

Introduction

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Most economists have a personal gripe and a few horror stories about the treatment handed out by some referees and editors (Shepherd 1995); but are their any structural weaknesses in the system? It is commonly asserted that a non-trivial percentage (maybe twenty percent) of referees from North American journals submit reports which are ill-tempered and not terribly helpful. In particular, many junior academics, submitting essays at the beginning of their careers, can be traumatised or incensed by an entirely unnecessary degree of abrasiveness. Yet for every unhelpful and dismissive report there are three or four or five which contribute significantly to the knowledge production process.

Also, why do mainstream journals not carry more history of thought essays? Are there identifiable and common weaknesses in submitted essays which deter mainstream editors and referees from publishing historical material? What can we do as a sub-discipline to increase the exposure of mainstream economists to the systematic examination of the historical evolution of our subject?

The contributors to this minisymposium were asked to address (with latitude) these questions. Their replies constitute a fascinating insight into the recent history of the history of economic thought.

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Reference

- George B. Shepherd (ed.) 1995. *Rejected: Leading Economists Ponder the Publication Process*, Arizona: Thomas Horton.