Those who remember C. P. Snow's Rede Lecture of last spring, "The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution," may be interested in J. Robert Oppenheimer's article, "In the Keeping of Unreason," which appears in the January issue of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists.

Like the Snow lecture, Dr. Oppenheimer's essay is concerned with the "alienation between the world of science and the world of public discourse, which has emasculated, impoverished, and intimidated the world of public discourse without any countervailing advantage...and which...has denied to public discourse an element of legitimacy and has given it a kind of arbitrary, uprooted, unfounded quality." While C. P. Snow is troubled by the effects this alienation has and will have on our response as a society to the challenges of what he has termed "the scientific revolution," Dr. Oppenheimer explores the nature of scientific knowledge and the possibilities of its contribution to a "revival of all philosophy." He examines in turn the three pre-conditions for public discourse and philosophy.

The first, "a common basis of knowledge," he believes to have been undermined by the quantitative and qualitative growth of science outside areas of ordinarily communicable human experience: "I believe that it is not possible to have everyone well informed about what goes on, to have a completely common basis of knowledge. We do not have it ourselves in the sciences—far from it." The second pre-condition, "a stable shared tradition," is also missing, but here the reason is the fact that our culture is secular. "We certainly live in the heritage of a Christian tradition," Dr. Oppenheimer writes. But, "I find myself profoundly in anguish over the fact that no ethical discourse of any nobility or weight has been addressed to the problem of the atomic weapons."

"A recognition of the importance of non-propositional knowledge" is the third prerequisite for philosophical discourse. "The purpose is not the attainment of certainty, the purpose is the exploration of meaning." Dr. Oppenheimer asserts. "My belief is that if the common discourse can be enriched by a more tolerant and humane welcome for the growth of science...it may be more easily possible to accept the role of clarification and of commitment which is the true purpose of philosophy, and not to hang around its neck that dread, dead bird, 'How can you be sure?'..."

As to C. P. Snow, he publishes in the February issue of Encounter some "Afterthoughts on the 'Two Cultures' Controversy." Having aroused a "complex and proliferating debate," not only in Europe and the United States, but in the Soviet Union and the East, Sir Charles brings the discussion up to date and answers some of his critics.

British left wing youth have a new publication in the New Left Review, which results from the merging of the New Reasoner with the Universities and Left Review. The first issue (January-February) contains an open letter to the Left by a visiting American, Clancy Sigal, who warns that, unless the Left can fulfill its role of opposition and necessary dissent, British political life will soon come to resemble the American system, in which "political parties [do] not represent inherently distinct ways or visions of life; but...exist primarily as institutional shelters for various pressure groups contending within an increasingly 'pluralistic' society."

Furthermore, Mr. Sigal asserts, this system has led to a deterioration of the very fabric of American life. It is his belief that "a chronic moral and cultural crisis [is] gathering or present in America: that it is at least partly the responsibility of the major organs of political expression which base their appeal and ideologies on what is rather than what ought to be; and that a special and critical disruption occurred in American life at more or less the same moment when that moral energy which, at its most natural, is directed squarely at important social issues—the national libido—was trivialized and strangled by the new spirit of political 'togetherness.'"

"Often, here in England," Mr. Sigal continues, "I have had to listen to criticisms of America, and American life, coming from Labor Party members. I cannot always accept such criticism and in fact regard much of what passes for responsible comment as not well informed. Be that as it may, many of those aspects of American life which British socialists most abhor...are sure to make a more aggressive appearance on the British scene, if the Labor Party persists in its present policy of 'me-too.'"

Pamphlet No. 4 in the "Africa Today" series published by the American Committee on Africa is "The Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland: the Future of a Dilemma." The author, Channing B. Richardson, analyzes the racial and political problems of Central Africa and speculates on the possibilities of their solution in 1960. In addition to Professor Richardson's survey, there are commentaries by Kanyama Chiuede, Joshua Nkomo, Roy Welensky, Garfield Todd and Guy Clutton-Brock.