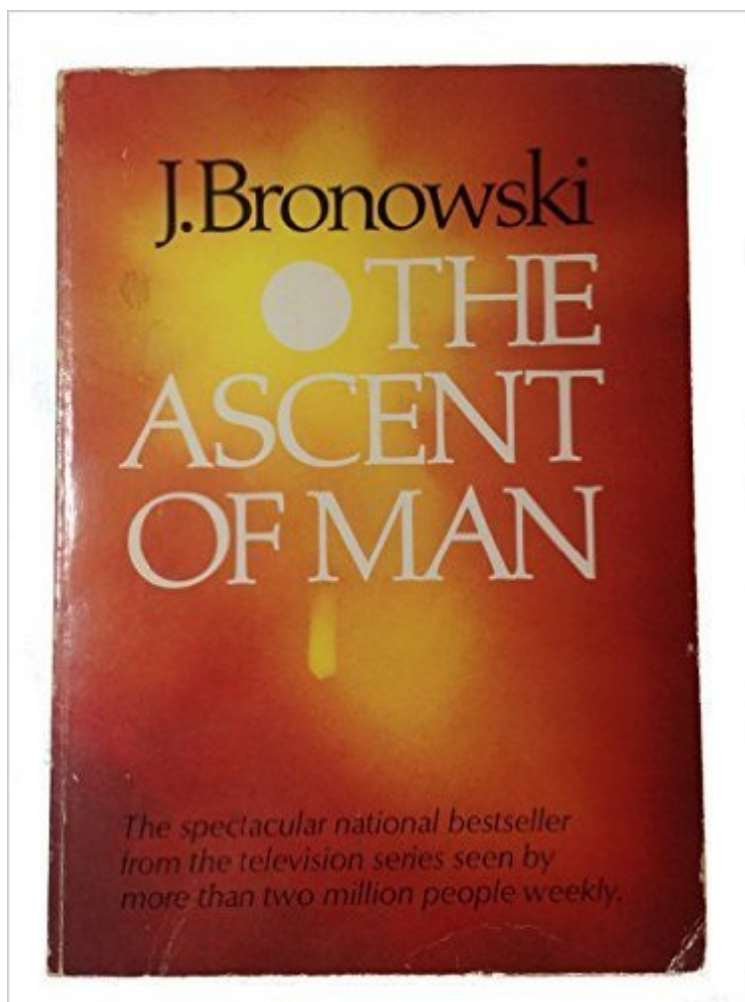


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The Ascent Of Man



Synopsis

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Customer Reviews

Other reviews in the section may give you a good idea of the content of this book. I would rather give you an idea of the impact that Bronowski had on one life. When I was a small boy living in London over 25 years ago, my father used to take me to the Science Museum in South Kensington almost every Saturday to attend the afternoon lectures. One Saturday it was not a lecture that we attended but a film by a gentleman named Jacob Bronowski. I sat mesmerised by the episode of the 'Ascent of Man' that was shown that afternoon. I understood much of the science which was being discussed and already had a good grounding in the subject. But within the description of man's pursuit of understanding was a humanity that I had never experienced before. At the end of the film, Bronowski crouched by a pond in a concentration camp and scooped a handful of ashes from the pool of water and, fixing his steady eye on the camera, said, 'I beseech you in the bowels of Christ, consider you may be wrong'. Bronowski was quoting Cromwell, but in that brief moment was encapsulated the essence of science, humanity, art, and understanding. The Ascent of Man, in the 1970s an attempt to bring a deeper and wider understanding of science and humanity to the public, is now confined to Open University television schedules. The book remains available to all. It is a revelation. Bronowski was a giant. Read this book and you may come closer to an understanding of the world around you, but when you finally put it down, having formed an opinion, 'consider you may

be wrong'. As for me, I went on to study physics as a first degree and the arts as a higher degree. I share Bronowski's atheism but there is never a day that passes or an opinion I offer when I do not heed that advice and question the world around me.

One of my all time favorite books from college that is definitely a keeper and still relevant after all these years. If you read each chapter and view the corresponding video text it produces a truly amazing insight into the development of mankind's knowledge. Similar in style to "Connections" it is quite possibly more engrossing. The book is a fascinating journey, written in a style that illuminates the darkest and distant passages of time with lucidity and foresight. My personal favorite chapter (6) was The Starry Messenger which was eventually about (like knowledge Bronowski builds on the past) Galileo and his relationship with the Catholic Church as a result of his theories. I love this book and the understanding it gave me to subjects I felt less than interested in. This book has the power to make even the most abstract and esoteric theories interesting. A beautiful book that puts all the knowledge of the past into perspective in an entertaining manner that can lead a young mind into areas of interest they may never have pursued. The book is also full of richly detailed photographs, full color prints and other visual aids that further explain the topic discussed. I would recommend this book for any young student in high school or approaching college who is even remotely interested in the connections between science and the evolution of mankind. A great gift idea for that budding scientist or historian on your list.

Jacob Bronowski was a genuine Renaissance man. This, his most famous book, looks at the history of science from the perspective of Bronowski's deep, humanist philosophy. Bronowski--along with C.P. Snow--saw art and science as two aspects of the same human enterprise: that of understanding the world and expressing that world in human terms. Here Bronowski shows those connections: why Mendeleev's periodic table was part of "the greatest collective work of art" in history--that is, physics; why the Watts Towers of Los Angeles are like the molecules in a copper wire. THE ASCENT OF MAN is a symphony for which SCIENCE AND HUMAN VALUES was merely a prelude. An outstanding, and vitally important book. "I am infinitely saddened," Bronowski writes, "to find myself suddenly surrounded in the West by a terrible loss of nerve." We must not turn our backs on science--we must finally discover it. One of those writers whose every page contains a brilliant idea, Bronowski is well worth reading. See also SCIENCE AND HUMAN VALUES, THE IDENTITY OF MAN, THE VISIONARY EYE, and my favorite, A SENSE OF THE FUTURE.

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