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My dear friends:

Josh Lederberg has made a suggestion to me that involves you two. Editorially I like the idea and therefore pass it on herewith.

Josh is reluctant to revise for book publication his papers on transduction; the meat of his thoughts is in the papers, and it would be a tedious chore to rewrite and revise as he would have to do were they to be published in book form by themselves. However, Josh feels that something could be done with those papers--something that would be easier as well as more valuable for advanced students of science and at the same time a pleasure. He would like to take the main papers, letting them stand as originally published but annotating each one--probably in a somewhat personal essay style; in the annotations, whether they were in the form of footnotes or addenda to the papers, he would point out the significant gropings, the places and times where a point was almost clinched but not quite seen clearly enough--when hindsight is used--and he would comment on the inevitable blind alleys that a scientist pursued for a way. I hope I correctly suggest what Josh has in mind as to method. What interests me most, however, is his purpose which is to show how a scientist works through his own personal experience--the gropings, the strains, the to'ing and fro'ing.

That purpose I like. As a publisher of scientific works, I have often felt that we should publish for advanced students works that would help them grasp the purposes and methods of scientific research. Yet I know that no textbook on the scientific method would do. (Whenever I think of a book on

April 7, 1959

the subject, I recall the volume of essays on it by various individuals, one essay by a German enunciating a procedure that he illustrated with Linus Pauling and his "method", while a subsequent essay in the collection was by Pauling saying that that way the German attributed to him was definitely not a good way to pursue!) The answer to my editorial need, then, is probably the publication of as many individual good volumes as we can find, each of them being a review of an actual individual experience illustrative of a scientific method.

To illustrate I describe another projected manuscript recently proposed to me by a chemist, Michael Kasha, at Florida State University. For many years he worked with G. N. Lewis, first at Berkeley and later by correspondence. He has a file of the memoranda that went between him and G.N.L. Kasha would like, out of both affection and respect for G.N.L., to prepare a small volume that one might describe as a scientific biography of that great chemist--not a biography in the usual sense, it would be an evaluation of his scientific life and method by a co-worker who has been as close scientifically to G.N.L. as anyone, I am told.

With two such possibilities in mind as Josh's and Michael Kasha's, I see the possibility of initiating my editorial dream along these lines. And thus--after what my college English teacher called this "prefatory hogwash"--I come to you two and where you fit into the picture. First, I may say--especially as I have been trying to let Beets enjoy his year in Europe unfettered by proposals from me--that it was Josh--not I--who proposed that I suggest this to you; and I carry through with his proposal and write you only because I feel the idea has so much merit, particularly when viewed in the broader editorial idea that I described above.

Josh would like to see you two, either in collaboration or separately, undertake to choose the more important papers in your own work and annotate them similarly for publication (by us, of course) as a companion piece for his. (As a matter of fact, I think that in part Josh feels that, were his alone to be prepared and published, some people might feel that he was a bit presumptuous; but in addition I imagine that both he and I feel that his alone would be inadequate for our joint purposes without yours.) What do you two think about the matter? I

April 7, 1959

assure you, if you haven't already guessed it, that I am all for it and herewith assure publication.

Who knows? If you two would like to carry out the idea and Josh and Michael Kasha carry out theirs, Linus might be interested in doing a similar volume. Lord knows there are too many books published, but there are too few that have a purpose. I do believe there would be a genuine purpose and value in such books.

Various random and miscellaneous thoughts have occurred to me, and I pass them on to you for consideration in your thinking. I would like to see these books reasonably short -- primarily so we could hold the price down and thus make them more readily available to the usually impecunious graduate student. (Josh notes that not every paper or every detail of all papers on biosynthesis would be needed, but only those papers or portions necessary to show the pattern of your work.) It goes without saying that I should like to have each of them a little gem of bookmaking--"rich, not gaudy." Finally, Josh expressed the hope that his volume could be done by next January and yours about the same time; I imagine that you could not meet this deadline, nor do I think that it is mandatory that you do so; yet I do think that it would be well for you, after considering the matter, to settle on a not-too-distant goal in time, if you agree with Josh and me that you should undertake the preparation of such a book or books.

As ever,

WHF:rja

cc: Dr. Michael Kasha
Dr. Joshua Lederberg
Dr. Linus Pauling