

September 28, 1956

Dr. Walter Carter  
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Dear Dr. Carter:

Anent our earlier correspondence, I have finally had a meeting with Mr. Thompson Webb with regard to the feasibility of an American edition of Buchner's *Endosymbiosis*.

The desirability of such a version requires no further discussion. It would be an enterprise of great interest and importance, and I have not changed my mind about that at all. However, I am becoming convinced that a verbatim translation of the whole work would not only be prohibitively expensive, and therefore impractical, but might not convey the full impact to as large an audience as would a less formidable work. Since the German edition is in print, and available at least in most university libraries, it would serve as the detailed documentation. On the other hand, we would not want an oversimplified, unsubstantial work, for example like Caullery's translation not long ago.

I can see weighty problems in the path of this enterprise, but it's only chance of financial and scientific success would be if Professor Buchner would consent to a substantial condensation of his book for an American edition. In the light of publishing costs here, e.g., as Mr. Freeman has already indicated, a volume of about 250 pages would be the most feasible, with a corresponding sample of the illustrations. For a manuscript of these dimensions, Mr. Webb has already expressed his very clear interest (and I am personally confident that a number of other publishers would be equally interested.)

The next step, I suggest, would be to ask Professor Buchner whether he would endorse this plan. In view of your personal acquaintanceship with him, it might be more appropriate for you to persuade him; of course you can indicate how many other people would be keen on the idea of having his work more readily available in the U.S. We should then have to face the problems of who would do the condensation and then the translation, but it might be better to wait until Buchner himself has spoken on this question. Ideally, he would prepare the condensation, and might help with the translation himself, but it would be understandable if he were reluctant to do it. As to financial assistance for clerical work, it is unlikely that any publisher will want to underwrite that directly, though the costs might be recaptured in royalties if the book were successful. I would be prepared to endorse applications to the National Science Foundation, or other agencies, if there were some possibility of their support. For that, it would probably be necessary to organize the project on a definite non-profit basis, through some university press.

Yours sincerely,