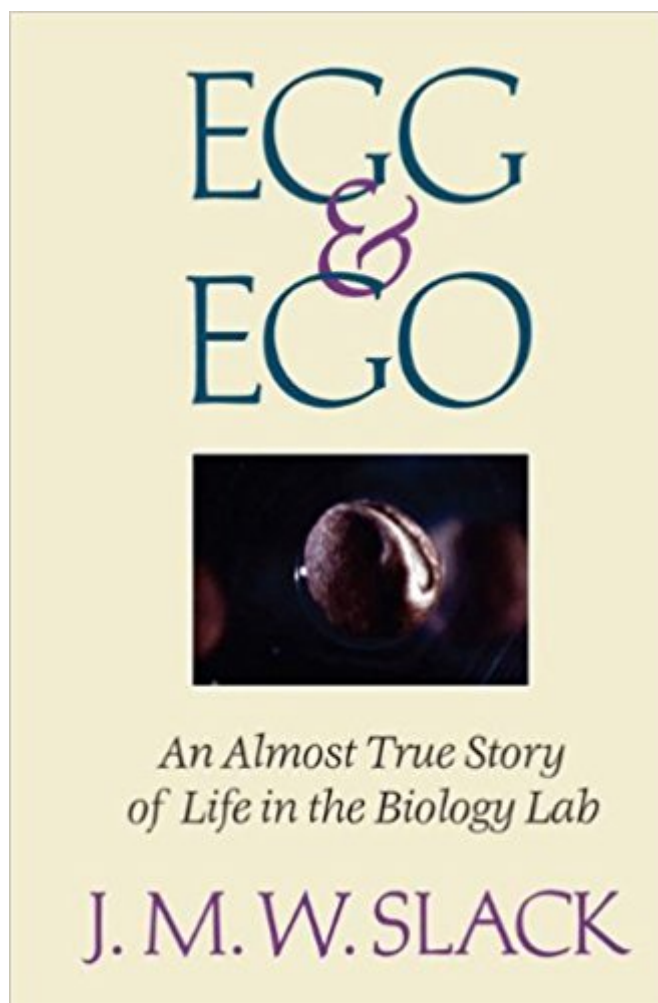


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Egg & Ego: An Almost True Story Of Life In The Biology Lab



Synopsis

A light-hearted look at the nature of academic science, intended for anyone interested in biology but particularly for biology students who want to find out what the future holds in store. The "Egg" of the title refers to the science of developmental biology, which is the speciality of the author, and which provides the material for many of the anecdotes. The "Ego" relates to the vanity of the scientists themselves. Academic scientists have to struggle to maintain their research funding. To do this they must persuade other scientists that they are very good, and that means working at a good institution, publishing papers in the most fashionable journals and giving lectures at the most prestigious meetings. Success often goes to those with the largest egos and it is their style of operation that is described in this book. The author is a well-known scientist who has worked at both universities and research institutes. He has published over 100 scientific papers and an influential book about embryonic development: "From Egg to Embryo".

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (7 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

Egg & Ego by J.M.W. Slack; Springer-Verlag, New York; (c)1999; 195 pages, softcover. Beginning in a slaughterhouse, Slack gives a hands-on perspective of harvesting enough tissue to process and concentrate growth factors. But this first chapter is the only "easy read" for high school students; most of the book requires a college-level or even graduate student biologist to enjoy the recent history of developmental biology as revealed before and after various techniques. Slack may appear irreverent when he describes the realities of appointments, peer review, publishing papers and

gaining academic appointments, but he is merely telling it like it is in both the U.S. and U.K. Long ago, Jacob Bronowski warned of the dangers of science becoming dependent on governmental funding. Much of what Slack details is the result of this growing dependency. However, Slack writes of the science climate before the onslaught of open access publication and the resultant gaming-of-the-system that has occurred under the Science Citation Index and Impact Factor bibliometrics which have exacerbated the problems even more. Slack is clear about science playing on reality. "No biological or medical research would be possible without the use of animals. This is an unpalatable truth to many who would like to believe that there are 'alternatives' that are as good or better. Alas, there are not. Scientists want their experiments to work, and if there exists an effective method that works, and it is legal, then they will use it." "Tissue culture cells are certainly very useful for some purposes; they can often be superior to animal tissues as sources of growth factors.

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