

Preface

The purpose of this ICN-UCLA symposium on "Molecular Approaches to Eucaryotic Genetic Systems" was to bring molecular biologists who have pioneered the new techniques of recombinant DNA research and rapid DNA sequencing together with the geneticists who have established promising eucaryotic genetic systems. The meeting was held in Park City, Utah from February 27 to March 4, 1977. The highlight of the meeting was the special lecture on "The Structure of Chromatin" by Nobel laureate Francis Crick. In closing his lecture, Dr. Crick gave a rather concise summary of the meeting:

My impression of this meeting, if we look around and see what has been presented, is that we all know the sorts of problems. Of course, some people are looking at more ambitious problems, they are interested in problems of cell-cell interaction, and the actual details of differentiation. Before we do all that, we really want to know the nature of the eucaryotic genome, and how it is controlled, never mind what happens when you get the products of all that. If you look at what people have done here, most of them have been stating that they have systems which look promising, or they have methods which look exciting, and we have some results, but I think it's fair to say we don't have any deep results yet. We're setting up the problem at this stage. At least that's my impression of the thing. On the other hand, I must tell you that I can't help feeling that we're in an era of very rapid progress. It will be surprising if what I've said is true in two or three years time, maybe even one. In other words, we have so many methods to attack some of these things, and things can go so rapidly, it would be surprising if we didn't begin to see daylight. Once we begin to see daylight, I think we can design our experiments better. At the moment, we're really groping, and I think we should recognize that. When we begin to see what it's all about, then I think things will go even faster, and I think many of the things that we've heard today, in different parts of the meeting, will then begin to knit together. So it seems to me one of the great advantages of this meeting is, it's made people aware of other people's approaches and methods though I don't think it has produced solutions. That's just my impression. Thank you.

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