



T. S. Eliot's Prufrock: An Archetypal Mock-Modern Tragic Hero

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Abstract

Literature is a mirror of society and life, and T.S. Eliot is a keen painter who dexterously sketches the true picture of the sterile modern world. Eliot outlines and delineates the anxiety, decline, ambiguity, fragmentation, paralysis and disorder of his age, the early decades of the 20th century, through a meticulous, keen and realistic delineation of Prufrock. Eliot portrays Prufrock's tragic and farcical story; the story of frustration, failure, debasement, paralysis, emasculation, uncertainty, conscious-inertia, self-effacement, and spiritual infertility. Eliot also, through Prufrock, delineates the utter emptiness of modern man and the sterility and hollowness of the western civilization. Prufrock speaks, suffers, and agonizes on behalf of the twentieth century man. His agonies are generalized, a theme that Eliot tends to present and emphasize. The poem exemplifies all presumable techniques and themes of Modernism, such as fragmentation, allusion, juxtaposition, uncertainty, ambiguity, inertia, hyperconsciousness, imagery, symbolism, and condemnation of the sterility of the modern world. This research paper critically examines the pathetic and tragic life, concerns, deterioration and disintegration of Prufrock. The paper is a deep psychological analysis of the mind and psyche of a neurite, coward, psychosexually paralyzed hero who is prone to inferiority complex, hyperconsciousness, self-effacement, dehumanization, and paralysis. The state of mental, psychological and physical paralysis evidently shapes Prufrock's fragmented and sophisticated thoughts and actions. Through a meticulous and objective analysis, this paper critically examines the poets' philosophical dialectic, and it demonstrates that Prufrock is an archetypal, mock-modern tragic hero.

Key words: Prufrock; Eliot; Modernism; Mock-tragic hero; Paralysis; Debasement; Inertia; Anxiety

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INTRODUCTION

Eliot, a leading modernist figure who holds a high stature in the realm of modern 20th century literature, was profoundly influenced by the writings and philosophy of the classics; he attempted to revive the heritage and traditions of his forefathers, the Greeks but with a modern touch. Critics claim that Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" exemplifies all presumable techniques of Modernism, such as fragmentation, allusion, French symbolism, juxtaposition, uncertainty, ambiguity, inertia and hyperconsciousness.

Eliot's masterpiece, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", is one of the poet's earliest major works that was completed in 1910 and published in the 1917 collection of poems *Prufrock and Other Observations* after many revisions. This collection established Eliot's reputation as a Modern poet. "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" and *The Waste Land* are considered as one of the most well-known poems by Eliot, as they explore many themes and replete with features and techniques that Modernism sheds light on such as, fragmentation, juxtaposition, allusion, imagery, symbolism, condemnation of the modern world sterility, and so on.

The modern age is characterized by isolation and separation. People became mechanical for they have lost all the values, emotional and social relations with each other. An overwhelming hollowness controlled the minds of the modern man. The population of the modern time is

forced to be segregated by the society and psychological disintegration. Man has become like an isolated island in a deserted sea where he lost hope in salvation or redemption.

The urban setting and the tragic theme of "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" reveals the violence, ugliness, bleakness, and sterility of the morally deteriorated modern world and the modern civilization. The "Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" is not a love song as the deceptive title suggests. It is rather an elegy about the fall of modern man who is trapped in an infinite dilemma and constant failure to maintain his identity and existence.

Prufrock is a neurotic character who is troubled with an engulfing quest and question. The unceasing quest for the meaning and purpose of life has been always a prime concern for the modern man. Prufrock is hyperconscious about asserting his identity and existence. Being dehumanized and demoralized, Prufrock lifts up his crumbling spirit by wearing the bottom of his trousers, or eating a peach which is recognized as a traditional sexual symbol. Prufrock witnesses an endless struggle to establish his existence and maintain his identity. But all his efforts bring no result because they are disillusioned by his mental inabilities, and psychological paralysis.

