

Wolfe Walks - my rant

The Urth list — 12 messages, 6 voices, 26 Jul 2003

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4112>

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Lisa Schaffer-Doggett — 26 Jul 2003, 03:34

On Friday, July 25, 2003, at 11:58 AM, Dan'I Danehy-Oakes wrote:
Ladies and Gentlemen, may I have your attention: Gene Wolfe has left the building.

Wolfe has left the Odyssey workshop prematurely; his explanation is on the Locus Website.

<http://www.locusmag.com/2003/Features/Letters07.html>

--Blattid

That is utterly unbelievable. What a pathetic lot of juvenile, ungrateful, UNKNOWING, clueless idiots. I don't even know where to start. How about why bother to take a writing workshop if you can't take honest criticism? It pains me, pains me deeply to read that Mr. Wolfe was treated that way. He is a writer of the first caliber, a truly unknown legend. Those hacks should be grateful he even bothered to read their most likely unreadable tripe. Personally, I don't have much use for writing workshops. I think writing is far too individual an art and the workshops are full of whiny idiots like these. I'll end this now with my paraphrase of Bukowski- Where is something interesting to read? Wait. Don't tell me. I know. You wrote it.

Sadly true
Don

Chris — 26 Jul 2003, 10:35 · follows Lisa Schaffer-Doggett

None of us could be happy to hear this. But, at the least, we can try to be as understanding as Wolfe himself, who was there and has more reason to be offended than anyone (to understate).

Mostly I am interested (and impressed) by the authors he chose to praise in the workshop. In time we'll hear from everyone their merits and faults, but right now we have the chance to find and read them and decide for ourselves ahead of popular opinion. I suggest we take advantage of the opportunity and grab hold of (and discuss) these stories before they are chewed up and spit out by other reviewers.

As soon as we find out where to find them, anyway.

- Civet

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Sadly true
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Josh Geller — 26 Jul 2003, 12:22 · follows Chris

What I was wondering was how much I'd pay for a week in a writing class with Gene Wolfe.

On Sat, 2003-07-26 at 03:35, Chris wrote:
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<http://join.msn.com/?page=features/junkmail>

Andrew Bollen — 26 Jul 2003, 12:26 · follows Josh Geller

I took a friend of mine to lunch yesterday to celebrate her first book being accepted for publication by Random. She found the workshop thing very valuable. Before the workshop, she had a draft manuscript and scattered comments on it from all over the place, but nothing very informed. The main value of the workshop was *useful reading*, to use her phrase. She was told the manuscript was totally unpublishable, for this reason and that, and that she would have to rewrite it. So she spent a couple of years rewriting from scratch, taking note of the specific criticisms, and ended up published.

She believes her work experience as a speech-writer, policy analyst etc for various senior politicians and bureaucrats was very helpful in being able to use criticism effectively: she'd spent years being told, brusquely, that pieces were no good & to rewrite them. But others in the workshop found it much harder to handle.

Being able to use criticism is one of those things you get from experience, if you're lucky. Sounds like these people have a way to go.

Josh Geller — 26 Jul 2003, 13:16 · follows Andrew Bollen

As I say, I am wondering how much I would pay for a week's writing class with Gene Wolfe. The answer is at least a couple of hundred dollars, perhaps more.

I wonder further. I wonder how much how many people on this mailing list would be willing to pay for a week's writing class with Gene Wolfe. How many people here would be willing to pay two hundred dollars for a week's writing class with Gene Wolfe? If the answer is ten or twelve, don't you think that \$2000 or \$2400 could pay the Wolfe's travel, food and hotel expenses and perhaps even afford them a small fee? All work would have to be done on a volunteer basis, of course. Do people who know the Wolfes think they might be interested?

I would be willing to devote time and work to this, if there are other people who are willing to devote time and work to this.

What does everyone think?

J.

On Sat, 2003-07-26 at 05:26, Andrew Bollen wrote:

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Yep, I'd be in it. Problem is, I'm in Australia. Maybe some kind of on-line thing as well? Wouldn't have to be very interactive or hi-tech to be useful. I'd also be willing to put some time into it.

Josh Geller — 26 Jul 2003, 14:08 · follows Andrew Bollen

On Sat, 2003-07-26 at 06:26, Andrew Bollen wrote:

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What does everyone think?

Yep, I'd be in it. Problem is, I'm in Australia. Maybe some kind of on-line thing as well? Wouldn't have to be very interactive or hi-tech to be useful.

Very easy to arrange.

I'd also be willing to put some time into it.

