

The End of Lyric Poetry

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The poem is the end product which can have psychological, ethical, political or social functions; only then can Crane's statement that "Aristotelianism is only a pragmatic and non-exclusive commitment to hypotheses about poetry and poetics", be accepted. To deny these multiple functions is to deny the place of literature in the wider context of life. Olson seeks to stress only the artistic nature.¹ When art is examined as a skill, as having a bearing on human life, Aristotle takes it up in his *Ethics*. In his *Politics* he shows that art has a social and political function.² In his *Metaphysics* he considers art as a mode of being. These aspects are not denied in the *Poetics*; nor are they emphasised. He refers to the theoretic purposes served by the poets.³ Aristotle accepted multiple frameworks in his evaluation of poetry; and if we accept his methodology we cannot ignore these frameworks which in their totality offer a comprehensive approach.

Aristotle employs different languages when he talks about poetry. These are all relevant only if we remember that the language of *poetics* owes a good deal to his various treatises. The terms like whole, part, unity, complete, magnitude, beauty and imitation come from his *Metaphysics*. His *Physics* defines the terms probability and necessity. *Hamartia* and other terms come from *Ethics*. Katharsis appears in *Politics*. Pity, fear, emotions, and poetic thought are outlined in the *Rhetoric*. The concepts of soul and organic unity are to be found in *de Anima*. If we derive our interpretation of these concepts from the different texts of Aristotle, we are not forbidden from interpreting a poem or a play from different stand-points after examining it as an artistic whole. As McKeon puts it, "a given critic may successively employ more than one of the modes of criticism and may even combine two or more of them...in a single theory or application of criticism."⁴ Crane admits that bibliography, linguistics, textual criticism, philological exegesis, the study of the sources, biography, the history of the theatre, and the analysis and history of ideas "are all essential tools for the kind of critical research we are considering".⁵ A

critic like Olson is entirely mistaken when he insists only on the artistic product. Evidently Olson cannot forget his Hume when he foists on Aristotle.

Crane asserts that "the different inquiries (in *Poetics*, *Rhetoric*, *Ethics*, *Politics*, *Physics* and *Metaphysics*) do indeed converge, but they converge upon objects which, though empirically the same, are given by no means exactly the same conceptual status or definition in the varied 'methods' which Aristotle brings to bear upon them."⁶ The *dynamics* of a poem is clearly related to the object of imitation and to the devices of technique whereby the object is revealed.⁷ But the object is not unrelated to the larger context of human life. No Greek could ever evaluate a work of art as if it had no bearing on the varied aspects of life. In some of his lucid moments even Olson states that the productive sciences which are the arts "derive propositions from both theoretical and practical sciences."⁸ Naturally the works of art cannot be satisfactorily evaluated if we look at them as pure and simple artistic wholes. It is veritable when Aristotle observes that the standard of correctness in poetry is not the same as that of politics or any other branch of study. But the same Aristotle writes: "Every art and every inquiry, and similarly every action and pursuit, is thought to aim at some good."⁹ "The good that poetry aims at depends upon the manner the plots are constructed."¹⁰ "The good which the poet pursues as his immediate end is (only) the excellent making of poems, as poems, in their respective kinds."¹¹ Aristotle clearly states that "in all sciences and arts the end is a good."¹² He also observes that "the end of productive science is the work produced."¹³ This does not mean that we should ignore the varied implications of a work of art, for any artistic product has a certain influence on the sensitive reader. Anything can be denied, says Aristotle, only through its working or power;¹⁴ and "purpose is present in art."¹⁵ What is this purpose? Is it merely the formal one of achieving an excellence in a certain mode? "A function is performed well when performed in accordance with the excellence proper to it."¹⁶ A blind reliance on such statements falsifies the method of Aristotle; and the critic tends to forget that he is quoting passages from outside the *Poetics*.

Any good poem must enable the reader to understand and evaluate human experience. The Neo-Aristotelians appear to minimise this role. If the final cause of the poem were to be only the perfection of its own form, what is its place in human life? Even Aristotle recognises that poetry has its place in social life. Can we deny the relation between poetry and morals? According to Aristotle, we cannot deny the relationship but we cannot treat moral standards as those applicable to a poem as a poem. But the poem is not merely a poem, since it is an imitation of men in action. The Chicagoans cannot easily ignore the significance of the expression "men-in-action". If they do, they will only be accepting the stand of the New Critics. Crane, however, is not guilty of such a standpoint, though at times he is misled into such a formalist position. Olson, on the other hand, is more a formist than a formalist, though

in his work on Dylan Thomas he forgets Aristotle and also his own favourite Hume.

The end of a poem is realised in the perfection of its form, according to the Chicago critics. This perfection depends on its organic unity. Murray Krieger argues that the concept of organic unity "involves by implication a theory of creativity that would preclude such organicism."¹⁷ What does creativity involve? As a good Neo-Aristotelian would say, creativity implies the evolution of an organic form from within. Krieger's idea of creativity appears to be the Biblical one of creating out of nothing. Aristotle emphasises not the creative process, but the realization of a perfection in the structure of the work. Even if we use the concept of creativity, we cannot afford to ignore Aristotle's words that the work of art "*resembles a living organism*". Aristotle never spoke of organic unity. He only referred to something similar to an organic unity. The idea of an organic form emerges in the theory of Coleridge, for Coleridge was more interested in the genesis of a work of art. Krieger and critics like him appear to confuse the Aristotelian theory with the Coleridgean.

Crane and Olson hold that the final cause of poetry is only the perfection of its own form. Assuming that poetry has a moral value, Crane does not go into the question of a difference in the moral values of any two poems. Further, why should a poem awaken or allay a strong emotion?¹⁸ Winters is right in posing this question. The Chicagoans seek to underplay the idea of Katharsis. It is true that Aristotle talks of Katharsis in the contexts of music and tragedy. But in the *Politics* Aristotle clearly promised to give a detailed explanation of the concept of Katharsis in his treatise on poetry. The very reference makes it clear that every form of poetry brings about a Katharsis of some kind or other. When Aristotle asserts that every kind of poetry evokes the pleasure proper to it, why should he mention Katharsis separately? There is evidently a serious misunderstanding on the part of the Chicago critics in this context. If a tragedy can have the pleasure proper to it and also a Katharsis, it is reasonable to assume that every poem can have two functions, if not more.

