CHAPTER IV
STRINGS OF THE HARMONY

A thematic study of C.P. Snow's novels reveals the subtle ways in which he sounds the depth of the human heart in its reactions to changing social milieus and shifts in time. The multiple focus attempts to probe into the conscience of men as a politician, man as a member of a social group, as involved in perpetual adjustments with his colleagues and institutions and moral codes and social purposes. His avowed purpose is 'to say something about people first and foremost and then people-in-society*. His is an insisive study of individual characters, themselves products of certain social forces, acting upon society and rather perplexed by the unexpectedness of its reactions. As the title of the entire series - *Strangers and Brethren* - suggests, his novels depict men as isolated in their own selves, lonely and strangers to each other but brothers in their resonances, in their joys and in their sufferings. His concern is with different groups who have come into power and who can take decisions affecting the lives of others. His characters are in conflict when personal ambition and
social conscience are at stake. He does not confine himself to the conscience of an individual but sets out to examine the moral conscience of England in the years that followed World War I. It is the themes of possessive love, of conscience and of struggle for power which dominate the novels of C.P. Snow and it is with the help of these that he attempts to probe the psyche of the post war middle class in England.

"What are men, solitarily, in themselves? and how, in their common experiences, are they brothers?"

These are the two main problems which Snow sets out to investigate in his sequence of novels and they, as a whole, formulate the general theme of 

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which binds and interlaces the other themes of the novels in a string of harmony. The whole sequence is an elaborate attempt to present the story of Lewis Eliot's life and consciousness in a changing milieu and, as C.P. Snow himself states in the 'Prefatory Note' to The Conscience of the Rich. "some of the more important emotional themes he observes

"William Cooper: C.P. Snow p.30"
through others' experience, and then finds them enter into his own.

These themes are mostly 'Possessive Love', 'Conscience', 'Ambition' and, to some extent, 'Lust for Power'.

(A) POSSESSIVE LOVE

Lewis Elist's relationship with his mother, in *Time of Haps*, bears upon the theme of ambition but we discover that, in *Homcoming*, it becomes central to his whole character. The theme of possessive love reappears in *The New Man* through Lewis Elist's relations with his brother, Martin Elist, the hero of the novel, and it is introduced in *The Conscience of the Rich* through Mr. March's relations with his son, Charles March. The last two novels - *The Man of Reason* and *Last Things* - elaborate the same theme while presenting the shifting pattern of relationships, between Lewis Elist and Charles, between Margaret and Maurice, and between Martin and Pat.

*Time of Haps* deals with the direct experience of Lewis Elist whose earlier life was full of struggles and stresses. The story starts when Lewis Elist was a boy.

\(^2\)C.P. Snow: Prefatory Note to *The Conscience of the Rich*
of nine in a provincial town and ends when he has launched on a legal career as a young barrister in London, rather unhappily married to Sheila Knight. In the earlier part of the novel we see that Lewis Eliot's mother has great ambition for her son's career but is unhappy because her financial condition does not allow her to provide him with good education. Mrs. Eliot herself, before her marriage, was an ambitious woman but her ambitions were not fulfilled and she, now, wants to see her hopes materialize in her son. She advises him not to be satisfied in life but to climb ever upwards. She also expresses her desire to live long enough to see Lewis Eliot achieve all that she hopes for him. Unfortunately, she dies when Lewis Eliot is still working as a clerk in an education office.

The latter part of the novel deals with the early struggles and successes of Lewis Eliot and his intense and hopeless passion for Sheila Knight. Lewis's rejection of the relatively safe prospect of becoming a solicitor for a precarious chance of a career at the bar shows to what extent Eliot is driven by his mother's hopes for him. His own love for Sheila has the same possessive
aspect as his mother had for him. Their unhappiness springs from this same characteristic. Eliot's intense desire to possess Sheila, body and soul, is frustrated for the simple reason that Sheila does not wish to be possessed, though she trusts him implicitly: "I don't love you but I trust you". The marriage proves disastrous and his progress is hampered. He, still, cannot leave her and even when she, at the end, offers to leave him he asks her to stay.

The driving forces of Lewis's life are ambition and love around which the whole plot of the novel moves. We may divide Eliot's life, as presented, into two parts. The earlier part is influenced by his mother's possessive love and her ambition for him while the latter is dominated by Eliot's dreams of success and his intensely possessive love for Sheila.

Eliot's mother is passionately anxious about his success in life. In the beginning she does not want to let Eliot know his father's rather low financial condition but when she realises that Aunt Milly will certainly talk to Eliot about this she tells her husband to clarify the position to Lewis Eliot. Her possessive love makes her feel that Lewis should learn about his

3 C. P. Snow, *Time of Hope*, p. 177
father's property. She tells Lewis:

"I'd have kept it from you if I could... But I wasn't going to have you hear it first from Aunt Milly or someone else. If you've got to hear it, I couldn't abide it coming from anybody else. It had to be from us".

She invests all her hopes in Lewis and is ambitious about his glorious success in his life. She is a proud lady but when she sees no way for Elliot's education her vanity melts and she goes to Aunt Milly to remind her of her promise to help Elliot in his education:

"This bit of begging - as she called it - for my fees was the first she had descended to."

When as a piece of good luck Elliot gets three hundred as a legacy from an aunt on his mother's side she feels very happy and does not forget to remind Lewis:

"Don't forget... that Ba's money ought to have been mine. I should like to have given it to you."

4 C.P. Snow: Time of Hope: p.73
5 C.P. Snow: ibid: p.41
6 C.P. Snow: ibid: p.73
Aunt Milly insists that Lewis should pay back his father's debt with that money but his mother urges him to use the money towards furthering his career. Snow stresses the possessive love of Elliot's mother for him again and again. Even when she is on her death-bed she thinks of nothing else but of Elliot's career and success. She calls Lewis and requests him to use the money that he has got as a legacy, in a suitable way. Further we hear the inner voice of Elliot's mother:

"I wanted to go along with you", she cried. "I wanted to be part of you. That's all I wanted." 7

Although she dies early it is her ambition for her son that drives Lewis to hard work for success and it is due to this that he prefers to read for the Bar examination instead of opting for the relatively safe prospect of becoming a solicitor.

The latter part of the novel shows how Elliot's love for Sheila tinged on possessiveness. Though repeatedly hated and hurt by Sheila's behaviour, Lewis

7 C.P. Snow, Time of Hope, p. 75
thinks all the time about her and even the light
in the windows of her house gives some consolation
to him whenever he passes by that way. Asked about
her behaviour Sheila clarifies the point to Lewis:

"I thought you were too possessive... you wanted me too much".

Again and again Elliot is seen changing his
mind about Sheila. At one stage he decided to cut
her out of his mind, not to see her, not to write to
her but next moment he finds himself obsessed with
the thoughts of Sheila. When he gets the news of
his success at the Bar examination, he is unable to
control himself and writes a letter to her asking her
to come and see him:

"It was surrender to her, unconditional
surrender. I had sent her away, and now
I was crawling back. She would be certain
in the future that I could not live without
her. She would have nothing to restrain
her. She would have me on her own terms." 9

In spite of Sheila's warning that their
marriage might injure him appallingly, Elliot marries
her and both of them become unhappy. Between them

8 C.P. Snow: Time of the Hero P.177
9 C.P. Snow: ibid.; p.213
there was none of the give and take of the two hearts.

Again at the end of the novel we are confronted with Lewis's indecisive nature. He reflects over his past life and finds that he wanted two things in his life - success and love - and could not get either:

"I had longed for fame; and I was a second-rate lawyer. I had longed for love; and I was bound for life to a woman who never had love for me and who had exhausted mine." 10

He realized that it was his own fault because he could not perceive the full truth of what his nature needed. He knows that Sheila is doing much harm to him. Once again he resolves that he and Sheila should separate. When he tells her this she at once agrees. But it is not possible for Lewis to live without Sheila. The resolution is changed. He is not ready to leave her. He knows the cost of keeping Sheila and yet he cannot let her go. Lewis is helpless and says:

"She touched the depth of my vanity and suffering, and that this was my kind of love." 11

10 C.P. Snow: *The Man to Man*, p.358
Lewis's kind of love is the same kind that his mother had for him. Jerome Thale maintains that Eliot loved Sheila for "he can love without the burden of being loved." It was in some respects his desire to be free of everything. But, as we see Eliot struggling with his obsession, this seems far from being the case. It is not freedom that Eliot seems to be experiencing, it looks more as if his mother is asserting herself from beyond. Eliot has inherited her possessiveness. The irony is that possessiveness is bondage, and that is what Eliot is so deeply and intensely feels.

Sheila's episode is more of an exception in Lewis's life than the rule. His relationship with other women reveals this desire to be free from possessiveness that Thale, speaks of. Throwing light on this theme Robert Greacen remarks in his article 'The World of C.P. Snow' that in Time of.Hand "Eliot's mother is both dominating and loving and keen that he should succeed in life. The boy cannot fully respond to her love. He tries to cope by being absent-minded,"

12 Jerome Thale: C.P. Snow: P.48
'distant', evasive. This pattern is repeated in his relationships with other women. Quite simply he reacts as best he can against feminine possessiveness.  

This reaction against 'feminine possessiveness' plays its part in *Homecomings*, the second novel dealing with Eliot's life. The first part of the novel shows the further relations between Lewis Eliot and Sheila. Lewis is much disturbed as Sheila occupies herself with Robinson's work all the time. Robinson spreads rumour about Lewis and Sheila, still he, only because of Sheila, recommends his work to different publishers. Lewis knows that Sheila is harmful to him, yet he cannot leave her. Sheila's words are enough to tell us how Lewis is prepared to sacrifice everything for her:  

"Well, you've sacrificed things you value, haven't you? You used to mind about your career. And you've sacrificed things most men want. You've liked children and satisfactory bed. You've done that for me."  

13 Robert Greacen: *The World of C.P. Snow*  
14 C.P. Snow: *Homecomings*  
(London: Penguin, Rtd. 1966) p.38
As Sheila finds no interest in life she kills herself. Lewis is shocked at the news and when he finds that Sheila has left no words for him he becomes angry:

"I had loved her all my adult life. I had spent the years of my manhood upon her, with all the possessive love that I had once felt for her. I was scared because she had not left me a good-bye."

After two years of Sheila's death Lewis forms relations with Margaret. Once again Lewis is so possessed that he is sensible beyond control if Margaret looks a bit uneasy. Whenever Margaret is worried Lewis blames himself and she does not like this. Because of his secretive nature Lewis hides the fact of Sheila's suicide from Margaret. When she knows this she thinks that Lewis has no confidence in her and finds a better man in Geoffrey Hollis, whom she marries.

The third part of the book presents Lewis's life after Margaret's departure. A man called Gilbert is working in Lewis's department and whenever Lewis

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15 C.P. Snow: BRITISH INDIANS
sees him he remembers Margaret because Gilbert is an acquaintance of hers. He, somehow, arranges for his transfer to another department. The more he tries to be free from the thoughts of Margaret the more possessed he becomes with them. Though he worked for Gilbert's transfer so that no thought of Margaret could enter his mind, yet after some days he is impatient to get news about her and goes to him.

When Margaret's father, Austin Davidson, calls at Lewis's office and invites him to a party in his house he is much pleased as once more he would have a chance of seeing Margaret. While attending the party he gets another invitation for dinner from Margaret's husband and then admits that "she was not free of me, any more than I of her".16

It is hard for Margaret to divorce Geoffrey against whom she has no complaint. Because of this she does not want to marry Lewis. Even without marriage she is ready to continue her love-affair with him but because of his possessiveness Lewis wants

'all or nothing' from her. Ultimately, divorce is obtained and Lewis and Margaret marry.

Thus, in his relations with either Sheila or Margaret Lewis is always a victim of possessive love, because of which he has to suffer and sacrifice much.

*Lost Things*, with its various themes, is Snow's third and last novel which presents Lewis Eliot's personal and direct experience. It reiterates the theme of possessive love in relationships of Lewis, Martin and Margaret with their sons. Pat, Martin's son, is married to Muriel Calvert but the relationship is, somehow, broken. No one but Martin takes it as common thing. He finds no fault with his son because his is "the most tenacious kind of parental love". Lewis Eliot observes closely the relations between Martin and Pat and comes to conclusion that:

"...one-sided though such a relation as Martin's and his son's had to be, it took two to make a possessive love. With some sons it couldn't endure; if it did endure, there had to be a signal - sometimes the call for help - the other way. Pat had cost his father disappoint-ment and suffering; there had been quarrels, lies, deceit; but in the midst of it all there was,
and still remained, a kind of communication, so that in trouble he went back, shameless and confiding, and gave Martin a new lease of Hope." 17

In Martin's view 'this business of his must be fairly common, mustn't it? You know, I'm pretty sure that I could have done the same.' Even Charles's remark about the broken relations between Pat and Muriel that "it's going to be a blow for uncle Martin, isn't it?" indicates Martin's possessive love.

