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PERSONAL AND THEORETICAL POLITICS

IN THE WRITINGS OF C.P.SNOW

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of
Social Science, University of Durham,
for the degree of Master of Arts,
Department of Politics.

George Stewart Boak

May 1977.

ABSTRACT

C.P.Snow's work may usefully be treated as a whole, despite the variety of forms in which it appears. As such, it contains a comprehensive set of related theories relevant to political activity and founded on Snow's view of the individual, and centreing on the relationship between personal and theoretical politics. This thesis presents a reconstruction of Snow's basic theories of the individual condition and the processes of political activity. Personal politics describes the immediate interaction of individuals in situations of acknowledgedly limited conflict; theoretical politics refers to any theory of the mode of political activity. These categories overlap but do not coincide with, Snow's own categories of "open" and "closed" politics, and Snow's thoughts and attitudes to his own dichotomy are discussed. The crucial action of the individual is that of making decisions, and a parallel is seen in social organisation, where the mode of activity is persuasion, the effective resolution is through compromise and the tools of insight and reason. While Snow's writings otherwise represent a congruent system of ideas there is an apparent gap between his analysis and his hopes for the future, which is resolved in terms of his own theories, and his contribution is found to provide a certain type of political education.

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PREFACE

A major current in the flow of C.P. Snow's thought is the interplay of belief and illusion, of action, intention, interpretation and reaction, and it was with this in mind that the title 'Personal and Theoretical Politics' was formulated.

Snow's writings, and the novel form in general, have not received much attention from students of politics. The majority of commentators have segregated his novels from his other work and discussed one or the other. Undoubtedly, there are grounds for doing just this, but the unfortunate result is that, to my knowledge, there is no comprehensive overview of Snow's system of ideas. Added to this are the problems of abstracting such a system from work the bulk of which has taken the form of fiction. While scholars of literature have been vociferous in their criticism and appraisal of his work, their major contribution has quite naturally been primarily from the standpoint of art and not social science. Social scientists, reflecting on Snow's lectures, have mentioned the novels - but usually only in passing. Snow's is the problem of the marginal man who belongs to so many groups that no one of them can evaluate the totality of his work. This thesis is no exception.

While I have been able to draw on commentators from both camps, most of the references are to Snow's own writings, and my concern has been to present a cogent and firm foundation for any future, perhaps more sectional, analysis of Snow's theories.

I am indebted to a number of people for help over the past two years, of whom I should mention the archivist of Leicester

University, the staff of Durham University Library, Jim Wiley, Lord Snow and especially Dr. Richard Chapman for his encouragement and advice. Any mistakes or misapprehensions are, however, entirely my own responsibility.

Chapter One

BIOGRAPHY

There is a legend which frames the conceptual genesis of Snow's series of novels, the 'Strangers and Brothers' sequence. At the beginning there was a flash of inspiration: it was January 1st, 1935, and Snow was out walking near Marseilles, when he "had the idea out of the blue."¹ He saw the framework of the series, the means he would use to structure it, how he could use it to speak with his own voice. At the time he was "unhappy and most things had gone wrong with my life."² This sounds like a failure talking, the possessor of an artistic spirit too sensitive for the hustle of the social world - yet nothing could be farther from the truth. Snow was thirty years old. From humble beginnings he had risen high - a Fellowship at Cambridge, a Doctorate in Physics, a participant in the scientific revolution and an author, with three books in print.

Charles Percy Snow was born in Leicester, October 15th, 1905. His father was a clerk in a shoe factory and a church organist - a rather dreamy man, one gathers.³ His grandfather was an artisan who had risen to the position of overseer of a tram depot. It was he who taught Snow to work out mental decimal problems by the age of eight, and gave him a start with his reading.⁴ Snow remembered, much later: "I was born poor, but in fact we were a bookish family."⁵

At the cost of three guineas a term, Snow attended the Alderman Newton Grammar School in Leicester. It was a school: "which had, in a longish history, not once thought of producing a scholarship candidate."⁶ Snow's poverty gave him a determination to succeed, and the means was, in the beginning, academic. He worked as a laboratory assistant in the school while he studied

for a scholarship examination, going to University College, Leicester, where he studied chemistry, and became president of the Students' Union.⁷ His determination was developing and also his ambition: he wanted to be a novelist. He wrote his first novel at the age of twenty-one, while at Leicester. It was a semi-autobiographical piece which he gave to a girl at the college. It has never been printed.⁸

The following year, 1927, Snow was awarded the college's first London (external) First Class in Honours Chemistry, and went on to research an M.Sc. in Physics.⁷ Subsequently he won a research scholarship to Cambridge, where he worked on molecular physics - the study of the arrangement of particles of matter.

This was at the time of the Twentieth Century Golden Age of Physics, and Cambridge was one of the foci of the age, perhaps the most important. In Cambridge, Göttingen and Copenhagen, giants of the scientific world, such as Rutherford, Franck and Bohr led the scientific revolution. Electrons and neutrons were discovered. The atom was finally split. It was a victory for science, similar in its symbolic significance to the first moonwalk, yet in its real gains, and coming to a world relatively untouched by technology, at a time when science created a brotherhood which could rise above the national issue, it was far more earthshaking. People, especially scientists, would never see the world in the same light as before.

Snow, in his speeches, never ceases to impress upon his audience the wonder and excitement which infected him during his time at the Cavendish laboratories in Cambridge.⁹ In 1930, on the result of his Ph.D., he became a Fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge, and continued his work on spectroscopy. Professor J.D. Bernal was with him: "I worked with Snow at Cambridge in the most exciting year of 1932 when the neutron was discovered and Scrutiny

founded. He was a brilliant physical chemist, whose work on photo-chemistry in the solid state could easily have opened up for him a new field of research."¹⁰

Other figures whose names are prominent in the scientific history were at Cambridge at that time: Dirac, Blackett (later to follow Snow into the House of Lords), Kapitsa, Hardy, Chadwick, Keynes. Snow was a member of the elite physics club, the Kapitsa Club: he was among the first to hear of the discovery of the neutron.¹¹ He became friendly with G.H. Hardy¹² who, with Littlewood, established a procedure which dominated mathematics for a generation.

Contemporary widely-acclaimed intellectuals included Bertrand Russell (also at Cambridge), and Einstein's Theory of Relativity was known of (if not understood) at the time. The Vienna school of psychoanalysis was under way. And there were a group of novelists - Dorothy Richardson, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, and poets - T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound - who were rising stars, whose supporters claimed for them the title "intellectual". Rutherford and the others were somehow confined, in the public image, to their white coats and laboratories. Their fame was circumscribed by the boundaries of science. News of what they had done leaked through, of course, but science had never been dominant in our culture; these men were pioneers, but pioneers in an area so esoteric that the plain, simple man could not begin to understand them, whereas Eliot and Joyce used words, rather than mathematical symbols. If the plain, simple man was left behind by both these developments, the literary cognoscenti knew which was superior. G.H. Hardy complained: "Have you noticed how the word 'intellectual' is used nowadays? There seems to be a new definition which doesn't include Rutherford or Eddington or Dirac or me. It does seem rather odd, don't y'know."¹³

Snow was making the transition from scientist to novelist at this time. He did not lose his scientist friends, and their isolated, misunderstood position was a subject which later would be prominent in his writing.

In 1932 Death Under Sail, a competent detective-story, was published. In 1933 a less successful, Wellsian, science fiction novel called New Lives for Old appeared anonymously, and the following year saw the publication of The Search, generally recognised as Snow's first serious novel. He did no more scientific research after that.

Part of the object of The Search was to introduce the species 'scientist' to the novel-reading public, to describe how he is like everyone else, and the ways in which he is different. Snow has been making this point repeatedly since then, introducing and examining the scientist in later novels and lectures.¹⁴ Intelligence, determination and consistency are the three qualities Snow has exhibited in his own personal search, the search for a key which will open the doors between men.

Yet the following New Year's day found him depressed - until his vision came upon him. The vision might have been the answer to his depressed state - assuming the cause of his depression was, let us say, mental confusion; or perhaps his vision was an escape from his depression - a project into which he could throw himself. There are suggestions that Snow was unhappy in love in his younger life, to which the novel sequence lends oblique credence.¹⁵ It seems likely that the novel series tided him over emotionally until he found a measure of personal happiness.

Otherwise, he was not idle. He was teaching: editing the Cambridge Library of Modern Science, writing for periodicals - often attempting to describe, in simple language, the benefits which applied science could bring - and, from 1938-40, he edited

the Cambridge magazine of popular science - Discovery. Robert Greason observes: "One is always staggered by the capacity for both work and purposive relaxation in Snow's heroes," remarking that perhaps they organise their time better than the rest of us.¹⁶ This capacity is evident in the story of Snow's own life.

In the late 1930s he wrote Strangers and Brothers, now known, and hereafter referred to as, George Passant. He was not satisfied with it - he laid it to one side, while he wrote The Conscience of the Rich - eventually editing and abbreviating Passant considerably.¹⁷ The publisher, Sir Geoffrey Faber, was interested in Snow's idea, and he arranged to publish the whole series. Faber published Passant in 1940.¹⁸

With the onset of war Snow's life changed. From 1939 he worked for the Royal Society, selecting scientific personnel for war-time projects. The war does not seem to have taken him by surprise¹⁹ and the position was natural to him - that of a translator between scientists and administrators. In 1940 the project was taken over by the Government and Snow became chief of scientific personnel in the Ministry of Labour.

Bernal wrote: "If the Germans had been able to find a man of the same calibre to make as good use of their scientists, the victory would have been a far nearer thing."²⁰ The Germans seemed to be aware of this: Snow's name was listed among others to be rounded up after the invasion of Britain.²¹ He was awarded the C.B.E. in the January 1943 Honours Lists.

As a Fellow of Cambridge, Snow had experienced and noted the closed politics, and the inter-personal politics of committees.²² As a high official, he was able, indeed compelled, to see more of man-in-committee. The intricacy, the reality beneath political hypocrisy, intrigued him. His work during the war left him no time to write novels, but he kept notebooks at the time and made

plans.²³ When the war ended Snow became a part-time Civil Service Commissioner with special responsibility for scientific personnel, and wrote the ultimate closed-politics novel, The Masters, in five months. He held the novel back from publication, fearing that his interest (in the series) in politics might be over-emphasised in the light of the novel.²⁴

In 1947 he wrote the more conventional The Light and the Dark, which received a more encouraging press than Passant. In 1949 Time of Hope was published, and received a slightly better welcome still.²⁵ He argued with his publishers over the production of the series at that time, and through Harold Macmillan he came to an arrangement with that politician's family firm.

Another acquaintance of that period was Leonard Russell, the editor of the Sunday Times. "I began by regarding /Snow/ as a scientist who wrote books for a hobby - but what a mistake! /He/ revealed /himself/ as an incredibly well-read critic of fiction. /He/ brooded unfavourably on the moment-by-moment story, the Virginia Woolf novel of sensitivity and plotted its overthrow."²⁶

Snow later impressed Russell to the extent that the editor offered him a regular fiction-reviewing column in the Sunday Times.

So, to Scientist and Administrator and Small-Time Novelist, Snow added Critic to the description of his functions. From a position of power Snow led the attack against existentialist novels and their prominent place in cultivated literary opinion.

"The moment-by-moment vision looked to its pioneers as though it might reveal startling truths, but it has turned out arid.

Its characteristic works have sacrificed mind and emotion - which, in any literary form, is altogether too big a sacrifice."²⁷

It was not merely a sense of aesthetics which determined Snow's outcry, but his belief that art should mirror life, and that the reality portrayed in the current existential mode was chimerical

and invalid,²⁸ Its death-orientation also disgruntled him. With the continuation of the existentialist form of writing Snow foresaw the extinction of the novel as a serious art form.²⁹

He attracted both support and opposition with his views. He brought to the attention of the public, and the literary world (two separate poles by Snow's account) the existence of writers where they could meet halfway. Snow was trying to co-ordinate, publicize and encourage the new wave of writers which was rising in Britain and America. Perhaps his time as a critic (nearly four years) of fiction prepared him for the papers he would later deliver.³⁰ In 1950 he married Pamela Hansford Johnson, a distinguished writer and critic, who supported him from the beginning in his critique of novels of sensibility.³¹

In 1951 The Masters was published. It was popular. Snow remarked: "In the U.K. I had become a useful property."³² It is one of his most intriguing and impressive books, presenting a paradigm of political activity in cerebral and emotional terms.

Throughout the 1950s he wrote various articles for popular journals, still attempting to bridge the gap between scientists and non-scientists by presenting scientists as men worthy of respect and science as the key to the future. An article called 'The Two Cultures' was published in the New Statesman and Nation, with little resulting reaction, in 1956.

In the 1950s he wrote The Devoted - a novel about the frightening areas of darkness and irrationality in the human mind. He scrapped the novel, salvaging some of it for the similar Sleep of Reason which, he felt, was more congruent with the series.³⁴

In 1954 he published The New Men, a novel of topical interest in the context of the Cold War. Burroughs Mitchell, a senior editor with the New York publishing house of Charles Scribner, flew to London and negotiated, within a few hours, to publish the novel.

Snow has published with Scribners since then. Often in advance of English editions brought out by Macmillan.

The New Men and The Masters jointly won the American James Tait Black Memorial Prize for the best novel of 1954, and narrowly missed becoming the Book of the Month Club Book, which would have guaranteed large sales.

In 1956 Homecomings was published and interpreted as the individually most important novel, and the keystone of the series.³⁵ It awakened critical appreciation of the series as a whole, as it provided an important clue to the final structure of the sequence, and alerted the critics to Snow's intentions. The cyclical structure of the series, for example, became apparent. Homecomings was published sixteen years after Passant, almost twenty years since the original inspiration.

This period saw the Russian development of the atomic bomb, and the grim beginnings of the Cold War. Snow continued to talk about world poverty, the advances of science and the dichotomised cultural situation in the West. Prior to the Rede Lecture 'The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution,' he wrote something like 200 articles for British and American journals.

To Snow the Rede Lecture was only one more attempt to open the eyes and ears of a group of people in a lecture hall to what, he, Snow, and his followers, could already see and hear; and, of course, had already attempted to communicate. The Rede Lecture, for some reason, did not slip unconscious into history, as his previous attempts to communicate had done. Essentially concerned with the same theme as earlier talks it evoked an explosive reaction. Perhaps the mood of the times had only just caught up with what Snow had been saying. The lecture was printed and published, and reviewed and criticised. The most notable, though not the most telling, criticism was made by F.R. Leavis in 1961, in the Richmond Lecture at Downing College.

Leavis made several mistakes - on the level of schoolboy howlers - in his polemic, and when rumours of the lecture began to circulate the literary world, Leavis published the text in The Spectator. (It was subsequently published in hard-cover)³⁶ According to Snow, the text was legally actionable; both publishers sought his permission to print.³⁷

In the lecture, Leavis observed that Snow had become a figure of intellectual authority by virtue of prevalent cultural conditions (of which Leavis obviously thought little). Snow's credentials as an artist were forgeries, Snow was "intellectually undistinguished as it is possible to be"³⁸, a fountain of cliches who had simplified the world, and human motivation, to an unacceptable degree. Basically such assertions were mistakes, if not in their inception, then at least by virtue of the vitriolic force of delivery customarily adopted by Leavis. If Snow was a symbol or a sign of the changing climate of opinion, what profit was there in attacking him in the most personal terms?

The flag was duly picked up the following week in the Spectator by a number of distinguished people, among them William Gerhardt, J.D. Scott, S. Toulmin, G. Reichardt, Ronald Millar and Peter Jay. The debate was taken elsewhere, and continued throughout the 1960s.³⁹ Snow did not join in (beyond an oblique article in 1970),⁴⁰ although in the light of the criticisms made by people other than Leavis he modified the lecture and shifted the emphasis.⁴¹

In 1960 in the Godkin Lecture 'Science and Government'⁴² Snow produced a case study of closed politics in the high ranks of the government. His point was that scientists and politicians should learn something about one another, which he argued from the basis of a factual example. He demonstrated the ignorance of politicians of science, and in his example he publicised the

procedure involved during the war to integrate scientific knowledge with the strategists of the nation. This later involved him in controversy over his assessment of one of the personalities involved in his example.⁴³

In a speech given in the same year in New York - known as 'The Moral Un-neutrality of Science'⁴⁴ he challenged the right of scientists to serve Science alone. Scientists have an obligation to the truth, Snow said, particularly because their profession is continually searching for truth - the truth, especially, of the physical world. They have an obligation in that their search has been successful - they have found processes and formulated laws which have universal applicability. They know, as facts, what can be done, and in what span of time, with technology. Further, they have an obligation not only to respect the truth, but to impress it upon people, to raise their voices. Snow divided science according to its two faces - on the 'malevolent side' scientists know that within a short period of time other countries will possess fission bombs; on the 'benevolent side' the poor of the world could be fed with existing technology. "All that is missing is the will. We know that."⁴⁵

In 1962 Snow was elected Rector of the University of St. Andrews, an old and dignified office, filled by a triennial election, with the franchise of all matriculated students. J.S. Mill had filled that office almost a hundred years previously. Snow's speech on that occasion - 'On Magnanimity'⁴⁶ - pursued a line of comment similar to the Rede and Godkin lectures.

Something happened in the later 1950s through the early 1960s which is difficult to explain other than in terms of Zeitgeist.⁴⁷ A large number of people found that Snow was saying something they were struggling to articulate themselves; and, from the extent of the controversy, there were those who found what

Snow was saying was unacceptable. Possibly, it was the Cold War, and Snow's apparent intimacy with that new balance of power, which attracted the attention. Perhaps it was the technological boom of the 1950s and the subsequent outdatedness of old values. Science, after the frantic energy brought out during the war, was not pausing for a breather. Television moved in upon an unsuspecting world. 1957 was, among other things, the year of the Sputnik. Snow's views were realistic and harsh - not totally black, but not light enough for optimists. There were exhortations in his speeches, and moral tones which may have been too uncomfortable to remain ignored.

Snow became an international figure in the late 1950s. He spent time in America studying the reasons for the 'Brain Drain,' the flow of Ph.Ds. from Britain to the United States.⁴⁸ In 1957 he was knighted. He appeared on the Brains Trust programme. He was popular in the United States, which he considered more forward-looking than Britain in its policy regarding science. In the early 1960s he was visiting Professor in English at the University of California, Berkeley,⁴⁹ and he was known and friendly to the Russians, where his novels were widely read.

In 1964 a Labour government was elected. The Party had promised to place greater emphasis on science, and on technology. Snow has indicated that he was called to Downing Street within two days of the result.^{50/1} He had resigned as a Civil Service Commissioner four years previously; on November 18th, 1964, he made his maiden speech in the House of Lords as the Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Technology.⁵²

He had doubts about taking the position: between 1960 and 1963 he underwent an operation for a dislodged retina, and his heart stopped in the theatre; he was afraid he would die before he

finished his sequence of novels⁵³. His spell in Office, however, enabled him to see his way clear to finishing the series,⁵⁴ (the final novel is set in 1964 and involves what seems on the surface to be some semi-autobiographical material). In speeches in the House of Lords he re-emphasised the points made in the earlier lectures, the vision of the future growing darker as the years passed.⁵⁵

In the same month that he was offered a peerage, Snow published The Corridors of Power⁵⁶. Since the title had been coined in Homecomings the phrase had passed into popular usage. The book had been long expected. A number of criticisms of the series of novels had been written by literati after The Affair was published.⁵⁷ It was known that there were three books to come, and that the first would be The Corridors of Power: As everyone knew, The Corridors of Power connected offices in Whitehall for the convenience of the civil service mandarins who ran the country. The book attracted great interest. Not all the critics were entirely happy with it, or with Snow's literary limitations, but they were no longer able to ignore him or leave his popularity unexplained.⁵⁸

In 1966 Snow published The Sleep of Reason, the descendant of The Devoted, incidentally fooling several critics with the change of title.⁵⁹ The same year saw the appearance of Variety of Men, "a set of personal impressions,"⁶⁰ of nine of the greatest figures of the twentieth century.

It was the end of December, in 1969, when Snow wrote the last book of the sequence, Last Things.⁶¹ It was thirty-five years on from inception, a colossus of modern fiction, of perhaps a million and a half words, eleven volumes, unique in its combination of method and scope. In the following year Snow began collating the books into three fat volumes, altering

the sequence as he did so.⁶² These books were published in 1972; the same year as another piece of fiction, The Malcontents, which appears in many ways to be an enlargement of the action in Last Things. In 1974 he published In Their Wisdom, a novel which was dramatised by Ronald Millar (who, in addition to The Affair, produced plays based on The New Men and The Masters).⁶³ The play opened in London in March 1975.⁶⁴

Snow was not idle in his role of contemporary speaker and public figure. In 1968 he delivered the Fulton Lecture - 'The State of Siege'⁶⁵ - which re-emphasised facets of the 'Two Cultures' argument. He previously identified the three main hazards facing the world as the H-bomb, over-population and famine. In 1968, with the Cold War at least tepid, and with his knowledge of the developments in the 'Green Revolution' he emphasised the booming population more strongly than before, suggesting that birth was now more mortal than death. He continued with this message in the Lords until the early 1970s.⁶⁶

He became chairman of the G.P.O. Think Tank in 1970. He was also at this time a member of the Arts Council, (he spoke frequently in the House upon the Arts), and also a member of the committee which supervised the finances of the Regional Arts Associations.⁶⁷

In 1971 he published Public Affairs, a collection of his lectures.

