

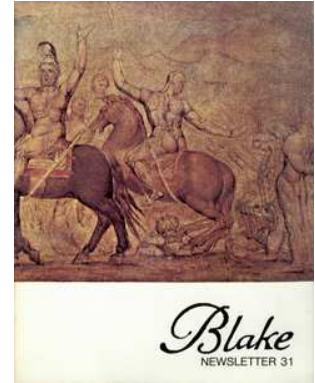
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R E M E M B R A N C E

Bronowski Dead at 66

Victor H. McElheny

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Bronowski Dead at 66

The following obituary notice, by Victor K. McElheny, appeared in the *New York Times* of 23 August 1974.

By Victor H. McElheny

Jacob Bronowski, a leading popular exponent of the philosophical basis of scientific research, and since 1964 a resident fellow of the Salk Institute in La Jolla, Calif., died after a heart attack yesterday morning in the East Hampton home of friends, where he and his wife were vacationing. He was 66 years old.

Dr. Bronowski's latest and most ambitious attempt to describe the place of science in human history, a 13-part television series for the British Broadcasting Corporation called *The Ascent of Man*, is to be broadcast on American public television stations this winter.

In the programs, first broadcast in Britain in May through July, 1973, and later in Canada, Dr. Bronowski played the same role as interpreter of his subject that Lord Clark, the art historian, had in the earlier B.B.C. series *Civilisation*.

Filming of Series

Sylvia Fitzgerald, for several years an editorial assistant to Dr. Bronowski at the Salk Institute, recalled yesterday in a telephone interview that the filming of the series took from



July, 1971, to December, 1972. Scenes were shot in such varied locations as Easter Island in the South Pacific, Machu Picchu in the Peruvian Andes, the Omo Valley in Ethiopia where hominid precursors of man lived two million years ago, and the English house of Charles Darwin, author of the theory of biological evolution.

Dr. Bronowski was born in Poland on Jan. 18, 1908, a son of Abram and Celia Bronowski. The family soon migrated to Germany and then to England.

In England, Dr. Bronowski attended the University of Cambridge, receiving his doctorate in mathematics there in 1933. In 1934 he became a senior lecturer at the University of Hull for eight years.

Report on Hiroshima

In World War II, Dr. Bronowski headed statistical groups studying the effects of bombing on industry and the economy. This was one of the origins of what became known as "operations research." In 1945, he was scientific deputy of the British Chiefs of Staff mission to Japan, where he wrote a report called "The Effects of Atomic Bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki."

In an article in *The Saturday Evening Post* in 1960, Dr. Bronowski wrote of his experience, "When I saw the inhuman desolation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, I was convinced that the development of atomic weapons could lead to the destruction of mankind."

In the same article, however, he said public fears that scientists who had worked on such weapons had lost their sense of right and wrong were mistaken. "On the contrary, I have found

that the conscience of scientists is the most active morality in the world," he wrote.

Dr. Bronowski closed the article by recalling the heroism of the atomic weapons specialist Louis Slotin who, when his screwdriver slipped during the delicate operation of manipulating the core of a plutonium bomb, causing a huge shower of deadly neutrons, pulled the pieces of the bomb apart with his own hands.

By this act, Mr. Slotin sentenced himself to death by radiation sickness nine days later, but he saved seven colleagues in the room. Dr. Bronowski commented, "Morality--shall we call it heroism in this case--has the same anatomy the world over."

In 1950, Dr. Bronowski became head of research for Britain's National Coal Board, which took over all British coal mines when they were nationalized after World War II. He held this post for 13 years, while the board's researchers worked to develop "smokeless" fuels to burn in British grates.

Often Witty

A short, stocky man, Dr. Bronowski was often witty, even sarcastic, in conversation. When interviewed on television, he made intent, dramatic pauses while he thought of answers to questions. He wrote many books, including the well-known *Science and Human Values*, and two plays. He was a frequent participant in the B.B.C. radio show "Brains Trust," a counterpart to "Information Please" in the United States.

One of Dr. Bronowski's deepest interests was the 19th century English artist and poet William Blake. He became an authority on Blake, about whom he wrote a book, *William Blake and the Age of Revolution*.

Although urging a loosening of ties between scientists and governments, and deploring a "terrible loss of nerve" eroding support for science in Western countries, Dr. Bronowski held to optimism about the future. At the close of the 13-part television series, Dr. Bronowski said, "If we do not take the next step in the ascent of man, it will be taken elsewhere, in Africa, in China."

In 1941, Dr. Bronowski married Rita Coblenz, a sculptor who used the professional name Rita Colin. They had four daughters, Mrs. Nicholas Jardine, Mrs. Robert Grant, Mrs. Jay Plett and Clare, a student at Harvard College.

Besides his widow and daughters, Dr. Bronowski is survived by a brother, Leo Baron.

The funeral will be private.

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