D . H. Lawrence

Biography

Shadows: Overview

Analysis

Biography

- **D.H. Lawrence**, in full **David Herbert Lawrence**, (born September 11, 1885, Eastwood, Nottinghamshire, England—died March 2, 1930 -France),

- English author of novels, short stories, poems, plays, essays, travel books, and letters.

- His novels *Sons and Lovers* (1913), *The Rainbow* (1915), and *Women in Love* (1920) made him one of the most influential English writers of the 20th century.

Biography

- His father, Arthur John Lawrence, was a coal miner, and his mother, Lydia Lawrence, worked in the lace-making industry to supplement the family income.
- Lawrence's mother was from a middle-class family that had fallen into financial ruin, but not before she had become well-educated and a great lover of literature.
- She instilled in young D.H. a love of books and a strong desire to rise above his blue-collar beginnings.

Biography

- Lawrence's hardscrabble, working-class upbringing made a strong impression on him, and he later wrote extensively about the experience of growing up in a poor mining town. "Whatever I forget," he later said, "I shall not forget the Haggs, a tiny red brick farm on the edge of the wood, where I got my first incentive to write."

- As a child, Lawrence often struggled to fit in with other boys. He was physically frail and frequently susceptible to illness, a condition exacerbated by the dirty air of a town surrounded by coal pits.

Overview

- This poem gives readers a look into the undying faith he had in God, how he used that faith to accept his impending death, and his belief in the new life that awaited him.

- Lawrence tells us he is ready to die at this exact moment, knowing there will be peace, tranquility, and contentment from the pressures of life.

Overview

- He will no longer have to deal with the pain and anguish that came with his illness.
- Because God has given him a taste of rebirth and everlasting peace, Lawrence knows that his mortal life will be replaced with immortal bliss.

- He feels his spirit waning, wanting to be released into the waiting hands of God, by the drifting sensation he feels when nightfall comes.
- With the days becoming shorter, and the season coming to an end, Lawrence feels his time is about to end.

Analysis

- All the sadness, denial, and anger are now enfolding around his being like a soft, melancholy ballad being sung as an exit to his life.
- Lawrence acknowledges he is closer to the end of his human life, as the Earth moves closer to its death of the changing season, only to be reborn.
- He knows he cannot alter the changing seasons, just as he cannot alter the course of his life. He is aware that after the darkness has passed, he, like the earth, will be reborn through his faith in God.

Analysis

- He penned his thoughts, ideas, pain, and hope on paper for all to read. Perhaps he felt others would find solace in the "shadows" of his life.

- The poem opens abruptly with "and" which suggests that something is omitted. In the darkness of the night the soul finds peace because the physical senses of the body are almost inactive.

Analysis

- In the second passage, night is still pervading the speaker and in this darkness his soul goes out. In this dark night of the soul, he feels close to God; he is walking with God as long as it is dark. Darkness in man’s mystical writings means the death of the senses.

- The poet then identifies himself with autumn and with the fall of the dry tree leaves. Like trees in autumn he undergoes a state of mortification and after this mortification, he enjoys a state of blessedness.

Analysis

- He feels deep and sweet shadows folding round his soul like the sweetness of a low sad song. It is a state of spiritual regeneration, renewal and rebirth.
- In the fourth passage, the poet uses sickness to suggest the annihilation of the body. He is like a dry tree with broken wrists and dead heart.
- However, strange flowers blossom on the withered branches of the dead tree symbolizing the spiritual rebirth and regeneration: "new blossoms of me".

Analysis

- The poet explains this in the last passage by using the image of the phoenix. The phoenix is a legendary sexless bird and therefore it burns itself to death and then a new bird is born from its ashes. This explains the meaning of the whole poem.

Dylan Thomas

“ Ferin Hill ”

Summary

Analysis

Selected Quotes

Summary

- The speaker of Fern Hill describes in extensive detail the happiness and beauty of his childhood landscape, making the scene come alive through personification and vivid vocabulary.

- Throughout the poem, he reminisces about his childhood innocence—but of course, there's a twist. By the end of the poem, he's lost his beloved innocence, no longer in the "mercy" of time.

Analysis- Stanza ONE & TWO

- Now as I was young and easy under the apple boughs
  About the lilting house and happy as the grass was green,
  (…)
  And the sabbath rang slowly
  In the pebbles of the holy streams.

- *Fern Hill* is written as six stanzas containing nine lines each. The structure of the poem is extremely subtle, and the flow relies on half-rhymes as well as internal rhymes , as opposed to the more traditional full rhymes at the end of each line. The lack of structure is used to great effect, as it evokes and mimics the way memory wanders and recalls the past in small pieces at a time.

