Chapter-V

The Affair

I

Of the three major novels of C.P.Snow's The Affair (1960) is the only one which is a post-Two Cultures novel. It would be extremely interesting to examine this particular novel from the point of view of what happens to the thesis after it is crystallised in The Two Cultures. Quite a number of characters from the earlier two novels reappear in this novel, the action of which takes place in the post-Second-World-War period, that is, to be exact, in 1953. If The Masters explored the behaviour of the academic men - scientists and literary humanists - in the context of the election of the Master of the College, and The New Men took for its similar exploration of the interaction between scientists and non-scientists, one of the most tragically dramatic situations of the modern times - namely, the making of a nuclear bomb as a war weapon, ~~In this novel~~, The Affair, ~~Snow~~ explores similar interactions among a slightly more aged characters, by creating, as in the The Masters, a purely academic crisis which involves a scientific fraud. A young physicist

called Howard is accused of scientific fraud and this creates a highly charged political situation in the college. Crawford, the elected Master at the end of The Masters is still in charge of the college and some of the old people like Nightingale, Martin, Brown, Getliffe, Gay, Lewis Eliot, Winslow and some of the new people like Skeffington, Tom Orbell, Dowson-Hill, Donald Howard are involved in Howard's affair (the novel is called The Affair because Snow has at the back of his mind the Dreyfus-case). As William Cooper says, "While The Masters was the study in politics The Affair is a study in justice, actually justice tied down and regulated by a 'fine-structure' of politics, again the college microcosm symbolising the macrocosm."[1] When the novel opens, Howard has been already found quilty of a fraud by a Court consisting of four senior members of the College - Crawford, Brown, Nightingale and Winslow - and he is already dismissed ffom the college. One thing leads to another and the feeling spreads among some of the people in the college that there might be a miscarriage of justice in the case of Howard. There is some resistance among the college to reopening the case but after a good deal of interaction among the academicians a majority of the Fellows demand that the case should be opened. Following the conflict

between these Fellows and the Court of Seniors, Lewis Eliot is consulted as a legal advisor. Lewis Eliot who is supported by Martin and Getliffe is on the side of Howard and he fights the legal battle for him. The drama is intensified by another impending election as Crawford is about to retire. Francis Getliffe and Arthur Brown are the two candidates and their election is tied up with the affair. Howard wins the legal battle and is declared innocent, but the college agrees to take him only for a short time. As in The Masters we have here an exploration of group activities rather than those of individuals. As Jerome Thale points out, "Its plot depends on the group decision. In place of 'who will be the next master', the question is 'will the college reverse its dismissal of a former fellow?'"[2]

The narrator is Lewis Eliot who is centrally involved in the affair, because he, who is no longer a Fellow now, insists that the college should reopen the case, and it is he, the literary humanist, who deals more with the complexities of human nature than scientists normally do, that ultimately succeeds in unravelling the truth and getting Howard exonerated. Crawford gives Eliot a compliment in the end by saying that ultimately 'sensible men usually

reach sensible conclusions'[3] The implication is that people who belong to literary culture are more sensible when it comes to resolving a knotty human problem. The scientists in their straight-forward, direct, logical manner of thinking, tend to create problems which they don't know how to solve and the other culture has to come in to resolve the difficulties. The Affair appears to be conceived in a spirit of reconciliation between the two cultures. In The New Men Lewis Eliot comes off as a morally inferior person to his brother Martin, his moral inferiority being attributed to his possessive love towards his younger brother. Martin, the scientist with his straight-forward moral conscience comes off as an immensely superior human being, who sacrifices a glorious career as an applied scientist for the sake of the moral life of a pure scientist.

The Affair seems to be conceived with the intention of setting the balance right by proving that Lewis Eliot has the capacity to come off as an utterly moral man in the context of an impersonal case - that is a case in which he is involved from a totally objective point of view. In the beginning of the series of this sequence, Strangers and Brothers, Snow is more interested in depicting the estrangement between the scientists and

the non-scientists, but as days go by when Snow himself is more of a denizen of the world of the second pole - that is the pole of literary humanist culture, he appears to lean more on the side of literary humanists than towards the scientists. The novel starts with the possible immoral act of a scientist and goes on to unravel the real immoral act of a frustrated scientist and ends with a vision of a common world of humanity in which things like justice and assertion of ethical conscience are things of utmost importance. In The Two Cultures Snow says that there is a moral element at the heart of science, but The Affair proves that this moral element has to be supported by literary humanist culture for its full expression and assertion.

