

The Modern Man as Represented in Eliot's The Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock

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Abstract

Alfred Prufrock's poetry incorporates modernist elements such as objective correlative, fragmentation, free verse, and irregular rhyme. It marks a marked split from romantic English poets such as Coleridge and Wordsworth. Eliot wants to explain the essence of life, and the content represents current day-to-day living rather than an escape from reality's grind.

"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" T.S. maintains Eliot's hold over today's man. The poem's narrator, c. Alfred Prufrock, represents Eliot's vision of modern man. Eliot explains his motivation for writing on this issue as follows: "Poetry may also help to destroy the traditional patterns of appreciation and evaluation that are constantly formed, and make people see the world anew, or a new phase of it." It can also remind us of the value of poetry on occasion. Deeper, unnamed sentiments that constitute the foundation of our existence are rarely explored since our entire life is a regular flight from ourselves, an escape from the visible and good world. The poem focuses on a difficulty caused by modern metropolitan culture.

The objective of this thesis is to demonstrate how Eliot's The Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock portrays the modern man.

Keywords: Modernism, Urban alienation, Existential crisis, Anxiety, Time, Fragmentation, Social criticism, Alienation, Self-consciousness and Desire and paralysis.

Chapter One

Introduction

Thomas Stearns Eliot originally titled this poem "Prufrock among the Women." He changed the title to "J. Love Song." Alfred Prufrock wrote the poem before it was published in Poetry Journal in 1915. The phrase "Love Song" is apt because narrative poetry is one of the meanings of love song. Of course, there's also J's Love Song. Alfred Prufrock' is a tale that gives the title character a second chance. The poem is about a middle-aged man who is too bashful to approach ladies and hence unable to grow in life. As a result, although Prufrock never expresses his thoughts of love throughout the poem, the title is sarcastic. As a modern man, his uncertainty stems from self-isolation from society. Eliot clearly depicts the dynamics of the modern world via Prufrock's paradoxical psyche, as he finds himself in a civilization that is no different from Hell.

He represents the current individual and has a new self to portray to society. There will come a day when you must prepare a face to meet the faces you will encounter. However, in some sense, this thought requires elucidation.

In order to connect emotions through the use of artefacts, Eliot uses objective correlation.

Modernism

The word “modern,” meaning history and art history, has three different meanings. In discussing history, it usually refers to either the era ca.

1500- present (when history is divided into ancient, modern and medieval times) or ca. From 1800 to the present (when there are ancient, medieval, early modern, and modern divisions). It usually means the time when "modern art" was created in the discussion of art history: ca. 1850-present.

Modernism in English literature is typically linked with the literary movement that emerged after World War I. The scale of the conflict shattered humanity's faith in the pillars of Western civilization and culture, and postwar modernist writing reflected a sense of disappointment and disintegration. The essential feature of modern literature was that it opposed the general attitude towards life as seen in Victorian literature.

During the Victorian era, people adhered to the voice of those in authority and followed the laws of the church. People began to follow the law without challenging it. However, it came decades after critical thinking, raising concerns about the decisions made by higher authorities. Modern writers have refuted the theories and values of the previous century. A variety of modern literary movements arose such as Dadaism, stream of consciousness, Futurism, Cubism, Expressionism, and Creatives. David Herbert Lawrence, James Joyce, Thomas Stearns Eliot (1888-1965) *Murder in the Cathedral*, William Butler Yeats (1865- John Galworthy) are considered one of the major players in modernist literature.

The concept of modernity in Eliot's world

Eliot is known as an exceptional avant-garde artist, and some critics have asserted that he uses some old-fashioned procedures in his works. These critics asserted that “although T. S. Eliot may be recognized as an ancient pioneer as a result of his reverence for natural and deeply medieval locality coupled with his 'generic' origin in craftsmanship, his elitist and formalist vision separates him from some of the pivotal terms of the tradition as I have described them.” Overall, some features of Eliot's work show middle-age themes and style; At the same time, these works are additionally established in the advanced direction of writing. For this reason, some critics considered him an "old pioneer".

T.S. Eliot has been acknowledged as a serious modern writer. W.B. William Butler Yeats is his sole challenger for the top spot in modern English poetry. Elliott was a legend from the start to finish of his career. He recognized the critical link between poetry, rhythm, and the language of common speech. Although he was aiming at himself, he became a target for everything he saw and experienced. As a result, he may have his own thoughts or opinions about what he has uncovered. Eliot may be considered a real author of his day. The reality is that he was the spokesman for his period. One of his greatest accomplishments was to reflect the anxieties and thoughts of his period. He is a current writer not only because of the freshness of his ideas, but also because he has created a unique approach for poetic communication. The mind that perceives lacks intensity. Eliot's poetry, criticism, and memories are all based on real-life experiences, and he creates a beautiful setting out of them. Eliot's nostalgia for medieval traditions seems linked to his interest in modern life. Eliot's poetry includes (medieval) theological concerns.

