

# EMILY DICKINSONS' DISAPPOINTMENT TOWARD PURITANISM TEACHINGS REFLECTED IN I PRAYED AT FIRST A LITTLE GIRL

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## Abstract

Poetry can be used to express someone's feelings in a unique way, because it is sometimes based on the author's experience. Emily Dickinson was an American poet woman who wrote a lot of religious poetry. In this study, the researchers try to analyze her expression in *I Prayed at First a Little Girl*. The aims of this study are to know the psychological side of Emily Dickinson toward Puritanism in her poetry *I Prayed at First a Little Girl*, to know the influence of the social condition of the society toward Emily Dickinson's poetry, and to know the meaning of Emily Dickinson's poetry mentioned above. The researchers used the library research method as the method of collecting data. The various sources which are collected are used to support the discussion, while for approaching the poetry the researchers used the objective or the structural approach method and psychological approach method to get deeper understanding of the author's characteristics. Based on the analysis the researchers conducted, it can be concluded that the poetry was the expression of Emily Dickinson disappointment toward Puritanism teachings. Emily was disappointed with her father and the priests in her church who asked her to obey all their rules since she was a child without giving any chance to ask about them.

Keywords: Poetry, Puritanism, Library Research, church

## INTRODUCTION

The types of literary works are generally classified into prose, drama and poetry. Among these literary works, poetry has its own strength and specialties in the form and the deep meaning. The short and meaningful words chain can deliver the meaning, idea and message that writer wants to convey without having to apply the long words chain. It is in line with Perrine's statement, "Poetry is the most condensed

and concentrated form of literature, saying most in the fewest number of words (1998: 12)". The aesthetics value of poetry is still remained exist although appears in the short form, even it is possible for a poet to free himself or herself in choosing the aesthetics words, beautiful and unique but still keep the idea and deep concern about human life.

James Reeves (1978: 26) in his book *Understanding Poetry* stated that poetry is a

literary work. All literary works are imaginative. The language of literature is connotative because there are more figurative meanings and symbolic meanings used than any other literary works, poetry is more connotative. Its language has more probability meanings. This is due to the existing of concentration or compression of the entire language strength in poetry.

Psychologically, the author will bring half of himself or herself into his or her works, whether it is physical description, personal experience, or the development of his or her idea and ideology. Although they tell the story from the third person point of view, they still cannot be separated from their works. Sometimes the urge to reveal personal anxiety on the event happened in their life becomes the trigger of the literary work creation. Moody said that literature springs from our inborn love of telling a story, of arranging words some special aspects of our human experiences. It is usually set down in printed characters for us to read, though some forms of it are performed on certain social occasions (1968:2).

Emily Dickinson was an American poet woman. Her works mostly tell us about love, nature, life and death. She also wrote religious poetry. Principally poetry is the expression of someone's feeling poured into writing using the proper diction to get a meaningful work. There are many literary works that contain the author feelings about their inner experience, either in love, nature, society, politic or religion. Even there are authors who express their inner experience about their refusal on certain religious teachings. The researchers are interested to discuss Emily Dickinson's poetry related to religious values and reveal her disappointment toward various religious and deity ritual in puritanism teachings entitled *I Prayed at First a Little Girl*

The criteria of a literary work should have today, may no longer exist next five years. Let's take an example, a work is called a poetry when it is written in a certain stanzaic form, metrical line and rhyme. But today, more and more poetries are free from the rules or conventions. William Carlos Williams's poetry "Just To Say" does not use rhyme, regular rhythm, or "beautiful" and difficult words. Freedom of innovation is getting greater and greater. Artists creatively change the conventions of literature that have been accepted by society. The changes of convention not only go along the passing time but also along the social and cultural development.

Research on Emily Dickinson's poetry had been conducted by several previous researchers where the results were able to improve students' understanding on poetry. Sitohang (2019) conducted a study on Emily Dickinson's poetry with an aim of finding out the American paradox representation in Emily Dickinson's poetry. The result of his research found that the society was still controlled by the majority party. Another research conducted by Bhal (2018) is about the aspects of death in Emily Dickinson's poetry. The purposes of this study were to comprehend her maturing poetic influences on the human perception of death and her fear of relinquishing her life to the unknown eternity. The result of this research stated that the theme of death in Emily Dickinson's poetry has attracted a huge critical attention.

