Abstract: Along history, sociology and literature have formed various associations with each other. From the sociology of literature that has considered literature as a social production to the usages of sociological perspectives as literary theories or the usage of literature as illustration of sociological abstract notions, literature and sociology have been constantly and interrelatedly studied. Nevertheless, this study aims at revealing another interrelation between literature and sociology by referring to the beginning of the twentieth century when the replacement of religious thinking with secular ideas was dominant in modern society. Sociologists like Emile Durkheim detected and studied this shift in modern society and later on literary authors of the time followed the promotion of secularism in their literary works. However, T.S. Eliot reacted to this replacement in his poem "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock". He wrote the poem while he was reviewing Durkheim’s *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* in the journal the *Westminster Gazette*. This paper argues that T.S. Eliot’s "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" is written with a mindset loaded by Durkheim’s sociological perspectives such as the notions of the sacred and the profane to further conclude that T.S. Eliot’s creation of Prufrock is consistent with the view that the modern man is unable to establish himself in a society which is devoid of the notions of sacred and profane and that he may consider committing suicide to save himself as the final resort.

Keywords: Sociology, T.S. Eliot’s "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", Sacred, Profane, Suicide, Durkheim
point out to the extent to which these two have been interrelated. The primary study has been the sociology of literature that defines literature as “a cultural product that reflects past interaction as interpreted by the author” (Merrill 648). For critics following this view, “literature is a legitimate subject of sociological investigation” (648) and the outcome is the voice of a critic led by the forces of the society to analyze literary works and diminish them to the samples of social issues or the biographical notes of the author. Nevertheless, as the field of sociology was firmly established in twentieth century, the relationship of society and literature took the form of sociology and literature. This being the case, the idea of literature being a product out of social circumstances took the form of a critical study between literature and sociology in mid-twentieth century. The act was to revive literary critical studies and sociological approaches as part of literary theories began to join the board of literary studies to further illuminate the nuances of literary works (Noble 213). Adding to these relationships, even American universities opened a new field of study in 1960s and 70s that had the purpose of enhancing the teaching of sociology through literature. Leaning on literature provided the sociologists with the chance to “illustrate otherwise abstract social concepts such as alienation, groups, class difference, and gender roles” (Templeton 21). Altogether, sociology of literature, sociology and literature and sociology through literature are now deemed as the common forms in which one can investigate the interactions of literature and sociology. However, the purpose of this study is to reveal another form of interaction between sociology and literature by referring to the beginning of the twentieth century when great social and technological changes brought about enormous changes on arts and literature to the disappearance of religious thinking and the appearance of secular ideas both in society and then in literature.

To this point, sociologists like Emile Durkheim first detected how the force of religion has been vanishing from people’s life and the notion of secularization has becoming predominant in the society. Later on, the same perspective could be seen in literature as a dramatic shift was marked from religious narrative elements to other narratives (Childs 58). As such, nowadays, critics are noting how the modernist writers were mainly focusing on “shaping the idea of secularization” (Schiedermair 1) and producing the types of literatures that could match the new world. However, T.S. Eliot, as a supporter of religious thinking, anchored on a different trajectory by concentrating on the destructive effect of religious systems having vanished from the society. Pertinent to this discussion, O’Gorman aptly describes Eliot as the poet who is “in his
searching of worry in art as morally purposive” (2012: 1012). Nevertheless, whenever the emphasis is on religious thinking and Eliot, *The Waste Land* is brought to the fore by the critics\(^1\) to the negligence of his "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock". Thereby, consistent with Eliot’s religious perspective, the mantle of this study is to analyze Eliot’s "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" since the poem was written before *The Waste Land* and at a time when Eliot was getting familiar with Durkheim’s *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*\(^2\). Therefore, the present study explores Eliot’s "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" with respect to Durkheim’s notions of sacred and profane explicated in his *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* to present the view that Durkheim’s sociological perspectives have been a compelling force behind the shaping of Eliot’s "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock". As such, our further explanations prove why Eliot’s Prufrock is driven to committing suicide which has been the consequence of an individual lost in a modern society in Durkheim’s view. At last, our main concluding point would be to justify how Eliot’s "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" which is considered as one of the first instances of modern poetry was written with a mindset highly affected by Durkheim’s sociological perspectives and this means the influence of sociology in literary production.