II

Surprisingly, Howard the young physicist, dismissed from the college for a suspected cause, plays a very minor role in the novel. In the beginning of the novel his wife Laura requests Orbell, a young historian, to see that her husband's case should be reopened, since she is sure that there is miscarriage of justice. Later Howard tells Martin that this affair is not an accident, suggesting that there is some deliberate conspiracy behind the disappearance of a photograph from his thesis.

Martin, who is convinced of his innocence, asks his brother Lewis to help him in the matter and both of them together question Howard about the incident and instruct him what he should speak when he is examined by the Court. So it is Howard's case which brings the two brothers together. The brothers who had become strangers, during the course of their career, become brothers again, thanks to their common involvement in Howard's case:

> "As we planned, each of us felt kinship and a curious kind of support. It was comforting - it was more than comforting, it was an active pleasure - to be at one, to be using our wits on the same side."[4]

Martin Eliot now in his late thirties has recently become a junior tutor, and does his job with obsessive conscientiousness. His prestige has been standing still for the last so many years. His throwing up a position of power and coming back to the college [cf. The New Men] hasn't done any good in terms either of his achievement or of his academic standing. He is now one of those who has a future behind him. He derives excessive satisfaction out of his excessive interest in teaching, since it gives him his bread and butter.

Academic politics seems to have caught him up, and he, too, has become like others, hard, selfish, cautious, and calculating. He cannot help moving the chess-board of power: he actually works for the magisterial election. He is now interested in trying for Brown as Master, so that if it comes off he can walk into the senior tutorship himself. As a young man his self-regard was romantic, as Lewis analyses. Twice in his life he had behaved extraordinarily: one, he made an imprudent marriage; two with real power waiting on his table, he quit the atomic establishment and came to hide himself in the college.[5] Now Howard's case offers him a third opportunity to be romantic. But this time there is a practical side to it, a political side which might further his interest. Martin, with the support of Tom Orbell, on the one hand, and his brother with his legal wisdom, on the other, decides not to accept the verdict of the Court of Seniors and plans a meeting of the majority. Ultimately, what we find is that he has become more like his brother, finding his fulfilment in his involvement in his family and children. Amidst all the complexities and contradictions in the academic life of the college, the thing that gives him a profound satisfaction is his love for his son, which is deep, tenacious and spontaneous. A pure idealistic scientist

thus becomes a man of the world and stands somewhere between the two poles of western culture. It is difficult to say whether this is a tragic predicament or just a realistic human condition.

It is possible to look at the novel as an exploration of Martin, who stands between two cultures. It is possible to place him at the centre of the novel and move the others along with Howard's affair into the background. A close reading of the novel with attention to the narrator's continuous analysis of Martin's character reveals that the real concern of the novelist is an examination of Martin's consciousness. For instance, take the following passage (there are many such passages in the novel) in which what Martin says about Nightingale is analysed in detail. Although Martin and his group had realised that Nightingale is the evil genius behind Howard's case, Martin says, "Still, I should have thought he'd tried to become a decent member of society I'm not prepared to kick him downstairs again unless I'm absolutely sure."[6] The passage I have referred to follows immediately after this and it runs as follows:

"Of these four, I was thinking, Martin

> was by a long way the most realistic. Yet it was the men of high principle, Skeffington and Francis, whom no one could imagine doing a shady act, who could themselves imagine Nightingale doing this. While Martin, who had rubbed about the world and been to one better than his brother men, could not believe it. Was it that realistic men sometimes got lost when they met the sensational - as though they had seen a giraffe and found that they couldn't believe it? Or was it more personal? In being willing to defend Nightingale's change of heart, in showing a heat of feeling which came oddly from him, and which had surprised us all, was Martin really being tender to himself? For he, too, of course, had tried to make something different out of his life."[7]

Lewis analyses why Martin should be showing some tenderness of heart towards Nightingale. He subtly attributes it to a certain contradiction in Martin's own consciousness. Lewis suggests, in a psycho-analytical manner, that Martin was really being tender to himself. By juxtaposing Nightingale and Martin, Lewis finds a certain odd similarity in them - both of them tried to make something different out of their lives, in one way or another.

