The Two Cultures and the History of Science

Frank James
Autumn Books Supplement

THE TWO CULTURES

"It's a matter of taste," said J. R. R. Tolkien, "but when we have been invited to a waterfall ceremony, it is not really people like me and J. J. Thomson and Katharine." Hardy was the first mathematician of his generation, J. J. Thomson the first physicist of his generation. If the principal meaning of these people is more than intellectual, then the meaning is more than intellectual. But it is not really people like me and J. J. Thomson and Katharine. It is not really people like me and J. J. Thomson and Katharine.

The first thing, impressively, is that it is a matter of taste. The second thing is that it is a matter of taste. It is a matter of taste. The second thing is that it is a matter of taste. It is a matter of taste.

The young Englishman at the beginning of the 18th century was a man of taste. The young Englishman at the beginning of the 18th century was a man of taste. The young Englishman at the beginning of the 18th century was a man of taste. The young Englishman at the beginning of the 18th century was a man of taste.

New Statesman, 6 October 1956
THE APPLE AND THE SPECTROSCOPE
being
Lectures on Poetry designed (in the main) for Science Students
by
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University Lecturer in English
with a Foreword by
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1951
BRITAIN’S TWO CULTURES
A Study of Education in a Scientific Age
By C. P. SNOW

We are the beneficiaries of a hundred years of educational science, and it is high time we rounded our educational system to a more flexible one. The present system is too rigid, too inflexible, too slow. It is not adaptable to the needs of today's society.

Perhaps the most interesting fact is that the old system of education is not only ineffective, but positively harmful. It is a system that never changes, that never improves, that never advances. It is a system that stagnates, that stays the same, that never grows.

But we must not deceive ourselves. These faults of being stuck in the past for a hundred years, of doing nothing about it, of not improving, are the fault of the old system of education. We are backward not only in the face of the present, but also of the future. We are not facing the challenge of the present, we are not ready for the challenge of the future.

The present system of education is not good enough. It is time for us to change. It is time for us to improve. It is time for us to advance. It is time for us to adapt.

What are we to do? We must not continue to neglect the importance of education. We must not continue to ignore the needs of today's society.

A Revolution in Education

By C. P. SNOW

This is the second of two articles by Sir Charles Snow, novelist and scientist, on Education in a Scientific Age. In the first article, which appeared last Sunday, Sir Charles spoke of the urgent need for more trained scientists and of the difficulties of the transition between the world of learning and the world of work. In this second article, he considers the education of our own youth and the steps that should be taken to ensure that they are properly prepared.
‘the scientific revolution … outshines everything since the rise of Christianity and reduces the Renaissance and Reformation to the rank of mere episodes, mere internal replacements, within the system of medieval Christendom’

'[Science] is the one product of the West that has had decisive, probably permanent, impact upon other contemporary civilizations. Compared with modern science, capitalism, the nation-state, art and literature, Christianity and democracy, seem regional idiosyncrasies, whose past is full of vicissitudes and whose future is full of dark uncertainty.'

‘not only is he [Snow] not a genius, he is intellectually as undistinguished as it is possible to be’

The Rede Lecture displayed ‘an utter lack of intellectual distinction and an embarrassing vulgarity of style’

As novelist Snow ‘doesn’t exist; he doesn’t even begin to exist. He can’t be said to know what a novel is’

F.R. Leavis, Gifford Lecture, *Spectator*, 9 March 1962
THE TWO CULTURES: A SECOND LOOK

by C. P. Snow

The first half of my lecture on "The Two Cultures" was delivered at the Royal Institution on 25 September 1963. In the second half I attempted to answer some of the objections that had been raised since the first lecture was delivered, and to discuss some of the implications of the findings of the second lecture. I have now written a book about the subject, entitled "The Two Cultures and the Second Personality". I shall be glad to hear from anyone who has any comments on my lecture, and to discuss the implications of my findings with them.

HENESK PEARSON

Henry of Navarre

The life of Henry of Navarre, the great soldier, statesman and lover who became Henry IV of France, written in the tradition which has made Hesekel, Pirocaus one of the foremost biographers of our time.

HEINEMANN

A BIOGRAPHY OF ADMIRAL LORD MOUNTBATTEN

Reginald Pound

A biography of the famous naval figure, Admiral Lord Mountbatten, who served in both World Wars and became the last Viceroy of India. He was also a prominent politician and author, and his life is told in this comprehensive biography.

Gellipoli to the Somme: RECOLLECTIONS OF A NEW ZEALAND INFANTRYMAN

Alexander Athkin

Foreword by Sir Bernard Fergusson

The letters of Captain William Bragg, Third (King's Own) Dragons

Edited by E. A. C. Tovey

The letters of Captain William Bragg, Third (King's Own) Dragons, edited by E. A. C. Tovey. One of the few personal records from the ANZAC Front, they provide a unique insight into the experiences of a New Zealand soldier during World War I.

Peninsular Portrait 1803-1814

The letters of Captain William Bragg, Third (King's Own) Dragons

Edited by E. A. C. Tovey

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Times Literary Supplement, 25 October 1963

The Royal Institution Science Lives Here

RBKC Two Cultures and the History of Science

25 September 2013
CIVIL SERVANTS’ SCIENCE TALKS

BRINGING TOGETHER “TWO CULTURES”

FROM OUR POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

The Treasury are to carry out an experiment to bring Sir Charles Snow’s two cultures together, or at any rate closer. In the autumn selected civil servants in the administrative grade who were educated mainly in the humanities will attend lectures and seminars at the Royal Institution, where leading scientists will expound some of the fundamental laws that underlie twentieth-century science.

Announcing the experiment in the Commons yesterday, Mr. Royd-Carpenter, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, explained that the aim will be to concentrate on younger members of the administrative class, and women civil servants would have the same opportunity as men.

“The aim,” he said, “will be not to try teach administrators to be scientists, but to improve their knowledge and understanding of scientific developments and of the scientific approach.

“The Royal Institution’s tradition and long experience in the exposition of science, and its facilities for this purpose, are an assurance that this will be a most valuable development.”

The Times, 6 May 1964
‘found a chair dealing with the humanistic relationships of science’

Singer to Blackett, 12 September 1958
‘the first holder of the chair will have the opportunity to bridge one of the gaps between the humanities and the sciences’.

History of Science groups established in addition to Cambridge, UCL, IC:
- Manchester University
- Leeds University
- Kent University
- Lancaster University
- Oxford University
- Open University
- Edinburgh University
- Durham University
- Leicester University
- Royal Institution

- Bath University
- Aberdeen University
- Queen’s University, Belfast
- Wellcome Institute
- Science Museum, London
- Loughborough University
- Sussex University (SPRU)
Committee on the Public Understanding of Science (COPUS)
Royal Institution
Royal Society
British Association

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<td>George Porter</td>
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<td>Lewis Wolpert</td>
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<td>Bridget Ogilvie</td>
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BSE
Foot and mouth disease
GM crops
Global warming
MMR
Scientists don’t speak with a single voice and there are significant power struggles within the scientific community.

There has, therefore, been very little clarity or long-term coherence from the scientific community about what they regard the social and cultural position of science to be.

Snow’s slogan, though apparently simple, has confused matters endlessly since it brings in everything from Britain’s place in the world to the role of education.

Because everything is under defined, attempts to address issues are prematurely perceived to have failed – e.g. history of science and public understanding of science.