

Atheism in Emily Dickinson Selected Poems

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Abstract

In brief, this paper aims to show the seriousness of Dickinson as a poetess and her thoughtful mood a woman to deal with such important issue as divinity and the existence of God. When her peers were busy with their families and social life she had been reading and writing about what was restricted and hardly discussed in such conservative community a hers. Throughout philosophical approach we are going to analyze certain selective representative poems to show how could she pave the way for existentialist pessimist responses against the world and state major principals of Theater of the Absurd based of meaningless of life.

Keywords: Atheism, Existentialism, skipticism, blaphemy

Résumé

Cet article vise à montrer le sérieux de Dickinson en tant que poétesse et son humeur réfléchie en tant que femme pour traiter d'un problème aussi important que la divinité et l'existence de Dieu. Quand ses pairs étaient occupés de leur famille et de leur vie sociale, elle lisait et écrivait sur ce qui était restreint et peu discuté dans une communauté aussi conservatrice. Tout au long de notre approche philosophique, nous allons analyser certains poèmes représentatifs sélectifs afin de montrer comment elle pourrait ouvrir la voie à des réponses pessimistes existentialistes contre le monde et aux principes majeurs du Théâtre de l'Absurde fondés sur le non-sens de la vie.

Mots-clés : athéisme, existentialisme, skipticisme, blaphemy

المخلص

باختصار ، تهدف هذه الورقة إلى إظهار مدى جدية ديكينسون كشاعرة ومزاجها كامرأة في التعامل مع قضية مهمة مثل الألوهية ووجود الله. عندما كان أقرانها مشغولين بعائلاتهم وحياتهم الاجتماعية ، كانت تتابع القراءة والكتابة حول ما كان مقيداً ونادراً في مجتمع المحافظين. هذا وسنقوم طوال المقاربة الفلسفية ، بتحليل بعض القصائد التمثيلية الانتقائية لإظهار كيف يمكن أن تمهد الطريق للنظريات والوجودية التشاؤمية ضد العالم ورواد مسرح العبثية القائم على معنى الحياة اللامحدد.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الإلحاد ، الوجودية ، الهرطقة ، الشك

1. Introduction

The poetess had not focused on the traditional standards in terms of form and content when most poets used to follow the archetypal image of the formal. Although she was well versed in the Bible and the form of many of her poems appears like hymnal pattern, the poetess had liberated herself from religious as well as poetic conventions of the nineteenth century (Freeman 2, 3). Paradoxically, most of her poems concerning religion such as *The Bible is an antique Volume* are full of theological vocabulary, they convey critical messages to the religious conventions of Christianity. Furthermore, Critics like Pollak argue that "Dickinson's poems are short yet intellectually challenging due to intense of emotion as and profound meaning (5). These arguments are due to her untraditional style which is full of misplaced punctuations, capitalizations, and short lines that do not convey the message differently.

To begin with, throughout this Section including Selected Poems, we are going to represent her skeptic attitude against divinity and holy sanctities of Christian faith and absence of inner religious influence inside the woman's psych about sacred elements. Through her personal perceptions, she celebrates the existential tendency and stands against Emersonian transcendentalism (Martin, ed.5). Far from religious norms, for instance, in *Those dying then* she intends to rise metaphysical inquiries about the end of life and hardly attempts to convince herself with religious interpretations. Here, she deceives herself by trying to state persuasive poetic production about what her society called holy issues. To add more, she dares to adress God as if one is speaking with closer friend. Simply, she reacts passively towards what had been sincerely believable at her time and uses religious word diction to ensure her doubt leading to disbelief. In that sense, her work had not been persuasive poetically as well as thematically. Long before the emergence of EX and its prominent figures such as Sartre, she had composed several poems in which

she dares to criticize and accuse Divinity as if she is addressing her intimate friend.

Dickinson keeps questioning every detail in life and later just like in *'I died for Beauty'*, she seems hesitated about death itself and sacrifice, and in *Did our Best Moments last?* she appears uncertain about the afterlife and Heaven. In those poems like several others, she attempts to convince herself with conventions, yet, this shows her Self-Deception when she doubts about the formal and dares to criticise sanctities and in the same time assures her faith. To sum up, this religious hesitation could refer to Skepticism and the disrespectful addressing to God is Blasphemy, and ED free attitude reflects the present of both concepts in her Selected Poems.