**T. S. Eliot and Emile Durkheim:**

The following quotation by Menand and Schwartz best elucidates Eliot’s comprehension of Emile Durkheim’s *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*:

> The instinct for association and community with other men is not merely defensive or economic, nor is the community an accident of common descent. It is a religious instinct. For the savage or the

\(^1\) Ping Song (2018), in his review entitled “A Myriad of Critical Lenses on The Waste Land”, refers to the collection of essays published in *The Cambridge Companion to The Waste Land* by Gabrielle McIntire. He categorizes the essays published in this work under Eliot’s three topics of ecological awareness, religious vision and the adoption of pastiche (183). Later on, he elaborates that the essays refer to the poet’s religious thinking as being consistent with oriental religious and metaphysical thinking (ibid).

\(^2\) Louis Menand and Sanford Schwartz, in their collaborative work entitled "T. S. Eliot on Durkheim: A New Attribution", point to a review of Durkheim’s *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* published in the *Westminster Gazette* in 1916. They believe that, though the review is unsigned, “internal evidence linking it to the recently discovered contributions to the *Monist* suggests that Eliot was indeed its author" (309).
civilized man, a solely individual existence would be intolerable; he feels the need of recreating and sustaining his strength by periodic refuge in another consciousness which is supra-individual. (312)

Eliot's explication of Durkheim can be folded within the phrase "religious instinct". He adopts this phrase to imply not a specific kind of religion but any attempt on the side of the individual to shore up support by being part of a community. This sense of yearning for community is colored by various religions. Eliot criticizes the lack of this platform and the existence of individual in the society while not being connected to any systematic underlying thinking as religion. Based upon this perspective, Menand and Schwartz have also concluded that Eliot's view of poetry is really synonymous with Durkheim's rational view of individual in the society; "stated in this manner, the relationship between individual and communal consciousness is sharply reminiscent of the tensions between the fragmentation of ordinary life and the longing for spiritual transformation that appear in Eliot's poetry from the outset of his career" (312). Emile Durkheim’s trajectory began with his famous *Suicide: A Study in Sociology* in 1897 and ended with *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* in 1912.

Durkheim's *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* revolves around the concept of religion. Interestingly, his achievement in this book came up through an accident that compelled him to take a fresh look at his previous studies. Durkheim's metamorphosis "was entirely due to the studies of the history of religion [...] and notably to the reading of the works of Robertson Smith and his school" (Durkheim 402-3). From that moment, he reconsidered the role of religion in individual and public life and recognized "the essential role played by religion in social life" (606). However, it needs to be noted that Durkheim's view of religion is extremely broad and well beyond the sole belief in God; "belief in God is only one kind of belief. There are many others" (68). In another assertion, he even dismisses the necessity of the existence of God as a decisive factor in defining a religion in the society; "we no longer have the right to define religion in terms of the idea of God" (44). Basically, Durkheim defines religion as a subcategory of the society. As he holds, "collectivity values are the source of all religious experiences" (274). It is apparent that Durkheim's view of broadening the notion of religion refers to certain elements within each society that gathers human beings together. For his religious thinking, Durkheim introduces two notions of sacred and profane. Firstly, he deems religion to be "a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things" (44). Moreover, Durkheim adds two more points regarding the concept of the
sacred to fully illustrate its pictures in the society. They include a) the possibility of any object to be regarded as sacred; "a rock, a tree, a spring, a pebble, a piece of wood, a house, in a word anything, can be sacred" (35) and b) the method through which this process occurs; "beliefs, myths, dogmas, and legends are either representations or systems of representations that express the nature of sacred things" (35). The considerable significance that Durkheim affords to the role of sacred in creating the concept of religion shows his attempt to create an inviolable status to accord the related systems of beliefs and rituals with great significance. Therefore, people assert the sacred things with "respect and emotion" (453). The emotion surging among the people fills them with ambiguous and contrary feelings; "the sacred is something that is earnestly sought after, but, on the other hand, the sacred is also something to be feared" (68). W. S. F. Pickering, as a famous Durkheim's scholar, believes that Durkheim has set the importance of sacred well above the concept of God, considering that as a sort of energy it propels religious rituals and performances forward to a specific end (117).