The other research on Emily Dickinson's was conducted by Sulaiman (2017) concerning the imagery used in Emily Dickinson's poetry. The aims of this study were to find out the imagery and its meanings in the five poetry of Emily Dickinson. The results of this study showed that there were sixty two types of imagery found in the five of Emily Dickinson's

poetry, the five poetry were related to the themes and meanings of human's life and their relationship with God, and the five poetry reflected Emily Dickinson's life. There is also a research discussing Emily Dickinson's poetry conducted by Cenita & Nurmaily (2020). The aims of this study were to identify the implicit meanings behind the metaphors used in Emily Dickinson's poetry. The implicit meaning of metaphorical expressions used in the poetry were death and pressure.

By paying attention to previous studies, the researchers seek to make a difference by choosing Emily Dickinson's poetry entitled *I Prayed at First a Little Girl* and analyzing the poetry using psychological approach to get better understanding of Emily Dickinson's personal life.

### Poetry

The word "poetry" comes from Greek "poiesis". This word at first means "making", "shaper", "maker". This word is derived from the word "poieo" or "poio" or "poeo" that means to develop, cause or arise. In English, the word of poetry is closely related to the word "poet" and "poetry". In English, a poet is a maker. In Greek, the word "poet" means someone who create something through his/ her imagination. This person is nearly like a god. He is a saint, a sophist and a teacher. He has a deep vision and ability to dig out the hidden truth.

However, we will find various definitions of poetry. Each poet tries to define it based on his or her own interpretation which of course results from his or her own experience. Each sees it from different angles. Although there are a great number of definitions, we can, of course, withdraw the substance that exist in each definition. William Wordsworth defined poetry as the spontaneous overflow of powerful feel-

ings; while Emily Dickinson said that if she reads a book and it makes her whole body so cold no fire can ever warm her, she knows that is poetry. If she feels physically as if the top of her head were taken off, she knows that is poetry".

In addition to trying to show the social conditions of a society, poetry also reveals psychological symptoms through the dynamics of the personality of the characters in the story which are seen through the behavior of the characters in helping to reveal the meaning of the whole story. The behavior that is reflected in the speech and actions of the character can be used as empirical data or facts that refer to the character's psychology (Khudlori, Amin & Efendi, Achmad Bahtiar: 2021).

The essence of poetry includes three essential things (Sutoyo, 1980: 34), namely:

*Sense* (theme, meaning)

Sense or theme is the subject matter uttered by the authors through their poetry. The subject matter is stated by the authors either directly or indirectly (the readers must guess or search for it, interpret it).

*Feeling*

Feeling is the poets' attitude toward subject matter uttered in their poetry. Every poets has different insight in facing a problem.

*Tone*

Tone is the poets' attitude toward the readers or the lovers of their works in general. Toward the readers, the poets can be humble, arrogant, persuasive or suggestive.

*Intention*

Intention is the poets' goal in writing the poetry. Although sometimes the goal is not realized, all people must have their own goals for their works. The goal or mandate depends on the poets' job, ideal, way of life and belief.

To reach the goal, the poets use media. The media are called method of poetry

(Sutoyo, 1980: 35). The method of poetry includes:

*Diction* is the selection of words usually used by the poets as careful as they can. The poets try to select the words either the words with denotative or connotative meanings, so that the words they apply really support the intention of their poetry.

*Imagery* is the ability of the words used by the poets in delivering the readers to be involved or able to feel what the poets feel. Therefore the poets use their ability of imagination, seeing and feeling in making poetry. Imagination is also called imagery, or description of thinking.

The concrete words are the words in which when viewed denotatively are the same but connotatively have different meanings based on the situation and conditions of use.

Figurative language is the method used by poets to generate and create images by using language styles, comparisons, figures of speech, symbols and so on.