The works of art do communicate certain ideas concerning righteousness, play, material concerns, spiritual values, humour, valour, love and death. "The righteous welcome righteousness, the lovers love; self-control is intended for the vicious, and forgiveness is taught to the wise. The valiant learn enthusiasm, the ignorant are awakened and the wise become wiser."¹⁹ A work of art has then a moral function transcending its purely artistic value; for it follows the normal human life (*Loka Vrittānūsarana*) and its activities.²⁰ Explaining this moral function Abhinavagupta states that it temporarily removes the experience of sorrow, and thereby it offers a relaxation or a repose. A man in sorrow develops a zest (*dhriti*) for life, a sick person enjoys something like a play (*Kridā*), a fatigued one gets happiness.²¹ Then the work of art is an imitation of life — '*Loka Vrittānūkaranam*'.²² Consequently it presents the ideas, states and the like experienced by human beings; and it has a moral

function, not a didactic one. Morality enunciated by a work of art appeals to the imagination, not to the intellect. This leads Bharata to say:

*Na taj jñānam na tac chīlpam nasā vidyā na sā kalā
Nāsau yogo na tat karma nātye' smin yan na driśyate.*²³

Knowledge, sculpture, wisdom, art, contemplation, and activity — if these are not found in literature they cannot be found anywhere.

The work of art does imitate the actions of human beings as they are known — *purvavrittānu — caritam*.²⁴ The artist is expected to know well the behaviour and nature of persons; and yet he has to transform this with the aid of the artistic activity. There is, however, no restriction regarding the *bhāvas*²⁵ (ideas, thoughts), *rasas*, states of life and activities. Even when the artist imitates life he has to follow the law of probability.²⁶ According to Bharata, a work of art cannot claim absolute autonomy. It may have an independent being. But when we admit that there is a relation between art and life, following Aristotle and Bharata, we cannot be satisfied with a vague concept like that of pleasure. Literature emerges from life and its appeal is to the living human beings. Any dissociation between the two is bound to distort the nature of both. The Chicago critics, like the neo-classicists, seem to swear by the words of Aristotle, even though they admit that the *Poetics* cannot be dissociated from the total framework of Aristotle's philosophical system. What Aristotle did not mention in the *Poetics*, Bharata did in his great work, the *Nāṭyaśāstra*.

Olson writes: "we may indeed worry about whether, on the contrary, it is not an absurdity to conceive of a poem — that is, any imitative poem — as having a theme or meaning. The words have a meaning; they mean the poem; but why should the poem itself have any further meaning?"²⁷ A peculiar fellow-traveller of Olson is Eliseo Vivas who says: "what (the poem) means is not a world it reflects, or imitates, or represents in illusion, in the sense of a world as envisaged by the mind prior to the poetic activity in the manner in which it is envisaged in poetry. What the poem says or means is the world it reveals or discloses *in* and *through* itself, a new world, whose features, prior to the act poetic revelation, were concealed from us and whose radiance and even identity will again be concealed from us the moment our intransitive attention lapses and we return to the world of affairs and of things in which we normally live"²⁸. Both Olson and Vivas are in a sense returning to the heresy of art for art's sake because of their eagerness to preserve the autonomy of the world of poetry. There are other ways to preserve this autonomy, if only we remember that the poetic world can only be relatively autonomous.

The poem as a mimetic structure "presents a meaning distilled from the human scene, and to this extent itself" it is mimetic²⁹. The meaning comes from the world of human affairs, and such a meaning cannot stand by itself. The function of poetry is then intimately bound up with human life. Even if

the Chicagoans forget it, Aristotle himself was constantly aware of it. Aristotle suggested that poetry satisfies both our appetite for imitation and our appetite for harmony.³⁰ The cognitive element tends to stress the rest, but not in a separate or distinct way from the second, which tends to express itself in structure³¹. The cognitive element involves some form of realism and also a certain knowledge. The poem gives us some knowledge, and knowledge is transitive and reflexive. If this is true, what are we to do with the statements concerning pleasure? Butcher at least refers to *rational* enjoyment, and so far he is faithful to the system of Aristotle. The neo-Aristotelians appear to be ignoring the rational aspect.

Art being an imitation, evokes pleasure in proportion to its similarity to the original. Does this pleasure arise from the beauty of the work? Aristotle finds beauty in the work having a unity which results from its magnitude and from the interrelation of its parts. Order, symmetry, and definiteness are some of the features revealed by the work.³² The work must have proportion³³ and an orderly arrangement of the parts.³⁴ Such a beautiful work alone gives rise to pleasure or rational enjoyment.³⁵ This pleasure ultimately depends on the manner of imitation, on the manner of execution³⁶ and on the intellectual activity "for if some have no graces to charm the sense, yet even these by disclosing to intellectual perception the artistic spirit that designed them, gives immense pleasure to all who can trace links of causation and are inclined to philosophy. Indeed it would be strange if mimic representations of these were attractive because they disclose the mimetic skill of the painter or sculptor, and the original realities themselves were not more interesting, to all at any rate who have eyes to discern the reasons that determined their formation".³⁷ Even the portrayal of the ugly can be pleasant. The imitative works "must be pleasant — for instance, painting, sculpture, poetry — and every product of skilful imitation; this latter, even if the object imitated is not itself pleasant".³⁸ Thus for Aristotle artistic pleasure is not the product of a faithful copying of the original, but it emerges from the manner of imitation and from the knowledge it gives rise to.³⁹ The pleasure proper to any form of art is intimately bound up with knowledge expressed or communicated by it.