Maurice's decision to marry a 'handicapped' girl called Diana disturbs Margaret much and she tells Lewis:

"I've imagined all sorts of weddings for Maurice. I haven't told you, but I have. So many women would have married him, wouldn't they? But I never imagined anything like this." 18

Her hopes are shattered and with heavy heart she asks: "tell me, Lewis, is that a real marriage?" Mother's possessive love is reflected well in Lewis's words:

17 C.P. Snow: Last Things: p.82.
18 C.P. Snow: Last Things: pp.231-232.
"As she had told Godfrey, she wanted Maurice to be like everyone else; or as near like as he could come... Margaret and I had often agreed, behaviour was more important than motive. And yet she, as a rule less suspicious than I was, had her moments of suspicion about this son she loved. Was it too easy for him to be good? Was it just an excuse for getting above, or out of, the battle? Did he really feel joyous and whole only with those who were helpless?"

All through the novel Lewis creditably restrains himself from interfering with his son's career and allows him to make his own decisions but at the end this puts him in an unhappy position because Charles's choice is different from what he would have made. As a father it is his intense desire that his opinion should be counted but he is hurt when he finds his son independent in his choice and tastes the bitterness of possessive love.

Ultimately, Lewis comes to see his possessive love for what it is:

"...affections, especially in families didn't carry the same weight on either side. I ought to have known that, from the way I behaved to my mother. It was a kind of vanity to suspect that another's choices depended on his relations with oneself."

\[19\] C.P. Snow: *Last Things* : p.234
Choices, lives, were less clear than most of ours had been. That was no consolation for me, sitting there in the bedroom. All I could do was think of him, not with affection, not even with concern, but with anger mixed with a kind of fellow-feeling, or a brutal sympathy of the flesh. \(^\text{20}\)

To quote Jerome Thale, "The New Man is thematically closer than the other novels of 'observed experience' to Lewis Eliot's own history." \(^\text{21}\) It records the multiple experiences and independent thoughts of Martin Eliot, Lewis's younger brother. Lewis Eliot's concern for his brother is tainted with possessiveness and that part of Martin's development lies in breaking away from his brother's concern. The novel examines the conscience of a group of scientists as well as the conscience of Martin Eliot and it ends in a conflict between possessive love and conscience. There is an interplay of will and possessive love between the two brothers.

At the beginning of the novel we find that Lewis Eliot is worried about his brother.

\(^{20}\) C.P. Snow: Last Things: p.336  
\(^{21}\) Jerome Thale: C.P. Snow: p.45
Martin, especially about his marriage and his job. As Eliot's mother had much hope for him he, likewise, has much hope for Martin. His expectations are greater as he himself could not reach a higher position in life. Lewis does not want that Martin should compromise his talents. If Lewis persuade Martin not to marry Irene it is because he believes that Martin will then have no prospects and she will be a burden to him.

When Lewis is successful in getting a job for Martin in the Barford Project he feels elated because he will have some responsibility for the career of his brother. Lewis wishes that Martin should play a successful part in the making of the bomb. When people start thinking that the Barford Project is useless and begin to argue whether it should be abandoned Lewis is angry with Martin because of his ill-luck. Lewis wants to see his brother in a good position and whenever a chance is lost he holds Martin responsible for it.

Martin, along with the other scientists, works sincerely at the Barford Project for making the bomb. In the meantime they come to know that Americans have
already manufactured the bomb and dropped it on the Japanese. None of them likes it. Martin is very angry and drafts a letter to be sent to the Editor of The Times pointing out the grave consequences of the use of the bomb and registering his personal resentment against its use. He expresses his view that "a minimum respect for humanity required that a demonstration of the weapon should be given, e.g. by delivering a bomb on an unpopulated territory, before one was used on an assembly of men, women and children." Lewis knows that the publication of the letter would mean the end of Martin's career. He believes in each and every word of the letter, but he still persuades Martin not to send it. It is Lewis's possessive love which lays down a different code of conduct than the one he would follow himself:

"For a brother as far son, one's concern is, in the long run, praiseworthy and crude. One is anxious about their making a living; one longs for their success, but one wants it to be success as the world knows it, reputation among solid men. For myself my own 'respectable' ambitions had damped down by now, I should perhaps have been able, if the choice was sharply enough, to throw them away and face a scandal. For myself, but not for him."23

22 C. P. Snow: The New Men. p. 149
23 C. P. Snow: ibid. p. 238
Lewis is much pleased when a chance comes for Martin to be the 'topman' in the Barford Project but Martin, to Lewis's surprise, declines the offer, saying that unless he did some real science soon he never would like to have the offer. Martin informs Lewis that this change in his mind came soon after the bomb was dropped. Lewis feels that perhaps he himself was responsible for the change in Martin's attitude. Martin, however, tells his brother that he would never have the success which Lewis has been hoping for him and requests him (Lewis) not to take the blame on himself because even without Lewis he would have done the same thing. Really speaking, it is Martin's conscience that works. Rightly does Lewis feel that his possessive love does not influence Martin who talks to him not like a younger brother but as an equal to an equal, a contemporary to another contemporary, a self-made man to another self-made man. He knows now that he will have no share in Martin's career.

Most part of the last chapter in the novel is devoted to Lewis's reflections on himself and his brother. Lewis admits that his fraternal concern had consisted not so much in worrying for Martin's happiness
as in cherishing hopes for his career. Now he finds that Martin, respecting the behest of his conscience, has renounced power and found his happiness. The conflict between the conscience of Martin and the possessive love of Lewis is conspicuous when we find that Lewis looks to Martin for going the way he has chosen for Martin but Martin goes the opposite way. Lewis compares his possessive love for Martin with that of his mother for himself and finds that everyone tried to cut himself free from that sort of possessive love. He terms it 'a darkness of the heart':

"If you identify yourself in another, however tough the tie between you, he cannot feel as you do, and then you go through (you who have been living your life in another) a state for which the old Japanese found a name, which they used to describe the sadness of a parent's love: a darkness of the heart.

I ought to have known it for my mother had tried to relive her life in me and I had not been able to return that kind of love. I too had been compelled to cut myself quite free. It was a little thing, the human price that Martin and I had paid."34

34 C.P. Snow: The New Man: p. 235
At the end Lewis realises that out of his affection he had done much harm for Martin and brought some sadness on himself.

In The Far Ken the theme of possessive love is secondary while in The Conscience of the Rich it is a major one. It is introduced through Mr. March's relations with his son, Charles March. Charles March, the hero, sets out to conquer the darker and wilder aspects of his own nature so that he may achieve his own idea of goodness. For this he has to struggle to emancipate himself from the oppression of family ties and the traditional background, but is brought into bitter conflict with his father's possessive love. Mr. Leonard March, the father, is always obsessed with the traditional background of his faith and with riches while Charles March, his son, and Katherine, his daughter, react against the traditional faith and do not attach much importance to wealth. Charles gives up his practice at the Bar because he does not see any purpose in such a life. He accepts the career of a doctor.

Charles always strives to achieve goodness. Mr. Leonard does love his son but is unwilling to give
him freedom even after his marriage as Charles is unwilling to confine himself within the bounds of the Jewish religion, the faith of his father and his family. Charles's desire for goodness does not allow him to accept the norms of his father. His father wants to see him happy and well but Charles does not accept his advice. Charles's abandonment of his career at the Bar is due to his quest for values and meaning in life, for he feels that the legal profession is an 'occupation' and that it is 'cut-throat' business. March's grievance at this defiance by Charles and, to some extent, of Katherine, who refuses to participate in the dancing party, gives us a comprehensive view of his obsessive thoughts for his family. He tells Charles:

"You've never taken the part everyone wanted you to take. You've not had the slightest consideration for what the family thinks of me. You wouldn't cross the road to keep me in good repute." 25

It is Mr. March's possessive love which makes him ask Ann Simon, who was in love with Charles,

"Why my son is contemplating a completely unsuitable career?" Her father is a medical practitioner and hence he suspects that she is responsible for the change in his son's career. But really speaking, Charles himself has decided to go in for the career of a doctor. Mr. March feels:

"She was taking away his son, destroying all his hopes: this was the loss which kept biting into his thoughts." 26

A rumour spreads that along with others Philip March, Charles's uncle, has taken the advantage of a government contract. It is felt that Ann Simon, Charles's wife, is one of the leading persons in bringing to light this scandal for all the papers are in her possession. Everyone knows that if Charles asks Ann to destroy the papers regarding the scandal she would certainly do that. Mr. March wishes that those papers should, somehow, be destroyed as his brother's career depends on this. He tries to persuade his son and also threatens him that if he does not ask Ann to destroy the papers he will have no share in his father's property. But Charles is unaffected.

26 C.P. Snow: The Conscience of the Rich: p.132
by this threat. Charles clarifies that under no circumstances his decision would have taken any other form. Charles's decision goes against his father's will and this results in Charles's exclusion from the party which is arranged in Mr. March's house to celebrate Elist's 'success'.

"I want something for you, I wish I could know that you'll get something that I've always wanted for you,"[29] says Mr. March to Charles and tries to keep him financially dependent on him. But, throughout the novel, both of them face a conflict which arises on account of Charles's conscience and Mr. Leonard's possessive love resulting in the separation of both. William Cooper has aptly remarked that "Possessive Love is the principal theme of this novel."[30]

The theme of Reason, dealing with the theme of absolute freedom, also refers occasionally to the possessive love of Martin for Pat. Besides

27 C.W. Snow: The Conscience of the Rich: p.68
29 William Cooper: C.W. Snow: P.18
this, Lewis is reminded of this sort of relations which he has observed in other persons known to him.

Irene, worried about Pat's career, is horrified at the debts which she has incurred mainly for his but when Lewis volunteers to offer his help Martin refuses and says: "That isn't necessary". He would not like to accept any help even from his brother for his son. This reminds us of Lewis's mother who, with great difficulty, had accepted Willy's help for her son's education. For Pat's failure in academic career Martin would not blame him but tells Lewis: 'I wish I knew where to blame myself'. Finding no fault with his son, he is sure that the school authorities were not clever enough to handle him properly. With full faith in Pat, Martin can tell his brother:

"I've got to make sure where I've made the mistakes so that I can get him started now".29

Lewis calls Martin's love for his son "a devotion... absolutely possessive and absolutely self-sacrificing". Lewis knows that Martin himself was ambitious and getting no success in his life he

29 C.P. Snow: The Name of the Rose: p.74
tries 'to compensate in the success of his son'.
Lewis comments that "it was man like himself, social
and secretive, who were most often swept by this
kind of possessive passion". This experience is
not new for Lewis as he finds this kind of passion
in many persons, including himself, and talks of
its unpleasing results:

"I had seen it in the relation of Katherine
Getliffe's father with his son. It had
brought them both suffering, and to the old
man worse than that... I had seen this passion
in old Mr.March. But I had felt it in my-
self. I had felt it in one person, and...
that was Martin... Once again it had brought
us suffering. It had separated us for a time."30

Regarding Vicky Shaw's love for Pat when
Lewis finds Martin speaking with great accuracy about
his son's affairs he realises that:

"...he knew his son abnormally well, not
only in his nature but in his actions day-to-
day. Whatever their struggles or his dis-
appointments, they were closer, much closer,
in some disentangleable sense, than most fathers
and sons. It struck me - not for the first
time - that it took two to make a possessive
love."31

It is seen throughout the sequence that the
theme of possessive love is introduced, except in case of

30 C.P. Snow: The Sleep of Reason; p.75
31 C.P. Snow: ibid; p.76
Charles March, mainly through Lewis Eliot's life and it dominates his whole family. When Eliot's mother could not fulfill her own ambition she invests her hopes in Lewis and when Lewis could not get success in his life he wants to see his hopes materialized in his brother, Martin. Martin also finds himself in the same position when he tries to compensate his own failure in the success of his son, Pat.

Lord Snow has made it clear in his novels that possessive love never brings happiness. Charles March was a 'favourite child' of his father but because he could not confine himself within the bounds of the Jewish faith and the traditional background as his father desired, he had to cut himself off from his father. Because of this possessive love Lewis's life is disturbed and he could neither get love, nor success. He loved Sheila who had exhausted all her passions and could not love him. He knew this, yet he could not free himself. It was only when she committed suicide that he thought of another woman. Once again his behaviour does not change. His possessiveness
drives Margaret away. He also has to face the unhappy consequences of his possessive love for his brother Martin whom he wanted to see as a 'top man' in the Barford Project. This resulted in their quarrel and for some time their relations were strained. When Lewis realises the consequences of possessive love he is happy with Margaret. Because of these experiences when Lewis finds his son, Charles, independent in his choice of career he does not interfere. He is unhappy, but lets Charles go his way. The experience of possessive love has changed the way of Lewis's life.
(b) CONSCIENCE

Though the theme of conscience is almost an orchestral music in all the novels of Snow it is presented in full harmony in *The Conscience of the Rich* and in *The New Man*. Charles March and Martin Elist are guided by their conscience in the choice of their careers. Their material gains could have been far greater had they acted otherwise.

