

October 13, 1953

Dear Tracy:

I'm sorry if you've felt "on the spot" about our book. [You're mistaken if you think I've really done anything about it!] I sent you those carbon copies to illustrate what I was not doing in other lines, and I am happy to have this excuse for restraint.

(Skinner)

I hope you've not given up Dave as a total loss (though just at the moment I am not a little annoyed with him; he was supposed to send me a summary of his last year's findings from which I could write a terminal report. It was due originally September 1, then October 1 at the latest!). I still think there's a niche where he might turn out very well: an academic position with a well defined teaching responsibility that would take up about 3/4 of his time, and an opportunity, without pressure, to do research completely on his own. He does not respond well to direction or even extrinsic stimulation, but I expect he will surprise us yet. This was (retrospectively) not the best kind of a place for him; there was and is no way for him to measure his accomplishment, to justify himself as he went along. People(s) needs do, of course, vary but a certain amount of recognition (in proper doses) is an indispensable tonic. Though she must have helped push him too fast through his graduate work and into ~~found~~ a paying job, I can't see how Linda can have been his trouble (though their immediate offspring was no help at all). But no point crying over sour milk, except that I would still keep my eyes open for a quiet opening of the kind I mentioned.

There is no point in your fretting about the book, Tracy, and still less in the suggestion that I could handle it, as this would be out of the question. I intend to put whatever little time comes along in it, rather than other dissipations, (especially when the lab. gets too frightful), but there'll be nothing lost if nothing comes of it. If we could sometime spend a summer together at Woods Hole or some such place, we might get closer together on it, but there's no hurry.

Not much new on phase variation (as I had to report to Beale) except a rediscovery (cf. Sertic, C.R.Soc. Biol. 123:951) that acriflavine agglutinates phase 2, but not phase 1, flagella. This is rather nice in view of their determination by distinct loci, but especially as a lead to fundamental chemical distinctions. Have you ever compared cataphoretic behavior of paramecia of different serotypes-- this is probably our next step.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg