

The War, Postwar and Postmodern British Poets: Themes and Styles

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ABSTRACT

British literature, especially poetry has experienced different phases and showed the unique faces from the early periods to what called modernity era. The multi-faceted poetry is inflected by the dynamic atmospheres faced by Britain as results of the responses of poetic artists to the ups and downs of British history, especially the industrial changes and the brutality of World War I and II. Poets responded the political, social and cultural waves with their own unique styles and moods. The traumatic Wars and their casualties were not the sole themes during the war or post war era poetry, some poets reacted the issues of their own ways. This paper will discuss the reaction of some British poets to the wars. The discussion sections will be parted into the general responses, and also the analysis of two post war poets namely Adrian Henry and James Berry to represent their era of 1960 and 1980. This study reveals some findings that the poets experienced WWI and WWII responded the wars in such dramatic and gloomy ways as they are closely affected by the effects of 1915-1945 wars. Adrian Henry lived in the era post-modern, 1960s, the effect should have recovered. His poetic style speaks itself. James Berry, a Black immigrant poet, voices his root, past experiences and hope for a new life. Despite the style and theme, they all flourish British poetry with their own uniqueness.

Keywords: *Adrian Henri, British poetry, James Berry, postwar, postmodern*

INTRODUCTION

The British poets seem to say enough to the nostalgic era of Shakespeare and his worshippers, also forget the eras prior to 1900. The urgent theme is war concern as it takes millions of lives world while. The casualties of wars build the hatred between nations in the name of country prides. The wars have been recorded as part of human greed and false prestige claiming huge devastation of human civilization and sanity.⁴

War is not a new theme in literary history. The scope that makes the difference. Some plays use war issues and scenes as the top-

ics such as kingdom wars, like Trojan War, and other wars fought by people like Alexander and Tamburlaine but they have a moral purpose as well.⁵ World War One (WWI) is regarded the first big event happening in the early of twentieth century. It is triggered by two nations and then spread over Europe. WWI has also been claimed as “the first modern war.”⁶ Many of the technologies we now associate with military conflict—machine guns, tanks, aerial combat and radio communications—were

⁴ Sarah Cole, “Enchantment, Disenchantment, War, Literature.” *PMLA*, 124. 5 (2009): 1632–1647.

⁵ Mehdi, Mubasher, “Tamburlaine The Great of Marlowe as the hero of Machiavelli.” *International Journal of English and Literature*, 7.3 (2016): 35-43.

⁶ John, Smith, and Dennis E. Showalter. Encyclopedia Britannica Inc., “World War I” (2000)

introduced on a massive scale during World War I.

World War II, two decades after the WWI, is simply the most devastating international conflict in history, taking the lives of some 35 to 60 million people of different nationalities, including 6 million Jews who died at the hands of the Nazis. Millions more were traumatized of losing lives, shelters and hopes. The legacy of the war would include the spread of communism from the Soviet Union into eastern Europe as well as its eventual triumph in China, and the global shift in power from Europe to two rival superpowers—the United States and the Soviet Union—that would soon face off against each other in the Cold War.

Writers all over the world reacted to the two world wars claiming loss of lands, properties and lives. They showed their concerns through their writings. Reactions and emotional concerns were stated in their works. Most condemned the devastation caused by wars. Others considered wars as heroic and patriotic expressions of loving their countries.

British writers responded their country involvement during the World War I and II in different literary genres. Plenty of expressions of the effects of wars were captured in the form of poetry and novels. Some writers emerged before and post wars with the theme of wars, especially era between 1915 – 1950s.

Entering 1950s, poets seemed to be enough with the war themes. New poets came and launched their poems, marking the movements of styles and themes. Some tried to experience with their uniqueness. Influences came from any corner, such as American pop culture influences. The era of 1960s onwards showed the different notion and themes.