Irene, Martin's wife, is now a happily married woman, a mother of a three-year old son. Their married life is very subtly depicted from time to time in this novel, though it does not become the area of central focus. For example, in Chapter Fourteen, there is an extremely perceptive domestic scene in which Martin and his wife are sitting on their lawn before dinner an a Monday evening. Irene, who is extremely fond of her son speaks of him in glowing terms, 'He's all man.' Then follows the passage which gives the subtle difference between Martin's love for the boy and Irene's love;

> 'He's all man,' she cried. 'He'll be as wild as a hawk, one day. That will be something.' Martin smiled. Even he, the most cautious of men, did not find the idea unpleasant. As for her she adored it. It was thinking, Martin's love for the boy was tenacious, deep more spontaneous than any other affection he had ever had. She loved the boy too, perhaps as much as Martin did, but in a way that was not in the ordinary sense maternal. She was a good mother; she was conscientious, to an extent that people who had known her in her raffish days could scarcely believe. And yet really she loved the boy looking upwards, not downwards, looking towards the time when he was a man, and would take her out and tell her what to do.'[8]

A little later the nature of their married life and a special kind of relationship they have with each other is again very perceptively described:

> "That was already so in her marriage, In calender years she was older than Martin: she looked older. But, now they had been married fifteen years, she had come to behave like a daughter to a father, who was wilful, capricious, but who was her one support: to whom under the teasing and the disrespect, she felt nothing but passionate respect."[9]

Most people had predicted that the marriage wouldn't work, even Lewis Eliot was apprehensive whether this odd marriage would work at all, but the thing is that the marriage had worked, to the great surprise and satisfaction of Lewis.

Speaking of the other scientists let us first take Francis Getliffe, who unlike Martin, becomes successful:

> "In the past few years the success which he had wanted honorably but fiercely . . . had suddenly piled upon him."[10]

He is now member of the Royal Society, and all over the world his reputation is very high. Again, for being one of the effective scientists in the war, he is given the C.B.E. and he has also earned a knighthood. With his strict code of fairness he tries to do justice towards Howard. In accordance with what Snow says of scientists, Getliffe is a leftist. He is instrumental in getting the case of Howard in reopening, though he knows that Howard shoudln't have taken Palairet's experiment on trust. He is critical of Howard, though he knows that he has to help him out:

> "If Howard's innocent, which I'm inclined to think he is, then he must break all records for stupidity. I must say, there are times when stupidity seems to me the greater crime."[11]

In spite of this criticism, he says, "now we have got to clear up this mess. ... All I hope is that it doesn't take too long."[12] Lewis observes with his mature perception, that "like most men of his granite-like integrity, he had a streak of vanity inextricably used within it."[13] Because of his vanity and self-regard, he doesn't want friction of any kind and doesn't want to make himself unpleasant to any one, particularly because the election is fast approaching. As a respec-

table distinguished scientist, he feels he must be true to all the technicalities. He pleads before the Court of Seniors in a tough, straight-forward manner without mentioning the name of the person who might have removed the photograph. Dowson-Hill, the opposition lawyer, feels that Getliffe is 'too scrupulous, too virtuous, too conscientious, too far from common clay."[14] What is important to notice in the characterization of Getliffe is that Snow is consistenly ironical about him though there is an element of sympathy in respect of his simple 'granite-like' moral integrity. Although he calls Howard a stupid man we see in Getliffe's own personality a streak of stupidity which comes out of his desperate clinging to the pole of scientific culture. Getliffe, thus, represents the moral limitations coupled with limitations in imagination that go with scientific culture if it is not properly humanised by literary culture. The fact that Snow makes him a slightly pompous and comic figure is significant criticism of some of the inherent limitations of scientific culture.

Walter Luke who is still the head of the atomic establishment at Barford, makes in an appearance in this novel, too, and it is interesting to get glimpses of this seasoned scientist in his forties. He is already

a member of the Royal Society, though he is younger than Crawford and Getliffe. If Crawford is an old-fashioned man of science who has reached to the top of his own little academic world, Luke, a much younger scientist, has reached the top of the scintific world with his ability and political skill. One of the points that Snow makes in all his novels is that, whether you belong to one culture or the other, you have to work in an organization, which means that you have to get inevitably involved in politics. Although Luke's creative scientific work is slender in comparision with that of Martin and Getliffe, because of his political situation and his narrow and intense patriotism he is apparently successful. If the scientists in the college are confined to college politics, Luke has been continuously in the midst of official politics of the country:

