

ENGLISH

To what extent has your personal response to the poetry been shaped by the enduring power of Eliot's poetic treatment of isolation and despair. Support your evaluation with a close analysis of 2 poems.

The poetic works of T.S Eliot elucidate the ramifications of industrialization as an inhibiting agent towards achieving individual liberty. Like that of his contemporaries, Eliot's modernist perception of the western world is impinged by the sordid realities of metropolitan society generated by World War One. Indeed, it is through two of his earlier works that Eliot's attempt to redress the Romantic idealism of former poetic templates can be observed, focusing on the innate human struggle to regain individuality in a mechanized world. In his dramatic monologue, "the love song of J. Alfred Prufrock", Eliot exposes the vulnerability of man through rigorously examining the futility of his own existence. Similarly, in the poem "Preludes", challenges romantic ideals by questioning one's ability to reconcile self knowledge with an external landscape. Ultimately, Eliot's poetic treatment of isolation and despair provide a personal engagement for the reader as the individual human consciousness is constantly been rendered insignificant against the burden of an urbanized milieu.

Eliot utilizes the central concepts of isolation and despair to demonstrate individual displacement as a result of conforming to the monotony of an idealized world. In the poem Prufrock, Eliot employs the form of a dramatic monologue to intimately illustrate the social fissures that distinguish the individual from society. The poem commences illustrating Prufrock is confined to the desolate and alienating city "like a patient etherized on a table", mirroring the events of Dante's inferno. In the second stanza, Prufrock begins to find it a challenge to associate with the middle class. Not only is he afraid to confront the woman "talking of Michelangelo" before "toast and tea", he questions his position in society: "do I dare disturb the universe". Through Prufrock's stream of consciousness, his internal anxieties are projected as "his soul stretched tight across the skies". Prufrock anticipates rejection and victimization according to the superficial notions of fashion, stating "they will say, how his hair is growing thin". Prufrock's apprehension portrays the common man has surrendered to the monotony of an industrial society.

Eliot comments through his internalized narrative voice that the response to social change is overwhelmed by the industrial resonances of the modern middle class society. Eliot's "Preludes" commences with an objective description of the city on a winter's evening. He employs imagery of corrosion and decay as the "showers beat on broken blinds and chimney pots". When the "morning comes to consciousness", Eliot utilizes personification to ironically portray society has awoken to a materialized world that hinders the natural instincts of humans. This insipid imagery is mirrored by the "muddy feet that press to early coffee stands" emphasizing the monotony that governs human existence. The symbolism of coffee is perceived to be a stimulant to the deadening effects of their fractured society but ironically, it dehumanizes human activity to the point of internal isolation and despair. Additionally, the "faint smells of bear" allow us to recognize that we are leading a destructive trail behind us in the efforts to achieve a false personal sanctimony.

Eliot poetic treatment of isolation and despair expose the overwhelming struggle to attain individuality in a world of conformity. In Prufrock, Eliot struggles to deal with this "overwhelming question" by confessing the inability of self expression "it is impossible to say just what I mean". He aspires to parallel his experiences with Hamlet, Lazarus and "the ragged claws scuttling across the floors of silent seas". Whilst this excerpt laments the loss of nature, this romantic idealism is quickly undermined by symbolist concepts of isolation and despair. Prufrock finishes with assigning himself to that of the hero in Shakespeare's play Hamlet. Whilst commencing with a speculation on Hamlet's condition, he then compares it to "the fool". While Prufrock ends with a devaluation of its hero, it exalts its creator. In contrast, that when the world intrudes, when "human voices wake us," the dream is shattered: "we drown." With this single line, Eliot dismantles the romantic notion that poetic genius is all that is needed to triumph over the destructive, impersonal forces of the modern world.

The crisis of identity and personal liberation is conclusive as Eliot is unable to reconcile his consciousness against his own phenomenon. Eliot commences the third prelude by addressing the 2nd narrative voice to evoke intimacy between Eliot and the audience. The flickering of the “thousand images of which your soul was constituted” examines the futility of the fragmented human existence. It also portrays the projection of an infected soul as a result of the schism between the human consciousness and the realities of their social environment. The poem concludes with Eliot’s technique of cynicism portrayed through “eyes assured of certain, certainties”. The use of Sinectdicky juxtaposes his self knowledge with the “masquerades” of prelude 2 and demonstrates that Eliot’s conscious may never be understood. Eliot presents us with a final statement to sum up the four preludes: “the worlds revolve around ancient women gathering fuel in vacant lots”. This closing statement renders that life from the very beginning has been isolating and worthless.

Ultimately, Eliot’s early poetry tends to address the social fissures that have overwhelmed society since the evolution of the mechanized world. Both “Preludes” and “The love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” attempt to portray this fundamental floor as being a divisive agent in terms of the quintessential middle class domestic scenario. It is indeed that Eliot’s poetic treatment of isolation and despair allows audiences to recognize the common mans struggle to attain internal unity in a world of chaos and decay.

Intro

- The poetic works of T.S Eliot elucidate the ramifications of industrialization as an inhibiting agent towards achieving individual liberty.
- Like that of his contemporaries – world war 1
- Indeed, through 2 early works
- Introduce Prufrock:
- Introduce Preludes:
- Address the question: individual human consciousness is constantly been rendered insignificant against the burden of an urbanized milieu.

1st paragraph: Prufrock - humans are overwhelmed by mechanized world

- Alienating city: “patient etherized on a table” like the hell of Dante’s inferno
- Prufrock finds it hard to associate: “women talking of Michelangelo” before “toast and tea”.
- Questions his place in society “Do I dare disturb the universe”
- Stream of consciousness: “his soul stretched tight across the skies”.
- Anticipates rejection through material notions of fashion: “they will say, how his hair is thin”.
- Surrendered to the monotony of society

2nd paragraph: Preludes – response to social change overwhelmed by industrial resonances of society

- Winters evening: corrosion and decay as “showers beat on broken blinds and chimney pots”
- When the “morning comes to consciousness”, ironic as they are consumed by deadening of society.
- Sordid imagery is emphasized by “muddy feet that press to early coffee stands”, monotony that governs human existence. Symbolism of coffee is stimulant however, dehumanizing.
- the “faint smells of bear” destructive trail towards false sanctimony

3rd paragraph: Prufrock - struggle to attain individuality in a world of conformity

- struggles over the “overwhelming question” by confessing inability of self expression “it is impossible to say just what I mean.”
- Aspires to parallel experiences of Hamlet, Lazarus and “the ragged claws scuttling across the floors of silent seas”. Whilst lamenting loss of nature, romantic notions undermined by isolation/ despair.
- Assigns himself to hamlet, whilst commencing with speculation, then finishes with “the fool”
- when the world intrudes, when “human voices wake us,” the dream is shattered: “we drown.”
- Eliot dismantles the romantic notion that poetic genius is all that is needed to triumph over the destructive, impersonal forces of the modern world

4th paragraph: Preludes - crisis of identity conclusive as Eliot is unable to reconcile his consciousness

- 2nd person narrative voice – intimacy
- flickering of the “thousand images of which your soul was constituted” fragmented human experience + projection of soul reflects schism between realities of human consciousness and world
- Cynicism and sinecticy “eyes assured of certain, certainties”.
- “the worlds revolve around ancient women gathering fuel in vacant lots”. Renders life futile