

## اغنية حب ج. ألفرد بروفروك للشاعرت. س. إليوت: الفراغ الروحي والاعتراب الاجتماعي كتحليل افكار للقلق في الأدب الحدائي

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### المخلص

تركز هذه الدراسة على تحليل موضوع محدد ومهم في قصيدة إليوت «أنشودة حب ج. ألفريد بروفروك»، نظراً لأهمية إليوت كواحد من أبرز شعراء القرن العشرين. تتناول الدراسة موضوع القلق العصري باعتباره صراعاً نفسياً، حيث يتم تقسيمه حسب رؤية الباحث إلى محورين رئيسيين: الفراغ الروحي والعزلة الاجتماعية. يشير الفراغ الروحي إلى الشعور بالفراغ الداخلي وافتقار الإنسان للمعنى أو الهدف، والانفصال عن القيم العليا أو الإيمان. أما العزلة الاجتماعية فتتعلق بالشعور بالاعتراب أو الانفصال عن المجتمع، أو الآخرين، أو حتى عن الذات. أو بالأحرى الفراغ الروحي والعزلة الاجتماعية. يشير الفراغ الروحي إلى شعور الفرد بالفراغ الداخلي وافتقار الشخص للمعنى أو الهدف في حياته، والانفصال عن القيم العليا أو الإيمان التي اكتسبهن في حياته. أما العزلة الاجتماعية فتتعلق بالشعور بالاعتراب أو العزلة عن البقية أو الانفصال عن المجتمع، أو الآخرين، أو حتى عن الذات مما يجعل الإنسان أو الشخص منعزل أو انطوائي في حياته بشكل عام. كما تسلط الدراسة الضوء على أسلوب إليوت الشعري، احد ابرز شعراء القرن العشرين في الادب الحديث الذي يتميز بالغموض والتعقيد، واستخدام الرمزية، والإشارات، والصور الشعرية، والتجزئة، والمونولوج الدرامي، بالإضافة إلى مفهوم المقابلة الموضوعية (Objective Correlative). ونقسم الدراسة إلى أربعة أقسام، يختص كل منها بتحليل جانب محدد من هذه المواضيع.

الكلمات المفتاحية: إليوت، أسلوب، القلق، الروحي، الاجتماعي.

## The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock by T. S. Eliot: Analyzing Spiritual Emptiness and Social Alienation as Themes of Modern Anxiety

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### Abstract

This study is particularly limited to the study of one significant subject in Eliot's The love song of J. Alfred Prufrock because he is one of the most important poets of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The study deals with the theme of modern anxiety as a psychological conflict that is divided into two main themes: spiritual emptiness and social alienation. Spiritual emptiness is a theme in literature that explores a sense of inner void, lack of meaning, or disconnection from higher values, faith, or purpose or the human is hollow in life while Social alienation is a recurring theme that explores the ways individuals feel isolated, disconnected, or estranged from society, other people, or even themselves. Those people feel secluded from the others for many reasons such as a comfort, weakness and others It also shows the poet's poetic style which is distinguished by difficulty and obscurity, symbolism, allusions, images, fragmentation, dramatic monologue and objective correlative and others. It is divided into four sections, each analyzing a topic.

**Keywords:** Eliot, Style, Anxiety, Spiritual, Social

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Eliot's Poetic Style

Eliot is one of the most important poets of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in literature in 1948. The social upheavals and existential problems that characterized the post-World War I era had a profound impact on Eliot. Every aspect of society had been significantly impacted by the conflict, destroying established conventions and creating a widespread feeling of disintegration and disappointment that permeated Eliot's writing. (Goldstein ,2018. P.13). Eliot's poetic works made his style distinguished from the other poets in his time in some features such as difficulty and obscurity, objective correlative, allusions, images, fragmentation, and symbolism. Because Eliot creates a novel form of poetry that demands effort and mental work, his poetry is challenging and obscure. It also demonstrates the intricacy of his poems, which mirrors the complication of contemporary life.

