

THE CHICAGO CRITICS

M.S.NAGARAJAN

It would be somewhat incorrect to label the Chicago critics as mere literary theorists and critics. For over a third of a century they have been humanistic scholars contributing to the study of the humanities in diverse ways. They have, at one time or another, been editors, anthologists, historians of criticism, bibliographers, metacritics, students of source, and reviewers of books. They have been "continuously concerned to improve the humanities by distinguishing the arts and methods relevant to their investigation, assaying their power and limitation, reviving old methods grown out of fashion, and putting new methods to the test—engaging, in short \, in a continual criticism of the humanistic arts." [1] All of them have been great educators, and in their teaching programme have always attempted to pursue critical investigation with an open mind, untied by convention and uncorrupted by prejudices. They have influenced generations of students with their new direction and new energy. Any future historian will surely place on record their services for the progress and development of higher study of literature. It is true that, in broad terms, the Chicago critics have subscribed to similar views on art, its status, and methods of interpretation. But it ought not to be assumed that there was a rigid uniformity in their views. They had, among themselves, wide differences of opinions. The movement as a whole gathered its momentum from their disagreements and constant quarrels with regard to several particular aspects of their theory. The study undertaken here is about the Chicago School Criticism and not of any individual member. Any treatment of an individual member is designed to assess the individual's contribution to the over-all philosophy of the school. The divisions and distinctions among the critics are referred to as the Chicago critics or Chicago Neo-Aristotaleans.

The Chicago critics believe that the confusion that prevails in the opposing doctrines and interpretation in which the problem of poetic structure is involved in the present times can be clarified in one of the following ways: (1) by believing that no solution can be found since criticism is a matter of opinion (scepticism), (2) by totally discarding the past as being unscientific and hence uncritical, and pinning our faith in the future and the present hoping that the growth of new disciplines such as psychology and anthropology or modern linguistics would orient criticism in new ways (dogmatism), (3) propounding a new scheme which would hopefully reconcile the partial truth of all (eclecticism). These three take into account the doctrines alone overlooking the methods involved. The Chicago critics propose the fourth philosophical attitude, 'pluralism.'

Literary criticism is not a single discipline and all critics are not concerned with a single question. Any sound critical writing is the result of three independent variables:

1. The critic with his background , his amount of reading taste,
2. The text, which is the center of the critical activity,
3. "The internal necessities and probabilities" of critical discourse constructed.
And it is this that is at the center of the concept of pluralism.

The basis of the view is the recognition that what any critic says on a literary subject (general or particular), is determined only in part by his direct experience with literary works; it is conditioned no less importantly by the tacit assumptions concerning the nature of literature and the most appropriate method of studying it which he brings to his immediate task: he will say different things about a given poem, for example, or at least mean different things, according as he conceives of poetry as a species of artistic making or as a mental faculty or as a special kind of knowledge, and his result will likewise differ widely according as his reasoning about it rests primarily on literal definitions within his subject matter or primarily on analogies between it and other things and so on through a good many other possible variations in principle and method. [2]

What is meant here is that the remark of a critic is the result of his basic assumptions about the nature of literature, of the work he is discussing, and the questions he brings to bear upon it. Every critical statement is an answer to questions about the nature of literature or the work under study and every 'question' thus raised is defined by the 'framework' which constitutes the critic's assumptions in general about what literature means to him and how he conceives of the methods of its study. So, in criticism, 'statements' are related to 'questions' and 'questions' are determined by 'frameworks'. It is for this reason that Crane says that, when Dr Bradley discusses Shakespearean tragedy in terms of the problems of characters and their motives for action, and when L.C.Knights discusses it in terms of 'poetry' and blank verse and diction and Wilson Knight or J.I.M.Stewart, in terms of the symbolism involved, they are all valid. There is really no disagreement among them for there are no conflicting dogmas. Each is right in his own terms. What Crane maintains is that they have different assumptions about the nature of drama or different 'frameworks' for discussion. "The opposition, in other words-though this is concealed by similarities in vocabulary-is not one of conflicting interpretations of the same facts to be settled by an appeal to a common body of evidence, but of two distinct worlds of discourse." [3] Each exhibits the work in contradiction. And what looks quite often like dissension among the various statements is merely a methodological difference because the statements are concerned with different aspects of a subject. [14] There can be no absolutely all-comprehending philosophy or critical theory on earth.