2. God is Indeed a jealous God

Generally, ED relies on what she had already read in the Bible to judge the common overviews about religion taking into consideration her social conventions; and all this is forged with her individual background about the issue. To begin with, in this poem, she addresses the Divine with disrespect and disgust:

God is indeed a jealous God
 He cannot bear to see
 That we had rather not with Him
 But with each other play.
 There comes an hour
 When begging stops,
 When the long interceding lips
 Perceive their prayer is vain.
 "Thou shalt not"
 Is a kinder sword Than?
 From a disappointing God
 "Disciple, call again."

In the above lines, she adds that God; the Creator is endowed with human characteristics like feelings of jealousy and desperation.

2.1 Bad Faith

In American society at the nineteenth century, people were accustomed to go to Church every Sunday to perform their former prayers. However, in one poem entitled *Some keep the*

Sabbath going to Church she celebrates her connection with the Divine and performs her prayers at home. In this poem like in several others, she does not advocate going to those religious places to worship God, because the latter cannot be found at any place. In details, she stands against those religious places and what they represent as if to say their message is neither true nor convincing and people are merely deceived by mythological speeches:

There comes an hour
when begging stops,
When the long Interceding lips
Perceive their prayer is vain.

Though some people spend long time praying to God, one day they will find their 'interceding' beginnings done in 'vain'. This will happen after they die and find neither Heaven nor Hell, while God had been nothing but their wishes to be helped by super power. In that sense, Shira Wolosky, in *Emily Dickinson: A Voice of War* urges that ED's work is classified within pioneer liberal blasphemous writings since her poetic mode stands against Divinity which she blames for any lifely disaster, while Rowena Revis Jones, adds she had remained critical mind against Orthodoxy (Freeman 14). Here, she acknowledges the invalidity of religious institutions as if to say they were created to serve greedy minority of hypocrites in order to benefit from others' benevolence and influence their thinking.

2.2 *Personification of God*

Instead of glorifying God and putting Him above all, she dares to describe His feelings negatively; disappointed, because He has discovered that humans could worship other gods and are so satisfied without His blessings then become Divinely powerful. Then, people return back to God, yet sooner, find they were deceived as if someone stabs them deadly with 'a sword' in the heart.

2.3 *Despair*

The general mood of the poem is pessimistic; when people discover God had been

vanished and their prayers were performed in vain, they got depressed. In details, human life is surrounded with several circumstances leading to disappointment such as aimless life, unknown end, uncertainty of the Divine...etc. In spite the fact that people believed God exists, they were not satisfied since whenever they tried to ensure His existence they found He was the source of evil, disappointment, and jealousy. ED conveys intense agony in her relationship with the Lord until she becomes destroying herself in the name of love with God (Martin, ed. XXXI). Here, she seems uncertain of Divinity from the beginning because people had not noticed any effective role done by this God, instead He stood against their happiness and persuasions.

3. *Those - dying then*

Though ED begins the coming poem as if she had been sure about the afterlife, suddenly, she turns to doubt. Her belief changes into Atheism when she assumes that people got shocked about their afterlife and God after death. In the transcendental sense, they 'knew' that 'they went to 'God's right hand' which rescues them from falling in Hell, but they found nothing:

Those-dying then
Knew where they went
They went to God's Right Hand
That Hand is amputated now
And God cannot be found
The abdication of Belief
Makes the Behavior small
Better an ignis fatuus
Than no illumine at all

So, human life is vainly lived since no God – if He exists at all- is going to either reward or punish.

3.1 *Bad Faith*

During their lifetime, people find no other way to calm down their doubts rather than to claim they will meet God and live in Paradise. However, in the coming lines this 'hand of God' gets cut off which means that God losses power. At the ending

lines, she presumes that people had no way to satisfy their anxiety and curiosity but to refer those complicated inquiries into metaphysical interpretations. Through this poem, she could be more like the Russian existentialist Dostoevsky, than any other contemporaries because she had written about the loss of faith and “bravely tried to calculate the cost.” And she won her way through doubt into genuine faith (Keane 38). So, for her, they had been creating mythological stories about gods as the best way to avoid Atheism.

