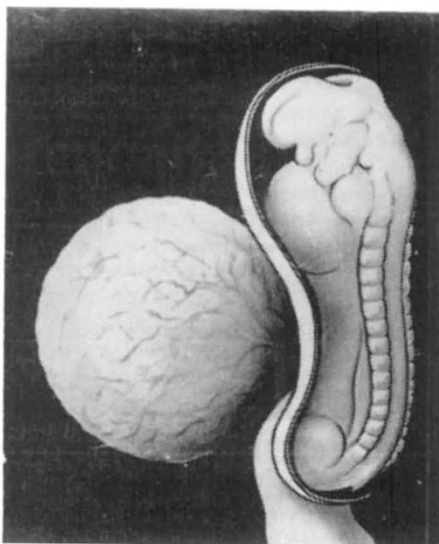


Film review

Looking at ourselves before birth



A 25 day old embryo, with its connecting stalk and yolk sac.

To describe the development of a human being from ovum to newborn baby in just over half an hour must inevitably mean an extensive compression of the available factual material. In *Ourselves Before Birth* (Macmillan Educational Films) the precis is unfortunately uneven. Ovulation, fertilisation, implantation and the early formation of tissue of a human embryo are described in the first third of the film and the rest of the time is devoted to the growth of the foetus and the development of its blood supply. That imbalance is, however, a major flaw in an otherwise admirable presentation.

As an exposition on foetal growth the film must be one of the best ever made, and the graphics are excellent. But as an educational aid for the study of human embryology in the first few days of life it is disappointing. The men behind the film, Professor W. J. Hamilton and Professor T. W. Glenister, of the Univer-

sity of London, have tried to cram far too much complex information in the first part of the commentary without explaining the technical terms introduced. If the members of an audience already know the meanings of these terms then they have no need to watch the first ten minutes or so of what is a rather superficial treatment; if they do not understand them then they will not be enlightened by this film.

So, for me, the film fell between two stools. As an undoubtedly excellent account of later foetal development it is burdened by technicalities relating to early embryology, which are not explained adequately. There is, however, one marked exception. The implantation of the embryo is beautifully illustrated by the animation which alternates between two and three-dimensional views of the interior of the uterus and the inside of the blastocyst. This technique is most effective—why was it not maintained for perhaps another 10 minutes or so to surmount the hurdle of early tissue formation?

John Wilson

announcements

International meetings

February 14, **Pesticides in Agricultural Control**, London (Mr J. M. Rowell, Society for Chemical Industry, 14 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PS, UK).

February 19–20, **Offshore Oil Needs Onshore Fabrication**, Glasgow (Colin Maynard, The Institute of Petroleum, 61 New Cavendish Street, London W1M 8AR, UK).

April 7–11, **Annual Chemical Congress**, York (Dr John F. Gibson, The Chemical Society, Burlington House, London W1V 0BN, UK).

April 9–11, **European Space Research Organisation Tribology Symposium**, Frascati, Italy (ESTEC, Mechanisms and Tribology Section, Structure Division, ESTEC, Domeinweg, Noordwijk, Netherlands).

April 23, **Machine Intelligence**, London (The Meetings Officer, The Institute of Physics, 47 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8QX, UK).

Miscellaneous

Residential course on enzyme and fermentation biotechnology. Organised by the Biochemistry Department at the University of Surrey and the Society of Chemical Industry, the course is aimed at young graduates and experienced workers in the field of technology. Further details from: Dr Alan Wiseman, Department of Biochemistry, University of Surrey, Guildford, UK.

Reports and Publications

Great Britain

Chemistry and Industry Buyers' Guide 1975: Chemicals, Manufacturing Plant and Laboratory Equipment. Pp. 70. (London: The Society of Chemical Industry, 1974.) [2511]

Mycotoxins in Food. By Dr B. Jarvis. (Scientific and Technical Surveys No. 83.) Pp. 20. (Leatherhead: The British Food Manufacturing Industries Research Association, 1974.) [2611]

Department of the Environment. The Welsh Office. Report of a River Pollution Survey of England and Wales 1973, Vol. 3. Pp. xii + 32. (London: HMSO, 1974.) £1.20 net. [2711]

Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London. A: Mathematical and Physical Sciences. Vol. 277. No. 1269: On Finite Amplitude Convection in a Rotating Magnetic System. By P. H. Roberts and K. Stewartson. Pp. 287–315. (London: The Royal Society, 1974.) £1.05; £1.10 overseas. [2811]

Technology at Work. Pp. 34. (Cambridge: The Director—Corporate Projects, Pyc of Cambridge, Ltd., 1974.) gratis. [2911]

People Without Choice. By Brian Abel-Smith. (Report of the 21st Anniversary Conference of the International Planned Parenthood Federation.) Pp. 68. (London: International Planned Parenthood Federation, 1974.) [2911]