Analysis- Stanza ONE & TWO

- Recalling the past is an immediately clear theme for this poem — the very first words of the poem are "*Now as I was young*." The first two stanzas introduce two main characters that serve as the basis for the work: the narrator and Time.

- The concept of time is personified somewhat here; it is not a "complete" personification, in the sense that Thomas gives Time physical attributes, but rather depicts Time as being a parent or guardian figure, which allowed him to embark on the adventures his narrator describes.

- These two verses describe many of the **speaker's** adventures, relying heavily on **connotation** to express the happiness borne from those days gone by. Lines such as "*happy as the grass was green*" and "*as I was green and carefree*" highlight the joy of the child, while also planting positive images in the reader's mind.

Analysis- Stanza ONE & TWO

- Thomas uses the colours green and golden often, and his word choice throughout is telling.
- He points out daisies, light, rivers, apple trees, and the sun throughout, and also describes activities like singing, playing, and being carefree.
- The entire introduction to the poem is filled with language that is easily interpreted as joyous, even as the story itself moves rapidly from image to image, and adventure to adventure.
- Recalling the events of their childhood leads the narrator to feel happiness, and to associate each memory with fondness and laughter, and the reader is meant to as well.

Analysis- Stanza THIRD & FOURTH

All the sun long it was running, it was lovely, the hay
Fields high as the house, the tunes from the chimneys, it was air
(…)
Out of the whinnying green stable
On to the fields of praise.

- *Fern Hill* continues in its middle verses largely by amplifying Thomas's use of connotation and repetition ; he both repeats themes and images from previous verses, such as the colour green, and introduces new positive connotations for the reader. Central to these verses is the parallel drawn between the speaker's childhood and the biblical Garden of Eden, the original Paradise.

Analysis- Stanza THIRD & FOURTH

- The main purpose of these two verses is largely to amplify the sense of childhood happiness that was established early on in *Fern Hill*. In the third verse specifically, the lines suddenly become very short, and the scenes pass by rapidly, as Thomas writes about playing in the river, imagining green fires, and then it being nighttime.
- Each of these lines begins with the word “and,” as though the speaker is breathlessly trying to summarize a day’s worth of excitement to a casual listener. In the fourth verse, the child awakens the next day and imagines their field and home as a Paradise worthy of Adam and Eve, which symbolizes perfection in the adult narrator’s mind. Another recurring image is that of horses, which likely are meant to symbolize freedom for the speaker.

Analysis- Stanza FIFTH & SIXTH

- And honoured among foxes and pheasants by the gay house
  Under the new made clouds and happy as the heart was long,
  (…)
  Time held me green and dying
  Though I sang in my chains like the sea.

- *Fern Hill* concludes with a subtle, but definite shift towards the present, and concludes in such a way that it reads almost like a eulogy , as the present speaker mourns the "death" of their past self. The fifth verse continues very much in the same vein as the ones that precede it, using positive imagery and symbols that represent that happiness.

Analysis- Stanza FIFTH & SIXTH

- There are bright colours used — blue, green, and gold — and more references to carefree freedom: the house is described as free and plain, the sun and the sky are referenced, and the words “nothing I cared” appear, depicting the child’s freedom in plain words.

- In the sixth stanza, however, Dylan Thomas brings his story back to the present, though his story is still told largely in symbolism and metaphor . The images used, however, have different connotations, and the story becomes more abstract when told through them.

Analysis- Stanza FIFTH & SIXTH

- Thomas describes the shadow of a hand, and describes the farm where most of the story took place as having fled forever, now that the land has no children upon it. In these final four lines, the speaker acknowledges that their childhood is in the past, and, like the barn, will never return.
- The character of Time returns here, and the speaker addresses its influence as a bout of mercy, as though it sheltered them from the “real” world for as long as it could, and held the dying child in the end.
- Of course, the story itself is proof that the child never truly died, but rather grew up, to become a person who looks back on those years with happiness that would be very difficult to ever match again.

Selected Quotes- Analysis

"And nothing I cared, at my sky blue trades, that time allows/In all his tuneful turning so few and such morning songs/Before the children green and golden/Follow him out of grace."

Here, the speaker begins to take on a tone of remorse as he describes his regret at not realizing how fleeting these wonderful days were. Though it guarded him earlier in the poem, time begins to lead him outside of his paradise and away from the "grace" of God. Just as Adam and Eve, who are referenced earlier, were cast out of Eden, the speaker is as well.

Edith Sitwell

“Still Falls the Rain”

Biography

Historical Background

Summary

Brief Analysis

Literary Devices

Biography

- Edith Sitwell was born on September 7, 1887, emerged as a poet during World War II.
- Her poems chiefly dealt with the emotional depth and profundity of human concerns.
- Her collections of verse include The Wooden Pegasus (B. Blackwell, 1920), Five Variations on a Theme (Duckworth, 1933), and Green Song and Other Poems (Macmillan & Co., 1944).