Discussing the unique style of post-modern poets, especially in terms of movements of

British poetry of 1950s onwards, Adrian Henri is the name not to be missed out. Adrian Henri is considered the leading figure of the Liverpool Poets who introduces poetry into a new dimension. Henri brings poetry into pop performance, blends poems and music and serves them to public. He treats poems as experimental art, non-serious objects. He creates humorous, simple and easy poems for any level of society to enjoy and cheer at. He flourishes British poetry of 1960s.

In the era of 1980s, black immigrants came to England and brought about the influence. Black music and Jamaican style were introduced. English people accept that style. Among black poets, James Berry has been the popular name. He writes his experience from his original country, Jamaica (part of America) and serves it to the English society. He enriches English poetry with its poetic color. One of his poems will be discussed as well.

POETS AND WRITERS REACTING TO THE WORLD WAR I AND II

Rudyard Kipling, like Owen in the very first time, supports UK involvement in the war. This is a reaction of obedient individual after Germany occupies UK. A group of British writers, especially poets raise their voices using poems, describing the casualties or wars. Some poets even involve themselves in front line to fight against other soldiers. Some are killed during the war. Names including Isaac Rosenberg, Wilfred Owen, and Charles Sorley are those die during the war. Robert Graves, Ivor Gurney and Siegfried Sassoon survive to recite their traumatic fears in their poems. William Butler Yeats with his mystical symbols and imagery in “The Second Coming” blends the nightmare of war and the reincarnation of Christ.⁷

⁷ Shweta Saxena. "A mythical interpretation of Yeats' The Second Coming." *International Journal of English and Literature* 4.1 (2013): 17-18.

Quite many poems by British war poets are published in newspapers and then collected in anthologies. Several of these early anthologies were published during the war and were very popular, though the tone of the poetry changed as the war progressed. One of the wartime anthologies, *The Muse in Arms*, was published in 1917, and several were published in the years following the war.

David Jones' heroic poem of World War I *In Parenthesis* was first published in England in 1937 and is based on Jones's own experience as an infantryman in the War. The book *In Parenthesis* recites the experiences of English Private John Ball in a mixed English-Welsh regiment starting with their leaving England and ending seven months later with the assault on Mametz Wood during the Battle of the Somme. The work is said to show a mixture of lyrical verse and prose, is highly allusive, and chained in tone from formal to Cockney colloquial and military slang. The poem grabs the Hawthornden Prize and harvests the admiration of writers such as W. B. Yeats and especially T. S. Eliot who commits highly standard of Roman and Greek-poetry.⁸

Not all British poets perceives wars as brutality. Wilfred Owen is considered a poet who at first sees his involvement in the World War I as a heroic move to protect his country. In his "Dulce at Decorum Est", he mentions the *line Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori* to state: sweet and honorable for father land. He eventually changes his mind after experiencing the war casualties. It is not hard to find deep condolences on war effects in Wilfred Owen's poems. He himself is the victim of war casualties. Owen condemns wars and says that wars are the effects of political cruelty. In his poems, he writes not only about wars but also

wars as metaphor for the human condition. This gives his best work a far-reaching gravity and moral force which is timeless of any situation of human live.⁹ Owen portrays the war scene in "Arms and The Boy"¹⁰ written in 1918 in deep despair:

Let the boy try along this bayonet-blade
How cold steel is, and keen with hunger of
blood;
Blue with all malice, like a madman's flash;
And thinly drawn with famishing for flesh.

Lend him to stroke these blind, blunt bullet-
leads,
Which long to nuzzle in the hearts of lads,
Or give him cartridges of fine zinc teeth
Sharp with the sharpness of grief and death.

For his teeth seem for laughing round an
apple.
There lurk no claws behind his fingers sup-
ple;
And God will grow no talons at his heels,
Nor antlers through the thickness of his
curls.

The poem "Arms and the Boy" is undeniably meant to show the cruelty of war involving unexperienced boys forced to act like professional soldiers. They are introduced with the killing weapons such as sharp bayonet-blade and bullets. They are trained as killing machines losing their innocence. This is sad that they boys do not have evil intention to kill as their teeth are not sharp for hunting. The war creates evil generation. The poet, Wilfred Owen, died in the war.