Yet, Crane does not affirm that the critical estimate of Bradley and L.C.Knights and Wilson Knight cannot be sensibly compared with one another or judged in relation to one another. Crane does not mean that the 'various statements' have equal validity. That would be reducing the power of various critical theories to the intellectual exercises or drill. The various critical systems differ from one another not only in their kind-the assumptions they hold about literature- but in the degree to which they can adequately explain and interpret a work of literature. "The power of any critical method is a function at once of the analytical precision and range of the competent concepts it affords within the confines of its special view; and those are, generally speaking, inferior and relatively unfruitful methods which have terms for dealing with only one or few of the many causes of poems, confining their effective distinctions, for example only to the psychology of the poet or to poetic subject-matter or language." [5]

Since critical systems get their meaning and value through their explanatory powers, they can be compared among themselves. It is possible to conclude that system A throws greater light on the explication than B, for A has a broader basis. Individual propositions cannot be compared but complete systems can be compared

and estimated. Studies along these lines have been attempted. Witness, for example, the extensional method—a system of model logic—proposed by Carnap where he argues for the reducibility of 'thing' concepts to 'autopsychological' concepts to facilitate comparative studies.

The pluralism of the Chicago critics and their attempt to do for the humanities something like what the philosophy of science does for science can be summed up along the following lines:

1. The applicability of any critical theory is dependent upon and determined by its terms, ways of reasoning, philosophical suppositions and commitments.
2. The critical 'language' determines completely the kind of questions that can be raised and answered. The 'language' of bio-criticism would be out of place when one talks of symbols and archetypes.
3. It follows, from above, that even a critical term is valid only within the compass of the system in which it occurs. Terms of reference cannot be separated from the systems in which they occur.

In short, that theory whose conceptual 'framework' is comprehensive, broad-based, and capable of raising a wide variety of question is better than the one which is limited in its scope by the concepts and questions it holds about literature.

The same catholicism as to the validity of different theories is evidenced in Crane's position as an educator concerned with a sound elementary critical education. He proposes a practical scheme of five such 'frameworks' of critical questions:

1. The criticism of element and devices' by which is meant the consideration of texts in their aspect as verbal compositions, irrespective of their genre. This, in some measure, relates to the explication de textes traditions or the 'grammar of literary study'
2. The criticism of form 'which is concerned with the 'overall' forms of works and principles of construction.
3. The criticism of qualities ' which concerns itself with the sensibilities and thoughts of the authors as reflected in the works.
4. The criticism of circumstances' which relates to the circumstances or the intellectual climate in which the works were composed. It accounts for the differences in the genius and vision of the writers in terms of the works.
5. The criticism of values' which concern with the functions of literary works apart from their 'formal' or qualitative excellence, and the effects they are capable of exerting on us and society.

These five kinds of criticism, Crane holds, are five lines of enquiry into works, each with its distinctly developed presuppositions and questions about literature. Crane proposes this five-fold scheme to combat the pernicious disease of the 'lust for orthodoxy' or the 'proper' or 'right' interpretation or judgment.

For evaluating the worth of the various systems and estimating which critical apparatus has a greater flexibility and employs more 'usable distinctions', Crane seeks recourse to what he terms as the 'commonsense apprehension' of literature. This term, owing to its recurrent appearance in Crane's discussions, raises for us some genuine problems. First let us turn to the contexts where the term is employed.

Though we can never discuss literature or poetry systematically except within a particular conceptual framework, we do nevertheless have a common sense apprehension (italics mine) apart from any theoretical formulation, of the multiple – likenesses and differences exhibited by literary works and of the variety of causes necessary to their production. [6]

All of us possess...a more or less extensive sub-critical or common sense (italics mine) acquaintance with literature or poetry in the light of which we may judge the relative adequacy and appropriateness of the various systems of terms that have been developed to explain it. [7]

Again while talking about the techniques to be developed in criticism, he says, "the critic does indeed need special techniques but for the sake of building upon common sense apprehension of his subjects, not of supplanting these." [8] And while he expatiates upon Eliot's contention that we should all be critics, he defines his common sense knowledge of literary principles. "It is enshrined in the practical understanding of literary arts which is handed down independently of doctrine, from one generation of writers to another; it is enshrined also in the ability of ordinary readers or theatre-goers to react to what they read or see." [9] In other words, he pleads for an appeal from criticism to common sense.

And yet it is not clear at all what this common sense apprehension is, what Crane means by it, and who is the one endowed with faculty. Is it any and every reader, the layman, untrained in reading and uncultivated in taste? While Crane takes so much effort at talking about the various kinds and levels of criticism and the 'language' pertinent to them, it is a little disturbing to note that the mediator among these critical systems is an unidentified, undefined scholar's common sense. In spite of the fitness and refinements with which the various critical systems are described, when it comes to distinguishing among them and evaluating their features, Crane leaves the judgment to 'common sense.' One wonders why Crane did not develop his epistemological enquiries further in the matter of distinguishing among theories. If this is left to purely common sense, how are we to arrive at certain broad agreement concerning their quality, and capacity for interpreting and evaluating the arts?

