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**Problems of Modern Man in T. S. Eliot “The Love
Song of J. Alfred Prufrock ”**

A Research

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Dedication:

To...

**Our guide and spark of hope and light in our life-
The prophet and messenger.**

To...

The pearl of our life, our parents

To...

The sweets figures, our brother and sister.

Acknowledgments:

I would like to thank Allah for his guidance and careness in our life.

My thanks are also to all the members of an English department, especially my marvelous supervisor

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Abstract

T.S.Eliots "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock " is a masterpiece which highlights the dilemma of modern man , being paralyzed an trapped in modern city .

The main concern of this paper is to shed light on theme of modern man s problems through analyzing Prufruck our conditions .It is divided into two chapter and a conclusion . Chapter one is an introduction subdivided into two sections . The first section deals with T.S.Eliot as a man and poet while the second section provides an introduction to the poem in question.

Chapter two provides an analysis of the poem and sheds much life on problems of modern life . However, the paper ends with a conclusion which sums up the whole finding .

Chapter one

Introduction

1. T.S. Eliot: the Man and the Poet .

Thomas Stearns Eliot (26 Sept.1888 4 Jan.1965), poet,critic, and editor. His father, Henr Ware Eliot, a successful businessman and an executive of the Hydraulic-Press Brick Company, married in 1860 Charlotte Champe Stearns, a woman with literary intentions who wrote a biography of Eliot's grandfather, William Greenleaf Eliot and a dramatic poem about Savonarola. The family had New England and Unitarian connections, both are manifest in Eliot's early writing). The young Tom Eliot was schooled at Smith Academy, St Louis, and the Milton Academy, Massachusets, before enrolling at Harvard in 1906, where he took his Master's degree (1910) in philosophy. That year he began the 'The Love-Song of J. Alfred Prufrock', which remained unpublished until 1915. In 1911 Eliot went to the Sorbonne, Paris, where he met a young Frenchman named Jean Verdenal; then he returned to Harvard, where he studied Sanskrit and furthered his love of French poetry as he began a doctoral dissertation on F. H. Bradley, author of Appearance and Reality, a text that exercised considerable influence on his thought. In 1914, Eliot was awarded the Sheldon Fellowship in philosophy, which gave him a year in England. He visited Marburg, Germany, that summer, but the outbreak of war forced him back to Merton College, Oxford, where he continued his studies before making three crucial decisions (each encouraged by Ezra Pound): to forsake philosophy for poetry; to marry Vivien Haigh-Wood; and to settle in England. (Ackerley, 2007: 6) Each proved momentous: Eliot would become the spokesman for the disillusion of a postwar generation; the marriage to Vivien would be a defining feature of his life, her neuralgia, insomnia and menstrual problems meeting his highly-strung consciousness and sexual fastidiousness; and he would become a quintessentially English voice and the most respected poets of his age. Partly in reaction to his marriage, Eliot began to seek his personal and cultural consolation in Christianity,

finally becoming in his words, 'classicist in literature, royalist in politics, and anglo-catholic in religion(Ackerley, 2007: 7) . These matters found expression in The "The Waste Land;" it remains a moot (but crucial) question as to how obvious or latent that expression might be.

Eliot's position in the years leading up that poem was precarious. Because of the war, he was unable to defend his Harvard thesis. To support his new life he took a position, first, as a teacher at the High as a clerk at Lloyds (Wycombe Grammar School and later (March 1917 Bank, where he remained until 1925, resisting Pound is well intentioned.

