

Wolfe & Women

The Urth list — 24 messages, 11 voices, 29 Jan 2020

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/6830>

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Gem Caccetta — 29 Jan 2020, 19:14

On Wed Jan 29 2020 Ab de Dos wrote:

"I believe the politically correct accuse Wolfe likewise of being a christian misogynist?"

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I wouldn't be surprised if this was Wolfe's own attitude toward women speaking through Barnes. He could find things to admire in some women, but he didn't really like them. Just my guess, for what it's worth.

Gerry Quinn — 29 Jan 2020, 22:21 · in reply to Gem Caccetta

On 29/01/2020 19:14, Gem Caccetta wrote:

On Wed Jan 29 2020 Ab de Dos wrote:

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Presumably Barnes doesn't want men either, and can't have them - so should his attitude not be the same? Clearly he is a misanthrope..

- Gerry Quinn

Ab de Vos — 29 Jan 2020, 23:02 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

Maybe Barnes is a case of the fox and the grapes. The fox cannot get the grapes he wanted. Afterwards he says they were sour anyway which they were not.

Op 29-1-2020 om 23:21 schreef Gerry Quinn:

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Norwood, Frederick Hudson — 30 Jan 2020, 12:21 · in reply to Ab de Vos

I don't think there is any doubt at all that Wolfe loved his wife.

Rick

From: Urth [mailto:urth-bounces at lists.urth.net] On Behalf Of Ab de Vos Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2020 6:02 PM To: urth at lists.urth.net Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: (urth) Wolfe & Women

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Norwood, Frederick Hudson — 30 Jan 2020, 12:27 · in reply to Gem Caccetta

In my experience, people who complain about having to be "politically correct" are people who want to say rude things and are really complaining about not being allowed to be rude.

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Ab de Vos — 30 Jan 2020, 13:18 · in reply to Norwood, Frederick Hudson

Like the fable of the Fox and the Grapes there is the maxim that the Grass is always greener on the other side of the Fence. Both relate to the ways in which the mechanisms of desire subvert rationality. (/Sour Grapes/ by Jon Elster) These are common to all men including the politically correct, who may think otherwise from the height of their moral elevation.

Op 30-1-2020 om 13:27 schreef Norwood, Frederick Hudson:

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David Stockhoff — 30 Jan 2020, 15:39 · in reply to Norwood, Frederick Hudson

On January 30, 2020 7:27:04 AM EST, "Norwood, Frederick Hudson" <NORWOODR at mail.etsu.edu> wrote:

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I see no reason whatsoever to ascribe Barnes' attitude to Wolfe. That's not how authorship works. It's far more likely that the thought occasionally occurred to Wolfe as a question---do I actually like women, or do I merely find them necessary?---and he found it interesting enough to use for building a character's interiority.

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 30 Jan 2020, 16:08 · in reply to Norwood, Frederick Hudson
Rick, you got it in one.

I'm someone who occasionally says some of those rude things. I'm old enough to remember when it was "normal". But I come down fully on the side of "political correctness", or, as it is properly know, *politeness*.

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On Thu, Jan 30, 2020, 8:08 AM Dan'l Danehy-Oakes <danldo at gmail.com> wrote:
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Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 30 Jan 2020, 18:32 · in reply to Charles Gillingham

If you can't figure out a way to politely tell someone that they are an idiot who should go jump off a pier, your linguistic skills are sadly lacking. And that is no excuse for rudeness.

Papa Heinlein, he say: when courtesy goes by the wayside, that civilization is in decline.

Note also that "civil" and "civilization" are intimately related words.

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Charles Gillingham — 30 Jan 2020, 18:51 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

"Idiot" is an ableist slur...

Some of the most vulgar societies were the most stable. Walking down any given street in Augustus' Rome would have disgusted us. The graffiti in Pompeii was worse than any I've seen growing up in the hood. Evolution isn't always a clean or polite process. The battle of ideas is just as dirty and violent as any other battle for survival.

On Thu, Jan 30, 2020, 10:32 AM Dan'l Danehy-Oakes <danldo at gmail.com> wrote:
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Ryan Dunn — 30 Jan 2020, 18:56 · in reply to Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

My view: There is a place for courtesy, and a place for plainspeak. Just like there is a place for biting your tongue, and a place for tough love.

My other view: We don't get to control what someone else says, neither legally nor physically, so learning to deal with people who don't follow your own views on speech (or anything else) is one of the most important skills you can obtain in life.