Durkheim also notices that, for the society to create the concept of sacred, an opposite pole is necessary. The tension of this duality would more gleam on the concept of sacred. For this purpose, Durkheim labels the concept of the profane as the opposite pole to the concept of the sacred. In his view, the profane is "constituted by the pre-social body whose impulses, rooted in organismic drives, are defined by their passionate and egoistic nature" (136). Having sketched these two opposite poles, Durkheim alerts us to an important fact by declaring the domain of each of these two concepts. He asserts that, for the extrapolation of the concept of the sacred, it should be related to the collective consciousness as opposed to the profane which is related to the individual consciousness and properties; "sacred things are those whose representations society itself has fashioned.... profane things, conversely, are those which each of us constructs from our own sense data and experience" (95). Moreover, Pickering raises a subtle point here to avoid any misunderstanding of the distinction between the sacred and the profane in that "what man absorbs from the social (corresponding to the soul) is sacred and what is individual, what the individual develops of himself, corresponding to the body, is profane" (119). This close reading of the sacred and the profane by Pickering reveals certain features regarding the role of the society and the individual. Anything conceived by the individual from the society, even if it is taken into extreme limits by the individual, is categorized under the concept of the sacred; otherwise, it is profane. As a matter of fact,
Durkheim draws a line between the individual and the society by relying on the concept of profane as a notion which "expresses the opposition between the individual and [the] society" (122). Similarly, for the concept of the sacred, this opposition shows itself as a transition from the individualization to socialization; "the initiation into sacred things was also the operation by which the socialization of the individual was completed" (96). Adding another dimension, Durkheim proposes that the concept of sacred differs from one society to another and there can never be any two societies generating this concept around the same things (Pickering 130). In other words, concepts such as sacredness and profanity are the trademarks of any society ever known around the world. Durkheim's further observation regarding the sacred is finalized when he claims that "sacred things are simply collective ideals that have fixed themselves on material objects" (Durkheim 335). However, for an individual to enter this realm of the sacred and performance of actions, there exist some preliminaries to regard; otherwise, the individual never gets the permission to conduct any performance even near that realm; "a man cannot enter into intimate relations with sacred things except after ridding himself of all that is profane in him" (441-2). An individual living in a society, which is anchored on certain objects viewed as sacred, should attempt to perform the required duties; otherwise, he or she faces the immediate aftermath of disrespecting the sacred, which may be physical punishment. Nevertheless, the modern man is exempt from this punishment because no systematic imposing regulation controls him. He, indeed, punishes himself out of the despair or detachment from any systematic societal system in the form of suicide. Durkheim had studied this fact two decades before the publication of *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. In 1897, he posed the question in his book entitled *Suicide* but provided a belated answer to it in 1912. This form of suicide committed by the modern man is defined as follows:

In the case of egoistic suicide, lack of integration gave rise to meaninglessness and so to states of apathy, melancholy, and depression. In anomic suicide, insufficient regulation had left individual passions and wants unchecked, leading to irritation, disgust, anger, disappointment, or recrimination. (Thorlindsson and Bjarnason 96)

Regarding Durkheim’s notions of the sacred and the profane as explicated above, the rest of the study is to follow his string of thinking on Eliot’s "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" and to study Eliot’s resistance to the prevalence of secular ideas in the modern world. At the onset of the twentieth century, Eliot alerts people on taking proper
actions, or individuals may face disastrous consequences like suicide as portrayed in his "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock".