3.2 *Simile*

ED is known for the use of figures of speech to compare concrete things to abstract ideas. Here, she states this resemblance between life with long path, and God with a lamb. Accordingly, she exemplifies life as a dull path and human is walking the way; sight is so gloomy without lamination to brighten the place. So, one would use even faint fire in order to see the surrounding since it is better than staying in the dark. This darkness is compared with life without faith, yet one finds no way but to use a delusive fire to enlighten that path somehow better than no light at all. Here, one finds no way to satisfy his/her curiosity and enlighten the darkness except to deceive oneself and proclaim God exists. In addition, some expressions like ‘God cannot be found’ and His hand is ‘amputated now’ remind us that God’s arm could be a dreadful force as well as a saving one just like human hands could be helpful as well as harmful (Pollak 69).

3.3 *Blasphemy*

In spite the fact that the poem includes theological vocabulary and deals with religious themes like Divinity and faith, ED shows different attitude towards the sacred religious tenets. She seems less respectful to God and does not trust His sovereignty over creation. Accordingly, in *Blasphemy* reference, ED’s poem *Much Madness is the Divinest Sense* is introducing Chapter One; entitled Naming Blasphemy, that is defined as a concept comes from ‘blame’, the opposite of ‘praise’ so then, it is the free thinking that leads one to stand

against formal religious, and refuses to accept it as definite truth, and doubt about Divinity and legitimacy of Jesus Christ, instead one has the total right and wisdom to criticize, disbelief, and even mock at those spiritual rituals (Lawton 2,3). In details, she personified God with no power referring to His cut off hands:

Hand cut that hand is amputated now
And God cannot be found

Here, as if she ensures that people went to the afterlife and found nothing about power of Divinity ever existed. This poem reflects the poet’s own turn from youthful trust in God’s promises to skeptical maturity working in parallel with America’s transition from the Second Great Awakening to Post Darwinian Skepticism (Pollak 71). Religiously speaking, people believe after they die, they will go to Paradise as she refers to by ‘right hand’ in order to join God and reach satisfaction. However, here, sincere believers found paralyzed God as if she refers to the pain of crucifixion which made God powerless and all humans become cursed and sinful by nature. This passive God had been acting as if cheating His faithful believers who will trust Him any more later.

4. *So has a Daisy Vanished*

The poetess again is disappointed from her doubts about God and what will happen exactly when one dies. In that sense, people are eager to discover the future and whether they will find better place than ‘crimson bubbles’ of magnificent nature.

So has a Daisy vanished
From the fields today
So tiptoed many a slipper
To Paradise away
Oozed so in crimson bubbles
Day's departing tide
Blooming - tripping - flowing
Are ye then with God?

Normally, death remains one of the ambiguous issues for the human mind. In details, no one knows when and where is going to die, so this unknown destination urges people to seek for appropriate answers for their curiosity.

4.1 *Skepticism*

When ED had been so excited to ensure her faith and interest to join the Creator, controversially, she becomes uncertain about her far future when she or anyone dies. According to the above poem, the 'departing' day is not the day of doom, but the 'crowd is flowing' like waterfalls strongly towards destiny. Here, as if she is enthusiastic to join this crowd, yet keeps hesitated because her end is still not ensured. The last question summarizes all the content of the poem and leaves the question openly answered; up to the reader.

Uncertainty indeed begins from the first lines when she finds God had retreated backward from the sublime nature that becomes like a desert, then she finds people dying and going as she expects to vague place. Her poem brilliantly expresses tensions between doubt and faith of the nineteenth-century Western World (Pollak 69). All in all, all along the poem, she keeps presenting nature's resemble to the Divine as if to satisfy herself in case she finds no God, nature will play deep role to heal her soul.

4.2 *Finitude*

Though the poem deals implicitly with death as a vague end, the poetess does not seem interested to die. She had noticed people run towards the idea of Paradise as if they are sure this place is as glorious as it is described in Holy Books. However, the first and last lines reflect her uncertainty about existence of God, then, death becomes fearful end. Hence, life itself is meaningless and held under no powerful control and precise aim. In *the Cambridge Companion to Emily Dickinson*, critics like For Fred White argues that ED's poetry pertains to Existentialism since it advocates the limited nature of humanity and boundaries of time and space (Martin, ed.5). Eventually, life is limited with certain circumstances like death, and whatever one is doing, this end is impossibly avoided. To clarify, finitude here is not only the limitation of death as finality in itself, yet it exceeds into what is supposed to be in the afterlife, that is, nothing according to the simple existential sense.