Reshaping Britain: a Programme of Economic and Social Reform. (Broadsheet No. 658.) Pp. 98. (London: PEP/The Social Science Institute, 1974. Orders to Research Publications Services, Ltd., Victoria Hall, Fingal Street, East Greenwich, London, SE10.) £2. [212]

Natural Environment Research Council. Monks Wood Experimental Station—Report for 1972/1973. Pp. 103. (Abbots Ripton, Huntingdon: The Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, Monks Wood Experimental Station, 1974.) 60p. [212]

The Royal Society. Report of Council for the year ended 31 August 1974. Pp. 99. (London: The Royal Society, 1974.) [312]

The British Council. Annual Report 1973/1974. Pp. 107 + 10 photographs. (London: The British Council, 1974.) [312]

The Autonomy of the Broadcasters: Constitution and Convention. By Sir Michael Swann, FRS. Pp. 12. (London: BBC, 1974.) [412]

Science Research Council. Radio and Space Research, January 1971–December 1973. (The Report of the Director of the Appleton Laboratory.) Pp. 83. (London: HMSO, 1974.) £1.25. [412]

Parkinson's Disease. Pp. 24. (London: Office of Health Economics, 162 Regent Street, W1, 1974.) 25p. [512]

Forty-seventh Annual Report of the Agricultural Research Institute of Northern Ireland, 1973/1974. Pp. 47. (Hillsborough, Co. Down: Agricultural Research Institute of Northern Ireland, 1974.) [512]

CEGB Research. No. 1, December 1974. Pp. 36. (London: Central Electricity Generating Board, 1974.) [512]

Other countries

CERN—European Organization for Nuclear Research. CERN 74-20: Selected Physics Data on Neon-Hydrogen Mixtures. Compiled by H. Leutz, F. Schmeissner and H. Weninger. Pp. 175. CERN 74-21: Radiation Measurements Around the Fermilab 3,000 GeV Main Accelerator. By M. Awshalom, D. D. Yovanovitch, K. Goebel, K. P. Lambert, J. Ranft and E. Wilson. Pp. 35. (Geneva: CERN, 1974.) [1311]

World Health Organization. Technical Report Series No. 553: Ecology and Control of Rodents of Public Health Importance—Report of a WHO Scientific Group. Pp. 42. (Geneva: WHO; London, HMSO, 1974.) Sw.fr.5. [1311]

Smithsonian Contributions to Zoology, No. 173: Ostracoda (Myodocoppina) of Cape Cod Bay, Massachusetts. By Louis S. Kornicker. Pp. 20. (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1974. For sale by US Government Printing Office.) 65 cents. [1311]

Smithsonian Contributions to Zoology, No. 167: Studies of Neotropical Caddisflies, XVII: The Genus *Smicridea* from North and Central America (Trichoptera: Hydropsychidae). By Oliver S. Flint, Jr. Pp. iii + 65. (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1974. For sale by US Government Printing Office.) \$1.50. [1411]

Bulletin of the Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University, Vol. 146, No. 3: A Revision of the Cardinalfish genus *Epigonus* (Perciformes, Agonidae), with Descriptions of Two New Species. By Garry F. Mayer. Pp. 147–203. \$3.35. Vol. 146, No. 4: The Spider Family Anyphaenidae in America North of Mexico. By Norman Platnick. Pp. 205–266. \$3.25. (Cambridge, Mass.: Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University, 1974.) [1811]

National Research Council Canada. NRCC No. 13688: Environmental Cause/Effect Phenomena Relating to Technological Development in the Canadian Arctic. By Wilson Eedy. (Associated Committee on Scientific Criteria for Environmental Quality.) Pp. 125. (Ottawa: National Research Council, 1974.) [1811]

CAS Today: Facts and Figures About Chemical Abstracts Service. Pp. 32. (Columbus, Ohio: Chemical Abstracts Service, A Division of the American Chemical Society, 1974.) [1811]

Glossary of Mental Disorders and Guide to Their Classification for Use in Conjunction with the International Classification of Diseases, 8th Revision. Pp. 86. (Geneva: World Health Organization; London: HMSO, 1974.) Sw.fr.12. [1811]

Publications of the Finnish Geodetic Institute. No. 77: Beobachtungsergebnisse der Finnischen Winkelmessungen in Den Jahren 1969/1970. Von Jussi Kaariainen. Pp. 40. No. 78: High Precision Measurements for Studying the Secular Variation in Gravity in Finland. By Aimo Kiviniemi. Pp. 68. (Helsinki: Geodettinen Aikisto, 1974.) [1811]

Recreation in a Marine Environment. Pp. 12. (Zurich: ICOMIA Marine Environment Committee, Gubelstrasse, 28, 1974.) [1911]