But impractical intentions of 'rescuing' him from that fate. Like Wallace Stevens, Eliot preferred to combine his vocation as a poet with a sedentary job. In 1922, he founded "The Criterion", a conservative cultural periodical that was from 1925 sponsored by the publishing firm of Faber & Gwyer (soon Faber & Faber), which Eliot joined that year and

Eliot's new life is not the .of which he eventually became a director 'Prufrock' and The subject of this study, yet the difficult years between Waste Land where the matrix out of which his later writing was born. 'The Hollow Men' and 'Ash-Wednesday' trace the trajectory of his increasing attraction to the religious life, as reflected in his conversion to Anglicanism in 1927 and his abandonment of Vivien in the early 1930s, a decision that haunted him like the memory of a sojourn in hell, no matter how he might justify it privately in terms of an Aeneas who must abandon his Dido to fulfil a greater spiritual duty. The public vindication of the religious vocation resides less in the controversial and intolerant essays of the 1930s on religion, culture and literature than the verse drama from Murder in the Cathedral (1935) to The Elder Statesman (1953) and the poetry that many consider his masterpiece, the Four Quartets (1935–42). (Ackerley, 2007: 7)

T.S. Eliot's period of activity, literary production covers over forty-five years. During this long period, he wrote poems, plays, literary and social essays, as well as worked as a journalist and editor. He achieved distinction and wielded considerable influence in each of the fields he worked. His writings may, therefore, be studied under three heads poetry, Drama and prose, the latter including his literary and social criticism as well as his journalism. (Tilak, 2011: 6)

Eliot's poetical vocation has been isolated into five stages: As for poetry, Eliot, the first Period of writing poetry started from (1905-09), these poems were published in various school and college magazines, are immature juvenile productions, mere of school-boy exercise, yet showing signs of poetic.

The Second Period included: *Prufrock and Other Observations*, 1917. The most significant poems were: "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", "Portrait of a Lady", "The Prelude", "Rhapsody on a Windy Night", *The Boston Evening Transcript*, and "Mr. Apollinax."

The Third Period started from (1918-1925). It included poems like: "Gerontion", "Burbank with" a Baedeker, "Sweeney Erect", A "Cooking Egg", "Sweeny among the Nightingales", "The Waste Land," and "The Hollow Men". (ibid, 7)

The Fourth Period started from (1925-1935): It is called the period of Eliot's Christian poetry it included poems like: "Ash Wednesday", "Journey of the Magi", *Animula*, *Marina*, *Choruses from "The Rock"*, *Coriolan*, A number of minor and unfinished poems.

The Fifth Period started from (1935-1943) with poems like: *Burnt Norton* 1936, 'East Coker' 1940, "The Dry Salvages" 1941, *Ana*, *Little Gidding*, 1942. (ibid, 8)

As for Drama: Eliot revived English poetic dramas. His poetic dramas are *The Rock*, a pageant Play, 1934. *Murder in the Cathedral*, 1935, *The Family Reunion*, 1939, *The Cocktail Party*, 1950, *The Confidential Clerk*, 1954 And *The Elder Statesman*, 1959. (ibid, 8)

As for Prose: Eliot's prose was published in the form of articles and essays in the various journals and periodicals of the day. Some of the highly admired essays are : *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*, 1933 , *The idea of a Christian Society*, 1939, *Notes Towards a Definition of Culture*, 1948 , *Selected Essays*, Third Edition, 1951 , *On Poetry and Poets*, 1957, *To Criticize the Critic*, 1965, *Tradition and Individual Talent*, *Poetry and Drama* , *The Function of Criticism*, *The English Metaphysical Poets* , and , *The Frontier of Criticism* .(Talikh, 2011,9)

2. The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock An Introduction .

No doubt, T. S. Eliot is one of the pioneers of modern poetry who employs his faculty to focus on the chaos and loss of identity in modern life.

The poems of this volume represent Eliot's coming of age. The influence of Laforgue, the French symbolist poet, predominates, and with it is blended the influence of 17th century metaphysical poets. The influence of Laforgue is seen in his awareness of the city, in his use of colloquial idiom, but above all in the amalgamation of levity with seriousness to intensify the seriousness. The poet wears an ironic mask. The highly sophisticated, but degenerate, Boston society receives an ironic treatment. The volume is full of characters who are representatives of this society anywhere. Prufrock, the lady, Aunt Helen, Mr. Apollinax, etc. are more interesting as representatives than as individuals. For the most part, we are either in the city streets or in some haunt, like the salon in *The Love Song*, of the degenerate, but fashionable upper class people..(ibid,85) .