> "He had been in the middle of a good deal of politics, but it had been controlled, official politics, with the feelings, the antagonisms, the hates and ambitions, kept some distance beneath the skin. It hadn't been different in kind from the college's politics, but there was a difference - Luke had forgotten how much - in nakedness and edge. The curious thing was, in terms of person-to-person conflict, when one

from high affairs to the college are moved
moved from a more sheltered
life to a less."[15]

Being a mature work of Snow's, The Affair contains a number of insightful and perceptual analyses of various dimensions of power politics at various levels. After making this statement about how man feels more sheltered at the realms of power, the narrator gives a detailed analysis of his observation which is the precise opposite of what most of us would imagine. He then gives the example of some tycoons or boss-administrators who have not met a direct word of hostility for ten years.'[16] In a special sense they are always sheltered and do not have to listen to a breath of criticism of themselves as persons. He then saw that it is the artists who have to take a good deal of criticism:

> "People whom they, the bosses, thought passed happy-go-lucky lives, the artists living right out of 'the world', had to take criticism, face to face, as straightforward as a school report, each week of their lives as part of the air they breathed."[17]

Crawford the master who is also a scientist has now become a stickler for precedents and technicalities.

He asks Lewis Eliot to persuade the majority of the Court to reverse or modify their decision on Howard, but if the members don't do so he says, he will have to take a vote. As an old man of science he now feels that the new scientific generation is in decline. Towards the end he is happy that the business is settled without breaking too many bones and he heaves a sigh of relief when he says that after all "sensible men usually reach sensible conclusions." Crawford's Mastership has been a successful one, thanks to his dependence on Brown's politics. The Howard case reveals that if he asserts himself, distrubing Brown's protocol, he is left in the lurch without anybody's support. What we learn about Crawford in the end is that his success as Master has been based on somebody eles's strong politicking.

Skeffington is a scientist just under forty who makes an appearence for the first time in this novel. Actually, he has been a regular officer in the navy was going according to plan, suddenly he decides that he wants to make himself a scientist. Academically, he is junior not only to Martin and his other contemporaries, but to young men like Tom Orbell. His

fellowship is not yet a permanent one, and within the college he is on probation. Since he is a man of means he can afford a certain independence of mind and action. He is a devout Anglo-Catholic and a Tory. It is he who gives a push to the inquiry of the Howard affair, although Howard's wife Laura says that "he is a religious maniac and the worst snob in the college."[18] Ultimately it is he who is convinced of Howard's innocence and shows copies of the manuscripts to Martin and gets ready to defend Howard's innocence. Once he takes up the issue he rushes on with single-minded concentration. He is bent upon getting justice done to Howard. If justice is not done to Howard he threatens "to get the college into papers."[19]

Skeffington always burns with moral indignation and his concern with justice appears to be more impersonal than his personal interest in Howard. In fact, he is extremely angry with Howard, and sometimes he is angry with almost everybody without any discrimination. But he is totally committed to getting Howard exonerated. The following passage gives an adequate analysis of Skeffington's character:

"As for Howard, Skeffington was

> ready to abuse him too. In fact,, I had noticed in Skeffington the process one often sees in his kind of zealot. He was still, as he had been from the day of his conversion, more integrally committed to getting Howard clear than anyone in the college. His passion for giving 'that chap' justice had got hotter, not more lukewarm. But as his passion for justice for Howard boiled up, his dislike for the man himself had only deepened. And there was something else, just as curious. For Howard's sake - or rather, for the sake of getting him fair play - Skeffington was prepared to quarrel with his natural associates in the college: the religious, the orthodox, the Conservative. All this on behalf of a man whom Skeffington, not now able to bear him and not given to subtle political distinctions, had come to think of as the reddest of the red.[20]

Skeffington is a rabid anti-communist, so rabid that he thinks of not voting for Francis Getliffe at the magisterial election just because Francis has been known to have a weakness for the Left. Whatever it is he takes upon himself the question of proving Howard's innocence as a kind of mission - a mission for the sake of justice, and not for the sake of a

particular individual or a group of individuals.

