

December 21, 1954

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Dear Bill:

Thank you for your letter of the 7th ult. I should have answered sooner, but have been snowed under with routine matters. However, one of these was a report which may help to answer one of your questions.

The phage experiments that I had had in mind in my earlier letters were not those bearing on segregation and delay, but those in which the Hfr parent is "destroyed". You hinted previously that you accepted this as likely evidence that Hfr functions as an intact cell, rather than as a donor of an extracellular, extruded, genetic element, and I was curious what you now thought about it.

Your letter mentions two rumors, which score about 50% in veracity (not a bad figure as scuttlebutt goes!) To answer one, The U/W is rather behind the times, and does not provide sabbatical leaves, at least not with pay. I should like very much to visit London, as would Esther, but we do not presently have either the resources or plans for it.

I have been spending most of my time for the last year on micromanipulation exercises. I am so much in media res that I would not like to be pinned down on any details, but I am enclosing an extract from a private "progress report" that gives the gist of the story, as it stood yesterday. As you might imagine, the work is extremely laborious, and not very rewarding in day-to-day details, as the majority of the pedigrees are essentially uninteresting.

I had intended to answer your letter before the meeting, but had misremembered this as being scheduled for January. I am truly sorry not to have been more helpful. In any event, I have no objection to being quoted verbally, but anything for the printed record should, I think, derive only from published statements. Without explicit instructions from you last spring, I assume you had a similar intent, and for the Symposium at Oak Ridge, acted accordingly.

Your prospective method for studying segregation reminds me of Chlamydomonas, but for technical reasons I shall be astonished if it works (perhaps this will be the more provocation!)

You will probably get this after what has been, I hope, a Merry Christmas, but at any rate, a happy new year from both of us.

Yours sincerely,