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Hyperownership in a Time of Biotechnological Promise: The International Conflict to Control the Building Blocks of Life

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This article provides a utilitarian critique of the interplay between patent-based private claims to genetic material favored by developed countries and state ownership favored by developing countries. It argues that collectively these systems have overreached, creating an interactive spiral of excessive enclosure of genetic material that deters biotechnological innovation, generates tension between nations, and threatens individuals and indigenous communities. It proposes a framework for a more open system.

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