In 1976 he produced a volume on the writer with whom he may most profitably and most probably be compared: Anthony Trollope.⁶⁸

Chapter Two

LIGHT (OR ILLUMINATING) FICTION

"In fact, of course, there remains a great deal about man-alone and man-in-society and the interaction between them...which during foreseeable time can not only be best rendered in terms of art, but rendered in no other way." 1

The sources of C.P. Snow's thought are of various size and hue. There are articles about science and scientists in periodicals from 1936 onward; a quantity of book reviews in the late 1940s, early 1950s; a handful of lectures, which led to wide-spread publicity after the Rede Lecture in 1959; speeches made in the House of Lords after 1964; sixteen novels, a book of biographies, a work on Trollope and press interviews. It is tempting to assume that Snow is wearing a number of different hats - scientist, art-critic, public speaker and novelist² - for his expression of opinion in these different fields, and to a limited extent this is so.

There are indications, however, of theories common to all aspects of his work - and, of course, it would be surprising if this were not so. One observes in the articles written by Dr. Snow, the scientist, that the writer wishes to encourage interest in the benefits of science, and in its nature, and recognition of the humanity of scientists³. Critic Snow is out to attack the moment-by-moment technique of the novel, for its failure to adjust to the changes brought about by science, and its unwillingness to relate instructively to the processes of living⁴. Sir Charles, and later Lord Snow, is appealing for recognition of the realities of world politics, the effective use of science, and the incorporation of that discipline within man's general consciousness⁵.

No one has suggested that these separate views are based on anything other than a common aim. In his writings on art and science Snow is attempting to bridge the cultural gap which his later work incorporates as a symptom of a world situation, and a place to begin remedial action.

C.P. Snow, the novelist, however, presents a description of the processes of human - individual and national - interaction which contradicts, at first sight, the element of hope in his non-fiction writings. The processes which Snow, the novelist, describes are rooted in selfishness and individuality - at first sight, at least - and not the good will and fellowship he exhorts in his other works⁶. He seems to be conscious of this: in his Rectorial Address 'On Magnanimity'⁷, he appealed for that rare attribute, while acknowledging the seemingly incongruent 'realism', i.e. pessimism, of his novels.

The discrepancy is resolved by noting the primary aims of each form: his lectures are attempts to influence action in a specific case - whether it be educational reform, or world politics. His novels are more concerned with understanding the processes of the world, with indications of healthy general action. They indicate, in instances, the symptoms of the diseases which Snow the public figure is anxious to see cured⁸.

There is a high level of congruence between ideas expressed in Snow's fiction and non-fiction writings. Phrases recur; even the conversational, reflective style is the same⁹.

J. Thale¹⁰ suggests that Snow's non-fictional writings are "parallel" in content to the work of his novels. Perhaps they are understood still more usefully if they are seen as logical extensions of one another, two wings of a set of theories, separated, according to the functions planned for each of them. On all major issues, novelist Snow agrees with lecturer Snow, and an under-

standing of either wing of his work is useful in interpreting the other.

The bulk of Snow's written work takes the form of novels. Their subject-matter is the commonly-perceived activities of men in society recognisable as that of our own, which are explained by coherent theories. It is obvious that Snow sees his novels as vehicles for his thought and wishes to communicate through them. The methods he uses to convey his theories are, however, often subtle, and the purpose of the remainder of this chapter is to display some of the mechanisms concealed beneath the story-line of a Snow novel.

It is perhaps convenient to dispose of the notion, at this point, that one will find in Snow stark allegory or political myth, which he disparages in Orwell and Camus¹², and suggest that his concentration upon processes within given historical periods is an attempt to demonstrate a method of interpreting events and, on that basis, to educate and to influence his readers to carry out appropriate courses of action.

Essentially, Snow uses his characters to act out his various theories and display his interpretation of the world. He has called his major concerns "themes:"

"When I started to write I wanted to deal with a number of themes. Among them, though incidentally, not the most important, were science and politics." 13

Elsewhere he says that he is interested in "the power relations of men in organised society"¹⁴. And he is interested in explaining these:

"If I were seeking a practical reason for trying to express this theme in terms of art, I should repeat what I have said elsewhere - you've got to understand how the world ticks if you're

going to have any chance of making it tick

better."

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Snow's style, or absence of style, has been criticised for its flatness, its aridity, sterility and assertion¹⁶. It is a calm, unemotional prose, written well after the event; the characters whom Snow favours rarely reflect intensely on their surroundings with panic, or fear, or spontaneous joy. They are stoical, prosaic¹⁷. The story-line is generally carried by strong narrative, although in later works Snow developed an episodic structure focussed upon meetings at which information is exchanged and discussed¹⁸.

The style was not in vogue when Snow began to write; it has scarcely altered over the years. It is consistent with his theories: regular, rational, un fanciful. Events take place - interactions of various characters - and their meaning is evaluated, either by a narrator, by discussion or even the narrative itself. Snow focuses on the choices which people must make in the course of life and how they should prepare themselves. Of the novel form, Snow wrote:

"There is a particular fusion of the investigatory, reflective and moral intelligences that specially fits the novel, and which is still the only way open to us of exploring certain aspects, including the most important aspects, of the individual and social condition."

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The reflective intelligence is present throughout the novels, interpreting events portrayed therein. Lewis Eliot is the housing for that intelligence in the 'Strangers and Brothers' series; by use of Eliot's reflections meaning is injected into events, the significance of which would otherwise be manifold. Eliot attempts to gain understanding of the

significance of events, and acts upon his interpretation. His judgements are not always correct, but his method of forming these judgements, his use of reflection is approved by Snow²⁰. The method transcends its vehicle. Although Eliot is an astute observer, events often prove him wrong, but Snow shows him as right to persist in attempting to puzzle out what he sees by mingling present experiences with the memory of past experience. This is the basis on which Snow builds his theories and, as Professor Kermode confesses: "it has to be admitted that this is how, from day to day, we do go about judging and estimating people."²¹

The process of reflection involves comparisons, and the result is a series of experientially valid theories. Comparisons of events, or characters, or the behaviour of a character in variable situations, are the differentiating devices Eliot uses²². This is clearly perceivable in the work itself, but less obvious is its extension as a stylistic device by means of which Snow conveys not only the present, observed state of affairs, but the customary state, too, and thus the tell-tale discrepancy between them.

Continuing with Snow's thesis, one might hazard the guess that the investigatory intelligence manifests itself as attention to meaningful themes. Snow's episodic exposition of Eliot's life distills a meaning from events largely by exclusion of the irrelevant. An example is the recorded effect of events common to two novels, which is emphasised differently according to its relation to Eliot's concern in each novel²³.

The moral intelligence will be accorded more thought in a later chapter²⁴. A humanistic desire to achieve better conditions for one's fellow man is a common feature and a driving force in

many Snow characters - Billy Pilgrim, the Malcontents, George Passant, Francis Getliffe, Charles March and Roger Quaife, among others²⁵.

Reflections upon the world, provided they are based on reason and experience, may detect the reality beneath appearances. The experienced observer holds the key to events. This is strikingly presented in Corridors of Power, where the world of appearance registers only the cypher-like gestures, innocuous events, which the experienced must translate²⁶.

It is in the light of Snow's views of the social importance of literature, and his belief that

"It is the elements of experience which those kinds of intelligence give - not only the here-and-now experience, but the experience of thinking about it - that we have to organise into a work of art." 27

Snow's themes are demonstrated by his characters, rather than belonging to them. Although he has denied symbolism²⁸, his major characters are, in fact, symbols - or representatives of types of character. Not much is revealed through symbols that is not explained in other ways, except insofar as the actions of certain characters assume greater significance in the light of their representation.

Passant is, in broad terms, representative of an antithesis to Eliot. He believes in the innate goodness of human beings, and the trial in The Sleep of Reason is the logical conclusion, not only for Passant, of such ideas²⁹. Also, he represents the man who lacks self-knowledge, despite his brilliance, and his rejection by the Civil Service in Homecomings is the rejection of the 'first-rate man' by Snow's representative of a certain type

of bureaucrat, Hector Rose, the 'second-rate man.' This is not to say that the incident means no more than this, but this interpretation is significant.³⁰

Roy Calvert is, in part, every man barred from true fellow-feeling - a man-alone who cannot endure his loneliness. In part he is any man who sees too clearly (a trait which recurs in Sheila Eliot); any man without egoism. Snow's use of symbols continues beyond this point, however, supporting his more explicit theories. Symbols are used as a type of shorthand, or as supportive structural elements, and concern events or actions which mean more than their appearance suggests. As with the major characters they appear frequently throughout the 'Strangers and Brothers' series. The frequent committee meetings, the trials, for example, emphasise the social basis of action and truth of which Snow approves. The lighted window, viewed from the dark, in part represents the comfort of men-in-society as opposed to the loneliness of the man-alone. Children express a hope for the future (strikingly, at the end of Corridors of Power)³¹. The homecoming represents a certain element of the power relationship of the individual.

Minor characters and events more obviously portray in cameo, themes which concern Snow at length elsewhere. The contenders for the Mastership in The Masters not only represent the sensitive and the complacent, the Conservative and the Liberal, but also the traditional humanist and the new scientific ethos: the action throughout The Masters is representative of more than a college election: the later election demonstrates this more clearly - G.S. Clarke is more than an individual with right-wing views and a bad foot.³²

In face-to-face situations, the characters are individuals: in synopsis they are evidently much more. Often it is relatively

easy to detect the character or action which means more than Eliot perceives, or is prepared to divulge, but Snow's nuance of meaning is difficult to grasp. First one character and then another may speak in what is recognisably Snow's voice. One should appreciate the character at this point, but beware of him in future. Repetition, or the absence of it, will prove him right or wrong. In his vocalised reflections upon events of the novel, Snow is often demonstrating the character of the speaker, rather than summarising what has gone before.

Snow's prose is arid, i.e. dry, enough to contain irony, and an obvious aid to interpretation is the bulk and homogeneity of his work. There is a dialogue running through the 'Strangers and Brothers' sequence, with questions and answers and echoes of both, which renders the whole work more lucid than any individual novel, or indeed, any particular passage. As the novels form a continuing story, with a number of characters recurring in many novels, the process of change and ageing is demonstrated. Changing interpretations are also a feature of the sequence, as the narrator, Lewis Eliot, also ages. As a description of the processes of social life, a view of the sequence as a whole is most valuable.

Secondly, the structure of the sequence is such as to present the echoes and comparison of single events in a way similar to accumulation of experience. There are two elections for the Mastership of Snow's Cambridge college; the Eliot brothers both refuse positions of power at different times; people from Passant's groups are twice put on trial. Unrealistic hope springs in the breast of the most hardened of men. The subtle power relations between brothers, lovers, husbands and wives, are demonstrated

again and again. No one example, for they are all slight deviations, variations on a theme, is the last word.

Individual novels are also highly structured. A simple test demonstrates one aspect of this. No Snow novel can be adequately related in terms of either one protagonist or one process, whereas they are indeed much more satisfactorily explained in terms of two or more processes, recognisable elsewhere³³.

At a certain level, abstracted from the peculiarities of each situation, interactions and personal actions form a generalisation^{ed} pattern. In such cases, the methodology most likely to produce accurate interpretations is to examine ambiguities in relation to Snow's complete work. To achieve anything more than vague and useless generalisation it is necessary to accept passages of work at face value, and herein lies the risk of failing to recognise irony or a false trail. On these occasions one can only reference sources and plead the case that the interpretation drawn is consistent with the recognisable core of Snow's work, and defensible on these grounds.

The major themes of Snow's work have been given names by him and others, The "power relations of men in organised society" has been broken down, by Snow into three themes: human solitariness, attempts through various kinds of love to shut out that solitariness: and politics³⁴. Or man-alone, possessive love and man-in-society³⁵. Or causal psychology, sociology (and politics).³⁶ Snow's theories are based on the assumption that death (and therefore life) is not transcended. This given, his three theories omit very little.

Other eyes see other themes, and one must beware of taking

the intention for the fact. For example:

- "Power, and its manifestations, in different circumstances, is the theme of the whole series." 37
- "The single theme which exercises Snow's mind is ambition and the struggle for power among men." 38
- "Snow has set out to examine the moral conscience of England in the years following World War I." 39
- "The deepest theme is the poles between which men shift in their relations with one another." 40

Barring exclusion clauses, these assertions are all true.

They lack the economy and comprehensiveness of Snow's tripartite statement of intentions, however, choosing, as they do, impressive facets of Snow's total thought as summaries of the thought itself.

The impressive facets which will be discussed in the following chapters will contain something of power and ambition, moral conscience and shifting relations, and suggest that possessive love is only an emphasised feature of man-in-society, an element of personal politics, politics being defined as the conscious interaction of human beings, in limited conflict.

In his grading of the three themes, Snow relegated politics to third place. Perhaps, by naming the themes, one reifies them, and this leads to the impression that one may be placed aside, the others retained. Significantly, the novel in which Lewis Eliot decides that his political life is over is taken up with his son's political activities and the personal power struggle between father and son⁴¹.

Chapter Three

IMBALANCE

A vision of the individual

The tragedy of the individual is in the limitation of his scope for change. The individual is imprisoned in his temperament which governs his actions in a way he can neither completely control nor a priori understand¹. In his innate characteristics the individual is separated from his fellow men by a failure of understanding: in the social area of his activities his urge to realise his potential involves conflicts with his fellow men; the tendency of the situation is to use other men for comparison and competition². The selfish temperament, what Snow occasionally refers to as the "old Adam",³ the earthy Sinner, rejects the intrusion of others upon its own exercise of will. The individual also faces a death of utter annihilation of identity. God is a convenient outlet for belief for those who, by luck, are temperamentally equipped to believe. God's essential non-existence ultimately leaves the individual solitary, in the trap of his character⁴.

Snow's is not a passive view of the individual, however. There is, in human character, a limited room to manoeuvre. People can learn to control or live with their temperaments: they can partially escape them by "losing themselves" in shared ideas, in communication through love and friendship, in material constructive action towards a purpose⁵.

The life of the individual is fashioned by the forces in tension as a result of the inner struggle between maintaining and losing "self."

The first requirement made of the individual is that he must try to come to terms with, i.e. know, himself. The process of

living in contact and co-operation with other human beings, and more specifically, the process of decision-making, will challenge the individual's view of himself and require him to protect his identity⁶.

To know himself, the individual must approach the forces which influence his actions and decisions with the measure of reason⁷. Many of the forces are in tension with one another; they react to external stimuli producing drives which happen to the conscious individual, rather than proceed from him; they limit rational and controlled reactions to the challenges of the individual's life and accordingly limit his prospects of success in the social sphere. He can become self-defeating, pulled this way and that by inner imperatives: without some mediation by reason, the individual can even lose his humanity.⁸

Judgement

Snow is concerned with maintaining humanity. Eliot is an essentially moral character. Yet maintaining humanity is not easy.

"I have never believed that men are naturally good, or that all one has to do is give them a bit of freedom in order to obtain a perfect society."

9

Morality resolves itself in the actions of men toward others. Snow's world is based on matter, and visible action. All human beings are subject to sinful thoughts (in any sense of morality). This is part and parcel of their given nature. One cannot expect to control the Adamic needs emerging as desires, but one has control over the resulting action. Morality is thus responsibility for others, and for one's action towards others¹⁰.

Social mores accept this, and one function of social judgement is to assess responsibility for crimes and frauds. The murder

case in The Sleep of Reason is the prime example of a trial of people who had cut themselves off, both from their responsibility towards others, and from the functional knowledge of their own characters¹¹.

A second kind of judgement is that held by the individual upon himself¹². Given that Snow's view of human beings is not a complacent one, we shall to explore the nature of judgement in this section: social and self-judgement, and not only in terms of morality, although that forms a part.

In his natural state, in society, where he is required to interact with others, the individual may partially escape his loneliness - not so much through full and direct communication but through joining with others in action¹³. As Snow regards men as brothers, he sees this escape from the individual state as laudable. Each individual, however, is also a stranger in the eyes of others, and a natural reaction to the spectacle of other members of the species, all in some way dissimilar, is to compare himself with them.

Certain attributes make life more comfortable for some: one may have an outgoing nature, or an absence of self-doubt, while another is secretive and worry-ridden. These are facts of nature, based purely on luck. Comparison with others is a force for coming to know oneself, but the room for self-improvement is limited¹⁴.

In terms of action - the playing of the cards - the situation is somewhat different. There is more fluidity in deeds, and men may control their nature sufficiently by acts of will to function in society in such a way as to merit the approval of others. The comparison of the initial situations is only a preliminary to competition between self-seeking men. In social judgements - as in social effects - men are what they have done (or appear to have done).

Self-judgement and social judgement do not correspond to matters temperamental and to events, but naturally, there is a tendency in the self-judgement to emphasise the inner man, and a leaning in the social towards what the man has done. Self-judgement, however, extends to all the individual actions too.

Within the individual temperament not a great deal can be changed while in the social sphere, change on a material level can be effected. Snow would suggest that the individual has a responsibility towards his brother men which should be manifest in action. This satisfies the social sense which is potential in men, in tension with the selfish drives of the individual¹⁵.

The measure of morality in one's judgement of oneself is in one's approximation to ethical standards of behaviour. Falling short of one's standards entails a loss of respect for oneself. Men wish to be more virtuous than they are - and to be regarded as such - and in this "vanity" lies the root of actions of good will.

"Don't be frightened of the word vanity. We come from the earth and the origins of human excellence are often murkier than we expect." 16

This dynamic vanity - to which Snow opposes the static vanity of self-regard¹⁷, is desirous of change and forms a spring of moral action. He is most responsible in his actions towards others who knows something about himself. And is appalled. And has to forgive himself to get along.¹⁸

Snow's main interest, from the point of view of morality, is not the judgement, but the action which springs from it.

While the individual's character is judged by others, it is generally related more closely to a functional aspect. The question asked is: could this person have done this, could this person do this? The static state is in terms of recognition, or acclaim, and men enjoy this tribute to themselves. In social

acclaim they may satisfy their need for respect of their character.

This bolsters their estimations of themselves: as Jago

"thought with wonder and delight 'this man believes in me! this man is competent, down-to-earth - and he's ready to make me Master! If such a man believes in me, I can believe in myself!'" 19

Maintaining self-respect, in terms of self-judgement, is a continuing and ongoing process of life. The basis of judgement, however, is perception of the relevant criteria, and such criteria vary from the concrete and tangible to the personal view of codes and values. The process of self-judgement has the potential for taking into account much more than any general social opinion - any opinion of others, in fact - except one: a love-relationship, to be loved, implies that another human being has seen a great deal of one's character, and approves in a special way. A knowledge, in some men, that they will be loved, manifests itself as confidence, and is noted by Snow as an important matter²⁰.

The basis of the more general social judgement is a subject which recurs throughout Snow's work. A great deal of illusion is involved. The criteria of judgement are questioned: the mixture of temperamental and functional factors, the weight which in social terms ought to be given to each, and the ways in which they are confused, are demonstrated in Snow's novels as a significant element of life²¹.

The rewards of those judged satisfactorily are self-respect, love and acclaim. Acclaim is associated, by Snow, with roles, and with power. These somewhat diverse rewards emphasise the point that self-judgement and social judgement may not necessarily agree in all cases; different motives, different criteria, different goals. In fact, a common situation for Snow to present is that of the good deed which may damage the doer's future²². This clash

between the urge to do good, which springing from conscience can be a strong desire in that it proceeds from a need for self-respect, and the desire for selfish ends which will be the subject of social acclaim, turns the drives of the individual against themselves. The situation asks the individual who he is: replies by acting. Different characters resolve their conflicts in different ways, driven by the unique shape of their personalities.

Snow presents various mixtures of the basic individual needs. Some individuals sacrifice selfish desires for the sake of conscience: in other individual pride is too strong²³; others form workable mixes; they adhere to codes of decency, for the sake of self-respect, with the effect of strengthening the trust deposited in them by others, and incidentally by developing in a code a guide to the limits of action, protecting themselves from the constant questioning of their uncharted selves²⁴.

The ideal state in Snow's theories, is a compromise between extremes of action. Codes of behaviour are not selfless, but ego-centric, not self-destructive in material terms, but considerate. To answer totally to the demands of conscience is, in essence, a 'vanity', and therefore ultimately based on 'illusion'. To satisfy conscience, Snow suggests, is to be as inner-directed as to satisfy ambition, and the ideal mixture is to ^{be} measured in terms of social results²³. In practical terms: what amount of good may be done, at what price to future? Recognition of the degree to which conscience and self-seeking must be compromised, is in the individual, a sign of self-awareness²⁵.

Fixed and Fluid Temperament

At the outset, the individual is limited by his temperament, which is mediated throughout his life by chance, by the operation

of his own rational will, and by the interaction of others. As much of the individual's reaction to life is emotional and dependent upon his nature, chance may put the individual into a situation which calls extremely damaging reactions from his temperament²⁶.

This limited scope for action and change avoids emphasis on the question of inevitable predetermination of the individual fate, substituting probability or tendencies in its place. Snow's thought has no place for ultimate answers to the dilemma of whether men have free will: to be responsible, to maintain any direction or respect they must assume they have: for the maintenance of society, it must be assumed they have. This is, after all, a hypothesis which has been tested in practice²⁷.

In drawing codes of behaviour the individual has already, by limiting the extent of his reactions, limited his functional nature. Another form of limitation involves a further, more direct, manipulation of what is and what ought to be. Mental compartmentalisation, which utilises useful hypocrisy, is a front which Snow sees in those people who are capable of controlling and directing themselves usefully²⁸.