#### Rhythm and Rhyme

Rhythm is an alternation of up and down, short and long, loudness and softness of speech sounds regularly. Rhythm is divided into two, namely:

(1) Metrum, which is a fixed rhythm, according to a certain pattern.

(2) Rhyme, namely the rhythm caused by the contradictions or alternating high and low sounds regularly.

#### I Prayed at First a Little Girl

*I prayed, at first, a little girl  
Because they told me to –*

But stopped, when qualified to guess

–  
How prayer would feel – to me

If I believed God looked around,  
Each time my childish eye

Fixed full, and steady, on his own  
In childish honesty  
And told him what I'd like, today  
And part of his for plan  
That baffled me –  
The mingled side  
Of his divinity

And often since, in Danger  
I count the Force, would be  
To have a God so strong as that  
To hold my life for me

Till I could take the balance  
That tips so frequent, now  
*It takes me all the while to poise  
And then – it doesn't stay –*

#### Figurative Language

Figurative language in general is a way of saying something using another expression. Although the expression uses another ways, the message that the poet wants to convey can be understood by the readers. Figurative language is more effectively used to express what the poet means because it is able to produce additional images in a poetry. The use of figurative language can make something abstract into concrete and can also make poetry easier to read and to enjoy. By using figurative language, the expression of a poet's feelings and attitudes can become clearer. Figurative language is also a way to concentrate the meaning to be conveyed by conveying something large and broad in short language (Barnet, 1963: 22).

Figurative languages refer to words and groups of words that exaggerate or alter the usual meanings of the component words. There are many types of figurative language. The figurative languages most commonly used by people or poets are metaphor, simile, personification, and hyperbole. The figurative language provides

new ways of looking at the world, it always makes a comparison between different things. Figurative language affect attitudes positively across context. Figurative language compares two things that are different in enough ways so that the similarities are interesting, unique, and surprising. Masters of figurative language can change an audience's experience of a word or an idea by comparing it with something else. Figurative language can improve social communication skills (Diaga: 2021).

The figurative language provides new ways of looking at the world, it always makes a comparison between different things. Figurative language affect attitudes positively across context (Kronrod, A., & Danziger, S. 2013). Figurative language compares two things that are different in enough ways so that the similarities are interesting, unique, and surprising.

Pradopo stated that there are various figurative language but they have a common characteristic, namely that these figurative languages relate something by connecting it with something else (1995: 62).

#### a. Simile

Simile is a type of figurative language that compares two things. According to Perrine, "In simile the comparison is expressed by the use of some words or phrases, such as like, as, than, similar to, resembles to, or seems" (1988:565). Meanwhile, according to Keraf, the figurative language of simile requires an effort that explicitly shows the similarity of two objects that are directly compared. This effort uses comparative words: as, like, such, and other comparison words (1996: 138).

#### b. Metaphor

Metaphor is a type of analogy that directly compares two different things to show similarities or differences. Metaphors can stand alone as words. Keraf said that the context for similes is very important

because it will help the meaning of the equation, on the contrary the meaning of metaphor is actually limited by a context (1996: 139). Meanwhile, Pradopo said that metaphor states something as equal or worth something else which is not actually the same (1995: 66).

#### c. Paradox

Basically, paradox is a figurative language used to express something that is opposite but is not actually the case. However, if you really look closely, it's really the opposite. According to Pradopo, paradox is a rhetorical tool that states something in the opposite direction, but actually it is not when you really think about it and feel it (1995: 99). Perrine also said, "A paradox is a contradiction statement that is somehow true" (1988: 605).

### Puritanism

In the book *An Overview of English History*, it is written that puritans are a group of extreme Protestants who aim to purify the Anglican church from the remnants of the Catholic church's customs. For example, they did not like the diocesan hierarchy which was inherited from the old church. They want a presbyter system as is commonly used among Calvinists. In this system, the management of the church lies in the hands of councils, each of which consists of pastors and the elders (presbyters) who are elected by the people. Puritans hold community meetings and form organizations (presbyters) (Samekto, 1998: 119).

