

# THE ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY

*pro bono humanis generis*  
1230 YORK AVENUE - NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10021-6399

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

January 10, 1988

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Dr. David Talmage

Dear David:

It was good to hear from you again. Thank you for the reprints. Enclosed is a copy of the paper I gave at the meeting in New York yesterday. If your FASEB paper is to be published, I hope you will send me a copy. I am putting together a number of chapters for a comprehensive scientific autobiography, and want to be sure I have all the appropriate sources in hand.

About Kuhn, one problem we have in discussing his philosophy is 1) that many more people quote "scientific revolution" than have read his works; 2) the inherent ambiguity of paradigm; and 3) the numerous revisions Kuhn himself has made in the exposition of the concept. I agree that the "social relativization" that Kuhn encouraged has gone much too far! But he has drawn attention to the very social processes involved in the settlement of scientific disputes that you refer to re the resistance to clonal selection.

As I mentioned in my Ann Rev Genetics, the only Kuhnian revolution I can accept at all in biology is, perhaps, the Darwinian: this evoked a protracted debate, and it is hard to point to specific evidence that resulted in its eventual acceptance. Something like that happened in the application of darwinian thinking to bacterial populations; in that guess, both a generational shift and the specific experiments (Luria & Delbruck, 1943; replica plating 1952) did push the conclusion over the brink.

I agree that the progress of molecular biology made a revision of immunological thinking inevitable -- cf the closing paragraphs of the NYAS preprint.

I hope you see my old friend and student Larry Morse from time to time. Did you know that Ted Puck and Roger Sherman asked me to join the Webb\_Waring institute ca. 1955; and I certainly was attracted by Denver at that time. Seeing how it has grown since has muted my regret; but you are certainly located in what is still one of my favorite pieces of geography.

All best wishes,

✓ 2/24/88  
3-11

✗ ...  
OTD  
with  
p275  
p279

Yours sincerely,

David - I'm sure this was never mailed; so here is (pubs) another. J

also  
SA 269  
SA 278