A FRAME OF HOPELESSNESS IN ENGLISH MODERNIST POETRY

İngiliz Modernist Şiirde Umutsuzluk Çerçevesi

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Abstract

Modernist poetry has been regarded as an articulate aesthetic mechanism with a beautiful expression of ugly occurrences of the modern epoch. Premised on the multiple debates about human beings' social, mental, philosophical, or religious issues, modernist poetry conveys people's conditions during turbulent times. Such eminent figures of English modernist poetry like Thomas Stearns Eliot (1888-1965), Thomas Hardy (1840-1928), Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889), and William Butler Yeats (1865-1939) portray the gloomy atmosphere of the period in their works. Therefore, their poems embody the idea of pessimism and hopelessness. Pessimism and hopelessness in their poems will be analysed through the themes of loss of identity and meaning, sense of insecurity, fragmentation, and lack of communication or inadequacy of language to convey a message.

Keywords: T. S. Eliot, T. Hardy, G. M. Hopkins, W. B. Yeats, modernist poetry, hopelessness

Öz

Edebiyatta modernist şiir, modern dünyanın kötü olaylarını estetik bir dille anlatan bir mekanizma olarak tanımlanmaktadır. İnsanların sosyal, ruhsal, felsefi veya dini sorunlarını ele alan modernist şiir, insanların çalkantılı dönemlerdeki durumunu edebi olarak betimlemektedir. İngiliz edebiyatında Thomas Stearns Eliot (1888-1965), Thomas Hardy (1840-1928), Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889) ve William Butler Yeats (1865-1939) gibi önde gelen modernist şairler, dönemin karamsar şartlarını konu edinmişlerdir. Dolayısıyla bu şairlerin şiirlerinde karamsarlık ve umutsuzluk teması hayli yaygındır. Bu çalışmanın amacı, bu şairlerin şiirlerinde umutsuzluğun işlenmesinin değerlendirilmesidir. Bu şairlerin şiirlerindeki umutsuzluk, kimlik ve

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anlam kaybı, güvensizlik duygusu, parçalanmışlık, iletişim eksikliği ya da bir mesajı iletmekte dilin yetersizliği kavramları aracılığıyla incelenenecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: T. S. Eliot, T. Hardy, G. M. Hopkins, W. B. Yeats, modernist şiir, umutsuzluk kavramı

Introduction

The last decades of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century were shaken by drastic changes in various spheres of existence. The devastation of nature, wars, revolutions, industrialisation, and social and religious reforms threw a dark shadow on the experience and existence of human beings. Modernist poetry that springs roughly from this period can be characterised as a momentum moving the forces of reaction against these conditions. As Emig states, "*modernism . . . can be interpreted as a late endeavour to come to terms with the rifts that were thrown open by modernity*" (1995: 2); modernity is described as "*the results of the period of philosophical, scientific and political upheavals commonly known as the Enlightenment*" (1995: 1). Elements of modernism can be seen in some of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century poems. Only some poets of this era questioned their conditions. Furthermore, precisely this tendency to question the immediate surroundings and conditions of the epoch marks the frame of modernist poetry. One of the main aspects of modernist poetry is the hue of pessimism spreading from the problems of the period. This study will analyse poems by Thomas Stearns Eliot (1888-1965), Thomas Hardy (1840-1928), Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889), and William Butler Yeats (1865-1939) in terms of the themes of pessimism, loss of identity and meaning, sense of insecurity, fragmentation, and lack of communication or inadequacy of language to convey a message. The names of the poets are alphabetically listed here and below. Within this study, however, their names will be referred to under the contents of the poems.

With his modernist literary masterpiece "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" and many other acclaimed poems, T. S. Eliot has been regarded as the leading representative of modernist poetry, and his poems have been accepted as "*icons of modernism*" (Emig, 1995: 61). Eliot is seen as a symbol of movement from one poetic era to the other. In this vein, René Wellek states that T. S. Eliot "*has done more than anybody else to promote the 'shift of sensibility' away from the taste of the 'Georgians'*" (1956: 398). Eliot's main concern was to be as impersonal as possible in his poetry, which he, indeed, propagated as a critic. Yet, as Wellek states, "*Eliot seems completely to contradict his usual emphasis on impersonality*" (1956: 408) by depicting an author's suffering or by speaking of private agonies. This stems from the impossibility of separation of intellect from emotions, and, it is precisely this division that the modern age compelled humans to accomplish. And as Wellek also adds, "*[t]he ideal fusion of intellect and emotion becomes the nucleus of Eliot's*

view of the history of poetry" (1956: 411). In his poetry, Eliot mainly portrayed a fragmented modern world and its consequences that horrendously influenced human beings. One of the pivotal elements of Eliot's poetry is his concept of an "objective correlative" – a general physical image for abstract concepts.