Snow's preoccupation with the theme is obvious in the second novel of the series, *The Conscience of the Rich*. It is a serious attempt to explore the moral nature of men. Here Snow deals with men as isolated in himself and in relation to other men, the ultimate quest of the novel being the significance and meaning in human life. Charles March, the hero, and Lewis Elist, the narrator, belong to two different faiths but are friends with an innate sympathy for each other. Charles sets out to conquer the darker and wilder aspects of his own nature in order to measure up to his rooted idea of 'goodness'. It is with this desire that he struggles to emancipate himself from the oppressive family ties and the traditional background of his Jewish faith.
He, however, finds himself in bitter conflict with his father's possessive love.

The novel, from beginning to the end, traces the development of the conflict between the older and younger generations. Leonard March, the father, is obsessed with the traditional background of his faith and the family riches while Charles March, his son, and Katherine, his daughter, find the traditional faith a nuisance and do not attach importance to riches. Being 'spiritually arrogant,' Charles gives up the practice at the bar because it conflicts with his sense of values. Finding no other profession morally good enough he embarks on the career of a doctor because he feels that the profession may accord well with his cherished sense of values. Mr. March feels elated and important when he comes to know that his brother, Philip March, has been appointed Parliamentary Secretary. But just after this the family is shocked by Katherine's determination to marry Francis Gotcliffe, a Gentile, though their anger is a little subdued when Charles announces that he is going to marry Ann Simon, a Jewess.

Francis Gotcliffe is a renowned scientist without any
political affiliations while Ann is a girl with
a communist leaning. The marriages, however, take
place in due course. Even after his marriage no
settlement is made for Charles who continues to
be dependent on his father. This is because Charles
refuses to confine himself to the bounds of the
religion and the faith of his father. The story
now takes a turn. It is rumoured that Philip March,
in his capacity as Parliamentary Secretary, has reaped
an advantage from a certain government contract and
it is feared that questions may be raised about it
on the floor of the House. The whole family is upset.
It is also suspected that Ann is taking an undue
interest in the whole affair. Ann is asked to stop
her scandal mongering but refuses to do so. When
Ann is taken ill Leonard March, the father, secretly
wishes that she should die, for her death would
conveniently end all their troubles. If Charles
were to ask Ann to destroy all the papers regarding
the affair there was every chance that Ann might
oblige but Charles declines to help. Though Katherine,
when he loves much, is angry at his refusal he does not
change his mind. He is adamant even when Mr. March
threatens to disinherit him. Katherine and Mr. March curse his marriage with Ann but Charles says that even otherwise his views would have been the same. Finally, Philip March is accused of having misused the information and is dismissed from service. Though Charles March loves his father and wants to see him happy he also desires to emancipate himself from the family ties and traditional background of his faith. But his father, even when loving him as a 'favourite child', does not want to see him 'free'. In the end we have the description of a dinner party to which Charles is not invited. Old Mr. March is seen alone in his room thinking about his riches and testing the latches of the windows. With this significant and symbolic action the novel ends.

The novel deals with, as the title suggests, the working of the conscience of the rich and the mystery of its ways. The conscience of Leonard March who loves his son, Charles, and longs for his success does not permit him to set his son free from the shackles of his possessive love. He does not want Charles to attend the party described at
the end of the novel because he has broken the faith and betrayed the clan. The conscience of Charles March, the hero of the novel, who is not tempted by the riches of his father, is a complex entity and functions in a subtle way. He stands by his conscience, though as a son he does feel sorry for being the sole cause of his father's unhappiness. Although he is successful at the bar he gives up practice as he cannot reconcile himself to such a life. He had taken law only as an 'occupation'. His is the constant endeavour to free himself from the traditional restraints of his family and faith. He finds the confines of the Jewish intolerable. He knows that if he stays at the bar he would find his 'environment' oppressive. He says:

"The Bar represented part of an environment that I can't accept myself. You see, I can't say it simply. If I stayed at the Bar, I should be admitting that I belonged to the world ... of rich and influential Jews. That is the world in which most people want to keep me. Most people, both inside it and outside. If I stayed at the Bar, I should get cases from Jewish solicitors, I should become one of the gang. And people outside would dismiss me, not that they need so much excuse, as another bright young Jew. Do you think it's tolerable to be set aside like that?"32

Had he altered his opinion at his father's bidding and asked his wife to destroy the papers about the scandal his uncle, Philip March, would not have been dismissed. On the contrary, he would have been promoted to a minor ministry as previously planned and as a result he would have made his father happy. He himself would have profited from the family inheritance but his moral nature revolted against this course of action and he preferred to be guided by his conscience. He may stand to lose the love as well as the property of his father but he would not ignore the voice of his conscience.

In her book, 'The World of C.P. Snow,' Helen Gardner remarks that "The appeal of 'a snow situation' is primarily an appeal to the conscience and to our moral experience". Though this remark applies to almost all the novels of Snow it is more germane in the case of The conscience of the Rich. A probe into the inner personality of Charles March reveals that his conflicts with his father and the Jewish faith had the hidden springs in his secret fascination for what may be called the 'idea of goodness'. His acceptance of his father's way of life would have

33 Helen Gardner: 'The World of C.P. Snow'; New Statesman & Nation, no.1411 (29 March 1958) p.410
amounted to self-deception and would have thwarted his 'search for goodness'. This infatuation for what he conceives as goodness leads him to work against his reason and abandon a successful career, though he is not unaware of the fact that his is an unquenchable desire for achieving goodness in a difficult world. It is for 'a sparkle of good' that Charles struggles against his own nature and comes to hate himself as he lies awake throughout the nights.

"He wanted to be good, so his active nature led him to want to do good. He was living a useful life now but that was all. No one felt that as a result he had reached a state of goodness: he never felt it for a moment himself. He knew that, with his insight and sarcastic honesty, he would have liked to feel goodness in himself - he would have liked to believe that others felt it. But he knew that in fact...others often felt a sense of strain, because he was acting against part of his nature. They did not feel he was apt for a life of abnegation. They distrusted his conscience, and looked back with regret to the days before it dominated him."  

The character of Charles March does not centre round the Jewish faith like that of his father; the definite purpose of his life is to do 'good' and to be 'good'. He never deviates from this purpose whatever.

the conditions he finds himself in. William Cooper states this very thing when he says:

"Charles is forbidden by his conscience to take advantage of the opportunities given him by his wealth. He might easily become an adornment to fashionable society, equally easily carve out a brilliant personal success at the bar with the help of his family connections. He will do neither. After a violent quarrel with his father, he retaliates by trying to keep his financially dependent, he embarks, feebly, like any poverty-stricken student, on training for the medical profession—a profession which promises him only that he will be useful to the human beings about him." 39

Paul West says that snow's "novels have so far shown little awareness of the religious side of men". 36 But this novel shows how sensitive snow is to the impact of religion on different minds in a given sect. It is Charles's impatient desire to 'do good' that brings him in conflict with his father and his religion. In a deeper sense Charles is a religious-minded person because it is he who upholds the spirit of the religion apart from its sham rituals.

Another novel in which C.P. Snow takes up this theme is The Man Who Was Thursday. As William Cooper sums up, The Man Who Was Thursday "is about the emergence of atomic scientists..." 37

39 William Cooper: C.P. Snow pp. 18–19
36 Paul West: The Modern Novel Vol. 1
(London: Methuen 1963) P. 108
into the affairs of the nation between 1939 and 1945. It deals with a new class and a new kind of hierarchy - the scientists working on England’s atomic project - and presents the functioning of this group in relation to the established political bureaucracy. It is the story of a group of atomic scientists working in a government research establishment at Harford. It is with the moral responsibility to scientific truth only that the scientists start their work on the manufacture of a ‘super bomb’ but are distressed to see that against their very wishes the bomb is dropped on Hiroshima. They feel sad to find that in a world of power they have absolutely no say. They feel deeply about all this because they regard themselves as having a moral responsibility towards the rest of mankind. At the end we find them at variance with each other and with their own consciences.

The New Man studies not only the conscience of an individual, the brother of Lewis Elliot called Martin, but it also looks into the consciences of a group of scientists. They work on the manufacture of a ‘fission bomb’ but as their consciences direct them they wish

37 William Casper: CoHh: Pp.34
that the high authority should 'realise what dropping
one bomb means'. They may like to make the bomb but
they are perfectly against the use of it. When there
is a rumour that there might have been some 'leakage'
a scientist named Cambridge, who is thought to be a
pro-communist, is interviewed by the intelligence officer
Captain Smith and Lewis and Martin are separately asked
a few questions about Cambridge. Martin does not like
this because for him science belongs to mankind and
anything relating to science should be done in the
open. It is not Martin as an individual who spines
like this; he is a representative of the group of
scientists who smalt under the tutings of their con-
sience. He believes that keeping science secrets
is undesirable and unaccomplishable. The views of
Martin as a scientist are well reflected in the words of
the narrator, Lewis Eliot:

"Martin was a secretive man; but keeping
scientific secrets, which to Smith seemed so
natural, was to him a piece of evil, even if
a necessary evil. In war you had to do it,
but you could not pretend to like it. Science
was done in the open, that was a reason why
it had conquerably if it dwindled away into
little secret groups hoarding their results
away from each other, it would become no better
than a set of recipes, and within a generation
would have lost all its ideals and half its
efficacy."30

30 C.P. Snow: The NEW HER. pp. 102
The work on 'fission bomb' proceeds and Luke and Savbridge take great personal risk in the experiment with the result that the condition of both of them worsens. Luke is the worst sufferer. The working of a scientist's conscience is clearly reflected in Mounteney's words when he visits them:

"I should like anyone who's ever talked about using the nuclear bomb to have a look at Luke now." 39

In the meanwhile Dr. Pearson comes with the news to Barford that the American Project men have already produced the bomb and they propose to explode one in the desert soon and one on the Japanese. Scientists are worried and they want anyhow to stop the use of the bomb but they are unable to get themselves heard by the authorities. Ultimately they held meeting to consider the ways of stopping the use of the bomb. They discuss the matter and a few scientists agree that the bomb should not be used at all whereas according to the others it should be used only when it is entirely necessary. At the end Francis Osliffe concludes:

39 C. P. Snow: The New Men: p. 117
"Step one: Inform the enemy that the bomb was made and give them enough proof. Step two: drop one bomb where it will not kill people. Step three: drop the next on a town".40

With the final word of Martin it is decided that two scientists should go to America and clarify the whole thing to the scientists working there and try to get their support. Francis Getcliffe and Mountancy are selected for this campaign but before the scientists at Barford could hear anything from them the bomb is dropped on the Japanese. Naturally the scientists do not like this and Martin feels so bad about this that he goes to the extent of drafting a letter to the Editor of The Times reporting the grave result of the use of the bomb and his own resentment against it. He records his own opinion that "a minimum respect for humanity required that a demonstration of the weapon should be given e.g. by delivering a bomb on unpopulated territory, before one was used on an assembly of men, women and children."41 This is the inner urge of Martin, however, on second thoughts he does not send the letter.

40 C.P. Snow: The New Men p.139
41 C.P. Snow: ibid; p.149
The conscience of the individual finds its great exponent in Martin Eliot. In a way, The New Men is a novel about an individual's moral history. Martin is not a remarkable scientist but he does have a considerable talent. In the beginning he works under Rudd, a scientist at Barford, but gradually makes the moves necessary for getting on. He attaches himself to Luke, who is a better scientist than Rudd, and finally succeeds in getting for himself a better position. As C.P. Snow himself points out, he is interested in "the power-relations of men in organized society" because these power-relations determine so much of our working lives. Martin is not an exception. He is one of the different types of men of power in Snow's novels. We do witness in the novel that he rises almost to the top command of the project through his administrative skill and through a certain amount of opportunism which involves accepting the logic of the situation involving extreme measures necessitated by security. But the commands of Martin's conscience compel him

to reject the job and a career of power almost at the last moment.

During the course of the novel we see Martin turning gradually into an opportunist. Hiding his ambition under a kind of stoicism, far-sighted and calculating Martin struggles for power in the scientific establishment. There is a rumour of 'leakage' and Sawyerbridge is suspected. In the beginning Martin is in favour of Sawyerbridge but when he finds that the world has divided itself into two halves and Sawyerbridge belongs to the other the far-sighted Martin naturally forms his balanced opinion and suggests to Luke to dismiss Sawyerbridge on the ground that if Sawyerbridge continues he would do the place infinite harm and this would not be wise either for Martin or for Luke. When Luke's views do not accord with his, Martin's ambitious nature compels him not to leave the matter there but to insist on putting his views on record. Later when Captain Smith informs that Sawyerbridge is a spy, Luke wants to dismiss him at once but Martin persuade him to keep Sawyerbridge for then he could be kept under observation. Martin has already foreseen the danger and he wanted to turn it to his own use. Lewis does not like this for he knows that Martin
was trying to take advantage of Luke's confusion in the Sambridge affair when questioned by Bevill, the head of Barford Committee. Due to Luke's ill-health Bevill asks Martin to take the responsibility for Barford project but Martin clarifies that unless and until he is allowed to settle the Sambridge problem along with Captain Smith he would not accept the responsibility. He then takes the opportunity to inform Bevill about his discussion with Luke regarding Sambridge's dismissal and tells him how he satisfied himself by putting his views on record. The credit for Sambridge's confession ultimately goes to Martin. It is through Martin's maneuverings that Sambridge finds himself completely isolated from his fellow scientists with the result that he finally breaks down and makes a statement.