Each form of poetry is said to evoke the pleasure proper to it. Pleasure accompanies an activity and completes it when it is successful. "Without activity pleasure does not arise, and every activity is completed by the attendant pleasure". This pleasure is greatest when "both the sense is at its best and it is active in reference to an object which corresponds".⁴⁰ Pleasure corresponds to the poetic object. It is not the end or good of poetry. It arises after the experience of the poem is successfully completed. Evidently pleasure is a kind of stasis which rounds off an activity. This activity has a reference to the object of imitation and to the apprehension of the meaning or significance of the total work of art. "A thing's name is its end : what a thing is when fully developed we call its nature...Again, the final cause or end of a thing is the

best and self-sufficiency is therefore the best".⁴¹ The nature of a thing is known when we grasp its essence. Aristotle here seeks to emphasize the integral unity of the essence and existence of a given work. The poem is both 'a this' and 'a what?'. It has a unique being of its own. This uniqueness cannot be identified merely with the form of the work.

When Aristotle refers to the form of a work of art, it is to emphasize its concrete being. "Nature shuns the infinite, for the infinite is incomplete, but nature always seeks an end".⁴² The work of art cannot be vague or indefinite, nor can it be without a purpose. In other words, every object has a potentiality and also an actuality. We get a clearer idea of the Aristotelian position when we analyse these two concepts. The potentiality of a work is its ability to act or be acted upon. The work acquires an actuality when it is wholly complete, when the form is entirely embodied at every point. This appears when its end is within it. The nature of a work "is always determined by its function: a thing really is itself when it can perform its function".⁴³ The end is not the mere achievement of a formal wholeness. The nature of an object is also at times determined by what it does. "In some cases of connection the end of the process is the nature of the thing—nature, that is, in the sense of formal cause and essence".⁴⁴ A statement like this can be misconstrued if we ignore the metaphysical system of Aristotle.

According to Olson the end of art "is neither knowledge nor action, but the product to be produced".⁴⁵ That is, "the productive action is for the sake of the product"⁴⁶ But Aristotle accounts for our enjoyment of poetry by referring to the organic relationship of knowing with the pleasure it gives.⁴⁷ Olson is clearly following not the method of Aristotle, but the general framework of Hume's philosophy. On the other hand, Art is a kind of knowledge concerned with the universals and causes. It brings about a change, and this is its power.⁴⁸ "Now art is a principle of movement in something other than the thing moved, nature is a principle in the thing itself—for man begets man, and the other causes are privations of these two".⁴⁹ The true artistic principle is not inherently present in the material, but there is something which gives a form and a function to the material. Elsewhere the same idea is stated by Aristotle thus: "the art is the principle and form of the product, but existing in something else, whereas the movement of nature is in the thing itself, issuing from another nature which contains the form in actuality".⁵⁰

Art communicates a knowledge of becoming. "It is directed to actions and productions and therefore like experience treats of individuals, although its special action is of universals, for the artist, unlike the man of experience, knows not only what is the case, but why and the cause".⁵¹ This view brings Aristotle closer to Hegel who spoke of art as the sensuous embodiment of an idea. Traces of this view are found in Plato too. That a work of art presents some kind of knowledge is to be found in the *Metaphysics* too: "All men by nature desire to know".⁵² Later he says, "as the horizons of knowledge were gradually enlarged, exponents of the fine arts were invariably considered

wiser than those of the useful arts".⁵³ Art cannot be studied in isolation, for it offers wisdom, not mere structural wholes. A few lines earlier Aristotle stated that "... knowledge and understanding, however, are thought to belong more properly to art than to experience, and artists are considered wiser than those who are limited to experience...An artist knows the cause of a thing, while the other does not".⁵⁴ Passages like these are too many in Aristotle's works. They enunciate certain principles which govern his methodology and which indicate the end of art.

Literature, says Abhinavagupta, is not addressed to those who are only happy or who are only unhappy. It is meant for a world that experiences happiness and unhappiness as well. It provides a play which by definition brings about a diffusion and then a concentration of the mind (*Citta Vikshepa*). Thereby the work of art functions as a sugar-coated pill which diverts the attention of the mind from the empirical problems. Works of art have no place in heaven or in hell. That is, the work of art is addressed to those who experience jealousy, anger, attachment, or desire.⁵⁵ Thus, when a person leads a balanced and virtuous life, he does not need the aid of a work of art.⁵⁶ In other words, according to Bharata, the works of art are intended to lead the individual towards the path of spiritual progress. This is a more profound conception in so far as literature is related to the spiritual development of mankind. If this is lost sight of, literature has no place in the higher life of man. Here Bharata and Abhinavagupta indicated the specific role of literature.

"Knowledge consists in art rather than in experience, for the artist is capable of transmitting his knowledge to others".⁵⁷ This transmission of knowledge is purely for the sake of knowledge. This is how Aristotle distinguishes fine art from useful art. The inventors of the fine arts were considered wiser because they did not aim at utility.⁵⁸

Art is a power, a principle of change, and it achieves its function effectively by being a productive form of knowledge. "All arts, all productive forms of knowledge", says Aristotle, "are potencies: they are principles of change in another thing or in the artist himself considered as other".⁵⁹

Poetry is a making even if it can induce us to act. This making has a dynamism which, in Aristotle's words, is a virtual rejection of the theory of art for art's sake. "Action and making are different kinds of thing...While making has an end other than itself, action, cannot; for good action itself is its end".⁶⁰ One wonders how Olson and others ignored such passages. Possibly they took up from Aristotle the passages they needed and ignored the rest on the ground that those do not appear in the *Poetics*. But they do appear in the contexts where Aristotle is seeking to distinguish fine art from other branches of study, and this is enough ground for considering them. "Wisdom in the arts we ascribe to their most finished exponents, for example to Phidios as a sculptor and to Polycritus as a maker of portrait— statues, and here we mean nothing by wisdom except excellence in art".⁶¹ Excellence in art, however,

does not mean mere excellence in technique. The sculptor is not only interested in achieving the perfection of form, but in communicating a meaning, a vision of life. Such a meaning or vision arises from a state of contemplation or *Samādhi*, a yogic experience. Talking about a portrait that has failed to communicate a significant meaning, Kalidasa refers to the artist as having a *śīthila samādhi*, a awed contemplation. Now this contemplation is never directed towards the mere form, but towards an embodied form. Such a contemplation was referred to by Socrates, and the cultured Greeks used their leisure to an exercise of this activity. In its concentrated and precise formulation, the lyric contributes to such an activity.