Compartmentalisation in any form involves narrowing the focus of concentration and a subsequent contraction of the scope of character which responds with action to situations. Compartmentalisation produces a public persona; it shields the individual from experiencing the full conflict within his character and fits him to function usefully by freeing his will of the wide range of doubts which would otherwise detract from its strength²⁹. The will is at its most effective where its aim is undiluted and simple. Compartmentalisation produces a useful simplification of character.

Within the framework of an inelastic temperament, this compartmentalisation does not contradict its grounding by assuming

complete malleability of the individual's responses. The assumption of a role is beneficial - even necessary - for the individual, shrouding his 'nakedness to life' in a recognised comment. But the danger of it, for the individual, is perhaps loss of communication with his inner self.

Compartmentalisation is demonstrated by Snow as a technique of excluding criteria from the basis of making decisions. At its simplest level it requires a decision in a public matter which is unobscured by considerations of self, or emotional reaction³⁰.

The status of the concept in Snow's work is not entirely clear. As in matters of morality, there is a confusion over what is normal and what only possible, the practice and the advocated use of potential. The concept involves conscious direction and is a clear instance of the action of the will upon the temperament. Perhaps the example of judicial behaviour strikes closest to the heart of compartmentalisation, but also of interest is the position of scientists of conscience in building the atomic bomb. Compartmentalisation is a deliberate breaking-down of the process of relating to interpretations of events and people³¹. This is a dangerous loose connection, specially where compartmentalisation shades into unconscious self-deceit.

Self-deceit, Snow suggests, is a natural self-protective mechanism which operates to make life bearable³². 'Useful hypocrisy' is apparent in figures such as Thomas Beville, the Minister, when he makes a speech at Barford "full of nursery images, in which with the utmost sincerity he paid tribute to everyone's good intentions, including those people whom he regarded as twisters and blackguards."³³ Useful hypocrisy is the ability to forget uncomfortable facts such as these, but the crucial factor is that it is a process of forgetting - not just of remaining silent.

It, too, strengthens the will and appeases the self-respect, sacrificing in clarity of perception for what it gains in conviction and protective qualities.

It is 'useful' hypocrisy from the point of view of the individual. One might argue that, as with conscious compartmentalising, it involves a refusal to perceive and relate to uncomfortable facts. An interesting example of this process is the situation in which a politician is pursuing action ostensibly for the sake of his belief as to what is good for the community, while the success of the action will result in an advantage for himself. Whether, in the two borderline cases in the 'Strangers and Brothers' sequence, this hypocrisy is regarded as admirable or not, is perhaps a question of personal taste, but the process as shown here is not of a disjunction from reality, but a manipulation of the weight of relevance. Arthur Brown hopes that he shall not be misunderstood:³⁴ Douglas Osbaldiston is more wordly-wise³⁵. They recognise the drive of the ego in social affairs, but they believe their own justifications.

Hypocrisy is not only useful for politicians. If its refusal to perceive is extended further, the balancing of relevance becomes less significant than recognition of the elements of the situation. Perception is not automatic. Emotion clouds it: loneliness diversifies it. Useful illusions replace what a consensus of people would designate as 'truth.' Although these illusions render individuals useless in social terms, they prop up the man himself and may imbue him with a resilience denied to the more perceptive. While those in this state of deceit are thus able to persist, their scope for taking decisions is limited, for part of their deceit involves ignoring their own nature.

George Passant, with his belief in the 'liberal illusion' of the innate goodness of man, is the prime example, but he is not alone³⁶.

Practical Decisions

The force of the human ego, will power, is the dynamic component of life, but it is limited by the resources and possibilities available. This is the primary compromise: desires and optimal actions are mediated by the material nature of reality. In social affairs other governing factors limit the exercise of the will to the extent of reducing its action to a choice of available options³⁷. Any option may be satisfactory: extending into the future the action, which flows from the decision is unknowable in its consequence. Mediated by chance and the actions of others, the consequences may be the opposite of what was intended.

For the sake of acting at all, Snow indicates, individuals ought to limit their reactions to the options. One invaluable hypocrisy or belief is the assumption of free-will. This assumption accrues responsibility to the individual and requires him to examine the actual choice involved. In many cases, options are hidden: there may seem to be no alternatives. Yet recognition of the availability of a decision is the first precondition.

The responsibility for taking a decision is that which is scrutinised in judgements. It follows, therefore, that social pressures may conflict with individual drives over the decision to be taken, and that some form of compromise is again necessary. Guides to action, useful in this situation, are codes of behaviour and notions of the effect of acting out each option; the

former limit the freedom of the individual facing the decision, the latter test the worth of deciding this way or that. Of course, one may only estimate the effects.

In the sphere of social decision-making, the social factors which govern the extent to which any decision may be effective, should be perceived and understood, so far as it is possible to do so, for to avoid being inner-directed, i.e. wholly based in individual self-respect or greed, the course of action chosen must rely not only on principles but also on practicalities for its determination³⁸. Actions based on high principles (the most frequent example in Snow's work) are essentially inner-directed - i.e. they regard the element of self-judgement as it relates to standards of conduct as of monopolistic importance; similarly, those decisions which ignore this area of self-judgement, and rely upon social acclaim and personal advancement as criteria, are equally unbalanced.

As the individual is divided within himself, pulled by conflicting forces, the formulation of a decision is by no means a simple process. In decisions which are influential upon the individual's future - and therefore of prime importance to him - the element of reason is not dominant, In The Malcontents Snow presents his most detailed description of the formation of a choice: Stephen is faced with deciding whether to speak as a character referee in the trial of a friend who is being prosecuted on false charges. If Stephen does this, he will probably do some damage to his career prospects. According to an expert consultant, the reference: "'...might save the defendant a few pounds off his fine'", and "'You'd have a black mark against you. I don't know what your plans are about jobs, but I guess that Cambridge wouldn't want to give you one.'"

Also it "'could fling your whole political game wide open...
all you seem to have a fancy for would get into disrepute.'"³⁹

Stephen

"would have said - and later did say - that he spent all those hours, from the evening before to this Thursday afternoon, making up his mind. When he told Hotchinson /the expert above/ that he had not 'quite decided', he wasn't pretending - he believed that to be the truth. And yet the decision had been made hours before...(there isn't a precise time for the first crystallisation of a decision)....

"Sometimes, but very rarely, in a state like Stephen's, a fluke happened from outside, and one could back out, then one felt judicious, for not having made the decision in a hurry: in everything but the act, one had. Usually...there was no chance of backing out and one moved, or was passively transported, to a second crystallisation. At this point - it could be very sharp - the decision, already made but shied away from and submerged, became conscious. Then one had it.

"Until the decision was conscious, then one felt free and also conflict-ridden, as Stephen had done, with intermissions, up to this Thursday afternoon. Even when it was conscious, there remained consequences, new choices where (perhaps one deceived oneself) one still felt free. One decision was forming itself clear in the open, in front of Stephen. When he couldn't resist it, there

were others which he hadn't let himself bring to mind: but they were waiting there." ⁴⁰

The sub-rational processes of decision-making, form a balance of the conflicting drives, and surface the decision into the conscious and rational processes. The conscious and rational create justifications for the outcome. It presents men with "names for their actions which are nothing like the real names," but maintain the appearance of rationality⁴¹.

In the above example, Stephen distinguishes between giving evidence for Neil - where the injustice of the situation is evident, and some benefit may result - and giving more limited evidence for Lance, where the benefit would be even slighter and the damage for himself greater⁴². To the sensible decision-maker, the estimate of effectiveness is an important factor, evidently, but the basis of the decision is very much the character of the individual. Neil, who is without much individual conscience, would only do the same for Stephen if "I thought two things. First, that I could have some effect. On the blasted trail. Second, that I was certain you were objectively useful. To the movement."⁴³ In this respect, Neil's single-mindedness is his strength in social matters: but perhaps that is Neil's luck - to have missed conscience in personal politics, and to be capable of reducing matters to their ideological significance.

This presents a peculiar situation. How much is the decision predetermined within any one individual? Perhaps two points are relevant here: the decisions need to be effective (in individual cases), to be carried out by conscious acts of will, and therefore even if the decision is predetermined, the

resultant action is less so. And, secondly, although with hindsight the decisions may appear predetermined, they are not entirely predictable to oneself or others: one may only gauge, on estimating the incentives and one's (imperfect) estimation of character, how they will be resolved.

Nevertheless, however imperfect, the estimation remains something by which reasonable judgements - not infallible, but better than random guesses - may be made. Snow feels it is important, therefore, to have some insight into the motives of men in general (rather than attending wholly to their rationalisations) and, in specific cases, to particular individuals. Especially important is the most specific individual of all - oneself; belief in the pronounced rationalisations in one's own case is an abstraction from the reality of one's motivations. Useful hypocrisy entails a capacity to make light of, or ignore, one's baser motives, but in order to prevent a lapse into fantasy and self-deceit, the moral man - who may achieve personal happiness - must come to terms with the darkness within himself⁴⁴.

An examination of decision-taking in Snow's theories leads to two distinctions relevant to social action, concerning the role of judgement and the character of action-orientated men, not discussed above.

In terms of judgement it is easy to distinguish between the social and the individual form and to note that, through the discretion of individuals, the social judgement may be based on illusions and appearance. Having noted that morality resides in action⁴⁵, and that the social judgement, in formal

areas, is based on the history and functions of the individual, and agreeing, for the sake of argument, with Snow's idea of decision-making, the concept of functional judgement receives additional emphasis.

Since it is defined more clearly by comparison, the idea of human judgement, and ideological judgement, may be laid alongside it, and references drawn from Snow's major work on the assessment of individuals in a formal situation - The Masters. Who is the better suited for the position? Jago or Crawford?

Ideological judgement examines the professed politics of the candidates (perhaps it is justifiable to extend this to disciplines of thought in this case also). Jago is a reactionary, a man of letters, a Conservative similar, according to one decision-maker, to the Nazis. Crawford is a liberal: "'He's got the right opinions'" (p.70) and a scientist.

Eliot's position in regard to ideological arguments of this type is to say: "'We're choosing from two human beings'" (p.219), "'...this is a job where human things come first '" (p.71) and of Jago: "'As a human being there's a great deal in him'", (p.69) while Crawford is "'conceited. He's shallow. He's a third-rate man.'" (p.70).

Raney Stanford⁴⁶ observed these two types of judgements as "personal politics" and "ideological politics" and gives the further example of confusion of types as the objection of a group of scientists to the presence of Eliot because he is an official, not a fellow-scientist, in The New Men⁴⁷, and he notes that in this novel "In a fashion very reminiscent of reality, international politics comes to play as important part in

these events as mathematical formulae."⁴⁸

In his commentary on The Masters, Stanford sees the continuing interplay between personal and ideological politics in terms of "the distinction between public false images and private true ones, and the harm that misjudging the distinction can do", which "is a major theme throughout Snow's novels."⁴⁹

Stanford wrote at a time when four of the 'Strangers and Brothers' sequence remained to be published. With the advantage of hindsight less perceptive critics, such as this writer, may indicate Snow's approval of the middle course, between personal judgement and the "seemingly rational, abstract political generalisations."⁵⁰

Yet the two forms of judgement - which, as Stanford's substitution of 'politics' for 'judgement' indicates - are expressions of theories of politics. As he observed, the growing complexity arising from the increasing interaction of institutions "seems to furnish more and more opportunities for the decision-making individual to go wrong, when he applies values drawn out of one context arbitrarily into another context where they do not apply"⁵¹. Prefiguring what is perhaps the increasing power of illusion and ideological politics in open politics situations.

The progression of The Masters indicates how effective each candidate would be as Master. Despite his "human qualities" Jago is not elected. Superficially, the proponents of ideological politics seem to win the day. Yet there is a middle path between extolling the human virtues or tidying appearances. Stanford chooses personal as opposed to ideological, choosing one as true, one as false. As one might expect, the true resolution of the theme is more in the nature of a compromise.

Lewis later reflects that his judgement of Jago "had been a bad judgement." He had become "more interested in people than in the job they had to do."⁵² "Sometimes my affections ran away with me. They had done so...when I had been voting for a Master of my college. They had made me forget function, or justice, or even the end to be served."⁵³

As Snow observes elsewhere: "What people feel doesn't matter very much. It's what they do we've got to think about."⁵⁴ While the entirety of a character is suitable for judgement in matters of friendship and love, it is a confusion of criteria to mix "human" and "functional." judgements.

Perhaps the nature of social action, which concerns a multitude of decisions, lends emphasis to this point. Man in his professional capacity is the relevant object of discrimination, not the entire creature but the compartmentalisation of him which forms the professional facet. The expert to whom Stephen of The Malcontents turns for advice, for example, is hostile, but Stephen is intent on "trying to cut through his own hostility and this other man's, occupied with one thought alone, how this man could compartmentalise his mind and apply himself to do his best about their tactics."⁵⁵

The basis of functional judgement is thus a measurement of how people behave, how trustworthy they are and how much they can limit the grounds of decisions. Hector Rose, the paradigm civil servant "judged men as functional creatures, and there he was, more often than I cared to remember, dead right."⁵⁶

Moreover, a functional judgement is tested, as it relates directly to estimates of action, whereas a human judgement may encompass the deepest insights into character. By judging men

as functional creatures Rose can bring to bear the whole of his experience and perception, without having to peer through feelings of affection.

The empirical nature of this kind of judgement is reminiscent of scientific means of discovery, in that hypotheses are proved or disproved by fact. It is more useful to the processes of social activity than personal judgement, although if one were to begin with the category of "functional judgement" some elements of motivational theory would need to be explored.⁵⁷

To summarise Snow's position, perhaps the words of a judge to a jury may be taken at face value: "'It's your decision. You will have to be guided by your experience of life, your knowledge of human nature, and I must say, by something we sometimes undervalue, by your common sense.'"⁵⁸

Men of Action

The distinguishing characteristic of action-oriented men, otherwise presented as "wordlings" and "men of action"⁵⁹, is an element of nature. The distinction divides the inner-directed (contemplatives) from the socially-oriented (actives). The latter feel, instinctively, that despite their interpretations of events, action may be effective (usually, in this context, for the social good). "Hope of the fibres" or "emotional optimism" is a propelling force for men who will become involved in politics.⁶⁰ Hope of advancement, hope of effective solutions, admits possibilities, which pessimism denies, and thus frees the will to act.

Sustained by this kind of hope, happier - and thus more likely to survive psychologically than those who lack hope - Snow's man of action views the results of his intended acts.

Action itself is simultaneously effective and a release for him⁶¹, an assumption of power while reflection is subjection to outside forces, and signifies powerlessness.

Contemplatives will correspondingly form different codes of behaviour, emphasise and intellectually manipulate their principles and deny the cause of action⁶². They may be characterised by their resignation to the facts before them, or the worst of possible futures. They are not forces for social welfare, and as such Snow is not much interested in them.

The "hope of the fibres" is a product of emotion. To hold to it one must sacrifice (as with other emotions) a part of one's 'clear sight.' Vain hopes are evident in Snow's men of action, men who are remarkably perceptive in other matters.⁶³

In this picture of individuals there are two perspectives. Much of what Snow attributes to the individual takes the form of description and explanation. The naturalistic approach - the individual whose character-conflicts are triggered by perception of external acts - and the prevalent loneliness and egotism of the individual indicate general theories of behaviour. The novel-vehicle of these theories is built up of examples. Within these general theories, further study may reveal distinct types of individual, with distinctive attributes, as the worldling and the contemplative have been briefly distinguished above. One can see indications that a composite civil servant could be produced, for example, and scientists, as opposed to non-scientists, are clearly distinguishable. For the purpose of this work, however, except insofar as they are 'leaders' or 'managers' the characters will remain as merely examples of different balances of internal drives.

Secondly, Snow has chosen to look at men of conscience, predominantly in events, and his thesis is that the wish to help one's fellow-men is normal and healthy, while the withdrawal of the non-interventionist is, in the end, self-destructive. It is in one's interests to act for the benefit of others. It is an opportunity to communicate in a purposeful fashion, as well as satisfying selfish drives and enhancing one's self-respect⁶⁴.

Snow also tends to look at the individual, not in a vacuum, but in groups and in action. Struggles within a character are set off by the events of ordinary life. Groups of individuals, and the processes within them, have a certain similarity whether they are at the centre of power or elsewhere. Snow has more elaborations to add to his theories of the individual - his man-alone theme - but for the purpose of this work sufficient groundwork has perhaps been laid for the theories of politics.

Chapter Four

POLITICS

Within groups individuals find not only comfort and refuge from individual fate¹, but also settings for their competitive drives and desires for power. Groups, or enclaves, are categories large enough to encompass nations and social classes, or small enough to admit only a communion of three or four. This competitiveness is the process from which personal politics are elaborated. Beginning outside any particular structure with personal imperialism and attention to self-interest, personal politics flourishes in the enlarged potential for interaction of groups.

Snow draws a distinction between two types of political situations, between open and closed politics.

"Closed politics. The politics of small groups, where person acted upon person. You saw it in any place where people were in action, committees of sports clubs, cabinets, colleges, the White House, boards of companies, dramatic societies." 2

Closed politics is "any kind of politics in which there is no appeal to a larger assembly."³ Open politics involves social forces, the pressure of man's opinions, an electorate, perhaps an element of representative democracy.

"For instance, some of the struggles in an English Cabinet partake of the nature of closed politics: but this is not pure closed politics, since the Prime Minister or any member can, if pressed, move from

personal to mass opinion."

4

Snow further distinguishes three types of closed politics: committee politics, the archetype of which "is that kind of committee where each member speaks with his individual voice, depends upon his personality alone for his influence, and in the long run, votes with an equal vote."⁵ Hierarchical politics, which recognises the struggle of individuals beneath the theory of a "chain-of-command"⁶ situation; and "court politics" - "attempts to exert power through a man who possesses a concentration of power."⁷ The conceptual tools are too fine, almost, for the purposes of examining personal and theoretical politics; while the field of closed politics is ideal. In the interaction of man upon man, closed politics, as Snow reveals them, are characterised by the struggle of individuals locked in rivalry or opposition.

Snow believes that "the permutations of men living in closed societies were quite limited, and there wasn't all that much to discover"⁸. In each issue, in each situation, the personal manoeuvres take on new forms, but the processes, at whatever focus of power the group is gathered, are the same, stemming from human nature.

Within the uncertain environment of shifting appearances, Snow demonstrates personal politics and the extent to which political action can be successful.

Explanations of Political Processes

Faced with the task of understanding the nature of political action in a personal context, perhaps prior to attempting action oneself, one might look at the formalistic rules of one's group (if any) - the legalistic procedures through which

action is channelled.

For example, a college needs a new master. A majority of Fellows of the college must endorse the successful candidate in the college chapel, on a predetermined date. Each Fellow is entitled to one vote.

It becomes evident, from the poverty of procedure, that these rules are by no means the only generally accepted restrictions of the scope and mode of action. As a theory of how the Master will be elected they are rather simple⁹. To understand more comprehensively one must hypothesise further. Hypothesis is necessary, arising from the partial ignorance of all things which is the individual condition. The formal explanation, however, is proved in fact: a new Master is required, and he is elected by the specified majority of Fellows in the college chapel. Moreover, further, formal rules are recognised, governing the eventuality of a tied contest, which flesh out the previously skeletal theory. Between the predetermination of the date, however, and the prescribed announcement of the votes, the college hums to the grouping of men, the clash of conflicting values, procedures, theories of conduct, changes of heart, rationalisations which are quite outside the formal theoretical politics.

Further examination of the situation reveals that the election is regarded as important by a sufficient number of Fellows to invest the action of voting with power. There is attraction, for at least one of the candidates, in being elected, to the Mastership, although this will not be advantageous in monetary terms¹⁰. His election depends upon the voters. The formal rules are confirmed: the power lies with the electorate.

Yet the formal rules, while presenting this, in abstract

terms, omit the significance of the fact that as it is in the hands of the electorate to give the Mastership, so the candidates themselves, and their hopes and desires, are in the power of the enfranchised.

The sensitive candidate recognises and resents his powerlessness beside the voters. Even while he enjoys the support and companionship of a group of Fellows, he is at the same time obscurely conscious of his position as an individual in relation to them. Correspondingly, the voters enjoy their power over the candidate¹¹. This emotional relationship with the formal diagnosis of the position is accentuated in small groups, where a single vote counts for much more than in a broader context.

The processes involved in using that power are basically those of decision (making up one's own mind) and persuasion (helping others to come to a similar conclusion). Decision-making focusses upon the individual who brings to the event some preconceptions as to its meaning, and, balancing the conflicts of his nature, acts upon his interpretation. The situation is such that his decision will have some effect upon his future, that to express his desires for that future, he must restrict his act of will in the first instance to a choice of limited alternatives¹², but that the element of self-protection is less evident than in purely individual decisions. If he wishes to make his choice effective in this case, it is not enough to cast his vote, he must persuade others, too, to vote as he did.¹³

Decisions, Snow shows, are not made rationally and therefore the rational basis for them is not compelling, so that persuasion based on reason will be ineffective. Persuasion plays upon elements of a man's nature which are closer to motivation than

reason: upon self-respect, one's picture of oneself; upon weaknesses and affections¹⁴. Events mean different things to individuals, and the process of persuasion involves a manipulation of the relevant interpretations of physical events.

Once a man concedes an interpretation of events as correct, or valid, or as 'truth', his action may subsequently be modified. If the concession arises from his nature, the modification, all things being equal, is very probable. Even hypocrites, Snow says, do not fly in the face of their beliefs: their secret is to deny the validity of certain interpretations of their actions¹⁵.