The Barford committee wants to appoint one of their topmost scientists in the field of atomic energy to head the project. As Francis Gelliffe declines the offer and Luke is ill they finally decide to put forward the name of Martin Elist. Lewis Elist comes to know from Irene that Martin is expecting the offer and he is so sure of it that he even talks to his son who is not old enough to understand him;
...now, I'm going further than anyone in the family's ever gone. It will give you a good start you will be able to build on! won't you?"43

But in the next few days, as Irene tells Lewis Eliot, she finds a change in Martin and she knows that he could not accept the offer. Martin is fully aware that "the head of Barford is just as much part of the machine as any of the other". Scientists are not to open their mouths or express their wills but they are simply to work and work at the behest of the governmental authorities.

Martin, very skilfully, declines the offer by saying that until he does some real research, he would not accept the offer. Helplessly they decide that Luke, although a sick man, should take charge of the Project. As Martin tells Lewis Eliot, this change was brought about in him by the dropping of the bomb on Hiroshima. Martin might have struggled to gain power in the beginning, his conscience was always against the use of the bomb. When the bomb is dropped it is his conscience which goads him to write a letter of protest to the Editor of The Times

43 C.P. Snow: The New Men: p.223
against the use of the bomb even though he knew well enough that this would destroy his career. Martin confesses that he had been after the top post but at last he declined the offer because for him:

"People matter, relations between them don't matter much." 44

Martin's views are clarified by Lewis when he says:

"For any of us who had been concerned with the bomb,... there was no clean-cut way out. Unless you were a Sambridge. For the rest of us, said Martin, there were just two conceivable ways. One was the way he had just conceivable ways. One was the way he had just taken; the other to struggle on, as Luke was doing, and take our share of what had been done and what might still be done, and hope that we might come out at the end of the tunnel. Being well meaning all the time, and thinking of nothing worse than our own safety." 45

According to Martin, no compromise is possible between the two:

"If you accepted the bomb, the burnings alive, the secrets, the fighting point of power, you must take the consequences. You must face Sambridge with an equal will. You were living

44 C.P. Snow: The New Men p. 228
45 C.P. Snow: ibid.; p. 228
in a power equilibrium, and you must not pretend the relics"liberal humanism had no place there". 46

The only way which Martin thinks possible for himself is 'to go back to pure science'. Martin understands that if one wants to make this world better one has to get clear of office and friends and anything that ties one's hands down and this is why perhaps he decides to decline the offer and to go back to pure science. As Jerome Thale puts it, "Martin denounces not only his own past conduct but his brother and all who wield power and accept compromises and extremes." 47 Here is a great conflict between the possessive love of Lewis Eliot and the conscience of Martin. The former wishes that Martin should accept the offer while the latter declines the offer simply because he will not be free to work according to his conscience. Martin clarifies that he would never have the success which Lewis wished him to have. It is Martin's conscience

46 C. P. Snow: The New Men: p. 128
which forces him to decline the offer, not his desire to differ from his brother. Lewis now feels that his possessive love has got an power over Martin who talks not like a younger brother but as an 'equal to equal, contemporary to contemporary, self-made to self-made'.

Having declined the offer Martin leaves Harford. As Lewis reflects, Martin might have had 'a big outside reputation' but he is somebody in the college laboratory. Though Martin has always been quiet yet the quietness of the time when he enjoyed power does differ from the quietness after he has lost his 'high spirit'. Still he is happy and this seems to be quite unusual for Martin. Lewis Eliot realises that Martin, working at the behest of his conscience, has resigned from power but found happiness. Lewis expected him to go the way he had chosen for him but Martin obeyed the dictates of his conscience and cared little for Lewis's possessive love.

Conscience is one of the strong motivating forces in the novels of Sma which not unoften alters the lives of men and in an unconscious and subterraneean way gives a certain direction to events. It is not a common entity nor does it embrace the different strata
of society. Conscience props up in certain cultivated minds only and that again in a special set of circumstances. Its appearance is shrouded in mystery though when it appears its grip is unyielding. The world of Snow is the world of the intellectual elite, the university educated men carrying a strain of some of the finest things in British culture and obsessively aware of the moral values at stake in a given situation. The stirring of conscience, thus, is not a common experience and it is only certain sensitive individuals who come under its mustering influence. Why this should be so is a mystery, one of the imponderables of life.

In The Conscience of the Rich we see how, in a close society like that of the Jews, conscience affects the young intellectual in the family. Charles March, who does everything in his power to uphold the principles which he thinks ought to guide one in life. For him the Jewish men of business world as also the Jewish solicitors are a sort of a gang who would not permit anybody to go against the 'rules' of the coterie. The obsession of these conscience-bitten men is an obsession for 'the good' as they conceive it, and which alone, they think, can salvage the social groups from the morass of immorality in which they find themselves. The working of the conscience is an individual slant and works in a special direction peculiar to the moral sensitiveness of the character. Conscience, thus, has a universal implication and is a point in the moral emanation of society. If Charles chooses to be a doctor it is because he can serve, in a Christ-like way, the suffering humanity. That alone
will make his life meaningful and set up an aura of goodness about it.

In *The New Men* the working of conscience amongst the scientists has again the same usual Snow pattern. Science, in the secret, is abominable and must go against the moral grain of the scientist. The scientists are horrified at the use of the atom bomb by the United States of America on the defenceless people of Japan. But the reactions of the scientists are different in accordance with their own personal ambitions for a struggle for power always goes on in higher echelons. Even Martin’s reactions in the beginning are the reactions of a scientist who just waits for climbing up the ladder of power. He is very much conscious of this and his ego unashamedly appears when he tells his son about the new heights to be reached by him. Even international power politics and the pulls among different nations are made to subserve personal ends and ambitions. But somewhere again conscience appears, for in the moral world of Snow it is an essential entity to guide and mould the destinies of individuals as also of the groups to which they belong.

Helen Gardner clinches the issue in a very fine manner when she observes that the appeal of a Snow situation is primarily an appeal to conscience and to our moral experience. It is this which makes Snow the novelist of the upper classes, of sophisticated men and women in whose hands the destinies of institutions and the universities rest. In this respect Snow is on a par with T.S.Eliot whose poetry is meant for the modern intellectually alert and cultivated
men. And just as for appreciating Eliot’s poetry we need a sensitive and intellectually cultivated mind with the whole background of modern learning in different languages and in different cultures, for the appeal of a novel situation we need intellectually alert and university educated men. His novels are no meat for common stomachs. They are the product of a connoisseur, of a sharp, razor-edged mind that can grasp with intellectual finesse the niceties of a situation. This gives us in some measure the greatness of C.P. Snow who, while keeping the conventional technique of the novel, raises its intellectual height to a point never before experienced in English Fiction.

Aldous Huxley is also an intellectual dilettante who finds great joy in conducting a debate between master minds at a certain level. C.P. Snow may not have the verve and the finesse of Huxley or the brilliance of the intellectual pyrotechnics of Snow, but he has the cool calculating mind of an intellectual aristocrat who very much believes and swears by the old moral values.

(C) LUST FOR POWER

"The whole sequence is an impressive and wholly personal statement about what Snow himself called, 'the power-relations of men in organized society.' It is this rather than any emotional resonances relating to Lewis Eliot that is the unique achievement of Strangers and Brothers." 48

This remark from The Times Literary Supplement takes us to the important theme of 'lust for power' in C.P. Snow's novels. Robert Grescen, in his The World of C.P. Snow, has observed that "the single theme that exercises Snow's mind in creative writing is ambition and struggle for power among men." 40 While discussing The Master, Walter Allen similarly finds that "one of the most striking sources of C.P. Snow's strength as novelist is his knowledge of various ways in which men are moved by the quest for power." 50

In words of Bernard Bergson, "it is in writing of intrigue and power struggles that Snow excels." 51

For Snow, "the power-relations of men in organized society" is, as he himself says, "an interesting theme in itself, and obviously an important one, since these power-relations determine so much of our working lives." Further Snow clarifies that "in fact, 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 have got to understand how the world ticks, if you're going to have any chance of making it tick better." 52

40Robert Grescen : The World of C.P. Snow.
50Walter Allen : Reading A Novel, p. 48.
A glance through the pages of Snow's novels comprising the sequence of *Strangers and Brothers* reveals that his characters are lawyers, scientists, academicians and administrators, etc., in fact all those men and all the groups who have assumed power in the twentieth century and make the decisions necessary for civilized life. Snow may say casually, as in *The Light and the Dark*, the 'power is too dangerous a thing to be in the hands of a few men' but in his novels we find very little general discussion of what power is and what it results in. He shows the pomp and lure of power and presents it simply as a fact. Really speaking, Snow's is the realistic account of how power incites and lures men. His novels do not only witness men's struggle for power but they also present a few characters who, in certain stages, denounce power without considering the consequences. In dealing with this theme Snow's main purpose is 'to understand how the world ticks' and how power helps in ticking that world. The writer's interest lies in how power works and how it incites people rather than in the consequences of power.

In *Strangers and Brothers* sequence the central story is that of Lewis Eliot's life which is affected by different sorts of men of power. Throughout the sequence we see that Lewis Eliot's life is greatly influenced by the lives of the persons around him and reflects their experiences. Truly does Snow find -
'the driving forces of human nature in love, ambition and desire for power.' Lewis Eliot, the narrator-here, is ambitious and in consequence of his mother's possessive love and his inner urge he dreams of 'great success' in his life. Because of this, he prefers to read for the Bar rather than accept a job in the Solicitors' firm, Eden & Hartmann. Lewis wants to move in a better world and says: "I don't mean to spend my life unknown." 53

In Time of Hope Lewis Eliot is unable to achieve 'success' because of his unsquatted love for Sheila. He is grieved to find himself still undistinguished:

"I had longed for fame; and I was a second rate lawyer." 54

When we come to Honiassim, the second novel in the series, we find that he realizes that his passionate interest in success and power has somewhat diminished:

"When I was a young man, too poor to give much thought to anything but getting out of poverty, I had dreamed of great success at the Bar, since then I had kept an interest in success and power which was to many of friends, fog-biddenly intense. And, of course, they were not wrong...Yet, over the last years, almost without my noticing it, for such a change does not happen in a morning, I was growing

53 C.P. Snow: Time of Hope, p.100

54 C.P. Snow: Ibid., p.358
tired of it or perhaps not so much tired, as finding myself slide from a participant into a spectator. It was partly that now I knew I could earn a living in two or three different ways. It was partly that, of the two I had loved most, Sheila had guessed my liking for power, while Margaret actively detected it ... Now that I felt a theme in my life missing, I thought it likely that I had started off with an interest in power greater than that of most reflective men, but not a tenth of Luftin's or Rose's, nothing enough to last me for a life time. I expect that I should keep an eye open for the manœuvreurs of others: who will get job? and why? and how? I expected also that sometimes, as I watched others installed in jobs I might once have, I should feel regret. That did not matter much. Beneath it all, a preoccupation was over. 55

But, later on, when his old intimate friend, George Fassant, is interviewed for a permanent job in the Civil Service and is not taken up Eliot is unhappy thinking of power and turns against the men who took decisions:

"It had come pretty easy, it had not given me much regret, to slip out of the struggle for power- as a rule I did not mind seeing the places of power filled by the Oswaldists, those who wanted them more. But that morning, gazing blankly down at the swamy street, I was watched because I was not occupying them myself. Then and only then could I have done something for George and those like him.

The men I sat with in their offices, with their certainties, their comfortable, confirming indignation which never made them put a foot out of step -- they were the men who managed the world, they were the people who in any society come out on top. They had virtues denied the rest of us: I was on the other side." 56

55 C. P. Snow: *Homemaking* : p.159
56 C. P. Snow: *ibid* : p.288
The remark of Robert Greenan that "Lewis Eliot has come to value power only in so far as it would enable him to help those who need and desire assistance," 57 is well illustrated here:

Lewis Eliot's lust for power is also visible in *Last Things* when he is offered a post in the government. He decided to reject the post not because he is not interested in enjoying power but because he knows that he would not have his individual voice and won't be able to "do much." However, he is in search of some reasons to accept it. He reveals his mind thus:

"I had in my mind all the reasons why I should say no. So far Margaret was wrong. But only a little wrong. What I wanted was for her to join in dismissing those reasons, take it all lightly, and push me, just a fraction into saying yes." 58

Further Lewis clarifies the reasons for his rejection. He knows that

"this job I had been offered carried no power at all; and that 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 consciously possess." 59

57Robert Greenan: *The World of C.P. Snow.*

58C.P. Snow: *Last Things*, pp. 36-39

59C.P. Snow: *ibid*, p. 91
Lewis is in two minds when the offer is made. The lure of power attracts him to the ministry but knowing that he cannot enjoy real power decides to reject the offer. But the lust for power is so eternal in human beings that Lewis asks Francis's advice in the hope that Francis may urge him to accept the post:

"May be I had expected, or hoped, even with the letter written, that he would say something different." 60

'Possessive love' and 'conscience' are, undeniably, the themes of The New Men but, really speaking, these two themes come to light because of the struggle for power. It is because of this notion of Lewis that he sets his brother, Martin, in the pursuit of power. When Lewis finds himself unable to acquire power he tries to enjoy it vicariously through his brother and hence he strives hard to see Martin placed at the top. He has an intense desire to see Martin amongst the top-notch of the atomic establishment, but when Martin turns down the offer for the post of Chief Superintendent Lewis becomes unhappy. He has to admit, at the end, that with his 'fraternal concern' he is 'worried' not so much for Martin's happiness as for position and power.