It is for this very reason that Crane develops his 'matter of fact' method that can adequately account for the literary phenomena in empirical terms as opposed to the 'abstract' method where the principles are first established or taken for granted without reference to the work under enquiry. He believes that the 'matter of fact' method is "less likely, in general, to do violence to our common sense apprehension of literature." [10] When Crane makes this common sense concept universal and insists on its sanction, this seeks to assume an a priori status. And it is doubtful how far common sense can be relied upon as a sure judge.

The concept of plurality of the Chicago critics has to be understood in the right spirit." It is not plausible, a priori on historical grounds, to suppose that there is a single way in which great literature would be read and interpreted or a single set of causes by which to account for its occurrence and operation." [11] It is not the easy solution of choosing the best of various theories and making an assemblage of them. That would be sheer nonsense, the portrait of Hyman's ideal critic. In fact Crane discredits the suggestion of R.P. Blackmur to synthesize Aristotle and Coleridge. [12]

All theoretical systems and critical 'languages' should be looked upon as heuristic tools. These tools are equipments in so far as they supply us with concepts, principles, and terms to lead us on to the world of art. They are only a means to an end. We ought to have at our command a wide multiplicity of such critical tools. Crane sees the hope of criticism in the 'perpetuation of this multiplicity' and in considering critical 'languages' " as so many distinct conceptual and logical means, 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." [13]

III

The Chicago critics believe, as we have pointed out earlier, that contemporary criticism is partial in its ontology and cannot account for the artistic particularity of works. So they felt that a comprehensive method should be developed, which can handle effectively the work as an accomplished task of an artist. In consequence, they have built a theory based on Aristotle's Poetics. They have held Aristotle as a 'multilingual philosopher,' whose aim is to discover the principles governing the poets, when they create art. For Aristotle, poetry is a 'productive science,' the end of which is the making of beautiful things, the value of which lie in their intrinsic excellence.

Things exist as 'concrete wholes' either by nature or as manmade objects, and these are fully recognisable when we can give an account of the matter in which they exist, and the 'shaping principle' which gives them form. Crane's examples are (1) the human eye which has its matter as the tissues and the vision as the 'synthesizing principle' (dynamis) which gives to the eye, its form, and (2) clay (the matter), and bust of a sinister looking man (the directing cause), which shapes into a bust. Through a process of causal, regressive reasoning – from the end, which is the artistically successful product, to the desirable means by which it is formed – we can have a rational knowledge of the artistic process. Crane is careful when he says that the problem is artistic and not psychological. This frees him from charges of 'affectivism'. " The causes that centrally concern us are the internal causes of which the only sufficient evidence is the work itself as a completed product. [14]

The basic assumption, on which the school's philosophy is built, is that every work of literature has a unity and uniqueness, all its own – it is an ordered and complete whole – and the critic's job is to study this in all its particularity. The school, in short, aims at an examination of the "excellence of perceptible form in a composite continuum, which is a whole," [15] through its constituents viz. definiteness, order and symmetry. "The poetic arts, like other arts originate in instinct, some matter being given a form not natural to it by an external efficiency for the sake of the pleasure produced." [16] A work of art has to pass through three stages – the instinctive, the practical and the artistic. The first two are determined by the nature of the artist and the third by the form of the work with which we are now concerned. A work of art realises its form when the constituent parts get well

ordered with the principle part primarily effective for producing the pleasure in the work and the other parts adjusting themselves in the proper artistic order. This synthesis, this artistic whole, is analysable into parts-the principal part can be identified, and the order or importance of the other parts established. The principal parts itself a whole with a beginning, a middle, and an end. This principal part has 'the working power' which primarily determines the emotional effect. The poetics of any species has to be addressed to this part. The subordinate parts can be dealt with in the hierarchical order of their importance and their capacity to serve the principle part itself. The whole analysis should aim at indicating the poetic construction-beautiful as a whole, and productive of the emotional effects determined by the whole. Olson defines this method as 'one of multiple differentiation and systematic resolution of maximal composites into their least parts.' All this mean that an exhaustive descriptive analysis of the various components- language and style, theme, etc., - and their interrelations in the work will have to be undertaken. The selection and arrangement of the various elements have to be explained in terms of the unifying form (the principal part). The principle of construction, the objective of the work, and the problem of the shape or form- all these too come in for study.