T. S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" in Durkheim's World of Sacred and Profane:

Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" was first published in 1915. A perusal of works discussing this poem reveals the fact that no work has interpreted the poem with regard to Durkheim’s notion of sacred and profane. Early scholars have focused on finding the outside references to different parts of the poem including the majority of the short notes published in The Explicator (Dunn 1963; Ledbetter 1992; Krogstad & Alexander 1994; Blythe & Sweet 2004). In another interpretation, Nicholas B. Mayer (2011) has studied the poem while paying attention to the part Eliot himself deleted on the suggestion of one of his friends. The excised part is called the "Prufrock's Pervigilium", and the research focuses on tracing the impact it may have left on Eliot. Nevertheless, one can easily notice a paucity of studies explicating the general framework through which Eliot reworks his thoughts, although the poem has been steadily recommended and acclaimed by different critics as a seminal modern poem in the history of English poetry. For instance, in 1922, Philip Headings, one of the first critics of T. S. Eliot, famously mentioned that "hardly a poetry reader is now alive who has not been becalmed and bemused in the yellow fog of 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock'" (17). The territory of Eliot's famous poem is still uncharted. For the critics, this poem has been the starting point of modern man's fragmented identity while focusing on its main character; "'Prufrock' differentiates between his thinking, sensitive character and his outward self" (Childs 687). Comments on T. S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" brims with such speculations that, whenever the critics are left awash on their interpretation, they refer to Prufrock's hesitation on making a decision and gaining comprehension based on this point. Nonetheless, we believe that Prufrock's hesitation does not emanate from the undecidedness or bewilderment of the individual in the modern world but is out of a fear caused by a lack in the society. Seemingly, these two are the same as long as Prufrock hesitates but considers it from this vantage point. This would commence a whole new perspective for interpreting the poem. Moreover, we need to modify Child's differentiation between Prufrock's "you and I" by suggesting that Prufrock's invitation of "you and I" is actually a differentiation between two selves, one totally constructed by the society and the other totally distinguished from the individualistic vantage point. Therefore, the rest of this paper is an attempt to see the confrontation of these two selves.
As mentioned earlier, Eliot was acquainted with Durkheim's works especially his last work entitled *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. This can mean Eliot’s acquaintance ignited the flare of writing a poem that reflected Durkheim’s observation of the practices and actions of religious people in the modern world. Surely, limiting our discussion of Eliot’s poem to this issue is not a new perspective as exploring Eliot's poems through religious issues has always attracted the attention of critics. For Samuel Hynes, Eliot is too much of a religious poet and he would have much succeeded as a religious poet if "he had made his Christianity invisible; but he made it visible, and so made religion seem a way of being reactionary, ungenerous and cold" (Molina 87). Moreover, Scott Freer and Michael Bell have also suggested Eliot's strong tendency toward religion; "Eliot, despite an ambiguous poetic method, became increasingly committed to the orthodox Christian narrative of salvation" (10). The perspective that they brought into light is based on Eliot's *The Waste Land*. They view the poem as "a classic example of a modernist response to the discourse of comparative religion that attributes equal value to Christian symbolism" (10), which is, indeed, a salient fact imparted by many other scholars. In a case of providing a complete background to Eliot's encounter with religion, Joanna Rzepa has also mentioned that Eliot's "theological crisis" during his stay in Paris is related to Pope Pius X's condemnation of the theological modernism in his encyclical *Pascendi dominici gregis*. Her conclusion of these incidents arrives at a fairly logical base when she argues that Eliot's persistent observation of religious issues has led him to consider the role of individual experience with respect to Christian dogmatic tradition (100). Interestingly, she deems two of Eliot's early poems entitled "The Love Song of Saint Sebastian" and "The Death of Saint Narcissus" suitable enough to commence studying the relation between individual experience and theology while not including "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock". Moreover, she has referred to Eliot's interests and his study of theology from 1910 to 1915, including his addressing of various topics like "sociology of religion, anthropology of religion, and religion and philosophy" (101). She has never attended to "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" or the relation of Eliot and Durkheim.