- She died in London on December 9, 1964, as one of England's dominating literary figures and an eminent poet.

Historical Context

- Edith Sitwell, living in England during the Blitz of World War II, compares the Nazi bombing of London to the Crucifixion.
- As befits the historical context, this is a bleak poem about the sinfulness of humanity.
- Each year since Christ's birth become another nail that humanity has driven into his body on the cross ("nineteen hundred and forty nails"), and the poem alludes to famous betrayers, murderers, and sinners from the Bible and literature.

Overview

- Magnificently written, “Still Falls the Rain” is an allegorical poem by Edith Sitwell. The poet compares the bloodshed of London to Christ. Since written during the time of London blitz, she deals it with an optimistic tone.

- Her writing of the poem reflects her courage and faith. She believes with perseverance that faith and poetry will win everything in the world at last. It speaks of man’s recurring failures from the creation, and of God’s everlasting kindness and love.

Summary

- “Still Falls the Rain” is a meditation on the suffering of people in England during World War II. From there it turns out a number of events in the seven stanzas.

- It is a reference to suffering throughout the history of the world. The thirty-four lines of the poem are divided into seven stanzas, perhaps to symbolize the seven days of the week and thereby emphasize the comprehensiveness of the suffering Christ still endures.

- The title of the poem is repeated six times throughout the poem, the number six traditionally being associated with humankind, which was, according to Genesis 1, created on the sixth day of creation. She has used a number reference from the Bible to indicate where man failed and God’s love persisted.

Analysis- Stanza One

Still falls the Rain—
Dark as the world of man, black as our loss—
Blind as the nineteen hundred and forty nails
Upon the Cross.

- The first stanza of "Still Falls the Rain" illustrates how the bombs shed on London like falling rain. The comparison made through the phrases 'Dark as the world of man', 'black as our loss', 'Blind as …..Upon the Cross' represent the gloomy atmosphere created during the time of Blitz as well as the time Christ was crucified. The adjectives 'Dark', 'Black' represents the pain and suffering of the people.

Analysis- Stanza Two & Three

Still falls the Rain
With a sound like the pulse of the heart that is changed to the hammer-beat
In the Potter's Field, and the sound of the impious feet on the Tomb.

Still falls the Rain

In the Field of Blood where the small hopes breed and the human brain
Nurtures its greed, that worm with the brow of Cain.

- Here, the poet compares the falling rain to the heartbeat which pulsates as the sound of hammer-beat increases. 'Potter's Field' alludes to the land bought by Judas Iscariot where he killed himself out of guilt.

Analysis- Stanza Two & Three

- It states that pain is a common thing to both the sufferer and the suffering. Hammer-beat also symbolically refers to Judas Iscariot's thumping heart at the potter's Field, when he realized his mistake.

- The 'Field of Blood' finds a way to the land where Cain killed his brother Abel out of Jealousy. Furthermore, it demonstrates how human greed always leads to bloodshed.

Analysis- Stanza Four

Still falls the Rain
At the feet of the Starved Man hung upon the Cross.
Christ that each day, each night, nails there, have mercy on us—
On Dives and on Lazarus:
Under the Rain the sore and the gold are as one.

- In the fourth stanza of "Still Falls the Rain", the rain is falling at the feet of the 'Starved Man' symbolically referring to Christ upon the cross. Her use of 'Christ that each day, each night, nails there has mercy on us' is an outcome of her catholic belief of praying in front of the idol of wounded Christ on the cross.

Analysis- Stanza Four

- The plea for mercy on both the “Dives” and “Lazarus” refers to the parable about a rich man and a beggar named Lazarus.

- Though the war is sinful, it is a complicated one to decide on which side is better. It is confusing to choose what side is better. So she seeks for mercy to fall on both the people.

Analysis- Stanza Five

Still falls the Rain—
Still falls the Blood from the Starved Man's wounded Side:
He bears in His Heart all wounds,—those of the light that died,
The last faint spark
In the self-murdered heart, the wounds of the sad uncomprehending dark,
The wounds of the baited bear—
The blind and weeping bear whom the keepers beat
On his helpless flesh… the tears of the hunted hare.

- In the 5th stanza, the rain and the blood of Christ are used in parallel lines, emphasizing how he bears all the pain of human beings in his heart. It also indicates how Christ agreed to die on the cross as an atonement for all the sins and suffering of people.

Analysis- Stanza Six

Still falls the Rain—
Then— O Ile leape up to my God: who pulles me doune—
See, see where Christ's blood streames in the firmament:
It flows from the Brow we nailed upon the tree

Deep to the dying, to the thirsting heart
That holds the fires of the world,—dark-smirched with pain
As Caesar's laurel crown.

