



John Carmody

The 1925 Nobel Prize in Physiology/Medicine

In 1925, one hundred years ago, when the Nobel Prizes were barely 20 years old and far less known and mercantile than they are nowadays (but were on their way to that condition), no prizes were awarded in the category of physiology/medicine. Such an act would be unthinkable today and could not pass unnoticed, but it raises two disparate sets of questions, nevertheless. The first set pertains to Alfred Nobel's will and the rules/procedures of these awards; the second, and more philosophical, set deals with the very basis of such awards and whether they can ever be disentangled from the values of the decision-makers. In short, can they really be fair and would we --- and the noble pursuit of science --- be better off if such prizes did not exist at all ? This presentation will grapple with questions of that sort.