COPY

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April 2, 1992.

Mr. W. Marshall Monford,
Synexis Associates,
PO Box G,
Manhasset, NY 11030.

Dear Mr. Monford,

I share your interest in scientific terminology, having introduced the terms "auxotroph" and "phenome" many years ago. And I agree that engineering, intervention, or manipulation have undesirable overtones when applied to deliberate genetic alterations in humans. But "allaxis" seems to me unnecessarily divorced from the already familiar terminology of genetics, and it fails to indicate what is being changed. Might not "allogeny" and "allogenic" for the process, and "allogen" for the block of DNA being moved, be more effective and acceptable? I haven't done any research on them, so I suppose there is some danger that they have already been used in genetics. Webster's Unabridged Internat. Dict. (2nd ed.) lists "allogenic" as a term used in geology, but there should not be any confusion in using the same term for somewhat parallel meanings in such different contexts as two fields of science.

I would take the liberty of further suggesting that you may have weakened your case for replacing the undesirable present terms by your enthusiasm for an extensive new, classical terminology. I doubt that the scientific community will embrace anything like the long list of new words that you suggest, but I can imagine that a few key authors in molecular genetics might agree to promote a single key new term.

Sincerely,

Bernard D. Davis
Adele Lehman Professor of
Bacterial Physiology,
Emeritus

c/J. Lederberg
R. Hotchkiss