60 C.P. Snow: *Last Things*: p.106
Though Martin, Lewis's brother, does possess power in the end, he had, as Lewis tells us, "of course been after the top job." 61 Martin, who had never approached Lewis for help, requests him for the same after the Barford project starts:

"I'd be grateful if you could get me into this project somehow." 62

In the beginning he works under Rudi but as he sees no chance of progress he leaves him and starts working under Walter Lake, a better scientist, with confidence in his results. When it appears that the Barford project would be a failure Martin is full of pain in his heart for he finds his future darkened. Angrily he tells Lewis:

"If it doesn't go this time, you needn't reckon on my future any more." 63

This shows how Martin is bent upon getting success and power.

Thanks to the hard work put in by Lake and Martin the Barford project gets started but the news reaches the scientists that the Americans have made the bomb and that it has been dropped on the Japanese. Martin now cannot

61 C.P. Snow : The New Men : p.237
62 C.P. Snow : ibid : p.24
63 C.P. Snow : ibid : p.103
control himself and drafts a letter to the editor of The Times warning against the grave consequences of the use of the bomb and registering his own resentment. The letter would have certainly ended Martin's career.

Martin, however, does not send the letter, though he is quite firm in his intention when Lewis argues with him. It would be too simple to believe, as Jerome Thale does, that Martin was persuaded by Lewis not to send the letter. Perhaps, in his innermost heart Martin did realize that the letter would spell his ruin and end all his chances of a bright career as a scientist. Martin's conscience is reared by the atrocity perpetrated by the Americans, but he is too sensible a man not to know what is detrimental to his own self interest. Whatever the reason, Martin's decision not to send the letter involves him in the struggle for power.

After the 'leakage' of the scientific information, Sambridge is suspected and Martin suggests that he should be dismissed. With all the stubbornness and authoritative note of Lake's denial Martin insists twice on putting his views on record because he had foreseen the danger about Sambridge and wants to turn the incident to his advantage. It can easily be seen that for his lust for power Martin has thrown 'other scruples' away. Lewis makes this clear:

"Martin was planning to climb at Lake's expense, making the most out of the contrast between Lake's mistake of judgment over Sambridge and Martin's own foresight." 64

64 C.P. Snow: The Man Next: p. 176
He takes advantage of Lake's confusion in the presence of Bayill, the chairman of the Barford Project. Martin is given the acting command of Barford as a result of Lake's uncertain health. When he is asked by the committee he shows his readiness to take responsibility for this project. It is agreed that Martin is to be allowed to settle the Sambridge question along with Captain Smith's. He informs them how he differed from Lake on this matter months back, insisted on dismissing Sambridge and, against Lake's disagreement, felt it sufficiently strongly to put it on record. This provides Martin with an excellent chance to prove himself more impressive and foresighted than Lake. Martin wants to utilize the chance afforded by the Sambridge affair so as to impress the authorities that he can do what others cannot. Lewis will surely be pleased if Martin gets power but not at the cost of 'loyalty.'

Martin's efforts to possess power materialize when he is offered the post of Chief Superintendent of the Barford project because he could impress the authorities with his great administrative skill and foresight. How pleased he is with this offer is plain enough in his talks to his son:

"...Now I'm going further than anyone in the family's ever gone. It will give you a good start. You'll be able to build on it, won't you?"

C.P. Snow: *The Eye in the Door* p. 223
His rejection of the post, does not mean that he rejects power; far from it. He rejects it because he realises that the post does not ensure the power for which he has been striving:

"The head of Barford is just as much part of the machine as any of the others." 66

William Cooper states that "in George Passant's story Lewis observes, among other things, the love of power impelling a man, whose character is flawed." 67 The idealist George Passant creates a cosmos from his fantasies. He organises a group of young men and women with the object of achieving freedom from constraining habits and conventions of thought. He is the head of the group. Behind the idea of his cosmos also rests his lust for power as the whole group moves according to his wishes. He helps them and wants to enjoy power over them.

After examining The Light and the Dark, The Masters and The Conscience of the Rich P.R.Karl finds that "the three novels, with Galvert and Eliot within the first two, and Charles Marsh, the center of the third, form a trilogy concerned with struggle for power...."68.

66 C.P. Snow : The New Men : p.233
67 William Cooper : Capt. Snow : p.33
68 P.R.Karl : The Contemporary English Novel :
(London : Thames and Hudson : 1960) p.68
Perhaps, Karl uses the term 'power' in a much wider sense for it also seems to include, as he says about Charles March, "the power-struggle of individuals to realize their own potential." @ The Conscience of the Rich deals primarily with a moral issue. It is true that Sir Philip March is very much in the world of power but the novelist's concern is mainly with the conflict between conscience and filial love in Charles's heart.

Even in The Light and the Dark the struggle for power is not intensive enough to attract the reader's attention because it occupies little space and the hero of the novel, Roy Calvert, who is to be elected as a Fellow, does not attach importance to it. Asked by Joan Muriel whether he is worried about getting elected Roy's answer to her can easily satisfy anyone's curiosity about his interest in it. After the narrator Eliot's remark there remains little doubt that Roy is not interested in Fellowship:

"About his election, I was far more anxious than he." To no doubt, we are pleased with Brown's maneuvering and handling of the whole matter with great political skill.

@ F.R. Karl : The Contemporary English Novel : (London : Thames and Hudson 1969) p. 65

70 C.P. Snow : The Light and the Dark : p. 75
Arthur Brown finds pleasure in indulging in such activities and tries to enjoy indirect power after getting success. He knows when to hit the iron and thus, many a time, gets what he wants. It is the same counting of heads and arranging of meetings, usual in power-politics, that we find Brown engaged in with Lewis's help. At the right moment Brown makes his proposal, and, supported by a majority, Roy is elected as a Fellow to the college. There may not be two opinions that this is "the precursor in its way of the election of a master in The Masters" 71 but it is difficult to agree with F.R.Karl when he says that "the dramatic conflict of the novel centers, for the most part, around Roy's election as a Fellow to a Cambridge college." 72 The novel shows Roy's melancholy and records his restlessness. He wants to believe in some dogma, he wants to believe in God but he is helpless. His is inner and hopeless struggle, because of this he seeks death by enlisting himself in the air force during the war.

Though Jerome Thale believes that there is 'no explicit theme' in The Masters, he observes:

"Indeed anyone interested in understanding how groups of managers and professional men operate, how decisions are made, could profitably study The Masters, for it presents a microcosm of all larger power structures." 73

71 F.R.Karl : The Contemporary English Novel : p.68
72 F.R.Karl : ibid : p.68
73 Jerome Thale : C.P. Snow : p.39
Robert Greenson remarks that "the theme of Snow’s concern with men attempting self-fulfilment through power, and the self-knowledge and responsibility power sometimes brings, may be found at its purest and most intense in The Masters." 74

The old Master is dying and the new one is to be elected. There are two candidates for Mastership, one is Paul Jago, and the other is Crawford. The ‘prime movers’ of the story are Brown, Chrystal and Paul Jago. With these persons ‘power’ is important in different ways. In Eliot’s reflection, the writer has very cleverly shown the different shapes of power:

"Each of these three were seeking power, I thought- but the power each wanted was as different as they were themselves. Brown’s was one which no one need know but himself, he wanted to handle, ease, guide, contrive, so that men found themselves in the places he had designed; he did not want an offer or title to underline his power, it was good enough to sit back smugly and see it work. Chrystal wanted to be no more than Dean, but he wanted the Dean, in this little empire of the college, to be known as a man of power less subtle, less reflective, more immediate than his friend, he needed the moment-by-moment sensation of power. He needed to feel that he was listened to, that he was commanding here and now, that his word was obeyed ... Chrystal was impelled to have his own part recognised, by Jago, by Brown, and the college ... it was essential for Chrystal that he should see his effect on Jago himself... irresistibly he needed to see and feel his power.

Jago enjoyed the dramatic impact of power ... He was an ambitious man, as neither Brown nor Chrystal were. In any society, he would have leagued to be first and he would have leagued for it because of everything that marked him out as different from the rest. He leagued for all the trappings, titles, emblems, and show of power. He would have to hear himself called Master; he

75 C.P. Snow: The Masters : pp. 61-62
would love to begin a formal act at a college meeting ' I, Paul Jago, Master of the college..."75

In the beginning Nightingale is against Crawford and favours Jago because he is interested in the post of a Senior Tutor. He expects that Jago would oblige him with that post. But when he gets no favourable answer either from Brown or from Chrystal or even from Jago himself he changes the side and decides to favour Crawford. On the other side, Jago is so ambitious for Mastership that when he knows from his friends that Nightingale decides to vote against him because of his unfavourable answer he repeats that he did not agree to offer senior tutorship to him and thinks of revising his decisions but Brown and Chrystal forbid him to do so.

Paul Jago is intensely interested in getting elected as Master. He wants to get the post by any means. He can not bear the idea of failure. He says to Lewis:

"Sometimes I think it will be taken from me at the last. Whenever I think that....I want it more than anything in the world." 76

Jago has confidence in his election and behaves as if he has already been elected. At least for his wife's sake he must not lose the election. When Jago knows that Chrystal has changed his mind he is upset. He meets Chrystal and tries to convince him. He is ready now to

75 C.P. Snow : The Masters : pp.626-63
76 C.P. Snow : Ibid : p.199
talk over all the practical arrangements that he and Chrysal can conceivably make for the future. Any how, he wants to see his name as Master in the history of the college. He is not after real power, but he likes that he should be called Master. He is even 'prepared to leave certain things in the college' to Chrysal, but, unfortunately for Jago, Chrysal sticks to his decision now. Previously, both the candidates had promised to vote for each other but now Jago thinks of breaking his promise so that Crawford may not get a majority, though in the end he submits to Brown's injunction and votes for Crawford. Though Jago yields to Brown, he does so against his own inclination. It shows to what extent the lust for power debases a man.

When it is felt that neither side is to get a majority Chrysal proposes Brown's name as a compromise candidate. Jago sees the mastership slipping away from his fingers; Brown, on the other hand, finds, to his dismay, the mastership almost thrust upon him. Brown does not like this; he, on the contrary, is angry not because he does not like power but because he cannot get it in his own way. He "liked to think of himself as the manager of the college, the power behind the meetings; but ... he was always scrupulous in keeping within the rules; he was not easy unless he was well-thought of, and in good repute. It upset him to imagine
that people were not thinking that he had planned an intrigue with his friend, so as to get in as a last-minute compromise."

The odour of power pervades the precincts of the college from the time Chrystal, the man who had first proposed Jago's name for the candidacy of Mastership, changes his opinion and decides to vote for another candidate, Crawford. Chrystal's decision is caused by his realisation that if Jago becomes Master his 'policy' for the college will have no meaning and he will lose his 'humble power':

"For Chrystal had come to feel that electing Jago would be a mistake; it would hinder all that Chrystal wanted, for himself and for the college..."

He had his own sensible policy for the college: that was safer with Crawford than with Jago. He wanted to keep his own busy humble power, he wanted his share in running the place. For months, every sign had told Chrystal that with Jago it would not be so easy.... He had come to think that, if Jago became Master, his own policy and power would - dwindle to nothing within the next five years."

The plot moves around the three main characters: Paul Jago, Arthur Brown and Chrystal, and lust for power, in its own way, is the dominating factor for their actions. As William Cooper states, "Although there are only thirteen Fellows involved, thirteen academic persons locked away in an ancient institution, the novel is about man's love of power and their equivocal needs to indulge and subdue it."}

77 C.P. Snow : The Master : p. 260

78 C.P. Snow : ibid : pp. 273-275

79 William Cooper : C.P. Snow : p. 29
Presenting a gallery of characters The Masters invites us to a series of meetings in the fellows' room, exchanges in the combination room, attempts of both the parties to win over a vote and their speculations. Each meeting adds its own conflict and creates curiosity.