As E.W. Mandel observes, in an article preoccupied with illusion in Snow's novels, the closed politician engages in "rewarding the proposition offering the compromise, blurring the fine distinction."¹⁶

The manipulation of what is significant and what is not distorts the basis of decision. Is it important that one of the candidates is a second-rate scientist, or that the wife of the other speaks as though he were Master? If human beings were as rational as they would like to be, then this would not be significant. Self-respect prevents the Fellows admitting that they would freely exercise their will for no greater reason than this, but the temptation annoys them.

Is it important that one of the candidates is a liberal scientist, and the other a Conservative-Humanist? The problem for the poor decision-maker is that, unlike the announcement of his vote - after which the thing is done - the decision is not made in a moment, but in a process which is, in fact, continuous. The decision is the result of a balance of drives

and values within the individual, which may alter; the decision may need propping up at a later stage with rationalisation, the ignoring of defects and the praise of merits of the candidate. Even before the persuasion process, events and meanings have thus been distilled and subtly changed.

Appearance being that which is visible, is thus significant where it forms the basis of an attitude or a decision. If an individual appears to be sensible, slow, level-headed, then his opinions will be regarded with the presupposition that they have the same attributes - even if they do not¹⁷. If it appears that one has been involved in Communist activity then one's words and history will be regarded with an eye to that assumption¹⁸. Appearance provides the first hypotheses for charting the unknown. Sometimes - for life is an ongoing process, and one must take some things for granted, the first hypothesis sets the mould for the rest

Theories of Politics: Formal and Ideological

Political appearance, in a large view of politics, is categorised by the spectrum shades between blue and red, from the Conservative aristocrat to the Communist. Convenient labels are available, so that rather than assess the totality of a man's views and placing him at a point on the spectrum, one may refer to him simply as a Conservative, a Socialist, a Communist.

Snow observes: "It is an outrage to human dignity to think of someone first as a label and then as a man."¹⁹ Class and race structures, and perhaps one might add, political structures, degrade the human condition²⁰.

Up to this point, we may agree with an application of Standord's diagnosis of the personal judgement as the one composed mainly of 'truth', and the public or ideological judgement - the label, or ticket - as composed mainly of 'illusion.'²¹

In a novel published in 1968, Snow presents a committee situation in which a student called before the committee reacts in accordance with his labelling interpretation:

"On the surface, it might have sounded like a trade union boss negotiating with an employer. On one side stood the student body, Pateman was grating away...on the other, 'the authorities.' 'The authorities had no right to impose their own laws unilaterally on the students, said Patemen.'²²

This gets Pateman, who faces a disciplinary charge, nowhere. It alienates the committee. This part of the chapter is an excellent example of massive simplification of the situation. The 'authorities' - the committee itself - is not homogeneous, but split by argument. The important factors in the decision of what to do with Pateman are the various characters on the committee which are obliterated by his theoretical stance. The best he could have done would have been to regard the event as a piecemeal series of individual actions, to "domesticate"²³ it to the common sequence of event following event, rather than treat it as a trigger for emotional (labelled) political manoeuvres. Of course, Pateman is not entirely mistaken in regarding the committee as a representative of the authorities, or in his view of himself as a member of the student body. For the issue involved, however, this analysis is too general to be of any practical use. In this issue it is the personality of the chairman which is crucial. Pateman only succeeds in antagonising him.

To take the viewpoint of the committee, is it important that Pateman is an ideological enemy? or in breach of a disciplinary, or Christian-ethic rule? Is it necessary for abstract 'Justice' to punish Pateman and his fellows with the same severity? Or, on theoretical grounds, should only one be punished?

Eliot, by which we may imply Snow too, makes a mingling of personal and functional assessments. The ideology only obscures the issues. Stanford's opinion on the relative roles of ideology and personality would apply with no difficulty here. Yet the example serves to illustrate a point which Stanford notes but does not emphasise: acting upon his theoretical grasp of what is happening in committee, Pateman creates an atmosphere of emotion. Similarly, the chairman of the committee denies the relevance of personality and influence in judging the four students²⁴.

Stanford does make the distinction between 'truth' and 'illusion'. The functional implications of the interplay between the two are most relevant to Snow's theories of politics, and for truth and illusion personal or contextual criteria may be substituted as less assertive categories, more suited to practical matters.

For while Snow feels that structure and divisions degrade the human condition "Yet we are still living, let us hope temporarily, in such structures."²⁵ The ideological theories, particularly the more obvious forms, are easy to grasp: the evidence is apparent. Complexity is bleached from the living context. The theory is a guide to those who lack insight into political or human processes. And they may be expected to act upon their theories.

The concept of ideological politics in this discussion has deliberately been left vague. A definition would indicate a reliance upon fixed principles, a refusal to see individuals as other than representatives - in the strictest political circumstance, as representatives of a party.

Snow observes:

"The seat was safe, the Kensington end would go on returning Roger, if he turned into a gorilla...Among the knockabout poor, the lumpen-proletariat, she Quaife's wife might pick up a vote or two; but the rest, with similar English impartiality and phlegm, would go on voting for another gorilla, provided he was Roger's opponent."

26

Perhaps the truth of the matter is that Roger is a gorilla, but the collective illusion prevails, and he is returned to Parliament. The theoretical judgement, theoretical politics thus act upon personal politics, and in a special way. Theoretical politics may not lead to an understanding of the personal manoeuvres, but a grasp of theory may be useful in carrying out programmes of action, especially in the larger context of open politics.

To reiterate, this type of theoretical politics is built on evident facts - within which inevitable judgements are associated. In an attempt to gain a consensus from a large number of people, the extremes of personal insight and supposition may tend to average out, and agreement relies on a simple and unarguable base of the labels in question. The blindness, the rigidity of labelling may be deplored, but the operation and the pressure of label-based judgement, especially in open politics, is a fact of political life²⁷.

The danger of this theorising is that it provides an explanation of events without properly understanding them, and that action which is endorsed by the explanation may, in human terms, be inappropriate to the physical circumstances²⁸.

Conspiracy

The example of the college election illustrates a dichotomy between the formal (in this sense, traditional) rules for the election of a Master, and the informal activity involved - the personal politics; the formal rules are not overthrown by personal politics, but used and augmented. Another example from Snow's work is the situation of the Minister and the civil servant. The Minister dislikes making decisions, while the civil servant has a point of view, in this case, as to the right decision to take. In theory, the civil servant advises and informs, while the decision is the Minister's. In practice, the civil servant is successful in having his view adopted. The catchphrase 'the corridors of power' indicates the significance for Snow of the informal, or pre-formal activities²⁹.

There is nothing ethically dubious about informality to begin with: friendships are natural phenomena and besides, informal information-gathering is prudent activity, if one wishes to succeed in any group project. To continue our example, Brown, the college manager, does not want to put up a candidate who had no chance of winning³⁰. This would be wasted effort. He attempts to discover the opinions of some choice Fellows. Upon finding what he judges by experience to be a sufficient number to form the basis of a caucus³¹, he proceeds to attempt to have the candidate elected. The process has an air of

confidentiality about it. People form alliances for the sake of their mutual purpose. Alliances are the products of action, and thus, in these cases, stronger than friendships. Alliances, in group form especially, allow the individual to submerge himself healthily into the group for a project and escape the dismal prospect of his own limitations³².

The alliances thus formed are also more effective than individual voices: in closed politics the alliance is a small army of persuaders, or a majority decision in a committee.

The formal stage of agreement generates publicity; the informal stages remain, to a greater or lesser extent, for the purpose of making plans and discussing hopes, secret. A common assumption is that in these secret stages, meetings, confidential notes and whispers, people are conspiring. Brown's caucus, eschewing publicity, are cabalistic. Lewis Eliot, in his readiness to accept the compromise solution, is part of the greater conspiracy 'the Establishment behind the Establishment.'³³

Snow repudiates the conspiracy theory of politics. It is a theory upon which some men act, he believes, but not with general success. To adhere to it is to be "cynical and unwordly" - a least favourite combination of attributes³⁴, furthest away from Snow's ideal character, the "worldling" with some sense of ethical purpose. He presents it as a theory with no basis in fact: generated by the absence of fact, an unworkable hypothesis:

First, this work will attempt to show below, the actions of individuals and groups are limited by other forces.

Secondly, men of action - and men in general, Snow suggests - have certain characteristics in common. To suggest an individual is conspiring is to suggest that he has divided himself from

a certain portion of society - in fact from everyone who may be affected by the results, who is not a co-conspirator. This places a strain on the individual who, in a normal or healthy state, should maintain a balance between sociality and individuality³⁵. 'Men of Action' - men who are orientated towards social action - do not relish this proposition as a way of politics.

Snow also maintains that the business of social affairs would not work on the basis of general conspiracy, or explicitness. The large-scale conspiratorial theory is rejected largely on the basis of experience.

"Of course politics can be corrupt. But not corrupt in that fashion. No one makes that kind of bargain. It's not that we're specially admirable. But we've got to make things work, and they couldn't work like that, and they don't...It's only people who don't know how the world ticks who think it ticks like that."

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Politics are not corrupt in this fashion, because it is - not too secretive - but too blatant. Those who assume a conspiracy hypothesis make the world seem worse than it is, they are too cynical, if they believe that men will admit their purely selfish interest in advancement and use this as a basis for negotiation³⁷.

Men in general, and certainly men of ambition, have too much desire to respect themselves and to maintain the respect of others, to conspire openly, to reveal their flaws.

The conspiracy theory, therefore, is as much a simplification

of the situation of closed politics as an account of the legalistic procedure. Snow represents this theory as the product of those who have no understanding of the motives of others. Such people, attempting to conform with what they perceive to be the normal procedure, try to practice it without success.

One must beware, Snow observes, of mistaking the significance of the moves of personal politics. In the pre-formal processes man is a social creature, who enjoys flattery, comfort, displays of consideration. It is the nature of informal political action to use sensory, sociable comforts as lubrication.

"It was absurd to suppose that Rose could be bought by dinner and a ticket to the opera. It was absurd to suppose that Rose could be bought by any money under Heaven: it would be like trying to slip Robespierre a five-pound note."

38

"It was equally absurd to suppose that...Lord Luffin could be bought by a dinner even by a lavish dinner in his honour. Lord Luffin was financially capable of paying for his own dinners, even lavish ones."

39

One has to see the relevance of the provision of such comforts in perspective, Snow suggest.

For conspiracy, Snow substitutes tacit agreements, personal manoeuvre and partially shared interpretations of events. For example, the Establishment means broadly: "an agreement, entirely unspoken, and very largely unconscious, to preserve substantially the present web of power-relations."⁴⁰ Perhaps the best term to use for these characters is 'fellow-travellers'. Unlike conspiracy, which Snow represents as an action involving

corruption or extra-legal activities, fellow-travellers, as a group, are inclined to remain within the accepted structures, and to have individualistic aims in addition to an explicit general goal.

The secrecy, which can mean tactful silence, or discretion, makes life more comfortable, Snow suggests. It avoids overt opposition and ill-feeling, the constant clashing of wills⁴¹. Within the sub-group - or, in our case, within Brown's caucus - the process of persuasion continues until the election day, for the process of decision is ongoing. From experience, Snow observes that it is often not possible to win over enemies, but relatively easy to lose friends⁴². Nothing becomes cut and dried: the conflict, the individuals themselves are in a state of flux, as they struggle for power with one another⁴³.

Leaders

The ones who win are called leaders. Leaders generally require certain natural characteristics, not least of which is emotional strength. A large part of this emotional strength in Snow's thought rests upon the interpretive business of politics. The leader figure, in a personal situation, presents his theory of relevance, in which he utterly and whole-heartedly agrees, and the fact of his total belief influences and commands those around him. On occasion, Snow indicates that an 'inner chill', an air of uninfluencibility marks a leader from his fellows⁴⁴.

Leaders, however, are not radically different from others. There are elements of identification and communication between them, for leadership in closed politics is generally a matter of influence, and persuasion. To persuade effectively, they need to be outward looking. Snow also notes that a common

characteristic is an element of paranoia - what he calls "nakedness to life" i.e. absence of social props and pretences - which, paradoxically, makes others feel protective. The nakedness to life lets flow the emotional energy, too, of the individual, and makes him more forceful⁴⁵.

Another type of leader may usefully be distinguished: neither of these types are exclusive of the other, they differ mainly in the selection process involved in becoming a leader. For the first ideal (i.e. discrete) type, George Passant serves as a prime example. Through the force of his personality he gathers a groups around him of which - in so far as they divide into leaders and led - he is the leader⁴⁵. For the second ideal type it is perhaps fitting to select Roger Quaife, the Minister, who has joined his 'group' after its creation, and whose position as leader has required more overt competition towards an established goal.

Roger Quaife is not without emotion, not without outward-looking faculties. He is not a charismatic leader, in the sense that it is his actions, his history, not just his nature, which have led to his selection; yet without an ambitious drive, similar in essence to Passant's, he will go no further, nor has he reached his present position on merit alone⁴⁶. 'Weight', suggests Snow, is necessary to carry a man to the top, whatever his profession. Will-power, determination, emotional force are elements of 'weight'.

The significant difference between the types is the degree to which they have had to compete with others for their position. The Passant-type, the purely inter-personal leader, is open to the world, incapable of realising the need for, or the means of, disguise. His position as a natural leader may not even require

him to be in close contact with experiential reality.

The Quaife-type leader has compromised himself, learned to contain his pride, learned something about himself through comparison, learned through competition that he is not superior to others, sacrificed his dignity in order to scramble after his ambitions. In doing so he has had to come to terms with his limitations, and this refines him into a self-controlled creature, more suitable for power than the Passant-type, whose depth of character separates him from more ordinary mortals⁴⁷.

Leaders pursue power. They pursue acclaim from others, and, in a political-social structure, the sense of power which comes from making decisions for others. Such positions have a dual aspect, in that they are at the same time foci of acclaim and trust, and provide the power (or apparent power) to choose.

The notion of ritual in Snow's work seems to be an extension of this love for acclaim and power, where, perhaps, a man can satisfy his need for "the moment-by-moment sensation of power" and "see and feel his power."⁴⁸

In groups of the powerful a climate is generated, and the emanation of the 'charm of politics' attracts the ambitious: "It was one of their rewards. What others were there?"⁴⁹

"Margaret was baiting me through the door, hilarious at the stately ritual downstairs. Did all men in power behave like this? Why? Because otherwise, I replied, they wouldn't reach power, enjoy it, or keep it."⁵⁰

The undignified scramble of men 'making their way in the world' may result in "in-fighting, knifing, faction forming and gang-warfare."⁵¹

Competition is both fierce and unethical. Snow seems to

give no clear line to follow: in his lectures and speeches, he holds up ideal examples of good will, while at the same time, he accepts the pushing and shoving, even in its more violent aspects, of men competing for recognition. If there is a consistent line on this it must begin with the acceptance of the rough and tumble as proceeding out of human nature, and an endorsement of ideals as also proceeding from a potential of that nature, neither excluding the possibility of the other. The struggle for position is, in a sense, necessary, if one is to obtain power to perform social action.

Where the line is drawn between acceptable and non-acceptable careerism, seems to remain a matter of preference. Lewis protests to his brother Martin when that latter, by careful manoeuvring, puts himself in a potential position of power at the expense of another;⁵² later Lewis witnesses Roger Quaife most deviously setting into motion processes which will make him a Minister at the expense of his superior, without protest⁵³. This is dangerous ground, for Martin and Lewis share a multi-levelled relationship. The grounds upon which Lewis protests are perhaps too personal to be generally applicable.

While nothing clear emerges from this point, a significant factor receives an extra emphasis: Quaife has more than a desire for personal power motivating his action. He has a cause, a social task. This, in fact, is why Eliot is prepared to accept Quaife's manoeuvres. They are fellow-travellers.

Leaders often have two sets of objectives: from the personal political basis of competition, ambition moves them to wish to be

"first to receive recognition. Also they have social objectives to reach, to see the specific

detail of their will carried out for the benefit - or at least not to the detriment - of their group.

"But she [Quaife's wife] knew this game of high politics better than I did, perhaps better than Roger did himself. She knew it as a game, in which one won or lost; it did not count whether Roger had to abandon a policy. What did count, was whether his chances of a high office were going up or down."

54

Martin and Quaife both attempt to balance their consciences with their actions, principles with advancement. Quaife finds this easier because the fact of his social objectives allows him to maintain his self-respect and gives him purpose⁵⁵. How much of this is illusion? might seem the natural question to apply at this point. But perhaps, in a world of illusion and mystery, where the commonest action of interpretation, the only reasonable answers to suggest concern the extent to which the leader believes in what is effectively his justification, and, perhaps, whether the objective thus set is attainable.

Who has the Power?

The personal objective is very much the scope of personal politics. Not so in the case of issues and policies. The eleven books of the 'Strangers and Brothers' sequence follow Lewis from the classrooms of a provincial technical college to an office off the corridors of power to a (pre-formal) meeting with the Prime Minister and the offer of high office. Lewis is a man with a cause, progressing towards the centre of power, the charmed circle of politics at its highest.

Yet, reviewing The Corridors of Power, Edward Shils observed: "Here at the very centre of Sir Charles' world there is an empty space."⁵⁶

He continued:

"Power turns out to be not something massive and powerful, but rather a motley cluster of unreflected preferences, vain aspirations, trivial combinations, wooden adherence to archaic patterns of conduct, minor bits of self-protection and self-advancement." 57

Within the novel, Snow does ask: "Who had the power?"⁵⁸

Shils has picked out the manoeuvres of personal politics, and on that level the power of the leaders is evident. The Prime Minister, for example, is a powerful man, because he allocates jobs, ranks and therefore status. His confidant, using his influence - in an example of 'court politics' - is powerful insofar as he has, presumably, some voice in the same matter. As for actually performing social objectives, however, the extent of the power - and where it does lie - is a more taxing question.

"If you want to get anywhere in politics you've got to be good at pushing open doors,"⁵⁹ reflects Quaife. The pushing ability of the leader is not in question, the choice of door is what matters in terms of results.

"...the more you penetrated that world, the more you wondered who had the power, or whether anyone had, or whether we weren't giving to offices a free will that those who held them could never conceivably possess." 60

"it had made me Tolstoyan, or at least sceptical

of the effect any man could have, not just a junior Minister, but anyone who really seemed to possess the power, by contrast to the tidal flow in which he lived!" 61

The situation, in these cases, is representative democracy, a mixture of closed and open politics. Snow's idea is that social forces operate to limit the freedom of action of the people who "really seem to possess the power" to such an extent that decisions almost seem to be predetermined⁶².

Social forces are equated with climates of opinion. Opinion is based on perception-interpretation of events, with the subsequent formation of attitudes. Ironically, general opinion may seize upon what, to an experienced observer, would appear to be of little relevance and thus irrationally prevent action which would otherwise be feasible. For the effective leader this entails a consideration of not only what is, in physical terms, practicable, but what is perceived as practical also. If attaining an objective is perceived as practical (and, by implication, desirable) then the door is open, the tide is not contrary⁶³.

Climates of opinion, of course, change. Normative behaviour, moral standards, political beliefs all change too, interacting with events. The effective leader must test the climate carefully to discover its nature and the boundaries of power it will allow him. The climate of opinion projects, among theories of political processes, a theoretical range of possible action, also.

Leaders must, and do, believe in their individual free will in this situation, as an experientially valid working hypothesis. Leaders are needed to notice when the doors are

unlocked, and to push them. It is possible for an individual to positively lead in his group, but only with the acquiescence of a vague general opinion⁶⁴.

This interplay of theoretical and personal politics within an action-based system, explains in part the pre-formal manoeuvres. Leaders, or more generally, men of action, of any order, managers of men, must constantly test both the physical reality and the popular myths framing it. As head of organisations they must try to assess the opinion of their subordinates. Within committees, the extreme ideas of individuals slide towards the compromise, the meeting point of the theories of committee members.

Such attention to the opinions of others weakens the will of the leader, by causing him to doubt his own hopes and will to fulfil them. In pursuing action, the leader may have to cut himself off physically from the full current of reactions in order to exert his personality to the full⁶⁵.

Despite symptoms of climates of opinion, the forces themselves are vague and unarticulated to begin with. They are activated by external triggers and become more restrictive as they crystallise around an event, or series of events. The external event is a trigger. The resulting climate is partially pre-formed by the nature of the triggers which set it in motion. Climates of opinion may thus be generated, influenced and crystallised by the political actors, whose scope for freedom they constrain, within the limits of their potential. Mass, or group opinion, is not the creation of, for example, an effective political actor, but by articulating this or that aspect he may cultivate it and influence its growth.

Typical generators of climates of opinion are rumour-mongers - whose wide-spread theories are often represented as

sheer illusion by Snow; also newspapers and demagogues⁶⁶.

As Lewis passes through the corridors he becomes increasingly aware of the power wielded by the generators of climate.

Brodzhinski is the most dangerous man in the world, a natural demagogue triggering the paranoia and xenophobia of mass opinion. Charles, Lewis's son, perceives where the power lies, and decides to become a journalist. Outside the structure of government, Lewis finds himself free once more to raise his voice in public protest⁶⁷.

For guidance in social action, Snow indicates the experienced observer⁶⁸. His theories of human nature and social activity only provide a framework within which specific experience - fuelled of course by the reflective intelligence - works. Beneath the illusory interpretations of events, the deceptions of appearance, there is an underlying, practical significance, with which men of experience are in contact. As with other shared perceptions, this facilitates communication. Unlike perceptions concerning issues the observation of the practical significance, being concerned primarily with personal politics, studies the processes of social activity, and gives a guide to results and action⁶⁹.