Skeffington is a strange mixture of science and religion. Both scientific and religious attitudes contain an element of utter objectivity and impersonality, coupled with an element of total devotion and singlemindedness. Skeffington is an embodiment of these elements which are common to both a rigid scientist and a religious zealot. He cannot, therefore, tolerate any kind of complicated politics. That is the reason why we find him in a state of continuous anger and simmering indignation. Skeffington is the only one who is totally and uncompromisingly dissatisfied with the final decision of the Court regarding Howard. "Skeffington wouldn't budge from his incorruptibility."

Nightingale, now aged sixty, the seedy scientist of The Masters, plays a similar villainous role in the novel. Since he doesn't come off as a scientist his non-creativity has resulted in a certain twist in his character. In The Masters he is an embittered bachelor and now he is a married man - married to a nurse in a military hospital where he was recovering from injuries in the war. The fact that he shows great reluctance to discuss Howard affair in the presence of Lewis Eliot

itself shows that probably he is involved in it. He points out that Howard's work is totally insignificant as compared to Palairet's contributions. His question is: How can a man absolutely established like Palairet committ forgery? Although he is primarily responsible for mischief with regard to Howard's manuscript, the way he behaves with the other fellows and in the presence of the Court is something remarkable. He never shows, for a moment, any sense of guilt. On the other hand, the Court listens to him with respect: "He carried more weight than I liked," says the narrator. "Not that he had been offensive to me; he was brisk, efficient, impersonal, ... that impersonal tone was a strength. And it was another strength, of course, that he was immersed in the detail."[21] It is Jago who first suspects him of some deliberate mischief, primarily because in The Masters Nightingale had done Iago-like deed in trying to vilify Jago's wife. The other scientists who are trained to believe only what they see and observe, are hesitant to put the blame squarely on Nightingale. Lewis Eliot, of course, gives him plenty of suggestions that Nightingale is the villain of the piece. Snow depicts in Nightingale the degeneration of scientific creativity, which if not fulfilled in terms of genuine

achievement, takes devious paths of abnormality.

The group of non-scientists consists of many colourful, complex personalities. Paul Jago, the sole contestant against Crawford in The Masters is now retired, but he still has some vital connections with the college. Lewis Eliot the narrator, too, is no longer a Fellow of the college, but he still maintains connections with the college and both of them are made use of whenever there are problems in the college. For instance, if Jago is coopted as Court member, Lewis Eliot is appointed as Howard's pleader. These people who are both the insiders and outsiders at the same time help to lend a mature dimension to our understanding of the college politics. Arthur Brown is a historian, who is the chief manager of the political life of the college. He is now one of the contestants for the Mastership after Crawford retires. Then we have old Winslow, aged eighty years, who is still bursar, a member of the Court of Seniors. The new characters in this group are: Tom Orbell, a young historion, who is shaping into a modern academic politician, who supports Howard from beginning to end; Gay, who holds the office of Moderator, an ancient office which has been resurrected; G.S.Clark, aged

forty, a Don in modern languages, who makes an appearance in this novel for the first time; Lester Ince, who is an intellectual socialite, who dabbles in the affairs of the college making all kinds of comments on college academics; Dowson-Hill, the lawyer who works opposite of Lewis Eliot. There are five women: Laura Howard, Margaret Eliot, Irene, Hanna Puchwein, Katherine Getliffe. The world of non-scientists is too complex to be described in terms of generalities. It is they who make the warp and the woof of the life of common humanity.

Among the people who represent the literary humanist culture is, of course, Lewis Eliot, the narrator, who stands at the centre for two reasons: one, it is his consciousness with which we the readers live with from the beginning of the novel to the end. This consciouness represents the best in the literary humanist culture from the point of view of understanding, sympathy, moral uprightness, above all what we call, wisdom. This consciousness which is an embodiment of wisdom stands for both charity and justice. It is not a religious but a humanistic consciouness, liberal, middle-of the road, tolerant, with a firm grasp of the complexities and contradictions of reality. Let

us take a passage, any passage, casually picked from the novel, and it has in it a mature point of view. On page thirty-three, for instance, we have the following passage:

> "Quietly, his eyes sharp, Martin explained what they had done. I began to think I had been airy-fairy in my criticism. The more I heard of the story, the more I thought that they had been decent, cautious, hard-headed."[22]

We see that this self-critical consciousness which is open to all the existantial complexties of life ~~and~~ is ready to learn from experience, making constant modifications in it. We often get remarks like, "At last I could understand some of the eddies of anger."[23] "The younger generation of the college are moving to the Right so fast that survivals like myself would soon be left standing outside the gates."[24] Or take this one:

> "I felt frustrated, no, I felt more than that: I felt sheer loneliness. I wasn't thinking of the affair: it would mean working out another technique, but there was time for that. Under the trees, the sweet smell all round me, I couldn't stay detached and reflect with interest on the Jagos, I just felt the loneliness."[25]

Brown, a trained politician, is a shrewd manager of people, He is a conservative and an Anglican, He behaves as though he is one of the pillars of society. He goes to church regularly, but church-going is a matter of propriety for him more than a matter of belief. He just cannot understand a man like Howard but he is convinced that Howard is an 'unmitigated swine', 'a twister, graceless and vile in behaviour.' For him the Howard affair is closed and he just doesn't want to get it opened. The supporters of Howard feel that Brown is very obstinate in his conviction and that he is the biggest obstacle in their attempt to get Howard exonerated. Being a politician he is more interested in the coming election of the Master after Crawford retires. He is already planning to contest the election and it is but natural that Brown who is more interested in power politics is opening a case which has been settled by the Court of Seniors. Being a conservative he is always with the establishment and he dislikes disturbing the quiet status-quo of the college. The narrator's analysis of Brown's character is very perceptive:

> "As a young man, I believed, he had known unhappiness. He had known what it was like not to be

> loved; he always had sympathy,
> which came from a root deeper
> than good-nature, for those who
> had got lost in their sexual lives.
> But all that was long over. As
> an ageing man, he was utterly,
> sometimes maddeningly, unshakably,
> at one."[26]

In spite of Brown's strong views the Howard case gets reopened and the conflict between the groups gets intense and the emotion starts spinning wildly. Brown doesn't see any meaning in the Court of Seniors spending months of their time to reach the same decision twice. He makes a proposal for a third and final inquiry, at which Brown wants to change the procedure and to get Paul Jago co-opted to the Court . Being a Tory he has a sneaking admiration for Nightingale who had participated in the war. Brown who had missed the first war on ~~account of~~ medical grounds has a great veneration for courage and for military life. Brown was grateful to people like Nightingale, who he thinks, are the people who have kept him safe during the war. He is prepared to make a few allowances ~~towards~~ for Nightingale and says, "I feel ... a man like that deserves a bit of looking after."[27] Brown is the typical liberal humanist who wants life to be straightforward, joyous, and devoid of too many complications.

Being in his early sixties, he cannot understand the anxities and agitations of young people most of whom appear to him to be rather stupid or abnormal. But power is something, and the only thing that appears significant to him is the attainment of power by using acceptable means within the traditional framework.

Laura Howard cajoles him to reopen the Howard issue but, since he is a junior and the only one of the twenty, he plans to get the issue opened by somebody who is very senior and whose credibility is very high. It is he who suggests Laura ~~to~~ persuade Lewis Eliot to reopen the case. He doesn't like Howard personally but he acts from a direct feeling for a victim and partly from frustrated anger. He cannot stand old men. "By God, I've got to come in with you," he says. "I cannot stand awful old men."[28] When Crawford talks about trouble-makers he gets into a rage:

> Trouble-makers! What else in the name of heaven and earth do they expect honourable men to be? Have they forgotten what it was like to think about one's honour? God knows I don't like Howard; but was one word said last night, was

> one word even thought, about
> the man himself? It was so de-
> humanized it made my blood boil.
> Have they forgotten what it's
> like to be human?"[29]

It is Tom who is totally on the side of Howard, on principle, and he fights for his exoneration right upto the end. He is the passionate one who adds a lot of verbal colour to the college drama. He hates the establishment and angry with all those who try to ~~have the~~ compromise. He takes Martin and Francis to task for this conciliatory attitude:

> "'Who says it's enough? Haven't
> you done exactly the same? Isn't
> that the whole.. behind this
> precious bargain? I don't like
> the Establishment. But I'm beginning
> to think the real menace is the
> Establishment behind the Establishment.
> That's what some of you' - he looked
> with hot eyes at Martin, at Francis,
> at me - 'are specialists in, isn't it?'"[30]

He doesn't want time-bound reinstatement and insists on complete reinstatement:

> "'We insist on complete reinsta-
> tement. Payment in full for the
> period of deprivation. And the
> Fellowship to run from this day with

> the period of deprivation added on. We won't be fobbed off with less.'"[31]