The theme of power finds its full expression in this novel and rightly does F.R.Karl point out that —

"... the college is, in fact, a miniature society, and the problem becomes how to use the power that is attached to this society. Power, in brief, will be the key to the novel. What is power? How do honest men use it or misuse it? How does it change honest men? How are decency and integrity compromised by power? How does power bring out the worst and best in men?"

The whole point of dealing with the theme of power is nicely summarized by Walter Allen:

"By the time we have finished reading The Masters we realize that we have seen the world under one of its aspects—the political—in microcosm. We have been shown what moves men when they act politically, that is, in terms of the use of power that decides who shall rule. The restricted scene of the Cambridge common room mirrors the world, and we feel that the intrigues that go to the making of a party leader or a prime minister are no greater and no less than those shown here."

In The Masters Brown is interested in getting Paul Jago elected as Master because he thinks little of enjoying

Walter Allen : Reading A Novel : p.49
power directly but in *The Affair* he is tempted to acquire it for himself. Crawford, the present master, is to retire after twelve months and Brown asks Lewis about his candidature with the intention that Lewis may talk to Martin in his favour. He, however, confesses before Lewis that Francis is a distinguished person and he would "be satisfied to see Francis Setcliffe as Master of this college." 82 But he, with his great political skill, tries to convince Lewis that some of the fellows think that he, Brown, would 'keep things going reasonably well.' To make his point effective he also adds that this is his 'last chance,' though not for Francis.

Throughout the sequence Francis Setcliffe is presented as an honourable, just and distinguished character, full of integrity. But, all the same, when Staffington and Martin talk to him about Howard's case he does not care and talks in a neutral way. His indifference is explained when he says:

"...I didn't want the risk of making myself unpleasant to everyone who counts for anything here. I just didn't want to blot my copybook. I needn't tell you why, need I..."

You know, Winslow and Nightingale and those others, they're my bohars. The election's coming on this autumn, and the fact of the matter is..... I would like it." 83
They are illuminating words; they show that even a man like Francis is not immune from the lure of power and is not ready to risk his chances even for a just cause. No, more than any one else, would know how to use power wisely, but in the process of acquiring power he is as susceptible as the others. No doubt, afterwards it is Francis who is mainly responsible for getting Howard's case reinstated. Throughout the process of getting justice done the feel of power is obvious and Brown is seen in all his eminence, using power indirectly. It is his voice which gets prominence at the end of the novel. He is the future candidate for Mastership.

In Corridors of Power, the hero, Roger O阳台, is presented as an ambitious man. The setting of the novel itself is in the corridors of power. From the time Roger O阳台 becomes a junior minister he has his eyes on the chair of his boss, Lord Gilby. His whole-hearted interest lies first in getting power. He tells Lewis:

"The first thing is to get the power. The next is to do something with it." 64

His firm belief is that "to make the real decisions, one's got to have the real power." 65

As Lord Gilby, Roger's boss, has been sick for a long time the Prime minister does naturally decide to get rid of

64 C.P. Snow: Corridors of Power

65 C.P. Snow: ibid: p. 43
him. The names of many persons as Gilby's successor were being considered, but Roger is impatient to get in. As Roger has already stated earlier, he wants power and if he does not get it at this moment he may never get it. His impatience reaches a degree of excitement and he sends his man with the file back; when the telephone rings he does not answer it but asks Lewis to do so. Ultimately, his wishes materialize and he is placed in the rank of a Cabinet minister.

Very soon does Roger win favour of all and his handling of power is praised. The Prime minister is pleased. Roger is a success in the world of power. It is felt that he may rise to the Prime Ministership in future. But soon we realize that the world of power is rather strange. No one can be sure of the next moment. A minister has to keep his eyes always open and be watchful. After getting power Roger's efforts are to do "something valuable with his life" but he forgets that he is unable to do anything without his colleague's support. His anti-bomb policy does not gain full support. Had he considered the advice of David Rubin, a scientist, and accepted the way of compromise he would have remained safe, but he did not do so. He repeates but still he is not sure that he could have behaved otherwise. He tells Lewis about the chances in favour of making the bomb:

"Some one's going to do it. May be I still can." 86

There is a conflict in him between his lust for power and his belief in anti-nuclear policy. Roger sends his resignation letter through his principal private secretary to the Prime minister. Roger does this in Lewis's presence because he fears his lust for power might get better of him. He confesses as much to Lewis:

"I might have changed mine ..., That would have been unfortunate." 87.

Throughout the novel we witness the working of power: cabinet-meetings, committees, secretaries, going to and fro, political rumour, newspapers, scientists involved in politics, talks on policy-making, counting of numbers in favour, efforts of opposition benches, etc. The corridors of power come to life before us. Very skilfully does C.P. Snow show us how a minister, not getting full support for his policy in his party, works in the parliament and comes to the tragic end of his political career.

One passage of the novel would suffice to present Lord Snow's views on politicians and the reality of power. It is a passage in which Roger Senipe tells Lewis Eliot how he had been keen to get power ever since he was twenty:

"Look, a politician lives in the present, you know. If he's got any sense, he can't think of leaving any memoir behind him. So you oughtn't to begrudge him the rewards he wants. One of them is just possessing the power, that's the first thing.

Being able to say yes or no. The power usually isn't very much, as power goes, but of course one wants it. And one waits a long time before one gets a smell of it. I was thinking about politics. I was working at politics. I was dreaming of a career nowhere else, from the time I was twenty. I was forty before I even got into the House. Do you wonder that some politicians are content when they manage to get a bit of power? ... The first thing is to get the power. The next—is to do something with it. 68

Snow is able to draw a realistic picture of the world of power because much of his life was spent inside it. He worked as an administrator, as a civil service commissioner and as a minister in Harold Wilson's second Labour Government. Snow's understanding of the world of power is vividly present in his novels. He points out that administrative skill, political or executive talent and foresight are not enough for enjoying power but one must be ready to tread the tight- rope of compromise. Snow has shown that quest for power is eternal in human beings but power is rather difficult to possess and preserve. Persons like Lewis Eliot, Bevill, Lenton, Arthur Brown, Sir Philip Marsh and Hector Rose can easily move in the world of power as they know how, when and where to compromise. They have a sense of their limitations. On the other hand, Martin Eliot, Paul Jago, and Roger Quaife, having a great political ability and human sense, can never be trusted with the power as they have not seen

the road to compromise. It is very obvious that only the semi-talented can lead the world. Rightly does F.R.Karl observe:

"Society, Snow indicates, depends on the kind of person represented by Eliot: dedicated to some extent, but responsible and flexible enough to change when he sees that flexibility lies the road to social and political survival." 88

(D) AMBITION

At the centre of the sequence, 

Brothers, is the character of Lewis Eliot, sometimes as a participant and sometimes as an observer. The greater part of his life comes under the impact of his driving ambition which has for its source his mother's possessive love and which ultimately plants in the corridors of power. The whole series presents different characters whose struggles to achieve their goals in life are often witnessed by Lewis Eliot with almost passionate interest. They sometimes pass through his life like the warp and the woof of an intricate design.

In Time of Hope, we meet Lewis Eliot as a young boy and as Jerome Thale puts it, "part of the 'hope' of the title is his mother's fierce, possessive desire that her son should do well and rise in the world. Part of it is the narrator's own ambition." 90 Lewis is not sure of his

88 F.R.Karl: The Contemporary English Novel, p.66
90 Jerome Thale: G.P. Snow, p.47
'success' and faces a practical problem as to how to procure money to enable him to study for the bar. He, nonetheless, takes a risk by rejecting a relatively safe prospect of becoming a solicitor and decides in favour of a career at the bar. He expresses very clearly what he desires to achieve:

"I want to see a better world... I want success... I don't mean to spend my life unknown." 91

Even if he fails to make the grade he would not blame it on others but would hold himself responsible for it.

Lewis's ambition is realized; he rises in the world but his marriage affects his career because his tearing passion for Sheila is not less powerful than his ambition. This shatters his ambition and he makes an agonizing appraisal at the end of the novel:

"I had longed for fame and I was a second-rate lawyer. I had longed for love and I was bound for life to a woman who never had love for me and who had exhausted mine." 92

The foundation of Lewis Eliot's career is laid in this novel which centres round his ambition. It throws much light on his relations with his mother and his -

91 C.P. Snow: *Time of Hope* : p.100
92 C.P. Snow: *ibid* : p.358
unfortunate marriage with Sheila. In the former we can trace the origin of his ambition; the latter shows him struggling with it. Jerome Thale says:

"Lewis Eliot's ambition is a result partly of his mother's urging, partly of his effort to be free of her love, and to be free of everything but that which he makes himself." 93

His consuming love for Sheila and his deteriorating health came in the way of his ambition, though he managed to get on all the same.

The later part of Lewis's life is comparatively smooth and we don't find him facing any struggle or striving for his career as an ambitious man but we know, however, that he gets a new start and rises high in one of the ministries. Now Lewis starts moving in the corridors of power, takes interest in policy-making decisions, accommodates his brother in an Atomic establishment and becomes an important and respected social figure. In Corridors of Power Lewis more actively supports Roger Omafe's anti-nuclear policy in the world of power but as full support is not gained, he decides to resign from the position of power. He does not accept the offer of a post in Junior ministry and decides to become a writer—an independent career—because he has come to realise that his position does not bring him power, but only a semblance of power, since he finds himself unable to get his humanitarian views accepted. But 93

93 Jerome Thale: Corridors: p. 68
Eliot's ambition is not dead. It only takes a devious course and seeks a vicarious fulfilment. His ambition now hinges itself upon his brother Martin as we see in *The New Men* and later upon his own son Charles in *Last Things*.

Ambition may not be the main theme of *The New Men* but it cannot be overlooked as Martin Eliot emerges as an ambitious person in the novel. Through Lewis's efforts he gets entry into the Atomic establishment at Barford and strives hard to rise higher and higher. In the beginning he works under Rudd but finding a better scientist in Walter Luke he leaves Rudd and starts working under him. The novel shows the slow but steady progress in Martin's career. In the Sawbridge affair he takes advantage of Luke's confusion in front of Thomas Bevill. Martin has foreseen the danger about Sawbridge and he wants to turn it to his own advantage. Lewis does not like that Martin should plan to climb at Luke's expense. Lewis feels that it means throwing away all the moral scruples which he and his friends greatly cherish but Martin has other ideas because his eyes are set on his own future. With his great administrative skill, foresight and an ability to command Martin is found a very capable man to handle the Barford Project and, consequently, an offer for the post of Chief Superintendent is made to him. He is, no doubt, happy with this. His ambition reaches its zenith. With great joy he talks to his three-year-old son as if he were an adult:
...now I'm going further than anyone in the family's ever gone. It will give you a good start. You'll be able to build on it, won't you? 94

As Robert Geroen has pointed out, "what he (i.e. Snow) seeks to examine closely are the moral problems and dilemmas which ambitious men must constantly face." 95 Martin Eliot, with the call of his conscience, turns down the offer as he also has to face the same problems and dilemmas. Rather than accepting the offer he prefers to teach in the college.

Lewis's life is, no doubt, at the centre of the sequence, but his 'observed experience,' to tell the truth, is not negligible as it enables him to understand the reality of life and to shape it accordingly. He moves in a wider world and comes across a variety of men striving to climb the peaks of their ambition. It is not only his brother, Martin, whom Lewis finds ambitious; he comes across a great many persons of that kind and tries, to the extent he can, to help them achieving their cherished goal.

It was George Passant who flamed Eliot's imagination and gave it a certain direction. Having enrolled himself in the law class at the college Lewis was, at the end of the year, rather suspicious of the utility of the course but George Passant's illuminating advice encouraged him. George, later on, took interest in Lewis's life and became a friend and a philosophic guide. Looking into 'George's

94 C.P. Snow: The New Men: p. 329
life, through Eliot's eyes, we find that his ambition was not limited to himself but was extended to a group of young people whom he encouraged and in whom he sought to stimulate "stirrings of new life and personal ambition." George believed that -

"...men could become better; that the whole world could become better; that the restraints of the past, the shackles of guilt, could fall off and set us all free to live happily in a free world."96

George, as he was ambitious, tried to create for the young such a world wherein they would, in every way, be free from "their damned homes, and their damned parents, and their damned lives."97 He would like to "concentrate on the little world" to "enjoy every moment of every day."

With Martineau's help George entered the Fins of Eden and Martineau as a solicitor's clerk and was hopeful, in times to come, of gaining partnership in the Fins. With Martineau's departure, George, a remarkably gifted man with for-wardable intelligence and striking personality, could not see why Eden could not do as much for him as Martineau ever did. Though he disliked Eden intensely and though he knew that Eden disapproved of his way of life yet he hoped that Eden would take him as a partner. He believed that Eden could not afford to overlook his work and his ability unless he were perverse. Though it was

96 C.P. Snow : Time of Hope : p.97
97 C.P. Snow : Strangers and Brothers : p.14
realized even by George that Eden had no sympathy for his general attitude he, still, was of the opinion that this might not outweigh his superior qualities.

