**Samples of Critical Writing**

1. “….vivid, simple realistic touches are too quickly merged in learned and fantastic elaborations, and the final effect of every poem of Donne’s is a bizarre and blended one; but if the greatest poetry rises clear of the bizarre, the fantastic, yet very great poetry may be bizarre if it be the expression of a strangely blended temperament, an intense emotion, a vivid imagination. What is true of Donne’s imagery is true of the other disconcerting element in his poetry, its harsh and rugged verse. It is an outcome of the same double motive, the desire to startle and the desire to approximate poetry to direct, unconventional, colloquial speech.”

(Herbert Grierson)

1. “In his *Ode to A Nightingale* Keats has found a perfect poetic occasion for poetic release of all his baffling identities of joy with pain, darkness and beauty, nature and spiritual experience. It starts with the usual aching excess of happiness and frustration associated with ‘drowsy numbness’, ‘hemlock’, ‘opiate’, and ‘Lethe’, followed by an invocation to Bacchic delights in an earthy setting of pagan dance and mythology and Mediterranean sunshine, which in turn gives place, as did the Bacchus description in *Endymion*, to the melancholy of tragic realism.”

(G. Wilson Knight)

1. *MCMXIV*: “Death is near/life is short, the world is changing, the men in the picture are unaware of this. Horror of war looms. Sensitive engagement with the men and their innocence. Beautiful, nostalgic description of idyllic world moves us. Touching details such as gardens left tidy show Larkin’s understanding of the men’s lack of awareness of what they were facing. While he mourns the passing of Old England and is clearly disappointed by the way the world has changed, he is heartbreakingly aware of the suffering that lies in wait for these men in the photograph.”

(Notes from the internet)

1. “Orphaned as an infant, Jane Eyre lives at Gateshead with her aunt, Sarah Reed, as the novel opens. Jane is ten years old, an outsider in the Reed family. Her female cousins, Georgiana and Eliza, tolerate, but don't love her. Their brother, John, is more blatantly hostile to Jane, reminding her that she is a poor dependent of his mother who shouldn't even be associating with the children of a gentleman. One day he is angered to find Jane reading one of his books, so he takes the book away and throws it at her. Finding this treatment intolerable, Jane fights back. She is blamed for the conflagration and sent to the red-room, the place where her kind Uncle Reed died. In this frightening room, Jane thinks she sees her uncle's ghost and begs to be set free. Her Aunt Reed refuses, insisting Jane remain in her prison until she learns complete submissiveness.”

(CliffsNotes on *Jane Eyre*)