The unity of each work of literature is basic in this system which derives its force and meaning from the philosophical conception of form as the synthesizing factor of each work; for, it is form "which gives definite shape, emotional power, and beauty to the materials of man" experience out of which the writer has composed his work." [17] The uniqueness of each work is evident from the fact that the selection of elements and the pattern of their inter-relations is particular to that end and that work alone. The Chicago critics plead for an examination of the 'forming principal or immediate shaping cause of structure in individual works of literature.' It is not at all enough to make an enumerated reading of such isolated elements as words alone which occur in all works, but it is necessary to examine the specific function and effect of these in relation to the whole , of which these are parts. Again, instead of enumerating various elements , one has to investigate how each of these elements has originated in a specific work and how the interrelations of these elements (actions, thoughts of character, author's comments images, symbols, patterns of composition such as parallelism and contrast, etc.) contribute to the over-all form. All such problems in a given work need a close examination since the principle of construction of any work is something unique. And this over-all form has a power and total effect which is not possessed by any of its parts taken separately. All this goes to prove that the study of elements and devices in a work or genre in isolation of secondary value, if at all , and of no value, whatever, if it does not contribute to our appreciation of the 'whole' as such.

The philosophical foundation of the school can be summed up thus: -

1. Every object, natural and man-made is a unified whole-synolon-governed by a form inherent to it which determines the 'distinctive character as whole' and the various components and interrelations
2. The whole is primary and prior to the parts and the interrelationship between the whole and parts is fundamental to any interpretation.
3. Every individual object of art is produced by four causes. [18]

- (a) The Efficient Cause , which means that art is conceived of as a 'power' directed to some end and is analysable in term of the end (whether the work has achieved its end or not)
 - (b) The Formal Cause, which means that art is an actuality of the mind and so it can be analysed by means of the potentiality and matter actualised into the form.
 - (c) The Final Cause, which means that art is a preconceived purpose and so analysable by the means employed and the ends achieved.
 - (d) The Material Cause, which means that each art is a class of objects, comparable to and distinguishable from one another and so analysable in common with the other arts by the forms suited to the materials in which they are embodied in the arts.
- 4) Every object has its own specific inherent possibilities of perfection, determined by its form, which it strives always to actualise as best it can. The degree to which these possibilities have been realized is, in a sense, a measure of its excellence. This is the basis of its evaluation. The illustration of Olson is that of the acorn which has its actual make-up the potentials of the oak.
 - 5) Plurality is an undeniable fact of life. There are many individual wholes. Some of these can be classified according to literary forms. There are some generic forms which are irreducible to one another.
 - 6) The plurality of kinds, forms, and ends implies that each of the four causes enumerated above gets a different character in each kind. Aristotle's Rhetoric is defined in terms which are the most general. The terms are used to establish the power of persuasion in arts. His Poetics is defined using the most particular of terms. The terms are used to establish the nature of acts as composite wholes.
 - 7) The kind of theory one can build up is determined by the inherent nature of the kind of the work. All for Love is a drama for which the Aristotelian poetic concepts are inappropriate for interpretation and judgement. On the same basis, Antony and Cleopatra is a drama for which the rhetorical poetic concepts are inapplicable.
 - 8) The method of reasoning and enquiry to be followed, in each case, is inductive and a posteriori.

Crane is confident that his 'constructive and differentiating' method possesses means of isolating and defining those principles of structure in individual poems which distinguish these from other poems.' It can talk with precision in its discussion because its starting point is "the shaping principle or form and emotional 'power' without which no poem could come into existence as a beautiful whole of a determinate kind." (Language, p.185). With the distinctions of object manner, and means, and specific devices, the method can introduce a 'greater particularity and artistic intelligibility' in its 'language'. Crane is also readily aware of the corruption of this method. They are:

1. A tendency to become much too 'formalistic' attending only to the mechanism of the structural parts.
2. Forgetting that wholes have no part in themselves except through the words which actualise them: and,
3. Failing into a 'methodological pedantry' ignoring that a theory has value only in so far as it can solve concrete problems.

The theory, an account of which has been now rendered, raises pertinent problems which we shall now attempt to discuss. In his Poetics Aristotle is basically concerned with mimetic poetry. He makes this clear in the second sentence of his treatise. He proposes to investigate the poetic causes of those works which 'happen all to be imitation!' Crane makes the Aristotelian concept of 'imitation explicit:

An 'imitation' is brought about whenever we succeed, by means of art, in producing an analogue of some natural process of form, endowed with similar powers to affect other things or us, in materials which are not naturally disposed to assume of themselves any such process or form; any poem can thus be said to be an 'imitation' when it is sufficiently intelligible, as a concrete whole, on the assumption that the poet, in making it, was intent on using certain possibilities of language in order to create in us, by certain devices of technique, the illusion of human being more or less like ourselves doing or undergoing something, for the sake of the emotional effects naturally evoked by such characters. passions, or actions in real life when we view them as disinterested but sympathetic spectators.[19]