George confessed to Eliot that he was ambitious from the beginning but, even with all his potentiality, he was not given any chance. George also pointed out that he desired for partnership in the Pima so as to provide freedom to the members of the 'group' and to do something for them in the created cosmos:

"It isn't that I'm not ambitious...I am, you know, to some extent. I know I'm not as determined as you've turned out to be -- but matters never shaped themselves to give ambition a chance. I had to take the job here, there wasn't any alternative to that. When I got here, I couldn't do anything different from what I have done... It's important from every point of view that I got promoted... For the group as well. If I'm really going to do much for anyone."

He wanted very much to 'be in with Eden.' He was impatient to get his partnership. Morons pleaded for George's case but Eden, with all the concern to his loyalty, would not agree to offer partnership to a man like Passant who did not mind to be seen with his young men and girls and would tell everyone how to run the world. Lewis's appeal to Martineau does, with perfect clarity, show George's keen desire to be enlisted as a partner:

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C.P. Snow: *Strangers and Brothers*: p. 133
"If George doesn't get this partnership, it may do him more harm than anything, we could invent against him. I'm only asking you to avert that just to take a nominal control for George's sake." 99

Desperate George, with the failure of Morcom and Lewis in convincing Eddy; for his partnership, condescended to ask Eddy himself and on Eddy's indication that Morcom knew the reasons for his refusal he went to Morcom, spoke contemptuously to him and said that it was he (Morcom) who deprived him of his partnership; it was he who did not like to see him happy. George's condition, after he was sure that he would, in no way, get any share in the Firm, was wretched and, for some time, he felt completely helpless.

His failure in getting partnership resulted in his participation, along with his group, in a scheme for raising funds which involved misleading people by false pretences. Though a man of conscience, he had to stand the trial with others. As he writes in his diary, he realised later on that --

"... the major cause of my present discontent lies in ambition." 100

Although Lewis's friendship with Paul Jago was not as intimate as it was with George Passant still he did his utmost to help Jago in fulfilling his desire because he found in him a man whom he could trust and sympathise with.

99 C.P. Snow: *Symonds and Brothers*: p. 134

100 C.P. Snow: *ibid*; p. 218
Jago's ambition to get elected as a Master, unlike George Passant's, was, to a great extent, tinged with his lust for power and was dominated, with all its intensity, by his passionate love for his wife. Jago was, in no condition, prepared to believe that he would lose the election. His optimism reached its extreme when he mentioned to his wife that he would get in. Chrystal's reversal of decision, on the eve of election, gave a great jolt to his optimistic outlook and Jago, a proud man, found it very difficult to call another man Master. Lewis gives an account of ambitious Jago's wretched condition when he says:

"We had heard himself being called Master; now he would hear us all call Crawford so. Among the wounds, that ranked and returned, he saw as clearly as though it were before his eyes-Crawford presiding in hall, taking the chair at a college meeting, He could not stand it." 101

In The Masters, which is the story of a group of men, it is Jago's ambition which calls for the reader's attention more than anyone else's. As Jerome Thale puts it:

"The motif of ambition which runs through the first three novels and is strongest in Time of Hope is picked up and generalized in The Masters where we see ambition and the struggle for power in a relatively pure form." 102

101 C.P. Snow: The Masters: p.284

'Ambition and the struggle for power' are excellently combined in Roger Quaife when Lewis Eliot met in the corridors of power. He, slowly and steadily, advanced in the world of power, became a minister with Cabinet rank and was tempted by the thought of becoming Prime Minister which would be the consummation of his dreams. He was ambitious, since he was of fourteen, to get a place in the world of power and when he got in, he became more and more ambitious and aspired, with all his humility and political skill, to rise to the highest. He would have, no doubt, touched the peak had he accepted the way of compromise but, not unlike some other characters of Snow, he remained adamant in his decision and did not alter his anti-Venizelos policy. Roger, because of his ambition, achieved a greater success in the realms of power but his moral preoccupation and human consideration, finally, dragged him down.

Looking into the whole sequence we find that among the characters, whose lives are dominated by their ambition, Eliot stands alone. He, undoubtedly, faces many difficulties but, all the same, he advances well in the world in different walks of life—from a practitioner at the bar to a fellow in a Cambridge college, from academic world to the world of power till finally he settles down to a successful career as a writer. Lewis, with a clear concept of his limitations, reaches his desired end and is, to a great extent, satisfied with what he achieves. F.R.Karl states the fact when he says
Lewis Eliot's talents are modest, his ambition within reason, and his success not out of proportion to his intentions."

The rest form a group which includes persons like Martin, Passant, Jago and Roger Senif whose ambitions were not realised because they, even though exceptional in their talents, could not cope with their limitations. They are the persons who, despite the promise of personal gain, retained their principles and respected the behests of their conscience. They could have translated their dreams into reality but, to our surprise, just when they were about to reach their goal they turned their back on it because of their moral and human consideration.

Snow's novels present the conflicts that moral issues impose on basically decent people; whether it is the question of possessing power or that of fulfilling ambition it is in making decisions that Snow's characters differ.

Justice

An Abstract Phenomenon

Man's conscience often sets him at variance with society; Snow shows us how it draws him apart from his fellow-beings, makes him an individual by virtue of an intense focussing upon his actions. Related to conscience, but working in a different direction is man's sense of...

103 R.Karl: The Contemporary English Novel: p.67
justice. The two are related in the sense that they represent two aspects of the dual relationship between society and the individual. This relationship is expressed on the one hand through conscience which may be described as society's demand upon the individual and on the other hand through justice which is the individual's demand upon society. In the one, the individual is concerned with his own actions, in the other, he is concerned with the actions of others. Both the forces demand sacrifice. In The Conscience of the Rich Charles March loses his inheritance in the course of obeying his conscience and in The New Man Martin rejects the post of Chief Superintendant, for its acceptance went against his conscience. In The Affair, Snow shows us how justice makes an equally inexorable demand upon men who accept grave risks to see justice done to a person for whom they have little sympathy and no affection.

Lord Snow's interest, in The Affair, lies not in defining the term 'justice' but in the ways of attaining justice. It is taken up in a different manner from that of the acquisition of power. The Fellows, who are all for getting justice, have very little sympathy for the accused. This clearly indicates that the writer's subject of study is the abstract idea of justice, not the person who seeks it.

Like The Masters, The Affair is a novel about a group and not about individuals and its whole plot is pivotal to
the decision of the Fellows in a college. The novel, sub-titled 'a study in justice,' presents the character of Donald Howard, who is accused of a scientific fraud. Howard had published a paper in collaboration with Prof. Palairret, an eminent scientist, who was also his guide. It is later discovered that the results of his experimental research cannot be proved. Two of the college scientists—Nightingale and Sheffington—are given the charge to look into the matter and they find that the photograph, which is decisive of the result, is forged. Consequently, the Court of Seniors dismisses him on the ground of the technical opinion of Nightingale and Sheffington. All this has happened before the novel begins.

A few Fellows suspect that the fraud is committed by Old Palairret, who is dead and they insist on the re-opening of the case. But the Court of Seniors, perhaps for fear of possible public scandal or because of their dislike for Howard, is not ready to judge from its decision. This creates a division among the Fellows of the college. Once again the same counting of heads, secret meetings, individual motives and personal grudges well known in Snow's novels appear in their usual way and we meet the Fellows in their characteristic postures and attitudes: Crawford, the renowned scientist as Master; Brown, with all his administrative and academic plumage; Winslow, the outspoken member of the opposition; Sir Francis Gelliffe, an esteemed man of principle and conscience; and Lewis's brother, Martin Eliot, renowned in the world of power who has now joined the college as a fellow.
Show here depicts how the process of securing justice for a colleague attracts all sensible persons and how they, during the process, keep their personal prejudices away. Julian Sheffington with all his 'contempt' for Howard, tries his best so that Howard, at any cost, gets justice. Lewis makes the point clear by telling us that for Sheffington:

"Personal relations did not matter, his own convenience did not matter, nor how people thought of him. Both by nature and by training, he was single-minded: the man had his rights, one had to make sure that justice was done." 104

Julian believes in Howard's innocence and he is of the opinion that the fault lies elsewhere. A 'certain amount of fresh evidence' from the last instalments of Professor Palairset's research drives him to this conclusion. Sheffington's interest in getting justice for Howard, even after Martin's warning that 'this business is going to split the college from top to bottom,' persists. Even the danger, that renewal of Fellowship may be affected, does not abate his interest and he simply asks Martin:

"Do you seriously think any of that is going to keep me quiet?" 105

When Martin and Sheffington are anxious to get a majority for re-opening the case, Tom Orbell, to their surprise,
comes forward to support them because, though he does not like Howard, he feels that the persons like Crawford and Brown have, in this matter, forgotten 'what it's like to be human.' Though the Court of Seniors reconsider the case yet the previous decision remains unaffected. This enrages Sheffington who tells Brown very frankly and fearlessly:

"I am not going to have this innocent chap left with a black mark against him while you put us off with one side step after another. If you can't give us a decent constitutional method of getting a bit of simple justice, then we shall have to try something else...I am ready to make the whole case public...I don't like it, it won't do much good to any of us or to this college. But it will do some good to the one chap who most needs it." 106

Sheffington's threat leads to the 'final inquiry' with the help of the legal advisers Lewis Eliot and Dawson-Hill. As the whole chance of getting justice rests on the possibility that the photograph from Palairet's notebook was 'removed deliberately,' Francis, a man of high principle, volunteers to raise the issue not because he likes to do so much but because he believes firmly that—

"they'll listen to me, and I'm the best person to do it." 107

This shows how Francis, a future candidate for mastership, thinks little of its consequences in his election and

106 C.P. Snow: The Affair : p.163
107 C.P. Snow: ibid : p.231
is determined to see that Howard should, somehow, get justice. He, very confidently, directs the attention of the Court of Seniors to the possibility that —

"the photograph now missing from Pelaiiset's notebook was removed not by accident, but in order either to preserve Pelaiiset's reputation or to continue justifying the dismissal of Howard." 108

A man of Francis's standing is bound to be listened to. Winslow, one of the members in the Court of Seniors, insists that innocent Howard should not be victimised and supports Getliffe's opinion that one of the Fellows is 'guilty of suppression veri.' Even Crawford, the Master, in spite of cautious suggestion by Brown — whom, right through his Mastership for fifteen years he had used as a 'confidential secretary,' does not hesitate in stating that:

"I do not know that Getliffe convinced me that Howard was, beyond the possibility of doubt, innocent. He did convince me, however, that no body of sensible men, certainly no body of men of science, could say that he was guilty. Therefore, I find myself obliged to believe that he has received less than fairness, and that he should be reinstated by this court." 109

Ultimately, decision is changed but not before Brown had used all his tact to work it out agreeably. This decision cancels the order of the deprivation passed on D.J. Howard and resolves that his Fellowship should be presumed to have continued without interruption during the period of deprivation. He is to be paid dividends and —

108 C.P. Snow: The Affair: p.241

common allowance in full for that period and would continue as a fellow of the college till the period lapsed. Lewis accepts it as he realises that there is no other alternative and, with great difficulty, succeeds in persuading all the Fellows, who favoured Howard to accept it. He is pleased to find Howard happy and content with the belief that after all they do not take him as 'a liar' and consider him innocent. This is enough of justice for him. Crawford, disturbed by the whole affair, feels relieved at the way it has ended. "Sensible men usually reach sensible conclusions," he says.

This is one way of attaining justice. To quote Jerome Thale, "At the end of The Affair we do not know any more about the nature of justice, but we are much more aware of the ways in which society goes about achieving justice." It may be noted that in fear of public scandal as well as because of Howard's communistic outlook the senior members of the college find it hard to reverse their decision. Even at the second time the decision of the Court of Seniors remains unchanged. The Seniors made it a prestige issue and adhered to their decision. Not until they are threatened that the case will be taken outside the college are they ready to agree to a fresh hearing of the matter with the help of legal advisers. The possibility of removing the photograph out of Palsiret's notebook, as

110 Jerome Thale: Cop. Show: p. 41
pointed out by Francis, with the intention of either preserving Palairret's reputation or continuing the dismissal of Howard, involves Dr. Nightingale, one of the senior members. This gives us an insight into human nature which, even among the intellectual elite, where sincerity and fairness are most to be expected, tries to turn its face away from justice when there is a conflict between one's sordid motives and fair play.

C.P. Snow, a close observer of the intellectuals, has, ironically enough, presented the fact in the novel that Dr. Nightingale, who is entrusted to look into Howard's case, is suspected of removing the very evidence which could prove Howard's innocence beyond all doubt. Justice, however, is done again but as William Cooper puts it:

"the college resolutely refuses to have his back in more than a token sense." 111

( F )  

ABSOLUTE FREEDOM 

AND 

NEW SENSATIONS

It is interesting to see how Snow in his series, Straussers and Brothers presents the twentieth century man in some of the most significant contexts of the age. The incessant craving of ambitious men for power has found a significant place in Snow's novels. But what is important

111 William Cooper: C.P. Snow: p. 129
is that his characters, even when bitter by the tug of power, never turn their eyes away from the ethical values of life. When their ambitions conflict with their conscience they prefer to know how before their conscience.