Thomas Hardy, mostly known for his pessimistic novels, greatly contributed to modernist poetry with his poems. He was generally accepted as a poet with a tendency to express "*the Contemporary Scene*" (Langbaum, 1995: 28). In other words, through Hardy's poems, it is possible to observe the events, traditions, and developments of the contemporary era. "Hardy wrote an elegy for the nineteenth century, an elegy for the queen who gave the century its name, an elegy for the unknown soldier of its imperialist wars, and an elegy for God, who had been dying through much of the century" (Ramazani, 1991: 133). This statement accurately summarises Hardy's poetry with its focus on the content and on the message of Hardy's works. Schad's short phrase – "negative focus" (1993: 174) – can be added to Ramazani's statement to see the complete picture of Hardy's poetry. Another term that can be used to talk about Hardy's poetry is "absence". As Schad claims, God "becomes the name for absence in general and unknowing in particular" (1993: 175). Roberts even goes further and claims that Hardy's focus on the diminishing power of God should be associated with the "prospect of the disappearance of literature" (2003: 64). And this can be true, at least for poetry. In short, Thomas Hardy's poems speak of the failure of religion, the inadequacy of language to convey human beings' messages, and the death of nature. Hardy's unfailing skill to translate his ideas into poems makes him transcend the boundaries of time and geography.

Even though Hopkins could not live enough to see the new century, most of his poems can be analysed under the light of 20th century criticism. Being a devout man of religion, Hopkins left a beautiful, yet gloomy, a body of poetic output. Generally speaking, Hopkins' poetry is seen as an escape into religion, an escape from the era's horrors. The religious hue in Hopkins' poetry depicts his desire to find a sanctuary. Nevertheless, most of the study on Hopkins' poetry focuses on his style. As Gardner states, the importance of his poems for modernist poets lies in his subversive and experimental attempts (1966: 245). Most of Hopkins' literary output shows that it was difficult for him to accommodate himself in governing bourgeois ideology. One of the signs of this difficulty is his play with the language, which can be regarded as his most prominent attempt at experimenting with poetry or, as Russell-Brown points out, his avoidance "to be definitively pinned down" (2015: 98). His famous poetic technique, an example of his experiments, is his creation of new words, which can be widely seen in his poems.

A strong poetic bridge that connects Victorian and modernist poetry is Yeats, an Irish poet and dramatist. His poetry is embellished with symbols, which have become a major characteristic of his works. Yeats tried to convey his message in

symbols in order to go beyond the ordinary language. Yeats, who was the Nobel Prize winner in 1923, was always conscious of his Irish background which provided him with legends, myths, stories and a wide range of symbols. Allison finds these elements in Yeats' poetry political: "Poetry such as this constitutes, perhaps, an attempt to re-write the story of the region and of 'the nation', using different paradigms from those used in the imperial British story" (2005: 230). Surely, it is impossible to see Yeats' poetry devoid of national politics. Yet, what Allison focuses on is the fact that Yeats' poetry is replete with supernatural elements. Yeats' old age and deteriorating health through the end of his poetic career also positively and greatly influenced his poetry, through which he conveyed the difficulties he experienced in life. Indeed, his late poems have their specific taste gained through his experience of old age. As Bornstein states, ageing was Yeats' "obsession" (2012: 46), and this obsession added more colours to his poems.

