R.S. Crane, the leader of the Chicago School of Critics and an editor of *Modern Philology* for some twenty years, drew enormous attention of critics, scholars and theorists after the publication of *Critics and Criticism* (1952) and *The Languages of Criticism and the Structure of Poetry* (1953). In fact, Crane and his followers assembled at the University of Chicago sometime in the mid 1930s and had been publishing their critical contributions in various journals, but it was only after the publication of these volumes that they could exert "a strong and continuing influence on modern criticism". These books, especially the second one, illustrates Crane's theory of criticism - a theory which was primarily aimed at rectifying the shortcomings of New Criticism as well as placing literary criticism on a much broader and more humane perspective. Crane studies literature as an integral part of a larger problem of human education and considers criticism as essentially a branch of philosophy. For every kind of criticism, he thinks, there is a philosophical foundation to draw sustenance from, and the number of critical positions is, therefore, determined by the number of possible philosophical positions. This belief makes Crane aware of an

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existence of the multiplicity of critical languages or frameworks, and in order to have best results out of this situation Crane, the theorist, proposes a theory of critical pluralism. The particular subject with reference to which he elaborates his theory is the structure of poetry. However, Crane uses the word poetry in this context more or less in the Aristotelian sense to mean any artistic creation in words. He examines the critical frameworks of Aristotle, and of the moderns to show how the structure of poetry receives different forms and significations in different critical frameworks. And finally he gives his own theory which he considers to be a more comprehensive scheme of critical analysis.

I

There are critics, Crane observes, like Aristotle who believe in a multiplicity of poetic structures. Side by side there are others like Cleanth Brooks who are of the opinion that the essential structure of poetry is one. Thus they form two different groups of critics having two essentially different attitudes to the problem of poetic structure. Again critics of any of these two groups widely vary among themselves in respect of their individual theorizing. Each critic seems to differ from others in respect of what he says about the structure of an individual poem, no matter whether he believes in the multiplicity or singleness of structure. The reasons behind such wide disagreements can be found in an
analysis of critical propositions framed by various critics.

The character of a critical proposition should be determined by three independently variable factors. One factor is the critic himself as a man equipped with certain range of information, intellectual capacity and a certain kind of taste and sensibility. Another factor is the concrete literary object or the text upon which he is engaged. And a third factor is the power and limitation of the discourse which the critic constructs. Every critic uses a particular framework of selected terms and distinctions and of rules for operating with them with a view to interpreting the text in hand. This 'framework' or a particular type of critical language gives sense to a critic's observations. A critic cannot step beyond his immediate framework and, naturally, cannot consider those aspects or sides of a literary production, which do not come within the capacity of the framework he happens to choose. "We are thus", Crane observes, "in all our inquiries into things, the more or less willing and productive prisoners of the special system of 'language' we have chosen to employ; it is only in relation to this system that we can assert anything as a meaningful 'fact' or give determinate significance to any question we ask; and our problems and solutions will differ widely, even when the ostensible subjects remain the same, according to the peculiar conceptual and logical constitution of the
'framework' we happen to be using"\(^2\). So this third factor is equally important as the two others, and the differences in critical propositions are largely due to the differences of frameworks.

Generally, critical problems are solved and principles derived by means of two different and contrasting methods. In the first method, which Crane calls 'the matter of fact criticism', the critic seeks to present an account of empirically distinguishable literary phenomena in terms of their essential and distinctive causes of production. For instance, a tragedy in this method is taken as a particular type of artistic production having as its distinctive features a particular plot form, character treatment and such other aspects devised in a manner to arouse a specific response. In the other method some abstract principles are at first framed and then applied to the subject in question. Crane calls it abstract criticism. Tragedy in this method may be taken "as the name of a universal attitude or 'vision' of life, the distinctive nature of which is defined in a dialectical opposition to another similarly universal attitude or vision of life for which the word 'comedy' is thought to be the appropriate symbol"\(^3\). Critics generally


\(^3\) Ibid., p.25.
follow either of these two methods. And the important point is that the nature of propositions may and does vary as the one or the other method is taken up. It proves what Crane finds that "literary criticism is not and never has been a single discipline to which successive writers have made partial and never wholly satisfactory contributions but rather a collection of distinct and more or less incommensurable 'frameworks' or 'languages', within any one of which a question like that of poetic structure necessarily takes on a different meaning and receives a different kind of answer from the meaning it has and the kind of answer it is properly given in any of the rival critical languages in which it is discussed".

