

British Society for Social Responsibility in Science

Secretary: Dr R.L.Smith 42 Great Russell St London WC1

President: Professor M.H.F. Wilkins FRS

9th February 1970

Professor J.Lederberg,
Department of Biochemistry,
Stanford University,
Stanford,
California 94305,
U.S.A.

Dear Professor Lederberg,

Some of us in the British Society for Social Responsibility in Science have been discussing the general problems of application of molecular biology, e.g. those raised by Beckwith. My own inclination is that, if one investigates the likely "good" and "bad" applications, one can make a good case for pushing on with molecular biology research. I think you were concerned about matters such as human cloning some time ago but had the impression that you may not feel so strongly now that genetic engineering is likely to get out of Social control. I don't think that scientists have done very much thinking about these matters. I would be very interested indeed to hear from you, for instance if you have written anything it would be very helpful if you could give a reference or possibly a copy. If there is any new angle on this whole matter which you do not think has had attention drawn to it I would be very glad to hear of it.

With many thanks for anything you can send,

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Wilkins

M.H.F.Wilkins

P.S. I had a short talk with Kornberg recently about all this.

M.H.F. WILKINS