The title of the poem consists of two parts, a love song and an ambiguous name. *Oxford English Dictionary* has created the adjective 'Prufrockian' meaning "resembling or characteristic of Prufrock or his world of middle-class conformity and unfulfilled aspirations" (Simpson and Proffitt). Since the first publication of "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", the name of Prufrock has echoed so persistently that the
directors of *OED* have decided to apply it to indicate a distinct type of people. Nevertheless, our assumption is quite contrary because Prufrock seems to be aloof from any certain class of people. Eliot's use of this strange name can clearly show his purpose of choosing an isolated individual to confront the society; he could easily adopt a more familiar name. This uniqueness evades the easy categorization of the name. Based on Durkheim's view, an individual's actions and behavior are assigned certain meanings as long as they are channeled through the laws of the society. He needs to recognize a locus where individuals can smoothly be garnered together. His pondering over the concept of the religion expanded to include any deeply held belief within a society charting the individuals. For him, a collective value should exist around which the society is shaped. On the other hand, the resonance of the modern time has created a huge gap between the individual and the society. Prufrock, the narrator of Eliot's poem, is stuck in this gap asking himself the question of how to get along in this newly created world; "To lead you to an overwhelming question—Oh, do not ask, 'What is it?' (19), Do I dare disturb the universe?, So how should I presume?, and how should I begin?" (20). As such, Prufrock's ambivalence results not from hesitation but from intimidation as he is not able to follow the collective identities anymore.

The rest of the poem continues through Prufrock's observations for he is new to this world. In his report of an incident, he looks surprised as he repeats a phrase twice; "In the room the women come and go/ Talking of Michelangelo" (19). With regard to Durkheim's theoretical discussion, a revelation strikes our mind for the repeated use of this phrase. He maintains that religion or any collective value imposing on any specific society consists of an arrangement of beliefs and practices around a sacred object or belief. His sacred notion is further distinguished with the concept of the profane, and, as such, he makes his observation of the Australian aborigines who perform certain rituals and practices around an object entitled churingas deemed sacred in their ceremony. Durkheim is surprised to observe that; "the profane, therefore- women and young men not yet initiated into religious life may not touch or see the churingas; they are only permitted to look afar and even then, rarely" (120). As he sees, women are excluded from the ceremonies around the scared things because they are considered profane. Therefore, he observes that "women and children in certain circumstances are profane persons" (380). In a similar way, one can see why Prufrock is surprised to look at women talking of Michelangelo as it was more a task to be conducted by men. However, in the modern world, women are no longer excused of participating in ceremonies with
a sublime subject or a sacred thing included. This being the case, the concept of the sacred and profane is no longer acceptable in the modern society as anyone can perform any desirable action. Also, no one is attached to any collective value or force to follow any specific pattern of behaviors.

Headings' claim on the status of "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" in 1922 was not an exaggeration. The yellow fog, not until 1922 but ever since, has bemused the reader. Nonetheless, bemusing is never quite fulfilling. The third stanza is centered on a yellowish atmosphere, be it smoke or fog. Possibly, a close link is established between this atmosphere and the first stanza in which the phrase "a patient etherized upon a table" (19) is used to describe the atmosphere of an evening. Such descriptions are wrapped up as portraying the feeling of loneliness and depression experienced by Prufrock, but it can imply quite more than the message it conveys. Metaphorically speaking, somebody has fainted nearby to be dead, and its signs are felt everywhere. This being the point, T.S. Eliot conveys the message that the notion of the sacred in the society has faded away. The society is changed, accordingly devoid of any sacred pillar around which actions and behaviors could be defined. In this regard, Prufrock is officially an individual after this occurrence. And now is his time to find himself in this new world; "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" (19). Prufrock is now allowed much time to discuss his situation, to make a new person out of himself to confront the society, to step into a world which is no longer divided by the concepts of the profane and the sacred and patterned respectively. Also, it is to be noted that, though the sacred and profane issue has been already mentioned in the literature, "literature's creative engagement with religion involved a 'continual slippage' between the sacred and the secular" (Freer and Bell 10). Eliot has put an end to it by announcing the ending of the concept of the sacred. Then, Prufrock continues his argument by imagining how to perform all these things while there exists no sacred notion; "Time for you and time for me,/ And time yet for a hundred indecisions,/ And for a hundred visions and revisions" (19). More on this point, Eliot refers to how the smallest thing in Prufrock's daily life is influenced after the disappearance of the notions of sacred and profane when he points to "the taking of a toast and tea" after a hundred of indecisions to be made yet. Simply, this can prove the extent to which the life of an individual like Prufrock is influenced when he is ripped away from the social life.