Prufrock is both the victim and product of the modern society; he is trapped in a predicament by his own personal inadequacies and tragic flaws. Prufrock is a resident of a modern big and polluted city where he feels grasped by fear, hesitation, sloth, loneliness, and detachment; he has no company in his lonely and confused life (Hussein, 2013, p.132).

The poem is not a love song in the very real sense, it is not also a spontaneous overflow of the feelings of a modern, farcical tragic hero Prufrock for his unknown mistress; however, it is a deep psychological analysis of the mind and psyche of a neuritic, coward, psychosexually paralyzed mock-modern tragic hero; a modernist tragic hero who cannot keep track of what time is, a helpless lover who is entrapped in the shackles of the present time, hesitant, indecisive and unable to take a decision about making the proposal to his potential cruel mistress.

Eliot is classical in thought but modern in style. He considered tragedy to be the most sophisticated literary genre that can best represent the human nature, and reflect the artistic excellence of the artist. His masterpiece, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" has the seeds of tragedy inside it. Because it is pregnant with the classical spirit of thought, and it looked at humanity with a tragic vision, similar to that of Plato, Aristotle, Sophocles and Dante. The poem imitates a classical tragedy but with a modern air. This paper sheds light on the psychological nature of the poem.

The spirit of the modern age was catastrophic; Europe was preparing itself for the destructive First World War. Death was not only Prufrock's wish; it was rather the wish of an entire generation and all people living in Europe in the early decades of the twentieth century.

"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" is a modern tragedy that deals with a modern tragic issue, it traces the rise and fall of a mock-modern tragic figure, Prufrock. Prufrock shows up at the beginning of the poem as an undetermined lover, at the middle quarreling with himself, trying to justify his inaction and cover up his fears, and at the end surrendering to the inevitable will of death.

The poem describes the tragic life of Prufrock as a modern tragic model whose sufferings include all the people of the same age who agonize during that period of time: the early decades of the 20th century. It is also an elegy that bitterly laments the paralysis and emasculation of the modern man who is entrapped in the present tense and unable to cross the boundaries of the present time. It mourns the deteriorating moral and spiritual decline in Europe, as well as the corruption, emptiness and hypocrisy of contemporary urban life.

DISCUSSION

Prufrock, the farcical modern tragic hero, is "presented with his tragic flaw inside him." (Guerin, et al. 2005, p.29). From the very beginning of the poem, Prufrock is presented with a dichotomy in his personality. He is presented as afraid, weak, reluctant, neurotic, and pessimistic. He is simultaneously similar and different to Hamlet. Even the name itself is presented linguistically with a division inside it to resound of a prude in a frock (Al-Jumaily, 2013, p.112). The state of mental, psychological and physical paralysis evidently shapes Prufrock's fragmented and sophisticated thoughts and actions. He lives in a state of lethargy and slothfulness which is similar to the people of his time; a state that comes as a result of an endless suffering, squalor and corruption of the complicated modern life. Prufrock goes through an internal conflict, it is a psychological one between Prufrock and his other soul: between the conscious will and his unconscious wish (Al-Jumaily, 2013, p.112).

The internal monologue of the poem begins with the "you" and "I", the two sides of Prufrock's character, debating to confront a female or not. In "Eliot's THE LOVE SONG OF J. ALFRED PRUFROCK", Blythe argues that:

One side wants to believe in the possibility of a relationship with a woman; the other, doubts the possibility. Out walking one October night, the more afraid self would rather, like the patient and cat, go to sleep than visit another party where he will confront women, and so he procrastinate, rationalize... (2004, p.109)

"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" examines the tortured psyche and fragmented reality of a prototypical and self-conscious modern man. Prufrock, the modern tragic hero, is highly educated, eloquent, mentally disturbed, and emotionally stilted man. Prufrock as an effete, balding, aging, weak, neurotic intellectual is

intimidated and perplexed by all women. One of the chief images that shows Prufrock's anxiety and entrapment in the poem is:

And I have known the eyes already, known them all—
The eyes that fix you in a formulated phrase,
And when I am formulated, sprawling on a pin,
When I am pinned and wriggling on the wall, (55-58)

Throughout the poem Prufrock, as a mock- modern tragic hero, reveals his real anxieties over all women, and he pathetically analyzes the reasons for his fear, anxieties, hyperconsciousness and procrastination. The speaker tries to justify his paralysis, cowardice and lack of nerves, which make him totally incapable of formulating his love proposal.