5. *Did Our Best Moment last*

The question of living has been haunting the poetess's mind besides to eternity; she repeats her question if time is limitless. On the one hand, if one considers life as the best moment, she fears this pleasure will end one day, referring to death. On the other hand, she could convey that faith itself is the aim of living, and belief in after life is the real beginning despite she doubts there will be Immortality:

Did our best Moment last?

Would supersede the Heaven

A few - and they by Risk – procure

So this Sort-are not given

Except as stimulants - in

Cases of Despair

Or Stupor - The Reserve

These Heavenly Moments are

A Grant of the Divine

That Certain as it Comes

Withdraws - and leaves the dazzled

Soul

In her unfurnished Rooms

In addition, time is controversial element here because it could lead into definite perfection of life, and in the same time, its limitations put one in the cycle of finitude.

5.1 *Atheism vs Mysticism*

By tradition, people depend on Holy Books as basic reference shows God, Immortality, reward and punishment...etc. However, through logic and scientific investigations, some intellectuals start to question metaphysical interpretations and even suspect that what is mentioned is really true, especially when science still has not found yet persuasive explanation. For example, in this poem, ED asks if those moments of sincere faith would remain as deep as they are at the moment, or one day she will discover the 'reverse' of all her beliefs.

Moreover, at the beginning of one's life, he/she passively receives religious teachings and gets pleased with what they offer as rewards in the after world, yet through time, she adds, one begins to state some questions and could become

unconvinced with metaphysical answers. So, religion becomes simple interpretation for those wise thinkers who find no way but to refuse this and claim the contrary. In details, while some people would spend the whole of their lives worshipping God, others stand against those religious conventions. Depending on shifting moods and contexts, she had opposed central argues about goodness of God, reality of Heaven, and presence Divine in nature, instead she seeks an alternative faith that will be truer to her moral conceptions (Keane 39). That is to say, wisdom is the doorway towards truth behind life, yet religion is the fundamental cause reduces human mental capacities because it does not lead one to search creatively for truth, but it dictates old interpretations just to satisfy human curiosity:

Withdraws - and leaves the dazzled
Soul

In her unfurnished Rooms

Eventually, one finds that deep faith is nothing but mirage captivates human mind in empty circle full of unanswered questions.

5.2 *Despair*

For existentialists, the state of being in itself is ambiguous and undetermined; one knows nothing and is not certain about the aim of existence, and what will happen later. In *Cambridge Companion to Emily Dickinson*, it is stated that similarly to Kierkegaard: finitude and Divine uncertainty, besides to chaotic life far from moral codes led the female towards overwhelming hopelessness, while he preferred to refer to faith again to certain extent, she continued to move far away from religion to assert her disbelief in God (Martin. Ed, 97) However, this does not reflect the negative connotation of despair since the latter becomes in the existential sense the door way to discover the truth. Far from emotional attraction to the unknown and submission to religious procedures, everyone's curiosity ends with despair clarifies ambiguity of life and leaves only one convincing answer for an existentialist; that is, life is nothing and religion could never determine its meaning.

6. *Going to Heaven!*

On the behalf of the human mind, ED thought about what would perplexes one and tried to find convincing interpretations. For example, the question of 'going to Heaven' and how one would feel if that was allusion had been her essential interest in the coming poem:

I don't know when,
Pray do not ask me how,—
Indeed, I'm too astonished
To think of answering you!
Going to heaven!—
How dim it sounds!
And yet it will be done
As sure as flocks go home at night
Unto the shepherd's arm!

Perhaps you 're going too!
Who knows?
If you should get there first,
Save just a little place for me
Close to the two I lost!
The smallest "robe" will fit me,
And just a bit of "crown";
For you know we do not mind our dress
When we are going home.

I'm glad I don't believe it,
For it would stop my breath,
And I 'd like to look a little more
At such a curious earth!
I am glad they did believe it
Whom I have never found
Since the mighty autumn afternoon
I left them in the ground.

Though it seems interesting to know what will happen when one uplifts to Heaven, she seems afraid and stressed towards her comparison between life and Heaven.