The complexity and perplexity of the modern urbanization , the fragility and ignorance of the inner world of the individual make the modern man, or more accurately the poet lives in utter isolation Besides, the cruelty and poignancy of the two world wars, the progresses and a variety of technologies in which tools supersede man· have their impacts on the mind of the modern poets. They as individuals in such society and represent the mouthpiece of their age, react vehemently and try to do their best to make a compromise between their needs and redeeming the cracked situation of the modern world.

Among these contradictions, the modern poet finds himself impotent to give a clear – cut idea in his poem. Therefore; the poem becomes a blurred picture which reflects the confusing mentality of the poet himself.

This chaotic society gives birth to difficult, abstruse, inward and complex poetry. The poetry of the modern age is indirect, symbolic, fragmented and allusive. The literature of this age, like life, is varied and challenging. The poem serves to be like a riddle which baffles the reader.

However, modern poetry is not only a clear criticism and a fundamental record of modern life, it is also a mirror which reflects the tortures and agonies of the modern poet's society. The poet who seems to be shattered, is the product of the culture in which he was brought up.

Therefore; "the crisis in English poetry.... Is a part of the moral, intellectual, social and economic crises of English and the Europe in which we are living today,"(Twayne, 1964: 17). To use V. D. S. Pinto's words Modern poets are cleaved into two parts. Some of them are concerned with the state of society experiences; but all are concerned with the quality of their individual responses to their age.

The sense of tedium and boredom has occupied people during this age. With this respect, D. H. Lawrence says, "they are bored because they experience nothing. And they experience nothing because the wonder has gone out of them. And when the wonder has gone out of a man he is dead"(in Brace, 1959: 3).

The modern age has witnessed the rise of so many theories and trends which have played a great role in creating such kind of poetry. The view of man as a biological phenomenon, a prey to instinctual desires makes the modern poets unable to arrive at a commonly accepted picture of man.

As we know, this age has attested the most destructive wars in the whole history. The effects that the two world wars have left are very brutal and poignant on literature in general. Thus, the outcome of poetry in these wars is "considered part and parcel of modern poetry"(Faber andFaber, 1968: 3).

This poignant impact of these two world wars is seen on the mentality of the modern poet and his way of thinking, feeling and how he reacts to the enormous changes which have taken place during his time.

He cannot even live peacefully since his sense of security has disappeared. The war has dispelled the dream of security which had lulled {them}"(University Press, 1979: 37) People, during and after the first world war to some extent.

but this 'Optimist that a better world might emerge from the grim conflict was just a wish which has never been fulfilled because they were shocked to find that the image of war turns to be ugly, in contrast to the concept of heroism and enthusiasm Likewise, the impact of urbanization perplexes the modern poets. In the modern age, the modern poetry" looked not to the countryside, but to the great city ---the new poetry was also a city poetry"(Faber and Faber, 1961). The modern city has dreadful images because of its coloring background.

The city takes the role. It becomes the controlling focus of represented to cruelty, inhumanity, ugliness and despair as hell. It is a place where people lose themselves. So, this modern civilization teaches man how to kill instead of teaching him how to live peacefully and safely.

Thus, the more man becomes civilized, the more savage he becomes. Therefore; civilization has left chronic touches on modern life in general.

Even the role of language is seriously questioned during the modern era.

An acute digression of its use can be detected through many poems of this period. The tendency of verse to sound like prose is one of the important features of modern poetry as John Burgess Wilson rightly says, "the divided – line between prose and poetry is very thin indeed" .

Language is no longer, a traditional means of communication because of the fragmentation and de formalization that modern English language suffers from.