No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be;
Am an attendant lord, one that will do
To swell a progress, start a scene or two,
Advise the prince; no doubt, an easy tool,
Deferential, glad to be of use,
Politic, cautious, and meticulous;
Full of high sentence, but a bit obtuse;
At times, indeed, almost ridiculous—
Almost, at times, the Fool. (111-119)

Prufrock compares his indecisiveness and lack of audacity to that of Prince Hamlet in William Shakespeare. However, Prufrock realizes that his problem is not as intricate and tragic as that of Prince Hamlet, as a result he gives up the comparison and accepts his weakness. He certainly hesitates and wavers like Hamlet, the Prince of Denmark, but the subject of hesitation is entirely different. Hamlet soliloquizes, "To be or not to be, to be that is the question" (Shakespeare, 1922, III. I.), meanwhile Prufrock says: "Do I dare? And, "Do I dare?"(37), "Do I dare"/ "Disturb the Universe?" (45-46).

Eliot ironically and parodically updates prince Hamlet paralysis to the modern world. Whereas Hamlet's paralysis, procrastination, and inaction are over murder, incest and corruption that eats into the vitals of the corrupt kingdom, Prufrock agonizes over women, whether he can "dare to eat a peach" (122) in front of a group of bourgeois women. Prufrock admits that he is not prince Hamlet, "No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be;" (111). Rather Prufrock compares himself with Polonius, a minor character and one of the attendants who serves the king Claudius, and the Fool, a generic ridiculous clown. It transpires from these words that Prufrock finally arrives at the honest assessment of himself that he has been unable to sort through his anxious and equivocating mind.

It is quite obvious that Prufrock is conscious of his own limitations. He is self-deprecating, "At times, indeed, almost ridiculous-/ Almost, at times, the Fool" (118-119), and he adds: "And in short, I was afraid" (86). These lines constitute a commendable piece of self-analysis. Prufrock recalls Polonius, a courtier and King Claudius servant, so he feels that he is fit for such role. He also admits that

he may be respectable, serviceable, intelligent, cautious, deferential, although at times ridiculous and "a bit obtuse" like a clown. Prufrock analyses and reflects on his character and thinks low of himself. George Williamson states that:

The poem turns again, this time to a note of decision, marking the resumption of his dominant role. He is not Prince Hamlet, though indecision might suggest it; rather the cautious attendant. Here even the sententious, choppy verse suggests the prudent character, as he takes refuge in self-mockery. (1971, pp. 64-65)

I grow old ... I grow old ...
I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled.
Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat a peach?
I shall wear white flannel trousers, and walk upon the beach. (120-123)

Prufrock finally realizes that he is getting older and that he has ruined his chance to approach his mistress and to ask his "overwhelming question". Prufrock dresses himself like an elegant modern man. He wears the bottoms of his trousers rolled, and to cover his baldness, he combs his hair in a fashionable manner and parts his locks from behind; In fact, he wants to look young and fashionable and to hide his old age in order to be acceptable to his lady love.

The poem thus is a catalogue of Prufrock's failure and inability to act i.e. to approach gallantly his lady; Prufrock does not "after tea and cakes and ices" (79) "have the strength to force the moment to its crisis" (80). Prufrock's concerns revolve around his sexual and social anxieties, his absurd concerns are pathetic but still real, and he is therefore a mock -modern tragic hero with both sexual and social fears, doubts and insecurities. The feeling of paralysis and emasculation of Prufrock, the modern tragic hero, pops up in a number of lines in the poem:

With a bald spot in the middle of my hair —
(They will say: "How his hair is growing thin!")
My morning coat, my collar mounting firmly to the chin,
My necktie rich and modest, but asserted by a simple pin —
(They will say: "But how his arms and legs are thin!")
Do I dare
Disturb the universe? (40-47)