6. 1 *Skepticism*

She puts herself in an overall position to decide how and what to answer when it comes to metaphysical inquiries in the human mind. It is claimed in *Emily Dickinson Romantic Imagination* that she dares to tackle serious issues like asking about Heaven and its decoration through modern

tendency, and in her way, she did not fear to be accused of blasphemy against God who is the only one as she presumes to judge her intention (Diehl 27). In this poem, she involves her reader and every human being in this case when death is neither avoidable nor preferred. In case, Heaven exists, she will be satisfied with the simplest needs for any human. Uncertainly, she is going to feel at ease there, yet, she knows that death is coming eventually like birds will go to nests later. Death here becomes as dark and fearful as night when nothing to be seen and evil comes around. Besides, she is still questioning 'who knows' when and where to die and if he/she deserves to go to Heaven or Hell if ever such places existed. For ED, nothing should be expected to happen after death so it is so 'dim' to think about it at all:

As sure as flocks go home at night
 Unto the shepherd's arm!
 Perhaps you 're going too!
 Who knows?

6.2 *Anxiety*

Skepticism goes in accordance with desperate mood of the poetess, she finds herself anxious about fundamental questions in life like existence in itself. Here, the state of uncertainty is like one going and coming back and this could lead to mental instability. Again here, in certain step, she seems ready to become formal believer, yet sooner her attachment towards earthy material objects obscured her eagerness to link with the Divine (Martin.ed, 97). In the same sense, thinking about the secret behind life 'sounds dim' for a normal human mind though one's curiosity keeps on rising relevant questions and passes those archetypal answers. However, this psychological situation of despair is not portrayed negatively and at least it does not create a sense of self deception. In details, ED is satisfied since she does not believe:

glad I don't believe it,
 For it would stop my breath,
 And I 'd like to look a little more
 At such a curious earth!
 I am glad they did believe it

Whom I have never found
 Since the mighty autumn afternoon
 I left them in the ground.

She argues that those believers are self-deceived when they believe in such miracles called religious certainties, while she is self-confident just because she disbelieves and still breathes while faith 'would stop her breath'.

7. *What Is-Paradise*

Similarly, the previous poems deal with metaphysics and question what will happen later as if religion and conventions had never being convincing. ED here tries to find logical answer to one simple question: 'what is Paradise' and whether it is worth living; waiting for such imaginative rewards in the far future:

What is - "Paradise"
 Who live there
 Are they "Farmers"
 Do they "hoe"
 Do they know that this is "Amherst"?
 And that I - am coming - too
 Do they wear « new shoes" in "Eden "
 It always pleasant – there-
 Won't they scold us - when we're homesick
 Or tell God - how cross we are
 You are sure there's such a person
 As "a Father" - in the sky
 So if I get lost - there – ever-
 Or do what the nurse calls "die"
 I shan't walk the "Jasper" – barefoot
 Ransomed folks - won't laugh at me
 Maybe - "Eden" is not so lonesome
 As New England used to be!

In the same time, she inclines to say that there is no need to glorify such place and imagine its magnificence since its inhabitants are 'cross with those who live in earth' and will effect God to direct His anger on humans to punish them.

7.1 *Skepticism*

Starting from the title on, she keeps on questioning 'what is Paradise' and who are its inhabitants and this reflects on the one hand her

interest to know more about it, and on the other hand, it indicates her uncertainty and anxiety. At times, her attitude towards uncertainty could even be playful, as when she had written in a letter to Otis Phillips Lord that “on subjects of which we know nothing, or should I say Beings...we both believe, and disbelieve a hundred times an Hour, which keeps believing nimble” (Pollak, qtd. 69).

To begin with, she states a scene of comparison so as to simplify how to imagine Heaven and her magnificent gardens in Amherst. Also, those sincere believers, prophets, martyrs...are no more than poor farmers poorly ‘hoe’ and toil the land.

Or do what the nurse calls "die"
I shan't walk the "Jasper" – barefoot
Ransomed folks - won't laugh at me
Maybe - "Eden" is not so lonesome
As New England used to be!

Later, dead people run towards Paradise like those who participate in folk gatherings while others ‘laugh at them’ when they lose. Here, she thinks those believers will face the same destiny and wise people who had never believed will laugh at last.