Sounds good. Who else?

J.

—

Josh Geller — 26 Jul 2003, 15:28 · follows Josh Geller

On Sat, 2003-07-26 at 07:38, James Wynn wrote:

I don't have anything to workshopped right now but I would certainly pay a couple hundred just to hang out with Gene Wolfe and the rest of you guys.

Unfortunately, my experience with organizing these things (not workshops but events and stuff) is that the cost of just a *location* to hold an event like this for just a *weekend* (with food not necessarily) included could not be had for less than \$80-\$120 per person -- if you can guarantee 50 or more people.

I was thinking less. Like, free if possible. If we are talking ten or twelve people and an internet hookup I could do it in my house. There are probably better places, in fact I can think of a couple.

I could also feed twelve people for a week for pretty cheap, at least one meal a day, snacks and beverages.

Also, a workshop is *a lot* of work for the teacher -- very reading intensive; harder than a normal class I would think.

I am thinking more, like, hang out and talk with Gene Wolfe about writing or about whatever he wants to talk about. I'd hope that he and Rosemary would have a good time, and that he'd not do any more work than he wanted to.

I'd be embarrassed to ask any writer of marketable merit to do it for just 2 or 3 thousand - even if it were just a dozen or so writers he would be working with.

Sure. I don't think we could make it worth his while; I think his time is worth probably a lot more than he is getting for it! I am wondering if he might do it if it didn't cost him anything and we could guarantee him (as we could) an absolutely attentive audience.

If Wolfe is uninterested, the project stops right there, obviously. Some of you know him personally; why doesn't one of you ask him? If he is even conditionally interested, then we will move on.

Thus the tuition for the Odyssey workshop was \$1400!

It was also more than just Gene Wolfe for a week, right?

Probably a very reasonable rate. I don't intend to throw cold-water on a wonderful plan at its inception. I just wouldn't like to see a good idea squelched by unreasonable expectations.

Indeed. Let's get the show-stoppers out of the way first.

On the otherhand, a *readers* workshop where the participants were responsible for reviewing and discussing each other's works; with, say, a series of "book club" type meetings to discuss various Wolfe works; with Wolfe in attendance. This is beginning to sound more like a Gene Wolfe Convention. I kinda like that idea too.

So do I, though I like the first idea better.

I'd be willing to do work on this also.

J.

silk tree — 26 Jul 2003, 15:09 · follows Josh Geller

I hope something could be arranged for the Chicago area. please please please. After all, doesn't he live around here?

Hmmm, rather than trying to muster up your own con-like event, why not work with WindyCon and see about a panel (or something more extended than a panel?) there? I've seen him at WindyCon before. That way a lot of the logistics will already be taken care of.

mimosa (who lives in Chicago)

Josh Geller — 26 Jul 2003, 15:45 · follows silk tree

On Sat, 2003-07-26 at 08:09, silk tree wrote:

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Hmmm, rather than trying to muster up your own con-like event, why not work with WindyCon and see about a panel (or something more extended than a panel?) there? I've seen him at WindyCon before. That way a lot of the logistics will already be taken care of.

What you are talking about and what I am talking about are two different things.

You can do whatever you like, as long as you are willing to do the work.

I am willing to do a lot of work for this, including catering meals if necessary (I am a skilled amateur chef), but only if it happens in my home town.

If people decide to do it elsewhere, best of luck to all of you! Enjoy yourselves! But it will be happening without me.

J.

Lisa Schaffer-Doggett — 26 Jul 2003, 19:32 · follows Josh Geller

On Saturday, July 26, 2003, at 03:35 AM, Chris wrote:

None of us could be happy to hear this. But, at the least, we can try to be as understanding as Wolfe himself, who was there and has more reason to be offended than anyone (to understate).

Don replies:

Yeah I know. I was just angry, which is why I labeled it a rant in forewarning. It sounds like something good might spring from this though. I hope that at least those who know him personally will convey how much he is respected as a writer by everyone on this list. I still don't

think much of writing workshops but who knows, maybe that's my loss.

matthew.malthouse — 28 Jul 2003, 10:37 · follows Lisa Schaffer-Doggett

On 26/07/2003 15:38:42 James Wynn wrote:

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<http://www.arvonfoundation.org/>

Just 'cause I'm familliar with it.

Basic open course fee for 4.5 day residential course including accommodation, tuition and food is UKP 395 - at todays rates that's USD 640 or EUR 558.

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Matthew

(who once pushed a car trough snow half way up the fell from Lumb Bank)