Eliot uses many refrains in his poem that indicate Prufrock's imprisonment in the present time, such as "In the room the women come and go/ Talking of Michelangelo" (35-36), "would it have been worth it, after all" (87), "And indeed there will be time" (37) "To have squeezed the universe into a ball" (92). These lines highlight Prufrock's anxiety about all women and his tendency to get stuck on a problem, they also strengthen his obsession with paralysis, inertia and indecisiveness. Prufrock deceives himself into thinking that he has plenty of time, and therefore he doesn't need to act, however, death approaches and Prufrock is getting balder and older:

I have seen the moment of my greatness flicker,
And I have seen the eternal Footman hold my coat, and snicker
And in short, I was afraid. (84-86)

Behind this pathetic degrading mental state of Prufrock, who is interrupted by continuous self-interrogation and self-consciousness, is a disease of modern monotony and routine, and the aimless life of the city dwellers. In addition to Prufrock's tendency towards hesitation, indecision, and inaction in love caused by frustration and feeling of inferiority, Eliot also excavates and brings out the triviality, hypocrisy, shallowness, corruption, sterility, and the emptiness, of contemporary urban life. The poem highlights the dilemma and indecisiveness as well as the misery of the modern world and barrenness of modern urban civilization.

In a research paper entitled "T.S.Eliot's Construction of Prufrock as a Prototypical Modern Hero in "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock": An appraisal". Hussein (2013) argues that Prufrock's inferno is London, a modern sterile city with dark and gloomy sky, "half- deserted streets" (4), and evening which "is spread out against the sky"/ "like a "patient etherized upon a table." (2-3). This dehumanizing and grotesque imagery shows the disorder and unpleasant environment of the mind of Prufrock and the turbulent world around him. However, in the beginning of the poem we are not sure if he or his split self invites his cruel mistress to accompany him as Prufrock changes his minds relentlessly. But it transpires from the lines of the poem that it is his divided self that he wants him to accompany rather than his beloved because he is too afraid and reluctant to ask a woman for company (Hussein, 2013, p.130).

Eliot meticulously describes the barren and dismal streets of London, "half-deserted streets" (4), "The muttering retreats"(5), "Streets that follow like a tedious argument" / "Of insidious intent" (8-9). London, the city where Prufrock lives, is fragmented and sterile, the skyline resembles a "patient etherized upon a table" (3), the population of the barren city is also fragmented, lost, lonely and isolated. Eliot meticulously describes the "yellow fog" (20) that wanders around the streets like a cat that wanders around a house.

The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes,
The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes,
Licked its tongue into the corners of the evening,
Lingered upon the pools that stand in drains,
Let fall upon its back the soot that falls from chimneys,
Slipped by the terrace, made a sudden leap,
And seeing that it was a soft October night,
Curled once about the house, and fell asleep. (15-22)

The fog finally gets tired and curls around the city houses to fall asleep like a cat that wanders around a house. Hakac portrays the dramatic description of courtship and philandering between "The yellow fog", and "The yellow smoke" to express the predicament of Prufrock, and to underscore the theme of Prufrock's emasculation, inertia, impotence, hyperconsciousness, paralysis, failure and psychosexual paralyzes (1972, pp. 53-54). The images of "The yellow fog", and "The yellow

smoke" also remind the reader of the modern and dirty urban atmosphere where Prufrock, a representative of the powerless modern man, is trapped. Prufrock, a hero with complexities and tragic flaws, is a spokesperson of Eliot who skillfully delineates the traumas of a sophisticated modern civilization.

The title of the poem is sarcastic and misleading because the reader expects some love adventures as the title suggests. However, later on the reader examines Prufrock's dilemma and his bitter but silly concerns as a modern tragic hero. The reader realizes that Prufrock's concerns and apprehensions are absurd, pathetic yet still real, and that Prufrock, as a modern tragic hero, is psychosexually paralyzed, emasculated and unable to approach his unknown mistress due to fear and indecisiveness.

