4.2.2 Worse than Anonymous Peer Review

Just for fun: what could be worse than peer review? Let's see:

Direct Refereeing by Committees or Peer Group

Large, so-called priority projects of the **DFG**, consisting of many proposals to a common topic, are reviewed as follows:

- All senior scientists (≈ Professors) gather in the DFG headquarter in Bad Godesberg where they put up a Poster of their proposal. At 9:00 in the morning, everybody assembles in the large lecture room, the group of (international) referees marches in, and the speaker of the referees ask Prof. **X** to come forward and defend his or her proposal in front of the assembly. Prof. **X** gives a short presentation and then fields the questions coming in.
- Not everybody is asked, and nobody knows ahead of time if he or she has to perform. Be prepared, is the motto.
- The referees (who are not anonymous anymore, but decide as an anonymous group) will give the grades "failed" or "passed" directly at the end of the meeting.

Given the odds for getting your proposal granted, direct refereeing by committees or peer groups is not all that amusing - neither for the refereed nor for the referee.

The Committee is an Audience

You, as one of **5 - 6** people, and from a total of **30** or more applicants have been invited to present your work by a "Berufungskommission", a finding commission charged with appointing a new Professor (or director, or ...)

You give a presentation that will be refereed by the (important people in the) audience.

- Their common "referee report" (going under a different name, but that's what it is) will decide how you conduct your future life.
- No more need to be said.

The Committee is Your Boss

In an **R&D** environment, a group of **7 - 12** people usually has a leader ("Laborleiter"). About **7** of those leaders (or **1st** line managers) have a group leader (or **2nd** line manager), and so on, until the *CEO* sits on everything and everybody.

- Note that we discuss "**R&D**", where you already have made a nice career move if you become the **1st** line manager **2** years after you joined the company. If you go into production, you may find that you have far more people reporting to you, but they are not your *peers* like most other members of your **R&D** group.
- Out of your **7 - 12** member peer group, only one can be the boss. Who will be promoted whenever the next opportunity comes up?
- You guessed it: The one with the best referee reports (written or just stored in brains). And the referees are your bosses (your boss, his boss, some of the bosses on parallel levels, and usually some representative from personnel). You will never go up if those people don't know you or haven't heard of you. If they have, it is necessary that they have some positive association when your name comes up. It helps, if they have read *and* appreciated something you have written....