

MUSEUM OF COMPARATIVE ZOOLOGY

The Agassiz Museum



HARVARD UNIVERSITY
26 OXFORD STREET
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02138

May 3rd, 1994

Connie Barlow
The MIT Press
55 Hayward Street
Cambridge, MA 02142

Dear Connie,

Your books are very beautiful and I thank you very much for your latest on evolution extended. I certainly have no objection to your fair use "from my work." My objection is to excerption, not quotation. But I do so much wish that I could convince you to use things in full and not to present little bits and pieces of such meaningful totalities. You give us such teeny, and frankly often distorted, bits of large scale beauty. Let me just try one example: on page 199 you quote the first few lines of a poem that Emerson called most beautiful ever written in our language (it may be old-fashioned of me, but I agree with him absolutely). I think that Wordsworth's *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality* is an amazing statement full of great psychological insight about ontogeny and the personal odyssey of our sense of wonder. But you just quote the first few lines and you don't even indicate that it comes from a much longer statement. Moreover, you put them at the end of a chapter called "banishing cosmic meaning." In the excerpted form and in this position, the lines could easily be read (and probably will be by most people) as a statement about loss of pristine environments through encroaching industrial development. Of course, and as you surely realize, the poem is about something entirely different -- loss of childhood's sense of wonder (splendor in the grass and glory in the flower) when we age and what we must struggle to retain in the light of this unfortunate but probably inevitable change. The whole poem is so glorious, but so devoid of meaning in this truncated version. Please rethink what you are doing. Your books are just too good and too beautifully produced to labor under this tragic flaw.

Sincerely,

/ap

Stephen Jay Gould

P.S. I am sorry to be a pest about Wordsworth, but please note on page 230 that he, not Lord Tennyson, is the author of "The World is Too Much With Us."

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11 June 1994

Dear Steve,

You are right, "The World is Too Much With Us" is Wordsworth, not Tennyson. I will make sure that the paperback edition (in a year) corrects the error, and that a second printing of cloth (if there is one) does same. Thank you for alerting me to the problem. (I shudder at the thought that a reviewer will see it too, and then down goes the whole book.)

As to the fundamental issue, that of excerpting, I fear there can be no meeting of minds (or hearts). To me, regular anthologies of full, previously published pieces are useful, but not riveting. I designed my "anthology," rather, to read like a conversation. I mine essays and books not only for their essence and the precise points I want addressed but for asides in which names of other author-scientists are mentioned. (See in my index the "mentioned" subtopics under the topics, Gould, Huxley, Teilhard de Chardin, Monod.) For Julian Huxley's first piece, I had to draw from four of his books to get precisely what I wanted. I believe my essential talent for this task is empathy, joined with deep respect for each of the disparate philosophies. Living authors for both of my books, with one exception, have not quibbled with my choice of excerpts—and the one author who did, did so strictly on the principle of his not wanting paragraphs out of order (our compromise was fruitful: he eventually agreed that my original reordering, in this context, worked well; and I determined to add a para-by-para concordance to the book so that the reordering would be visible to those who wished to check). And for dead authors, I am usually successful in finding a colleague, protégé, or biographer to review what I have done.

More to the point, I wouldn't be motivated to produce a normal anthology. These books are my creations, my children. They are of my soul, and the reader can see it. I willingly devote unpaid time and put my own money into permissions payments. I hope to be financially capable in a few years to produce two more in this *Evolution Extended* series, subtitled (1) *Biological Debates on the Power [and/or Limits] of Life*, (2) *Biological Debates on the Ethics of Life*. But those two will have to be financed on whatever I can squirrel away in my new career as freelance developmental and copyeditor of science books

for Columbia University Press, which is decidedly less lucrative than my previous career in energy economics consulting, the life savings from which financed the time and costs for my first two anthologies. But, I decided that "getting and spending, we lay waste our powers." Editing is my calling. By the way, I am particularly proud of my role in David Gillette's *Seismosaurus* (published this month) and McMennamin²'s *Hypersea* (December 1994).

I shall miss seeing *A Glorious Accident* when it airs tomorrow, as we have no television here and I suspect that not all PBS stations are airing it yet. But I will see it when we return to New York in the fall.

Thank you for taking the time to give me your thoughts on my anthology.

Sincerely,

Connie Barlow

cc: Madeline Sunley, MIT Press