Therefore, to understand a certain poem, it demands to make the reader interfere to complete what is lacked or hidden.

So, the modern poet goes on a journey to get self-knowledge

He is "the enthusiastic explorer of the self which modern society

tends to shatter into incongruous halves"(University of Minnesota Press, 1956, : 19-20).

To achieve this heroic task, the modern poet believes that the inner world of the individual is not a place to be ignored.

Therefore; from the ending of the first World War onward, many writers turned from public affairs to a concern with the inner world of the individual which leads to the concept of alienation in which the individual, especially the intellectuals feel a kind of spiritual and psychological alienation from their own society because of the great gap between them.

The modern poet strives to acclimatize with his society, but in vain. This sense is considered one of the most outstanding features of modern poetry. It is more than a feeling of alienation, but as John Middleton Murry says, "the sense that we are exiled from our own country, that our rightful heritage has been usurped from us .

In the modern age, man is not still regarded as the crown of creation, His superiority is not so marked as before because of the dehumanization of man and the glorification of technology and scientific discovery.

The modern poet, then, begins to look to the east at a solution for his dilemma. The east stands for a shelter, which those intellectuals try to restore in order to protect themselves from dehumanization that faces every single person in the modern world except the in the east which represent the place of morality, humanity, virtue and religion.

All these dilemmas oblige the individual of this era to lose his role in the society , furthermore, to lose his identity as a human being who has the right to have a personality and live peacefully and properly.

This situation leads to the modern poet to think hesitantly about his society. So, his poem is shrouded in disorder and distortion.

This sensitive state of the poet is precisely criticized by T. S

Eliot in his most significant poem, "the love song of J.Alfred Prufrock".

Chapter Two

3. The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock an Analysis.

"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" is published in the 1917 volume of verses and is one of the best known of Eliot's poems. As F.R. Leavis tell us (in Talik, 2011:85), "The Love Song" marks a complete break from the 19th century tradition. It is a revolutionary poem, one of the best specimens of T.S. Eliot's style, diction, technique and versification. There is an explosion of the symbolist and the "stream of consciousness" techniques, as well as of the manner of the metaphysical. The title is ironic , for it makes the readers expect some love –making , but the protagonist is entirely " un heroic ", a bundle of hesitations and indecisions , a neurotic , one who has not even the courage enough to approach his lady and purpose to her, not to mention any love –making or seduction which is obviously beyond him. The poem portrays his hesitancy and indecision as brings out the triviality, the hypocrisy, the emptiness, etc., of contemporary urban life. (ibid, 86)

The poem depicts the agony of inadequacy, an agony arising less from the fact of Prufrock's inadequacy than his consciousness thereof. The title is a miniature portrait: a surname suggestive of prudes, prunes and prisms, with a touch of prissiness; a forename unusual among the Boston Brahmins; the two preceded by an initial (not Alfred J.' but 'J. Alfred) as if to assert that he is somebody different, someone who matters, someone who might sing a love-song Like did not recall the association Hiawatha. The name echoes the Prufrock-Littau furniture dealers in St. Louis; Eliot thought this possible, but did not recall the association.(Ackerley, 2007: 12)

According to what has been exposed, one can imagine the chaotic society of the modern age. This chaos, in turn, leads to the perplexity in the mentality of those intellectuals.

The modern poet finds himself in an unplayable situation. He is tossed between his pleasure and his public responsibility which both disappoint him. Since the poet is an acknowledged legislator of the world and has the sensitivity towards such anarchy, his poetry embodies all his feeling, thoughts, actions and reactions concerning what has happened during the twentieth century.

