

picture to procure radical alteration in the organization of forces within the personality. "Give a dog a bad name and hang him" may be only folk-wisdom, but like so much folk-wisdom it marks out a field for science to explore.

I am not concerned here to demonstrate, and it could not in the present state of our science be demonstrated, that publication of Freud's descriptions of human nature served (in part) to call out in human nature precisely what he had described, and on a grand scale. Neither can I say for Fromm that his view will do the like, though I think it not unlikely. If the contrary of what I suppose were true it would be equally important.

What I am concerned about is what I believe to be a fundamental error in much social-scientific thinking, the error of "naïve realism," using the term in a very special sense. It seems to me that, as social scientists, we take insufficient account of the indeterminacy, or if that term offends the multi-potentiality, of human affairs and human situations. In imitation of the physical sciences, we have built our thought-models on the supposition that human affairs are far more determinate than they are, and that therefore we may describe them without affecting them, as our colleagues can with their atoms and their galaxies. The procedure seems to me unwarranted and dangerous.

IV

I have done nothing more than point to what seems to me a field of social science research which is virtually unexplored. I have added that, if what I suppose is true, we must needs revise our whole notion of social science and the role of the social scientist. We should be forced to accept a view of research as taking place *inside* the social act under study (as well as in some sense outside it) just as individual reflection is within, a part of, and an element in the building up of the ongoing individual act, modifying it in its progress and being modified in turn, on the analogy of the feed-back mechanism. I have used an illustration that may turn out to be inept but that appeared to me to be convincing and dramatic. This view would create difficulties, but I do not think that the problems that would arise in dealing with the more complex thought-models involved would be insuperable.

Neither do I think that, if my view should turn out to be justified in whole or in part, this would diminish the importance or dignity of social science. Individual reflection is not to be the more lightly thought of because it arises in, and flows back into action. The reflection that takes itself thus into account is relatively free; the reflection that naïvely supposes itself to be free is cripplingly bound. That paradox may hold for the social sciences too.

DOUGLAS ALEXANDER SKELTON (1906-1950)

The death of Alex Skelton by drowning at Lagos, Nigeria, in July, 1950 brought to a premature end a fruitful and distinctive career. To his many friends, Sandy or Alex Skelton, as he was known to successive generations, was a winning and powerful personality, strong in his opinions, scornfully resentful of pretension, but with a warm generosity which they remember gratefully. To his colleagues and acquaintances among the economists, he

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was a forceful mind, never neutral, unacademic in his approach to problems, but thorough in his investigations, original in his analysis, and incisive in presenting his views.

Alex Skelton was the eldest son of distinguished parents. His father, O. D. Skelton, achieved great distinction as a writer, as Professor of Political and Economic Science at Queen's University, and as Under Secretary of State for External Affairs. His mother, Mrs. Isabel Skelton, has found time in a busy life to write a number of books which combine competent historical research with insight and graceful writing. Alex was born in Chicago, where his father was a graduate student, grew up in Kingston, and returned there to attend Queen's University after a year spent at Bembridge School, Isle of Wight. As a student he was brilliant in perception and capable periodically of an astonishing *tour de force*, but he found it difficult to fit himself docilely into the conventional pattern of an academic curriculum. Extraordinary in his enthusiasm and physical energy, he was an athlete of note and developed an abiding love for sailing boats whether on Lake Ontario, the Mediterranean, or the Ottawa.

After graduation, he spent two years at University College, Oxford, as a Rhodes Scholar and returned to spend a year in teaching political science at the University of Saskatchewan. He often spoke warmly of this experience but decided against an academic career. For four years he was economist to the Beauharnois Power Corporation and during that time collaborated under the Harvard Bureau of International Research in the publication of the volume, *International Control of Non-Ferrous Metals*, a subject in which he had become interested because of the importance of electro-metallurgy as a market for power. In 1935 he became the first chief of the research department of the Bank of Canada and in 1944 research adviser, a position which he held until he transferred to the Department of Trade and Commerce as Assistant Deputy Minister in 1948.

Skelton's distinctive work was not all or even mainly to be found within the confines of his official positions. Though he laid firm foundations for the work of the Bank's research department, he was absent from it on special assignment for most of ten years. He was a man of projects and forays and was rarely in better form than when organizing a task force. Routine and the daily round dulled his edge and made him restive. During the war and after there were numerous pioneer jobs to be done which were assigned to him, but unquestionably his greatest work which will bear fruit over many years was that as Secretary of the Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations and later as Secretary to the Cabinet Committee on Dominion-Provincial Relations. He was responsible for much of the notable report of the Commission and for the organizing of the Conferences of 1940, 1945, and later.

One can criticize some of Alex Skelton's work by saying that he tended to organize it on too grand a scale. He found few helpers who could work as massively as he could when he had been caught up by a project and few who could assimilate to an orderly pattern the innumerable facts which his energy and unorthodox methods turned up. His methods paid rich dividends in the *Report of the Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations*. Though

many others helped, and helped decisively, Skelton was the architect of the investigations and the framer of the issues. The recommendations of the Commission suffered some degree of obsolescence by reason of the war, but the analysis in the *Report* and in its many appendices will stand for many years as perhaps the most substantial contribution to applied social science which has been made in this country. It is difficult to think of anyone who could have brought to this enormous task the energy and concentrated talent which he put into it.

This was his great work but there were scores of other projects in Ottawa that were carried through because of Alex Skelton's quick grasp of the essentials and his prodigious energy. At the time of the accident which ended his life, he was a member of a Royal Commission to advise on a federal system for the West African colonies. His ability to fix a wide range of detail in his mind and yet achieve significant generalizations was of an unusually high order. With it he combined an astonishing knowledge of personalities, both high and low, and an insatiable interest in them. For the *poseur* and the unimaginative he had little tolerance. But for his many friends and co-workers he had a warm regard and strong loyalty. His personality and his ability had given him a distinctive place which can never quite be filled by others.

[W. A. M.]

BOOK BURSARIES

The Canadian Social Science Research Council is continuing its offer of "Book Bursaries," in aid of instructors in the social sciences in Canada. These bursaries are designed to aid junior members of departments or the social science staff generally in the financially weaker institutions to secure books directly helpful to them in their teaching or research, when they lack access to adequate library facilities. They are intended to stimulate broad scholarship and sound research. The maximum value of the bursaries is \$100 but the list of books desired may indicate a greater value in order to allow of alternatives in case of titles proved to be unobtainable. As a rule persons who have been granted a bursary are not subsequently allowed to apply for a second one. Application forms may be obtained from the Secretary of the Canadian Social Science Research Council, 166 Marlborough Avenue, Ottawa.

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