Modernist Poetry in the Pessimistic Hue

Horrific effects of the modern era and a loud advance of industrialisation, which according to Baysal, have been regarded as the first steps of the notion of anthropocene (2019: 204) – the stamp human beings left on nature, left human beings with a sense of pessimism. The poets of the era, as a result, tried to reflect this pessimistic attitude in poetry to make their voices heard. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", one of the pivotal poems of the modernist world, presents this pessimistic tone in a transparent way. "*The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the windowpanes*" suggests the ugly atmosphere of the period when it is difficult to envision the environment or to envision the future. What is more, the fog suggests the feelings of the speaking persona, the feelings that do not promise a clear sight of the future. The city's "*half-deserted streets*" suggest loneliness and the speaker's emptiness of his soul. "*I have gone at dusk through narrow streets / And watched the smoke that rises from the pipes / Of lonely men in shirt-sleeves, leaning out of windows?*" Prufrock's loneliness is similar to the people leaning out of windows because both parts lack communication. Yeats' "No Second Troy", which is similar to Eliot's Prufrock in that it forwards its pessimistic tone in a question form, is heavily infused with depressive mood: "*Why should I blame her that she filled my days / With misery . . . ?*" The speaker's life is miserable, and the hope for a better existence is lost because of "*ignorant men*" with "*most violent ways*".

Moreover, "*Was there another Troy for her to burn?*" suggests the advancing terror of destructiveness and the chaotic atmosphere of the current condition. The poem was originally dedicated to Maud Gonne, Yeats' woman who was an ardent political activist. By drawing an analogy between the ancient political movements that inspired the events of Troy and the contemporary political ambitions, in which Gonne took part, Yeats wanted to stress the inevitability of people's violence

towards each other and the emptiness of the political enterprise. All of these just cause other waves of violence.

Eliot's Prufrock is a multi-dimensional persona, and the poem can be analysed in many ways. Besides his pessimistic attitude, he is a Nietzschean nihilist walking on the deserted streets looking for the meaning of life to embellish his grey existence. Inability to find such meaning and, indeed, the loss of it, in turn, causes one to search for his identity. Prufrock's short sentences like "*I am no prophet*" or "*I am not Prince Hamlet*" show that he cannot talk about who he is, and that is why he goes back and forth between other identities to find out most appropriate one. He tries to solve his identity crisis by eliminating the least possible options. He would choose what is left, but nothing is left to him. What is more, even if he overcomes his crisis, ". . . *would it have been worth it, after all, / Would it have been worth while.*" In other words, does he need to identify himself or is it necessary to put effort into this work of reaching meaning? Because of this uncertainty, the "overwhelming question" that Prufrock wants to answer is either not asked or, if asked, is not answered. The poem conveys that weight of the overwhelming question which, in fact, does not get any clear answer in response.

Loss of identity and meaning leads to the sense of insecurity which is clearly seen in Eliot's "Prufrock". Indeed, as Kaya suggests, some characters may go through a painful realisation of such losses (2019: 588), which, in fact, leads to other losses. In other words, what these characters and speakers experience is a vicious circle of eternal losses. Prufrock's persona is Eliot's objective correlative of the experiences of a modern man in a horrific universe. And the feeling of insecurity is one of the main attributes of a modern man. Prufrock's questions and statements related to his surroundings constitute an umbrella-like categorical frame which conveys the meaning of a human being's existence in this world. The line "*But as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in patterns on a screen*" reveals the speaker's fear of being seen by everybody. He is not sure of himself, and he does not want other people to see his non-identified identity. He actually does not feel secure because people can see his fragmented identity and is afraid of it. It shows the general attitude of the people in this particular period of time, when profound isolation and alienation hold sway among the population.

Prufrock's inability to communicate with women is just another example of his sharpened sense of insecurity: "*I do not think that they will sing to me*". He sees only some parts of these women's bodies: "*And I have known the eyes already,*" "*And I have known the arms already.*" He focuses on a limited space and as a result, he sees himself in the same limited way. This limitation, in turn, leads to the failure of self-actualisation as an individual. Prufrock's fear of being identified as an incomplete individual intensifies his insecurity. This sense of insecurity is deepened

further when he starts to elaborate on the future, which is neither certain, nor promising, nor blissful: "*I should have been a pair of ragged claws / Scuttling across the floors of silent seas.*" The only certainty is the passing of time and its devastating consequences: "*I grow old ... I grow old.*" "*Shall I part my hair behind?*" This suggests his insecurity and his pronounced uncertainty in terms of his physical appearance. He requires appreciation because he feels inadequate in nearly all spheres of life. He needs somebody to approve of him and appreciate his behaviour. Being unable to communicate or to find somebody who would satisfy his needs of being appreciated, Prufrock states: "*Let us go then, you and I.*" This is a famous line from Eliot's poem that evokes utter loneliness and pitch darkness of the soul.