The love song of J. Alfred. Prufrock . Presents the dilemma of the poet who seems to be hesitant, isolated, timid and spiritually numb. In the poem, the character of the poet is incarnated in the personality of Prufrock. He becomes the spokesperson of his creator Eliot). The poet uses Prufrock as "a symbol of the shy, hesitant, self-conscious young man who is out of place in a capitalist society... He is a symbol of helplessness and hesitation"(Foresman,1989:531)

The suffering of Prufrock in this poem reflects the suffering of the poet himself. The "you and I" of the first line "may be thought of as two parts of Prufrock's personality, one part urging him to go, too, participates in the experience; the other parts holding back, withdrawing retreating" (Foreman, 1989:531).

The poem pictures the poet who is beset by fears of involvement in life, of relationships with other people. This situation creates the poet's own internal conflict. In "the love song of J. Alfred Prufrock" the poet comes to realize that the modern age is not encouraging place to recite poetry. This is shown clearly in the imagery of the first fourteen lines, which establishes the atmosphere of disillusionment, and passivity that suffuses the poem. The simile in which the speaker compares the evening to an like a patient etherized upon a table" (L.3) violates the etherized patient reader's viola expectations concerning the lyrical landscape and presents instead an image of sterility in an urban landscape, which seems inimical to human life. The "half-deserted streets" in the poem expresses the poet's isolation, and although he tries to find a refuge of retreat in these lonely

avenues, they seem to be "muttering" to him, as if reminding him of his predicament.

The dirty, urban streets are not only the ugly space of the city, but also the spaces of the poet's mind, the wandering paths of his undirected thought. Thus, the streets, which are "like a tedious argument" (L.8) are also the twists and turns of an inner argument of conflict that the poet conducts with himself. In the poem, we see the poet is afraid of the destination of his mental journey, which is suggested by the speaker, that overwhelming question which will force him to confront the meaninglessness of his life. Throughout the poems, he had torn between a desire to change his life and at the same time a fear of change. To the poet, the vision of modern life is not clear. He falls in a challenge between allowing himself the triviality of a polite society and the anonymity of the desolate urban landscape.

The poet's anger reaches its culmination at the end of the first fourteenth lines passage. The sense of meaninglessness and trivialization is reinforced in the couplet; "In the room the women come and go/Talking of Michelangelo". Here, Eliot uses rhyme to juxtapose the grand and mundane ironically, and the rhyming of Michelangelo" "and the singsong phrase" "come and go," suggests a general trivialization of culture. In the image of the women speaking of Michelangelo as they would of any item of gossip, Eliot satirizes the trivial, social interest in the aesthetic. The poet says that real beauty has become only a subject for society's chit-chat.

The consciousness presented in the poem is an intensely anxious and impotent one in that the poet is unable to draw conclusion about anything. Elliot uses his faculty to make everything in the poem contributes to his aim, i.e. to show the dilemma of the poet even the structure. Therefore, the division of the poem into short and disjointed section, the succession of short, anxious question, and the ellipses are formal elements that contributed greatly to the general atmosphere of mental confusion, anxiety and frustration in the poet's mind. For example, the first verse paragraph, in which the speaker suggests a visit to his audience, is followed by a pair of short, rhyming lines that have no

relation to the preceding lines; "In the room the women come and go/
Talking of Michelangelo" (L 13- 14). These lines make the reader ask
about what room and women the poet talks about. In addition, the
sing-song lines surface eerily, only to give way to eight lines of a
description of the autumnal fog that shrouds in some urban street.

The barrage of questions such as "Do I dare?" "Do I dare?" "So how
should I presume?" "And how should I begin?" is another important
formal feature that conveys that neurotic indecision and anxiety in
Prufrock's mind. No direct answers are given to these questions.

The ellipses, which follow the image of the ragged claws in the middle
of the poem, also function to represent the poet's suppression of painful
thoughts. The self-loathing and wish for oblivion implicit in his self-
image as a "pair of ragged claws/ scuttling across the floor of silent seas"
(L. 73-74) are too terrible for the poet of fact. According to the poet the
atmosphere of modern age becomes sick and every corner in the society
breathes that sickness.