In such a situation of the multiplicity of critical frameworks Crane intends to offer us the most fruitful method of critical interpretation. And he proposes the theory of critical pluralism, which, however, is different from what either S.E.Hyman or R.P.Blackmur suggests. S.E.Hyman and a few other critics yearn for a 'synthesis' of various critical doctrines. The job of an ideal critic, he thinks, should be to combine in his work the best insights and techniques of the large variety of critics. And Blackmur's suggestion is that the only possible way to remove the narrowness of contemporary criticism is to make possible an

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'alliance' between different sorts of critics, say, Aristotle and Coleridge. He tells us to collect the important aspects from both Aristotle and Coleridge together. The result, he thinks, will be better than either of the critics taken separately. Both Hyman and Blackmur fail to realize the actual nature of the problem, and their suggestions, therefore, can hardly solve the problem of varying critical doctrines. What Hyman suggests is merely to make a list of critical insights and techniques. Such a list may only help us giving readymade information about critical solutions. And Blackmur's theory of 'alliance' is not a theory at all. It leaves us no scope to identify the virtues of an individual critic.

Crane's theory of critical pluralism is different from the theory of either Hyman or Blackmur. It stands in sharp contrast with the monistic tendency to assert any particular theory as the only correct and profitable one. The pluralistic critic, Crane informs us, "would take the view that the basic principles and methods of any distinguishable mode of criticism are tools of inquiry and interpretation rather than formulations of the 'real' nature of things and that the choice of any special 'language', among the many possible for the study of poetry, is a practical decision to be justified solely in terms of the kind of knowledge the critic wants to attain". He will be aware of the fact that

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5 Ibid., p.31.
most of the differences in critical propositions are due to the differences in critical frameworks, and that various critical theories are different but not mutually exclusive. Naturally, even the most diverse sorts of propositions may coexist without any contradiction. A proposition must be judged in terms of the framework in which it occurs. And thus considered, a pluralistic critic will easily get the help of a large number of critical insights, which will enable him to form a more comprehensive approach to literary problems.

To accept most of the critical pronouncements as relevant, however, is by no means to suggest that there will remain no standard for distinguishing the good critical performances from the bad ones. We can, Crane suggests, make comparative valuations among the different existing languages of criticism. We may also judge if a critic, in his act of interpretation, violates the accepted canons of reasoning, hypothesis-making and of common-sense. He must also be true to the literary text he considers.

These, then, are the major philosophical assumptions upon which Crane founds his actual theory of critical analysis. But before analysing the method of critical interpretation that Crane expresses in terms of an examination of the structure of poetry and which he considers to be the most effective method, it will be relevant, I think, to analyse briefly what Crane observes about the result of an
examination of the structure of poetry in the 'languages' or critical frameworks of Aristotle and the moderns.

II

Aristotle, Crane observes, unlike almost any other philosopher considering poetic art seriously, believed in a theory of the multiplicity of linguistic systems. Plato, for instance, used the same system of language for the discussion of both poetry and music. He of course treated the two subjects differently, but the language of his discussion is essentially the same. Other philosophers like Hume, Hobbes, Hegel and Croce also take help more or less of a single language to discuss both poetry and other arts in themselves as well as in relation to other things. But Aristotle believed that every distinguishable thing, such as poetry, presents a multiplicity of aspects and relations, each one of which may be examined in different languages or critical frameworks. And in his own practice Aristotle is found to use different system of language and principles for talking about poetry, for example, in his different treatises - on poetry, on ethics, on politics and the like. Thus, while in **Politics** Aristotle is concerned with efficient causes in relation to the good of citizens, in **Poetics** it is the intrinsic good in relation to the art of the poet. It will be a mistake, Crane warns, to understand and consider them in the same way. The validity of a statement can be determined
only by its proper contextualization.

Crane explains the major assumptions upon which Aristotle bases the line of inquiry he pursues in the Poetics, and these assumptions, Crane thinks, give him the basic framework of his analysis. Naturally, the critical propositions which Aristotle has offered become meaningful only when they are considered in relation to the framework within which they occur. Crane mentions three major assumptions. Firstly, Aristotle thinks that "the primary concern of poetics will not be with the actual process of poetic creation but rather with the poetic reasoning - from the character of the end to be achieved to the necessary or desirable means - that is reflected in this process when it terminates in an artistically successful product". For, the actual poetic process may vary from artist to artist but poetic reasoning or the conception of the type of poetry artists are engaged to compose is more or less the same. In other words, the structural parts of a particular type of work will more or less be the same even when the artists may differ in respect of the particular process they follow to arrange and employ those parts. Secondly, poetics will deal with necessities of two kinds: those which form the essential conditions or parts of all poems and those others which are specific to different poetic forms. What follows from this is that poetics must present a causal analysis of the various poetic

6 Ibid., p.46.
species which differ from one another in order to show the necessities which are peculiar to each of the various poetic species. Thirdly, the end of all inquiries of poetics, since it is treated as a practical science "must be the discovery of what is the best possible state, consistent with their specific natures, to which different kinds of poems and their parts may be brought". These three major assumptions, it is needless to repeat, give Aristotle the basic framework or language of his inquiry. And Crane points out some of the special features of this critical framework.