7.2 *Blasphemy*

In addition to her skeptic sense about Paradise, she moves to describe God Himself. In brief, she does not give the Divine any glorious characters but describes Him very normally:

You are sure there's such a person
As "a Father" - in the sky

God is like any human if ever He existed, she prefers to find God just like Father they worshipped in the Church during her life time. The only difference between God and human is the first is in the sky, while the second lives in earth. The comparison in itself is blasphemous since she does not show any respect to God and even focuses more on Paradise and its inhabitants as if they were vulgar. This sounds like her personal ideas revealed in her letters like when she says “I feel that I have not yet made my peace with God (farr and carter 20). Besides, she goes to detect the similarities between Paradise and Amherst and eventually thinks

that the latter is even wider and more pleasant than Paradise.

8. *I never lost as much but Twice*

The reaction of ED against what is used to be formal and believable had been always refusal unless sometime if logic agrees on. She had suffered from the death of her relatives and friends especially during the Civil War like any American citizen. Yet, one would mark that the death of two dear lovers had created deep and negative effect on the woman and poetess as well:

I never lost as much but twice,
And that was in the sod.
Twice have I stood a beggar
Before the door of God!
Angels - twice descending
Reimbursed my store
Burglar' Banker - Father!
I am poor once more!

She considers her beloved ones and family members the most precious element pushing her to live and be happy just like ‘store’ of precious stones hidden away in case of urgent need. However, death comes like professional thief and stole her ‘store’, then she becomes so poor.

8.1 *Blasphemy*

At first, she tries to stand up strongly to resist that sudden change in her life yet when she finds her resistance is done in vain, she begins to damn that reality and finality caused by death. For her, it is God who asks angels to come and end human’s life since He is the leader of life. Accordingly, death had created much pain and misery for her, yet this desperate mood has made her wise and deduce that God is neither merciful nor fair since He separates beloved ones and pleases by their sufferance. So, even though she ‘begs’ Him and His angels to be merciful with her, He denies her prayers and leaves ‘the poor beggar’ alone waiting for her own death as the only chance to reunite with her beloved ones once again.

The archetypal image of blessing and helpful ‘God’ is changing completely into ‘Burglar’ Father!

steals happiness from people's heart, or 'vice banker' steals people's precious properties just because they trust him/her. In both cases, God for ED becomes stealer, and one should any more believe in such big lie and worship what is called holy merciful God. And if one is doing so, he/she is like a 'poor beggar' asking for charity and unfortunately will be given nothing.

Another possibility to interpret the poem is that ED refers to a dear friend using holy title as God to show she adores him/her and highly respects this relationship better than she worships God Himself. In that sense, if her friend is helpful and understandable, she would never mind to react with profound heart devotion and consider him/her closer than God (*Farr 125*). So, she glorifies her attachment with simple people than her faith in the sacred doctrine.

8.2 *Despair*

Here, both of death and life are the source of depression because in both cases she is pessimist and prefers to be in another situation. On the one hand, life becomes source of agony because she lives separated from her beloved ones and just waiting for their meeting. On the other hand, death also causes her sufferance because it is personified like bulgur steals her expensive supplies hidden in 'the store'. So, the loss of her dear ones led her to deny the truth of finality, that is, death whatever the reasons and whenever time, her closest had to die one day.

9. *I know that He exists*

In such poem, ED seems in contradictory state; in one time, she asserts the belief of God's existence, while in the other, denies the assurance of any Divinity:

I know that He exists
Somewhere – in silence –
He has hid his rare life
From our gross eyes.
'Tis an instant's play –
'Tis a fond Ambush –
Just to make Bliss

Earn her own surprise!
But – should the play
Prove piercing earnest –
Should the glee – glaze –
In Death's – stiff – stare –
Would not the fun
Look too expensive!
Would not the jest –
Have crawled too far!

In spite the fact that the idea is so serious, the poem shows ED simplifies her views and puts her God under personal considerations.

