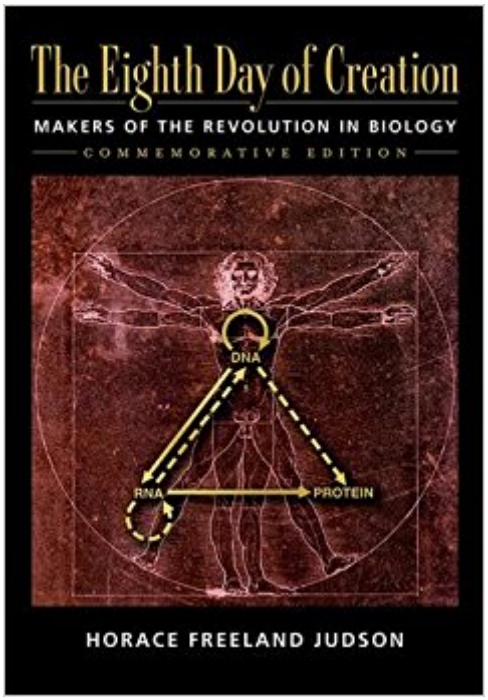
# The Eighth Day Of Creation: Makers Of The Revolution In Biology, Commemorative Edition



## Synopsis

In this classic book, the distinguished science writer Horace Freeland Judson tells the story of the birth and early development of molecular biology in the US, the UK, and France. The fascinating story of the golden period from the revelation of the double helix of DNA to the cracking of the genetic code and first glimpses of gene regulation is told largely in the words of the main players, all of whom Judson interviewed extensively. The result is a book widely regarded as the best history of recent biological science yet published.This commemorative edition, honoring the memory of the author who died in 2011, contains essays by his daughter Olivia Judson, Matthew Meselson, and Mark Ptashne and an obituary by Jason Pontin. It contains all the content added to previous editions, including essays on some of the principal historical figures involved, such as Rosalind Franklin, and a sketch of the further development of molecular biology in the era of recombinant DNA.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In the foreword to this expanded edition of his 1979 masterpiece, Horace Freeland Judson says, "I feared I might seem the official historian of the movement"--molecular biology, that is. If by official he means "authoritative; definitive; the standard against which all others are measured" then his fears are warranted. Detailed without being overly technical, humane without being fulsome, The Eighth Day of Creation tells of molecular biology’s search for the secret of life. "The drama has everything--exploration of the unknown; low comedy and urgent seriousness; savage competition,

vaulting intelligence, abrupt changes of fortune, sudden understandings; eccentric and brilliant people, men of honor and of less than honor; a heroine, perhaps wronged; and a treasure to be achieved that was unique and transcendent." And in Judson this drama found its Shakespeare.

"A historian has mused that the memory of man is too frail a thread on which to hang history; Judson's achievement, in drawing out the memories of so many participants in the epic of molecular biology and weaving them into a single robust skein, is magisterial. His work fittingly commemorates a golden age which already seems as remote as that of Darwin and Huxley." Nature"This reissue of a pioneering history of molecular biology, for some years out of print, is essentially a reprint of the first edition of 1979. Horace Judson has corrected a few minor errors (remarkably few for such a fact-filled book), given a sharper emphasis to Frederick Sangers' work on protein sequencing to reflect his (Judson's) conviction of its central importance, and added some personal details to a biographical sketch of Rosalind Franklin. Finally, an epilogue touches very briefly on developments in the 1970s that were the foundations for the subsequent vast expansion of molecular biologyEL. This epilogue obviously is not meant to bring Judson's original story up to the presentthat would take another large bookbut only to point readers to topics that Judson leaves for other historians to explore. The Eighth Day of Creation has aged well, like a good vintage, and its very good to have it available again." ISIS"The revelations of modern biology make a remarkable human and scientific story, and it has never been told better than in Horace Freeland Judson's The Eighth Day of CreationEL. What is especially fortunate is that he is a graceful writer with a keen sense of the human as well as the scientific dramaEL. I finished the book with a great sense of elation and a deepened sense of admiration for what the human family, at its best, can accomplish." (Review of the First Edition) JEREMY BERNSTEIN, New York Times Book Review"In his massive, marvelous history of molecular biologyEL Judson introduces us to many fiendishly clever experiments, some fiercely competitive rivalries, and some of the greatest scientific minds ever to ponder the mysteries of biologyEL. He has talked with nearly everyone involved, and The Eighth Day of Creation is a unique oral history of a scientific revolution; to my knowledge there has been nothing else like it." (Review of the First Edition) LEON GUSSOW, Chicago Tribune