The topic and the trend towards contemporary issues the modern topic. As a result, as critics have pointed out, Eliot attempts to merge the two sides.

Use myths to improve and organize the fragmented modern experience. A combined comparison of many voices, traditions, and discourses. Its focus on form as a vehicle of message. His critical prose established the aesthetic criteria of New Criticism, and his journal *Criticism* was a major arbiter of taste in the 1920s and 1930s. Eliot's notable but relatively minor works are *J. An Early Love Song* by Alfred Porfrock (1915), *Basic Wasteland* (1922), and *Four Quartets* (1943), which Eliot considered his masterpiece. He established him as a pioneer of modernist poetry for his contemporaries and future generations.

The philosophy of Eliot

T. S. Eliot began his career as an intellectual philosopher, not an author or critic. Between 1908 and 1915, he diligently followed this didactic study in such famous philosophical centers as Harvard, the University of Paris, Marburg, and Oxford. In 1916, he finished a Harvard student thesis on F. H. Bradley's philosophy, and between 1916 and 1918, he wrote a number of excellent philosophical pieces and reviews. Most Eliot studies accept that his early exposure to philosophy aided his growth as a musician and critic, although viewpoints vary. The approaches used to convey philosophical impact were effective and valuable for intellectuals. Bergson's ideas about duration, memory, and intuition within the stream of consciousness are evident in Eliot's early poems; Royce, Bradley, and Russell are convincingly called upon to illustrate Eliotian concepts like imitation, poetic character, coherent purpose, analytical rigor, and requisite insight. TS Eliot hoped that his wisdom would help humanity escape the misery and despair of the new age. He claimed that the eternal human condition grants man salvation, which begins with a full understanding of man himself. In his poems, he may, in essence, allow the reader to reach another state of consciousness through metaphysical and existential discovery, where we reconnect with all our will on a deeper level.

Chapter Two

Summary of the poem

T.S. Eliot's first significant poem, *The Love Song of Alfred Prufrock*, is one of the city man's earliest works. Professor Pinto celebrates the poem as a milestone point in English poetry because it challenged nineteenth-century conventions. Alfred J. "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" is not your typical love song, but that's part of what makes it unique. It's a love song written by the titular speaker, who is nervous, embarrassed, and full of doubt.

Eliot portrays Prufrock, a middle-aged guy, as melancholy and gloomy. He is in love, but his love song is never uttered, he is too thoughtful, and timidity is his Achilles' heel. The question of whether or not to disclose his feelings for the lady was resolved. The poem does not depict the twentieth century, but rather all ages. It addresses human emotional anguish and despair, as well as emptiness, throughout history. The title of the poem suggests that we shall discover how a lover exposes his heart at the feet of his beloved in this poetry. Yet, none resembling this occurs in the poem. The title of the text is a play on terms. The absurdity of alluding to this poem as a song of affection is that it has never been performed; Prufrock wouldn't venture to express his emotions.

This poem is about the disordered psyche of the average modern man: cultured, powerful, nervous, and emotionally manufactured. The poem's creator, Prufrock, confronts an accomplice who wants to dissolve the connection in a particular manner.

He starts to accept judgment from individuals for his flaws. He became conscious of his old age and untidy look. He seldom talks about himself and cannot even eat a peach. He cannot engage in anything except contemplate and reflect. He sees the underwater creatures sing to each other after the poem, but he

doubts they will sing to him.

The importance of some major symbols in the poem

- **Etherized patient:** IF Eliot's symbols and photos in "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" are attractive and lightweight, as they can penetratingly represent their concerned environment and circumstance. They are the product of Eliot's deep realization of man's chaos, futility, and isolation in a divided and war-torn world. The "etherized patient" is the first symbol Eliot uses to represent Prufrock's isolation. The emblem is employed to create the striking image of an individual seeing himself from beyond his body, a clarity which most people never have. Prufrock struggles to accept this truth because he is unsatisfied with what he sees. He examines oneself thoroughly and is unsatisfied with what he finds, and he begins to figure out how he is shunned by society.
- **The yellow fog, cat:** The cat, or yellow mist, often represents society's alienation towards those who are different from it, misunderstood, or belong to a lower social class. This yellow mist that "wraps around the building" and stares at the women through the glass. Prufrock's desire to be accepted by his peers, especially women, is symbolized by this "cat."
- **A bug:** To explain what he feels in the eyes of society, he uses the image of an insect "stretched out on a pin" being dissected. It is believed that if examined, people would detail its defects, such as its bald head or old age, in the same way that an insect is dissected into its body parts.
- **The mermaids:** The mermaids in the poem reflect the unattainable woman he is attracted to. The fact that they are mermaids, magical sea creatures, highlights their status as fictional characters rather than just practical expectations.