His poetry is difficult and. He expresses emotions through concrete situations or images rather than direct emotional statements. As a poet of allusions, Eliot uses literary and cultural references (Dante, Shakespeare, Michelangelo, the Bible) to deepen meaning. For instance, the poem begins with a paraphrase of Dante's *Inferno*, suggesting a psychological journey akin to a descent into hell. This poem's epigraph, according to Eliot, is taken from Dante's *Inferno*. Both Prufrock and Guido, the main character in Dante's *Inferno*, are miserable, melancholy, dejected, and depressed. (Bloom,2007.P.18). Poetry that makes use of pictures. Emotions or abstract concepts can be communicated through imagery. His emotional and intellectual complexity can be expressed through images. Eliot often portrays modern city life as bleak, alienating, and spiritually empty. He frequently references mythology, religion, history, literature, and philosophy, expecting readers to make connections. (Dhain,2023.P.60) His poems often jump between voices, scenes, and ideas, mirroring disjointed modern life such as *The Waste Land*

Summer surprised us, coming over the Starnbergersee  
With a shower of rain; we stopped in the colonnade,  
And went on in sunlight, into the Hofgarten,  
And drank coffee, and talked for an hour.  
Bin gar keine Russin, stamm' aus Litauen, echt deutsch.  
And when we were children, staying at the archduke's. (Bloom, 2007.P.49).

One important modernist tactic is fragmentation. The poem's fragmented images, thoughts, voices, and cultural allusions reflect both the fragmented modern world and Prufrock's uneasy, divided consciousness. Prufrock's thoughts alternate between starts, stops, and repetitions.

"Do I dare? And do I dare?"

"How should I assume?"

These unfinished, doubtful sentences mimic nervous inner speech and display hesitation and self-doubt. The poem alternates between disparate, frequently unsettling images:

"The yellow mist that rubs its back against the windows"

"Streets that follow like a tiresome dispute"

Urban alienation is reflected in the isolated snapshots rather than a continuous scene. Finally, symbols make the language rich and expressive. A symbol can be used to convey pure sensations. Eliot is a symbolist. Eliot's poetry has two kinds of symbols:

(1)- Traditional symbols ( General Use)

Ex: Rose is a symbol of beauty.

(2)- Personal Symbols ( Private Use)

Ex: Rose is a symbol of his beloved. ( Dhain, 2023.P.58)

## 1.2. Overview of Eliot's Selected Poem

The selected poem in this study is taken from Eliot's collection of poetry entitled " Prufrock and Other Observations" in 1917. Eliot's The love song of J. Alfred Prufrock is one of his early poems that was written in 1910. It is considered one of the first major modernist poems in English literature. It reflects early 20th-century anxieties, urban life, and psychological complexity. The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock is a dramatic monologue that presents the inner thoughts of a modern, urban man suffering from self-doubt, anxiety, and emotional paralysis. Despite its title, the poem is not a traditional love song; instead, it explores the fear of intimacy and the inability to act. (Cooper,2006. P.49). This poem engulfs the metaphorical process itself in a kind of backwash of anxiety. This poem is a theater of self-consciousness, allegories of the state of his mind. (Oser, 2007. P.92) The poem establishes the split between Prufrock's inner states and the sequence of external events and between Prufrock's intense, elusive desires and the formulated, conventionalized surface he presents to the world. Although Prufrock displays his feelings through images of the external world, they remain separate. Prufrock's despair is largely for the submergence of his inner self, the 'passionate capacity' of which he is aware but which he cannot reveal. Then the poem shifts between images evoking his external self-the coffee spoons, the butt-ends, the insect pinned to a wall-and those evoking his inner desires-the 'arms that are braceleted and white and bare', 'the perfume from a dress', the 'arms that lie along a table'. In short, this poem is a dramatic monologue that presents the inner thoughts of a modern, urban man suffering from self-doubt, anxiety, and emotional paralysis. Despite its title, the poem is not a traditional love song; instead, it explores the fear of intimacy and the inability to act. (Cooper,2006. P.49). This poem engulfs the metaphorical process itself in a kind of backwash of anxiety. This poem is a theater of self-consciousness, allegories of the state of his mind. (Oser, 2007. P.92) The poem establishes the split between Prufrock's inner states and the sequence of external events and between Prufrock's intense, elusive desires and the formulated, conventionalized surface he presents to the world.

## 2. Modern Anxiety in Literature

Modern Anxiety in Literature refers to how writers—especially from the late 19th century onward—explore feelings of fear, uncertainty, alienation, and inner conflict caused by rapid social and cultural change. These texts often focus more on a character's inner world than on external events. Literature reflects the pressures of modern life, such as: Industrialization and urban life, loss of religious certainty, world wars and political instability, world wars and political instability, scientific and technological change, fragmentation of identity and values, alienation and isolation mean characters feel disconnected from society or themselves. Loss of Meaning means life appears purposeless or absurd. Identity Crisis means an uncertainty about who one truly is. Psychological conflict includes anxiety, guilt, paranoia, or dread. (Cooper,2006. P.44).