According to the website [www.the-Victorian.com/Puritanism.htm](http://www.the-Victorian.com/Puritanism.htm), puritanism emerged in England after the Protestant Reformation, along with the founding of the Anglican church in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and becoming stronger in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Puritanism developed during Elizabeth's

reign with the aim of purification of churches in England. The teachings applied in the puritan tradition are basically not much different from the teachings of Calvin. In it there are rules according to the Bible and sources from the doctrine of the ten commandments of God (Ten Commandments). It's just that in the puritan tradition, they put more extreme emphasis on all the regulations contained in the holy bible. This tradition also teaches about the existence of life after death. According to them the power of death is unavoidable. They believe that life and death are in God's hands, so both human life and death are in His control. Humans cannot question this because all of it is part of God's secret plan for all His human creations so that humans should not know it. Some of the important things they believe include: they believe in the sacrament of baptism as a symbol of forgiveness of sins according to what is in the Bible. "Repent and be baptized and God will forgive your sins" (Markus, 1: 4b).

They also believe in the Holy Communion as a symbol that God's body and blood have been united in their bodies because they have been cleansed by Him. They used to call it the Passover meal. They do it as a memorial of Jesus who they call their Lord and savior as written in the Bible.

Then He took bread, gave thanks, broke it and gave it to them. He said: "This is my body which is given up for you; do this in remembrance of me." Likewise He did with the cup after eating; He said: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for you (Luk, 22:19-20).

In addition they hold their belief in respecting the Sabbath day, so that every Sabbath they always go to church and do not do any work as has been commanded in the Bible.

Remember and keep the Sabbath day

holy: six days you will work and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God; So do not do any work, you or your son, or your daughter, or your male servant, or your female servant, or your animals, or the stranger who is in your dwelling, six days you will work and do all your work, but the seventh is the Sabbath of the Lord your God; so do not do any work, you or your son, or your daughter, or your male servant, or your female servant, or your animals, or any stranger in your dwelling. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that are in them, and rested on the seventh day; that is why God blessed the Sabbath day and kept it holy (Kel, 20: 8-11).

Apart from the things mentioned above, there are still many teachings that are instilled by puritanism that are in accordance with the Bible, including the doctrine of the answer to prayer. In this case, it is taught that God always answers the prayers of His people and God pays attention to His people. As it is written in the Bible.

Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives and everyone who seeks finds, and to everyone who knocks the door is opened (Matt, 7: 7-8).

Teachings about God's plans or designs that are always good for His people are also written in the holy Bible.

For I know what plans I have for you, that are the Lord declares, namely plans for peace and not plans for accidents, to give you a future full of hope (Jer 29:11).

The teaching which states that God speaks through a priest or prophet is found in many books of the Old Testament, such as when God speaks to the prophet Moses.

The Lord said to Moses: "Go to the people; tell them to consecrate themselves today and tomorrow, and they must wash

their clothes. By the third day they had to be ready, for on the third day the Lord would descend before the eyes of all the people on Mount Sinai. Therefore you shall set a boundary for the people to go around, saying, "Take care of it carefully, don't climb the mountain or touch its feet, for whoever touches the mountain will surely die. No one's hand may touch it, for he must have been thrown with stone or shot to death; whether animal or human, he will not be allowed to live. Only when the trumpet sounded long were they allowed to climb the mountain" (Kel, 19: 10-13).

Even not only that, there are still many other verses that emphasize on the rule of the Sabbath.

You are to keep the Sabbath, for it is a holy day to you; Whoever violates the Sabbath day will surely be put to death, for everyone who does work on that day must be cut off from among his people (Kel, 31: 34).

## **METHOD**

### **Type of Research**

The descriptive qualitative method was used by the researchers to discuss the problems in this study. The data analyzed using qualitative descriptive method are not in numbers or coefficients relationships among variables. This method uses quotes collections to illustrate and fill the infield material. The data collected may be in the form of meaningful vocabulary, sentences, and images. So, in this study calculations, numbers, percentages or statistics are not used, but it emphasizes the quality terms like words, notes related to the meaning of values and understanding.