Isaac Rosenberg is brought up in a strong Jewish family. Rosenberg involves in World War I between 1915 and 1918. Isaac Rosenberg has quite a talent in arts but the war calls him to serve to be a common soldier during the war. Rosenberg comes from a working-class family without any good

⁸ Mebuke Tamar. "The role of intertextual relations in cultural Tradition." *International Journal of English and Literature* 5.2 (2014): 52-63.

⁹ George Macbeth, ed., *Poetry 1900 to 1975*. (Longman House, 1979) 104.

¹⁰ G. Macbeth, 104.

education background. His language in poems is simple, but with a great life and energy.

Many critics see Rosenberg strictly through his war poems. Others, however, insist that the war was only a subject for Rosenberg, or perhaps a challenge for which he was eminently suited. "The tragedy of war gave [his] affinities full expression in his later poems," Staley concluded, "and as war became the universe of his poetry, the power of his Jewish roots and the classical themes became the sources of his moral vision as well as his poetic achievement." In his poems "Break of Day in the Trenches"¹¹ and "Dead Man's Dump" he described about the life and humanity of the killing fields:

The darkness crumbles away.
It is the same old druid Time as ever,
Only a live thing leaps my hand,
A queer sardonic rat,
As I pull the parapet's poppy
To stick behind my ear.
Droll rat, they would shoot you if they
knew
Your cosmopolitan sympathies.
Now you have touched this English hand
You will do the same to a German
Soon, no doubt, if it be your pleasure
To cross the sleeping green between.
It seems you inwardly grin as you pass
Strong eyes, fine limbs, haughty athletes,
Less chanced than you for life,
Bonds to the whims of murder,
Sprawled in the bowels of the earth,
The torn fields of France.
What do you see in our eyes
At the shrieking iron and flame
Hurled through still heavens?
What quaver—what heart aghast?
Poppies whose roots are in man's veins
Drop, and are ever dropping;
But mine in my ear is safe—
Just a little white with the dust.

¹¹ Alexander Allison. *The Norton Anthology of Poetry* Third Edition. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1983).

Rosenberg's "Break of Day in the Trenches" describes the war situation, an ordinary soldier life in the trench. It is also a portrayal of how a man survives his life amid the brutalities. The line with survival and death is thin. He symbolizes the life of a soldier like a rat roaming from one place to another, fragile and vulnerable. Plucking a poppy is usual scene. Life of a human is as easy as a rat. He observes that the trenches and the other demarcations of war that separate the English soldiers from their "enemies" matter little to the rat, which will perhaps cross no-man's-land to continue its feast on German corpses.

It is this free act of crossing a few miles of open space that figures in the next section of poem. The speaker of Rosenberg personalizes at the rat's strength, while "haughty athletes" with "Strong eyes, fine limbs" are so easily targeted. It is also the term poppy or red poppy which is famous and over used by poets. The poppy always relates to the war zone, the plants in the killing field and the commemoration of the armistice of war. The symbol of peace comes in the 11 November.¹²

Thomas Hardy, a popular poet in the century, dealt with poetry writing throughout his life and considered it more important than his novels. As a poet, he expresses the other side of common feelings and emotions. His poems do not see life as a bitter tragedy. Hardy believes that life is full of problems and uncertainties, but the strength that people can use to overcome its hardship and

¹² In Europe during the Great War, the red poppy was a weed that grew over battlefields, no man's land, and near the trenches. In Rosenberg's poem, these poppies grow out the blood of killed men, perhaps men the speaker has watched die. Like the men, the poppies "Drop, and are ever dropping" — except for the one the speaker has tucked behind his ear, in small act of defiance toward the death that surrounds him. It's not an uncomplicated gesture; the poppy, plucked, will die, and the dust suggests the inevitable end of humankind: "for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

survive in life. His poetry shows great delight in the natural beauty of the world and at the touch of humor in events. Hardy describes human hardship and suffering by looking at them from a distance. Though his language is generally direct, at times, it is full of unusual words and sentences.