Prufrock as a modern protagonist suffers from endless hesitations and indecisions, he thinks that:

There will be time, there will be time
To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet;
There will be time to murder and create,
And time for all the works and days of hands
That lift and drop a question on your plate;
Time for you and time for me,
And time yet for a hundred indecisions,
And for a hundred visions and revisions,
Before the taking of a toast and tea. (23-34)

Prufrock is also aneurotic; he doesn't have the stamina and courage enough to approach or propose his woman. The poem exposes the dilemmas of Prufrock as tragic figure in an 'interior monologue' form that probes deep into the sub-conscious mind of Prufrock, through rendering his actual thoughts and through highlighting his neurotic nature and moral cowardice. Stephen Spender argues that:

The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock is the dramatic monologue of a man of uncertain age who speaks out of a life whose centre is a society drawing-room approached through streets, the description of which provides metaphors for the squalor (and also the mystery and beauty) of a city, unnamed, which nevertheless seems representative of other great cities. (1986, p.36)

Prufrock is an incarnation of split figure-a dichotomy of reason and heart, a paralysis of the will and inaction regarding a love proposal. Prufrock refers to Hamlet and this enables us to understand Prufrock's psychological malaise. The introspections Prufrock goes through are the result of his emotional frustration and feeling of debasement and inferiority.

Prufrock, is a middle aged modern tragic hero who is prone to irresolution and promises which are not kept. He cannot have access to his lady despite the affluent lifestyle he has, "My morning coat, my collar mounting firmly to the chin,"/ "My necktie rich and modest, but asserted by a simple pin-"(42-43). He is indulged in pleasures and desires. He always keeps up with the young and fashionable styles, grooms himself elegantly, smiles to

women but he is unable and hesitant to express himself, agonizing over his social actions and worrying over how other women will see him.

And would it have been worth it, after all,
After the cups, the marmalade, the tea,
Among the porcelain, among some talk of you and me,
Would it have been worth while,
To have bitten off the matter with a smile, (87-91)

Levis remarks that "Prufrock... is concerned with the directly personal embarrassments, disillusionings and distresses of a sophisticated young man" (1961, p.83).

Eliot opens his poem, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" with a quotation from Dante's epic, *Inferno*, to suggest that like Guido da Montefeltro Prufrock is also in hell but unlike count Guido's hell his hell is on the earth. The poem's epigraph is functional. It suggests the underlying idea of the poem.

S'io credesse che mia risposta fosse
A persona che mai tornasse al mondo,
Questa fiamma staria senza piu scosse.
Ma perciocche giammai di questo fondo
Non torno vivo alcun, s'i'odo il vero,
Senza tema d'infamia ti rispondo. (Dante, *The Inferno*, xxv1,
pp. 61-66)

The translation of the above lines written in Latin is as follows:

If I thought that my reply would be to someone who would
ever return to earth, this flame would remain without further
movement; but as no one has ever returned alive from this gulf,
if what I hear is true, I can answer you with no fear on infamy.
(South, 1981, p.39)

The poem is not a conversational one rather it is an interior monologue where the prufrock speaks with himself. In the very first line Prufrock tells his "other half" not a beloved to be his companion:

Let us go then, you and I,
When the evening is spread out against the sky
Like a patient etherized upon a table;
Let us go, through certain half-deserted streets,
The muttering retreats
Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels
And sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells:
Streets that follow like a tedious argument
Of insidious intent
To lead you to an overwhelming question...
Oh, do not ask, "What is it?"
Let us go and make our visit. (1- 12)

"LET us go then, you and I," / "When the evening spreads out in the sky" (1-2). The image is in the manner of a metaphysical conceit, suggesting the mental emptiness of Prufrock. Stephen Spender argues that, "The combination of the clinical and the romantic connotations suggest the state of suspended consciousness of the 'patient' and the head of the dreamer full of the night sky and stars" (1986, p.42).