Aristotle, as has already been suggested, aims at composing a productive science of poetry having as its primary subject-matter the various necessities involved in the making of poetic wholes of one or another specific kind. His problem therefore, Crane observes, in what he likes to perform is two-fold. In the first place he has to define particular species of poetry from their existing varieties and at the same time has to point out the nature and number of the constituent parts of each of the species as well as its various sub-species. In the second place he is required to point out the conditions of artistic success and failure of the poetic forms he chooses to consider. Aristotle believes that "every art and every inquiry and similarly every action

7 Ibid., p.47.
and pursuit, is thought to aim at some good." So he is also required to clarify the nature of the 'good' or the end of poetry as well as the 'good' which poetics must aim at achieving. And in the Poetics, one must agree, Aristotle does all these things quite systematically. Only what we must remember is that Aristotle is concerned mainly with tragedy - which is only one of the many existing forms of poetry; he does not offer us a theory of poetry in general. And Crane's claim is that if we read the Poetics as an attempt to deal with a particular type of poetry, and not as an attempt to form the poetics of all kinds of poetry, we may immensely benefit from Aristotle's observations as well as of his method of analysis.

III

The critical languages of our contemporary critics, Crane observes, are remarkably different from those of either Aristotle or other critics of the past though they can hardly deny the influences of various critical languages of the past. Aristotle, for instance influences the later generations of critics in two major forms. Firstly, it has been an influence of and upon doctrine. Aristotle's critical statements about various aspects like catharsis, tragic hero etc. have been interpreted, throughout ages, in various ways, on the basis of which the Poetics has sometimes been invoked and sometimes

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repudiated. Secondly, the influence of Aristotle is quite obvious in the fact that critics are often found to exploit purely Aristotelian terms like 'action', 'character', 'plot', 'thought' etc. even in their attempts to frame critical observations in a way which is absolutely un-Aristotelian. But these two types of influences are far from making the critical languages of the later critics identical with the language of Aristotle, because a critical language is "something more fundamental than the particular doctrinal conclusions it is used to express and the particular terminology in which its analysis is stated". The more important or inner aspect of Aristotle's treatise - the principle or method that acts as a guiding force in Aristotle - is not found to be properly adopted by his successors. The approach of the later critics to poetry was basically different from that of Aristotle.

The modern critics, unlike Aristotle, have defined poetry in general. For them poetry is sometime 'statement' (as in Winters), or 'communication' (as in Brooks and Warren), or 'knowledge' (as in Prof. Pottle). It must, however, be mentioned here that Crane cites from Yvor Winters' *The Anatomy of Nonsense* to show that for Winters poetry is a statement in words. But Winters modified his definition of poetry in his later books. He says, "I use the term 'statement' in

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a very inclusive sense, and for a lack of something better."\(^{10}\)

In another book also he says, "A poem is first of all a statement in words. But it differs from all such statements of a purely philosophical or theoretical nature, in that, it has by intention a controlled content of feeling"\(^{11}\). It will thus be a mistake to understand 'statement' in the ordinary sense of the term. However, all the modern critics more or less take it for granted that the term 'poetry' refers to one qualitatively homogeneous thing, however variously it may manifest itself in the various poetic genres. Another important point that Crane has mentioned is that in the moderns the individual works or groups of works are determined as 'poems' only after giving the definitions of poetry, whereas in Aristotle they exist as concrete objects (with which the Poetics deals), prior to the inquiry into their nature.

Unfortunately Crane does not distinguish between 'poetry' and a 'poem'. The modern critics that he has cited have given definitions of poems and hinted at what poetry is like. Poetry is abstract; a poem is a concrete whole. Poetry, therefore, can never be defined the way a poem can be.


