

## Why Did MWF Alter Its Award Announcement? – Revelation of a New High-Level Misconduct

Shi V. Liu

Truthfinding Cyberpress  
Apex, NC 27502, USA

Corresponding with [SVL8TFCP@im1.biz](mailto:SVL8TFCP@im1.biz)

(Received 2007-11-06; revised 2007-11-08; accepted 2007-11-08; published 2007-11-08\*)

### HIGHLIGHT

In order to save an award given to Ove Nilsson whose major discovery was retracted by *Science* the Marcus Wallenberg Foundation has altered its original award announcement at least two times. However, is this alteration of history an ethical thing to do? Is falsification of history a high-level misconduct?

### ABSTRACT

Ove Nilsson won the 2007 Marcus Wallenberg Prize mainly because of his so-called breakthrough discovery reported in *Science* in 2005. However, not only that discovery was not made by Nilsson himself but also that discovery was later retracted by Nilsson against the will of the real discoverer. The dispute between a pretended discoverer and a real discoverer over the decision of making a retraction led to an exposure of some even higher level misconduct by Nilsson and *Science*. A world-wide condemnation on this Nilsson-*Science* Gate scandal has taken place but Nilsson has chosen to keep silence over many questions presented to him. Meanwhile, Marcus Wallenberg Foundation (MWF) has been busy with repeatedly altering the original award announcement so that it will justify the maintenance of the award for Nilsson even though his major discovery turned out to be untrue or at least not his. The MWF so far has rejected a formal protest against the presentation of the award to Nilsson in an upcoming big ceremony which will be attended by the King of the Sweden. But history will record this Nilsson-*Science*-MWF gate as a shameful event in science and a disgrace to Swedish.

### KEY WORDS

Nilsson, Science, Retraction, Marcus Wallenberg Prize, Award, Ethics, Disgrace, Falsification, Misconduct

On August 19, 2007 I sent to the Marcus Wallenberg Foundation a formal complaint (See appendix 1) against the awarding of the 2007 the Marcus Wallenberg Prize (MWP) to Ove Nilsson. My complaint was based on the ground that the major discovery (2) for his nomination as clearly stated in the original award announcement (See Appendix 2) was already retracted by *Science* (1) and severe misconduct has been found for Nilsson (3-5). I asked MWF to conduct a formal and thorough investigation on the Nilsson case and keep me informed of the outcome of this investigation.

On November 6, 2007, after being urged repeatedly, MWF finally sent me a formal response

(See appendix 3) which stated that “the Board is content, after rigorous investigation that Professor Nilsson is indeed worthy of the Prize and it will be awarded later this month”. The response argued that “the original nomination of Professor Nilsson referred to several components of his research of which the ‘messenger’ story was only one ... the retraction of the paper in *Science* did not reduce the case for the award of the Prize...”.

Now I wish to let the world know that, although the retraction of *Science* paper has so far not affected MWF’s determination to keep a protested award being gloriously presented to Nilsson, it does

have some effects on the foundation of the award announcement made by MWF.

In Table 1, I listed several major differences for the allegedly the “same” announcement (all bearing the same original date as “February 6, 2007”) that was captured in three different dates. The first webpage “photo” (printout) was made on April 25, 2007, right after the *Science* retraction of the “Nilsson’s discovery” due to the alleged “Data manipulation by Tao Huang”. At that time the announcement contained many reference to the “pathbreaking discovery” of messenger molecule “florigen” and still culminated Nilsson’s accomplishment with the 2005 *Science* article which was “third most important globally” (Appendix 3). Reading this announcement, anyone would feel that the 2005 *Science* paper is the most important reason that Nilsson was selected for the 2007 MWP award.

However, after the retraction of the *Science* paper and, more importantly, after the exposure of the Nilsson-*Science* gate scandal related with this 2005 *Science* paper, the emphasis on the “third most important” discovery was deleted in the “same” announcement that was capture on August 16, 2007 (Appendix 4).

After the reception of my former protest sent to MWF (on August 19, 2007) and likely before the response of MWF to me (on November 6, 2007), the “same” announcement was changed again. This time, not only the mentioning of *Science* was deleted but also all the references to “messenger molecule” were globally changed to “gene” (Appendix 5).

So after these alterations the “same” announcement stands as a “solid” ground for supporting the continued maintenance of the 2007 MWP award to Nilsson. However, MWF may not know that its alteration of history has been captured on records. Its misconduct of falsifying an “originally perfect” award announcement by keeping changing its content just add itself to the collection of the original Nilsson-*Science* gate so that the gate is officially called Nilsson-*Science*-MWF gate now.

Apparently, MWF cannot be a competent party to investigate this Nilsson-*Science*-MWF gate since it has become part of it. So who would have an authority to find out the truth and give justice to this truly international case of scientific dispute and ethical judgment?

