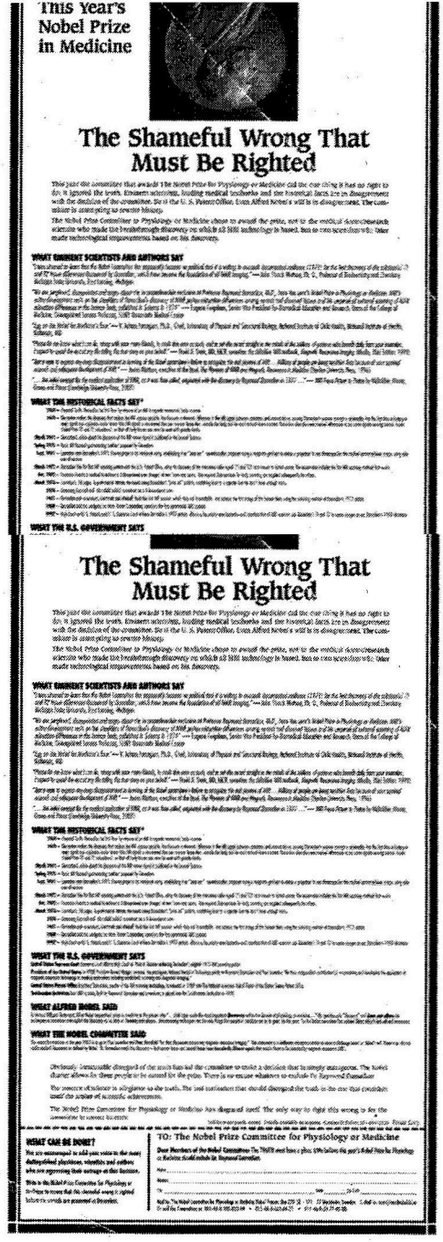
hadn't—and I believe him, but can't figure out why I should care.

Dr. Damadian has been campaigning hard to get the committee to change its mind and include him. He buys ad space in newspapers to press his case (see the adjacent image), but the committee is hanging tough. I gather he is a brilliant scientist, successful, well recognized, widely admired and, in general, doing great. More power to him. But I doubt too many people are staying up nights morosely chewing over this Nobel he didn't win. To be rewarded or even recognized for your work in your own lifetime is too much to count on in this complicated world. If you are indeed a genius, consider enjoying your genius and leaving it at that.

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The Shameful Wrong That Must Be Righted

We are a marvelously uninhibited society. If you want to dye your hair green, stick jewelry up your nose or take out newspaper ads introducing the public to all the awards you ought to have won but didn't, why stint yourself? But 99% of the public no doubt wishes it could get some of that old-fashioned inhibition *back*. Inhibition (aka "taste," "dignity") is missed around here. The sounds of an uninhibited society are a lot like whining.

Dr. Damadian is feeling wounded because his place in history is sure to be damaged by the Nobel committee's failure to give him a prize. Rule one: If your place in history depends on winning a Nobel, you probably don't deserve one anyway. Rule two: Those who have got one are damned good, on the whole; those who never got one and should have are (on the whole) even 1953 but was too busy to pick it up; his wife went instead. The great philosopher Wittgenstein never got one—and (for good measure) the only house he ever designed (a first-rate Wittgensteinian masterpiece) was nearly rezoned out of existence by the ever-helpful Viennese; it was only saved at the last moment. I picture the late Lubavitcher Rebbe busily changing the world, addressing a rapt mammoth crowd; he never got one (for Charismatic Talmudics?)—and somehow I doubt whether it would have mattered a lot to him one way or other. Of the best thinkers and artists of the last 100 years—such people as Freud and Turing, von Neumann and William Foxwell Albright, Giacometti and Soloveitchik and de Kooning, Frank Lloyd Wright, Orwell and Nabokov—none got the prize; few were even candidates. There *are* no Nobels for abstract expressionism, mathematics, computer science, philosophy, neo-conservatism, artificial intelligence, architecture, getting your girl to marry you, rearing your child all the way up to thoughtful adulthood, not being a jerk despite all the provocations, or any other of the hard achievements that really matter.

We are a society that talks too much about "entitled," not enough about "unbecoming." How about we all promise not to take out ads or organize filibusters when we lose? And let's call it the Damadian Oath . . .

Mr. Gelernter is a professor of computer science at Yale.