"Leisure", says Aristotle, "is the end of toil."⁶² Though he admits that "the pleasure of the best man is the best" and that it "springs from the noblest sources", he argues that one must study the various branches of learning "merely with a view to leisure spent in intellectual activity, and these are to be viewed for their own sake".⁶³ The best man's pleasure is determined by his ideas or values of virtue and wisdom, and the noblest source from which it springs is the rational aspect of the soul. In this light we are told that we should "make right use of leisure" and that this "is the basis of all human activity".⁶⁴ In spite of some of the Chicagoans we have to admit that here Aristotle is talking as the first great Platonist. Only let us remember that Platonism is not the same as Plato's teaching found only in his *Dialogues*. Consider Aristotle's statement: "A particular work and an art and a science must be considered vulgar if it makes the body or soul or mind of free men useless for the employments and actions of virtue".⁶⁵ Though he distinguished making from doing, here he argues that making must lead to some form of doing.

The Aristotelian method is not indifferent to the question of values. It is true that the poet is a poet in so far as he presents a beautiful or intrinsically excellent work. As Crane puts it, "the criticism of forms needs to be supplemented by the qualities and also by historical inquiries".⁶⁶ The basic problem of art, however, refers to the application of knowledge to the organization of materials. A work of art communicates knowledge, and it must be capable of excellence or virtue.⁶⁷ Since the arts are productive powers, they are themselves intellectual virtues.⁶⁸ Virtues are habits of action, and therefore they involve knowledge. Man learns through witnessing imitations, and since all learning is natural, what is natural is pleasant. He learns through likeness.⁶⁹ An awareness of likeness gives rise to a knowledge of the universals arising out of experience. The recognition of likeness is a source of pleasure which is cognitive. That is, Aristotle's idea of the pleasure proper to the form of poetry involves a knowledge proper to that form of poetry. The lyric offers a knowledge of the inward life of the poet, and to banish this inwardness from literature is to go against the Aristotelian methodology.

Poetry is an integral aspect of life and it is therefore related to varied human activities. Its genesis is in life and its content comes from life. Theoreti-

cally we may say that we value poetry for its own sake. But can we ignore the other aspects? When Crane states that “we value different poems for the different peculiar pleasures they give us”,⁷⁰ does a difference in pleasure mean a simple difference in the form? Crane writes: “these differences are determined, in no simple way, by interrelated differences in language, subject matter, technique, and principles of construction”.⁷¹ This is a piece of formatism which is un-Aristotelian. At times Crane appears to be misled by persons like Olson and Weinberg. Mckee, the theoretician of the school, is alive to this serious drawback. The literary critic who accepts the methodology of Aristotle has to reject the arguments of Olson, because Olson’s master is not Aristotle, but Hume. The Humean approach to literature is not merely empirical, but sensuous; and Olson, for reasons best known to him, preferred to follow Hume as though Hume followed Aristotle. Here is the greatest weakness of Olson’s approach; and to use the modern vocabulary, Olson is the great reactionary and revisionist.

The dramatic work is both seen and heard.⁷² As visible it must be pleasant (*hridayam*), and as heard it must be scholarly (*vyatpatti pradam*). Consequently a drama must be both pleasant and intellectual.⁷³ Bharata accordingly states that the work of art must inculcate a sense of righteousness; it must teach and show people how they must behave. It will then be an epitome of all the wisdom presented by the various branches of knowledge, and guide to the development of all the plastic arts.⁷⁴ The Indian approach does contradict Aristotle’s *Poetics*, but not the method followed by Aristotle in his other works. Bharata states that drama has taken delivery from *Rigveda*, music from *Samaveda*, acting from *Yajurveda*, and *rasa* from *Atharvaveda*.⁷⁵ That is, though a drama may claim an autonomous existence, it cannot run away from the heritage of the dramatist. Any work of art can exist only as an integral element of the living culture of the land. This is the concept of tradition which the Indian aesthetician accepts as valid. But the tradition refers only to a certain group of works and actions.

Aristotle was on a more sound ground when he gave his own meaning to the term “pleasure”. “If a man behaves like the Boot in comedy and turns his back on every pleasure, he will find his sensibilities becoming blunted”.⁷⁶ Pleasure is linked with sensibility, and sensibility is closely related to the intellectual, emotional and ethical attitudes of the speaker. This is apparent when we consider Shelley’s “Ode to the West Wind” or Keats’ “Ode to Nightingale”. The pleasure we get from such poems is not merely sensuous, for it is preceded and succeeded by an intellectual activity. Moreover, pleasure in the context of fine art is one of the misleading terms. Let us look at Aristotle: “Pleasure is a movement, a movement by which the whole soul is consciously brought into its normal state of being; and pain is the opposite”.⁷⁷ That is, according to Aristotle, pleasure is not a mere physiological state, for it involves, as Coleridge would say, “the whole soul of man”. At the same time there is an element of spontaneity in the experience⁷⁸ “That is pleasant which

is not forced on us".⁷⁸ Such a pleasure is found in great lyric poetry from Sappho down to the present day.

Learning gives rise to the best kind of pleasure, according to Aristotle. We have derivative pleasures arising from imitation, from observing imitation, from any particular recognition, from any reflective understanding, from examining the form or technique, and from grasping the nature and value of the medium employed. What kind of learning do we get from lyric poetry? Most lyric poetry acquaints us with the emotions and feelings of the poet. These are the reactions of the poet to a given situation or environment. The confessional lyric of Coleridge gives us a wealth of information about the attitudes and relations of the poet to the world outside. The lyrics of Stevens are only intellectual deriving from his meditative and contemplative attitudes. The lyrics of Whitman tell us more about the poet and his world. In this light can we say that the end of poetry is an experience of pleasure? The aestheticians, who are more interested in theory and who generally have little interest in the works of art, speak of beauty as the end of poetry. This juxtaposition of pleasure and beauty raises serious questions about the end of art.

The end aimed at by the poet is not only pleasure, but beauty. At the same time the poet does express a knowledge for the sake of a certain kind of human activity. "Activities", says Aristotle, "are what give life its character."⁷⁹ This is in line with Aristotle's emphasis on action, or, what Arnold called, "the excellent action". But what is an excellent action is determined more by its causes and consequences.