In the sixth stanza, Prufrock contemplates on a possible option for this dreadful situation. He wonders if it is possible to reverse the time
back to when everything was in a peaceful situation because there was the concept of collective values around which people used to center their actions and behaviors. This being the case, he suddenly imagines himself in the form of a person living in a previous era; "To wonder, 'Do I dare?' and, 'Do I dare'?/ Time to turn back and descend the stair,/.../ My morning coat, my collar mounting firmly to the chin,/ My necktie rich and modest, but asserted by a simple pin" (21). With regard to Prufrock's appearance, Sara Trevisan (2004) contends that "Prufrock's morning coat, the collar, the necktie, the pin, all suggest a fashionable, sophisticated morning suit from the late Edwardian era" (221). Prufrock's appearance bears a comparison with the previous era when the society was not disturbed by the collapse of its main pillar. While he desires to picture himself being attached to traditional concerns, he deems it impossible to continue with the traditional and collective values and decides to find his own way. But he is still frightened and undecided to take the action; "Do I dare disturb the universe?" (Eliot 15).

Mulling over Durkheim's concept of the sacred and the profane, Pickering runs his discussion on the basis that each society generates a pattern through which men think about themselves and, consequently, take actions. In his view, the society shapes the concepts deeply embedded in individuals' minds. With this in mind, Prufrock's confession of how he recognizes the world is, indeed, his notification of how society has embedded this particular way of thinking in his mind:

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?

(Eliot 22)

Moreover, the second part of this stanza refers to a long-standing opposition between the society and the individual. Pickering's analysis of Durkheim comes to the point that "socialization, thus, means not only the incorporation of the individual into society but the embracing of the sacred by the individual" (122). As this observation dictates, once someone has totally absorbed the concept of sacred prevalent in his society, he is fully socialized. The corollary that follows this discussion is that an individual is fully socialized when the concept of the sacred acquires a high status for him or her. On this account, "The sacred commands respect and is also an object of love and devotion. The sacred is something that is earnestly sought after, but, on the other hand, the sacred is also something to be feared" (158). Prufrock has noticed the disappearance of the concept of the sacred from the society, but he still holds the emotion emanating from that concept. He refers to the "dying
voices" and the "music" that come from the "farther room". In other words, he knows the ending of the age, old traditions which are centered on the firm belief of the sacred, but he is gripped with the fear of continuing his life without abiding by those traditions.

In the following stanza, Prufrock describes himself as firmly fixed on the wall like a pin; "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?" (23). Trevisan believes that the pin raises a crucial point in this part because "the pin gets to be the objective correlative for Prufrock's entire persona. Thus, Prufrock's life is worth a pin. This diaphora is used to indicate that Prufrock's life (and self) is worth nothing" (222). Prufrock is regarded as insignificant and out of the frame of the society, and he feels being in the realm of the profane. "Profane has no other apparent end than to provide for the temporal necessities of life; it puts us in relations with ordinary things only" (Pickering 397). In this view, Prufrock's nothingness is the consequence of his separation form the realm of the sacred and his entrance into the realm of the profane which makes him totally insignificant. Later on, Prufrock refers to how he is readily misled in a society that is devoid of any sacred notion; "Is it perfume from a dress/ That makes me so digress?/ Arms that lie along a table, or wrap about a shawl" (25). In continuation, Prufrock's description of himself as "ragged claws" in the eleventh stanza really matches his status in the society; "I should have been a pair of ragged claws/ Scuttling across the floors of silent seas" (21). Any action he performs in the society is considered profane and a scratch on the smooth surface of the concept of the sacred.

