

*A "final year business student" from an elite university sent me this unsolicited "book review" on 11 February 2003:*

Dear Mr Coleman,

I found your epic rant against "anti-economics" on the web this evening.

I am hoping to study economics and would like to become an economist, hopefully in government here or perhaps in the European Commission.

I haven't had time to read all of your essay but will do as it certainly looks like interesting reading.

However I disliked your tone, giving the impression that this diverse movement is against a reform of the subject. This I find to be completely dishonest. The PAE movement is full of reformers and I would see myself as one. You seem to see economics as a complete science that cannot be "tampered with" which is ludicrous. You also push off the idea of an economics that balances the economy, society and environment as the product of idiots. Forgive me, but why should the economy be the be all and the end all of life and this world?

Surely economists who strive for that and which take an institutional perspective, one which means that economic causal relations are selective and detailed and therefore one cannot stick to a single cause analysis of something are not anti-economics?

Or do you say anti-economics is that which is against an economics that wants the world to deteriorate to oblivion (insurance companies saying costs of climate change will exceed global GDP by 2050) and therefore you must write a thesis thrashing it?

I think you need to think again, because I would argue that you are the greatest anti-economist there is with that attitude!!

Looking forward to your reply,

[etc]

*(I have replied)*