



A History of Molecular Biology

Michel Morange

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Every day it seems the media focus on yet another new development in biology--gene therapy, the human genome project, the creation of new varieties of animals and plants through genetic engineering. These possibilities have all emanated from molecular biology.

A History of Molecular Biology is a complete but compact account for a general readership of the history of this revolution. Michel Morange, himself a molecular biologist, takes us from the turn-of-the-century convergence of molecular biology's two progenitors, genetics and biochemistry, to the perfection of gene splicing and cloning techniques in the 1980s. Drawing on the important work of American, English, and French historians of science, Morange describes the major discoveries--the double helix, messenger RNA, oncogenes, DNA polymerase--but also explains how and why these breakthroughs took place. The book is enlivened by mini-biographies of the founders of molecular biology: Delbrück, Watson and Crick, Monod and Jacob, Nirenberg.

This ambitious history covers the story of the transformation of biology over the last one hundred years; the transformation of disciplines: biochemistry, genetics, embryology, and evolutionary biology; and, finally, the emergence of the biotechnology industry.

An important contribution to the history of science, *A History of Molecular Biology* will also be valued by general readers for its clear explanations of the theory and practice of molecular biology today. Molecular biologists themselves will find Morange's historical perspective critical to an understanding of what is at stake in current biological research.

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