As it emerges in more public or articulate forms of group, personal politics appears as a cypher of formal activity. Experience reveals the unwritten rules and develops intuition of the meaning of the cypher.

Group feeling, or climates, however, are not founded on this experienced opinion. Besides lacking the detachment of an observer, and thus clouding their perception with emotion, group feelings are aggregates of individual opinions, cumbersome and inarticulate. The lonely individual does not find

complete consensus with others of his kind, but they agree on certain things. The irreducible things, upon which the individual theories are based, are those which are apparent, even verifiable.

For example, in the case of a scientist of voluble left-wing persuasion: another scientist may notice the intellectual ability of the man, deplore his manners and, personally, accept the political beliefs; non-scientists, unable to appreciate or verify for themselves the academic quality of the man fuel their opinions on what is apparent to them. People with no acquaintance of a man will not take his personal manners into account. A process of abstraction ensues and continues until the human being is no more than a label: Communist, Jew, Liberal, Conservative, Artist, Landlord, Philistine. The dehumanisation process fails to grasp the physical factors. Empty of all but a caricature of personality the individual is filled again with the presuppositions his label arouses⁷⁰.

Obviously, this is not a beneficial process. The personal judgement, functional judgement and judgement-by-label are all, at one time or another, fit to be considered, but the choice and blend of criteria should not be arbitrary, and perhaps should be more conscious in the mind of the individual. To generalise on the basis of one type - especially the labelling type - may lead to unwanted actions and a departure from the practically important factors of the situation.

Judgement by label evidently and logically becomes more significant in open politics and in areas, in general, where large numbers of people are involved. The neglect or simplification of character is more probable where personal character

cannot be perceived. Although the type of judgement leads to illusion, it is an illusion which may generate a climate of opinion, a governing factor of the limits of possible action⁷¹.

Similarly, personal judgement is more evident in closed or small-number political situations. As the process of assessing other human beings' characters, it is obviously the type of judgement which defines friends and enemies and types of temperament. Snow's suggestion in this area is perhaps that attributed to Brown of The Masters, who "loved his friends and knew they were only men...One took them as they were."⁷² Of personal judgement, Snow's theory is that as external events trigger reactions from one's nature so there will be understandable predispositions in one's judgement of one's fellows, dependent on the particular shape of one's own nature and the ideals of character to which this gives rise⁷³.

As the processes of politics are a) predominantly ego-based within b) a concern for the broad social outlook and therefore c) with an emphasis toward action, the personal judgement is not entirely appropriate. Experienced professional politicians do not base their actions upon the personal judgment, with its mingling of affection, its regard for another individual in favour of the social benefit. Professional politicians are more concerned with the immediate relevance of character which is the nature of its expression in action⁷⁴. Alliances are unions formed for or in action: friendships are more private relationships, based on other factors not strictly relevant to politics, or the social, but corresponding to the individual condition.

As was mentioned previously, the functional judgements may be tested. Functional judgements of what a man has done are

the province of experts, forming professional opinion. The basis of professional, or official, opinion is thus not personal dislike or affection, but recognisable functional criteria. An element of objectivity - or, at least, the availability of a consensus opinion - is present in functional judgement as a result, rendering it a suitable tool for effective and sensible political action.

Label-based judgements, on the other hand, ignore the detail, the insight into either character or specific rules, and generate massive illusions in open politics which separate informed, official opinion from the climate of thought⁷⁵. In large-scale politics, this tendency to labelling may be unavoidable. In practical terms, one may only hope to minimise the amount of illusion generated by increasing the amount of information available. Of course, Snow's novels may be seen as works of public edification concerning the processes of politics; in other works he is attempting to break down the labels of 'scientist' and 'humanist', and his articles on education reinforce this concern⁷⁶.

Chapter Five

PERSONAL POLITICS

Personal politics describes the microcosmic action of human beings pursuing their ends through opposition, alliance and persuasion. It is the activity upon which the theories and illusions are projected. The shifting processes of personal politics remain crucially important to the people involved in them, and insofar as the scope for action is only limited, not specifically dictated, by the pressure of outside theory. A great deal of Snow's work is in the form of description after description of movements in the field of personal politics. Perhaps, as Snow maintains, the process can be properly demonstrated and discussed in no satisfactory form other than the novel, with a scope for detail too particular for any general theory. Snow is surely right about the value of the novel form, that by producing theories through a process of induction, of abstracting similarities and comparisons of experiential events, even the spurious experience of fiction, a weight is given to them, an extra dimension of credibility.

Generalisations, however, can be made. Shedding no doubt valuable detail, they escape the institutions, the formal rule structure, the particular climate which engendered them, and rest ultimately upon human nature. The natural politician or manager of men is aware of the general processes, and, unsurprisingly, the generalisations are another type of theoretical politics which only the experienced may learn to apply with success. Perhaps, if one were asked to distinguish, in one sentence, between these notions of political action and other theories, the

simple reply would be that these are the notions which natural politicians apply and have found to work in practice¹.

Limited Successes

In the preceding chapter reference was made to the metaphor of the door, the oiled hinge, and the role of the leader as pushing open doors. As discussed above, the word "leader" is used here in a limited sense, primarily for the purpose of explaining the effect of climate upon personal politics. Returning to the activity of organising men, the idea of a "leader" as a man who, at the forefront of the project (or directing from a high place) may usefully be replaced by the more embracing term of "manager" or, in the ideal, the "natural politician."

All three types seek satisfaction by means of personal politics, but insofar as the manager combines ambition with knowledge of political processes, he is perhaps the best unit in which to approach the world of personal politics².

For the sake of useful personal action, managers work within the climate of opinion in its fluid, amorphous form. When the climate has crystallised the scope for action is severely limited by the group, or mass recognition of the situation in simplified ideological forms, easy to grasp but cumbersome to manoeuvre. As the climate emerges, it is strengthened in the individual by a consciousness of its extent. In conflict-situations, where the opposing groups are gradually formed, the situation results in a further separation of the groups until they become quite inflexible and intractable³.

While climates of opinion are generated by reaction to events or articulated theories, the speed at which they crystallise

seems to be affected by the emotional weight of the reaction. Snow's managers work by persuasion, attempting to quietly influence the position, letting opinion crystallise slowly without creating an unpredictable emotional atmosphere⁴.

The main mode of political activity is persuasion. This is evident at the committee table, and between equals; if one accepts Snow's concept of individual politics, persuasion may be expected to be equally important in the organisational framework, even when the framework is rigid. Much of the manager's work is practising the art of persuasion, and here, within Snow's world, there appears to be a starting point: we see man being instructed upon what he needs to see success in an issue:⁵

"Obstinacy," "patience," "powers of persuasion," and "considerable command of tactics," are the attributes mentioned. The first three categories only amplify the nature of persuasion: if social activity is seen in the clashing of wills, then successful politics means winning these clashes by some form of persuasion. If the clash of wills is the product of a desire to compare favourably with others, to enhance one's own power, then persuasion takes on a further meaning: it must allow, and allow for, an impression of choice.

Choice, even the illusion of choice, allows an impression of free exercise of will, the maintenance of self-respect, and opportunity to win the respect of others; choosing, deciding, is also the measure of personal power. The persuader must therefore be patient, guiding the formation of opinion, letting resolves form, if he wishes to carry out a project over any length of time⁶. If the capacity for persuasion is absent, if a man is not willing to be convinced, then all the dexterity of a manager will

be ~~wasted~~⁷. As in the case of climates of opinion, however, there is a time before a decision has crystallised when persuasion may be effective.

From Snow's opinion of human nature it follows that effective persuasion will play upon the self-respect of the object of persuasion, and define the decision in terms which will lead that individual to the conclusion which in terms of action will be similar to one's own.

Necessary for persuasion is strength of belief. If persuasion is a struggle of egos, belief endows the individual with emotional force, and possibly it is useful to note that in an argument our belief is simultaneously a reflection upon the validity of one's point of view, and one's instinctive motive for continuing to argue. As an instinctive motive, Snow would endorse its value, as he regards instincts as closer to operation of will than reason⁸.

Such conditions may create tension from their contradictory demands; he who believes the most forcefully in his point of view is he who is blind to the viewpoints of others. The more intense his belief, the greater his instinctive desire to exercise his will, and the believer is fused monolithically in his purpose. This, of course, detracts from his ability to adapt to changing circumstances, and perhaps to react with others.

In The Affair, Snow presents a character with such a belief, who, unable to adapt to the changing parameters of the boundaries of action, and incapable of accepting the limited power of managerial persuasion, was both more effective in the issue in question than experienced managers, and at a disproportionately greater potential damage to his career and his reputation:

"At least as often as not, in a group like the college, the shrewd moves cancelled each other out and the only way to win was through the inadmissible and the inexcusable."⁹

The character, Skeffington, has no hope in the future of playing a part in politics in the group. His inadmissible and inexcusable action has been to threaten the group (with publicity). Snow's idea of a manager is of one who works to exercise his power within the group, not over it, who is compromising the desire to act with the desire to persist¹⁰. His belief is tempered with other considerations. He excludes them as much as he can, by compartmentalising his mind, but their diversity - and perhaps their resultant uncertainty - saps his belief. While the course of argument shifts, the persuaders both seek to define grounds for their own advantage, from which they can seize the "moral initiative" - belief in the justice of their case¹¹. Here the instinctive believer is less tractable, stronger, while the less committed move more nimbly to less purpose.

Genuine "responsible" persuasion, divorced from emotional issues, wants only to influence the forming of a decision. At some point after what Snow has called the "first crystallisation" of the resolve¹², the effective persuader seeks an indication, or expression of commitment, strengthening his position by requiring a public articulation, and further crystallisation of the decision¹³.

The general pattern of political processes in the causes undertaken in Snow's examples, begins with the pre-formal gathering of opinion, designed to inform the manager of the potential, both physical and permissable, of a situation while arousing as little reaction from the climate as possible. The pre-formalities lead to decisions and alliances and a recognition of opposition. The

nature of the pre-formal manoeuvres gradually stimulates conflict and the generation of shared beliefs, and the climate crystallises. The opposing groups in the conflict are left to work out an agreement between themselves, in which there is often a certain amount of compromise, which will partially satisfy both of them and resolve their antagonisms. Formal occasions may provide structured opportunities for consultation, conflict, or persuasion. Although formally they exist for the formation of group resolutions, the nature of these resolutions is strongly influenced by the desires of certain members within the group, so it is appropriate to think in terms of managers within a formally democratic group¹⁴, although not of leaders.

It should go without saying that the effective managers seek out the power lines in groups of this sort. The chief source of influence over a group is the man whom the manager needs to persuade most of all¹⁵. Failing that - which requires some consent from the man of influence himself - he can, on his own account, be aware of the moves made against him. In committee, or in a group decision-making situation, the lines of power emerge. Prior to this formal group situation, the outsider is limited to gathering what information he can through the imperfect source of gossip and rumour.

Skeffington, who represents in Snow's mythology, the non-managerial political actor of principle, would not succeed at effective persuasion. One could linger over the four qualities that he was told he would need and point out his lack of patience, his lack of tactical knowledge, but it seems more likely that the root of the matter is his ignorance of the limits of "responsible action."¹⁶ Skeffington is not presented as a man to measure up to, but rather to measure up against. Yet Skeffington is always

capable of using outside power against the society of which he is a part, and is thus potentially effective in action. His action is irresponsible in that it gives no thought to wider-ranging practical and social results.

Skeffington, however, has a lesson for the manager. Skeffington has both goal and justification, and is capable of responding positively to situations which confuse less committed managers. There is an importance in a goal which calls out determination¹⁷ and an increased chance of achievement - from a human being. While the goal is important, however, the firm decision crucial, the general mode of politics is movement by increment and goals are achieved gradually, if at all. Perhaps this is the essence of the position of a meliorist. What is the position, beside Skeffington, of a manager? In the long-term it is the manager who maintains the society, gains some collective trust and with that some power, and place, in the society. The manager has controlled his self-destructive desires, and has struck a balance between satisfaction for himself and benefit to the community.

What if the Skeffington type has, in fact, comradeship and trust; a group which supports and sustains him, an ideology which gives him strength? Perhaps this, the charismatic leader of social forces, is what Snow designates the "new type of leader" in later books of the sequence. Perhaps it is a function of a changing climate and social structure in the 1950s and early 1960s¹⁸.

The manager compromises. To an extent this must be taken in terms of original nature: some people are naturally good at this, some useless and some will improve with practice¹⁹. Snow seems to believe that this is perhaps the most we can expect. Failure to compromise results in an imbalance dangerous to the

individual and - more importantly for Snow - potentially to the society as well. Failure to realise the different nature of decisions taken for society (functional judgements) and decisions taken for oneself (personal and functional) leads to a confusion of aims and criteria. Failure, in fact, to compartmentalise, draws the social decisions into the personal irrational sea of temperament²⁰.

Before passing on to techniques of personal power, it is interesting to note the element of inclusion in persuasion. Persuasion brings people together, the domination aspect of pure will entropies them into individuals. Cohesion of groups may rely upon the glue of affection, but also on the makeshift adhesive of compromise and persuasion.

Techniques

Two noteworthy techniques, connected with the art of persuasion, stand out in Snow's work. One of them, which is more of a tactic than a technique, concerns the direction from which the manager persuades; one of them is a definite technique, a manipulation of character.

To continue with the theme of persuasion, the source of the persuasive argument is regarded by men as perhaps more important than the argument itself. An argument advanced by a technical expert carries more weight than the same opinion advanced by a layman. Men of influence are those whose opinions are respected, and naturally the effective manager tries to utilise this status²¹.

Their role, so far as he is concerned, is to exert pressure in his favour and to lend weight to his cause. By diversifying the sources of persuasion, the manager attempts to create a climate

of opinion focussing upon the object of his persuasion.

This climate of opinion (Snow does not use any technical or common term to distinguish between the general climate of opinion, from which the climate within any group originates, and the climate within a particular meeting), this climate of opinion is within the manager's grasp. His effectiveness depends upon a climate at this level of personal confrontation, and his wisest action is to organise the choice and preponderance of favourable components.

The second technique entails selective control of one's temperament. Snow shows a number of subtle men pursuing personal political action, labile characters, and generally concludes that subtler men are under the illusion that they delude others, and the final misapprehension is their own²². Manipulation of character is not so rapid and extreme in the Snowian manager.

The technique is one which utilizes a natural reaction or drive for a rational purpose. The drives of the natural politician may be more balanced than those of other men, but they are charged with a dynamism which can be released - in the case of anger or spontaneity - freeing part of strong elemental will²³. Control is as much a part of the technique as release, while release is interactive; the other skilful part of the technique is to know when to control and when to release - when to appear spontaneous, when to reserve oneself²⁴.

Power relations

It is intended only to look briefly at some instances of 'rules of thumb' regarding the relation and intent of individuals

engaged in personal politics. Part of the subject has already been noted under the section 'Leaders' above. Natural inadequacies may make the individual desirous of increasing his self-respect through the respect of others; he becomes determined and ambitious, intent on functional competition²⁵. While never digging deeply into individual character, Snow does provide working theories, sharp enough to deal with his topic, which are of limited use in exploring the deeper recesses of psychology.

Another element of personal power is discussed in relation to persuasion, above: the advantage of arguing from belief - and hence the tactic of redefining the argument to take advantage of different ground.

The structure of a relationship denotes the primary distribution of personal power is based on a series of needs²⁶. A needs something which it is in B's power to give, then A is in B's power. This basic situation may be altered by subsequent or concurrent factors: it may be that B has little choice, realistically, in giving A what he needs, for other reasons. Nevertheless, this is not just an abstract or logical idea, but a relationship which is emotionally recognised. The giver enjoys his power, and satisfies himself by giving, and by having his position of power recognised. While there are limitations on his secondary power, i.e. over the needing individual, this is the power relationship in which men find most satisfaction.

A striking example of Snow's view in this area relates to space exploration. After suggesting rationalisations, such as military and scientific gains, Snow noted: "There is something truer than rationalisation." Because it is technologically possible to send up rockets, people do it, and the "adventurous athletic aspect of space activities" is not the motivating reason.²⁷

Of course, at the other end of the personal relationship, men dislike the thought of their own powerlessness, and transfer this feeling of animosity to the source of the satisfaction of their needs. Is gratitude a true emotion? Probably not, in Snow's world: quite probably it is an expected ritual in certain circumstances, which contradicts and usefully covers over the deeply-felt envy and self-dislike²⁸. Paradoxically, gratitude is the price which those with power expect from those who have not.

The externalisation of objects of blame (i.e. attribution of responsibility) is a self-protection device, which does not apply only in power relations. By externalising blame an emotional release, beneficial to the individual, is obtained²⁹. This is more clearly shown away from the tangle of a pure power relationship, in the cases of transmission of bad news. To strip these instances to the skeletal pattern, the situation is of one individual modifying the views, status and position of a receiver of information, in the receiver's eyes. The action is significant to the receiver: on an individual-perception basis, the messenger has modified the receiver's position by presenting his message as much as if he had the responsibility for physically bringing about this transformation. The change may be, in the first place, blamed upon the messenger. Whether he is associated with, or taken as representative of, the information is not practically relevant. This blaming action is neither fair nor rational, but is common, self-protective, sensible in a limited area.

By externalising objects of praise, too, the individual strengthens his self-respect. Admiring, or finding affection for, those who are similar to himself, the individual effectively

loves himself, prizes his own qualities. Even externalisation of relationships takes place: the individual talks about himself while his words refer to another in a position he interprets as similar to his own³⁰.

These traits are described and indicated by Snow. He appreciates the benefit of them (for the individual) in places, although generally they are value-free. Power itself is an exception. Although men are attracted to it, power is dangerous, blinding the individual to the importance of his social self, severing meaningful connections with others - while, of course, of immediate danger to other individuals³¹. Power also distracts attention from more social considerations; in a world view is it the key to the "weird inevitability" surrounding the question of nuclear armaments? As an unspoken assumption, a factor to which reference is never made, the power-desire may permeate all aspects of social life. Perhaps one of Snow's most significant achievements is the relation of this concept to different settings and manifestations of common life in a didactic, dynamic form.

Group behaviour

Another area of personal politics readily identifiable in Snow's work is his description of group situations. It has been noted above that group decisions are influenced, according to Snow, by identifiable individual actors, no matter what their form - democratic or otherwise. Where a hierarchical form exists, and one member is placed in a superior position of authority, then the power lines may tend to be drawn in his direction, but in committee politics, the situation is a genuine decision-making body and not merely an advisory form, force of personality becomes

crucially important.

The means by which one may exert influence in a group have been discussed in part above, where no attempt was made to distinguish between personal politics in relation to a collection of individuals as against a coherent group. The form of activity is the same: one persuades rather than threatens, one influences rather than attempts to command. But groups are different in kind to the sum of their parts:

"Groups of men, even small groups, act strangely differently from individuals. They have less humour and simpler humour, are more easy to frighten, more difficult to charm, distrust the mysterious more, and enjoy firm, flat, competent expositions which man by himself would find inexcusably dull." ³²

Group identity is emotionally reinforced by the emergence of climate and tension: "a tension that springs from man to man like an electric charge."³³ Through intensification of the emotional atmosphere in the small group characteristic of closed politics, the scope for rational decisions would seem to be limited. Perhaps here, as noted above, the pre-formal activities during which individuals may come to some decision, or reach conclusions regarding the realistic scope of action, realise their benefits by resolving the parameters of contention outside the influence of an irrational group setting³⁴.

In this sense, the pre-formal is necessary but not sufficient. Of top civil servants in committee, Snow writes: "They were too capable to have brought up this scheme in the committee room, unless they had found support outside."³⁵ But once inside a

committee, decisions remain to be taken and the manager must utilise his persuasive power or influence:

"Perhaps for influence in the affairs of solid men, one had to be able to send...the 'old familiar phrases reverberating around.' Neither /of two individually gifted and exceptional men/ could do that without laughing. To be an influence in any society, in fact, one can be a little different, but only a little; a little above one's neighbours, but not too much,...neither /of these two men/ was humble enough to learn the language of mere ordinary men." ³⁶

Here, as elsewhere, one must beware the distinction between being "an influence in any society", with its implication of continuation, and being effective in an issue. The caveat for the manager specifically in relation to groups, is to observe their sluggishness, their tendency to the mediocre - and this is surely a function of the limited nature of the ground they hold common, which may be passed over without alerting controversy - and to avoid either talking over their heads (in which case one will be ignored) or precipitating a premature, rigid formation of opposing divisions, thus limiting the scope for manoeuvre and unifying compromise.

The significance of personal politics

Snow saw that the British system of parliamentary democracy "has almost every possible disadvantage, except that all other systems are slightly worse."³⁷ The one "really drastic disadvantage.../is/...that it is almost impossible to get anything done in it,"with the result that there are "far more secret

decisions made than when our society was less articulate."³⁸

Decisions formulated in closed politics situations thus, at some later stage, become endorsed publicly, without decision-making power residing in the public appearance. One important aspect of personal politics is its position in the affairs of national politics. A second aspect is that personal politics within formal decision-making structures is a function of individual interaction and therefore takes place in all such situations. Managers and leaders are found in the smallest organisations as well as the largest, and the shifts, the manoeuvres, the ambitions are, in their essence, common to all.

