

What idea does the author suggest regarding how people bring about change in their lives?

The world of twenty-first century life is plagued by procrastination. It has been rampaged by those willing to put off change to another day, be it for fear, or mere laziness. In T.S. Eliot's poem "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," he tells a tale of a man who desperately wishes to remove himself from his shallow, meaningless societal ties, and become a man who can connect with those around him on a higher level. However, despite his denunciation of the world in which he is immersed, he seems to be unable to break away. He is paralyzed, unable to act upon his desire for deeper relationships, a plight that many today could identify with. His lack of ambition and motivation stand as immovable obstacles in his quest for change. Through his tragic reflection on the life of J. Alfred Prufrock, Eliot suggests that without drive and tenacity, one will never achieve the change that they wish in themselves.

Throughout the piece, Prufrock is face with a constant conflict between time and change. The poem opens on a younger Prufrock, who has begun to realize the vapid, sterile nature of the society in which he has established himself. He commits to himself to make a change, and escape before he is consumed by the vain, trivial connections of that what he hopes to make his former community. Time passes, and despite his chastising of this establishment for its artificial, superficial ways, He appears to be

trapped by it. He doubts whether such a change should be made, stating, "Do I dare disturb the universe?" He realizes that he has become that which he wished to be free of, obsessing with sartorial matters, and other by-products of his materialistic society. He is "pinned and wriggling on a wall," unable to break free of his ways, and unable to resign himself to them. Again, time passes without change for Prufrock, and he finds himself an old, withered man, entombed by the melancholy of his regrets. He finally begins to fear that he will never see the change that he vowed to ignite as a young man, the chief irony of this piece, as this fact was made obvious early on in the poem. As Prufrock's life passes him by, he finally resigns himself to apathy, no longer caring about how he presents himself, and no longer looking for any connection, let alone one of meaning and significance. He falls victim to his procrastination, and gives up on the change that he once passionately desired. He was, tragically, overcome by his lack of perseverance, and fails to achieve in his honorable quest for change.

Eliot's tragic account of J. Alfred Prufrock's plight for meaning in life makes great use of technique to enhance the theme. The tonal shifts from determination, to panic, and through to despair, generate a strong emotional tie to Prufrock's descent from youth and passion, down into old age and apathy. Prufrock's initial determination is strongly suggested by the phrase "Let us go then," which recurs throughout the first stanza, which provides a sense of urgency to action, as he tries to convince his more stubborn, conservative, self that this action is for the best. He, over time, falls into panic, as his other self begins to take hold, and he is absorbed into the society that he had tried to

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rebel against. The frantic refrain “Do I dare?” that is scattered through the fourth stanza, creates a sense of impending doom for Prufrock, and it draws the reader in. However, the rebellious side of prufrock is eventually overcome, and he succumbs to despair and dispassion. His desolate remark “I do not think they will sing to me.” on line 125, makes it tremendously clear that his dreams of living a meaningful and significant life, here symbolized by the mermaids that sing offshore, have faded from him, and he no longer believes them to be attainable. The Prufrock’s fall from his youthful passion is sharp and painful, but it provides a strong medium on which Eliot can express his theme.

Concluding Paragraph, incorporating a metaphor:

Without drive and motivation, one cannot hope to achieve their goals. T.S. Eliot’s pathetic tale of J. Alfred Prufrock’s desperate attempt to break free of an expressively oppressive society epitomizes this mandate. Prufrock, like a hamster on a wheel, repeats his desire to change but is unable to muster the determination to jump out of the wheel and forge a new path. One can only hope that we can apply such a message to our own lives, and not fall victim to the same fate as Prufrock.