- The seventh stanza still continues to talk about the falling bombs. The second line of the sixth stanza refers to some of the final words of the self-condemned Faustus in Christopher Marlowe's play *Doctor Faustus* (1588).

Analysis- Stanza Seven

Then sounds the voice of One who like the heart of man
Was once a child who among beasts has lain—
"Still do I love, still shed my innocent light, my Blood for thee."

- In contrast to all the human failings, in the seventh stanza, the poet speaks about the words of Christ who is still willing to forgive the people. He bears a heart that is as innocent as a child's. 'a child who among beasts has lain' another indication of how Christ was born in the place where the animals were kept.
- After all the things that happened, God is still loving and forgiving. She iterates on how the people can stop warring against each other and gain forgiveness.

Literary Devices

- Allusion
- “Still Falls the Rain” stands as an example of Sitwell’s religious conviction, for a number of allusions are deliberately used. The phrases “Potter’s Field” in line 8 and “Field of Blood” in line 11, alludes the piece of land obtained with the thirty silver of Judas Iscariot. The Cain-Abel incident is used to define the impact of jealousy. Again, in line 15, she refers to a parable about the Dives and Lazarus, asking for mercy on, not just the victims but for those who cause it also.

Literary Devices

- Anaphora
- The poem's title "Still Falls the Rain" has repeatedly used five times in the poem, especially in the beginning to impart the emotions of the reader on the cruelty of the Bomb shed. Similarly, the other expression "the Starved Man", repeated in lines 14 and 19, indicates the existence of the Messiah, the Savior. It emphasizes the fact that wars only bring about pain and sins, but amending with God could help resolve history.

4th Year- Poetry

INTRODUCTION TO MODERN POETRY

Modern Poetry

Modern poetry started in the early years of the 20th century with the appearance of the Imagists.

It grew out of the philosophical, scientific, political, and ideological shifts that followed the Industrial Revolution, up to World War I and its aftermath.

Modern poets try to focus on fragmentation, alienation, boredom and indecisive of modern man.

Modern Poetry

For artists and writers, the Modernist project was a re-evaluation of the assumptions and aesthetic values of their predecessors.

In the early 20th century, novelists such as Henry James, Virginia Woolf, and Joseph Conrad experimented with shifts in time and narrative points of view.

Modern Poetry

Ezra Pound vowed to “make it new” and “break the pentameter,” while T.S. Eliot , wrote The Waste Land, in the shadow of World War I.

Shortly after The Waste Land was published in 1922, it became the archetypical Modernist text, rife with allusions, linguistic fragments, and mixed registers and languages. Other poets most often associated with Modernism include H.D., W.H. Auden, and William Butler Yeats.

Modern Poetry

"Poets in our civilization," T.S. Eliot'' writes in a 1921 essay, "must be difficult." Such difficulty, he believed, reflected the times: advanced industrialization transformed the West, Europe reeled from World War I, and the Bolshevik Revolution ignited Russia.

Thinkers such as Darwin, Nietzsche, Marx, Freud, and Einstein changed people's understanding of history, economics, philosophy, science, psychology, physics, and even religion.

Modern Poetry

Many English-language artists, including poets, thought a new approach was needed to capture and comment on this new era, requiring innovation in their own work: the result was called Modernism, the largest, most significant movement of the early 20th century.

Difficult, *various*, *complex*: these are often the very terms critics use to describe Modernist poetry in general.

Characteristics of Modern Poetry:

Modern poetry is written in simple language, the language of every day speech and even sometimes in dialect or jargon like some poems of Rudyard Kipling (in the jargon of soldiers).

Modern poetry is mostly sophisticated as a result of the sophistication of the modern age, e. g. T. S. Eliot's "The Waste Land".

Alienation. The poet is alienated from the reader as a result of the alienation of the modern man.

Characteristics of Modern Poetry:

Fragmentation: the modern poem is sometimes fragmented like a series of broken images.

Definition: Fragmentation is both thematic and formal. Plot, characters, theme, images, factual references, grammar and narrative form can be broken and dispersed throughout the entire work. The poem itself can also be fragmented; consisting of broken stanzas or sentences. In general, there is an interrupted sequence of events, character development and action.

Characteristics of Modern Poetry:

Example:

Within T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land," a modern waste land of crumbled cities is depicted. The poem itself is fragmented, consisting of broken stanzas and sentences that resemble the cultural debris and detritus through which the speaker (modern man) wades.

Characteristics of Modern Poetry:

Modern poetry is highly intellectual; it is written from the mind of the poet and it addresses the mind of the reader, like the poems of T. S. Eliot.

Modern poetry is pessimistic as a result of the bad condition of man in many parts of the world, such as most of the poems of Thomas Hardy.

Characteristics of Modern Poetry:

Experimentation is one of the important characteristic features of modern poetry. Poets try to break new grounds, i. e. to find new forms, new language and new methods of expression.