Lord, Shaw might "not have had in 1935 the idea of such a book as The New Men, which is concerned with the development of the atomic bomb during the Second World War, or The Flame of Reason which is chiefly concerned with a sex crime," 112 but the idea of the latter, viz. sex crime, is dormant in the very first novel of the sequence, *Strangers and Brothers*. George Passant, the hero, advocates the idea of freedom and his concept of freedom has a wider connotation than that of Charles March who, in order 'to be good' and 'to do good', decides to cut himself off from the traditional background and Jewish faith even when his relations with his father and sister are snapped. It is his conscience which urges him to do so. But George has a different notion of freedom.

George Passant refuses to accept that freedom has any limits. He, however, is not satisfied with complete freedom for himself; he strives to create a 'group' of like-minded young people. The 'group' is an idealistic cosmos created by his own fantasies. During this process, he makes brothers of several strangers. George believes that —

112 'The World of Power and Groups' *.

"...people get on best when they're given freedom—particularly freedom from their damned homes, and their damned parents, and their damned lives." 113

George's interest in securing partnership in the Fins of Eden & Martineau, is, more or less, motivated by his idea of freedom for he would then be able to help the young people of his 'group' to whom he preaches absolute freedom;

"It's important from every point of view that I get promoted...for the group as well. If I'm really going to do much for anyone." 114

Eden, in spite of all his faith in George's talent and capacity, is not prepared to offer partnership to him in the Fins because of George's belief in absolute freedom which leads him to 'wild life.' But this does not make George change his ways of life in which he believes so intensely. No sacrifice is too much for his faith in absolute freedom.

George's failure to get the desired partnership results in his participation in a scheme through which he, along with the other members of his 'group,' misleads people using false pretences to raise money. This fraud brings him to the trial in which angry George admits that his 'important work' was to make people 'live in freedom';

"I was helping a number of people to freedom in their lives." 115

113 C.P. Snow : Strangers and Brothers : p.14
114 C.P. Snow : Ibid : p.123
115 C.P. Snow : Ibid : p.293
George's avowal of freedom 'from constraining habits and conventions of thought' creates a strong sensation amongst the generality of men as this confined itself, more or less, to sexual freedom. It is in The Sleep of Reason that George's idea of freedom finds its full expression when his niece, Cora Ross, and her lesbian friend, Kitty Pateman, who had been 'on the fringe of his (George's) crowd,' participate in the murder of a child:

"The freedom which George had once dreamed about had only happened: and, now it had happened, he took it for granted. He just assumed that the world was better than it used to be." 116

Kitty Pateman tells the court that she admires the books of Camus because "they go to the limit." 117 George refuses "to take any responsibility for either of them" and tells Lewis that "they were just acting according to their nature" 118 but confesses:

"I told them what I've told everyone else, that they ought to make the best of their lives and not worry about all the neutered rubbish round them who've denied whatever feeble bit of instinct they might conceivably have been endowed with." 119

116 C.P. Snow: *Sleep of Reason* p. 56
117 C.P. Snow: ibid 3 p. 351
118 C.P. Snow: ibid 3 p. 209
119 C.P. Snow: ibid 3 p. 209
Reviewing The Sleep of Reason Times Literary Supplement

The author comments:

"Snow has tried to analyse the basis of the sadistic violence that marks the 1960s. His title comes from the Saga: 'The Sleep of Reason brings forth monsters.' Why does reason sleep, where do the monsters come from? The answer given here leads back in George Pessant's belief in ultimate and complete freedom, the ideas to which the youthful Eliot listened although he never fully shared them." 120

George believes 'in the perfectibility of men.' His preaching to the 'group' is:

"Live by the flow of your instincts. Salvation through freedom." 121

This leads Cora Ross and Kitty Pateman to murder a child. They stay together in Mr. Pateman's house for they are lesbian friends. Miss Pateman, playing the feminine role in this relationship, would naturally yearn for motherhood and this leads them to fantasies about having children. Their fantasies about ultimate freedom - freedom from all constraining social conventions about which they had heard from the people in the 'group' - must have induced them to take pride in breaking the social norms and have a sense of superiority while doing so.

120 'Monster at Bay' : Times Literary Supplement
   (31 Oct. 1968) p.1217

121 C.P. Snow : Sleep of Reason : pp.276-277
Once again it is this belief in 'absolute freedom'—or sexual freedom as it turns out to be—which leads the students to believe that fornication is no sort of offence and as consequence of this two male students are found bedding with a girl each in a girls' hostel. When the problem is taken up by the Court in the University Dick Pateman, one of the participants, expresses his views that, "the authorities had no right to impose their own laws unilaterally on the students."\footnote{\textit{C.P. Snow: Sleep of Reason}: p. 33}

Snow wants to show here how the concept of 'absolute freedom' is seeping into the minds of the younger generation and how violent are the social tremors caused by it. The germ of this was already there in Snow's mind when he wrote the first novel of the series, \textit{Strangers and Brothers}. With the trial of Cora Ross and Kitty Pateman are shaken by the ramification of this sort of freedom and fear that chaos would descend on society and the word 'responsibility' would lose its traditional meaning. This creates a conflict between the older and the younger generations. For the former 'reason' is the sheet-anchor of our social fabric while the latter swear by the 'instinct.'

It would be wrong to say that Lord Snow believes in 'absolute freedom.' He only records the ripples which appear time and again in our society. Snow's position is also clear when he shows how 'absolute freedom' results in
frustration and violent social consequences. The title of the novel, *The Sleep of Reason*, seems to proclaim that no reasonable person would trust his 'instincts' at the cost of 'reason.' His ideas are very clear:

"Reason was very weak as compared with instinct... But, if we didn't use it to understand instinct, then there was no health in us at all...Put reason to sleep, and all the stronger forces were let loose it meant a chance of hell." 123

Porrination or even murder may be an act of 'absolute freedom' but the persons concerned are not left without punishment. At the trial of Gora and Kitty the lawyers do not dispute the act of murder by their clients but they agree about 'diminished responsibility' which makes clear that no responsible person would fall victim to such freedom. Clive Rosenquest says:

"Who had a free choice? Did any of us? We felt certain that we did. We had to live as if we did." 124

Really speaking, this is an answer to the question posed by the persons believing in 'ultimate freedom':

"What is to tie me down, except myself? It is for me to will that I shall accept. Why should I obey conventions which I didn't make?" 125

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123 C.P. Snow : *Sleep of Reason* : p. 375
124 C.P. Snow : ibid : p. 359
125 C.P. Snow : ibid : p. 310
As Snow's subject of study is the twentieth century man he cannot turn a blind eye to these new social sensations whether he believes in them or not. As F.R.Karl puts it, "specifically, Snow asks, what is man like in the twentieth century?" Snow finds that the concept of ultimate and complete freedom has got hold of the mind of the younger generation. Uncontrolled instinct may lead human beings to utter destruction but that is none of Snow's concern. In the words of Jerome Thale, "Snow's openness and generosity of temperament are very closely connected with the fact that he is a great deal more interested in studying and understanding character than in judging it." Snow is a philosopher artist of scruple and scrupulously avoids passing of judgements. He depicts the characters as he finds them in society. His is the meticulous effort at understanding the world around because he believes:

"You've got to understand how the world ticks, if you're going to have any chance of making it tick better." 128

George Passant, a great exponent of the ultimate freedom, is the hero of the first novel of the sequence and a friend of Lewis Eliot, the narrator. Gifted with formidable intelligence and striking personality George Passant is a man of:

127 Jerome Thale : C.P.Snow : p.24
probity, integrity and loyalty. In spite of all this, he is deprived of partnership in the Firm of Eden & Martineau and has to face the charge of fraud. His is a tragic story.

Snow, however, has a sympathetic approach towards this character which would, otherwise, have ceased to create any interest for the reader. Can we hazard that Snow has a secret sympathy with George’s beliefs? Perhaps not. Snow understands his characters well and finds in George “a man who has wasted every gift he possesses” and “he’s broken every standard of moral conduct we’ve tried to keep up.”

As Herbert Getliffe points out in his speech, George has been “too arrogant to doubt his idea of freedom: or to find out what human beings are really like. He’s never realized—though he’s clever man—that freedom without faith is fatal for sinful human beings. Freedom without faith means nothing but self-indulgence. Freedom without faith has been fatal for Mr. Passant himself.”

Snow also realizes with Getliffe that George is “a child of his time. And that’s more important for the way in which he has thrown himself into freedom without faith.”

George advocates ‘absolute freedom’ because he believes that freedom will enable human beings to attain self-fulfilment but is appalled to find the ‘group’ involved in immoral relations. This takes him to a decision-point when he thinks

129 C.P. Snow: Strangers and Brothers: p.313
130 C.P. Snow: ibid: p.313
131 C.P. Snow: ibid: p.314
of abandoning the 'group':

"It was the only course left for me to take. I'd finished as much as I could do. I'd tried to help a fair number of my friends from the school. I'd given them as much chance of freedom as I could. Doing it again with other people would merely mean repeating the same process. I was willing to do that—but if it was going to involve me in continual hostility with everyone round me, I wasn't prepared to feel it a duty to go on. I'd done the pioneer work. I was satisfied to let it go at that." 132

In his cross examination by Forson the whole idea of George's freedom, its consequences and George's ultimate hope become clear:

George: 'I was trying to make a society where, they would have the chance of being free....'

Forson: "The more obvious ones (results), however, were that a good many of your friends began to have immoral relations?....Your group became, in fact, a haunt of promiscuity?....

'you admit, I suppose, that this was the main result of your effort to give them "freedom in their lives"?'

George: 'I knew from the beginning that it was a possibility I had to face. The important thing was to secure the real gains.'....

'I can't be expected to give much significance to these incidents you are bringing up—when you compare them with the real—meaning. They mattered very little one way or the other." 133

Thus, Snow never claims either to be a social reformer, or a revolutionary but he is merely an observer of the ramifications of our permissive society and that too of certain cross-sections in which he is interested. He —

132 C.P. Snow: Strangers and Brothers: p.297
133 C.P. Snow: ibid: pp.294-296
presents his observation without adopting any moral
postures or supercilious attitude. A detailed study
may perhaps provide us with some evidence of Snow's
direction of thought on this point. As Thale speaks
of him:

"...much of his portrait reflects the social and
political climate of the times...And Snow's —
practical intelligence and reluctance to make blame
make this portrait remarkable." 134

Snow, like his narrator Lewis Eliot, betrays a
secret cord of sympathy for the ideas so devoutly and
single-mindedly propagated by George Passant. That probably
springs from his innate scruple and the desire for the
liberation of the human spirit. Even when he is accused of
belonging to establishment, Snow who is the finest flower
of the two cultures cannot ignore the urges of the human
spirit which feels throttled by social conventions and the
social norms. Yet Snow never takes sides and never sits in
judgement on the diverse personages created by him. Not
only that he never philosophises, never utters a word either
of sympathy or anger while the scrupulous and scientific
observation and analysis of his characters goes on. Unlike
the nineteenth century novelists like Dickens and Thackeray
he does not feel involved in the fortunes of his characters.
Again unlike James Joyce and Virginia Woolf or Dorothy
Richardson he does not make his characters lie on the psycho-
logist's couch and then start probing into their mental —
aberration. Snow might be conventional in his approach but
then he is perfectly aware of new developments in the science of human psychology. What Snow is mainly concerned with is the observation and subtle analysis of the changing spectrum of the social fabric and the diversities and subtleties of human relations and responses. It is here that he gives a new dimension to the English novel. Wells was an avowed socialist who merely used novel as a peg to hang his creed on. Galsworthy in Forsyte Saga attempted a so-called detached description of the changing social milieu and the changing mental attitudes of successive generations. D.H. Lawrence was obsessed by his religion of blood and the mental twistings which arise from sexual repressions and experiences. Aldous Huxley, the haunting intellectual, was more in love with his own genius than his characters and wanted to impress his readers by the subtlety of his analysis and observations. Conrad was more concerned with his methods of narration and the probing of human history by means of a simple philosophy of life natural to a sea-farer.

But Snow is neither a traditionalist nor an experimentalist. He is a shrewd and subtle observer of the flux of life as it changes and eddies in the crucible of a social scientist. Here there are no theories nor swearing by any ideologies or nostrums. But the human relations and the human aspirations in a shifting social, political and economic milieu of a given society are minutely observed and reported by a gentleman of scruple and dignity.
It is for this reason that there are no literary
ornaments, no display of phrase-making feats, no
— fripperies of style, innuendoes or verbal pyrotechnics.
The style is bare straight-forward or simple like that
of a genuine scientist. The apparently bold narration
has a thoroughness and precision rarely found in either
modern or the nineteenth century fiction. The limits of
freedom, even in a permissive society, are pointed out
more by implication than by any thesis making. Such
moral scruple and gentlemanliness to-gether with a social
scientist's spotting of the malady is difficult to come by.
That gives us a measure of Snow's greatness.