Hardy also writes about the sadness of war. In his poem "In Time of The Breaking of Nations", he recites the effects of war. The demanding and uneasy of war routine one has to carry out is described in the stanza of:

Only a man harrowing clods
In a slow silent walk
With an old horse that stumbles and nods
Half asleep as they stalk

War does not give you a spare time to deal with your tiredness and sleep. A soldier has to keep moving and keep stalking. Not only human being, a horse has to deal with all agony and torture in the war zone. Hence a soldier not only deals with enemies unknown somewhere, he has to fight against his human nature like tiredness and sleepiness.

Poetry in the hands of soldiers is like a diary of life and death record. Soldier poets, when not holding bayonets, express their fears and ecstasy with pens and papers. It is not exaggerating that Brockmeier once describes, "Literature does more than merely represent memories and processes of remembering and forgetting it; it gives shape and meaning to them."¹³

THE STYLES OF LIVERPOOL POETS: ADRIAN HENRI

During 1960-1970, some new postmodern groups of poets who introduce different

styles of poems or the way enjoying poem. This is the beautiful consequence of pop culture influence during the time.¹⁴ The era of American culture and jazz have a lot affected British people in creating and enjoying poems. During sixties and seventies, a number of phenomenal poets existing. Starting from "the Group", "the Movement" and "the Underground" who wise to experience poetry differently. In the same era, a group of poets in Liverpool foregrounds their pop culture way of treating poem, the same city of the phenomenal Beatles. From Roger McGough to Brian Patten, a name called Adrian Henri is the best known and most popular for his strike as a poet of the Liverpool Poets who introduces his youthful style blending words with rock n role era. Henri is influenced by the style of French poetry and surrealist art. He is the locomotive between the three.

Henri himself is a painter. He won a prize for his painting Meat Painting II - In Memoriam Rene Magritte in the John Moores competition back to 1972. He was the president of the Merseyside Arts Association and Liverpool Academy of the Arts in the 1970s and was an honorary professor of the city's John Moores University. In his time, studying at colleges of arts became a new trend rather than attending universities.

Henri's networks were quite outstanding. He was closely related with other artists of the area and the era including the Pop artist Neville Weston and the conceptual artist Keith Arnatt. His famous friends including John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Melly, Allen Ginsberg, Willy Russell and John Willett. Henri enjoys his roles from artist and poet to teacher, rock-and-roll performer, playwright and activist. Taking different path with McGough and Patten, Henri chooses to live at Liverpool than London.

¹³ Jens Brockmeier. *Interpreting Memory: The Narrative Alternative* "Beyond the Archive: Memory, Narrative, and the Autobiographical Process." (Oxford University Press, 2015) 97-128.

¹⁴ Peter Barry. "Contemporary British Poetry and the City." Oxford University Press, 27 Mar. 2018, global.oup.com/academic/product/contemporary-british-poetry-and-the-city-9780719055942.

He said that he loved Liverpool better. With his poet friends McGough and Patten, Henri launched some books including *The Mersey Sound*, restored in 2007¹⁵ a best-selling poetry anthology that soared their names, *Collected Poems 1967-85*, *Wish You Were Here* in 1990 and *Not Fade Away* in 1994.

Henri believes that poetry and music can be enjoyed at the same time. He was a leader of local band called the Liverpool Scene, which released four Liverpool Poets of poetry and music. Earlier, in 1955, he played washboard in the King's College, Newcastle, Skiffle Group. He read poetry in live performance, blending with music at a number of venues including schools and colleges, including workshops. One of his last major poetry readings was at the launch of *The Argotist* magazine in 1996.

Henri suffered from stroke about two years and died in Liverpool, aged 68. He was honored by Liverpool City Council conferred on him the Freedom of the City in recognition of his contribution to Liverpool's cultural scene. He also received an honorary doctorate from the University of Liverpool. Henri was well known for his philosophical line "If you think you can do it and you want to do it—then do it."