Different poets and writers show the subject of anxiety in their literary texts and focus on the inner thoughts and the fractured realities such as Auden's "The Unknown Citizen" that shows a critique of modern society. Auden reflects his personal anxiety toward political and social uncertainty. In postmodernism. Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* shows anxiety through confusion, irony, and fragmentation. Modern anxiety in literature helps readers understand some sides such as mental health struggles, Social pressures and identity confusion, and how individuals cope with uncertainty. Prufrock is unable to act because of his anxiety. He consistently puts off making decisions: "Time to turn around and go down the stairs will come." "There will be time" is a reassuring phrase that betrays avoidance. He is unable to progress emotionally or romantically due to anxiety, which keeps him in a state of perpetual reflection. Prufrock is a symbol of the contemporary person who feels overpowered and alienated by city life. His nervous thoughts are reflected in the disjointed imagery, foggy cityscape, and stream-of-consciousness style. According to Eliot, anxiety is a condition of contemporary life rather than just a personal issue. (2006. P.45)

### 2.2. Anxiety as a Psychological Conflict

Anxiety can be understood as the emotional signal that arises when a person is caught in a psychological conflict—when important needs, desires, values, or fears pull in different directions at the same time.

From Psychoanalytic view, especially Freud's ideas, anxiety results from intrapsychic conflict: (Id) means instinctual desires and impulse while (superego) implies moral rules, values, and expectations, lastly, (Ego) means the rational mediator. When the ego struggles to balance unacceptable impulses (id) with strict rules or guilt (superego), anxiety emerges as a warning sign. The person may then use defense mechanisms (e.g., repression, denial) to reduce anxiety. It can be appeared as a conflict between approach and avoidance. Anxiety often appears when someone wants something but also fears it at the same time. This is called approach-avoidance conflict. (Eagle and Woltizky,2017. P.3)

Example: Wanting success (approval, achievement) but fearing failure or judgment. The mind is pulled in opposite directions, creating tension and unease. From a cognitive point of view, anxiety reflects conflict between:

Perceived threat ("Something bad will happen")

Perceived ability to cope ("I can't handle it")

When a person believes demands exceed their coping resources, anxiety increases. Conflicting thoughts (hope vs. catastrophe) maintain the anxious state. According to humanistic psychologists, they see anxiety as a conflict between: The real self (who I am) and The ideal self (who I think I

should be) When people feel pressured to meet expectations that clash with their authentic feelings, anxiety develops. Anxiety can also stem from conflicts in relationships—such as needing acceptance while fearing rejection, or wanting independence while fearing abandonment.

The purpose of anxiety is not just a symptom but a signal: It alerts the person that something important is unresolved. It points to underlying conflicts that need awareness and resolution. (Frued,1966. P.6)

Prufrock constantly delays the "overwhelming question" (proposing or connecting) with phrases like "There will be time," revealing a paralysis of will.

I should have been a pair of ragged claws  
Scuttling across the floors of silent seas.  
Though I have seen my head (grown slightly bald) brought in upon a platter,  
I am no prophet — and here's no great matter;  
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. (Eliot, 2009. P.11)

He feels out of place, isolated, and fearful of rejection, seeing himself as a "shrimp" or a "pair of ragged claws," trapped in a sterile society. His anxieties are tied to his physical decay (baldness, thinning arms) and the "Eternal Footman" (Death), intensifying his fear of action. He differentiates between his sensitive inner self and his awkward outward persona, unable to reconcile them. His inability to act leads to a stagnant, "hellish" inner state, a modern man's "drowning" in his own inaction.

As a psychological conflict, anxiety arises when the mind struggles to reconcile opposing forces—desires vs. fears, values vs. impulses, or expectations vs. reality. Recognizing and addressing these conflicts is key to reducing anxiety and promoting psychological well-being. (Frued,1966. P.6)

According to psychoanalytic theory, particularly Freud's ideas, anxiety is caused by intrapsychic conflict: (Id) refers to instinctual desires and impulses, (superego) refers to moral rules, values, and expectations, and (Ego) refers to rational mediator. When the ego tries to balance unacceptable impulses (id) with strict rules or guilt (superego), anxiety appears as a warning sign. To reduce anxiety, the person may use defense mechanisms such as repression or denial.