In the eleventh stanza, after detailing some insignificant matters which are the indicative of the profane, he again brings up the phrase "you and me" but to be continued with a question; "Have the strength to force the moment to its crisis?" (21). Prufrock himself answers the question; "I am no prophet — and here's no great matter; I have seen the moment of my greatness flicker" (ibid). He has two selves, one constructed by the society centered on the concept of the sacred and the other individualized and profane. He has come to the understanding that a difference exists between these two but is still intimidated to reject the former in favor of the latter. A prophet is a leader of a religious society guiding a group of people toward a destined path by determining certain objects or notions as sacred. However, Prufrock is an individual hoping to take on the deeds which are profane and of no importance. Therefore, he can never hang on a status of a prophet by inviting people
to his new style of living. He must get along with his individualistic life which is fear-inducing. Altogether, he is entangled in an endless conflict between his inner self and the society, for he is unable to settle his inner conflict and is left by himself driven into a meaningless world. In Durkheim's opinion, at a critical moment like this, the individual decides to commit suicide. He notes further that there exist two types of suicide which are the result of the society being incomprehensible to the individual. These two types, being anomie and egoistic, occur when no regulated relationship exists between the society and the individual or no relationship exists at all. It seems that Prufrock prepares himself to admit this ending for himself but is filled with fear to utter it in words as he says, "it is impossible to say just what I mean!" (ibid). We wonder here if Eliot himself is afraid of touching on the subject too. We have delayed the discussion of the famous quotation at the beginning of the poem until now to better connect it with our main point. In the quotation, there is a moment at which the narrator is sure that no one is going to hear his answer; otherwise, he would face infamy. As mentioned earlier, during the time that Eliot wrote this poem, he was experiencing a theological crisis compelling him to peruse so many books regarding religious matters including Durkheim's *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. In our view, Eliot came to a realization that he was so afraid of sharing with others because it would be an offence to the sacred concept of any religion. Durkheim believes that "the individual is sacred in modern western society" (Pickering 151), but Eliot was afraid of proposing it bluntly. He created Prufrock to cope with this difficult situation. In this respect, a reading of this poem through Durkheim’s sociological perspective proves beneficial as it portrays a period of time when the character does not carry out significant deeds nor refers to them; but, indeed, he detaches himself from any greatness of the past and delves into himself for an answer to this world. Unluckily, he is not strong enough to gain one, and, at the end of the poem, he comes to an ending for his life; "Till human voices wake us, and we drown" (Eliot 29).

**Conclusion**

The current study is a scrutiny of Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock". It is argued that Eliot has attempted to be morally responsive to the changes that the modern society has brought to the human community. As a classic and royalist person, he has taken the issue with the pervasive secularism of the emerging modern society. The novelty of this study lies in the analysis of Eliot's work from Durkheim's sociological perspective. The choice of this perspective is due to Eliot’s
review of Durkheim’s *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* around the same time when he wrote his poem “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”. The analysis of the poem is conducted in terms of the duality of the notions of sacred and profane explicated in Durkheim’s *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. As Durkheim has argued, the contentious duality between the notions of sacred and profane has disappeared in the modern world. According to him, since the communal association is contingent upon the notion of sacred to get formed, individuals are left unheeded and forced to pave their path by themselves. As such, the paper has argued that Eliot’s creation of Prufrock is not out of modern man’s indecisiveness and indeterminacy but due to his inability to cope with the disappearance of the notions of sacred and profane in the society. Finally, it is concluded that Eliot’s concern for the “dismantling of religious narrative elements to the construction of new mythological models” (Childs 58), revealed later in his *The Waste Land*, began to grow from his "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock". This is because the nonexistence of the notion of sacred would lead to an unfortunate ending like the suicides committed by individuals in the modern society.

References

**T.S. ELIOT I EMIL DIRKEM: SVETO I PROFANE U LJUBAVNOJ PJESMI J. ALFREDA PRUFROKA**

Tokom istorije, sociologija i književnost upućivale su na različite načine jedna na drugu. Od sociologije književnosti koja je književnost promatraла kao društveno proizvodnju, do korištenja socioloških perspektiva kao književnih teorija, ili upotrebe književnosti kao ilustracije za sociološke apstraktnke pojmove – književnost i sociologija se neprestano i međusobno proučavaju. Ova studija ima za cilj da otkrije još jedan međuodnos književnosti i sociologije referišući na početak dvadesetog vijeka kada je zamjena religioznog mišljenja sekularnim idejama bila dominantna u modernom društvu. Sociolozi poput Emila Dirkema otkrili su i proučavali ovu promjenu u modernom društvu, a kasnije su i književnici tog vremena u svojim književnim djelima promovisali sekularizam. T. S. Eliot regovao je na ovu zamjenu u svom djelu *Ljubavna pjesma J. Alfreda*

**Ključne riječi:** sociologija, T. S. Eliotova *Ljubavna pjesma J. Alfreda Prufroka*, sveto, profano, samoubistvo, Dirkem