Ambiguity: Most of the modern poetry is ambiguous for many reasons.

A word, statement, or situation with two or more possible meanings is said to be ambiguous. A poet may consciously join together incompatible words to disrupt the reader’s expectation of meaning

Major themes in modern poetry

Modernist poetry is characterized by themes of disillusionment, fragmentation and alienation from society. These characteristics are widely believed to be feelings brought on by the Industrial Revolution and the many social, political and economic changes that accompanied it.

Many modernist poems have speakers that seem to be struggling with their own definition of self and placement in society.

Modern Poetry

T. S. ELIOT: THE LOVE SONG OF J. ALFRED PRUFROCK

Overview

It’s difficult to summarise what happens in Eliot’s poem, since it’s not a narrative poem and more a collage of thoughts, wishes, fears, meditations, and images – spoken to us by Prufrock himself – than it is a coherent speech

Instead, in ‘The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock’, Eliot offers us a portrait of a middle-aged man, named J. Alfred Prufrock, who is attending social events (almost certainly in New England, such as in the Massachusetts area which Eliot knew well from his time studying at Harvard), probably in the hopes of finding a woman he can court and then marry.

The poem begins with an epigraph from Dante’s *Inferno* in which Guido da Montefeltro, a resident of hell, explains he is willing to share his story with his interlocutor because he knows that person will never be able to return to the world and relay it to someone else.

Overview

He is indecisive, anxious, self-conscious (he worries that the women are muttering behind his back about his thinning hair) – perhaps a bit like the famously indecisive and delaying Prince Hamlet from Shakespeare's play, except that Prufrock doesn't consider himself important enough to be compared to Hamlet ('No! I am not Prince Hamlet …').

He also dreams of escaping the suffocating social world he inhabits

Even in his fantasies he sees himself as inadequate, such is the crippling social anxiety of the early twentieth-century New England world (somewhat prudish and even puritanical in its attitudes).

Overview

He lingers in this ‘happy place’, the chambers of the sea, until the human voices chattering around him in some drawing-room return him to the less pleasant reality of his life, and he ‘drowns’ again in the social pressures of those tea parties and the knowledge that society expects him to follow convention, marry one of the women he seems to find so intimidating, and settle down.

Curiously, many biographers of T. S. Eliot, including Lyndall Gordon, have located the origins of this poem in Eliot’s own shyness around women as a student at Harvard. But if the poem did have a personal root, ‘The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock’ transcends this and becomes a much more universal statement about not fitting in, and about feeling social pressures to behave in a way we find uncomfortable.

Overview

The poem is a dramatic monologue, but utterly unlike those written by Robert Browning and Alfred Lord Tennyson in the previous century. Tennyson and Browning virtually invented this new form of poetry in the 1830s and 1840s, and their names were synonymous with it.

But Prufrock is a modern-day, urban speaker, who talks frankly about his failures: chiefly, his failure to ‘grasp the nettle’ or ‘seize the day’, his lack of sexual fulfilment, and his overall sense of failure. We cannot always be sure that what he is confiding to us *is* actually being uttered: we may instead have a direct line to his thoughts, to the inside of his head.

Overview

The poem follows the fragmented consciousness of a middle-aged male speaker, J. Alfred Prufrock, as he navigates fears and concerns about his life and reflects upon his impotency and inability to create meaning for himself in the modern world. The poem dips in and out of Prufrock's reflections and scenes of social anxiety he imagines for the reader.

Analysis: Line 1-12

The opening line of *'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,'* "Let us go then, you and I," provides the reader with a hint that the poem needs to be read as an internalized, dramatic monologue. It also gives us the idea that the narrator is speaking to another person, and thus what is being said is a reflection of his own personality.

In this case, the personality of Alfred J. Prufrock is one that's pedantic slightly miserable ("like a patient etherized upon a table"), and focused mainly on the negatives ("restless nights in one-night cheap hotels"). Note the emptiness of the world: "oyster-shells," "sawdust restaurants"; everything is impermanent; everything is about to dissolve into nothing. The world is transitory, half-broken, unpopulated, and about to collapse.

ANALYSIS: LINE 1-12

The setting that Eliot paints, in his economic language, gives us a half-second glance at a world that seems largely unpopulated. Note that he does not mention anyone else in the poem, lending it an air of post-apocalyptic silence. However, it is left ambiguous whether it is the world that is actually this way or Prufrock's miserable nature that is painting it in such a manner.

However, scholars have been undecided on the true nature of what the first line means. Perrine believes that "you and I" show the division between Prufrock's own nature; Mutlu Konuk Blasing suggests that it is the relationship between Prufrock and Eliot that is represented in the poem. Similarly, the name of 'Prufrock' has been taken to symbolize both everything – Prufrock as an intelligent, farcical character, emasculated by the literary world and its bluestockings – and nothing at all – Prufrock as part of Prufrock-Litton, a furniture store in Missouri, where T.S. Eliot grew up.