The Liverpool Poets were different from their predecessors, such as the Movement and Group. They treated poetry as popular art that should be performed and enjoyed among public, not only for academic and school environments but also among ordinary people. They chose to perform poems with music, popularly called musical poems. They multi-folded the zest of postmodernism. In the postmodern condition, "literature, art, and theory are all parts of the same incoherence and meaninglessness". Postmodern literature is pri-

¹⁵ *The Mersey Sound* is restored and republished by Penguin Books in 2007 containing Henri, McGough and Patten's famous poems of the era.

marily an outcome and a reflection of the movement's ideologies and theories. It is a reaction against the Enlightenment and modernist approaches to literature, and is characterized by heavy reliance on techniques that reflect its ideological context like fragmentation, paradox and unreliable narrators.¹⁶

The contribution of The Liverpool poets to the cultural explosion in the Liverpool city in the 60's was enormous. Why it should be Liverpool? There were two reasons why the name of Liverpool, as attached to the poets, became famous at that time. First, it connected to the popular band the Beatles synonym to the pop culture in 1960s. Secondly, Liverpool was miles away from the hectic and structured city glamor of London. Liverpool treated itself as free, relaxed and easy-going urban town that shaped poetry into poetic entertainments.¹⁷

The popularity of Liverpool Poets was said to influence rock music and were even called the pop poets due to the name attachment to the Beatles of Liverpool origin. After all, the Beatles originated only from Liverpool in the early 60s and hence it is no wonder that most of the Liverpool poets were directly or indirectly associated with the growth of popular music at that time.

Henri was identical to Liverpool Poets. The group was claimed to give high impact on the city. Allen Ginsberg stated that Liverpool is "the center of the consciousness of the human universe". While Pete Brown witnessed that the Liverpool literary scene: how the budding poets of the Liverpool scene gathered at Streat's coffee bar and gave poetry performances. He said that the coffee bar was "the center of activity and

¹⁶Fatma Khalil Mostafa el Diwany. "So it goes: A postmodernist reading of Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*." *International Journal of English and Literature* 5,4 (2014): 82-90.

¹⁷ Ian Mackean. "The Liverpool Poets". *The Essentials of Literature in English, post-1914*. (Hodder Education, 2005).

meetings". Like the coffee houses in Queen Anne's period, Streat's coffee bar in Liverpool became the beehive of literary activity. In the early sixties, Henri, Patten and McGough were the center of reputation as performance poets.

Lucie Smith commented that the anthology *The Liverpool Scene* comprising of poems by Patten, Henri and McGough not only offered a picturesque account of the city with its description of the roads, graffiti, pop culture, the influence and the impact of Beatles and the flower power, but also brought to light the native speech with its local flavor and "the attitudes to life which they express". It was Liverpool, a city with the predominantly a working-class city. The rich tended to live in the Green Belt or the other side of the Mersey side. Consequently, the people of Liverpool were gifted with natural sarcasm, and this characteristic sarcasm was truly reflected in the poetry of Patten and other Liverpool poets.¹⁸

The uniqueness of the Liverpool Poets can be derived of one of the Henri's poems entitled "Tonight at Noon".

Tonight at noon
Supermarkets will advertise 3p extra on everything
Tonight at noon
Children from happy families will be sent to live in a home
Elephants will tell each other human jokes
America will declare peace on Russia
World War I generals will sell poppies on the street on November 11th
The first daffodils of autumn will appear
When the leaves fall upwards to the trees
Tonight at noon
Pigeons will hunt cats through city backyards
Hitler will tell us to fight on the beaches and on the landing fields

¹⁸ Lucie Smith Edward, ed. *Introduction: The Liverpool Scene*. (Doubleday, 1968).

