My analysis of some of the major aspects of R.S. Crane's writings must have established the point that Crane's is no mean achievement in the field of literary criticism. He has offered a very effective method of critical analysis in his much discussed book *The Languages of Criticism and the Structure of Poetry*. His theory, as I have already pointed out, is not simply another addition to the huge number of already formulated critical theories; his theory is distinguished from the rest by means of its approach of synthesis and comprehensiveness. He has offered us a theory which, if properly pursued, can put an end to our troubles and confusions with innumerable theories. William Empson, while criticizing *The Languages of Criticism and the Structure of Poetry*, remarked: "Mr. Crane's book struck me as reasonable opinion moderately expressed".\(^1\)

Crane's "Shifting Definitions and Evaluations of the Humanities from the Renaissance to the Present" is another important writing which, on the one hand, gives us a very systematic study of the history of the humanities from Vives to the present, the like of which is not found in the whole

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range of scholastic writings, and, on the other, exhibits what other than literary criticism Crane achieved. The series of essays under this title appear quite meaningful and up-to-date in today's context when the humanities are once again attacked by the sciences, and are often treated as unimportant or at least less significant in comparison with the immediate practical utility of the sciences. Crane's essays enable us to remove our misconceptions about the true nature of the humanities and their relation with the sciences.

Another scholastic writing of Crane is surely his "Critical and Historical Principles of Literary History". Crane in this book has suggested the method and primary requirements of writing the most effective and fruitful literary history. Crane is perhaps the first to give us such a detailed and systematic study of the historical and critical aspects of literary history. Crane's credit, therefore, lies both in the very design of the book and in the originality of insights. Side by side, as Howard Erskine-Hill has remarked, "the full and well documented essay on Anglican Apologetics shows how in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the concept of progress was used by orthodox divines to combat the criticism of deistic rationalism".

In the field of practical criticism also Crane has achieved immense success. His criticisms of Jane Austen's

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Persuasion, Ernest Hemingway's The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber and The Killers and others show how a literary work should properly be analysed on the basis of what the text exhibits. Of course, he was never opposed to theories. He rather emphasized the need for theory. But his distinction lies in the fact that he never imposes a theory from outside. His clear opinion is that a critic must not test a theory on a literary work; it is the textual properties of that work which will welcome and validate the theory or theories required for its analysis and understanding. Howard Erskine Hill rightly praises Crane's way of artistic analysis when he says that "in the very fine discussion of Persuasion Crane displays, by stressing the purely artistic problems and alternatives which faced Jane Austen, the necessary and beautifully worked out narrative strategy of this novel". René Wellek also finds Crane absolutely right. He remarks: "Crane emphasized justly the need for theory and its grounding in general philosophy and the need for concentrating on an analysis of works of art apart from their origins in the minds of the authors and their causes in society and history".

A number of articles and books which I have not discussed so far also testify Crane's achievement as a literary

3 Ibid., p.196.

critic. In "Criticism as Inquiry: or, the Perils of the High Priori Road", for example, Crane criticizes the New Criticism which brought about a revolutionary change in the field of literary study, replacing the traditional form of historical scholarship. His criticism, however, is not directed against the formation of the New Critical theory of literary study because Crane, as a pluralist, knows that the emergence of new theories is a historical inevitability and also because he believes that each of the critical theories, if properly utilized, may contribute something towards our understanding, enjoyment and evaluation of literary works. He, in fact, expresses his concern over the "emergence within criticism itself of modes of thinking about literature which make not merely for a separation in practice between critical discussion and historical scholarship, but for a sharp and irreconcilable opposition in principle between the two fields".

Crane in this article shows, and convincingly, that for the New Criticism a literary work is a closed system of empirical data. What he objects to is that the New Critics have certain paranoiac ideas such as "the unifying significance of a poetic drama is normally given by its patterns of recurrent imagery; the belief that literary structure is typically a matter of ironical tension" etc. which predetermine their judgment. The point that Crane tries to make is that inspite of

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6 Ibid., p. 43.
their protestations for objective criticism the New Critics are basically subjective in their approach. They fail to come out of the grip of New Criticism. Consequently many important aspects are lost sight of.

