

# From Two Cultures to No Culture: C. P. Snow's Two Cultures Lecture Fifty Years On

Raymond Tallis, Roger Kimball, Frank Furedi

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## From Two Cultures to No Culture: C. P. Snow's Two Cultures **Lecture Fifty Years On**

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In 1959 C.P. Snow delivered the annual Rede Lecture in Cambridge under the title of 'The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution'. Snow warned of a gap that had opened up between scientists and the 'literary intellectuals' that made it almost impossible for the two groups to communicate. Snow complained that literary intellectuals were not only ignorant of science but contemptuous of it, as if scientific knowledge were unnecessary for a good education. Snow believed that improvements in the teaching of science were required in order to address the world's greatest problems, and that both the USA and the USSR were ahead of Britain in that respect. Snow spoke with the authority of a man with a foot in both camps, as a trained research scientist and a successful novelist, and his lecture provoked worldwide coverage. However, in 1962 it received an extraordinary response from the influential literary critic F.R. Leavis, who delivered an attack on Snow of unprecedented ferocity. The Snow/Leavis controversy has provoked debate ever since between the supporters of both men's positions as to the real purpose of education. Should science or the humanities be given precedence? Should education aim at the moral formation of the individual or address the world's practical problems? This volume contains two of the most articulate expositions of each point of view, by Roger Kimball and Raymond Tallis. Frank Furedi considers the implications of Snow's lecture for the current education debate, while Robert Whelan argues that the choice is no longer between two cultures but between an education system based on academic rigour and no culture at all.



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