Aristotle differentiates the three independent variables 'object', 'matter', and 'manner' of imitation. These are the answer to what is imitated, in what medium, and how. The fourth question would be then: For the sake of what is the imitation made? The answer, according to Crane, as Aristotle conceives of it, is that the poet as artist attempts to realise poetic excellence which is "the maximum actualisation, within the necessary limits of its matter, of what its nature is capable of (Languages, p.60). This refers only to the intrinsic possibilities of art and bears no reference to the effect to be intended on any audience. The end is the successful realisation of poetic imitation. So if a tragedy is constructed according to the right requirements of magnitude, completeness, 'necessity' and 'probability' it should necessarily arouse the tragic catharsis. The dynamis of the tragedy is internal. For Aristotle, the final cause would therefore be the "perfecting of the poetic whole itself, as a rendering in pleasurable words of universally intelligible and emotionally effective forms of human action." (Language,p.64).

Since the Poetics is not a unitary theory, and its field of enquiry is a restricted one, its principles, based on the concept of imitation, cannot apply to works which broadly go under the classification 'didactic'. Aristotle deals with these in his Rhetoric since the organising principles of such poems are some kind of argument or persuasion. In fact, Crane observes that for Aristotle rhetoric is a faculty, unlike poetry:" It is the faculty of power of discovering and using with respect to any subject the available means of persuasion."(Language, p.197) Crane also adds that, if Aristotle had dealt with didactic poems, his own theory this distinction is not sharply maintained. His definition of literary work as a concrete whole that synthesizes the various elements " for the sake of a particular organising effect or series of effect on our opinions, emotion, or behavior (Idea,II,56) does not seem to maintain the distinction. This seems to have in the two together, except in so far

those works which have an effect on the emotions are held to be 'mimetic' and those which have their effect on behavior and opinions as 'didactic'. One remembers Crane's definition of the plot as that which "imitates in word as sequence of human activities, with a power to affect our opinions and emotions in a certain way." (Critics and Criticism, p.621). Besides subsuming didactic and mimetic literature under one hand Crane maintains that the two are different in their constructive principle, he himself neglects the subtle distinctions in his evaluation of didactic works by using the same canons which he advocates for mimetic works. Crane is aware of the various degree of didactic literature- from the ephemeral pamphlets to the best plays of Shaw which are "the lastingly moving works of didactic art." But for him the one common characteristic for all works, whether mimetic or didactic is that they are artistic structures; only the formal nature of didactic is constituted of certain kind of thesis which is elaborated artfully by the poet. The practical ends of the poet subsumed under the formal ends. Being all the time concerned with the internal artistic organisation of imitative works, Crane holds mimetic art as being higher than the didactic. The result is that the latter oftentimes is assimilated into the former and loses its essential, individual identity which Aristotle all the time maintains.

The Chicago critics' concept of form is basic to our understanding of their theory. Aristotle's concern is with *synolon*, the *concretum*, the artistic composite which is achieved when a certain form is imposed on a certain medium. The poet is concerned with the making part, and the critic seeks the rationale of the making through a course of reasoning. Olson terms the course "hypothetical, regressive reasoning, taking for its starting-point or principle, the artistic whole which is to be produced, and proceeding through the various parts of the kinds to be assembled." [20] The terms 'form' appears in somewhat different contexts in the discussion of the Chicago critics and it is not used in a unitary sense. When Crane defines it as "that principle, or complex of principles, which gives to subject matter the power it has to affect our opinion and emotions in a certain definite way," (Language, p.166) it acquires at least two varying connotations. For the reader it is the power that lies in the work to affect his emotions in a certain way. For the artists it is the principle of the construction which dictates him how he should order and organise the parts. While it is true that the form is actualised in the work, one cannot discount the author who has given it the form and the audience on whom it is realised. Crane uses it in varying contexts, now to mean the one, and now the other. The exact nature and character of the audience on whom the form will be realised remains undistinguished. He believes all of us who have read widely will possess the practical knowledge of literary things to respond more or less appropriately and perceive the form of the work. This is somewhat an undeveloped concept in relation to the audience. There are degrees of perception and sensitivity among readers, and so their response and reaction to the work, and ability to have a conception of the form of the work, will have to be different. This is critical commonplace. Olson accepts "the multiplicity and diversity of reaction" and standardises the right audience making it the "man of practical wisdom." He explains what he means by the proper object of emotion in the following words:

Surely here as elsewhere we must take the sound by which we judge the standard of the unsound, and not mingle all together as if they had an equal claim to consideration; it would be foolish, for instance, to accept the word of a man with poor vision as equally authoritative with that of man whose vision is excellent. Here, similarly, we must take the word of the brave man rather than of coward as to what is really fearful, and generally the word of the virtuous person; so that what is

really pitiful or fearful or serious or comic, is what is so in the judgement of the man of practical wisdom.[21]

This sounds all right as far as it goes. But once we begin to accept the shift of focus from the art to the audience in whom it is realised, such a concept remains much too generalised and sweeping. This, in turn, raises problems in aesthetics and literary judgments for which the Chicago critics do not seem to have a conclusive solution. Crane's form has three well-defined implications.