A tunnel full of water will be built under Liverpool
Pigs will be sighted flying in formation over Woolton
And Nelson will not only get his eye back but his arm as well
White Americans will demonstrate for equal rights
In front of the Black house
And the monster has just created Dr. Frankenstein

Girls in bikinis are moon bathing
Folk songs are being sung by real folk
Art galleries are closed to people over 21
Poets get their poems in the Top 20
There's jobs for everybody and nobody wants them
In back alleys everywhere teenage lovers are kissing in broad daylight
In forgotten graveyards everywhere the dead will quietly bury the living and
You will tell me you love me
Tonight at noon

It is fair to say that for the very beginning of the poem, the unique contradiction appears as soon as we catch the absurd title "Tonight at Noon". Night is identical to darkness. But how can he said that tonight at noon? Henri tries to turn the logical upside down. The other non-sensical and non-logical lines are "elephants tell jokes", "America declares peace to Russia", "WWI generals sell poppies" and "daffodils appear in autumn". They are all contradictory to non-human elephants, cold war America vs Russia, war generals sells poppies, poppies (this might also be artificial poppies to), growing in the churned-up earth of soldiers' graves in Flanders, a region of Belgium,¹⁹ symbolize the WWI war zone while 11 November is the Remembrance Day of calling the war, and daffodils flowers appear in spring not autumn. Contradictions are here and there.

¹⁹ "Where did the idea to sell poppies come from?" *BBC News*, 10 Nov. 2006.

The similar humor also continues in the second stanza of using lines of non sensical facts: Pigeons hunt cats, Hitler will tell us to fight on the beaches and on the landing fields, A tunnel full of water will be built under Liverpool, Pigs are flying in formation over Woolton And Nelson will not only get his eye back but his arm as well, White Americans will demonstrate for equal rights In front of the Black house And the monster has just created Dr. Frankenstein. All facts are reversed non-sensically.

Henri reverses the objects and makes the impossible as possible. Cats are haunted by pigeons, Hitler and the beach and landing fields, tunnels with water, Pigs can fly, Nelson's eyes and arm – revenge, White Americans instead of Black Americans and Black House instead of White House and Frankenstein is obviously a monster created by human being.

The third stanza shows continuing awkwardness: Girls in bikinis are moon bathing – but not sub bathing, Folk songs are being sung by real folk - English sing Americans, Art galleries are closed to people over 21 - age discrimination or adults are not art type, Poets get their poems in the Top 20, normally music charts, There's jobs for everybody and nobody wants them – ratio jobs to job seekers, In back alleys everywhere teenage lovers are kissing in broad daylight – darkness instead, In forgotten graveyards everywhere the dead will quietly bury the living – reversal living burying the dead.

The three stanzas are nonsensical, non-logical and reversal truth. The style of experimental of using the common logics is strong in Henri's poem. Henri tries to attract the humorous side of readers. He shows that with poems you can even turn the logics upside down.

But, what makes the poem interesting is closing line “and You will tell me you love me, tonight at noon” may be the inversion

of “I will tell you I love you”. The closing is also reversal of his feelings.

THE BLACK JAMAICAN BRITON POETIC RICHNESS OF JAMES BERRY

James Berry has been known as a black British poet whose name soared during 1980. His poetry was realized in the end of 1970. Berry spent his childhood in a village in Jamaica. Berry was the fourth of six children in the small coastal village of Fair Prospect in Jamaica. Berry Before coming and living in Britain, he went to America at the age of 17. He worked as a farm laborer and learned that the black people were treated so bad as he witnessed in New Orleans. He returned home after experienced his unfavorable life for 4 years. Two years later, in 1948, he left Jamaica and arrived in Britain with a group of post war immigrants. He felt solidarity in the ship with other Caribbean passengers. He settled his life in Britain for good.

Berry learned to read very early. From a very young age he was exposed to two distinct tongues: on the one hand, the “standard” English of the Bible and of Sunday prayer books; on the other, the tunes of everyday Jamaican. Both voices would permeate his work.

Berry was one of the first black writers in Britain to achieve wider recognition. His name was so prominent in 1981 when he won the National Poetry Competition. He launched five collections of poetry besides he also wrote children stories which are broadly accepted. He also serves an editor of two influential anthologies, Berry was at the forefront of championing West Indian/British writing and his role as an educator had a significant impact in mediating that community's experience to the wider society. Berry was awarded The Order of The British Empire (OBE) in 1990.