As in all classical tragedies, the tragedy of Prufrock ends in implied death. Prufrock "reaches the state of

death-in-life" (Cox & Dyson, 1979, p.77) which indirectly suggests physical death as we see this fact reflected in the scene of drowning at the end of the poem.

We have lingered in the chambers of the sea
By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown
Till human voices wake us, and we drown. (129-131)

Prufrock is totally paralyzed that he cannot take any action and achieve any progress, he keeps on delaying his proposal. Prufrock's intricate paralysis resembles many modern tragic heroes who are also psychologically paralyzed and entrapped in the present tense. Vladimir and Estragon in Samuel Beckett's play *Waiting for Godot* is a good example of the modern tragic man who is prone to procrastination, delay, and feelings of inferiority, frustration, anxiety, and emasculation. Like Eliot's Prufrock, who waits for his death, both Vladimir and Estragon are waiting for nothing but for death.

Prufrock is quite conscious of his paralysis and inefficiency, but still he cannot get himself out of the sea of doubt, entrapment, shame and disorder. He fails to convince people to feel what he wants to convey which is visible in his endless struggle to expose the real meaning of his speech: "That is not what I meant at all"/ That is not at all" (97-98), "That is not what I meant at all"/ That is not at all" (109-110).

A continuous feeling of reluctance and inferiority complex haunts Prufrock and causes him more frustration and more procrastinations. Eliot wrote the poem when Europe was preparing itself for the First World War. As a mock and hesitant European hero, Prufrock represents an entire generation; a generation who is afraid to take actions that are associated with death. Therefore, the poem mirrors the fears and concerns of an entire crumbling generation.

Prufrock's previous experiences with women are stored in his mind with many images: of the braceleted hands of women, or the perfume of their clothes, or the power of their eyes. So if he will make his visit, he may face the same risks! Therefore, he keeps on talking to himself more and more without taking any real actions.

And I have known the arms already, known them all—

Arms that are braceleted and white and bare
(But in the lamplight, downed with light brown hair!)
Is it perfume from a dress
That makes me so digress?
Arms that lie along a table, or wrap about a shawl.
And should I then presume?
And how should I begin? (62-69)

"Do I dare to eat a peach?" (122) is a sensual image which suggests Prufrock's impotence and sexual paralysis, for eating a peach in literature stands for having sex. Prufrock, therefore, expresses this impotence: he is not sure of himself whether he can do it or not. In fact, the main story of the poem describes Prufrock's visit to a woman, and his powerlessness even to declare his love

for her. The “you,” and the “I” of the opening lines are considered to be the two parts of Prufrock’s divided self: one part urges him to act, and the other holds him back (Al-Jumaily, 2013, p.116). Eliot generalizes Prufrock’s tragedy and personal suffering by making it global. Al-Jumaily argues that “This is the soul of Eliot’s tragedy: a tragedy must reflect a general human suffering through a private experience which all people understand” (2013, p.117). And so as to make Prufrock’s suffering and tragic death global; Eliot turns to language and form it to serve his unique style. He moved on from using the pronoun (I) to use the pronoun (we) which he repeats twice in the last three lines:

We have lingered in the chambers of the sea
By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown
Till human voices wake us, and we drown. (129-131)

Prufrock is prone to self-effacement and hyperconsciousness. Modernism and its claims on the modern man eroded not only man’s faith in God but also did shake his self-confidence. Losing self-confidence, modern man become totally indecisive and lost in his purpose and actions. This is reflected in the procrastination and bewildering attitude of Prufrock, who is good at making revisions of his decisions and indecisions. This lack of confidence and internal fragility made people escapist, skeptical and afraid to face reality.

Prufrock keeps on pacifying himself and delaying his purpose, to ask his overwhelming question, by misleadingly assuring himself by saying that “And indeed there will be time” (23)/ “There will be time, there will be time” (26). Time, however, never comes to convert his plans and promises into actions. Prufrock is scared and reluctant to reveal his proposal, he instead attempts to conceal everything even his presence. All his attempts to meet the worlds and the people around him are crushingly thwarted (Hussein, 2013, p.133).