1. He uses it in a very general way to mean how we are affected by a piece of art. This is the sense in which he uses 'form' when he talks about the "moral universal that underlies and gives emotional form to the main action of Macbeth." By and large, this is the 'form' that is likely to be comprehended by the 'common reader' of Johnson. This form is a universal human experience. This universal form is perceived by all human beings, and they will respond to it in almost similar ways.
2. Crane uses it to mean literary forms which involve defining a work in terms of the four essential variables: object, manner, matter and effect- and elements, and the ordering of them, as done by Aristotle in his definition of tragedy in Poetics, chapter 6, 13 and 14. It should be noted that Crane's 'literary form' is not the same as the different conventional form of literature. He does not mean that traditionally differentiated genre, often described by the constructed subject-matter, as for instance, 'the ode', 'the sonnet', 'the epic', but "species of work inductively known, and differentiated, more or less sharply, in terms of their peculiar artistic element and principles of construction." [22] Using this 'literary form' as a factor for differentiation,, Crane is able to distinguish between kind of lyrics (of feeling and thought), comedies (narrative, satirical), and tragedies (Greek, punitive), etc. These are very different from the conventional 'genre' distinctions.

The later critics who dub the Chicago critics as genre critics, fail to recognise what Crane means by 'literary forms', and hence are unfair, when they hold that the Chicago critics explain a work in terms of its genre. It is for this very reason they maintain that Chicagons are unconventional in their approach. The Chicago critics are clearly aware that the poetic forms are not fixed or finite and that new forms evolve from the old in many instances. Greek tragedy itself traces its evolution to the epic and the dithyramb. Arts always develop, the old order always changes, yielding place to the new. And so, theories of form which are fixed cannot adequately account for the changes and innovations.

3. Crane uses the 'form' in third sense (conceptual form, for Olson) to mean the artist's intuition of form which directs him to shape and mould the universal form of a work which has its power to produce the required effect. "Form" in this specialised sense is the final end, its characteristic and desired power, "to affect us in this definite way rather than that." Crane uses, such terms as 'forming principle', 'synthesising idea,' to describe this. 'Form' in this sense is something unique to a work, and in any discussion of a work, it is this 'form' that must be considered. And this is exactly what Olson means when he calls all art 'sui generis.' "In every act of production the artist takes sensible materials and structure them into suprasensible relations which eventually constitute the form of the work." [23] This form is

unique and particular to the work and the work alone. It includes in itself the 'form' in the sense of generic principles. This third use of form, in a highly specialised and particularised sense, in a concept peculiar to the Chicago critics alone. Much of the confusion that prevails in critical discussions can be overcome if this sense is rightly understood.

As we have observed earlier, the Chicago critics believe that it is possible for a critic to inquire inductively into the principles of construction of a work. At the first level of response he would be able to observe the 'form' of the work. Since criticism is a systematic and reasoned discourse, the critic's job now will be to explain how the various parts have been organised into a whole of certain kind. In other words, he must give reasons why the writer solved his problems in such a way and not otherwise, i.e., the poetic problems and the reasons for their solution. The critic can have inference on these only through his hypotheses. And these hypotheses will not be general hypotheses about poetry as such but "particular working hypotheses for the investigation of the structure of individual poems." The hypotheses, for Crane, are "working suppositions which, both imply and are implied by the particulars of the works for which they are constructed." (Crane, *Language*, p.174). In simpler terms the hypotheses are "conceptual materials for framing pertinent question." Actually these hypotheses begin to operate when the critic attempts at a realisation of the 'literary form' of the work. He seeks to absorb the generic nature of the work as an ordering, in some way, of the four causes. It is at this stage Crane's concept of 'multiple hypotheses' which place the Chicago critics as true humanists trying to see the arts in their varying possibilities, seems most admirable. A critic's conceptual materials should be so equipped as to provide him with a wide variety of hypotheses for all the distinctions he needs. The hypotheses, as Crane recommends, should be 'complex' and should aim at a 'maximum of internal unity,' and should be 'complete and coherent' as far as possible. This concept of 'hypotheses in interpretation' is till further developed by Robert March and E.D. Hirsch.[24] Crane's examples of regarding the plot form of *Macbeth* as assimilating the imitative lyric of moral choice rather than of action or mood" are the results of ruling out 'privileged hypotheses' and applying 'multiple hypotheses.' Now, having arrived at the right hypotheses, the critic can precisely determine the 'form' (third sense) of the work – 'the shaping principle' of the artist. He can thus adequately determine how far the work has realised its optimum possibilities. He will be able to determine now, at this stage, what is the form which the artist has successfully imposed on the material and how the work has realised its maximum possibilities. We have examined at the beginning of this paper further procedures involved when once the 'artistic intuitive form' is grasped by the critic. Thus the critic can enquire into all details in the work from the plot down to the words and imagery. The three concepts of 'form' that Crane has described operate at three levels, helping the critic in his analysis of the work.