Berry's traumatic experience with slavery and his emotional link to his origin Jamaica are portrayed in his works. He is also obsessed by his beautiful homeland. The both beautiful land but bitter experience of slavery has been mixed in his works. His father's experience with white employers that causes the anger has haunted him in his poetry. He described the emotional mixture in his poems.

His anger at these injustices paint some of his poems, particularly when writing about his father's ill treatment at the hands of his white employers. However, the overriding tone of Berry's poetry is one of celebration. Without denying the hurt of the colonial experience, he chooses to defy prejudice through an emphasis on unity in his poetry as in "Dreaming Black Boy":²⁰

I wish my teacher's eyes wouldn't
go past me today. Wish he'd know
it's okay to hug me when I kick
a goal. Wish I myself wouldn't
hold back when an answer comes.
I'm no woodchopper now
like all ancestor's.

I wish I could be educated
to the best of tune up, and earn
good money and not sink to lick
boots. I wish I could go on every
crisscross way of the globe
and no persons or powers or
hotel keepers would make it a waste.

I wish life wouldn't spend me out
opposing. Wish same way creation
would have me stand it would have me
stretch, and hold high, my voice
Paul Robeson's, my inside eye
a sun. Nobody wants to say
hello to nasty answers.

I wish torch throwers of night

²⁰ Robin Richardson. *Inclusive Schools, Inclusive Society: Race and Identity on the Agenda*. (Trentham Books, 200).

would burn lights for decent times.
Wish plotters in pyjamas would pray
for themselves. Wish people wouldn't
talk as if I dropped from Mars

I wish only boys were scared
behind bravados, for I could suffer.
I could suffer a big big lot.
I wish nobody would want to earn
the terrible burden I can suffer.

The poem dramatically describes Berry's childhood experience to his emotionally tortured in America. The first stanza shows his experience as a student. He wishes to change his future as he does not want to be like his ancestor of wood choppers. He wants to change his life.

The second stanza also shows his dreams of travelling globally. He does not want waste his time by doing nothing. The third stanza also shows his hating of being inferior like "sink to lick boots". The next stanza also portrays the struggle of black Americans through the black activist of Paul Robeson. Berry screamed out the same hopes. They want the white treat the black better. He also mentions Klu Klux Klan with torch and pyjamas. The black are not aliens drop from Mars. They are not different. Finally, in last stanza, he wished he did not experience the same childhood nightmare. He does not want to experience the same burden like anybody does not want to suffer.

CONCLUSION

British writers, specifically poets respond the WWI and WWII almost the same ways. Though in the beginning Owen and Kipling view the war as the patriotic movement to glorify the country, in the process of involvement and realization, they recite through their poems that Wars are not more than human and political desires. Soldiers lose their homes, youths, innocence and lives. Poets use some terms such as the popular poppy, trench and metaphors to illustrate the casualties of wars. Most poets

describe wars as gloomy, sad, hopeless and the sacrificing innocence of young people. Some poets involve in the wars and some die during the service. The survived poets write their experience with grief and condemnation. Wars have changed the face of British literature. The feelings of optimism swift into pessimism. This kind of agony makes British literature colorful and gloomy at the same time.

A Liverpool poet like Adrian Henri has uniquely flourished the landscape of English poetry in his era of 1960. Henri has proved through his poems and collaboration with other artists that poems are not serious art that can only be found in school or library collection. Henri has fulfilled his good notion that poems can be relaxed, humorous and experimental at the same time. He also proved that poetry can be created into performing art for public enjoyments like other groups have done in pubs, clubs and bars.

James Berry convinces readers that childhood experiences in homeland can be resourceful ideas of his poetry. Berry also uses his poems to tell British people and the world that black people have been treated so bad in America as he experiences himself and his father as well. He uses his poems to release his sorrows. He changes his life through poetry by winning prizes and earns living that should be the antidote of his traumatic experience.

British poetry has continuously been flourished by alternative colors and poetic genres. Unique streams such as Liverpool and black Briton poets give different rhymes and angles of British traditional verses of style. The different poetic richness, among colorful others, has contributed to English poetry as it is now.

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