### **Data Source**

Data are the main parts of a research. Ary et.al (2010) stated that in qualitative re-

search, there are two sources that can be used to get the data, namely primary and secondary data. The primary datum source of the study is Emily Dickinson's poetry entitled *I Prayed at First a Little Girl*. This poetry tells about Emily Dickinson's insight toward puritanism teachings. It presents love, life, and belief. The secondary data source are some data which are cited from internet and alternative journals.

### **Data Collection**

Sugiyono (2008) stated explicitly that qualitative researchers relied on basic technique to aggregate the data because the data are the participation within the setting, direct observation, in-depth interviewing, and documentation review. The researchers collected the data through library research by taking notes of the documents or archives related to the purposes of the research. The researchers came to the library, read some books and collected the data from the readable media, then they took some relevant information based on the analyzed problem. The researchers used the information as the data to support their research. According to Semi library research is a research conducted by reading books, magazines and other data sources in a library (1990: 8). To get further information, the writer also uses search engine website in the internet to visit and to collect some data. Those websites; which have been chosen by the writer, have some relevant information to support the research. Reading the poetry, analyzing, and reviewing the social aspects were the ways how to collect the data. Then, note taking technique was conducted by writing down the data that were relevant to the object of the study.

### **Data Analysis**

In qualitative analysis, data analysis is

the method of categorization, description, and synthesis. Data reduction is critical for the outline and interpretation of the development below study. The structural analysis technique was used by the researchers to examine the constructive elements of the primary data to get the full meaning of the work like social facts, social history, social behavior, social events, and other elements to understand the character of a society's socio-cultural life.

The data obtained were then analyzed using descriptive qualitative analysis. The analysis used in this research was qualitative. This study fits well with qualitative research associated with various methods, perspectives, and approaches (Mackey et al, 2005).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this poetry Emily Dickinson tries to express her inner turmoil about her spiritual experience from when she was a child until she felt capable of making decisions to determine her own way of life. Many things influence Emily in producing her works. In this case, the influence of psychology is very dominant in addition to several things that influence her in principle and support her spiritual thinking. Psychologically Emily felt very pressured by all the rules she had to obey. But she didn't have the right place to express her feelings, so she just kept her inner turmoil for herself. The teachings of transcendentalism that influenced her made her seem to have found something he had been looking for. Transcendentalism teaches about self-confidence, which is a belief in oneself in all things.

In living their life, humans have the right to determine what is best for themselves. This should be done by the humans themselves without any element of coercion from others, because the person who

will undergo it is the humans themselves. In making these decisions they must be prepared to bear all the risks for their own choices, even when everyone opposes what has become their choice. In this poetry, there are several disappointments felt by Emily which the researchers will analyze. Emily used the appropriate choice of words to express her inner experience, namely her disappointment with the teachings of puritanism. Diction or word choices used by Emily to express her feelings include the words *at first, little girl, they, qualified, looked around, childish, steady, honesty, baffled, mingled, divinity, in danger, balance and frequent*.

### 1. Emily Dickinson's Disappointment toward the "Acceptance of Prayer" Teaching

In the poetry *I Prayed at First a Little Girl*, Emily uses the words *at first* and *little girl* as a choice of diction to start the long story she is about to reveal. *At first* has the meaning initial which means at the beginning. While at the beginning itself can also be interpreted as the first time, the initial or the starting. By paying attention to the extrinsic elements of the poetry, it can be seen that the first stanza of this poetry describes Emily Dickinson's inner turmoil. Since childhood she felt pressured by the rule to always pray. But because that was the rule made by her father, she still obeyed it even though she was forced to do it.

As stated in her biography, Emily and her family did not dare to go against the rules that had been set by her father based on puritanism teachings. This shows that she carried out all these teachings out of necessity. She carried out these obligations because of the pressure from her father. She shows her feelings of depression by being quiet, gloomy and isolating herself from her social environment, so that she grows up to be a very closed woman.