### **3. Themes**

#### **3.1. Definition of Spiritual emptiness**

"Spiritual emptiness" is a theme in literature that explores a sense of inner void, lack of meaning, or disconnection from higher values, faith, or purpose. Authors often use characters, settings, and events to portray the alienation, despair, or moral decay that comes from this emptiness.

Spiritual emptiness also refers to the feeling that life is devoid of deeper meaning, purpose, or connection. (Gaur and Mudgil,2023. P.69)

In literary works, it is often connected with: Alienation means characters feel isolated from society, family, or themselves. Loss of faith or moral confusion shows characters struggle with ethical dilemmas or religious doubt. Materialism and superficiality also focus on wealth, pleasure, or appearances instead of inner fulfillment. Existential crisis demonstrates questioning the purpose of life and human existence. There are more authors who use various techniques to show spiritual emptiness such as symbolism as a literary term shows empty landscapes, ruins, or desolate cities

symbolize inner void as in T.S. Eliot's The Waste Land.

Characterization as a dramatic device views that characters may feel disconnected, aimless, or depressed as in Jay Gatsby in *The Great Gatsby* after achieving wealth. Imagery as a figure of speech can be dark, cold, or barren. Imagery often conveys a lack of spiritual warmth. Furthermore, dialogue and inner monologue showcase characters' reflections reveal their sense of meaninglessness or existential doubt. the best examples of literary works are such as Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* Shows spiritual emptiness through characters' obsession with wealth and social status, neglecting emotional and moral depth. Eliot's *The Waste Land* Captures Post-World War I disillusionment, depicting a spiritually barren world. (2023. P.70)

### 3.2. Definition of Social Alienation

Social alienation in literature is a recurring theme that explores the ways individuals feel isolated, disconnected, or estranged from society, other people, or even themselves. Writers use alienation to examine human psychology, social structures, and existential concerns. Social alienation also refers to the feeling of being separated from a community, social norms, or meaningful relationships. It can manifest in various forms:

Emotional alienation means a feeling is emotionally distant from others.

Intellectual alienation shows that a feeling is misunderstood or intellectually isolated. Cultural or societal alienation also is being rejected or excluded from societal norms or institutions. Existential alienation means a broader sense of disconnection from life, purpose, or the world.

In literary works, more writers often depict alienation as a response to:

Industrialization and urbanization which show that Cities can make individuals feel like anonymous cogs in the machine as in *Metropolis* by Thea von Harbou. Societal expectations and norms states that conformity pressures may lead characters to feel isolated as in *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger. In some literary texts that deal with war, displacement, and show that characters experience cultural or national alienation. Finally, existential struggles demonstrate that philosophical and spiritual questions can make characters feel detached from the world. (Gaur and Mudgil,2023. P.67)

The best literary examples of social alienation are Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* that narrates Gregor Samsa's transformation into an insect symbolizes his alienation from family, work, and society. In Camus's *The Stranger*, Meursault's emotional detachment and inability to conform reflect existential alienation.

In Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*, Holden Caulfield's feelings of isolation and his distrust of "phoniness" illustrate teenage alienation. In literature, there are Some literary techniques that describe an alienation such as first-person narrative that provides direct insight into the character's isolation. Emotional alienation means a feeling is emotionally distant from others.

Intellectual alienation shows that a feeling is misunderstood or intellectually isolated. Cultural or societal alienation also is being rejected or excluded from societal norms or institutions. Existential alienation means a broader sense of disconnection from life, purpose, or the world.

Stream of consciousness also shows inner turmoil and detachment from reality. Symbolism as a literary term stands for objects, settings, or transformations that represent alienation such as Gregor as an insect in Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*. (2023. P.69)

#### 4. Critical Estimate of Eliot's The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock

It is written in 1915 and is often considered a seminal work of modernist literature. The selected poem in this study is taken from Eliot's collection of poetry entitled "Prufrock and Other Observations" in 1917. Eliot's The love song of J. Alfred Prufrock is one of his early poems that was written in 1910. It is considered one of the first major modernist poems in English literature. It reflects early 20th-century anxieties, urban life, and psychological complexity. The poem is a dramatic monologue that presents the inner thoughts of a modern, urban man suffering from self-doubt, anxiety, and emotional paralysis. Despite its title, the poem is not a traditional love song; instead, it explores the fear of intimacy and the inability to act. (Cooper,2006. P.49). This poem engulfs the metaphorical process itself in a kind of backwash of anxiety. This poem is a theater of self-consciousness, allegories of the state of his mind. (Oser, 2007. P.92).