9.1 *Blasphemy*

Through disrespectful attitude ED personifies a funny God playing with His creatures. All along the poem, God is childlike similar to a father playing with his children; hiding and appearing to make them enjoy. At first, she appears certain about God's existence, yet gradually she becomes not sure because He keeps on hiding and obscures essential details about His private life. His appearance and disappearance in the same time makes her stressed and uncertain. What made her doubting is that this God does not prove His existence, instead He remains absent and keeps 'silence' though people need to listen to His blessing words. Indeed, she discovers with all believers that faith is nothing but 'ambush' they were deceived by referring to those historical myths so called, as she thinks, religion. For her, though people think faith in God is the greatest 'bliss' in life, suddenly, deep investigation will 'prove' truth about such playful childlike God. Compared to Nietzsche, she was deeply desperate about the loss of Divine guidance that had urged her to declare doubtful thoughts through blunt and sharp poetic diction different from nineteenth century poetry (Keane, qtd. 38). However, the 'funny' play ends dramatically after death and costs 'expensive' prices for the human power because it ends one's mental abilities exhausted in thinking about unseen and unproved issues. So, though she begins her poem asserting her faith, gradually she rises some skeptic questions leading her to final

answer, that God is childlike and had any more controlled.

10. *Faith is a Fine Invention*

ED had been influenced by inventions of nineteenth century, and even used certain new concepts in her poetry and involved them to contribute in the literary value of her poetic production:

"Faith" is a fine invention
For Gentlemen who see!
But Microscopes are prudent
In an Emergency!

In comparison to the previous poems, ED here involves new terms and linked science with metaphysics.

10.1 *Blasphemy*

By traditions, faith is Divine gift and could not interpreted by logic and scientific interpretations rather than intuition. Yet, here is compares faith as metaphysical element created through spiritual connection by inventions and new scientific creations reached by experimentations and work field outcomes. At first, it seems incomparable elements, yet she conveys that faith is human invention done to serve needs of humanity without any intervention from spiritual power of God. Then, acknowledges that it is personal way to serve humanity to search for overall truth behind creation. In addition, according to this poem, religion is not true characteristic in life, but a new creation invented by people to serve the spiritual needs of humanity yet with time it becomes sacred and mistakenly believable. In that sense, in certain literary references about the poetess such as in *the Cambridge Companion to Emily Dickinson* her work is studied in accordance to existential themes, certain poems of ED celebrate the priority of one's achievements to determine the meaning of one's life and identity far from Divine assistance to guide humans as if she advocates Sartre's famous phrase of 'existence precedes the essence' (Martin, ed. 5). However, for intelligent people, one should believe nothing out of experience and logic since they admit

that important steps should be followed such as 'to see' and test in order to reach valid result at last:

For Gentlemen who see!

But Microscopes are prudent

And if nature fails to give convincing answer, scientific equipments like 'Microscopes' lead certainly to true outcomes; proved and logical.

All in all, intuition leads only to imaginative allusions like religion, that is, merely human invention while science certainly makes the human able to reach the precise truth.

12. *The Bible is an Antique Volume*

In previous poems, ED resists any assurance of God's existence and disagreed with religious conventions that truth reached through intuitions and deep faith inside. In details, here she criticizes the direct representative of religion, that is, the Bible. For her this Holy Book is merely a historical document registries old information about ancient stories from which people of the temporary time could benefit:

The Bible is an Antique Volume
Written by faded Men
At the suggestion of Holy Spectres
– Subjects–Bethlehem–
Eden – the ancient Homestead
– Satan – the Brigadier –
Judas–theGreat Defaulter–
David – the Troubadour
– Sin–a distinguished Precipice
Others must resist –
Boys that "believe" are very lonesome –
Other Boys are "lost" –
Had but the Tale a warbling Teller –
All the Boys would come –
Orpheus' Sermon captivated –
It did not condemn

She tries to simplify and summarize well known stories and characters so as to make it simple and better understood.

12.1 *Blasphemy*

In the above poem, religious prophets appear like normal people and their miracles included in

Holy Books are no more than myths and skills any one could be endowed with. Besides, the Bible itself is written under the suggestion of wise people; wrote it to help people and gone away. Those wise men relied more of their imagination, history, and myths to interpret nature and narrate the past so as to guide people's life through teaching lessons. Then, the content of such document as she describes is like an adventure story full of suspense and speculations so as to attract the reader's attention. So, she is not afraid to declare that she is skeptic about the authority of the Bible (Martin, ed. xxiv). With any respect, David is Troubadour; as if to say his essential message is to sing aimlessly and tempt listeners by melodies in order to fascinate their mental abilities:

Eden – the ancient Homestead
 – Satan – the Brigadier –
 Judas–the Great Defaulter–
 David – the Troubadour–
 Sin–a distinguished Precipice