Poetry being a product has a value in itself which is independent of the character and motives of the agents who may have brought it into being. As Aristotle puts it, "the final cause is an end, and that sort of end which is not for the sake of something else, but for whose sake everything else is".⁸⁰ Such a statement, interpreted in the light of the philosophical system of Aristotle, does not support a formalistic theory or even Olson's formistic theory. Though Aristotle accepts the autonomous status of fine art he does speak of fine art as intimately bound up with life and culture. On this point the Neo-Humanists like Babbitt are more faithful to the master's method than a Chicagoan dogmatist like Olson.

Any poem, says Aristotle, gives the pleasure *proper* to it. The word *proper* has misled many critics. Pleasure is not a movement or a process for "it accompanies the activity of a sense organ that is in sound and excellent condition. It completes the activity, supervening like the bloom of youth on those in the flower of their age".⁸¹ Pleasure is the end product of a process, and the process need not be pleasant. It is a consequence of an activity that may even be painful. Aristotle as a shrewd thinker does not attribute any pure pleasure to the work of art; nor does he speak of pleasure as an activity emerging from a work of art. "Pleasures are not processes nor do they all involve process—they are activities and end" in rest, not in movement.⁸² Pleasure is a

kind of stasis emerging at the conclusion of a process. This process, as we find from witnessing a tragedy or from a reading of the lyrics of complaint or melancholy, is not an unmixed one. Shelley was probably nearer the truth when he spoke of the element of sorrow present in the highest experience of pleasure. One may have a pure pleasure in the contemplation of the divine. But even then the mystics did go through the dark night of the soul.

"There are actually no pleasures that involve no pain".⁸³ The pleasure proper to the kind of poem we go through does have a disturbing element. In other words, we find Aristotle rejecting the so-called poems of pure joy. Such poems possibly express the energy of the animal spirits, and this is not what we seek in lyric poetry. Further, Aristotle declares: "As pleasant things differ, so do the pleasures arising from them".⁸⁴ The pleasure proper to a work of art is determined by the nature of the object imitated and by the nature of the product. It cannot be the pleasure derived only from the excellence of the imitation, for the pleasure that art offers must also be a variety of goodness"; that is, "the chief good would be same pleasure".⁸⁵ When an activity is impeded there can be no pleasure.

Aristotle's views on pleasure have been so badly interpreted as to give rise to a pure formalistic approach to the problem. Such an attitude arises from a misinterpretation of Aristotle. Pleasure is one of the ends of mimesis. When we are told that each work of art gives rise to a pleasure proper to it, Aristotle reminds us of the existence of higher and lower pleasures. The lower ones arise from pastimes and recreation.⁸⁶ Among the higher pleasures is one evoked by art and this is associated with wisdom⁸⁷ because it is more autonomous. The higher pleasure that art offers is the pleasure experienced by the cultured audience. Such a pleasure is bound up with intellectual and ethical values, which cannot be ignored in any evaluation of a work of art. The poem has a structure which makes it unique and which presents a meaning. That is, in being a thing made, the structure becomes a thing of meaning.⁸⁸ Does a work of art give rise to pleasure because of its form or because of other factors?

The form of a work does contribute to pleasure. But it is not the whole story. Otherwise all the sonnets of Shakespeare must give rise to identical pleasures. That this is contrary to experience is proved by Sonnet 64 dealing with mutability. Moreover, mere form by itself is only a skeleton, and it is not a work of art. It becomes a work of art only when it presents the content in a certain way. Then, the pleasure arising from a work of art is intimately bound up with our intellect, emotions, and imagination. That is, we cannot argue in favour of a pure or formal pleasure. Aristotle knew about it, even if the Neo-Aristotelians chose to ignore it.

In lyric poetry the end called pleasure depends to some extent on its musical quality. By the word "musical" is meant one who "has turned himself with the fairest harmony, not that of a lyre or other entertaining instrument, but has made a true concord of his own life between his words and his

deeds...in the Dorian mode, which is the sole Hellenic Harmony".⁸⁹ The Dorian is said to have a manly, stately character; the Ionian is more passionate and contentious, while the Phrygian and Lydian are foreign modes. In the Dorian harmony there is an exact correspondence of words to deeds.⁹⁰

The several kinds and patterns of music are hymns, laments, dithyrambs dealing with the birth of Dionysus, and gnomes. "A frantic and unhallowed lust for pleasure" brought about the degeneration of music; and the musicians "imitated the strains of the flute on the harp, and created an universal confusion of forms".⁹¹

Music, said Plato, imitates character through sound. But "sounds are harmonised not by measure, but by skilful conjecture. The music of the flute always tries to guess the pitch of each vibrating note, and is, therefore, mixed up with much that is doubtful and has little which is certain".⁹² Good music can be properly evaluated "when we know what object is reproduced, how correctly it is rendered, and how well a given representation has been effected, in point of language, melody, or rhythm". The last one refers to the hearers and critics.⁹³ Music is integral to all lyric poetry and it is made up of words, modes, and rhythm.⁹⁴ It must correspond to the nature of the character singing. Rhythm, melody, and diction are present in music. "Order in movement is called *rhythm*, order in articulation—the blending of acute with grave *pitch*, and the name for the combination of the two is choric art".⁹⁵ The mode is the manner of expressing words, and expression depends on rhythm. Such music must retain "its likeness to the model of the noble", which alone can be the right music, not merely a pleasing one. This likeness refers to the "reproduction of proportions and quality of the original". Rhythm and figure should not be divorced from melody, nor should melody and rhythm be separated from words. "Any tune is correct if it has the proper constituents, incorrect if it has unsuitable ones".⁹⁶

Plato was clearer when he declared: "all the good epic poets utter all those fine poems not from art, but as inspired and possessed, and the good lyric poets likewise; just as the Corybantian worshippers do not dance when in their senses, but when they have started on the melody and rhythm they begin to be frantic, and it is under possession—as the bacchantes are possessed, and not in their senses, when they draw honey and milk from the rivers—that the soul of the lyric poets does the same thing, by their own report".⁹⁷ Wild music and frenzied dancing of the priests of Kybele of Rhea are referred to here.

