
Reply to the Review by Dr. B. Willumsen on

The Beginnings of Cancer in the Cell. An Interdisciplinary Approach by J. Ladik and W. Förner; Springer Verlag, Berlin, Heidelberg, New York, 1994; ISBN 3-540-57962-1.

in FEBS Letters, Vol. 363, pp. 206–207 (1995).

Dr. Willumsen concludes that the book could not give information on the 'mechanics of the creation of a cancer cell'.

We regret a couple of unlucky formulations and a few factual errors which occurred in the book, and which were collected (for which we are grateful to her) by Dr. Willumsen to conclude that everything is 'mystifying' and that the 'factual content is faulty'.

On the other hand we cannot agree with her general attitude. After reading in detail only the first two Chapters of a book of eight chapters and an Appendix and finding a few – even important – mistakes in these chapters, one cannot state that the whole book has no value whatsoever. The reviewer obviously missed the main point of our book: a popular description of the results of many quantum theoretical investigations to understand the microphysical mechanisms involved in the activation of oncogenes by chemical carcinogens and in the inactivation of antioncogenes by radiations.

J. Ladik
W. Förner

Reply from Dr. B. Willumsen

The cover of the book I evaluated indicated that it is aimed at the general reader; perhaps even at the student level. For such an audience it is appropriate to expect a knowledgeable and up-to-date treatise of the subjects that are covered in the book. If the authors do not wish to be judged by the standard of the first chapters, then why put them in? For the authors to successfully bridge the gap between biologists and physicists interested in quantum mechanics, it is entirely appropriate to require precise information on both areas.

Berthe Marie Willumsen