The other characters, including the ladies, have a very minor role to play in the novel, and none of them is given novelistic importance in terms of the narrator's psychological interest. They come and go helping the dramatic scenes to take shape. Even Laura who makes a dramatic impact at the beginning of the novel fades out as one of the tools of plot-making. Only Irene is picked out for some analysis by the narrator, and, since Irene's character has been dealt with earlier it is unncessary to probe deeper. Winslow and Lester Ince are comic characters to add some relief to the serious action of the novel. Lester Ince, who has always a cheerful, cannubial, sexy air about him and who goes about attending parties and making odd remarks about college politics and college politicians, helps merely to add a social dimension to the academic drama. G.S.Clark, aged forty, and his wife Hanna Puchwein who consider Skeffington a play boy and do not believe in Howard's honesty are merely choric characters narrating the story of the Howard affair as it took place before the beginning of the novelistic action.

The Affair is one of the maturest novels that C.P.Snow has written, with total grasp of the entire situation in the novel and all the characters. The consciouness through which we see the entire drama of The Affair is subtle, urbane, uncompromisingly honest, and refreshingly critical all the time. This post-thesis (the thesis of The Two Cultures) novel examines his own thesis critically in terms of a concrete situation which brings together scientists and non-scientists in an interesting academic-cum-moral crisis. One of the points he makes in this novel is that the scientists, as they grow older, lose their characteristic attitude that are mentioned in the thesis-attitudes like individualism, rigorous rational thinking and direct moral decisions and leftist approach in politics and concern with the future etc. - and become more and more like the literary humanists. They get totally domesticated, and too much living with the family and the society around makes them lose their scientific angularities. They, too, become involved in politics, which is the common area for scientists and non-scientists to come together. In fact, they start developing an attitude of compromise and conciliation, and their socio-cultural interests

widen in ~~their~~ range with the result that the gap between the two cultures is shortened. It is true that the scientists have more straight-forward and simplistic ethical attitude and they still do not manage their practical affairs very well without the support of literary humanists.

What Snow says about the young and the old scientists in The Two Cultures is, of course, borne out by the novel. Skeffington is an example of the young scientist who is bent upon getting justice done to Howard. He is balanced by the young historian who is also bent upon in getting Howard exonerated although he doesn't like him personally. Skiffington's attitude is simple and straight-forward but, Tom Orbell hates all men and the entire Establishment and he is intolerant about any kind of compromise or conciliation. What Snow appears to be concered is the effects that ageing has on human beings: the ageing process with its increasing involvement in the socio-cultural process results in humanising the scientists. Snow is aware of the totality of the socio-cultural process in which both the young and the old, both the scientists and the non-scientists are involved. In fact, it is this process itself which bridges the gap between the so-called two cultures. Now does it mean that the novel

invalidates the thesis? No. It modifies the thesis and explores the possibilities of bridging the gap between the two cultures. A good novelist is never a dogmatist but an explorer, who explores the principles and idealogies men live by and the attitudes and the approaches that men fashion for themselves in terms of concrete human life. For a novelist, ultimately, life is more important than the thesis, but the thesis does help to throw light upon the conceptions of characters and his own approach to life. Being a denizen of both the cultures, Snow himself has worked out a synthesis of two cultures in his own life. Inevitably he cannot say that the two cultures are too seperate to be reconciled. The Affair is the embodiment of the possibilities of reconciliation.

Notes and References

1. Cooper. p.29.
2. Thale. p.39.
3. C.P.Snow., The Affair, Penguin Books, England, 1962, p.317.
4. Ibid., p.106.
5. Ibid., p.87.
6. Ibid., p.230.
7. Ibid., p.230.
8. Ibid., p.271.
9. Ibid., p.271.
10. Ibid., p.16.
11. Ibid., p.108.
12. Ibid., p.108.
13. Ibid., p.109.
14. Ibid., p.244.
15. Ibid., p.161.
16. Ibid., p.161.
17. Ibid., p.161.
18. Ibid., p.40.
19. Ibid., p.163.
20. Ibid., p.227.
21. Ibid., p.211.
22. Ibid., p.33.
23. Ibid., p.34.

24. Ibid., p.34.
25. Ibid., p.188.
26. Ibid., p.168.
27. Ibid., p.294.
28. Ibid., p.143.
29. Ibid., p.143.
30. Ibid., p. 314.
31. Ibid., p.314.