The most disastrous tragedy of modern man is when he cannot even “murder” himself. Self-effacement, thus, is the only option left in such intricate circumstances. Prufrock favours Self-effacement for he is afraid to have a close contact with reality. Prufrock wishes to be lower animals and he dehumanizes his soul and identity. He admits that “I should have been a pair of ragged claws”/ “Scuttling across the floors of silent seas” (73-74).

This self-effacement perspicuously depicts the dehumanization state of the modern man. To be a lower animal is more desirable to Prufrock, the representative of the modern man, than dragging his dreary existence.

Pathetic Prufrock feels worse about himself under such dismal circumstances. The “silent seas” and “ragged claws” express the ultimate self-pity that Prufrock undergoes. He is descending in to his own hell, and to cover up his shame and to justify the delay of his proposal he brings us along with him. This reminds us of the pathetic situation of the modern man; a hollow creature who is living low- animals life.

Through Prufrock, Eliot’s mouthpiece, Eliot attempts to universalize the trails, plights, and sufferings of his tragic hero. The disillusionment and frustration the reader witnesses after reading “The Love Song” are the hallmarks of Prufrock who epitomizes the shameful plight of the modern man. Eliot sketches Prufrock as victim of the modern society who is stuck by his own personal deficiencies and paralysis. Eliot uses dehumanizing images cleverly to illustrate the disgusting condition of modern man.

CONCLUSION

Eliot’s meticulous depiction of Prufrock’s fragmented and pathetic reality is one of Eliot’s strategies of presenting the modern world as chaotic, disordered and fragmented as a “heap of broken images” (Eliot, 1983, p.9), and the modern man as emasculated and paralyzed. Prufrock, the mock- tragic hero, as a prototypical representative of the modern man who tries to mend things, brings order, and take actions, but all in vain. Prufrock is presented as an insect or a crab trapped in a world of indifference, anxiety and reluctance. He is suffering from listlessness, lethargy, and sloth of the uncaring, modern world around him. He is sterile, impotent, hesitating and incapable of achieving anything that requires an effort.

It is worth mentioning that such dismal state of affair that preoccupies the subconscious mind of prufrock is not exclusive of him, rather the modern man, who is in an everlasting quest for his tortured and confused soul but cannot find any remedy, embodies these bleak features. So, Prufrock speaks and suffers, and agonizes on behalf of the twentieth century man. His agonies are generalized, a theme that Eliot tends to present and emphasize. In fact, the character of Prufrock portrays the condition of modernity and modern man living in so called “Unreal city” depicted in *The Waste Land* by Eliot, a sterile and barren city which is prone to moral decline. The world of modern man is a world of chaos, confusion, impotence, and disorder, this degrading world is illustrated by Prufrock’s nightmarish experiences. Prufrock, a prototypical modern tragic- hero, embodies the true spirit of his age, the modern age.

“The Love of Alfred Prufrock” seeks to find a way out of the spiritual decline that modern man has gone through. Eliot supplies us with Prufrock’s tragic personal experience that he generalizes later on. According to Isaacs, Eliot introduces us to, “what we now realize to be the logic of the unconscious; the picture of what we now recognize as an inferiority complex (1952, p.56).

For Eliot, modern life is too severe to be cured with moral lessons. Being so pessimistic, he considers tragedy as a main therapy “to elevate the human mind to sublime ends” (Al-jumaily, 2013, p.120). “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” shows how the tragic modern man has spiritually become void, lonely and isolated. Aljumaily

argues that "Eliot presented to us a character so fearful and futile to the point that he could not take the silliest decisions" (2013, p120). Prufrock, who was first presented as an isolated hero, turned out as the poem unfolds to represent the whole modern community.

The poem presents the ugly face of life so as to notify us from the tragic conditions we are facing hoping to achieve a kind of catharsis in our empty and sick souls. Whenever we read Eliot's masterpiece "The Love Song", we feel pity for Prufrock, and we fear least we become like him paralyzed in action, in thinking, and in behavior. Therefore, all the features of the farcical modern tragic figure can be traced in Prufrock.

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