Emily used the word *at first* in the first line of this poetry to say that she was feeling depressed by all her inner turmoil that continues to stir. Before doing anything she should start with a prayer, as told by them, */I prayed at first a little girl/ Because they told me to-/*. She was forced to do so even though she could not feel the answers to all the prayers she had prayed. Emily felt more and more depressed as time went on. She felt she had done something she should never have done. But there was nothing she could do to stop it all. All her feelings and worries were never revealed, only she knew what she really felt

In the next line of this poetry, *they* have the meaning of plural, more than one person. *They* can also be interpreted as the plural third person pronoun or more than one. The word *they* in the second line, */Because they told me to-/* was chosen by Emily to say that the person who told her to obey the rules to pray before doing anything was not only her father but there were other people too. What Emily meant by other people were the pastors in the church who always recommended the same thing to her and also to all their people. Here, it can be seen how disappointed Emily is with the rules applied by *they* in the puritanism teachings. Her father taught her all these teachings because he wanted Emily to become a devout Christian. She showed her adherence to these rules in her childhood. She was obedient to her father's rules and religious traditions in accordance with the teachings of puritanism inherent in New England society at that time. Apart from that, Emily's disappointment with her father and the pastors in her church who always give extreme puritanism teachings to her can also be seen in this poetry.

*They* gave rules and orders to Emily to pray like that because *they* thought that praying was the only way to reach God.

What's more Emily is a woman, a girl, so she has a greater obligation to carry it out according to the custom of all New England women. Emily said that being *a little girl*, you have to do your duty to obey by doing what you are told and not doing what is forbidden without neither having to question everything, nor argue it. In the puritan tradition which his father believed in radically taught that questioning the doctrine and power of God is something that does not need to be done. Because of that Emily used her own way to express her inner rebellion against all the rules that she felt so pressing.

In the third line, *qualified* has the meaning of having the necessary qualifications which means fulfilling the requirements to choose. */But stopped, when qualified to guess-/ How prayer would feel-to me/*. The choice of these words is very appropriate to represent her feelings that have been saturated with all the existing regulations and want to get rid of all these regulations immediately. She felt sure that she was qualified to make a choice and her own decision.

In the two lines of the poetry above, Emily reveals that after she grows up and feels qualified to question something of herself and answer that question, she feels confident to make a firm decision. All of that was due to the teachings of transcendentalism that she got through her writings and also along with the teachings of that understanding. Transcendentalism teaches to believe in yourself in everything because every individual has the right to determine what they want. Emily decided to choose her own way and destiny. She no longer prayed like she did when she was a child because she felt that she was not getting anything out of it. Here it is very clear that Emily experienced a fundamental change of mindset in the field of religion. After being depressed for a long time with all the

teachings that didn't suit her conscience and finding the teachings that she felt matched her personality, she was finally able to make the right decision for herself.

The word *qualified* here is also chosen to state that Emily is not *a little girl* anymore who has to obey everything that is ordered by *they*. She felt that she had become an adult woman who had the right and freedom to determine her own way of life. Emily was happy that her inner turmoil had subsided. She had succeeded in making her life choices so that she was no longer forced to do something she didn't want to do.

## 2. Emily Dickinson's Disappointment toward the Teaching of "God Cares for His People"

In the first line of the second stanza */If I believed God looked around/*, the word *looked* has the meaning to see, while the word *around* has the denotation meaning surrounding. Meanwhile, if the two words are combined to become *looked around*, then the word has the denotation meaning of looking the surrounding environment. But in Emily Dickinson's poetry the word has the meaning of seeing and paying attention to everything around the environment.

In the next line */Each time my childish eye/*, the word *childish* has the denotation meaning of having child behavior or like a child. Meanwhile, if it is combined into *my childish eye*, it has meaning according to the view or opinion of the author, who at that time was still a child.

In the third line */Fixed full, and steady, on his own/*, the word *steady* has the denotation meaning of even, fixed or strong. By using these words she wanted to say that as a child, Emily who was still a child and innocent was very confident and determined in what she was doing. While in the next line */In my childish honesty/*, the word *honesty*

has the meaning of fairness or can also be interpreted into candidness, determination or sincerity. In this line Emily would like to say that she did all her duties as a Christian with all honesty as an innocent little child.

In the first line of the first stanza in this poetry Emily wanted to explain that she was a devout Christian, believes in God and participates in performing rituals as taught in Christianity and what most people in New England did at that time. But she said that she did it when she was a child, *a little girl*. At that time she did all of that like most people because she believed that God was watching over her. Meanwhile there were still many things that Emily didn't understand how God really cares for His people.