A similar sense of insecurity reaches its peak in Hardy's "Hap". The persona in the poem speaks about the feeling of uncertainty, inability to rely on somebody or something, and absolute frustration concerning life in general. However, while the first two stanzas tell the condition in which the persona would feel more secure, the last stanza refutes the whole context:

> But not so. How arrives it joy lies slain,
> And why unblooms the best hope ever sown?
> –Crass Casualty obstructs the sun and rain,
> And dicing Time for gladness casts a moan. . . .
> These purblind Doomsters had as readily strown
> Blisses about my pilgrimage as pain.

The persona is devastated by the lack of hope for the future because even sun and rain fail to promise better days. The sense of insecurity arises from the idea that nothing is certain and everything is violent and harsh.

The idea of fragmentation is seen in Eliot's "Prufrock" when the speaker mentions women's body parts separately. Fragmentation is one of the main themes in modernist poetry. Longenbach states, "*when Eliot says in 'The Metaphysical Poets' that the poet's mind is 'always forming new wholes,' he is aware that the mind has no choice but to do so; wholeness and order are not inherent in the world we experience – and certainly not in the world Prufrock experiences*" (1999: 120). It is the inability to be coherent with the rest of the world. Poetry of the period tried to portray human beings, who became fragmented because they were separated from nature and each other. In Yeats' "The Tower", for example, the speaker negates his old age as his own component:

> WHAT shall I do with this absurdity –
> O heart, O troubled heart - this caricature,
> Decrepit age that has been tied to me
> As to a dog's tail?

An intense focus here is on the speaker's old age, which spawns the sense of fragmentation. The speaker is, clearly, not in tone with his identity as an older man. There is a lack of mastery of wholeness because the speaker cannot juxtapose an old age and his growing imagination:

> Never had I more
> Excited, passionate, fantastical
> Imagination, nor an ear and eye
> That more expected the impossible –
> No, not in boyhood when with rod and fly,
> Or the humbler worm, I climbed Ben Bulben's back
> And had the livelong summer day to spend.

Exploring a unique imagination that has not been experienced so far is thought to be thwarted by the passive breath of old age. In other words, the speaker does not accept the imagination that occurs at an old age, which, in turn, is not accepted as something belonging to the speaker. Yeats' poems, Emig states, always include "*the individual – artistic – self-fighting for its position in an environment that denies permanence to the self and its works*" (1995: 125). It is precisely this fighting that leaves the speaker fragmented and weary. In another poem, "Sailing to Byzantium", Yeats explored the sense of fragmentation on a larger scale:

> THAT is no country for old men. The young
> In one another's arms, birds in the trees
> - Those dying generations - at their song,
> The salmon-falls, the mackerel-crowded seas,
> Fish, flesh, or fowl, commend all summer long
> Whatever is begotten, born, and dies.
> Caught in that sensual music all neglect
> Monuments of unageing intellect.

It is a poem of dislocation whereby the young generation is exalted, and the aged population is defined as something outside of the mainstream existence. It is a fragmented modern world where human beings are expected to function without which it loses its practical side. The poem pictures the world governed by the principles of production and consumption. Indeed, this idea is further worked on in "The Second Coming":

> TURNING and turning in the widening gyre
> The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
> Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
> Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
> The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
> The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
> The best lack all conviction, while the worst

Are full of passionate intensity.

Yeats' definition of fragmentation is basically based on the inadequacy of the centre to hold its fragments. Moreover, innocence is lost and blood is everywhere – the announcement of the progressive utilitarianism or the division of people into several units, units that depend on functions.

These themes of fragmentation and isolation prevalent in the poetry of modernist period, irreconcilably pave the way for the impossibility of communication between human beings, human beings and nature, human beings and God. This notion of lack of contact profoundly influenced modernist poets who further extended their themes to encapsulate the idea of inadequacy of language to convey any message. Hopkins has been regarded as one of the poets whose poems reveal his instinctive urge to find a way to translate his unique language into the language of poetry. In his poem "I Wake and Feel the Fell of Dark, Not Day", the speaking persona undergoes the difficulty of lack of communication; he expresses his inability to achieve unity with God:

> With witness I speak this. But where I say
> Hours I mean years, mean life. And my lament
> Is cries countless, cries like dead letters sent
> To dearest him that lives alas! away.
>
> . . .
>
> Selfyeast of spirit a dull dough sours. I see
> The lost are like this, and their scourge to be
> As I am mine, their sweating selves; but worse.