However, poetry for the modern critics, as not for Aristotle, exists in a 'verbal universe'. And this very fact, Crane observes, is there at the basis of the principles discovered and applied to examine poetry by the modern critics. The principles of poetics for Aristotle are peculiar to the art of poetry. In his conception they are identical with the necessary and sufficient internal causes or principles of construction that operate in the composition of a poem and make it a beautiful whole of a specific kind. And these principles in Aristotle vary as the species of poetry vary. The principles of poetics for the modern critics, on the contrary, who believe that poetry is essentially a particular type of discourse, are necessarily specifications of principles operative throughout the field of writing as a whole. Their basic principles of poetry are identical with the basic principles of all varieties of verbal composition. And the most basic principles are derived from just two elements, which are essential to any purposive speech - the elements of thing and language, or in other words, those of content and verbal form. These elements, however, are not discovered by the moderns. Crane rightly observes that they are what Quintilian long ago mentioned as res and verba. Thus, this approach which may rightly be called non-Aristotelian is not so modern as it is often thought to be, its root can be traced back to the classical past - to the grammatical and rhetorical studies of literary texts that started in the schools of Hellenistic
Greece. The approach has remained the same in essentials, but it has admitted of several changes or modifications in respect of outlooks and terms exploited to study literary texts in various ages. And these modifications have given birth to various slightly different critical languages.

The modern critics believe that poetry is a special kind of language used to express thoughts which are impossible to express in other medium. And the business of the critic is to make clear the nature of this language. Their approach may, therefore, broadly be called semantic, which, according to Crane, is, the latest version of the Hellenistic - Roman subjection of poetics to grammar and rhetoric. The criticism of this sort deals primarily with words and meanings images and concepts, symbols and referents, with the help of which poets are supposed to constitute the special kind of the language of poetry. And Crane has pointed out - and this is highly original - that although this approach (the semantic approach) seems to enjoy a striking unity of spirit and method, a close study may discover "beneath the common preoccupation of these critics with 'language', 'symbol' and 'meaning', at least two distinctive ways, which are often associated in individual critics, of getting at the semantic nature of poetry and hence of defining the characteristic symbolic structures that condition its meanings and values"¹². These two different ways

¹² Crane, R.S., *The Languages of Criticism and the Structure of Poetry*, op. cit., p.100.
within the same approach constitute two distinctive contemporary critical languages.

In the first way, which is followed by such eminent critics as I.A.Richards, William Empson, Wilson Knight, J.C. Ransom, R.P.Blackmur, Allen Tate and Cleanth Brooks, the language of poetry is, generally speaking, considered as statements in words. And the initial problem of the critics is to differentiate this language of poetry from other modes of verbal discourse. They proceed, as Crane says, "by fixing upon some familiar type of verbal expression which is admittedly not poetry and then deriving the distinctive attributes and structural patterns of poetry by dialectical comparison and contrast with this". The critics, thus, preoccupy themselves primarily with the negative analogies between the verbal aspects of poetry and those of science or prose. And so far as the unity and structure of poetry are concerned these critics try to find out the dominant 'attitude' to which all the other thematic elements of a particular poem appear to conform.

The structure of poetry in this approach may be examined in two different but complementary ways. In one way critics may concentrate on the particular manner or technique used in poetry, as distinct from other modes, to apprehend and express meanings. In it, thus, the critic's primary concern will be with the various elements of poetry like

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13 Ibid., p.100.
rhythm, diction, imagery, symbols, and such others which cooperate in a particular fashion in each individual poem to express and to give force to what the poet tries to say in the poem. In one sense this type of criticism may almost be similar to the formal criticism. But the essential difference is that the elements of poetry in this criticism, unlike those in formal criticism, are treated not as structural parts but as carriers of meanings. Brooks and Warren, Crane has rightly observed, in *Understanding Poetry* have made this method sufficiently familiar to us.

Another way complementary to the first one is to concentrate on the meanings of the poems themselves, not, as it is in the other way, on the technique or manner of meaningful expressions. The critics, Crane observes, reduce the concrete elements of symbols, images, diction and rhythm to some underlying themes or meanings which those elements are considered to embody. A number of New Critics of Shakespeare like Wilson Knight, Harold Goddard, Robert Heilman, and Brooks and Warren in some of their later writings have followed this way of interpretation. In his *The Well Wrought Urn* for example, Brooks finds the inner symbolism of *Macbeth* in the recurrent images which relate on the one hand to the clothes and on the other to young and innocent children. Brooks, Crane thinks, has "generalized from them a pervasive

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opposition between 'the over-brittle rationalism on which Macbeth founds his career' and the 'irrational' forces in life which Macbeth and Lady Macbeth have left out of account in their conspiracy to capture 'the future' for themselves'. My point is that Brooks derives the symbolic structure of Macbeth from a consideration mainly of the elements of imagery and diction.