Emily expressed her anxiety and turmoil when she reminisced her childhood in the second verse */If I believed God looked around/ Each time my childish eye/ Fixed full, and steady, on his own/ In my childish honesty/*. By using words like those line by line Emily tried to review her childhood as an innocent child. With her childish perspective, she firmly believed that God really exists and is always aware of her existence. At least that was the truth she knew from her father's upbringing who was strongly influenced by Puritan teachings. She had to follow the teachings because her father always told her to do all of these. Even so she could not feel that God cared for her as her father had taught her. Judging from the stanza of the poetry above, it seems that as a child Emily really wanted to believe in the truth of the teaching which states that God cares for His people, including herself too.

In the next line */And told him what I'd like, today/* Emily honestly as a child who believed in the existence of God who cares for His people pleaded to God for everything she wanted every day, even though there were still many things that were con-

fusing herself. This can happen because she did everything not because of her own desire but at the will of her father and the pastors of her church. Meanwhile she had many unanswered questions because she was not allowed to ask the things she wanted to know.

### 3. Emily Dickinson's Disappointment toward the Teaching of "God's Plan Is Always Good"

In the next two lines /*And part of his for plan/ That baffled me/*, the word *baffled* has the meaning of confusing, troublesome or surprising. In this case Emily wanted to express her child's thoughts who were getting confused and felt that all these rules were so troublesome for her that she wondered why she had to carry out all these rules. Then in the last two lines of the second stanza of the poetry /*The mingled side/ Of his divinity/*, the word *mingled* has the denotation meaning of mixed and the word *divinity* has the denotation meaning of deity, divine or great. The two words above were used to express the confusion that had been mixed with puritan teachings. She felt confused about the nature of divinity rather than with God Himself.

The word in *danger* in the first line of the third stanza /*And often since, in danger/*, has the denotation meaning in hazard situation. *In danger* here can be interpreted in *danger* in terms of psychology or real life. Emily used this word to describe her state of being indecisive, worried, disappointed and hopeless. In this stanza Emily also used figurative language to produce additional images for the reader, so as to clarify the meaning of the poetry. In the next three lines /*I count the force, would be/ To have a God so strong as that/ To hold my life for me/*, Emily used simile figurative language. She chose to use the word as in the third line of the third stanza of this poetry to

compare her desire to have God as strong as her desire to have her own life without God. This shows that she was very confused and frantic about why if she had God in her life she had to do various kinds of rules that she didn't like. But she also didn't know what it would be like if she had to live in this world without God's intervention.

Then the word *balance* in the first line of the fourth stanza /*Till I could take the balance /* has the denotation meaning of equilibrium, calm, harmony, stable and steady. The word *balance* was chosen by Emily to show that she was able to calm herself even though she was in a state she called *danger* in the previous verse. Then the word *frequent* in the next line /*That tips so frequent, now/* has denotative meaning of often or can also be interpreted as a habit. Emily wanted to say that all the rules she had done so far were just a habit.

In the next line /*It takes me all the while to poise/* means that Emily needed a little time to calm down to get a state that she called *balance*. In a state of *balance* she tried to decide whether she would have a God who would control her life or not and allow herself to determine the course of her life.

Then in the last line /*And then – it doesn't stay/*, the word *it* here refers to the *balance* she once had. At the end of the poetry we can see that in the end the *balance* that she had could no longer last or disappeared so she chose to be with God in her own way. She had decided to have her life without the need for interference from her parents and all the religious regulations that exist in the surrounding community. From Emily's expression through her poetry, it can be seen that a deep feeling of disappointment has brought her into a very long dilemma. This makes her a closed human being so that she can only express all

of her feeling through her writings. The rules that had suppressed her since her childhood made her unable to enjoy her childhood happily.