Analysis: 13-14

In the room the women come and go
Talking of Michelangelo.

Finally, there is a presence in the poem besides the voice of J. Prufrock – the women talking of Michelangelo. Though they are a living presence, the focus on ‘Michelangelo’ actually serves to deaden them; they exist in the poem as a series of conversations, which Prufrock lumps into one category by calling them ‘the women.’

It sets the scene at a party and simultaneously sets Prufrock on his own: an island in the sea of academia, floating along on light sophistication and empty conversations. Prufrock is removed from the world of people, seeming almost a spirit, so acute is his distance from society.

Analysis: 15-22

The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes,
The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes,
(…)
Curled once about the house, and fell asleep.

Critics are divided as to the symbolism of the yellow smog. Michael North wrote, “The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes” appears clearly to every reader as a cat. Still, the cat itself is absent, represented explicitly only in parts — back, muzzle, tongue — and by its actions — licking, slipping, leaping, curling.

Analysis: 15-22

This fragmentation can also be applied to the earlier reference to “the women,” which are not really described in any way but are instead considered by the sum of their parts in conversation – they only exist because they are “talking of Michelangelo.”

The metaphor has, in a sense, been hollowed out to be replaced by a series of metonyms and thus it stands as a rhetorical introduction to what follows.” According to Terry Eagleton, Metonym is the sum of parts – in this poem, the ‘cat’ that is made by the yellow fog is fragmented and ghostly. It is never explicitly stated to be a cat but hinted at.

The fragmentation of the cat could also symbolize the fragmentation of Prufrock’s psyche, the very schism that is leading him to have this conversation, his hope of risk, and his terror of risking his interest in women, and his terror of them. Much like the cat, Prufrock is on the outside looking in at a world that has not been prepared for him.

Analysis: 15-22

Furthermore, fragmentation is a Modernist technique that had not since been seen before in literature and was probably not very well received by the literary elite's high circle.

Modernist poets and writers believed that their artistry should mirror the chaotic world they lived in; seldom is meaning, in the real world, parcelled up and handed over in whole parts. But in pieces.

This is why the poem is so significantly argued over the very fragmentation that Eliot wrote, for it is the wealth of a seemingly inexhaustible source of reasonings. One can take almost any approach, any assignation of meaning, to J. Prufrock and his world. One can make their own meaning from the clues that are provided by Eliot's writing.

Analysis: Lines 23-34

And indeed there will be time
For the yellow smoke that slides along the street,
Rubbing its back upon the window-panes;
(…)
Before the taking of a toast and tea.

Note again the very same fragmentation process providing a broken-in society, a patchwork view of humanity that only serves to populate the poem with more emptiness. Prufrock's distance from contemporary society reflects itself in this fragmentation; he reduces people to the sum of their parts, and thus by doing so, empties the world of others.

Analysis: Lines 23-34

Prufrock's indecisiveness and his stating thereof do not stop the poem but rather increase its pace. By focusing on '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 our plate; time for you and time for me, / and time yet for a hundred indecisions' he actually creates a nervous, hasty, skittering feeling to the poem.

The overuse of the word 'time' both renders it meaningless and lends the reader a state of anxiety, that no matter how much Prufrock focuses on time, he can never quite have enough to achieve his goals.

The sense of time, time, time presses upon the reader, and the repetition of the world, in fact, makes the reader more conscious of the passing of the minutes, rather than less. Therefore, it can be read as the hasty rush of daily life, that no matter how much time there is, no matter how one thinks about it, there is always going to be enough.

Analysis: Lines 35-36

In the room the women come and go
Talking of Michelangelo.

And in the next stanza, time slows down again: ‘In the room the women come and go / Talking of Michelangelo.’ While it also serves to remind the reader of the setting, this phrase stops the poem in the mire. Even though time is rushing in the last stanza, here time has slowed down; nothing has changed, nothing is quick. Therefore, can it be considered that time is only quickening in Prufrock’s head, that his worries are accelerating time in his own head, but not temporally? It could certainly be seen as another idea to the you-I schism.

Analysis: Lines 35-36

This line also enforces the idea of keeping the conversation light, airy, and without feeling. Thus, Prufrock alone seems to have feelings and thoughts; Michelangelo is used as a placeholder for meaningless things.

It could have been replaced with a hundred other things, and the effect would have still been the same: Prufrock is external to the conversation, external to the world, and the conversation, therefore, is reduced to nothing more than a word.

Analysis: lines 37-48

And indeed there will be time
To wonder, “Do I dare?” and, “Do I dare?”
Time to turn back and descend the stair,
(…)
In a minute there is time
For decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse.