This essay of Crane is of signal importance because it registers strong reasoned protest against the basic assumptions of New Criticism in its hey day and thus anticipates the reaction against New Criticism that started later in 1967 with the Deconstructionists. The essay is therefore important for both its practical values and its historical significance.

In "Every Man His Own Critic" Crane observes that the right of critical evaluations of literary works, has been, practically, monopolized by a group of learned scholars and writers of reviews in the papers. Most of the students, or in a broad sense, the majority of readers generally lack the power of critical judgment, and depend upon the explanations and ideas of different theorists, teachers and literary critics for their understanding. But critical understanding, in fact, is the thing that everyone requires. Everybody should be his own critic. Therefore, Crane thinks that students of literature should be trained in such way that they can master some sort of critical aptitude, think for themselves and arrive at independent judgments. Crane recommends a particular course of study to achieve this aim.
The idea that Crane thus propounds in this essay is of enormous practical value. Crane is interested in sharpening the critical faculty of the students and in developing their literary sensibility. This, admittedly, is a valuable objective of teaching literature and this can really go a long way in making every man his own critic. It is, however, true that no approach can be absolutely perfect, and Crane's approach, though extremely valuable and pragmatic, is also not free from certain lacunae arising out of the variable factors which concern the intellectual capacity of the students, their training and discipline. As there is a great variety of students in terms of calibre and intellect, aptitude and interest, there will be a great variety of critics even when all of them follow the method recommended by Crane. But even then it is expected that the difference among the students as critics will be only in degree, not in kind.

"History versus Criticism in the Study of Literature" is another essay in which Crane emphasizes the necessity of critical analysis of literary texts. He observes that the professors and scholars of English in different universities devote their energies mostly to literary history rather than to criticism. And consequently the young people who come out acquiring their highest university degrees often fail to understand and explain the textual properties of literary works. They are rich only in historical information.
Crane, however, does not banish literary history from the scope of university teaching. What he actually suggests is a thorough revision of the existing system leading to a reduction of the time and importance devoted to literary history because literary history has no direct contribution to an artistic appreciation of literary texts. And in order to increase the ability of artistic appreciation of students, Crane suggests two distinct sorts of studies in all the levels starting from college. First, he suggests the study of certain theories about fine arts in general and the art of literature in particular. The second part of literary education will be the application of the theories in the reading and literary explication of individual literary works.

The essay is important both thematically and technically. The manner in which the whole subject is treated in the essay and given at the end a synthesized solution is quite typical of Crane. His pluralistic temperament always incites him to explain and realize all the theories and techniques, to receive unhesitatingly the necessary parts of all which seem useful to attain his desired result. Here we find him analysing the apparently opposing ways of literary studies and to suggest the ideal way of studying literary works for the best outcome. And so far as the theme is concerned the essay exhibits Crane's affinity with the New Critics as well as his originality of thinking. One can easily detect his affinity with the New Critics in his
constant and repeated emphasis on the text and in his consi-
deration of the text as the primary thing. He also admits the
importance of the text in developing the aesthetic and liter-
ary sense of the students. No extra-textual consideration
can directly develop this sense of the students. But Crane's
originality is found not in his affinity with the New Critics
but in his successful attempt to overcome the limitations of
the New Critics. His originality, as the essay exemplifies,
is in setting things in a proper historical perspective with-
out losing focus on the text in hand. He does not ban, unlike
the New Critics, the extra-textual considerations from the
scope of literary study, but rather hails them. The idea of
complete and comprehensive literary study which Crane sugg-
est in this essay consists of two different but related cir-
cles. The inner circle is confined to the text and the larger
outer circle accommodates the context. But both the circles
have the text at the centre. The critic-scholar has to move
from the text to the context. The context which includes the
historical and other considerations, helps and increases
one's understanding and enjoyment of the text. Thus there
remains no contradiction between critical and historical
approaches to literature. One is complementary to the other.