Emily felt that she didn't have sweet memories at all from her childhood because she felt shackled by all kinds of rules that her father had set. She was never given a chance to ask questions, let alone do what she wanted. Her feelings of disappointment towards her father and her closed nature had to defy all the rules set by her father and also the regulations of the church. Emily experienced a shock in her life because there were so many questions she wanted to ask but could never get out of it, let alone get answers to all of them. She could not understand all of God's good plans for her even though she had been taught about them by her father and the priests. She seemed unable to feel how good God was to her.

Emily was also confused about God's plans for her future, even though she had been taught that too. As God's people, she should not have to worry about her future because God had promised a hopeful future to all of His people. But Emily seemed to be worried about all of those, so she called her situation in danger. As a child, there were many things in her life that confused Emily, so she needed an explanation. She questioned how God felt and what kind of goodness God had towards her. She also really hoped for an answer from God for all the prayers she had performed. She questioned whether God had a good plan for her. However she could not understand the form of God's kindness towards her.

In facing her inner struggle, Emily seemed to be at a crossroads between believing and not believing in all the goodness of God. In her disappointment she began to doubt God's plans and goodness in her life, because feeling doubtful in the

end she decided to stop hoping to God for all His goodness because she thought it was in vain. She felt that she did not get anything even though she had carried out all the commands from God. The decision was considered as a rational decision. By going against her parents' orders and not following the existing rules, it can be said that she had defied God. For Emily, the obligation to carry out God's commands was manifested by the firm attitude of her father who always emphasizes to keep praying to God. If Emily had believed that God looked around as in the first line of the second verse, surely she would obey her father's teachings.

Judging from her background, Emily was actually a critical woman. She had extraordinary minds, so she had many questions which neither her father nor the pastors of his church had answered. She even felt that the God she believed in would never answer her questions. Her disappointment started from his childhood, namely disappointment with her father who emphasized many rules without giving explanations and also the rules set by the church. Emily couldn't understand why this had to be and why everyone followed all those rules without questioning things as much as she did. Emily carried on with her thoughts until she felt that she had to take a firm stand for a clear decision. Finally, after she felt ready and able to bear all the risks, she took a decision. Emily's decision was an extraordinary decision, she chose to be with God in her own way.

## CONCLUSION

After analyzing Emily Dickinson's poetry entitled *I Prayed at First a Little Girl*, the researchers conclude that the poetry expresses Emily Dickinson's disappointment with the teachings of Puritanism. Even

though she had been taught by her father about these teachings since childhood but she could not hide her disappointment toward these teachings when she grew up and could decide things on her own without interference from her parents or others. Through this poetry, Emily wants to express all her disappointments and reveal the factors that influence her. Using the right choice of words she can tell the story of his long life in just a few short and simple sentences. All of that because in a literary work, especially poetry, the right choice of words can produce a broad and very deep meaning for the readers.

In the process of studying Emily Dickinson's poetry, the researchers found the causes of her disappointment toward the teachings of puritanism so that she could produce works like the one above. In addition, the researchers also found some basic disappointments experienced by Emily against the teachings of puritanism. Emily was basically disappointed in her father who had enforced the rules she had to follow since she was a child. These rules include the rule to pray and always go to church every Sabbath. Unfortunately her father never gave her the slightest chance to ask about all of these. Meanwhile the pastors at the church where she was to observe the Sabbath in accordance with her father's orders also emphasized the same rules that she must follow without questioning them. Meanwhile, none of her family members dared to oppose this.

The disappointment that had been buried since childhood always haunted Emily's mind. She tried to find the answers to all of her unanswered questions. Feelings of depression, confusion, disappointment and hopelessness made her a very secretive woman. She seemed to only be able to communicate with her own mind because she thought everyone couldn't understand

what she was thinking. Everything she experienced had made Emily finally able to make a very important decision in her life. The decision was taken based on the teachings she received from her friend who taught transcendentalism. This understanding teaches about self-confidence, so that everyone has the right to make their own choices without any influence from others.

In the end, with all mixed feelings, Emily made a decision to have a relationship with God using her own way and destiny. She chose to honor the Sabbath in her own way and destiny without any special regulations from anyone, neither from her own father nor from the priests. With this decision, it can be concluded that Emily is still aware of her obligations and needs toward God, only that she does it in a different way from other people in general.

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