The speaker wants to achieve unity with God, but he is not able to succeed because his words cannot reach the addressee, he is away. The speaker's account of his effort to establish unity with divine power is just an unfortunate intuitive sharing of a failure to reach, reach anybody. The profound "un-reaching" consciousness is seen in the lines where the effort is measured in years and life. The image of dead letters symbolises the glorious "un-reaching". Eventually, the phrase "I am mine" in the last line of the poem shows speaker's imprisonment in his consciousness.

The notion of "un-reaching" seen in Hopkins' poem can also be seen in Yeats' poem "The Sad Shepherd" that is shot through with the eternal unanswered questions, communication without the addressee, or lack of understanding between the parties:

> And then the man whom Sorrow named his friend
> Sought once again the shore, and found a shell,
> And thought, *I will my heavy story tell*
> *Till my own words, re-echoing, shall send*

> *Their sadness through a hollow, pearly heart;*
> *And my own talc again for me shall sing,*
> *And my own whispering words be comforting,*
> *And lo! my ancient burden may depart.*
> Then he sang softly nigh the pearly rim;
> But the sad dweller by the sea-ways lone
> Changed all he sang to inarticulate moan
> Among her wildering whirls, forgetting him.

A Prufrock-like persona in this poem gets empty responses and feels the coarse impartiality of the world. The persona's loneliness is expressed through mere moans, sad sounds full of meaning but are incapable of communication. With the first line that signifies the utter gap between human beings, in his poem "A Broken Appointment", Thomas Hardy also works on the theme of the rupture in relations. "You did not come, / And marching Time drew on, and wore me numb." – the persona juxtaposes the concept of time and loss of a person and thus, creates a sense of deep melancholy. In the second stanza, time is emphasised again, the awaited person is remembered, but the speaking person is aware of lack of love: "Once you, a woman, came / To soothe a time-torn man; even though it be / You love not me?" Thus, the poem stresses the notion of the impossibility of healthy human interaction.

Poets not only conveyed the universe's failure to connect its tiny elements, but they also tried to find some techniques to overcome this failure, to compensate for the universe's linguistic deficiency. If looked at the words that Hopkins utilised to convey the integral problem with communication and language, it can be observed that they loudly announce the poet's desire to convey his message. Indeed, Hopkins' poetry is seen as "*a desperate struggle for adequate expression*" (Emig, 1995: 13). Thus, the inadequacy of widely accepted language to transmit the message is being compensated for in his poetry. For example, in "Pied Beauty", there are a few newly-created words:

> Glory be to God for dappled things –
> 　　　For skies of couple-colour as a brinded cow;
> 　　　　　For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that
> 　　　　　　　　　　swim;
> Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;
> 　　　Landscape plotted and pieced – fold, fallow, and plough;
> 　　　　　And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.
> All things counter, original, spare, strange;
> 　　　Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
> 　　　　With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
> He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
> 　　　　　　　　Praise him.

The combined words in this poem try to convey the speaker's refined notion of the greatness of God, his "beyondness" and his "incomprehensibleness". Indeed, these features cannot be described with ordinary language. As a staunch believer, the speaker tries to explain God's power by merging meanings that ensue the combination of words. The poet's linguistic "*barbarism*" (Gardner, 1966: 266-267) is actually his aesthetic tradition that, in a way, grants him freedom of expressing the incomprehensible.