Aristotle states that though music is neither necessary nor useful, it is "a source of intellectual culture in leisure hours". It is a "part of that culture to which men think a freeman should devote himself."⁹⁸ He quotes Homer to show that "the bard would delight them all".⁹⁹ Music is a "liberal and noble" art. Music can be regarded "as a source of amusement and relaxation, or as conducive to moral virtue, or as contributing to the enjoyment of leisure and to the cultivation of our minds". Since music is a part of learning, it cannot be

viewed as an amusement. The second alternative is not acceptable because one can learn moral virtue by listening to music, not merely by cultivating it. The third alternative also is rejected on the same grounds. Yet music is connected with all the three alternatives: character—building, amusement, and cultivation of the mind. As Musaeus says, “song is to mortals of all things the sweetest”. Music offers relaxation and alleviates the consequences of past toil.¹⁰⁰

Nature operating on contraries brings about harmony.¹⁰¹ This harmony is the specific feature of the soul, and also of music. We are drawn towards music because of this affinity, and through rhythm music acts on us. “As we listen to rhythm and melody, our souls experience a real change”. Since this influence has a reference to change, it involves the intellect and ethos. Music has an influence on our characters and souls. “Rhythm and melody above all else provide imitations of anger and calm, of courage and temperance and their contraries, as well as of other spiritual affections, which come very near to the affections themselves”.¹⁰² Even Aristotle appears to agree with Plato on the ethical standards involved in the problem: “The human soul appears to have a kind of affinity in musical modes and rhythms, whence some philosophers maintain that the soul is a harmony, others that it *possesses* harmony”.¹⁰³ As Damon said, noble souls are produced by noble song and the vulgar by vulgar.¹⁰⁴

Aristotle is clearer when he stated that while “shapes and colours are indications rather than representations of ethical states”, musical compositions— “are clearly imitations of character”.¹⁰⁵ The musical modes on which the lyric depends do depend on ethical and emotive considerations to a large extent. Some of the musical modes like the Mixolydian “make us sad and solemn”, the softer ones like the Ionian and the Lydian “enervate the mind”. The Dorian “gives rise to a moderate and settled state of mind”; and “the Phrygian inspires enthusiasm”. Similarly some kinds of rhythm “induce restfulness, others excitement”.¹⁰⁶ Music has an impact on emotions, on sensations, and on the important ethical mores. Melody and rhythm produce music.¹⁰⁷ Some melodies express character, some rouse to action and other produce inspiration, according to certain philosophers. The advantages of the study of music are education, katharsis or release of emotion, cultivation of the mind, recreation and relief from the pressure of work. “Those which best express character are the best for education”, and others can be admitted only when performed before an audience. “Emotions such as pity and fear, and even inspiration, while predominant in some soul, are found to a greater or lesser extent in all. Certain persons are particularly liable to feel themselves possessed by some kind of inspiration. We find that such persons are affected by religious melodies: When they hear those which fill the soul with religious excitement they are brought back to normal as if they had received medical treatment and katharsis. Men who are subject to pity or fear, and indeed all emotional people, experience the same kind of effect”,

when the emotions are evoked by the appropriate melodies. This holds good of all persons who are susceptible to feeling. "All, therefore, will be in some way purged and restored to the delights of tranquillity. Kathartic melodies, incidentally, are likewise a source of harmless enjoyment to mankind".¹⁰⁸

Music involves wind instruments, and we find Aristotle paying attention to this. The flute "is an instrument expressive not of moral character, but rather of orgiastic states; it is best used on those occasions when performance is intended not so much to instruct as to release emotion".¹⁰⁹

Here Aristotle's approach has serious quarrels with Plato's doctrine. As Platonists we have to consider his views seriously. Plato's Socrates rejected the flute, but retained the Phrygian and Dorian modes.¹¹⁰ Frenzy and similar emotions are expressed adequately only by the flute and they "are better set to the Phrygian". The dithyramb is a Phrygian melody. The Dorian is "the most solemn and sturdiest of modes", and it "stands midway between the other modes",¹¹¹ probably because it expressed the manly vigour being sober and intense. The Aeolian music is ostentatious and turgid and it does not reveal any affection because it is serious. Yet all lyric poetry should and does depend on music. Some of the so-called lyrics that are not musical are to be rejected from the lyric genre.

The primal source of all the fine arts is music, says the *Vishnu Dharmottara*.¹¹² Without music a lyric is an impossibility. If we have odes, sonnets, elegies and the like that are not musical, they are not lyrics and we exclude them from our purview in this treatise. Of the modes or musical vibrations (*srutis*) *Chandovati* is said to express or suggest the peace of mind, heroism, and generosity; *Raudri* expresses wrath, warmth, and enthusiasm; *Kumudvat* - renders simplicity and gaiety; *Sāndipani* kindles love and affection; *Gāndhāra* indicates hardness, determination, wrath and the like; *Pancama* suggests lust. These and other modes are found in the voices of the birds and animals also. The *srutis* are the components of the *rāgas*, and the *rāga* is, as it were, the soul of music. *Sruti* forms specific *svaras*; or notes, and the fusion of the *svaras* gives rise to a *rāga*. *Srutis* manifest the *svaras*. The seven *svaras* evoke different emotions. The emotion is rendered determinate when these *svaras* assume the form of a specific *rāga*. The *rāga* has an audible form which the musician-painter rendered in their paintings. Sārangadeva¹¹³ speaks of the various colours of the *svaras*, as Bharata attributed colours to the *rasas*.¹¹⁴

Pleasure may arise from a variety of reasons. The beauty of the poetic form is one source. But to say that distinctive forms evoke peculiar pleasures because they have peculiar beauties¹¹⁵, is to take up a very narrow view which even Aristotle refused to accept. Olson appears to be eager to distinguish his view from that of the Neo-Classicists: and in the bargain he does not mind sacrificing Aristotle at the altar of Hume. Olson's approach ignores the part played by the emotions and feelings evoked by the work of art. The pleasure arising from a work of art is a result of the emotions awakened in us by the object imitated, and by "such embellishments as rhythm, ornamental lan-

guage and in general any such development of the parts as is naturally pleasing".¹¹⁶ This is partly true. But to say that the pleasure evoked by a poem is solely dependent on these alone is to fall into a trap. If these formal embellishments alone are enough, some of the nonsense verses have to be treated as great works of art. Does the value of "Ode to the West Wind" depend on the mere presence of the embellishments? Are we to ignore the way in which the meaning develops in the poem?

