The Love Song Of J. Alfred Prufrock: Literary Analysis

The following text has the intent of analyzing a poem of T. S Eliot and afterward, I will proceed to compare it to other texts whose theme is T. S. Eliot.

T. S. Eliot was a poet who was born in the 19th century and is mostly known as the pioneer of Modernism in poetry. During his life, Eliot won a Nobel Prize in Literature and wrote several books and poems, including ‘The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock’.

‘The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock’ was published in 1915 for the first time and displays features of a new movement at the time, Modernism, as previously referred to.

In this poem, the lyrical subject exhibits an intense desire for love through descriptions of different romantic scenes and different scenarios that are a figment of the imagination, evidence of a hopeless romantic, howbeit, this subject also describes himself as someone who has failed in love, and in life. Prufrock affirms that he is not Hamlet, nor a Prince. Prufrock is the one who aids the person of interest but he is never that person. Furthermore, the lyrical subject holds a melancholic tone throughout the poem, depicting a variety of parts that compose reality, parts that he as already seen. In addition to melancholy and desire for love, the poetic subject limns a desire for isolation, it seems that the subject renounces the entire reality and chooses to live inside his fantasies instead of facing the depth of his own feelings and desires.

This poem displays features of Modernism, as mentioned earlier. The entire lyrical subject’s perspective of reality is based on how he sees it. He portraits the reality using only what he sees and how he interprets every situation. Prufrock is a person who got lost during life, diminishes himself, and escapes reality in order to avoid the question ’Do I dare?’[footnoteRef:1]. Due to the question’s placement in the poem, (after describing a romantic relationship), a possible interpretation is that Prufrock is afraid of rejection, especially in terms of love and due to that fear, the description of the relationship he makes throughout the entire poem, is how he imagines the ideal love. For last, the subject reveals that he is someone who does not have a destiny, that remains unknown to everyone. In terms of structure, the poem has a lot of verses that don’t rhyme, they simple are similar. His posture towards life, his beliefs, and even his fear are characteristics of Modernism. [1: Quotation from ‘A Companion To T. S. Eliot’]

In the book ‘A Companion To T. S. Eliot’ and in the article ‘A close reading of 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock’ the writer’s life, influences, and inspirations are relevant subjects due to their importance in order to understand Eliot’s writing

In the book, it is mentioned the interest in Psychology that Eliot possesses and his admiration for Dante, two important things that he had in mind while writing this poem. Self-consciousness is evidence of Psychology while an epigraph of ‘Inferno’ is also proof of that. Not only he used Psychology and Dante as he also used his experience in living in the city. In his work, Eliot describes urban life with a lot of details, it seems that when we are reading Eliot’s work we are living in the place he describes. Furthermore, Eliot uses all of his knowledge in the writing, since comparisons between characters to the choice of words and scenarios,

In terms of this specific poem, ‘A Companion To T. S. Eliot’ did a special and deep analyze to it. In the book, in a general way Prufrock is described as a mysterious and anxious person that has ‘tendency to make the external world into a symbol of his own state of mind’[footnoteRef:2] , as someone who sees the world according to his own feelings and finally, as someone who does not have self-love, nor esteem. In terms of the writing, this book affirms that Eliot always applies his knowledge and describes everything within words, sometimes we are not able to interpret it and that there are some contrasts within words or expressions. [2: Quotation from ‘A Companion To T. S. Eliot’]

In the article, ‘A close reading of 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock’, it is affirmed that there is a juxtaposition between realities and that happens with some regularity throughout the poem and that references to Dante were made (the idea of letting them go). Furthermore, Prufrock is described as as someone who does not have a course to follow, he is just a lost soul that only knows reality through his feelings. In addition to that, he is described as a person who is afraid of rejection, therefore prefers to be isolated. In terms of structure is said that the verses don’t need to rhyme because the author wants to demonstrate how his mind functions.

Concluding, after comparing my interpretation to the others two, which were written by different people but the opinions are the same, it is my personal opinion that I was able to interpret the poem and was capable of understanding the author’s intent. In my perspective, it was a very interesting poem, with a lot of content in it, since references to other authors to successfully portraying the mind of someone so unique like Prufrock.

Bibliography:

1. https://www.brighthubeducation.com/high-school-english-lessons/29453-modernism-in-literature/
2. T.S. Eliot | Biography & Facts | Britannica