In the first aspect, in national politics, Snow's attitude may seem ambivalent:

"The real hope was open politics. It must be." 39

Perhaps because, in closed politics: "we are much nearer than in ordinary government to personal power and personal choice,"⁴⁰ and the secrecy which distinguishes closed politics leads to disconnections with the world outside the closure and the appearance of conspiracy, and the danger of alienating the "responsible public" from the political community, a dichotomy which Snow felt would be injurious to the community:

"unless responsible persons feel at one with decision-makers, we are going to have a less homogeneous and healthy country than we all wish to see." 41

On the one hand, open politics allows adequate representation for affected parties, opportunities to equal out extremes of character and personal quirks of temperament, but on the other hand, at least in the area of scientific decisions, for reasons

of national security, some decisions must be taken in secret, and of these Snow noted optimistically:

"First, you can abolish some, though probably not all, secret choices in this area as soon as you abolish nation states." 42

Similarly, to conduct decision-making in the open air, as it were, should on the grounds of Snow's theories, generate a climate of opinion based, not upon the collected wisdom of responsible men of goodwill and insight (which is the positive gain from open politics, together with the inclusion of such people as part of political processes) but upon a degenerated label-based perception of issues. In certain circumstances, (the occasion was a debate upon values) it is wise not to prod the climate by open debate in front of a country or a world, which is engaged in judgement. 43

Open or closed politics? Contradictions are found in Snow's work. Remembering the technique of balancing opposing tensions, we may try to apply this to the situation. If we take the normal criterion of long-term effectiveness as given, perhaps the ideal guide to decision hinges on the question of whether, in a particular case, the gains of open politics (the inclusion of the opinion and commitment of responsible people) outweigh the risks (breach of security, delay, fomentation of an emotional atmosphere). To an extent the institution of Royal Commissions, Departmental Committees, and Committees of Inquiry may be seen as an attempt to maximise the benefits, although Snow does not refer to them in forming his theories. As devices for consultation and accumulation of information, they lack any immediate power, and the limits of their inquiry are set, without open

debate, in advance.⁴⁴

Closed politics, too, has merits. It permits a quicker response, generally, to a situation, and more immediately effective action - which are evidently two good reasons (possibly causes) for its development within representative democracy.

In its second aspect, its universality, the importance of personal politics is simply that it is the normal practice. To understand social action, one must come to grips with personal politics:

"I mean my description of politics to be taken as neutral statements. So far as I have been able to observe any thing, this is how the world ticks...It seems to me important that men of good will should make an effort to understand how the world ticks, it is the only way to make it tick better." 45

Chapter Six

HOPES AND REFLECTIONS

Through his work Snow has been making an attempt to influence both the climate of opinion in regard to the causes of international co-operation, education, governmental reorganisation and peoples' regard of the processes of politics. In this chapter it is intended to examine what Snow has provided and how effectively this has been presented in terms of an education in politics.

Hopes

"First, any social hope that is going to be any use against the darkness ahead will have to be based on a knowledge of the worst." ('The State of Siege')

Snow has allied himself with the men of action. He sees men as flawed creatures not naturally ruled by reason, nor necessarily motivated to do good, even to themselves; of limited perception, whose gatherings are marked by the clash of wills and interferences of personal politics, personal imperialism and sacrifices of individuality. Men's communal decisions are spiced with a mixture of the evils of closed political processes, where the force of the irrational personality is strong, and open politics, where only gross simplifications are considered relevant. With this intellectual pessimism comes the man of action's optimism, which can see the possibility of a Utopian future.

Snow's main causes in his lectures and periodical articles have been with aid for the underdeveloped nations, the management of national resources and the introduction of scientists to government. His first cause is within the context of becoming self-conscious of the species mankind. In the ideal case he

would want a literal coming-together of Soviet and Western states, to organise material aid for the underdeveloped countries, apparently with the behaviourally sound idea in mind that by subordinating their energies to a common goal which none of them can achieve alone, relationships between states will improve¹. The motivation, or reason, for this action he has described as a desire for self-respect and enlightened self-interest. The alternative is for the industrialised countries to become a privileged enclave surrounded by the poor; perhaps this is artistic licence, perhaps Snow is calling to mind an ultimate tragedy in order to induce favour for the ultimate action of co-operation between those who were formerly enemies. The ultimate tragedy can be averted, by states working alone, and although the results may fall short of Snow's optimistic target they stand the chance of avoiding the worst².

Part of Snow's hope has come from the prospect of the entrance into Government of the scientific statesman. It is his thesis that human perceptions are influenced by the cultural atmosphere of their profession, and that the scientist is professionally orientated towards both an objective viewpoint, and the concept of change in physical and social senses; the scientist is predisposed towards both action and the future, and his discipline recognises mankind as one in its common properties. The scientific discipline, therefore, has a clear potential for moral action, which is action for human beings, while being, simultaneously, a communicable social pursuit³.

There is a light glossing over in Snow's early work here on distinction between potential and actual. Granted that the tendency of the scientist is nominally to favour the social there

is no necessary motivation towards moral action. Science and technology have transformed the material basis of life, but individual products of this transformation may be immoral, or harmful, or useless. The claim of scientists to moral neutrality, dedication to knowledge or career, does not necessarily void their right to advise on technical matters important to governments and societies, but it is an indication that their influence in policy-making may conceivably be less than Snow believes. Partly, perhaps, because of the mass climate of the times: here Snow's concern is with an educational introduction to scientific thought, to the status of scientific truths. General ignorance of this status is the cause of the failure of understanding between scientists and non-scientists⁴.

Snow's ideas on education tend to regard intelligence as a resource to be developed, through scientific education and through the specialised training of the elite from an early age⁵. In addition to the strong national bias, it is natural, in view of Snow's biography, that he should take this point of view. His utopian vision is achieved on a foundation of the social and material, the subject-matter of science and social science - his third culture⁶. While his fictitious characters chase worldly success, there is also something more - getting the power is the first step, the second is using it.

"Earning a living is a means to an end and not an end in itself...The end is to make a decent society; the end is to make us live better as individuals and in our society. It is to give worth and value to our individual and social lives...and I do not believe they can be disjointed

-that we go through these difficult and sometimes frustrating enterprises. By this any course of action or any kind of political or administrative steps must ultimately be judged..."⁷

The minimum is to ease material and physical discomfort.

While the individual and the social cannot be disjointed, the enrichment of the individual life comes through subordinating its cause to that of the social. The goal of this humanist religion is to act for others in a way not harmful to oneself. And it seems that the individual life is given only undeniable worth and value in a subjective sense in terms of actions well performed, and that only through compartmentalising thoughts and feelings by means of the roles he plays does the individual cope with inner problems and decisions relating to his environment. The perceptive man may learn more about himself through competition and action than by pure introspection and more usefully too, since the measure of his nature is relevant primarily in its relation to others, from whom all satisfactions eventually flow.

Snow argues that only by restricting the focus of their concentration - by selectively forgetting, i.e. assuming defined roles - individuals control their temperament. In the first place this must lead to an admission of the inner duality of the irrational and rationality, and the ideal place of reason as arbiter of desires. In the second place, the individual assumes public roles and through role-playing restricts the criteria for decision and action to manageable proportions. Roles also provide satisfaction by structuring the individual life, making a niche into which the inner self may be rested⁸.

Snow both accepts and recommends compartmentalisation.

Perhaps the attraction of roles is that they contain the promise of stability similar to tradition and habit, which are half-way houses between reason and unreason. The successful, in Snow's world, are those with control over their multiplicity of personae: the mentally ill are so by predisposition; the "subtle" men are driven by a fluid conflict of motives, causing them to shift identity and opinion with a frequency and rapidity which is ultimately self-destructive; the self-defeating are those who do not know, can barely control, and are constantly deceiving, themselves.

Self-deceit is obviously no rare occurrence, and by compartmentalising themselves, Snow's successful men may evidence a kind of schizoid behaviour. There are obvious functional advantages: one sets aside one's judge's cap to become a candidate - one acknowledges, like Pooh-Bah, the different grounds on which decisions must be taken. Perhaps the advantages for the individual of the public persona are offset to an extent by the constraints and roles he is, through it, called upon to play. This compartmentalisation can, more seriously however, cut off one's actions from reflections upon morality.

Snow accepts the danger of this - and its usefulness⁹.

Self-deceit will always play a part, and men may have to persevere in situations of moral ambiguity. Whether they are "hoping for the best", however, or merely living with their eyes on the ground is another matter¹⁰. Managers need a complex moral code, and Snow has demonstrated this point, but his arguments seem to rely upon an underlying notion of decency, a concession to conscience, built into the fibre of individuals. Managers may be without a moral code at all; and it is these managers who seem to appear at the 'next impulse' in politics. While we may accept

Snow's picture of the 'second rate man' as civil servant or politician of the 1960s, it is useful to note that, even within his fictitious world, men are not all taken care of by Security, are not all disbarred by the criterion of illegal political action.

All, in fact, that Snow offers to solve the schizoid perceptual problems, and the new power politics, is respectively an injunction to reflect from time to time upon morality, and to meet the power-politician with an equal will¹¹.

A similar ambiguity exists in his attitudes towards closed and open politics. In Government the tendency towards closed politics is for the sake of increasing the amount of room to manoeuvre, and the amount of power accrued. To understand politics, in Snow's view, the precondition to intelligent political action, it is not enough to be aware only of political ideologies nor is it enough to know the interaction of the personalities involved, for the actual process of politics lies in neither personal nor theoretical but in such a melange of both that only in their different natures are they identified.

It is arguable that, although Snow may have wanted to reach a conclusion that open politics are preferable to closed, his attitude is basically more complex and too pragmatic to do so. The dangers of open politics may outweigh their benefits, so that in a particular case the effect of layman's labelling may be more deleterious to sensible political action than the advantage of having informed opinion. Open politics does not necessarily mean politics open to the entire electorate, however. In the sense that political decisions should involve more opinions rather than less - especially expert opinion - his inclination towards open politics is more consistent. Also, insofar as he expect consultation and discussion to create solidarity between governors

and governed, he is drawn towards pleading the open politics case¹².

On the other hand, it is evident that closed politics may not only be quick and more effective, especially in crises and in issues of administration, or necessary in cases of technology or defence, but that only in certain closed political situations, especially in pre-formal discussion, a slightly greater element of rationality may be brought to bear on the matter. To say that certain examples of closed politics will cease - in the scientific and military areas - when nation-states are abolished is looking a long way ahead, perhaps too far for relevance¹³.

Perhaps this dichotomy is explicable only in terms of viewpoint. Those who have the power will have to trade off their preference for qualified secrecy with their desire to maintain contact sufficient for adequate opinion and respect to be expressed. Those who have a cause should approach and educate the larger climate of opinion. Although Snow does not make this clear, perhaps the education of the climate of opinion is only a necessary strategy in issues which lie on the boundaries of what it will accept, and within the boundaries newly-defined new forms of personal politics will flourish and act.

Snow is undoubtedly in favour of the manipulation of the climate, he recognises the power of propaganda¹⁴, and his attitude seems to be on the side of society against the individual. Either he relies on instinctive decency, or more checks and balances in the democratic tradition, or he is prepared to condone the totalitarian state for the sake of the good which may come out of it¹⁵.

In order to educate his public in the processes of politics

Snow attacks the "great man," and the "conspiratorial" images of politics. The "great man" is too close to rationality, even omniscience, to figure in the mixture of chance, limited alternatives and persuasion typifying political activity¹⁶. The "conspiratorial" groups argument is tenuous to the point that one suspects it is the result of regarding conspiracy as an "impermissible term"¹⁷, and defining strictly to restrict the debate to terms of reference of Snow's choosing.

The tacit agreement which Eliot enters in Corridors of Power, the pre-formal activities of discussion and preparation before formal decision-making, the "largely unspoken" agreement by the establishment, are significantly domesticated, are not given a labelling term. As Snow seems to take it, conspiracy refers to an illegal agreement which is both explicit and self-interested, and in breach of formal rules. The cruder pictures which ideologists, in their wilder moments, paint of conspiracies are obviously behaviourally excluded, yet in outline and effect, the ideologist succeeds in presenting a rough interpretation of politics. In a sense, yes, there are conspiracies; only they are unspoken, or only partially made clear. There is pure self-seekingness, only it goes on without words.

Two points may clear this ground a little: one concerns the activities seen as conspiratorial and one the term itself. First, if a conspiracy involves illegality, then the devolution into private groups of men engaged in political activity is not conspiratorial - otherwise one is led into the fallacy that completely open discussion is the only alternative to conspiracy. This alternative has so many functional disadvantages that it is unlikely ever to become popular. The reasonable course is to

discuss and inquire, and formulate agreements prior to the formal occasions.

Secondly, it is arguably the case that the interpretation of a groups as "in agreement" or "in conspiracy" depends upon emotional emphasis. One agrees to do something, one conspires against someone. Snow seems to be associating the rise of conspiracy theories with paranoia, the state in which one loses one's sense of fact, or forgets one's experience, or fails to see events in perspective. He implies that mores governing the mode of political action do distinguish between conscious plot and tacit agreement. When he uses the concept 'conspiracy' he presents it as an inaccurate product of ignorance which believes that by such means political life is maintained¹⁸.

It is necessary for Snow to refute conspiratorial politics, because otherwise his own ideas could be, without great carelessness, taken as such. The sophisticated moral code of his manager fits events into none of the categories by which simpler, purer or more evil people judge their actions. It is necessary at once for him to demonstrate the potential for good and wickedness in politics unhindered by doctrinal and disapproved conceptual frameworks.

The difficulties of associating Snow's utopian vision with a realistic goal in the light of his analysis of present politics are considerable. As Stephen Toulmin observed "Snow's sense of the realities of power seems to me to have failed him."¹⁹ The ideas make more sense seen as the product of emotional optimism, and as a goal which may inspire progress a little way towards its achievement.

Points in Snow's theories concerning the merits of closed

and open politics, and compartmentalisation - concerning, in fact, secrecy and the basis of decisions, approach crucial areas of politics without coming to clear resolutions.

Snow has not claimed to provide any easy answers, although Le Carre's caricature of a "philosophy of bewilderment"²⁰ seems extreme. Snow has defined the grounds, and given some examples, of political activity. In addition to the mechanics of personal politics, and the interplay of theoretical and expected activity with personal politics, he has provided a moral framework to which it is inherently within human capacity and interest to aspire. He accepts, and in the manner of acceptance promotes, compromise both in man's relation to his fellowmen and in his relation to his sense of morality. His emphasis in political and individual activity upon decisions and persuasion underlines the care with which men should approach decision-making, the frequency of the challenges to human aims, definitions of the environmental situation, and individual identity. He accepts, and confirms, the benefits of the ego, the screen of self-concern through which the suffering of the world is muted, and includes the vanity which leads to ambition among the virtues of character. He provides a behavioural criterion for normal and healthy human beings.

He has put forward demonstrations of his view that the individual must manage, organise, attempt to control his life, and in the course of so demonstrating, he has drawn together strands from various disciplines, including those from the management science movement of the 1950s, behavioural science or social psychology, individual psychology and politics. Management scientists are close to Snow in that they, too, are preoccupied with how men work together in institutions²², but they generally

spare themselves the task of erecting moral frameworks or detailed theories of the individual and his need for the role and the institution.

Didacticism

"The relevant question is whether the means he has chosen are suited to what he has to say and whether he says it well with these means." 23

There was patently a diactic intent on C.P. Snow's part in writing his novels. Through fiction he has presented a way in which the individual may regard and act in social processes, to the mutual advantage of himself and others, in a form wherein the pill of advice and warning is sugared with entertainment and an opportunity to become involved in a vicarious manner in politics.

Dwight Waldo writes:

"If a student of organisations were looking, then, not just for artistic, if fictitious 'examples', but for sources of insight, even for hypotheses, perhaps he could with profit turn to the novelist." 24

He continues to express a set of views not dissimilar to Snow's own: on the necessity of distinguishing between the individual's "biologically given nature" and the results "of the specific cultural impact" - the "problem of the nature of human nature, of what is given and its possible and desirable plasticity":²⁵ on the approach of the meliorist, "that, on balance, the contemporary human situation (at least in the West), for all its problems and dangers, is preferable to any previous situation", or that it is impossible to turn back the clock to a simpler age, while supposing that human beings "still have some significant control of their destinies."²⁶

This is close to a rationale for Snow's type of writing, which, though broader in scope than Waldo's idea of an "organisation novel" subscribes to the view that "novelists could give tremendously valuable aid in helping us find our way through the incredibly thick and organisational jungle"²⁷, and also through other modern complexities of individual and social existence. Using this form, Snow has considerably extended the circle of his audience beyond that which would receive or peruse more academic or theoretical works. Part of the price of this broadened readership is his neglect by serious, academic political theorists. One relevant query which arises at this point is to the extent to which Snow's social purpose has been compromised by his evident artistic ambition.

The commentators, for example, why do they all tend to see something different in Snow's work? What is the reaction upon a reader who, without previous experience of Snow, reads one novel of the series? Would he not exclaim with confusion as paranoid suspicions are proved correct, and the predictions of "sensible men" palpably proved wrong? Would he not necessarily overlook the factor of the narrator's development, errors and shifts?

In extrapolating what seem to be the general theories underlying the novels it has been necessary to rely upon several sources for the simple reason that what is treated with ambiguity in one work may be made clear in another,²⁸ what is approved in passing in one novel may be analysed in another, the fragmented strain may in another place reveal itself more clearly as a theme; the almost-unspoken social hope of the novels is only clarified in the lectures and articles. Use of the general theories as a framework leads to a greater awareness and understanding of the source

material itself.

For Snow, one could realistically voice the reply that the provision of pre-novel structure would not be appreciated by the general public. On the other hand it is arguable that Snow is artistically obscure in all but the simplest points he makes, and this as a result of his desire to present his theoretical ideas in a form which demonstrates them in action and retains contact with individual experiences, so that characters are used, not caricatures. In New Lives for Old we have an example of a work which is written in a simpler style, less intent on an accurate simulation, where the actors are obvious mouthpieces and the ideas clearly and didactically articulated.

While interesting to the political and behavioural student New Lives for Old is not good fiction. It reached no wide audience, and was therefore an unsuitable form through which to take the meliorist's viewpoint into the literary camp. On the other hand, Snow's beliefs are nowhere so clearly articulated in any one place²⁹ - indeed, completely opposite views may be aired on the basis of a passing acquaintance with Snow's other work. The lesson to be drawn from this is that the novels will have no far-reaching effects on the casual. For the serious reader, who is likely in future to read the series as a whole in its three-volume form, part of this misunderstanding will not occur.

Perhaps one could argue that the novels are enough, that they demonstrate, beyond the capacity of any theory, the processes of personal politics and how the individual can go about deciding in his life³⁰, but while conceding the advantages of the form, considering the multiplicity of examples presented, the solutions, supposing they are found, to the human and social condition lack

order and clarity, as one gropes for types by which to ascribe meaning to all-too-individual events. Although Snow has claimed that his novels are reducible, the resolutions reached in any work are incomplete, are notes of continuity rather than summary, and must be treated with caution. Any return to ultimate themes does not provide what it may appear to - an explanation of the intricate manoeuvres which have gone before. The themes which, in interaction, may be noted as a general explanation of these manoeuvres, appear in a kind of spurious chronology which disregards all notions of summaries and conclusions. Because the "objective" observer - the narrator - ages and changes his viewpoint even his best intentioned and most lucid conclusions must be seen in context and thus qualified.

Snow's is predominantly a behaviouralist approach to politics, of perceptions limiting and defining actions, of rationality which aspires to but never reaches Weberian strength, of how the activity of politics is pursued rather than why. So it seems vulnerable to Bernard Crick's criticism that all models of political behaviour assume or beg questions of political philosophy³¹.

This is arguably true so far as the novels are concerned. Snow the novelist is not a philosopher and to the extent that philosophy is apparent in his novels it is demonstrated in interaction with political activity. Oriented towards action, Snow is in the position of advancing the 'as-if' argument, or the validation of practice, in response to philosophical questions. Ideologies are presented through various individual characters, primarily as phenomena, and they are tested in action - demonstrated rather than argued. The points on which Snow presses - conscience and innate goodness, for example - he does in conditions closely related

to experiences, not abstract thought. His method indicates a belief that moral crises emerge from within everyday experience and that 'philosophy' is consequently formed by reflection upon the alluvia of daily decisions and activities, (although, paradoxically, Eliot sets off with his aims and devices intact)³². In the lectures, Snow's viewpoint is made more apparent, though the details are scattered.

A reasonable second criticism of the behaviouralist study, is that without a complementary study of institutions, it produces an unbalanced picture. To an extent, institutions are the backdrop to Snow's presentations. They are acknowledged in action and in interaction with individuals, and Snow has not attempted a comprehensive analysis of British institutional structure. He presents key points of the political processes, in Whitehall and Westminster, in terms of the atmosphere and personal politics, within the institutional framework.

Michael Oakeshott has expressed the view that politics is only understood as a self-moved or complete activity when the empirical business of attending to the general arrangements of a set of people, together with the scheme of ends to be pursued, which is the product of systems of ideas abstracted from experience, are recognised as being dependent upon a traditional manner of behaviour³³.

