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PHILOSOPHY, BULLSHIT, AND PEER REVIEW

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Philosophy, Bullshit, and Peer Review

Elements in Epistemology

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Abstract: Peer review is supposed to ensure that published work, in philosophy and in other disciplines, meets high standards of rigor and interest. But many people fear that it is no longer fit to play this role. This Element examines some of their concerns. It uses evidence that critics of peer review sometimes cite to show its failures, as well as empirical literature on the reception of bullshit, to advance positive claims about how the assessment of scholarly work is appropriately influenced by features of the context in which it appears: for example, by readers' knowledge of authorship or of publication venue. Reader attitude makes an appropriate and sometimes decisive difference to perceptions of argument quality. The Element ends by considering the difference that authors' attitudes to their own arguments can appropriately make to their reception. This title is also available as Open Access on Cambridge Core.

Keywords: peer review, bullshit, academic hoaxes, prestige bias, trust

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