

Rejection slips: a brief anthology

Dear Professor Jones,

Thank you for submitting your paper "An argument for the proposition that p " to this journal. Your paper argues interestingly for the proposition that p . However, doesn't it rather overlook the following possible objection: not- p ? In view of this, we regret that we are unable to accept it. Yours, etc....

Dear Professor Smith,

Thank you for submitting your paper "An argument for the proposition that p " to this journal. Your paper argues interestingly for the proposition that p . However, it says nothing at all about the proposition that z . In view of this, we regret that we are unable to accept it. Yours, etc....

Dear Professor Small,

Thank you for submitting your paper to this journal. Your argument that p is interesting, but we think your argument would work better if you added a section arguing that p and not- p . Yours, etc....

Dear Professor Large,

Thank you for submitting your paper to this journal. You argue (1) if p then q , (2) p , (3) therefore q . This is all very interesting, but we can't see the relevance of section (2). Wouldn't the argument run much more smoothly if you deleted this rather fussy digression? Yours, etc....

Dear Professor Grey,

Thank you for submitting your 146-page paper to this journal, together with the 20-page bibliography, the 16 pages of accompanying graphs, diagrams and computer printouts, and the 5-dimensional pop-up feature formalising your 134-step argument in non-monotonic propositional calculus with S5 modal operators.

Our referee thought that your main idea was an interesting one, but not developed in sufficient detail to be worth publishing. You might like to come back to us once you have thought this project through properly. Yours, etc....

Dear Professor White,

Thank you for submitting to this journal your ten-line paper handwritten in red biro, together with the interesting Tesco's receipt which you kindly included on the back. Unfortunately, your argument is much too detailed and technical to be of interest to non-specialists. Yours, etc....

Dear Professor Famous,

Thank you, thank you, *thank you*, for submitting your paper "Black is white" to this journal. We are of course delighted to accept it. Within the next half-hour we will write to twenty other less well-known authors, reversing our decision to accept their papers, to ensure that there is room in our pages for yours. In the mean time, please bear with us and *don't go away*. Humbly yours, etc....

Dear Professor Obscure,

Thank you for submitting your paper "Black is not white: a response to Famous" to this journal. Your paper is interesting, ingenious, and cogent, but who on earth are *you*? Yours, etc....

Dear Professor Fanous,

We refer to our earlier acceptance letter in respect of your paper "Black is white". We regret that we are not after all able to accept your paper, since our acceptance was, it turns out, based solely on an unfortunate mix-up between yourself and Professor *Famous*. Doh! What are the chances of that happening, eh?

In any case, incidentally, isn't it patently ridiculous to argue that black is white? We've certainly thought so all along. Yours, etc....

Dear Professor Grue,

Thank you for submitting your paper "A critique of Professor John Griffiths" to this journal. As our anonymous referee found the argument quite unconvincing, we regret that we are unable to accept it. Yours, etc.,

Professor John Griffiths

Dear Professor Emeruby,

Thank you for submitting your paper on just-war theory to this journal. Unfortunately you make no reference to some of the most important items in the literature on this subject. In particular, we are volcanically incandescent to receive yet another submission to this journal that doesn't even mention Professor Mark Dean-Jones' seminal article in *The Trobriand Islands Bulletin of Pig-Breeding and Phenomenology* (Supplementary Volume), 1928/9, pp.1344-5: "Conceptual problems experienced by mature South-Pacific Gloucester Old Spot Boars in attempting to perform Husserlian *epoche*".

Yours, etc.,

Professor Mark Dean-Jones

Dear Professor Gred,

Thank you for submitting your paper "An argument for the proposition that p: a critique of Smoles and Blunt-Instrument (*Analytica Pessima* 2002)" to this journal. Unfortunately, exactly what you want to argue has been said already, in a paper you appear not to have read: Smoles and Blunt-Instrument, "An argument for the proposition that not-p", *Analytica Pessima* 2002.

Yours, etc.,

Dear Professor Diarald,

Thank you for sending us your paper. It is clear, original, exciting, and on a topic of the greatest importance, and it raises a large number of extremely interesting and potentially discipline-changing questions. Consequently it is quite unsuitable for publication in this journal.

Yours, etc.,

Disclaimer: all these "rejection slips" are total fakes entirely of my own invention. No real academic has ever received any actual rejection slip from any genuine journal that bears the faintest resemblance to any of them.