In the conventional sense of the word, this poem is not about love. It is an investigation of the thoughts of a lover who is incapable to adopt whether or not to pop the question to the lady he loves. The two sides of Prufrock's personality are engaged in an internal conflict. It explains Prufrock's feelings and ideas. ( 2007. P.93) This poem is a dramatic monologue that is a type of poetry in which a speaker addresses a silent listener. the purpose of it is to express the speaker's thoughts, emotions, feelings, and attitudes. The elements of dramatic monologue are the speaker, the listener, the action, the occasion and the revelation of the character. The listener obtains a psychoanalytic view of the speaker. It reflects the speaker's thought and speech. So this poem is full of dramatic situations that shows a complete conflict between the speaker and the listener who is the other side of the speaker. (Wollman,1957..P.188)

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.  
In the room the women come and go  
Talking of Michelangelo. (Eliot, 1962. P.3)

It is nighttime. Like a sick man slept on a table, Prufrock is powerless. He is no longer strong enough to take action. He mentally travels through streets that are only partially occupied until the question in front of him comes to mind. His proposal to the woman he loves is the subject of the inquiry. When he arrives at the inexpensive eatery, he discovers some women chatting about Michael Angelo. Those beautiful women have a habit of discussing the portraits of famous artists. Despite being close to some of them, he lacked the guts to voice his opinions. He fears women. He struggles with how to start and is terrified of proposing to women. He talks about some of his

friends who are getting married to women, but he is unable to say his name because he lacks bravery. He believes that if he confesses his feelings to a woman, she might reject him. As a sick, inactive man, he starts to think about his unattractive appearance in front of women. Prufrock rationalizes that there will be time to take action, but it is ironic that he is unable to speak. (1957.P.189)

I should have been a pair of ragged claws  
Scuttling across the floors of silent seas.  
Though I have seen my head (grown slightly bald) brought in upon a platter,  
I am no prophet — and here's no great matter;  
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. (Eliot, 2009. P.11)

The poet uses different images, allusions and symbols in this poem such as the night appears to be a patient sedated on a table. The tiresome agreements are suggested by the streets. (1957.P.191)

The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes,  
The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes,  
We have lingered in the chambers of the sea  
By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown.

The metaphor of the fog as a cat alludes to Prufrock's inaction, loneliness, and inertia. Prufrock's inner self is revealed by the sea. The romantic realm is suggested by the mermaids. As a poet of allusions, Eliot uses literary and cultural references (Dante, Shakespeare, Michelangelo, the Bible) to deepen meaning. For instance, A paraphrase of Dante's Inferno opens the poem, implying a psychological journey similar to a descent into hell. Eliot claims that Dante's inferno serves as the poem's epigraph. Guido, the protagonist of Dante's Inferno, and Prufrock are both miserable and desperate. (Chinitz, 2009. P.50)

Though I have seen my head (grown slightly bald) brought in upon a platter,  
I am no prophet — and here's no great matter;  
To say: "I am Lazarus, come from the dead,  
Come back to tell you all, I shall tell you all"  
I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be;  
Am an attendant lord, one that will do. (Eliot, 1962. P.6)

Eliot makes reference to the biblical figure "John The Baptist," a Jewish prophet and preacher who turned down Salome's love. Salome was a performer. Herod "the king" was pleased by her dancing, and in return, Herod cut off the Baptist's head and presented it to her on a plate. Lazarus is raised from the dead by Christ, a biblical allusion.

Eliot aims to demonstrate that people in the modern era are spiritually dead. The poet uses Shakespeare's Hamlet as a literary allusion to compare his poem's protagonist. Because of his hesitation, he likens himself to Hamlet. Then, because Prufrock is thin and elderly, the poet compares him to Polonius. He wants to look young by dressing in the newest styles. He can't deal with life's challenges. (Chinitz, 2009. P.50)

As a symbolist, the poet uses different symbols in this poem like the character of Prufrock is a symbol of weakness of modern man in a modern society.