Hardy is another poet who, like Hopkins, tried to express the incomprehensible, despite the language's deficiency. According to Hardy, "'*the adjustment of things unusual to things eternal and universal' is 'the key to the art'*" (qtd. in Lentz, 1995: 135). In other words, it is a kind of blasphemy against common sense since he tried to subvert it. Alternatively, it can be likened to the defamiliarisation effect, coined by Russian formalists to explain ordinary objects or events unusually. Nevertheless, Hardy's aesthetic technique of making up words that could fit his content was his weapon against language's deficiency. For example, the word "*unblooms*" from Hardy's poem "Hap" depicts the poet's endeavour to utter something different from the widely established norms of meaning. Some words that are written together in Hardy's poems serve a similar purpose of expressing the experience beyond the traditional limits of understanding; for example, such words can be seen in his poem "The Voice" – air-blue, and in "The Darkling Thrush" – spectre-gray. Another feature of Hardy's poetry that depicts his playing with the form and language is the use of words in different grammatical functions. For example, the adjective "*obscure*" is used as a noun in "Near Lanivet" – murked obscure.

Another technique to fight back the howling linguistic limitation is Hardy's loading of unusual meanings on usual words. In his poem "Hap," for example, he transcended the borderlines of the existent linguistic epistemology by such words as "*doomsters*", "*hap*", "*casualty*" that show the power that governs the godless universe. These words can be seen partially like Eliot's objective correlative because they encompass the array of meanings pregnant with pessimism, emptiness, gloominess, and an increasingly corrupted universe. Hardy, actually, was transforming the traditional forms of language and was "*standing them on their heads, to devastating effect*" (Johnson, 1991: 138). In his poem "Hap", the ideas are unequivocally shouted:

> If but some vengeful god would call to me
> From up the sky, and laugh: "Thou suffering thing,
> Know that thy sorrow is my ecstasy,
> That thy love's loss is my hate's profiting!"
> Then would I bear it, clench myself, and die,
> Steeled by the sense of ire unmerited;
> Half-eased in that a Powerfuller than I

> Had willed and meted me the tears I shed.
> But not so. How arrives it joy lies slain,
> And why unblooms the best hope ever sown?
> -Crass Casualty obstructs the sun and rain,
> And dicing Time for gladness casts a moan…
> These purblind Doomsters had as readily strown
> Blisses about my pilgrimage as pain.

The poem depicts the mere uncertainty, arbitrariness, hopelessness, and crass insensitivity. Contrary to Hopkins, who remained loyal to his religious beliefs, Hardy propounded a Nietzschean god-less universe in his poems. In Romantic poetry, "*[t]he poet seeks comfort and rebirth in nature, and it is beautiful not only because of itself, but also because the spirit of God is revealed in nature, which unites all created beings into a whole*" (Erdem Ayyıldız, 2017: 1758). However, Hardy was an anti-Romantic poet. Romantic tradition is shattered completely in Hardy's poems because they are the unified whole of the expression of the negativities of the universe, the universe which Howarth calls "*directionless*" for Hardy (2007: 69). Moreover, these immense negativities are stuck into newly created words that Hardy staunchly uses in the hope to convey his message correctly.

Modernist poetry expresses the experience of a modern man thrown into the incomprehensible world of uncertainty and instability. Poets like Hardy tried to show that the prevailing ideology – be it the religion or the social norms governing the period – failed to guide people. Hardy, for example, expressed religion's inadequacy to help people. And it was incomprehensible for the people of the era, the people who just emerged from the Victorian background. Questioning the idea of God was something incomprehensible for them. On the other hand, Hopkins' poems invite the reader to understand the unreachable because his poems strive for unity with the divine power, albeit sometimes unsuccessfully. Even when the speaker is unsuccessful in his endeavour to reach "him", there is the desire to understand that incomprehensible being. Hardy and Hopkins' techniques to adapt the language to their standards can be explained as their ways to colour the usual content into unusual hues to defamiliarise the subject matter and to focus on it more. However, all these themes lead to the encroaching sense of pessimism. The fragmented universe cannot be unified anymore. And this pessimism is clearly exemplified by modernist poetry. Yet, what is missing is not a God-driven frame with an appropriate speaker-addressee system but a self-conscious and self-determined self-image of an individual that can go far beyond Eliot's Prufrock and Yeats' solitary characters. In short, modernist poetry has prepared the ground for understanding the universe as an absolutely empty space that cannot be filled in. This emptiness marked by human beings' pessimism, search for identity and meaning, lack of sense of security, inability to reach cohesion and linguistic and social deficiency cannot be overcome. Furthermore, the poets of modernist period, namely Eliot, Hardy, Hopkins, and Yeats, tried to convey

this pessimism through their poems to shed light on the varieties of these emptinesses.

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