Snow has produced a simulation of empirical activity, the process of ideologies forming, and their constraining effects³⁴. To a certain extent he presents an historical study, too, as his books span fifty years of the twentieth century. While the historical periods are often acknowledged, or even shut out, of Snow's novels, and there are few period pieces - of news or of

fashion, for example - the signs of time's work on institutionalised relationships and social feeling are exemplified³⁵, and Passant, Calvert, March, Martin Eliot, Quaife, Charles and the Malcontents, are children of their time, symbolic of their age, and faced by the decisions of their age. Although almost bald of sensory detail, Snow's writings produce one picture of "what people have thought and said about what happened: the history, not of political ideas, but of the manner of our political thinking."³⁶

Notes to Chapter One

- 1 'The World of Power and Groups' TLS 23 (Oct. 70) pp.1223-4.
- 2 The Times 13th March 1971, p.17.
- 3 The Guardian 8th Sep. 1970: 'Flummery Rampant on a Field of Snow' p.7.
- 4 ibid.
- 5 Hansard vol. 263 (1965) p.149.
- 6 The Guardian loc. cit. p.7.
- 7 Leicester University Gazette Issue No. 9 (Jan. 1960) p.62.
- 8 The Guardian loc. cit.; Preface to Death Under Sail Heinemann (1959) London p.viii.
- 9 e.g. 1) 'The Age of Rutherford' Atlantic Monthly 102 (Nov. 1958) pp.76-81.
e.g. 2) 'On Magnanimity' University of St. Andrews Students' Representative Council (1962) pp.9-12.
- 10 Spectator (23rd March 1962).
- 11 Variety of Men: MacMillan (1966) London p.12.
- 12 (1877-1947) From 1931 he occupied the Sadleirian Chair of Mathematics. cf. Variety of Men pp.15-46.
- 13 The Two Cultures and A Second Lock Cambridge University Press 1969 edition p.4.
- 14 e.g. 'The Habit of Truth' New Republic 139 (Aug. 1958) p.26.
- 15 Cf. The Guardian loc. cit. "He said that he would willingly wipe the first half of his life away." and ff.
- 16 The World of C.P. Snow Scorpion Press (1962) London p.26.
- 17 The Times 13th March 1971 loc. cit.
- 18 ibid.

- 19 Variety of Men p.96. Snow's meeting with Lloyd George,
p.85 his meeting with Einstein.
- 20 Spectator 25rd March 1962.
- 21 William L. Shirer, The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich.
(1960) p. 784, as observed by Jerome Thale in C.F.Snow,
Oliver and Boyd (1964) Edinburgh, ch.1, p.1.
- 22 As shown in George Passant, and later The Masters, which he
discussed with Hardy before the War - The Times loc. cit.
- 23 ibid. loc.cit.
- 24 ibid. loc.cit.
- 25 ibid. loc.cit.
- 26 'Billiard Room Talks' Sunday Times 6th March, 1960, p.18.
- 27 'Books and Writers' Spectator, 186 (Jan. 1951), p.82
- 28 cf. his summary of the existential case: 'Challenge to the
Intellects' TLS 15th Aug. 1958, p.iii
- 29 cf. 'Books and Writers' Spectator 185 (Sep. 1950) p.320.
- 30 The most recent support for Snow in this area is well expressed
by James R. Kincaid: 'Bring back the Trollopian', Nineteenth
Century Fiction, Vol.3, No.1, June 1976.
- 31 cf. P.H. Johnson; 'With Prejudice' The Windmill 1.(1944)
p.1. cf. also 'Challenge to the Intellects' (n.27).
- 32 The Times loc. cit. The book sold over a thousand copies in
the U.S.A.
- 33 New Statesman and Nation: 52 (Oct. 1956) pp.413-414.
- 34 The Times op.cit: Preface to the First Volume of the Strangers
and Brothers Omnibus MacMillan (1972) London, p.xiii.
- 35 cf. Greacen, op.cit. pp.11-14; possibly it impelled Snow to
write an explanatory preface to the following novel.
- 36 Spectator 208: (March 1962) pp.297-303: Two Cultures?

The Significance of C.F. Snow. Chatto and Windus (1962)

London.

- 37 'The case of Leavis and the serious case' TLS 69 (July 9th 1970) p.737.
- 38 Leavis op.cit. p.297.
- 39 e.g. Spectator 211 (Nov. 1963) p.554: Henry Fairlie, 'Cults not cultures'. New Statesman 67 (March 1964) p.370. 'Snow's Second Look'. Aldous Huxley Literature and Science. Chatto and Windus (1963) London.
- 40 'The case of Leavis and the serious case' op.cit. pp.737-740.
- 41 'A Second Look'(1964).
- 42 Published by the Oxford University Press (1961) London.
- 43 Lord Cherwell.
- 44 An address before the American Association for the Advancement of Science; delivered 27th Dec. 1960. Science, 132, (Jan. 1961) pp. 256-259. Reprinted in Public Affairs Macmillan (1971) London.
- 45 Science op.cit. p.259. Public Affairs p.198.
- 46 'On Magnanimity' (1962).
- 47 Weintraub leaves it at "a complex of reasons", p.3. C.F.Snow: A Spectrum. Scribners (1963) New York. Thale probes deeper, Ch.II of C.F. Snow. Snow might call it a 'climate of opinion.'
- 48 Hansard vol. 278 (1966) p.1998.
- 49 Greacen op.cit. p.10.
- 50 cf. The Times 19th Oct. 1964, p.12; 20th Oct. p.12.
- 51 Variety of Men p.96. Robert Goreham Davis, C.F. Snow. Columbia Essays on Modern Writers No.8 (1965) Col.U.Press, p.40.
- 52 Hansard vol. 261 (1964) p.594; in a debate on 'Education for Business and Management.'
- 53 cf. TheTimes 13th March 1971, and Preface to Omnibus Edition

of the sequence, vol. 1.

- 54 ibid.
- 55 e.g. Hansard vol. 289 (1968) pp.856-863.
 vol. 308 (1970) pp. 405-408.
 vol. 315 (1971) pp. 145-154.
- 56 October 1964.
- 57 Greacen op.cit. Karl: C.P. Snow: The Politics of Conscience.
 South Illinois U. Press (1963); Thale: C.P. Snow (1964)
 Weintraub: C.P. Snow: a Spectrum (1963); to mention only
 books.
- 58 Anthony Burgess, for example, Encounter 24 (Jan. 1965) pp.71-76.
 'Powers that be.' F. Kermode Partisan Review 30 (Spring 1963)
 pp.74-76; L.W. Smith: South Atlantic Quarterly 64 (Summer
 1965) pp.316-331 'C.P. Snow as novelist: a delimitation.'
- 59 e.g. Greacen and Karl op.cit.
- 60 Variety of Men p.ix.
- 61 The Times 13th March 1971.
- 62 "The toughest effort of memory I have had to make since I
 was an undergraduate." The Times loc.cit.
- 63 Published as plays, 1964.
- 64 10th March, 1975. cf. Daily Telegraph for that date, John
 Barber 'Drama from the Melting Snow' p.9.
- 65 John Findlay, Green Foundation Lecture 1968 Scribners.
 Also in Public Affairs (1971).
- 66 Hansard vol. 308 (1970) pp. 405-408.
 vol. 315 (1971) pp. 145-154.
- 1968 is significant for the 'State of Siege' lecture, which
 marks a significant re-evaluation of points in the Two Cultures
 series.

- 67 Hansard vol. 314 (1971) pp. 1303-8, on television.
 vol. 329 (1972) pp. 765 -8.
 vol. 267 (1965) pp. 596-606.
- 68 Trollope: His Life and Art Scribner (1975) New York.

Notes to Chapter Two

- 1 'Challenge to the Intellectuals' Times Literary Supplement
 (15th Aug. 1958) p.iii.
- 2 cf. S. Toulmin, reviewing the Godkin lecture: 'Scientist
 Overlord' Spectator 209 (July 1962) p.104.
- 3 For example, 'What we need from Applied Science,' Spectator
 158 (Nov. 1920) p.904; 'New Men for a New Era', Sunday Times
 Aug. 24th 1958, p.12; 'The Age of Rutherford' Atlantic Monthly
 (1958) (Above, ch.I, n.9).
- 4 'Challenge to the Intellectuals' (op.cit. n.1) and, for example,
 'Cult of the Atrocious' Sunday Times Oct. 16th, 1949, p.3.
- 5 'The Two Cultures' the Rede Lecture (1959).
- 6 cf. Robert Goreham Davis C.P.Snow (1965) p.5, for this view.
- 7 'On Magnanimity' (1962) p.9. Similarly, in his appeals to
 the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. to unite in the cause of common
 humanity, Snow called upon a better nature, a more selfless
 self than he presents in his novels.
- 8 The most obvious example is the divide between the cultures:
 cf. The New Men, pp. 17, 22 (on secrets), p.23 (on politeness),
 p.130 (on engineers), p.135 (on the atom bomb), p.177 (on
 an aspect of the cultural divide) for example, for comparison
 with Two Cultures sentiments.
- 9 'The Changing Nature of Love' Mademoiselle 46 (Feb. 1958)
 pp. 105, 180-181 for example.
- 10 J. Thale: C.F. Snow (1964) op.cit.

- 11 'Challenge to the Intellectuals' (note 1).
- 12 'Science, Politics and the Novelist' Kenyon Review 23
(Winter 1961) p.14.
- 13 ibid. p.13.
- 14 'Challenge to the Intellectuals' loc.cit.
- 15 ibid.
- 16 Le Carre, Sunday Times 25th Oct., 1970.
- 17 Leavis, Spectator 208 p.297.
Bergonzi, 'The World of Lewis Eliot' Twentieth Century 167
(Feb.1960) p.215.
cf. 'Books and Writers' Spectator 185 (Sep. 1950) p. 320.
- 18 cf. Thomas Ashton 'Realism and the Chronicle: C.P. Snow's
cinema verite' South Atlantic Quarterly 72 (Autumn 1975)
p. 516ff for an analysis of this.
- 19 'Challenge to the Intellectuals' loc. cit.
- 20 Bergonzi op.cit. disagrees, but Ashton, op.cit., observes
that the "jaws of Eliot's judgement snap shut for Snow
to pry them apart." (p.525). Apart from the obvious example
of Eliot's change of mind over Jago (cf. Corridors of Power
p. 47) other occasions show Eliot's interpretation of
character change within novels; cf. The New Men p. 179,
The Conscience of the Rich p. 32.
- 21 'Beckett, Snow and Pure Poverty' Encounter vol. 15 No. 82
(July 1960) p. 73.
- 22 For example: "yet that night I could not do as he wanted.
A few years before I should have said yes on the spot."
The Masters p. 15.
- 23 Strangers and Brothers (George Fassant) ch. 31 'Confidential
Talk in Eden's Drawing-Room.' and Time of Hope ch. 41
'Another night in Eden's Drawing-room.'
The Masters ch. 23 'Affliction.' and The Light and the Dark
ch. 18 'Outburst.'
Time of Hope pp. 262-3, and The Conscience of the Rich pp. 14-5.
- 24 Chapter III, below, 'Judgement' and Chapter VI, 'Hopes'.
- 25 "Snow demonstrates what it is like to be a 'good man' in
the twentieth century continually fighting the temptations
of ambition in a materialistic and competitive world."
F.R. Karl: C.P. Snow: The Politics of Conscience (1963) p.viii).

26 "The Opposition had put down a motion to reduce the Navy vote by ten pounds.
 "It would have sounded archaic, or plain silly, to those who didn't know Parliament." (Corridors of Power p. 278).
 While there is a recognition that although one may gain a majority in the House the actual result is a defeat: ch. 39 'Political Arithmetic.'

27 'Challenge to the Intellectuals' loc.cit.

28 ibid. but in the Preface to Volume I of the Strangers and Brothers Omnibus Snow concedes that characters may stand in place of symbols, and in a letter he wrote: "The characters are, of course, essentially and primarily to be regarded as human beings, but they carry some symbolic weight." (Letter to the author, August 1976).

29 The Sleep of Reason p. 229ff., "I refuse to take any responsibility for either of them.." in relation to p.323: "They had made fantasies about ultimate freedom." and p.336.

30 Homecomings ch. 44 'Second Interview of George Passant.' It, at least, corrects the tendency to fall into Karl's opinion, op.cit.p. 110.

31 p. 352.

32 Although Ince would not agree: The Affair ch. 31, 'Stateliness of a Man Presiding.'

33 For example:

In The Affair:

One explanation may be in terms of the motivation to do justice, but this is based on more clearly recognised ideas:

a) The extent to which prejudice and appearance affect one's interpretation of people:

i) Howard is judged for a variety of reasons by a variety of people.

ii) Gay is judged on the grounds of appearance, whereas he does, in fact, display presence of mind and insight.

iii) Nightingale is judged by Lewis and Jago on the basis of experience, coloured by prejudice. The reader is left to draw his own conclusions about the missing photographs.

iv) Clark is judged by Ince and Eliot and Orbell.

b) The motivational aspect is presented in many forms, and in different circumstances.

c) The different methods by which men go about their social goals is presented: e.g., Skeffington's and Gay's recourse to outside agencies. Martin's and Brown's statesmanship

Nightingale's hysterical determination, Crawford's uncertain attitude, Winslow's cynicism, Howard's inaction.

d) The extent of compromise and the conflicting drives is present in the sense that in pursuing what they believe in the Howard affair men are running the risk of damaging their future.

Francis Getliffe and Arthur Brown are good, but not the only, examples. Others include Skeffington, Tom Orbell and Martin Eliot.

In The Masters:

- a) The power relations between men.
- b) The different reasons for which men make decisions - and the reasons they then give. The basis of persuasion.
- c) Several methods of conducting social action - for example, Brown and Chrystal's 'cabals', Winslow's 'bear-garden', Nightingale's method, Chrystal's domineering style, compared with that of Brown.

34 Strangers and Brothers Omnibus Vol.1, Preface p.xii.

35 "C.F. Snow" Times March 13th, 1971, p.17.

36 'Challenge to the Intellectuals' op.cit. p.iii.

37 Fison: Twentieth Century 167 (June 1960) p.570.

38 Greacen: The World of C.P.Snow (1962) p.11.

39 Karl op.cit. p.3.

40 Cooper 'C.P. Snow' Longmans (1959) p.30.

41 Last Things cf. ch.14 'End of a Line' p.121 ff.cf.

Homecomings p.158.

Notes to Chapter Three

1 For example, Irene and George in The Sleep of Reason p.231

and also ch.30, and Mark in The Malcontents ch.27. Even understanding does not necessarily entail control: Karl, C.P. Snow: the Politics of Conscience p.62. The Light and the Dark Macmillan (1961) London pp.108, 163.

- 2 As an everyday measure: the sick and the well:
 "I felt some of that zest - disgraceful and yet not to be denied - which came from being well in the presence of someone who couldn't be well again." Last Things, p.140
- 3 e.g. The Affair p.135. The Sleep of Reason p.299. The "Adamic fact" of Auschwitz.
- 4 e.g. The Affair p.233 - Getliffe is "trapped" by the interplay of forces, of which his conscience is one. For the general view, Hansard 18th June 1968, p.540.
- 5 The Two Cultures and a Second Look op.cit. pp.76-77.
- 6 Karl: The Politics of Conscience op.cit. p.4.
- 7 Decision-making requires the individual to define his identity in terms of desires and values. The self-defeating are so because they do not know what their unconscious wants are, e.g. Hankins, The New Men p.221. R.S. Robinson in Homecomings p.42, and therefore cannot guard against those which are self-destructive.
- 8 The loss of humanity is evident in The Sleep of Reason.
- 9 Hansard vol. 275: (1966-67) pp.66-7.
- 10 A humanistic solution to a concept similar to Original Sin: cf. The Sleep of Reason p.299, 'On Magnanimity' (1962) p.7: "Virtue exists in action."
- 11 Examples include Howard, in The Affair, who is cleared of fraud, but found guilty of professional irresponsibility, and George Passant in the novel of the same name, cleared of corrupting youthful morals on the grounds of being a child of

- his time; ch. 41 'Getliffe's Speech.'
- 12 Snow distinguishes them, at, e.g. The Sleep of Reason p.367 and Last Things ch.23 'Lying Awake' p.197: "Judgement? Well, thinking with displeasure on what I had done was a kind of judgement."
- 13 The Malcontents p.251: "A common sense of danger or purpose, and you were living alongside those whom fate had given you."
- 14 The personal story of Lewis Eliot is one of mental readjustment to fully include the healthier external orientation which Snow sees as necessary for normal human beings. The turning point is shown in Homecomings, cf. ch. 54 'Come with Me' and p.154, ibid. The possibility of some form of adjustment or control through an exercise of will is the criterion of mental health, but it is limited, cf. The Sleep of Reason p.328. The analogy of training is the closest: e.g. The Affair p.39: Lewis has had to "train and discipline" himself out of being suggestible.
- 15 "One looks outside to other lives...each of those other lives has the same irremediable components as one's own; but there are also components that one can help. It is in this tiny extension of the personality, it is this seizing on the possibilities of hope, that we become fully human: it is a way to improve the quality of one's life: it is for oneself the beginning of the social condition." (emphasis added). The Two Cultures and a Second Look op.cit. pp.76-77.
- 16 'On Magnanimity' (1962) p.17.
- 17 ibid. The difference between the "vanities" is crucial to an understanding of self-respect.
- 18 ibid. (A quotation from The Masters p.51) 'On Magnanimity' continues: "We have to forgive ourselves; we have to find out what good there is in us, we have to try to be better than we are."

19 The Masters, op.cit. p.286.

20 e.g. The Masters pp.86-87 (last paragraph of ch.11).

The New Men p.131 ("once she felt Martin's love...", etc.)

An examination of Snow's theme of love could usefully begin at this point, but this work must leave it there and continue to follow politics. Snow's ideal picture of a love-relationship is one in which there are no secrets between the partners, who enjoy a full sensual, sexual relationship with one another.

As Goreham Davis (1965 op.cit.) notes, the motivational force for many Snovian characters is "the need for women and the need for success" (p.14). Aside from the power-relations implicit in sex, and the type of judgement a love-relationship brings, sex serves as a legitimate outward-directed form of transcendence of individuality.

Snow recognises, therefore, the important depth of experience sex provides; e.g. The New Men p.163. Yet it is a distraction from one's potential for moral social action to concentrate upon eroticism; e.g. Homecomings, p.206, Corridors of Power, pp.204-205, and on p.150, where a man of action's marriage is not "all-excluding; but strong, a comfort, an alliance."

21 cf. ch.IV, below, on Persuasion.

22 Karl: The Politics of Conscience, pp.28-29.

Typical examples are Quaife's choice between defending his brother-in-law and preserving his own safety, Corridors of Power pp.57-59.

Martin Eliot's choice - The New Men, ch.27 'An Uneffaceable Afternoon.'

Lewis Eliot: Homecomings ch.33 'Pathology of Spectators', similar to The Malcontents chs. 22-28.

23 Actions pursued for the sake of conscience can be equally "selfish" - i.e. not geared to action so much as gestures to salve self-respect. e.g. The Malcontents p.203. While Charles March's conscience (The Conscience of the Rich) is a sick conscience.

24 cf. The Masters p.90;

The Affair, p.167: "He had been manipulating the college for a generation. He was cunning, he knew all the ropes, he did not invent dilemmas of conscience for himself. He wanted the mastership, and he would do anything within the rules to get it. But it had to be, within the rules; and that was why men trusted him. Those rules were set, not by conscience, but by a code of behaviour..."

The implication is that conscience, a natural drive, is not reason-based, and that a code of behaviour is more useful in social situations. Snow's politics are more the politics of decency than of conscience.

25 Karl: The Politics of Conscience pp.29, 40.

26 The Light and the Dark ch.36 'The end of a Reproach.'

The forces in men are triggered by external activity, so that parts of their nature are accentuated by fortuitous circumstance: e.g. The Masters p.47. Snow uses a memory-trigger as a technique of writing, thus emphasising the point: e.g. The New Men p.184. The Sleep of Reason p.403.

27 "Free choice. Who had free choice? Did any of us? We felt certain that we did. We had to live as if we did...We had to believe that we could choose. Life was too ridiculous unless we believed that...We had to act as if it were true...That was an old answer. Perhaps it was the best we could find."
The Sleep of Reason ch.36 'Let Down or Frustration.' p.387.

cf. ch.IV, below, note 62.

- 28 Sheila does not have the capacity for it, Homecomings p.44.
Irene "did not possess in the slightest the gift, so desirable in the life of affairs, of being able to keep the right hand from knowing what the left is doing." (The Affair p.48).
Calvert also: The Light and the Dark (Macmillan) p.71.
- 29 cf. Karl, op.cit. pp.50, 57.
Nightingale cannot find "detachment from the pain" of his envy and frustration, and "suffered meanly, struggling like a rat, determined to wound as well as be wounded." (The Masters, p.136).
- 30 cf. The Affair, p.167;
The New Men, p.96, on emotion;
Last Things, p.121 on "corrupt humanity."
Corridors of Power, p.117, on pride.
- 31 The striking example in Homecomings ch.10. 'No Letter in the Room' of the value of egotism. Also the Masters ch.29 'A Vacancy in the Office of Master' and The Malcontents chs.15 & 16.
- 32 e.g. Pateman: who "won't believe it whatever happens. It's just as well. He couldn't face it if he did." The Sleep of Reason p.250. In ibid. p.403 Lewis wonders "Was anyone tough enough to look at himself, as he really was, without sentimentality or mercy, all the time?"
- 33 The New Men, p.183.
The Affair, p.131.
Homecomings p.118.
- 34 The Masters p.38: "If one always stopped supporting people whose election would bring one the slightest advantage, it would be remarkably silly."
- 35 Corridors of Power p.320: "If we worried about that sort of

consideration, Lewis, we should never do anything, should we?"