I agree with other teachers that the obvious connection is to the nymphs, the seductive and fatal women who lure men to death with their songs in Homer's Odyssey.

- **The peach:** Although Eliot only briefly mentions peaches in this poem, it has become one of the most controversial images in terms of interpretation. Robert Flessner devotes an entire chapter in his book "Ascending Prufrock's Stairs" to different interpretations of "Prufrock's Peaches." First, he examines whether the peach in this context might be a reference to the forbidden Biblical creation story fruit. Prufrock is forced to choose between immortality and intelligence in this interpretation. Prufrock's ongoing battle with his own mortality is reflected in this conflict. Prufrock believes that he has already consumed the fruit of Scripture and must now bear the consequences: a burdensome knowledge of his surroundings and his impending death. Flessner's view also addresses Prufrock's anxiety regarding getting older. It is believed that Prufrock's fear of biting peaches stemmed from his fear of losing his teeth. Prufrock is ashamed and terrified that his body will fail him even in everyday activities such as nutrition, similar to his obsession with his thinning hair. Finally, many critics accept that Peaches can be interpreted as a sexual image, representing Prufrock's recurring feelings of sexual inadequacy and anxiety when interacting with people. With peaches considered a symbol of female sexuality, and especially with his self-doubts about whether or not he should eat peaches, Prufrock reconsiders the feelings of inadequacy she has been experiencing.

Why it is a song?

The poem's title is ironic: Prufrock doesn't have the courage to sing a true love song, and this is the best he can muster.

Although not adhering to the traditional definition of a love song, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" is considered one because it expresses the speaker's desire for his beloved.

"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" is not your typical love song, but that's part of what makes it unique. It's a love song written by the titular speaker, who is nervous, embarrassed, and full of doubt. The subversive intent of the poem appears in the first three lines:

"Let us go then, you and I,
When the evening is spread out against the sky
Like a patient etherized upon a table"

A typical love poem will make the night seem beautiful. Prufrock, on the other hand, feels uncomfortable and uses disturbing images to illustrate his condition.

A lover or potential lover speaks to his or her lover in a typical love song. They can talk about how beautiful the object of their affection is, their romantic longing, their sexual fantasies, and their future expectations. They can compare their love to an endless ocean or another beautiful metaphor. However, this poem provides a glimpse into the disordered mentality of the average modern man: overeducated, verbose, neurotic, and emotionally explosive. Prufrock, the writer of the poem, appears to be addressed an eventual lover who seeks to "push the time to its climax" by somehow completing their connection.

How Prufrock represents the modern man!

Eliot believed that modern man has a demanding attitude towards the consistency of life and the things that are truly important. Gee, it's his personality. Alfred Prufrock embodies all the traits that Eliot despises in the modern man. Prufrock, by instance, is consumed with his looks and age; additionally, he lacks interpersonal abilities. Prufrock is simultaneously over-educated, scared, timid, overly responsive, and agile. He constantly thinks of squandered chances and unsolved concerns. This is the weaker contemporary guy.

Friendly, not stiff and silent. By openly displaying discontent and weakness, he represents modern man. The experience of duality inside contemporary man is a prominent issue in Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." In this poem, the main character Prufrock is miserably trapped in a never-ending fight between his yearning for being isolated and his responsibility to conform to society conventions. Eric Miller claims in his American work T. S. Eliot that Eliot illustrates the dualism of "elements of warning in the one spirit." Prufrock suffers hopelessly as a result of his dual nature. The two selves, personal and societal, must coexist (188-9).

Prufrock, as a figure of modern man, presents a distinct self to society. This self, as Eliot defines it, is something artificial that must be prepared:

"There will be a time, there will be a time to prepare a face to meet the faces you meet" (lines 26-27). In order to win approval from other people, a person attempts to be as like to them as possible. Joseph Conrad develops the concept further. "We can sometimes be led to a faint awareness that our opposite is our true self," he said. "However, man is intuitively and naturally a different creature than what he portrays to the world. He is visible, for example, in becoming bored with his colleagues as soon as they attempt to penetrate his personal life, as well as in this regard, the individual is a phony and a double trader.

Conclusion

Conventional judgment and perception patterns are continually changing, causing individuals to perceive everything as fresh or as a new aspect of it. It may occasionally make us more conscious of the deeper and

unidentified sentiments that constitute the basis of our existence, but we seldom enter; since our lives are largely an escape from ourselves and the apparent and obvious world. But to express all of this is to convey simply what you know know, once you have experienced it.

Dear man, he has a limited understanding of the worth life has to offer and the things that genuinely count. It represents his personality, according to Alfred Prufrock's All Aspects of Modern Man! Elliot despises. Prufrock, for example, is concerned with his appearance and age, and he lacks effective communication skills. This is the subject we have discussed in our study about Prufrock as an offering to contemporary mankind.

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