Another essay that marks Crane's originality of thoughts
is "Questions and Answers in the Teaching of Literary Texts".
The most commonly agreed aims of teaching literature, Crane
suggests, are to enable the students to memorize some of the
excellent literary works and a certain body of essential facts about their historical relations, to create within themselves an inclination to read literature for its own sake, and above all to educate them in the "elements of a critical approach to literature so that, in their later studies and in life, they will know how to interpret and judge for themselves, appropriately and independently, whatever new works they may read". Crane leaves the sign of his practical-mindedness in the act of specifying the aims of teaching literary texts. He gives more emphasis to the aspect of acquiring critical outlook, which is basic to any fruitful enjoyment and evaluation of literature. Regarding the problem of the method of teaching also, Crane is equally specific and practical. To have critical outlook is to have the ability to ask certain kinds of questions about the literary work in hand, the answers to which will lead to a proper understanding of that literary text. The students, therefore, must be trained to ask themselves certain appropriate questions about a literary work as well as to acquire the technique for getting and justifying their answers. The solution of the problem of method thus hinges on two questions - (a) what are the varieties of critical questions about a literary work that must be asked for a rounded understanding and appreciation of literary works? and (b) what are the conditions of formulation and testing under

which the students may seek answers to such questions?

The teachers of literature, Crane suggests, are required to frame, in the light of their knowledge of the various critical theories, a scheme of critical questions that will include "the different fundamental aspects of literary works which our predecessors and contemporaries have defined, and which our students ought to be led to consider". Crane has suggested one such scheme, admitting at the same time that other equally useful schemes can also be devised. His scheme consists of five groups of critical questions, which will enable the students to have the criticisms of five distinguishable aspects of a literary work. The five distinguishable aspects, each of which remains at the centre of a set of critical questions, are (i) elements and devices, (ii) structure and form, (iii) literary personality of the author, (iv) circumstances in which the work is produced, and (v) moral, social, political and religious values of a literary work.

These five distinguishable aspects, interestingly, have developed into five major critical systems: New Criticism, Structuralism, Psychoanalytic Criticism, Historical Criticism, Philosophical and Social Criticism including Marxist Criticism. There are, of course, many overlappings and cross currents. Crane, in fact, with his fine critical perception

8 Ibid., p.181.
anticipates the momentous developments of modern critical theories. And the remarkable thing to note is that the scheme Crane proposes has the potentiality to include a great variety of critical approaches within a single scheme of teaching without any contradiction or conflict among them. We may cite it as a brilliant example of a practical application of Crane's theory of critical pluralism.

However the success of this scheme, Crane asserts, will depend "not only on the kinds of questions we habituate our students to ask of literary works but also on the standards we induce them to apply in deciding upon and testing their answers". And Crane mentions two general conditions of getting justified answers to any of the questions to be asked about a literary work. One of them is to know for certain what question we want to answer before we make any comment about a work, or accept or reject any critical comment on that work. The other condition, which is more important, is to know the proper method of constructing literary hypothesis.

Thus in this essay Crane tackles the problem of teaching literary texts by offering us a concrete method which, if properly followed, will surely enable us to have a comprehensive critical study of literature. Crane's recommendations, however, arise from his conviction that a literary work embodies plurality of values and only multiple approaches can

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9 Ibid., p.189.
hope to do justice to these. It is also interesting to see how this essay, which is a product of Crane's professional experience, contains the seeds of all modern critical theories. Crane, though an Aristotelian, is at the same time, most modern as a critical theorist.

It hardly requires any mention, therefore, that Crane is, in respect of what he has achieved, one of the most important critical theorists of our century. His was a very remarkable and distinguished voice in the thirties and forties when the New Criticism observed its hey-day, and his observations are still valid in the present days of Deconstructionism. But unfortunately, Crane has not yet given the attention he really deserves in the field of critical theorizing. He is always, as Rene Wellek has said, "a severe reviewer of shoddy scholarship". He puts forward a critical theory which is aimed at rectifying the shortcomings of New Criticism as well as placing literary criticism on a much broader and more humane perspective. We may immensely benefit in our understanding and enjoyment of a literary work if we follow the way Crane has directed.

10 Wellek, Rene, A History of Modern Criticism 1750 - 1950 Vol.6, op. cit., p.64.