"When poems of any sort, didactic no less than mimetic, are well made, pleasure is bound to result, the peculiar quality of which, in any mimetic poem is a sign of its form".¹¹⁷ This does not mean, says Crane, that the function of poetry is to produce pleasure. Yet every kind of poetry, says Aristotle, "affords its own pleasure *Hedonen ten oikeian*."¹¹⁸ Is this pleasure derived from the inner structure of the poem? Clearly any kind of pleasure owes its being to the total experience of the poem.

The poet says something through the specific character of the language employed. This linguistic construct is a whole whose parts are internally related. In other words, the poem fulfils its function through its content also. But the peculiar emotional effect of the poem cannot be explained by merely analysing its structure. If we do so, Neo-Aristotelianism will become a formalistic school. As Jaeger puts it: "In Aristotle's teleology substance and end are one, and the highest end is the most determinate reality there is".¹¹⁹ That is, a neo-Aristotelian like Olson is not fair to the Aristotelian principles and methodology. The final end of a work of art cannot be abstracted from its content.

Literature, like the other fine arts, evokes emotions which play an intensive role in lyric poetry. "The emotions are all those feelings that so change men as to affect their judgements, and that are also attended by pain or pleasure. Such are anger, pity, fear, and the like, with their opposites". Here, particular attention has to be paid to the state of mind of the speaker under the influence of an emotion, the persons or objects that evoke the emotion, and the grounds that bring about this emotion.¹²⁰ "The images called up cause pleasure" which follows the emotion experienced.¹²¹ Aristotle analyses anger, calmness, friendship and enmity, fear, shame and shamelessness, kindness and unkindness, pity, indignation, envy and emulation following the method outlined by him. But Aristotle was aware of the fact that what counts is also the manner of expression.

Lyric poetry should not only express something, but should also reveal the manner in which it is expressed. The manner refers to the style and also to the mode of delivery. We can apply here the observations made by Aristotle in a different context: "It is, essentially, a matter of the right management of the voice to express the various emotions". The voice has to be determined by the "volume of sound, modulation of pitch, and rhythm".¹²²

Here Aristotle follows Plato who stated "The seasons and all the beauties of our world arise by mixture of the infinite with the finite".¹²³ It is not merely

the content that Plato emphasised, but the manner of the statement. This is clear from his statement that “measure and proportion are everywhere identified with beauty and virtue”.¹²⁴

The emotions aroused by a good poem should be compatible psychologically, and they should enable us to form attachments. Then alone can a good poem offer us “a high order of distinctive pleasures”.¹²⁵ Pleasure is a state of the soul¹²⁶ and Aristotle’s psychology does not ignore the rational aspect of the soul. That is why Aristotle warns us not to be misled by the voice of the siren. As he says: “When pleasure is at the bar the jury is not impartial. So it will be best for us if we feel towards her as the Trojan elders felt towards Helen, and regularly apply their words to her. If we are for packing her off, as they were with Helen, we shall be the less likely to go wrong”.¹²⁷ Pleasure is taken to be a siren who misleads man.¹²⁸ That is, when Aristotle speaks of the pleasure proper to a given poem, he is implicitly warning us against a non-rational pleasure. The pleasure given by the form of a work of art is not purely a rational one: for as the passage implies, there is a sensuous pleasure which cannot be treated as the ultimate end of poetry.

Lyric poetry fulfils its function by evoking certain emotions and feelings which are developed around an idea or an image. It may be that the function of a lyric depends on the objects imitated or on the devices of presentation. In the latter case, the lyric cannot be a great work of art, for the devices are those that even a child can manipulate. Moreover, Aristotle does not treat the medium as an independent entity but as one inherently related to the object and the manner. It is in this context that we find Aristotle observing: “The most valuable work of art is that which is great and beautiful — for the contemplation of such a work inspires admiration, and so does magnificence — which involves magnitude”.¹²⁹ This holds good for all great lyric poetry. But Simonides composed his ode with a definite intention of assailing and abasing the maxim of Pithakus.¹³⁰ Still we can conclude with Plato that the cultivation of rhythms and scales contributes to the development of gentleness; and that “the whole of man’s life requires the graces of rhythm and harmony”.¹³¹ Only lyric poetry can provide this.