Prufrock’s overwhelming emotions come to a full appearance in this stanza: we can take his insistence that ‘there is time’ as an attempt to convince himself that there is no need to rush into action (even though, as stated before, the repetition of the word ‘time’ renders it almost the opposite).

Analysis: Lines 37-48

Here, we are also shown what Prufrock is doing: he is outside looking in (again, the pervasive symbolism of the fog-cat) and trying to decide whether or not to enter this party where other people are concerned with conversations that do not apply to him ("in the room, the women come and go / talking of Michelangelo").

This is the crux of Prufrock's emotions: emasculation, the terror of the unknown, and indecisiveness to whether or not he should dare. 'Do I dare / Disturb the universe?' asks Prufrock, and then reassures himself again that 'in a minute, there is time,' once more giving his decision a sense of heightened anxiety.

It is interesting to know that Prufrock himself is fragmented: we do not have a complete image of him, but a half-image of his morning coat, and the collar buttoned to his chin, a modest necktie, and thin arms and legs. The bald patch implies that he's middle-aged, but it is more given as a symbolic measure of his embarrassment and nerves than a physical descriptor.

Analysis: Lines 37-48

J. Hillis Miller had an interesting point to make about the temporality of Prufrock and whether or not Prufrock actually manages to make himself go somewhere. He wrote:

In another sense, Prufrock would be unable to go anywhere, however hard he tried. If all space has been assimilated into his mind, then the spatial movement would really be moving in the same place, like a man running in a dream. There is no way to distinguish between actual movement and imaginary movement.

We can see his point in this poem: there is no indication that Prufrock ever leaves whatever view he has of the party. He could be anywhere. We are not told where he is. We are told only that there is time.'

Analysis: lines 49-54

For I have known them all already, known them all:
Have known the evenings, mornings, afternoons,
(…)
So how should I presume?

Once more, evidence of the passing of time gives us the idea that Prufrock is one of those men who drink about sixteen coffees a day. ‘I have measured out my life with coffee spoons,’ implies a solitary, workaholic existence, implies that there is no other marker in his life with which to measure, that he is routine and fastidious and not prone to making decisions outside of his comfort zone.

Analysis: Lines 49-54

Also, the line ‘for I have known them all already, known them all’ helps us again to understand the Prufrock is perhaps the most insecure man to ever walk the planet. He convinces himself not to act on what he wants – which, presumably, is to go to the party – but to remain steadfast and distant, looking into a world that he is not part of.

Analysis: lineslines 55-61

For I have known the eyes already, known them all—
The eyes that fix you in a formulated phrase,
(…)
And how should I presume?

Mutlu Konuk Blasing wrote: “Prufrock does not know how to presume to begin to speak, both because he knows “all already”—this is the burden of his lament —and because he is already known, formulated.”

The phrase ‘sprawling on a pin / when I am pinned and wriggling on the wall’ shows the inactivity that currently thwarts Prufrock shows the way he is suspended in animation and in time. Once more, there is the fragmentation of people, the idea that everyone but Prufrock is a ghostly reimagining, the only thing that he allows himself to think of, the only important thing to Prufrock.

Analysis: Lines: Lines 62-69

And I have known the arms already, known them all—
Arms that are braceleted and white and bare
(…)
And should I then presume?
And how should I begin?

Prufrock's agony over addressing the woman at the center of the poem is evident here: he knows that she exists, he knows who she is, he thinks of her in terms of arms and eyes and bracelets, but he cannot approach her. 'Is it perfume from a dress / That makes me so digress?' Prufrock is self-aware enough to know that his attempt to keep back will not make him happy, but he has no idea where to begin articulating what he means to the woman at the center of his thoughts.

He is terrified to speak to the women he sees because he feels he will not articulate his feelings well enough. He does not think that they will be interested in him. His crippling shyness and insecurity, therefore, keep him back.

Analysis: lines 70-72

Shall I say, I have gone at dusk through narrow streets
(…)
Of lonely men in shirt-sleeves, leaning out of windows? …

‘Lonely men’ could very well symbolize Prufrock’s own situation in a very overt way.
Also, the world’s description is characteristically bleak, existing only in dusk and smoke.

SUMMARY

In the first stanza, Prufrock begins with an invitation, asking the reader—or perhaps addressing a different part of his own psyche—to go out “through certain half-deserted streets” that “follow like a tedious argument / of insidious intent/to lead you to an overwhelming question” (Lines 4, 8, 10). The “overwhelming question” crops up in later sections of the poem, and Prufrock never satisfactorily answers it.