The second of the two contemporary approaches to criticism is popularly called archetypal criticism, and it finds its expression in the works of critics like Maud Bodkin, Kenneth Burke, Edmund Wilson, Lionel Trilling and Northrop Frye. Critics in this approach try to interpret poetry in terms of something else which is considered to be basic in human experience and nature. This other something is either psychology or anthropology, or a combination of both in varying proportions. Actually this approach is based on the achievements in the fields of two non-literary disciplines - the cultural anthropology of Sir James Frazer, Jane Harrison, Emile Durkheim and others, and the analytical psychology of Sigmund Freud and C.G. Jung. These movements had a great influence on this group of critics, poetry for whom is a sort of symbolic language which has close affinities both of nature and of origin with dreams and other psychic manifestations as well as with folk tales and rituals. The starting point of criticism in this approach is not

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15 Crane, R.S., The Languages of Criticism and the Structure of Poetry, op.cit., p.120.
the nature of poetry, but the nature of the universal symbolic process. Consequently, the critical language of this group consists of terms mainly psychological and anthropological.

The structure of poetry to the archetypal critics is more or less identical with the structure of a dream, having at least two levels. And what a critic of this group actually does to expose the structure of an individual poem is, at the first level, to discover the particular archetype which is there in the poem. Mr. Colin Still thus, Crane observes, finds The Tempest to have "the double theme of purgation from sin and of rebirth and upward spiritual movement after sorrow and death". Still discovers the 'rebirth archetype' in The Tempest, which he thinks gives the basic meaning and structure to the work. At the second level the critic draws an analogy between the archetype discovered in a particular work and the work itself in order to convince the readers that the structure and meaning of the work bear similarities to those of the archetype.

Crane's significant contribution lies in his fine distinction between two major critical frameworks of contemporary criticism: symbolic structure and archetypal pattern. While the symbolic structure is explored from within through an examination of various structural elements, the archetypal pattern is discovered through an affinity between the archetypes used in a poem and the universal archetypes. What is

16 Ibid., p.132.
important is that both these conceptions make enough room for multiple interpretations of a literary work - interpretations which are not mutually exclusive.

Crane's observation that the two contemporary approaches to criticism are part of the long tradition of literary criticism which has its origin in the Hellenistic Roman schools of criticism is important and highly original. It suggests an important aspect which is that the so called 'New Criticism' is not so new as it often claims to be. A very old tradition of poetic criticism, through modifications and changes, has finally emerged as New Criticism in our century. But to say this is not to minimize by any means the achievements of the New Criticism. What I want to suggest is that Crane's observation actually links this great critical movement of this century to one of the greatest traditions of literary criticism. However, Crane has expressed his dissatisfaction with the critical languages of the moderns as well as with their power of investigation into the nature of the poetic structure of individual poems. He gives, as I shall show in the next section, reasons for his dissatisfaction, and offers us his own theory of critical analysis.

IV

Crane considers the critical languages of the moderns inadequate. In order to determine the adequacy of a procedure in practical criticism, he observes, we must take into
account the concepts and modes of reasoning which that particular procedure presupposes. We must also see if that procedure can effectively examine all the important aspects of a literary object it takes into its consideration. If any important aspect is left out of account we may suspect the adequacy of that procedure. Crane's impression is that the two contemporary critical languages, when their adequacy is judged in this scale, are proved to be inadequate, because they do not provide us with any "means for dealing precisely and particularly with ... the forming principle or immediate shaping cause of structure in individual poems"\textsuperscript{17}.

What Crane suggests by 'the forming principle' or 'immediate shaping cause' is that there always remains in the artists' mind an 'intuition of a form' which directs him in what he does with the materials of a work. This 'intuition of form', however, is not thinking, or planning, or incubation, or anything an artist does at the preparatory stage of his writing. From his own experience as an essayist Crane has mentioned that sometimes even after a long and interested concentration on a subject and after collecting all the exciting ideas and patterns of key terms he had to face a lot of troubles to write down even the very first sentence of his essay, whereas, at some other times, he happened to write a whole essay without any trouble or occasional interval even when he was not completely prepared to compose that.

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., p.140.
What Crane means to suggest here is that there remains something beyond the conscious efforts of an artist which controls his immediate act of construction. This 'something' is, according to Crane, an idea about the particular form which the completed literary work will finally take. The form remains there in the mind of the artist directing him, even though he may hardly be conscious of it, in the act of his actual construction of the artistic whole. This impression of Crane, I think, may help us to understand his stand as a formalist critic. As a formalist Crane gives primacy to form (in this precise sense) over content. He thinks that an artist, even when the content (theme or other materials) is ready in his hand, can hardly construct a successful poetic or artistic whole out of his materials unless the intuition of form is there in his mind as the immediate shaping cause.