To wonder, "Do I dare?" and, "Do I dare?"  
Time to turn back and descend the stair,  
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? (Eliot, 1962. P.4)

Prufrock can be divided into four categories. His mental side indicates that he lacks good ideas. He is insignificant and worthless. The physical aspect of the second side indicates that he is isolated in this harsh, modern world. He lacks self-confidence. According to the third Side Spiritual, he has passed away. He is lost and without direction. His baldness, age, thinness, slimness, height, and weakness are all beautifully depicted on the last side. He is a missing spirit as a result of his sin of indecision and postponement.

He is therefore spiritually dead. Michelangelo is a representation of painting and art. The personality of Prufrock's psychological statement is represented by the cat. (Prufrock's dangers in romantic relationships). Eliot places Prufrock in a world of stagnation rather than heroic movement right away. Although the invitation "Let us go then, you and I" implies progress, the trip only passes through "half-deserted streets" and monotonous social customs. Prufrock's desire for action without actual progress is reflected in this. His life is measured by insignificant, cyclical occurrences rather than pivotal moments: "I have measured out my life with coffee spoons." The gap between wanting to act and being unable to do so is reinforced by the unstoppable passage of time and the lack of significant progress. Prufrock's paralysis is exacerbated by the constant fear of death. "I have seen the Eternal Footman hold my coat, and snicker," he says, imagining death as a silent, dehumanizing force. He also imagines his own physical decline, including his thinning hair and "arms and legs, so thin." Rather than creating a sense of urgency, Prufrock's fear of failure and exposure is heightened by his awareness of mortality. Action feels pointless because death is inevitable; any audacious action runs the risk of being mocked and appears pointless in the face of extinction. The filthy urban environment and Prufrock's timidity are represented by the yellow fog. Mermaids are a representation of love, purity and innocence. The sea-wavers and mermaids are the subjects of Prufrock's dream. He has witnessed mermaids singing to each other.

He has seen them riding and jumping as horse-racing on the waves. In the end, Eliot portrays Prufrock as a contemporary person caught between desire and death. Death's inevitable nature encourages self-doubt, irony, and inertia rather than heroic action. Eliot criticizes a contemporary consciousness through Prufrock, where the awareness of time and death overwhelms the ability to act, leaving desire unfulfilled forever. (Wollman,1957.P.192)

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. (Eliot, 1962. P.4)

The insensible evening, restless darks, October night, hands' labor and days, minutes, evenings, dawns, midafternoons, days and ways, dusk, and sunset are all manifestations of time. The "concealments" of choices and modifications, coffee spoons, tea, cakes, and ice, dooryards, sprinkled streets, novels, teacups, and floor-trailing skirts are all assumed by these recurring moments. The poem's main themes are the division of Prufrock's inner and outer lives, his incapacity to live in accordance with his own emotions and desires, and his surrender to time in the form of a pointless cycle of actions.

Prufrock constantly tells himself that there is "time yet for a hundred indecisions," portraying time as plentiful and infinitely delayable. His belief that action can always be postponed to avoid risk and emotional exposure is suggested by this repetition. This seeming abundance is misleading, though. Prufrock is ensnared in monotony by the cyclical structure of time, which is characterized by social rituals like tea, coffee, and courteous conversation. Nothing changes as time goes on. Prufrock is also well aware of the destructive force of time. He emphasizes how time reduces existence to insignificance by measuring his life in insignificant units, such as "coffee spoons." His obsession with getting older, particularly his thinning hair and physical deterioration, adds to the impression that his opportunities and vitality are being gradually diminished by time. Action seems more and more impossible as a result of this awareness, which erodes his confidence and heightens his fear of being judged. (Wollman,1957.P.190)

The poem's use of time highlights the main conflict in Prufrock's life. He assures himself that time will never run out, but the poem shows that time is passing by unrelentingly and bringing him nearer to death. By the end, time has silently guaranteed the absence of action rather than enabling it. Eliot thus intensifies the tragedy of Prufrock's unmet desires by depicting time as both an excuse for delay and an unavoidable reminder of mortality.

For I have known them all already, known them all:  
Have known the evenings, mornings, afternoons,  
I have measured out my life with coffee spoons;  
I know the voices dying with a dying fall  
Beneath the music from a farther room.  
So how should I presume?

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,  
Then how should I begin  
To spit out all the butt-ends of my days and ways?  
And how should I presume?

