

Memo from
JOSHUA LEDERBERG

To: Dennis Flanagan
Scientific American

MAY 3 1973

"on premature discovery"

I well understand why you might have some difficulty in deciding whether to print my "letter". It might help if I suggest you think of it more as an original article than as a letter in rebuttal.

My motive for preferring S.A. as a vehicle is ~~that of~~ efficiency. Gunther Stent's piece laid the groundwork, that I do not have to repeat in as much detail as will be necessary if I draft a similar piece for another journal. And, while yours is not a "scholarly journal", the general interests of your readers surely resonate well with the issues that Stent and I have raised. Finally, "not scholarly" is a rather lame copout for wanting to move away from a Pandora's box whose latent content was surely visible to you when you accepted Stent's article.

But I hope your main criterion will be whether, in your judgment, I said something that would be interesting to your readers.

May I make another request, regardless of your decision? I am trying to collect more documentary evidence on the history of molecular biology, 1940-1946: if some of your many respondents to Stent's piece offered such documentation, could you put me in touch with them?

I have had a very interesting report from Carlson about Muller's letters; but I suspect there are many other sources from people whose letters you did not print.

Sincerely,



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