One of the themes this poem develops is the tedium and dryness of
modern life. It is an expression of the futility of life. The reader gets an
intensely personal view of the society, the city and the world in which
Prufrock lives. The poet also conveys a sense of frustration, which leads
us into the main issue: the problem of communication.

This theme, present throughout much of Eliot's work, is incorporated in
the poem by means of the question, which is never asked. The speaker
cannot get his message across. It does not matter whether the recipient of
that message is a woman or not.

The fact is that communication fails. In addition, the failure of
communication related to the theme of the individual's isolation,
loneliness, and estrangement from other people. Prufrock is alienated
from this world, like Guido and like the "patient etherized upon a table"
(line 3). He should have been a crab "scuttling across the floors of silent
seas" (line 74).

The theme of lack of communication and understanding that Prufrock
voices in his monologue has a close relationship with the way the poem is
written, its style and structure. According to Leonard Unger', there is a

statement in the poem which suggests this connection between the problem of articulation Prufrock suffers and the mode of composition T.S. Eliot chose for his poem: "It is impossible to say just what I mean/ But as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in patterns on a screen" (lines 104-105). T.S. Eliot, like Prufrock, does not clearly say what he means; instead, like the magic lantern, the poem throws different pictures of Prufrock's mind on a screen. In order to express his feelings, the poet shows different (the streets, the room, the fog, the room again etc.).

And all these images put together give the meaning of the poem therefore we cannot see a logical structure in the poem, despite the fact that it is divided into several sections. There is only the structure of the flow of thoughts in Prufrock's mind. The poem based on the free association of ideas and images without connective and transitional passages. It renders the flow of impressions, visual, auditory, physical, and subliminal- that impinge on the consciousness of Prufrock, a technique similar to the stream of consciousness, used by James Joyce a few years later.

Eliot's technique in this poem is like that of a collage, composed of juxtaposed Images. "Prufrock" made out of different elements Images, literary references, remarks, the squalor the beautiful, lyricism, brutality, etc... The whole sum of the elements build up the meaning of the poem while the reader is delighted in trying to rationalize the association of elements.

The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" has written a new kind of poetry, with irregular rhyming verse paragraphs, free verse, new themes, and attitudes. In spite of all the different influences, such as the English metaphysical poetry, the French Symbolist Movement, or Henry James, the poem remains an original piece of poetry. It had a great effect on Modern Literature in English as the critic John Berr3rman States after quoting the third line of the poem "with this line, modern poetry begins.

At the end of the poem, we see the longing of the poet for more primitive and mysterious life, which is evoked by the mermaids. However, the poet comes to realize that even the mermaid's alluring song, which is very beautiful, is not for him. This image conveys the poet's longing for beauty or, perhaps, love, but even this dream lasts shortly. He

again brings us back to the trivial chit-chat· the "human voices" which wake us from the lovely and mysterious fantasy, shown by the song of the mermaids.

4.Conclusions

There seems to be no progress in the poem. It ends where it began. However, there has been a deeper and deeper probing into the consciousness of Prufrock. To conclude, the poet has succeeded in highlighting the dilemma of an enervated man as well as the sordidness and pettiness of modern urban civilization.

Throughout the poem, the recurrent imagers that of boredom , un easiness, conved through the frequent use of metaphor .

Prufrock as is identified with Guied Da Montefeltro ,the speaker in the epigraph, is living in a kind of hell on earth .

He is paralyzed , unable to make an action , being restrain and repeatedly pinned by the eyes of the women in the parties , he used to attend . It is through Prufrocks dilemma, his inability to any just whats that Eliots shows the failure of communication im modern society .

The description of the tea, coffee , parties Prufrock used to attend , shed much light on trivilality of modern conduct in such occasion .

Prufrocks inability to put his ideas in to action , in matter of love, is indicative of modern man , inability to achieve an action being stripped of freedom in social world .

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