different from the traditional poetry of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Her poems are unique for the time they were written in, not only in the experimental way she used versification, ignoring tradition and grammar, but also in the use of unusual metaphors, paradoxes, changing poetical moods – from melancholy to ecstasy, from bliss to darkest unhappiness, etc.

**Key words:** poetical experiment; metaphor; paradox.

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