The word 'form' is thus used by Crane in a constructive sense, and he considers that 'form' is an indispensable first principle for every writer. So in practical criticism also this may and should be taken as the first principle of the critic. But unfortunately the two modern approaches to literary works as well as the long tradition of criticism wherefrom the modern approaches have emerged are not found to do this. Actually it was not possible for them to take this particular aspect of form as the first principle in their criticisms for two major reasons.

In the first place the critical languages in which
the contemporary critics have attempted to explain the structure of poetry lack appropriate terms required to explain the 'formal principles' of the artists. They have attempted to deal with the problems of poetic structure on the basis of their assumptions of the non-formal aspects of poetry such as subject-matter or theme, language, and technical procedures. They, thus, concentrate their attention on the various 'patterns' used in the poems, but "they provide no means, since none are available in the critical language these critics are using, for helping us to understand why the 'patterns' are there or what their precise function is." 18

The second important reason why modern critics cannot make the 'formal principle' of a poet the first principle of their criticism is, Crane thinks, that these critics in their concerns for structure in practical criticism start with some predetermined ideas of poetic structure. They usually come to a poem with some sort of a definite specification about the nature of the structural pattern they ought to look for. Thus the critic who describes poetry as paradox, approaches a poem with the determination of discovering paradox. But no such predetermination, Crane suggests, is possible about the 'formal principle' or 'the shaping cause' of a poem. The critic must discover the formal principle from the particular poem he examines by means of his general concepts. And unless and until he discovers the formal principle that enables an artist to synthesize his materials into an artistic whole, the

18 Ibid., p.141.
critic can hardly achieve success in analysing the structure, which is the outcome of that formal principle. The languages of the moderns allow to deal only with the various aspects of poetic structure, not with the causes.

This observation leads Crane to call the modern critical languages inadequate. One may here suspect that Crane contradicts his own belief as a pluralist. As a pluralist Crane hardly discards any approach or theory; he rather bears a free mind to accept the positive values of each and every theory. Here also Crane does not contradict his belief simply because he does neither call the critical languages of the moderns wrong, nor discard them. He only suggests that these languages are not adequate because they cannot give us a comprehensive criticism of the structure of poetry. Therefore, he feels the necessity of a different and we may say developed kind of language for a comprehensive criticism of poetic structure. And he thinks that the critical language of Aristotle can serve this purpose to a great extent.

Crane has given a list of concepts, methods and approaches derived from Aristotle's observations in the Poetics, showing how they may help us to solve satisfactorily some of our problems in practical criticism. Crane however leaves the mark of his free mind when he says that "our loyalty at any rate should be to problems rather than to ancient masters"¹⁹ (like Aristotle). In other words, Crane means to

¹⁹ Ibid., p.149.
suggest that we need not (and also should not) be 'Aristote­
lian' in a narrow sense of the term, and at the same time we
should not hesitate to take any help from Aristotle if we
find that we may benefit from his insights in solving some
of the problems we face. It will almost be the same as our
contemporary critics benefit from the observations of Freud,
Jung, Frazer and others.

The first thing that we can have from Aristotle is
his concept of poetic works as 'concrete wholes'. A concrete
whole, as Crane understands, is something the unity of which
can be clearly and adequately stated in terms of the parti­
cular 'form' and 'matter' it employs. The two aspects, 'form'
and 'matter', must join in such a whole, but the form is more
important because it is the principle or the cause that giv­
es a definite shape to the 'matter'. Crane illustrates the
point with the help of an example. A lump of clay, he says,
which is the 'matter' may be given different shapes accord­
ing to the creator's notion of different particular forms.
Matter is thus, in Crane's view, dependent on form for a
definite shape. Naturally, in order to understand how form
and matter are related in a poem, one must first take into
account the formal nature of that poem.

The second important thing, according to Crane, is
Aristotle's method of investigation and reasoning. The con­
cept of literary works as concrete wholes gives us a notion
about the basic structural relations in a poem. Aristotle framed his method of investigation and reasoning with that notion in mind. The very concept of literary works as concrete wholes organized by formal principles suggests that the critic's problem is to analyse the various elements and subordinate structures of a particular literary work in the light of the particular organizing form of that work. Aristotle's method, Crane suggests, enables a critic, on the one hand, to realize the different forms that can go with different matters, and, on the other, to know the different elements or parts of construction that are essential for giving a body to some particular form.