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? (Eliot, 1962. P.5)

Prufrock spends his entire life chatting and attending tea parties, which ultimately leads to his demise. He endures the meaningless cycle of social interactions. He senses the hollowness of social gatherings in "the evenings, mornings, and afternoons." Irony and a mocking sense that they will never be more than personal suffering permeate his series of fears and desires, his yearning for sympathy and beauty. His fears, desires, and hopes are unrelated to his public persona. For him, they are of a personal intensity that he cannot reveal to the outside world, even though they manifest as a fear of disdain and a desire for love. Prufrock is familiar with the women's communication organs, including their arms, eyes, and voices. They have never been able to communicate with him in a satisfactory way. They are critical and conceited, superior and contemptuous. The "passionate capacity" of his inner self, which he is conscious of but is unable to express, is the main cause of Prufrock's despair. The poem then alternates between images that represent his inner desires, such as "arms that are braceleted and white and bare," "the perfume from a dress," and "arms that lie along a table," and images that represent his exterior self, such as coffee spoons, butt ends, and insects pinned to walls.

Then how should I begin  
To spit out all the butt-ends of my days and ways?  
And how should I presume?  
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? (Eliot, 1962. P.5)

This procedure is demonstrated by Prufrock's pin: "My morning coat, my collar mounting firmly to the chin, / My necktie rich and modest, but asserted by a simple pin." The character decorates himself with a small piece of jewelry meant to identify him as a gentleman who is comfortable in the elegant world of the room. But before long, the pin penetrates him: "when I am formulated, sprawling on a pin." In this line, the pin becomes a metaphor for his (internal) emotions instead of an object in the outside world. Naturally, since the pin is a physical object that violently enters the body, it is a specifically fitting sign for internalization. It is therefore a significant symbol in this poem. (Chinitz, 2009. P.179)

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:

The love song of J. Alfred Prufrock's love song is an ironic poem. The ridiculous notes in this poem will be songless, and Prufrock will not have the courage to show his emotions. Like everything he does, his life is pointless, trivial, and unimportant. His tragedy is that, despite knowing this and being able to see what would make his life meaningful, he lacks the bravery and initiative to alter his mediocre surroundings and way of life. Throughout the poem, Prufrock

hesitates and overthinks. He is unable to act decisively, symbolizing the paralysis of the modern individual. Prufrock is unable to express love or passion, highlighting frustration and emotional suppression. Prufrock's inactivity and meaninglessness are directly related to his hesitation. Such a society is the source of Prufrock's fear; he is intimidated by his condition in addition to being afraid to interact with women. The poem creates a division between Prufrock's intense, elusive desires and the formulated, conventionalized surface he presents to the world, as well as between his inner states and the series of external events. Prufrock uses pictures of the outside world to express his emotions, but they stay apart. He continues to postpone the decision. Prufrock shows his self-consciousness and fear of social interaction. This line introduces the fog as a living entity, a cat rubbing against windows, setting a familiar, domestic yet slightly unsettling tone. The fog extends its reach, exploring hidden spaces, much like a cat investigating. Its movement is agile, again like a cat. The fog mirrors Prufrock's own hesitant, meandering, and introspective journey through his inner world.

He is an intelligent and modest man who openly acknowledges the pointlessness of his existence and makes an unsuccessful attempt to determine the meaning of his life and start a new one with greater depth and significance. Prufrock's paralysis is exacerbated by the constant fear of death. "I have seen the Eternal Footman hold my coat, and snicker," he says, imagining death as a silent, dehumanizing force. He also imagines his own physical decline, including his thinning hair and "arms and legs, so thin." Rather than creating a sense of urgency, Prufrock's fear of failure and exposure is heightened by his awareness of mortality. Action feels pointless because death is inevitable; any audacious action runs the risk of being mocked and appears pointless in the face of extinction.

(Wollman,1957 .P.188)

#### **4.1. Spiritual Emptiness and Social Alienation in Eliot's The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock**

In The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock, Eliot portrays a profound sense of spiritual emptiness and social alienation through the inner life of Prufrock. The poem captures his inability to connect meaningfully with others, his fear of judgment, and his paralysis in expressing desire or asserting his identity. Prufrock's fragmented thoughts, obsessive self-consciousness, and fixation on trivial social details reflect a modern individual cut off from genuine human intimacy and deeper spiritual fulfillment. (Brooks and Warren ,1939.P.590). Ultimately, the poem presents a stark commentary on the isolation and inner void of modern urban life, where emotional and spiritual connections are overshadowed by anxiety, indecision, and social anxiety. The poem depicts a world of "half-deserted streets," "one-night cheap hotels," and tedious social rituals, reflecting a profound lack of spiritual depth or nobility in modern life. Conversations about Michelangelo by "coming and going arty ladies" highlight a focus on status and generalities over genuine meaning, showing the barrenness beneath cultured surfaces. Prufrock embodies the modern condition where grand actions and heroic possibilities are replaced by trivial concerns and psychological paralysis, leaving a spiritual void. In the conventional sense, It examines the feelings of a lover who is undecided about asking the woman he loves to marry him. The two sides of Prufrock are at odds with each other. It clarifies Prufrock's thoughts and emotions.