- 36 e.g. Passant; Strangers and Brothers Macmillan (1966) p.300.
cf. Karl op.cit. pp.28-30. Ronald Porson: "Do you realise... that I'm only sixty-two?" Corridors of Power p.72.
- 37 A conscious effort of will, rather than the rationalisation for succumbing to temptation is very rare, or even illusory - Last Things, p.136.
- 38 In New Lives for Old, for example, Vanden and Pilgrim see no practical choice as to which side in the revolutionary civil war they must join: philosophical questions of right are considered not relevant. p.333. cf. also Corridors of Power p.268, for politics as purely the art of the possible and safe.
- 39 The Malcontents, pp.194-196.
- 40 ibid. pp.198-199. This process is strikingly similar to Snow's idea of the formation of a climate of opinion, ch.IV, below, 'Who has the Power?'
- 41 New Lives for Old p.321 - part of the delay may be due to the individual wishing to savour his situation of choice. Also Last Things p.104.
- 42 The Malcontents, p.198.
- 43 ibid. p.203.
- 44 'Insight' is a fixed perceptual property e.g. The Affair p.186
The New Men. p.191.
- Insight into oneself is necessary to control irrational impulses; The Sleep of Reason, p.231.
- Compartmentalisation, however, indicates a continuous process of selective amnesia, or perhaps peripheral vision, in order to at once take note of baser motives and aspire to bettering oneself. ibid. ch.37. 'Forgetting.'

- 45 ibid. p.387 "Morality existed only in action..."
- 46 'Personal Politics in the Novels of C.P. Snow' Critique vol.2,
(1958) pp.16-28.
- 47 The New Men ch.25 'Standard Roses in the Sunshine.'
- 48 Stanford, op.cit. p.23.
- 49 ibid. p.20. He notes that the crucial decision is made purely
on ideological grounds - The Masters ch.33. 'That which dies
Last.'
- 50 Stanford op.cit. p.22.
- 51 ibid. loc.cit.
- 52 The Sleep of Reason pp.82-83.
- 53 A parallel is drawn in the second election. G.S. Clark
represents the growing Conservative element in the 1950s.
Ince selects him as an "independent" while Orbell, on a
personal basis, protests "he's a ridiculous monster."
(The Affair, p.259). Clark wins the election, The Sleep of
Reason, p.85.
- 54 ibid. p.299.
- 55 ibid. p.193.
- 56 Corridors of Power, p.203.
- 57 In some cases, at least. Functional judgements appear
throughout Snow's work, ususally as relatively undisputed
observations, preliminary, and in a sense separate from,
hypotheses as to character. Usually functional judgements
summarise personal histories of professional success and
failure, wealth and status of the individual.
e.g. The Affair, pp.10, 190-191.
The Conscience of the Rich, p.14.
Homecomings p.17.
- 58 The Sleep of Reason, pp.389-390.

- 59 Corridors of Power, p.81, and p.62 on the "optimism which makes a gulf between men of action and purely reflective men, which makes a man insensitive to defeat until it has really happened."
- 60 "Intellectually, I am deeply pessimistic; on the other hand... I find a sort of emotional optimism coming though." Hansard vol. 315 (1971) p.234.
- 61 e.g. Corridors of Power p.170.
- 62 David Rubin is an example of a contemplative, who trusts his analysis, not his feeling. The Sleep of Reason, p.151. Also at Corridors of Power ch.35 'A Choice.'
- 63 "Like most devoted politicians, he was realistic about everything in /politics/ - except his own chances."
Corridors of Power p.218.
- 64 This is not unavoidably the case. Conscience alone may be devoid of human affection. The extension of personality is then minimal, but perhaps in action-oriented terms the deed is more important than the intent to all but the doer: The Affair ch.7. 'The Component of Contempt.'

Notes to Chapter Four

- 1 Last Things, p.97.
- 2 ibid. p.130. Also The New Men p.212.
- 3 Science and Government, Oxford University Press, (1961)
London p.56.
- 4 ibid. loc.cit.
- 5 ibid. p.57.
- 6 ibid. p.60.
- 7 ibid. p.63.

- 8 Last Things p.130.
- 9 The Masters pp.78 and 175 for the formal rules.
- 10 Appendix to The Masters , p.302.
- 11 ibid. p.184 "...we enjoyed... the chance of asserting ourselves against our candidate." , and pp.95, 188-9.
- 12 cf. Victor Ferkiss, 'The Literary Approach to Politics.' Thought 31 (Autumn 1956) p.350.
- 13 For 'vote' one may substitute any public decision. cf. The Affair pp.42-3, and ch. 28 'The Sound of Falsity.' for an example of neglect of the persuasion aspect of decision-making.
- 14 The Masters ch. 33 'That Which Dies Last.' i.e. a man's image of himself; cf. New Lives for Old pp.66, 76.
- 15 The Affair p.99: "Hypocrites who saw the naked truth and acted quite contrary...were a romantic conception. Those whom we call hypocrites simply had a gift for denying to themselves what the truth was."
- 16 E.W. Mandel, 'C.P. Snow's Fantasy of Politics.', Queen's Quarterly vol.69, No.1 (Spring 1962) p.35.
- 17 Corridors of Power p.234.
- 18 ibid. ch. 33 'A Man Called Monteith.'
- 19 Introduction to The Jew in a Gentile World Arnold Rogow, Macmillan (1961) London, p.xvii.
- 20 ibid. loc.cit.
- 21 Raney Stanford, 'Personal Politics in the Novels of C.P. Snow.' (1958) op.cit.
- 22 The Sleep of Reason p.43. The episode takes up ch.3, 'A Meeting.'
- 23 Eliot wanted to "domesticate the whole business" - The Sleep of Reason p.39, and cf. ch.27, 'An Impermissible Term.'
- 24 ibid. p.47.
- 25 Introduction to Rogow op.cit., above n.19, loc.cit.
- 26 Corridors of Power p.120

- 27 e.g. Hansard vol.276 (1966) p.1096.
- 28 cf. 'The Atomic Pioneers.' New Republic 139 (Oct.1958) pp. 18-9,
and Hansard vol.275 (1966) pp.1133-4.
- 29 Corridors of Power p.193.
- 30 The Masters p.38.
- 31 ibid.p.59.
- 32 cf. the group feeling in The Malcontents pp. 39, 58; The Masters
ch. 12, 'Jago Walks Round the Court.'
- 33 The Affair pp. 314-5; for innocence and cynicism ibid.pp.177-8,
The Masters pp.46, 104. Hansard vol.287 (1967) p.1177.
- 34 Science and Government (1961) p.60.
- 35 The spy in The New Men is broken down by his own loneliness; pp.199-200.
- 36 Corridors of Power p.142.
- 37 ibid.p.143, so the innocent make the world seem worse than it is.
- 38 ibid.p.104.
- 39 ibid. loc.cit.
- 40 'The Irregular Right.' Nation 182 (March 1956) p.238.
- 41 In The Masters this appears as the interpretation of actions
as civilised discretion versus "bear-garden" or cabals and
conspiracy versus having things out in the open, (p.79).
Brown favours the pre-formal as an opportune method of getting
rational discussion, as opposed to the emotional escalation
resulting from open conflict.
- 42 i.e. through one's own action; The Masters p. 174.
- 43 ibid.p.275; Corridors of Power p.309. True of all group actions.
- 44 The Sleep of Reason p.43 (uninfluencibility), p.353 (inner chill).
- 45 The Malcontents pp.103-4; Corridors of Power p.263.
- 46 Passant has the qualities of a natural leader, Brown those of
a natural politician. The Masters ch.8, 'Three Kinds of Power.'
presents examples of the desires for different combinations

- of status and power. cf. also The Light and the Dark pp. 52-3.
- 47 Character is formed in action: "There is great dignity in being a spectator and if you do it for long enough you are dead inside." The Affair p.98; Homecomings p.184 on the isolation of diffidence. Also The Malcontents p.176 on the feeling of superiority resulting from lack of competition, obviously related to 'The case of Leavis and the serious case.' TLS (July 1970) vol.69, pp. 737-40.
- 48 The Masters pp.61-2.
- 49 Corridors of Power p.204.
- 50 ibid.p.176, and similarly pp. 141, 259.
- 51 Hansard vol. 261 (1964) p.1119.
- 52 The New Men ch. 38, 'Words in the Open.'
- 53 Corridors of Power p.45.
- 54 ibid.p.125, and also p.270.
- 55 ibid.pp. 38, 342, and 47. Eliot lacks that justification when his chance comes: Last Things p.127. Most explicitly, The Affair ch.9, 'A Treat for a Worldly Man.' The 'Treat' is a justification.
- 56 'Charismatic Centre' Spectator 213 p. 608.
- 57 ibid. loc.cit.
- 58 Corridors of Power pp. 60, 102. One aspect of this book is its alternation between two possible groups of candidates - the Higher Civil Service and the political socialites.
- 59 ibid.p.267.
- 60 Last Things p.107
- 61 ibid. p.105.
- 62 Corridors of Power ch.27, 'Promenade Beneath the Chandeliers ' contains a discussion of this point which inclines towards the "Tolstoyan view" of history and politics (p.207) and the as-if solution noted above (Chapter III, n. 27).

- 63 The "door" metaphor perhaps expresses the position of the leader more effectively: personalities only "count" when "the hinge is oiled, but the door may swing or not." Corridors of Power p. 341. The undirected climate does not act on its own account, but is permissive of action. Similarly, persuasion implies some consent - The Masters p.255 - or confusion on the part of he who is persuaded - Corridors of Power p. 178.
- The "tide" - ibid. pp.268-9; Last Things p.105. For a contemporary application cf. Hansard vol.293 (1968) pp.539-48, on Southern Rhodesia, and New Statesman 65 (May 1963) p.748.
- 64 The effective leader leads by only a little way: Corridors of Power pp.179, 209; The New Men p. 128.
- 65 e.g. The Affair p.272.
- 66 Rumours: Nightingale in The Masters, Robinson in Part I of Homecomings, about Passant in George Passant. Newspapers are constantly present in Corridors of Power.
- 67 Last Things ch.41, 'A Bearer of Bad News' (in the context of the conversation in ch.14, 'End of a Line', pp.132-3.)
- 68 T.L. Ashton sees Eliot as "the experienced observer" through whose services "Snow counsels us" and welcomes us to the "community". op.cit. p.519.
- 69 Examples of experienced political observers include Hector Rose, e.g. in Corridors of Power ch.39, 'Political Arithmetic.', Thomas Bevill (Homecomings and The New Men) and the unnamed expert in The Malcontents pp. 173-4. Science, as a discipline, of course, relies upon accrual of experience and expert opinion.
- 70 The Affair is ripe with examples, e.g. pp.37, 80, 179, 308; The Masters p. 274, The Malcontents (on abstraction) pp. 25-6, 103 and 227, where the labels are demonstrated as being totally detached from the facts.
- 71 Corridors of Power p.201 - Quaipe cannot afford Opposition support.

- 72 The Masters p.281; also The Light and the Dark p.140.
- 73 e.g. The Affair p. 45.
- 74 Corridors of Power p.101, and pp.140-1; being taken for granted is better, pp. 37-8.
- 75 Snow saw the dangers in the separation of Government from the responsible members of the community (Hansard vol.287 (1967) pp.1176-79) which would come about through Governmental secrecy.
- 76 'The case of Leavis and the serious case' TLS 69 pp.738-9.
'Education and Sacrifice.' (An abbreviation of the Richmond Lecture of 1st May, 1963) New Statesman 65 (May 1963) pp.746-50.

Notes to Chapter Five

- 1 cf. A. Burgess 'Powers that Be.' Encounter vol.24 No.1 (Jan. 1965) p.74.
- 2 As above, cf. The Masters ch.8. The use of the term "manager" is justified by reference to the first 'Corridors of Power.' - The Listener vol.57 No.1464 (April 1957) pp. 619-20.
- 3 Thus the importance of timing: The Masters ch.11, 'View from Roy Calvert's Window' illustrates the wrong way to work within the climate, i.e. automatically trying to crystallise the position. Contrast The Affair pp.78, 80-1, Martin's secrecy.
- 4 Contrast Nightingale in The Affair ch. 31, 'The Sight of a Blank Space.'
- 5 In The Malcontents p.83 the precondition for revolution of a Marxian character is seen as persuasion. The advice is given by Martin Eliot to Skeffington, with the assumption of a purpose formed, The Affair pp.84-5.
- 6 The Masters p.53; The Affair pp.133-4, 308; Corridors of Power p.149: "He...let the decisions form."
- 7 The Masters p.255.
- 8 The Affair p.273: "He believes that. He means what he says."

The Malcontents p.155: "...that moral certainty...was his strength. One had to be capable of that unambiguous anger."

Last Things p. 133.

9 The Affair p.178.

10 ibid. p.228.

11 e.g. The Sleep of Reason p.143; The New Men pp.152-3.

12 The Malcontents p.198.

13 e.g. The Masters pp.92-3; The Affair ch.40, 'Walking out of the Lodge.'

14 e.g. The Affair p.211 on who "carries weight."

15 Corridors of Power p.105.

16 The Affair p.177.

17 Science and Government (1961) p.73 : "...it is cardinal that you should be positive." The Two Cultures (1969 ed.) p.44:

"...jam tomorrow, and one often sees men at their noblest."

18 "The kind of leader... who is the next impulse in politics."

Last Things p.132. The emergence of this type progresses from

The New Men p.228: "You were living in a power equilibrium, and

you must not pretend; the relics of liberal humanism had no

place there." Neil of The Malcontents is a good example.

19 Hansard vol.261 (1964) p.595. (His maiden speech.)

20 As in Chrystal of The Masters e.g. pp. 272-3, and Orbell of The Affair p. 54.

21 cf. The Affair pp. 125-7, 232, 284. The Light and the Dark p.65.

Corridors of Power pp.193-7, 258.

22 This type of subtlety does not inspire trust. Generally it

appears to arise from an unstable fluctuation of individual

drives, combined with egocentricity, e.g. The Affair p.165;

Corridors of Power p.40; Homecomings pp.22-3.

23 The Light and the Dark p.226; Corridors of Power p.234 (public

face, private nature) ibid. p.208 (calculated use of genuine

anger); The Masters p.35; The Affair p.11.

- 24 The Affair p.156: Managers would be useless if they were "passionless", "...what made them effective was that they were capable of being infuriated on the one hand and managerial on the other."
- 25 Lufkin is the paradigm: Corridors of Power p.107.
- 26 Homecomings p.13
- 27 Hansard vol. 269 (1965) pp.851-2.
- 28 The Affair pp.24-5, 294:"Most of us were disposed to deny our gratitude." ; Homecomings pp.24-5.
- 29 The Malcontents p.125; Corridors of Power pp.98, 112, 230-1.
- 30 e.g. Corridors of Power ch.21, 'Breakfast.'
- 31 ibid.p.249; The Malcontents pp. 174-6.
- 32 The Masters p. 94.
- 33 ibid.p. 78.Also The Malcontents ch.14, where "mood" and "collective mood" replace the "climate" of the 'Strangers and Brothers' sequence.
- 34 e.g. The Affair ch.26, 'Definitions by a Window'. Also ch.23, 'Bargains at a Small Dinner Party ', and at p.301 Eliot mentions that his Fellowship was arranged pre-formally. Cf. The Light and the Dark chs. 5, 6 and 8 for a complete political manoeuvre.
- 35 The New Men p.213.
- 36 The Masters p. 94.
- 37 Hansard vol. 287 (1967) p.1176.
- 38 ibid. loc.cit. cf. Last Things p. 130.
- 39 Last Things p.131.
- 40 Science and Government (1961) p.55.
- 41 Hansard vol.287 (1967) loc.cit.
- 42 Science and Government p.55.
- 43 Hansard vol. 293 (1968) pp. 539-46.
- 44 cf. the second of Snow's criteria for effective committees in Science and Government p.74. (He declined to join the Robbins

Committee because he did not think that "any Committee of this type could possibly be radical enough" - Hansard vol.270 (1965) p.1294.).

45 Science and Government p.66.

Notes to Chapter Six

- 1 'The Two Cultures', Part IV, 'The Rich and the Poor', at Public Affairs pp. 38-44; 'The State of Siege', at Public Affairs pp. 214-7.
- 2 Perhaps events in world politics have overtaken specific points of Snow's argument - e.g. the 1973 raw material economy watershed, and the 1973-74 emergence of the Arabian oil-producing states.
- 3 'The Two Cultures', at Public Affairs pp.16-17, 21; 'A Second Look', at ibid. pp.53-4; 'The serious case', at ibid. pp.94-7; 'Science and Government', at ibid. pp.145-7; 'Appendix to Science and Government', at ibid. pp.184-5; Hansard vol.289 (1968) pp.856-63; ibid. vol.328 (1972) pp.859-65. cf. Bentley Glass, Science and Ethical Values Oxford University Press (1966) London pp. 76-84.
- 4 This is the point on which Leavis's argument fell down: Spectator 208 (March 1962) pp.297-303, and later Henry Fairlie, ibid. 211 (Nov.1963) p.211; as Stephen Toulmin noted (Spectator 208 (March 1962) p.332) such arguments do "not seem to know the difference between the tradition of scientific ideas (or 'natural philosophy') on the one hand and 'technology or scientific hygiene.'" cf. The Sleep of Reason pp.142-4 for an example.

- 5 Hansard vol,269 (1965) p. 853;
 vol. 270 (1965) pp.1296, 1299;
 vol. 302 (1969) pp.159-165.
- 'The serious case', at Public Affairs pp.90-2.
The Guardian 8th. September 1970, p.7.
- 6 The Two Cultures and A Second Look (1969) p.70.
- 7 Hansard vol. 261 (1964) pp.597-8; Time of Hope p.404:
 "I should never be able to comfort myself that I had grown up,
 that I had gone beyond the vulgarities of success." ; Last Things
 p.131: "People in the West were crying out for something more."
- 8 e.g. The Light and the Dark pp. 332-3.
- 9 'Reflections on Mr Dean's Report.' Spectator 167 (March 1954)
 p.283.
- 10 Homecomings p.202: "People of my sort have only two...."
- 11 'Reflections on Mr Dean's Report.', loc.cit. The New Men p.228.
- 12 This section simplifies the argument somewhat by treating closed
 and open politics as discreet categories, whereas most political
 processes are a mixture of the two, and one is really putting
 the question of the degree to which a process should be open
 or closed. See Chapter V, above, 'The significance of
 personal politics '.
- 13 'Science and Government' at Public Affairs p.131.
- 14 'Appendix to Science and Government', ibid. p.154 and cf. p.142.
- 15 The Light and the Dark p.255.
- 16 e.g. Corridors of Power p.250; The New Men p. 164.
- 17 'London Diary.' New Statesman 53 (March 1957) p.267; 'The
 Atomic Pioneers.' New Republic 139 (Oct.1958) p.19.
- 18 cf. The Sleep of Reason ch. 27.
- 19 The Affair p.277; Corridors of Power pp. 101, 131, 142.
- 19 op.cit.p.105.
- 20 Sunday Times 25th. Oct. 1970, p.21.

- 22 Herbert Simon's focus upon the decision-making process, which the individual approaches with 'bounded rationality', as the central process of an organisation is not at all dissimilar to Snow's attitude to individual life. (Two characters in The Conscience of the Rich, published in 1958, are called March and Simon).
- Similarly, although one would not like to place undue stress or reliance upon the comparison, Silverman's Action Theory is based upon competitive individuals of unique perception, and interpretation of events.
- J.G. March and H.A. Simon, Organisations Wiley (1958) New York.
- D. Silverman, The Theory of Organisations Heinemann (1970).
- 23 Jerome Thale, C.P. Snow (1964) op.cit.p. 60.
- 24 Dwight Waldo, The Novelist on Organisation and Administration Institute of Governmental Studies (1968) University of California, Berkeley, p.41.
- 25 ibid.pp. 47-8.
- 26 ibid. pp.57-8.
- 27 ibid. p. 58.
- 28 R.A.W. Rhodes implies a similar point in relation to Trollope, 'Wilting in Limbo: Anthony Trollope and the Nineteenth Century Civil Service.' Public Administration 51 (Summer 1973) pp.207, 210, 217.
- 29 With the possible exception of Corridors of Power.
- 30 Decision-making is, for Snow, the opportunity for men to control their destiny, and this opportunity must be taken to be real.
- 31 Political Theory and Practice Allen Lane The Penguin Press (1971) London, p. 8.
- 32 Time of Hope pp.115-116.
- 33 'Political Education' Bowes and Bowes (1951) Cambridge, pp.19, 10-11, 14; Crick, op.cit. p.7: "...the behavioural approach has cut itself off...from the most obvious range of explanations

of how...patterning / of behaviour / ...occur: history."

For Snow's agreement cf. Kermode, 'House of Fiction' Partisan Review 30 (Spring 1973) p.75.

34 Ashton sees a psychological study suppressed beneath the style: 'Realism and the Chronicle' op.cit. pp.520-2.

35 For example, the shift from aristocrat to bureaucrat as the 'class' most concerned with Government policy: The Conscience of the Rich through The Light and the Dark to Corridors of Power; and science, academia and the role of women : The Masters and The Affair .

36 Oakeshott, op.cit. p.25. For a full political education he would require comparative studies and philosophy. Snow compares cultures and groups bound by different traditions and values, but he does not present international comparisons to effect, except in discussing education itself. Of course, Snow has not claimed to be giving a full political education, and perhaps a more appropriate evaluation, suitable for his novels, would be Waldo's test of whether his work adds the concrete, sensual, emotional, subjective and valuational, to other descriptions of administration and politics (op.cit. pp.4-5, used by Rhodes for Trollope, above, n.28). This is a test of the value of an administrative novel, however, while an attempt has been made throughout this work to treat Snow's writings as a whole, and his novels as providing theories of politics, widely defined, providing more than illustrations of administrative situations.

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