

Acknowledgment

published. This triggers the type of letter I most enjoy writing: that the essay is clear, accurate, well-informed, and making an important contribution—and so will appear in the journal.³

If an essay does not make the cut to be published in *PSCF*, this in no way limits an author from publishing their arguments. On the contrary, hearing reviewer responses that are not laudatory is an opportunity for the author to foresee reader concerns; the author can then write more clearly and make better arguments. If the author feels that their essay would be better recognized by another journal, they can next offer it to other journals. That is the standard response to not being chosen for one journal's publication. No one's freedom to make their case has been compromised. Even when a journal decides not to publish the manuscript, the author can improve their essay on the next try from what was said in the anonymous peer review, at no charge to them. That is a gift.

If the author is not persuaded by a criticism from a reviewer, they can and no doubt will state so privately to the editor. They also can articulate, in any forum that will have them, that they have heard an objection to their work and this is their reply to it. Peer reviewers, who have freely donated their time to help an author improve their work, should not have to expect that a communication informally shared with an author may appear in print with or without their reputed name. We all write more directly when wrestling privately with an anonymous idea than we do when we are trying to protect a known correspondent's ego or are expecting to be read by a broad audience.

If an author confronts a fellow scholar as the possible reviewer and receives permission to assign their name for publication to an originally anonymous peer review, that does not justify publishing the review. This would undermine the expectations and benefits of the process for everyone else. The scholarly conversation at this important stage is destroyed by games of tracking down attribution for censure or refutation. This promotes pointless speculation and attack on people just trying to help the author and journal readers. It makes it more difficult to find scholars willing to give their time and expertise freely, subverting a crucial step in journal quality.

If an author undermines the anonymous peer review process, it is unlikely that they will be entrusted again with the benefits of counsel from anonymous peer review. ▲

Notes

¹Jacalyn Kelly, Tara Sadeghieh, and Khosrow Adeli trace the discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of such anonymous peer review in "Peer Review in Scientific Publications: Benefits, Critiques, and a Survival Guide," *The Journal of the International Federation of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine* 25, no. 3 (October 25, 2014): 227–43, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4975196/>.

²Joanna Wilkinson, "Who's Using Open Peer Review?," October 27, 2017, <https://clarivate.com/blog/whos-using-open-peer-review/>.

³James C. Peterson, "Peering at Double-Blind Peer Review," *God and Nature* (Summer 2018), <https://godandnature.asa3.org/peterson-peering-at-double-blind-peer-review.html>.

James C. Peterson
Editor-in-Chief

2021 Peer Reviewers

We wish to thank the following scholars for their crucial service in anonymous peer review.

Charles Austerberry
Ryan Bebej
Robert Bishop
John Bloom
Dorothy Boorse
Dustin Burlett
Peter Bussey
David Chettle
Roy Clouser
April Cordero
Evangeline Cornwell
Gregg Davidson

Robert Dean
Alan Dickin
Danilo Diedrichs
Elise Eifert
Sy Garte
Robert Geddes
Brian Greuel
Robert Hayes
Erin Haynes
Christy Hemphill
John Hilber
Gordon Hugenberger

August H. Konkel
Heather Looy
Richard Middleton
George Murphy
John Pohl
Thomas R. Roose
Rodney Scott
Philip Senter
Erin Smith
David Snoke
John Walton
Janet Warren