Back in the 1990s, in my early 50s, I thought about shifting into genetic counseling, and took a series of undergraduate biology courses in preparation. A most exciting day was when, in the Cell and Molecular Biology lab, my lab partner and I isolated DNA. I felt as if I were walking on air! Later, writing up a lab report, I reread large chunks of The Eighth Day of Creation, to see that the various

experiments we carried out in that lab replicated the pathway to understanding that had gone on in the 1950s and ’60s.I didn’t make the move I was thinking about, but that course and the day we actually had a blob of DNA in our test tube, remains with me to this day. And this book put it all into context. Even today, it stands as a wonderful review of the process that resulted in a major "paradigm shift" (a la Kuhn) in biology. While The Double Helix is a fun, gossipy way to get into popular biology literature, The Eighth Day of Creation is where the real story is to be found.Today, in the week of the bicentennial of Darwin’s birth, I recommend this book as a great way to follow the thread from Darwin’s deep insights of the mid-19th century to what we knew by the last 3rd of the 20th century. Obviously, the story continues from there, but the period covered by the book was seminal. And yes, some elementary biology is good background for reading it, but just as important is an interest in the social networks that underly an area of scientific endeavor. What Judson gives us is a picture of how the various scientists fed into each other’s insights and experiment led into experiment. He’s very good at describing important biological concepts -- readers with just a little biology under their belts will have no trouble following him.

I have always loved this book. I lost the original I had. This is an "OK" printing but is not on acid-free paper and the copy I bought through  is yellowed considerably. Given that this is really a personal library book you might want to keep: buy a the newer versions of the book. I did, and it’s easier to read.All that aside, this is an amazing story of how different disciplines converged to create our understanding of the structure and function of DNA, and the whole discipline of molecular biology.

When I received the book, advised by a friend, I got a shock. So thick with such small writing, I thought I’d never get through it! What a mistake; the text engulfed me and although not always prepared to such exposure of scientific material, my interest rarely subsided. I was fascinated to see how imagination and common sense were instrumental to push research. How ideas that are so obvious today seemed as wild hypotheses. How people just missed them. And how "gentlemanly" research was in those days. People spoke to each other, compared results, even before printing an abstract. Today, to preserve priority claims, scientists rush to the editor! Fierce competition has taken over.DNA is central to our epoch and it’s difficult to imagine that reputed scientists thought that the molecule was stupid, that it had nothing to do with genetics and that a genetic code was a hopeless idea. And the worst was still to come once the structure of DNA had been discovered! The eighth day of creation, a beautiful title, is a great book for those interested in the background of research work.

Excellent book. I read it back in the early 1980's as an undergrad in college.. it was so exciting and eye-opening that I shifted gears in my college studies and became a scientist myself! Judson describes in beautiful detail the the pathways by which individuals from various scientific backgrounds, with all their various egos and frailties developed the field of molecular biology. Absolutely fascinating read! Looking forward to reading it again!

This is a masterpiece, describing in a very interesting and readable fashion how the development and subsequent practice of molecular biology forever changed our knowledge of the structure and expression of genes. I was a student and later a lab head in that field during the period described in Judson's book, and nevertheless found the book very exciting and also informative.

This book is a wonderful read. I find it very useful in my work which extends the discoveries that were made by Watson, Crick, Pauling, Monod, Nirenberg, and so many others. It can be read by anyone with an interest in biochemistry, genetics, and crystallography. It is emotionally moving. It shows the extreme dedication and exertion and time required to do scientific discovery. It shows how few resources and how little space were required to make the enormous steps that have led to the current understanding of genetics and protein chemistry.

it arrived early and in fine condition. it gave me insight into DNA and was a good story on the scientists and their fields of discovery. It combines physics and chemistry and microbiology as the experts in these fields worked ;out how our inheritance really works.

I never expected so much drama from a book about molecular biology. The personalities of these scientists are compelling and their stories cover the range from glorious to tragic. Judson's book is a fantastic read!

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