A few other terms and concepts may also help us. But Crane clearly warns - and this is highly significant to indicate Crane's undogmatic stand as a critical theorist - that we must not be satisfied with what we can extract from Aristotle, because the observations of Aristotle - what we get from him in the form of methods and conceptions - cannot satisfactorily explain all the different structural problems which modern works contain. Aristotle considered only that variety of poetry which is imitation, but there are the great varieties of non-imitative species of poetry about which Aristotle said nothing. Even if we talk about the imitative form of poetry we find that Aristotle deals elaborately with only one plot-form which he calls tragic. But there are many other plot forms which we may and do come across in
novels and modern plays about which Aristotle had no scope to talk about. Crane's suggestion, therefore, is that a fresh attempt is necessary for a theoretical analysis, in Aristotelian method, of all the different varieties of structures we meet at present. This implies another important thing which is that poetics is an on-going process. It is not something fixed and determined. New kinds of literature will call for new poetics, or an enlargement of the existing one in order to illustrate the functioning of the new literary works.

I may now, when some of Crane's major theoretical concepts have been discussed, illustrate his theory of structural analysis. He has quite categorically shown what the critic, whose intention is to explore the shaping principles of poetic works, is required to do. The critic need not have a thorough knowledge of the variant apparently inconsistent theories of poetry, he need not care for the difference of poetry from other verbal discourses; he need not even worry much about the end of poetry. But the important assumption which the critic must possess is that "any poetic work, like any other production of human art, has, or rather is, a definite structure of some kind which is determined immediately by its writer's intuition of a form to be achieved in its materials by the right use of his medium". He will, therefore, try to understand what this form actually is, and

20 Ibid., p.165.
his knowledge or understanding will be used as a principle in the analysis of that work.

Crane believes that a poem with all its material objects like words, images, symbols, characters and devices of representation is the outcome or effect, the cause of which is the artist's intuition of a particular form that determines the way in which a particular poem appeals to us. In other words, the material objects of a poem are given the power by the poets' intuition of its form to combine themselves and thus affect our ideas and emotions in a particular way. They might easily receive a different type of combination and might appeal to us differently had the form, which is the synthesizing principle, been of a different kind. Hence, the structural problem of a critic is to explain how the material aspects of a particular poem are related to its formal nature. This, however, by no way means that Crane suggests an investigation into the poet's mind to realize his intuition of form. He has warned us against such an assumption by suggesting time and again that the problem of the critic is not psychological but artistic. The poem as a concrete whole is there before the critic, and he must determine the formal nature of the poem from its material objects through hypotheses.

Hypothesis-making takes a very significant place in fact in Crane's method, and he considers it to be the first important step of the critic's work. The hypotheses, Crane
suggests, must not be general but particular, concerned specially with the shaping principles of poetry. And in order to frame his hypotheses a critic must have some theoretical conception about the formal natures and material objects of poetry, although the fact remains that his previous conceptions of forms may be of no use for the poem in hand. Actually, the critic's theoretical knowledge will enable him to form some other hypotheses in the same manner. That is why Crane has suggested the necessity of theoretical analysis, in Aristotelian manner, of those literary genres which Aristotle could not do.

The hypotheses, again, must not merely be descriptive formulae. They must be formed in such a way that they clearly imply practical artistic consequences. Besides, a critic in his act of hypotheses-making must honour every aspect of the text as significant evidence. His hypothesis can never be accepted if it does not suit all the major and minor aspects of the poem. Crane has suggested a method of multiple hypotheses. His point is that the critic will at first frame all the possible hypotheses. In the next stage he will argue against each of them and thus try to dismiss each. In this way one hypothesis will remain, which cannot be dismissed. That will be the most appropriate hypothesis and will illustrate almost correctly the formal cause of the poem in question. A last point Crane mentions is that the critic must try to be as objective as possible at every step of his work.
Crane, however, is quite aware of the fact that all methods have certain defects or, as he calls them, 'characteristic corruptions', and, naturally, the formal approach to the structure of poetry which he speaks of is not free from its defects. Crane himself has mentioned three such possible faults which an incompetent practitioner of this method may indulge himself to make. Firstly, a critic may become merely formalistic in his concern with forms. He may then indulge more in the comparatively mechanical and dry job of analysing the various structural parts and the mechanism of how they combine than in pointing out what gives life to poetry. Secondly, in his concern with poetic wholes a critic may forget the importance of the words in poetry, which actually give a concrete body to a poem. And thirdly, a critic in this approach takes help of theoretical insights to solve the actual problems of structure. His purpose is not to propound or form any particular theory. But the critic may gradually fall into a 'methodological pedantry', and may thus exhibit more interest in pronouncing the theoretical insights relevant to a problem than in the solution of that particular problem.

