

Insufficient

by Steven J. Kolbe

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We have read your book, but regret to inform you that it is insufficient. This is not to say that *you* as a person are insufficient, simply that your writing is. When you asked us what percentage of manuscripts we found *sufficient*, we told you, "Less than one percent." You then said, "Well, I'm in the top one percent, surely." You were incorrect. You forgot that the other more than ninety-nine percent had thought this same exact thought, otherwise why would they have sent us their books as well?

At the level of originality, we found it to be mediocre, but at the level of quality of prose we all thought it was only slightly insufficient. Not *sufficient* by any means, but arguably so-so. The length of your book was overly-sufficient, exceeding the word limit by 50,000 words, which is not a place you want to exceed sufficiency. If anything, insufficiency would have been to your advantage as we would have read it more quickly.

Furthermore, the work lacks a number of elements we explicitly mention in our "Selection Criteria." There are no Greek allusions, for example. No one dies from a lengthy and painful disease. And finally, your sentences are positively lucid throughout. However, these are problems you can easily fix. By changing your protagonist from Jon Moses to Jon Apollo and then giving him pancreatic cancer, you could kill two birds with one stone and then eventually kill Jon Apollo, of course. Then, during his death scene, remove the periods from half of the sentences, replacing them with commas or better yet ambiguous dashes. This would greatly increase its academic appeal.

Your sense of humor, as exhibited in your work, received one nod of pleasure from our junior editor, but he is also very naïve, with a penchant for superficial and popular fiction.

Do not think that because your work is insufficient for our purpose, which is to champion truly great literature, that it is insufficient for some other press. One whose purpose, let's say, is to turn a cheap buck. Such people are far less discerning when it comes to matters of quality.

As always, good luck in all of your endeavors.