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Notes and References

- ¹ *Critics and Criticism*, abridged, pp. 9-10.
- ² *Politics*, 7.17.1336 b 12 ff; 8. 5-7 1339 b 10-1342 b 34.
- ³ *Metaphysics*, 1.3.983b 27; 1.4.984 b 23; 1.8.989 a 10; 2.4.1000 a 9; 4.5.1009 b 28; 12-8.1074 a 38; 12.10.1076 a4.
- ⁴ *Critics and Criticism*, abridged P. 272.
- ⁵ *Critics and Criticism*, P. 22.
- ⁶ *Languages of Criticism*, P. 41.
- ⁷ *Of Languages of Criticism*, P. 56.
- ⁸ Aristotle's *Poetics*, P. 179.
- ⁹ N.E.1.1.1094 a 1-2.
- ¹⁰ *Poetics*, Chap. 26.
- ¹¹ *Languages*, P. 60.
- ¹² *Politics*, 3.12.1282 b 14.
- ¹³ *De baelo* 3.7.306 a 14.
- ¹⁴ *Politics* 1.2 1253 a 24.
- ¹⁵ *Physics* 2.8.199 b.
- ¹⁶ N.E.1 7.1098 a 7.
- ¹⁷ *The New Apologists for Poetry*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1956, P. 96.
- ¹⁸ See *Winters: The Function of Criticism: Problems and Exercises*, Alan Swallow, Denver 1957, pp. 17-19.
- ¹⁹ *Nāṭyaśāstra*, 1.108-110.
- ²⁰ *Abhinava Bhārati*, 1.39.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*
- ²² N. S. 1. 112.
- ²³ N. S. I. 116; 19 143.
- ²⁴ N. S. 19. 145.
- ²⁵ N. S. 19 146-147.
- ²⁶ N. S. 19. 149.
- ²⁷ *Critics and Criticism*, P. 139 footnote.
- ²⁸ *Essays in Criticism and Aesthetics*, P. 87.
- ²⁹ *Body: The Function of Mimesis*, P. 23.
- ³⁰ 14.48 b.
- ³¹ *Ibid.* P, 52.
- ³² *Metaph.* 1078 a 38 ff; *Problems* 913 b 36.
- ³³ *Politics* 1284 b 8 ff.
- ³⁴ *Poetics* 1450 b 35 ff.
- ³⁵ *Rhetoric* 1369 b 32 ff.
- ³⁶ *Poetics* 1448 b 20.
- ³⁷ *De Partibus Animalium* 645 a.
- ³⁸ *Rhetoric* 1371 b.
- ³⁹ *Poetics* 1448 b 10 ff, *Rhet*, 1371 b.
- ⁴⁰ N. E. 10.4 of I.6.
- ⁴¹ *Poli.* 1. 2. 1252 b 32 -1253 a.
- ⁴² *Generation of Animals* 715 b 12-16.
- ⁴³ *Meteorologica*, 4-12. 390 a-10.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid* 4, 2.379 b 25.
- ⁴⁵ *Poetics of Aristotle* P. 178.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid*, P. 179.
- ⁴⁷ *Poetics* 1448 b.
- ⁴⁸ *Metaphysics* 5.12.1019 a 15; 9.2.1046 b 2.
- ⁴⁹ *Metaphysics* 12.3.1070 a 7.
- ⁵⁰ *Generation of Animals*, 2.1.734 b 36.
- ⁵¹ See Mckeeon in *Critics and Criticism*, P. 218.
- ⁵² *Metaphysics* 1.1.980 a.
- ⁵³ *Ibid* 1.1.981 b 18.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 1.1981 a 24.
- ⁵⁵ *Abhinava Bhārati*, 1-10.
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 1.11.
- ⁵⁷ *Metaph* 1.1.981 b 8.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid* 1.1.981 b 14.
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid.* 9.2.1046 b 1.
- ⁶⁰ N. E. 65. 1140 b 4-7.
- ⁶¹ N. E. 9.7. 1141 a 8-10.
- ⁶² *Politics* 7. 15. 1334 a 16.
- ⁶³ *Ibid.* 8. 3. 1338 a 8-10.
- ⁶⁴ *Ibid* 8.3. 1337 b 29.
- ⁶⁵ *Ibid* 8.2. 1337 b 8ff.
- ⁶⁶ *Languages*, P. 92.
- ⁶⁷ N.E. 2.4. 1105 a 26-1105 b 5.
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid* 6.4. 1140 a 1-23 cf. *Metaphysics*, 9.2.1046 a 36.
- ⁶⁹ *Metaphysics*, 1.1. 980 b 27ff.
- ⁷⁰ *Languages*, P. 35.
- ⁷¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁷² N.S. 1.11.
- ⁷³ A.B. 1.11.
- ⁷⁴ N.S.14,15.
- ⁷⁵ N.S. 1.17.

- ⁷⁶ N.E.2.2. 1104 a 25.
⁷⁷ *Rhetoric* 1.10.1369 b 32.
⁷⁸ *Ibid* 1.10. 1370 a 8.
⁷⁹ N. E. 1.10. 1100 b 33.
⁸⁰ *Metaphysics* 2.2. 994 b 8.
⁸¹ N. E. 10.4.1174 b. 31 ff.
⁸² N. E. 7.12.1153 a 10.
⁸³ N. E. 7.12. 1153 a I.
⁸⁴ N. E. 7.12.1153 a 8.
⁸⁵ N. E. 7.13.1153 b 12.
⁸⁶ *Politics* 1339 b.
⁸⁷ *Metaphysics* 981 b.
⁸⁸ Boyd, P. 133.
⁸⁹ Plato: *Laches* 188 D.
⁹⁰ *Laches* 193 E. See *Republic* 39, 8-99.
⁹¹ *Laws* 700.
⁹² *Philebus* 56.
⁹³ *Laws* 669, 670.
⁹⁴ *Republic* 2-398.
⁹⁵ *Laws* 666, 656, 665.
⁹⁶ *Laws* 663-670.
⁹⁷ *Ion* 533-4.
⁹⁸ *Pol.* 1338 a.
⁹⁹ *Odyssey* 17.385.
¹⁰⁰ *Politics* 1339 a-b.
¹⁰¹ *De Mundo* 396 b.
¹⁰² *Politics*. 1340 a.
¹⁰³ *Ibid*. 1340 b.
- ¹⁰⁴ Athenaios: *Deipnosophistae*, 628.
¹⁰⁵ *Politics*. 1340 a.
¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*. 1340 b.
¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*. 1341 b.
¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*. 1342 a.
¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*. 1341 b.
¹¹⁰ *Republic* 399 A.
¹¹¹ *Politics* 1342 b.
¹¹² 3.5. 3-7, See *Sangita Ratnākara*, 1.2. 1-2.
¹¹³ *Sangita Ratnākara*, 1.3.54-5.,
¹¹⁴ N. S. 6. 42-3.
¹¹⁵ *Critics and Criticism*, Abridged. P. 13.
¹¹⁶ *Critics and Criticism*, pp 556, 564.
¹¹⁷ *Ibid* P. 18.
¹¹⁸ *Poetics* 1453.
¹¹⁹ Jaeger: *Aristotle*, pp. 384-5.
¹²⁰ *Rhet.* 1378 a 20-28.
¹²¹ *Ibid*. 1378 b 8-9.
¹²² *Ibid*. 1403 b 26-31.
¹²³ *Philebes* 26 B.
¹²⁴ *Ibid*. 64. E.
¹²⁵ *Languages*, P. 97.
¹²⁶ N. E. 1.8. 1099 a 7.
¹²⁷ N. E. 2.9. 1109 b 7.
¹²⁸ N. E. 3.4. 1113 a 34-1113 b 1.
¹²⁹ N.E. 4.2. 1122 b 16.
¹³⁰ *Protagoras* 343 c, 347 A.
¹³¹ *Ibid*. 326 b.