

News and Views

In a recent article by I. Kayton (*1*), the applicability of the copyright law to genetically engineered cells was discussed. It appears that one can seriously contemplate getting a copyright on a microorganism. Given the statement by Mr. Kayton about copyright protection and immediate publication, the copyright office should move quickly to establish a P3 facility.

One wonders though about the implications of originality. When a new "written" work is considered for copyright protection, one merely consults the great libraries of the world to confirm originality. If a new micrororganism is claimed, how can we be sure of originality? Shall we consult "Mother Nature's" great library? Obviously, we have not found and studied every living cell and do not know much about cells that preceded those extant today.

If we exclude "Mother Nature" as an author and use the sophisticated computer technology we have today, it does seem possible to think of applying copyright law to an engineered cell. And then, to a group of cells, and a tissue, and a species.

References

1. Kayton, I. (1983), Does copyright law apply to genetically engineered cells? *Trends Biotechnol.* **1**, 2.

Linda L. Lasure
Miles Laboratories, Inc.
Elkhart, Indiana 46515