However, 'Satan' is personified positively like another member of religious men; stands near to the door entrance to guard and protect. Also, when religion considers 'Sin' as big mistake, here ED thinks it is behavior wrongly performed and not as negative as religion presents it. To add more, for her, the way of the preacher is so important to attract people towards religion. In details, if preachers are sever and keep on warning people from God's anger and punishment, they would fear and avoid going to Church and refuse to read the Bible that will convince them any more:

All the Boys would come –
 Orpheus' Sermon captivated –
 It did not condemn

Instead, she compares good 'Orpheus' tunes that attract people with preachers' flexible ways to persuade the audience. Eventually, she wants to convey, if religious men fail to gather people around religion, it is because they perform it severely, while if they imitate 'orpeus' and musicians' kindness and flexibility, they will fascinate the audience easily.

13. *To lose one's faith – surpass*

Another poem shows ED stands against what is inherited and not adopted through persuasion and logic:

To lose one's Faith_surpass
 The loss of an Estate
 Because Estates can be
 Replenished - faith cannot
 Inherited with Life
 Behef-but once-can be
 Anmhllate a single clause
 And Being's - Beggary

Here, she thinks that if one asks questions about faith, the answers would not be rational matters.

13.1 *Bad Faith*

Before one becomes mature, he/she gets involved in religious institutions to determine one's religious belonging. In one of her letters, ED said: "I do not respect doctrines" neglect the ceremonial teachings and beliefs like Predestination (Armand 127). Gradually, one begins to reconsider those religious teachings and investigate their credibility until one 'loses faith'. In that sense, it will be so hard to go back again since one had already been in such situation previously and needs to move forward.

Moreover, one would inherit several traits from ancestors including culture and religion. However, ED wants to convey that one should not be passive and accepts everything given just like a begger always seeks help. This passivity of acceptance of belief is Bad Faith because one is not convinced by what is dectated but only receives.

14. *He preached upon "Breadth" till it argued him narrow*

Here, ED criticizes religion, yet directed her attention into religious men and institutions. At that time, religion was still influential and preachers had an effective role to serve people's daily life. So, they took priority and acted like the secretary of the Divine; permitted what they liked and prohibited what they disagreed with. In so doing, no one had the right to criticize their faith and

doubted in the certainty of what they were preaching:

He preached upon "Breadth" till it argued
him narrow

The Broad are too broad to define
And of "Truth" until it proclaimed him a liar
The Truth Never Haunted a Sign
Simplicity fled from his counterfeit presence
As Gold the Pyrites would shun
What confusion would cover the innocent

Jesus

To meet so enabled a Man!

According to ED, religious men insist on prayers and worshiping God as the best way to gain His satisfaction. God for them was the Dominator over the cosmos and the only Determiner for peoples' life, so they had to submit to His sovereignty. However, ED disagrees with those preachers and thinks they cheat people with material assistance while faith is not certain.

14.1 *Blasphemy*

ED proclaims that 'truth' is highly stated and hardly reached and all human efforts are not valid to assert it. Here, one should not trust neither preachers nor prayers since they are merely personal performance to show obedience and goodness. However, such begging and worshiping will return with nothing simply because God had already predestined what will happen in life before creating the world. So, for her, controversially, prayers are

aimless and God is paradoxical; in one sense, He asks people to pray to change their life and gain His satisfaction, and in the other, those prayers are no more than wasting of time because their future is already planned long before. In her response to Emily Dickinson's poetic values, Christina Rossetti argues that this work opposes the conservative Christian belief in predestination then could recognize her blasphemous (Keane, qtd.40)

Conclusion:

Finally, we conclude that her tendency is deviated from formalities and conservatism of her times, and instead she dares to doubt essential metaphysical questions about the existence of Divinity and after world. In so doing, blasphemy and skepticism, I.e. Atheism had been her best way to deduce at last that human entity could never be related to more powerful entity. Though she lived during religious revivals era, she had been paving the way for Sartre and his followers to establish the founding basics of Existentialism far away from doctrinal teachings and asserting that Divine is no more dominating over creation. For example, in *So has a Daisy Vanished* and *God is Indeed a jealous God* and other poems she compares the Divine holiness into the human personification with its imperfect characters as if to say God if ever existed is like her friend could feel jealousy, hatred, disgust...etc.

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