Crane's awareness of these defects of his own method shows his unbiased outlook as a theorist of poetry. He is among those few theorists who are squeamish about their own theories, and do not claim that theirs are the only faultless and correct methods.
However, inspite of its 'characteristic corruptions', the theory of formal inquiry is more applicable to the problems of poetic structure than the contemporary modes of analysis for reasons more than one. Firstly, the faults of the formalistic approach to poetry are not part of the method. They are largely due to a lack of the critic's awareness of his actual work, or to some misconceptions on the critic's part. Naturally, a competent critic may easily avoid them and then give us adequate insights into the structural principles and characteristics of poetic works. Secondly, this method can do all the things which other contemporary modes of criticism usually perform. In an analysis of poetic structures the existing contemporary modes usually confine their investigation to the 'matter' (not 'form') of poetry and to the various techniques in which the matter is expressed in poetry. A critic who follows Crane's method of formal inquiry can and does perform such an investigation into the material elements of poetry. He may, for example, analyse how various elements in a poem are combined and how they work to create the desired effect; he may also explain the images, symbols, poetic diction and rhythm exploited in a poem, and may even tell us what an archetypal critic informs about the cultural and psychological universals that a poem implies. Thirdly, this approach can perform more than what other modes can, and herein lies the superiority of this mode. Unlike all other modes, the formalistic approach to poetic structure tries to
find out the shaping principle of form that makes a poem an artistic whole of a particular kind. All other critical schools, Crane has rightly marked, have been in varying degrees generalizing and reductive. They approach a poem with some definite concepts about poetic structures and try to fit them to poems on the basis of some apparent analogies on the level of the material aspects of the poems. Thus, they reduce structures to a set of concepts.

Such positive values of Crane's theory may convince us of its relative greatness as well as of the liberal mindedness of the theorist. It may still appear to someone that Crane, even when he speaks repeatedly against dogmatism and reductionism, finally propounds his own theory in supersession of all other theories. L.C. Knights for example, in his review of Crane's *The Language's of Criticism and the Structure of Poetry* remarks: "... having discarded all terms derived from a world of discourse outside poetry Mr. Crane seems to be left with a most meagre vocabulary of appraisal." Such adverse criticism, however, can easily be disarmed and Crane's critical stand, which is popularly known as pluralism, may be understood if we follow what Crane has repeatedly said.

The first thing he says is that his theory is "only one of many possible legitimate approaches to the question of poetic structure"\textsuperscript{22}. Thus Crane, unlike most other theorists, does not claim that his is the only fruitful and right method. The second important thing is that Crane's theory should not be misunderstood as one capable of solving all the critical problems. It is, Crane suggests, applicable only to the question of poetic structure and not to many other critical questions with which a critic may profitably concern himself. Crane believes that no single critical language can actually bring out the truth about literature. This belief is there as the basis of Crane's pluralism as well as of his disliking for dogmatism and reductionism. It is out of this belief, again, that he welcomes the existence of a multiplicity of critical languages, all of which together can make possible "a fuller exploration of our subject in its total extent than we could otherwise attain"\textsuperscript{23}. It is clear, therefore, that to call Crane merely a formalistic critic or a neo-Aristotelian must be a great mistake. For a fuller understanding and exploration of literary texts he is ready to take help of any theory or approach he finds useful to solve his problem.

Crane believes, and quite rightly, that the hope for

\textsuperscript{22} Crane, R.S., \textit{The Languages of Criticism and the Structure of Poetry}, \textit{op. cit.}, p.191.

\textsuperscript{23} \textit{Ibid.}, p.193.
a glorious future of criticism depends on the perpetuation of this multiplicity as well as on an atmosphere of friendly co-operation among all the critical languages. For, the greatest bar to an advancement of criticism is not actually the existence of different schools of critics, but the spirit of exclusive dogmatism that keeps one school away from the others and prevents each one from taking help of others' insights. This problem of 'exclusive dogmatism' may be solved only if the critic possesses a self-knowledge. He should particularly know what he can perform - the limitations and positive values of what he does. He should try to know, with equal interest and sympathy, what other critics have achieved with their respective theories and methods. And above all he must try to bear in mind that the various critical languages are not "rival attempts to foreclose the 'real' or 'only profitable' truth about poetry", but are tools, "each with its peculiar capacities and limitations, for solving truly the many distinct kinds of problems which poetry, in its magnificent variety of aspects, presents to our view". We can hardly doubt that Crane's suggestions, if properly followed, will be of immense help to eradicate the unhealthy rivalry in the realm of critical languages, and to make criticism really fruitful and fairly comprehensive.

\[24 \text{Ibid., p.194.}\]