He speaks the song to himself. Prufrock is socially awkward and emotionally disconnected. He observes society from a distance and feels out of place:

“Do I dare?” and, “Do I dare?”  
Time to turn back and descend the stair,  
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?

Prufrock's overwhelming anxiety and self-consciousness prevent him from connecting, isolating him even in crowded rooms, as seen in his fear of asking "the overwhelming question".

To lead you to an overwhelming question ...  
Oh, do not ask, “What is it?”

Prufrock's inactivity and meaninglessness are directly related to his hesitation. Such a society is the source of Prufrock's anxiety; he is intimidated by his condition in addition to being afraid to interact with women. His desire to be "a pair of ragged claws scuttling across the floors of the sea" symbolizes his retreat from human interaction, preferring the anonymity and simplicity of marine life to the complexities of society. (1939.P.594)

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.

Prufrock shows his self-consciousness and fear of social interaction. This line introduces the fog as a living entity, a cat rubbing against windows, setting a familiar, domestic yet slightly unsettling tone. The fog extends its reach, exploring hidden spaces, much like a cat investigating. Its movement is agile, again like a cat. The fog mirrors Prufrock's own hesitant, meandering, and introspective journey through his inner world. The poem creates a division between Prufrock's powerful, obscure needs and the formulated, conventionalized surface he offers to the world, as well as between his inward conditions and the series of exterior actions. Prufrock uses pictures of the outside world to express his emotions, but they stay apart.

The "passionate capacity" of his inner self, which he is aware of but is unable to express, is the main cause of Prufrock's despair.

The poem then alternates between images that represent his inner desires, such as "arms that are braceleted and white and bare," "the perfume from a dress," and "arms that lie along a table," and images that represent his external self, such as coffee spoons, butt ends, and insects pinned to walls. Throughout the poem, Prufrock hesitates and overthinks. He is unable to act decisively, symbolizing the paralysis of the modern individual. Prufrock is unable to express love or passion, highlighting frustration and emotional suppression. Prufrock's inactivity and meaninglessness are directly related to his hesitation. Such a society is the source of Prufrock's fear; he is intimidated by his condition in addition to being afraid to interact with women. The poem creates a division between Prufrock's intense, elusive desires and the formulated, conventionalized surface he

presents to the world, as well as between his inner states and the series of external events. Prufrock uses pictures of the outside world to express his emotions, but they stay apart.

## Conclusion

This study offers a critical estimate of Eliot's *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*. It draws attention to the central themes of modern anxiety that arises when the events of the poem are seen from the spiritual emptiness and the social alienation. The critical appreciation shows that throughout the chosen poem, Eliot's modern anxiety as a psychological conflict is evident. Anxiety appears as existential dread, emotional paralysis, and social fear in "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." The poem is a potent examination of anxiety and alienation since Prufrock's incapacity to act, love, or connect highlights the psychological challenges of the contemporary individual. Prufrock's "love song" is a confession of an internal battle where anxiety, fear, and societal pressures prevent him from living, transforming a simple desire for connection into an "overwhelming question" that leads to endless reflection, not action. Eliot portrays a profound sense of spiritual emptiness and social alienation through the inner life of Prufrock. The poem captures his inability to connect meaningfully with others, his fear of judgment, and his paralysis in expressing desire or asserting his identity. Poetry that makes use of pictures. Emotions or abstract concepts can be communicated through imagery. His emotional and intellectual complexity can be expressed through images. Eliot often portrays modern city life as bleak, alienating, and spiritually empty. He frequently references mythology, religion, history, literature, and philosophy, expecting readers to make connections. It concludes, Prufrock's "love song" is not about love, but a lament for lost connection, a tragic depiction of a sensitive individual suffocated by the spiritual and social emptiness of the modern world.

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