However, we cannot agree wholly with Crane when he says that in this procedure, "a kind of judgement of value will emerge in the very process of our analysis." Formal analysis into a 'concrete whole.' We might be able to conclude whether a work is artistic or not, whether it has realised its possibilities or not, etc. It cannot arrive at value judgements. Crane realises this when he seeks the assistance of the criticism of quality to assess the question of morality in *Tom Jones*. Any judgement of value, the critic can arrive at will be only related to the form and structure of the work-i.e., how fully are the necessities and probabilities of the form the writer has chosen are achieved in the work, Formal criticism cannot go beyond this and speak of the quality or value of the experience of the work. Works there are, such as *Treasure Island* and *The Woman in White*, which are almost flawlessly

organised and the parts are compatible with the whole. Yet, as works presenting great issues of human life, they are inferior in quality to work which might be structurally flawed. Again there are works, such as *The Vicar of Wakefield*, which lack the perfect organisation of parts. Yet, the vision of life presented in these is unquestionably great. The force or the vision of these work compel our repeated attention and imaginative response to them. Any work of art, by its nature, is a system charged with values cannot be understood through the structural organisation of the work. "Three Blind Mice" in spite of all its rhythmic and phonological regularities, is poor in quality and ineffective artistic ally. Pope's "Raven" has all intricacies in sound-patterns and rhyme-schemes and yet these do not make it a great poem. If the Chicago critics believe that the final cause for a work is the perfection of its form, then they cannot tackle the question of its value. Criticism, then, would become only descriptive and not evaluative, for form is not a criterion of evaluation. It involves only an aesthetic, for form is not an ontological judgement. The criticism of form has a limit beyond which it cannot go. However, it is to be held to its credit that it is a 'method capable of dealing adequately and at the same time literary work which derive from its construction as a self-contained whole endowed with a power of affecting us in a particular way by virtue of the manner in which its internal parts are conceived and fitted together.' [25]

A related issue is the question of pleasure in the arts. This remains very much undeveloped and rather inchoate in the theory of the Chicago critics. Crane gets on the right start when he declares that the later theoreticians have not understood him justly when he says that the end of poetry is the giving of pleasure. Crane adds that "the excellence of anything, for Aristotle, is the maximum actualisation, within the necessary limits of its matter, of what its nature is capable of." Crane adds that, if the poetic parts are proportionately ordered with respect to the self-sufficient whole of the poem, it should result in poetic excellence capable of affording the highest pleasure the imitated work can aim at. So Crane goes on to the idea of 'magnitude' and 'completeness' in works-the final cause. This reminds us of Coleridge's concept of a good poem, the end of which is "production of as much immediate pleasure in parts, as is compatible with the largest sum of pleasure in the whole." [26] Aristotle has precious little to say about pleasure in his *Poetics*, other than the fact that it is natural for all to delight in works of imitation. He discusses pleasure in *Nicomachean Ethics*. Pleasure, like seeing, is a whole and complete at any and every moment. There is no moment or a coming into being pleasure. Pleasure accompanies activity. He adds that "the best activity is that of the best conditioned organ in relation to the finest of its objects. And this activity will be most complete and pleasant." [27] So pleasure is not a result of the work alone but a result of the interaction process. Crane's concept of pleasure that it is the result of poetic excellence when the parts are organised into whole to give it a power, however right it may be, is only a limited concept of the pleasure that poetry gives.

The Chicago critics believe that language is necessarily the last in the order of the qualitative parts of work, In the order of governance of a work, it is the plot, character, thought and diction (Plot here stands for morally determinant action, Character means that which reveals moral choice, Thought is what the doers express in language as pertinent and possible in the circumstance they are placed). "The question of what the actual words of a particular tragedy ought to be is one that can never be answered finally until the poet has found answers for all the complex question involved in the detailed construction of its object." (Crane, *Languages*, p.75) . Olson is of the view that "the words are the least important, in that they are governed and determined by every other element in the poem." (Olson,