I think public opinions will serve some virtual justice on this case. So let us keep building a “web-pressure” until the traditional “brick-and-mortar” wall of corrupted scientific research and publishing system yield in.

Even though Nilsson so far has not answered any of the 10 questions (4), I still wish to post some questions to MWF:

1. Why would you keep changing the “story” of Nilsson’s discovery?
2. Who made those specific scientific changes in the announcement?
3. Did Nilsson play any role in suggesting or making those changes?
4. Is this alteration of a publication (published announcement for a major award is a publication) an distortion of the history?
5. Is the later change of a publication without notification a misconduct, especially when the altered publication still bears the original publication date?
6. Could MWF show us the original nominations so that we can see exactly what the other discoveries were cited for the award?
7. Has MWF asked Nilsson any of the questions related to his unethical act in the Nilsson-*Science* gate and, if this was done, what were the answers?

#### References

1. **Bohlenius, H., S. Eriksson, F. Parcy, and O. Nilsson.** 2007. Retraction. *Science* **316**:367.
2. **Huang, T., H. Bohlenius, S. Eriksson, F. Parcy, and O. Nilsson.** 2005. The mRNA of the Arabidopsis gene FT moves from leaf to shoot apex and induces flowering. *Science* **309**:1694-6.
3. **Liu, S. V.** 2007. More answers needed for resolving the mystery on publishing the flowering paper. *Top Watch* **2**:12-13.
4. **Liu, S. V.** 2007. Nilsson and *Science* owe public more answers than a simple retraction. *Sci. Ethics* **2**:41-43.
5. **Zielinska, E.** 2007. *Science* retracts major Arabidopsis paper. <http://www.the-scientist.com/news/display/53081/>.

#### Online Appendixes

1. My letter to MWF on August 19, 2007 ([PDF](#)).
2. MWF’s initial announcement captured on April 25, 2007 ([PDF](#)).
3. MWF’s response to me on November 6, 2007 ([PDF](#)).
4. MWF’s announcement captured on August 16, 2007 ([PDF](#)).
5. MWF’s announcement captured on November 7, 2007 ([PDF](#)).
- \* This publication was sent to MWF for response and comment.

**Table 1. Contrast among three web “shots” of the “same” announcement dated “February 6, 2007**

<b>Location *</b>	<b>Content on 2007-04-25**</b>	<b>Content on 2007-08-16**</b>	<b>Content on 2007-11-07**</b>
P2 L3	...for his <b>pathbreaking discovery</b> on the regulation of flowering in trees and its translation into tree growth and development. His scientific accomplishments have revealed fundamental molecular mechanisms of regulation ...	...for his <b>path-breaking discovery</b> on the regulation of flowering in trees and its translation into tree growth and development. His scientific accomplishments have revealed fundamental molecular mechanisms of regulation ...	...for his scientific <b>accomplishments</b> that have revealed genes and fundamental molecular mechanisms of regulation ...
P4 L1	Ove Nilsson and his colleagues have identified a <b>messenger molecule “florigen”</b> , which is <b>produced in the leaves and transported to the buds</b> , triggered by long and short nights, as occur in spring. Without this <b>messenger molecule</b> the bud would develop into a lead [leaf] but, with it, flowers will be formed. The same <b>substance</b> also controls the budset which occurs when day length decreases in autumn. <b>The FT messenger molecule</b> can make poplars flower precociously when they are only a few weeks old.	Ove Nilsson and his colleagues have identified a <b>messenger molecule “florigen”</b> , which is <b>produced in the leaves and transported to the buds</b> , triggered by long and short nights, as occur in spring. Without this <b>messenger molecule</b> the bud would develop into a lead [leaf] but, with it, flowers will be formed. The same <b>substance</b> also controls the budset which occurs when day length decreases in autumn. <b>The FT messenger molecule</b> can make poplars flower precociously when they are only a few weeks old.	Ove Nilsson and his colleagues have identified a <b>gene</b> , whose activity is triggered by long and short nights, as occur in spring. Without this <b>gene activity</b> the bud would develop into a leaf but, with it, flowers will be formed [formed]. The same <b>gene</b> also controls the budset which occurs when day length decreases in autumn. <b>The gene</b> can make poplars flower precociously when they are only a few weeks old.
P5 L1	<b>The FT messenger molecule</b> will be transferred	<b>The FT messenger molecule</b> will be transferred	<b>The gene</b> can be transferred
P7 L8	Since his return to Sweden in 1998, he and his colleagues have published <b>several articles in Science, one which was ranked as the third most important globally in the year 2005.</b>	Since his return to Sweden in 1998, he and his colleagues have published <b>several articles in Science.</b>	Since his return to Sweden in 1998, he and his colleagues have continued <b>publishing in leading journals.</b>

\* Starting position as in 2007-11-07 version where P=paragraph and L=line.

\*\* Bold for emphasizing the critical differences between the two versions. Typos in the original announcements were also indicated by square parentheses.