The images in the first four stanzas describe a seedy, urban scene, with an eerie “yellow fog” permeating the entire setting (Line 15). The speaker exhibits concern about the “overwhelming question” and anxiety about interacting with other humans. He describes scenes of fashionable women going about the room, “talking of Michelangelo” and other fashionable, elite topics, and expresses worry over how to present himself to other “faces that you meet" (Lines 14, 27).

SUMMARY

Prufrock is painfully self-aware, describing his aging body, and his sense that others constantly watch and judge him. Disembodied voices enter the poem, commenting on Prufrock's thinning hair and physical appearance, and these judgments paralyze him and prevent him from acting on any of his desires. He recalls the banal details of his life, one that has been "measured out […] with coffee spoons" (Line 51) in which nothing big or meaningful has ever happened. He is "pinned and wriggling on the wall" (Line 58) like a trapped insect, unable to escape his discomfort and unable to move or act.

SUMMARY

Halfway through the poem, the speaker imagines a romantic, sexualized other, describing her "arms that are braceleted and white and bare" (Line 63). Prufrock is impotent in his approach to this figure, and to all female figures in the poem, seized by not knowing "how [he should] begin" (Line 69). He acknowledges his inability to communicate with this love interest, claiming it would have been better for him to have been "a pair of ragged claws / scuttling across the floors of silent seas" (Lines 73-74) as he is incapable of forming a connection with her.

Prufrock spends several stanzas reflecting further on the meaninglessness he experiences, drawing on Biblical allusions to John the Baptist and Lazarus to emphasize his lowliness in comparison. Even the "eternal Footman" (Line 85), or Death himself, snickers at Prufrock, finding him pitiful.

THEMES

Prufrockian paralysis

paralysis, the incapacity to act, has been the Achilles heel of many famous, mostly male, literary characters. Shakespeare's Hamlet is the paragon of paralysis; unable to sort through his waffling, anxious mind, Hamlet makes a decisive action only at the end of "Hamlet.“

Eliot parodically updates Hamlet's paralysis to the modern world in ‘’ The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock’’ . Parodically, because Prufrock's paralysis is not over murder and the state of a corrupt kingdom, but whether he should "dare to eat a peach" (122) in front of high-society women.

THEMES

Indeed, Prufrock's paralysis revolves around his social and sexual anxieties, the two usually tied together.

Eliot intended Prufrock's name to resound of a "prude" in a "frock," and the hero's emasculation shows up in a number of physical areas: "his arms and legs are thin" (44) and, notably, "his hair is growing thin" (41).

The rest of the poem is a catalogue of Prufrock's inability to act; he does not, "after tea and cakes and ices, / Have the strength to force the moment to its crisis" (79-80).

THEMES

Fragmentation

One of the key terms in Modernist literature, fragmentation is the accumulation of numerous and varied - often to chaotic effect - signs (words, images, sounds).

James Joyce's Ulysses, with fragments as obscure as specific letters that course meaningfully throughout the novel, is possibly the defining fragmented Modernist work. But it is so successful because the Modernists also believed that meaning could be made out of these fragments.

THEMES

To quote from Eliot's "The Wasteland," possibly the defining Modernist poem: "These fragments I have shored against my ruins" (431). From the ruins of fragments, some coherence can be established; only this gives the chaos of modern life hope.

The city Prufrock lives in is itself fragmented, a scattered collection of "Streets that follow like a tedious argument" (8) above which "lonely men in shirt-sleeves" (72) lean out of their isolated windows. The population is fragmented, lost and alone; even the sterile skyline resembles a "patient etherized upon a table" (3).

Analysis of Literary Devices in “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”

‘’ Literary Devices’’ a significant part of any literary piece, are used to highlight hidden meanings. These devices also help in bringing clarity and uniqueness. T.S. Eliot has also used various literary devices such as metaphors, similes, personification and irony in this poem. The analysis of some of the literary devices is given below.

1- Personification : Eliot has used a personification that means to use emotions for inanimate objects. He has personified trees and other objects in the poem. The phrase “the tree waved as I walked by” shows the trees as humans, and they wave at him. He has also personified “Yellow fog” as a lurking cat or even a dog.

Analysis of Literary Devices in “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”

2- simile : A simile is a device used to compare two different objects to understand meanings by comparing these object’s qualities. “The streets that follow like a tedious argument” is one of the examples of simile used in the poem. Perhaps the people or the crowd talking across the street sounded like an argument to the narrator. In the second example “While streets the evening is spread out against the sky, Like a patient etherized upon a table…” the evening is compared to death.

3- Irony : is a figure of speech that states the opposite meanings of the situation being discussed. Prufrock, in the poem, thinks he has a lot of time, but in reality, he is running out of time.

4- Epigraph: refers to a quote, statement or poem that is set at the beginning of the document before the actual poem or a literary piece begins. Eliot has used a stanza from Dante’s ‘’ inferno’’ before starting the actual poem.