Critics and Criticism, p.564.f.n.). Language and diction in some works may be fundamentals as artistic principles. And Crane only makes a somewhat sweeping proposition that there should be an examination of diction and symbol with respect to the over-all form. For the most part, how it is to be accomplished and in what direction critical enquiry should proceed are left unexplored. Original works are translated works do not seem to be differentiated when one takes this stance. Shelly may sound far too unreasonable to hold that translation is a vanity. "It were as wise to cast a violet into crucible that you might discover the formal principles of its colour and odour, as seek to transfuse from one language to another the creation of a poet. The plant must spring again from its seed, or it will bear no flower." [28] But the point for our consideration is whether our response to Aeschylus's The Oresteian Trilogy is identical with our response to the best of his translation, which are believed to retain the spirit of the original. Such problems which occupy universal attention in the trilogy as the question of justice, its relationship with vengeance, the nature of fate, the force of human feelings, the demands of religion, etc., can be posed and presented by the translation. But can the philosophic intensity, the dramatic excitement, and poetic splendour reach the modern reader through the translation?

What is truly humanistic about the Chicago critics is their ready acceptance that theirs is not the only method capable of exhausting all questions relating to the poetic arts. They believe, that unlike the unitary dialectic of Plato, Aristotle handles questions about the social and political functions of art, the psychology of audience, etc., in treatises other than the Poetics. He has different starting points, uses different method and proceeds along different directions. They care for the principles and lines of enquiry outlined in the Poetics only as a strictly productive science, and honestly believe that it can be extended "to keep commensurate with the development of new forms." Any philosophical method is limited by the question it poses, the answer it expects, and by its method of enquiry. Their Aristotelianism in short, is a "strictly pragmatic and non-exclusive commitment."

Four decades ago the Chicago school originated primarily as a movement concerned with the problem of general education in the humanities. This motivating spirit is present behind the school in all its work-whether it is interpreting individual writings, or formulating a meta-critical theory. It has been an endless and ever-renewing crusade against every form of cultural imperialism that corrodes and cuts at the root of the spirit of the humanities rendering its study anti-intellectual. That is the reasons why the Chicago critics have, time and again, cautioned us against the doctrinaire commitment to one method in opposition to other and anatomised the lapses of the relativism and subjectivism of contemporary critics. The scholars of the Chicago school are steeped in a live tradition, and the study of the arts is to them a serious profession, engaging their whole hearts and minds. Their method may not provide us with all the answers for our problems. But they serve us with the necessary tools. The reputation of this is perhaps a part of the continual emergence of spirit of rejection of tradition. In the domain of art, there is always room for the new creations of beauty, for the discovery of new values. But behind all that is new, in form and appearance, the driving impulse in an old, well-seasoned and sturdy one, toward Beauty and Truth. The Chicago School emphasises the age-old roots of this thrust towards Beauty and Truth, without losing sight of the illimitable possibilities of their manifestation through the ages. The School seeks to refashion well-tried tools to meet the challenges posed by new development in the world of letters. This is not done in a spirit of rugged conservatism or blind traditionalism but in recognition of the immemorial antiquity of the cherished values which art embodies in newer forms: as the indissoluble continuity of the standards, rooted in

human imaginative response to art, by which the worth of new achievement is assessed linked up with the old, in a forward looking march of art to fresh woods and pastures new.

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- [21] Elder Olson, *The Theory of Comedy* (London: Indiana University Press, 1975). pp.37-38.
- [22] R.S.Crane, *The Idea of Humanities*, "II.59.
- [23] Elder Olson, "On Value Judgement in the Arts," *Critical Inquiry*, 1, No.1 (September 1974), p.75
- [24] Historical interpretation, for Marsh, is a task, not of speculation, but discovering what particular authors have done artistically in particular works. We have progressively to eliminate all historically unlikely possibilities on the basis of internal external evidence. For this, verbal structures are most unreliable, for these are determined by the concepts of the interpreter. The enquiry should not involve any predetermined thesis, but the concepts that we bring to bear on any work should be capable of tackling the diverse artistic problem in a work. (Robert Marsh, "Historical Interpretations and Criticism", "Literary Criticism and Historical Understanding" (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967, pp.1-24): Hirsh revives the age-old distinction between interpretation and criticism. Interpretation, for him, is the construction of the textual meaning which is "unchanging and reproducible" and it is not to be confused with the author's or reader's psychic acts. Criticism builds on the results of interpretation. So, if criticism has to be objective, it must be founded upon an objective interpretation of the text (E.D. Hirsch, "Objective Interpretation", *PMLA* 75 (1960), 466-479 and also see Elder Olson, "Hamlet and the Hermeneutics of Drama", *Modern Philology* 66 (1964), 225-237.
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Dr.M.S.Nagarajan
Former Professor & Head
Department of English
University of Madras
Chennai, Tamailnadu, India