One final view: Gene Wolfe was not misogynistic. He once started crying his eyes out while telling me how hard it was when he had to stop writing Cassie's voice in An Evil Guest.

I know that one anecdote doesn't summarize a man, or whether a man's views on women evolved as he grew older, but I find it hard to buy into any flippant high ground aimed at marginalizing Wolfe's portrayal of women in his literature.

?ryan

Ryan Dunn, Director
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Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 30 Jan 2020, 19:23 · in reply to Ryan Dunn

Y'all are, of course, right that we can't and shouldn't be able to control others' speech.

We are free, however, to criticize, ignore, and ostracize rude people. And that is what "political correctness" means.

Those who are criticized, ignored, and ostracized will protest that they are persecuted.

Bullshit. (Is that sufficiently plain speech for y'all?)

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James Wynn — 30 Jan 2020, 19:25 · in reply to Norwood, Frederick Hudson

Calling proponents of a position "politically correct" is itself a form of ad hominem. But if it is going to be *defended* as a category, then...

In my experience, unironic "political correctness" gained a very bad reputation quite early -- by the late 80s -- because the people advocating for it demonstrated a very low bar for the definition of rudeness when encountering ideas they disagreed with and a very permissive bar for the punishment that should be meted out for perceived rudeness. They also demonstrated marked blindness for rudeness perpetuated in the name of "political correctness" (sometimes euphemized "the common good"). Nothing about the culture of PC has changed since then, but what has changed is an increased ability of some of its advocates to sequester themselves from the critiques of it and the various subcultures it spawned (callout culture, cancel culture, social credit scores).

Rather than engaging inaccurate statements with ad hominem (see above), I think it is more effective to engage them with accurate speech untainted by personal emotion.

~ James

On Thu, Jan 30, 2020 at 6:27 AM Norwood, Frederick Hudson <NORWOODR@mail.etsu.edu> wrote:

In my experience, people who complain about having to be "politically correct" are people who want to say rude things and are really complaining about not being allowed to be rude.

Rick

Charles Gillingham — 30 Jan 2020, 19:48 · in reply to James Wynn

Well said Mr. Wynn.

Discussions like this, like any discussion where you know what someone will say before they say it, get boring fast. More and more, I'm sure this distinction is genetic, everyone is born with either a L or a P gene. So debate boils down to something like "well I think brown hair is best because I have brown hair, " and so on.

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Rick

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 30 Jan 2020, 20:05 · in reply to Charles Gillingham

I often think it's comical--Fal, la!, la!
How Nature always does contrive--Fal, la!, la!
That every boy and every gal
That's born into the world alive
Is either a little Liberal
Or else a little Conservative!

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

Maka ki ecela tehani yanke lo!

*--*T?a???ke Witk?

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Rick

Ab de Vos — 30 Jan 2020, 21:15 · in reply to Charles Gillingham

A Liberal or a Psycho gene?

Op 30-1-2020 om 20:48 schreef Charles Gillingham:

everyone is born with either a L or a P gene

Ab de Vos — 30 Jan 2020, 21:20 · in reply to Ryan Dunn

This line sounds a bit like Ecclesiastes without the vanity part.

Op 30-1-2020 om 19:56 schreef Ryan Dunn:

There is a place for courtesy, and a place for plainspeak. Just like there is a place for biting your tongue, and a place for tough love.

Ab de Vos — 30 Jan 2020, 21:49 · in reply to Charles Gillingham

Maybe politeness is a question of style and not necessarily correlated with an attitude of fundamental human respect. Often it is a way to make a distinction between the man of value and the worthless man. So it is not an ethical category but a strategic and rhetorical one. 18th century France comes to mind: very polite and very corrupt. Rudeness was always considered a property of the lower orders lacking the refinement of the higher ones. 19th century GB considered the proles genetically inferior like colored people and racism evolved with biological thinking - as a form of ideology not science - and imperialism. So politeness may be not only related to political civility but also to exclusion or worse.

Op 30-1-2020 om 18:10 schreef Charles Gillingham:

Controlling speech is just one step away from controlling thought, which is controlling action. Freedom of speech isn't freedom to compliment or placate or agree with the majority (or belligerent minority, in this case). It's freedom to disagree with authority, to be rude and controversial. But sure if you want to be polite when someone tells you to come with them, go ahead be as nice as you want.

On Thu, Jan 30, 2020, 8:08 AM Dan'l Danehy-Oakes <danldo at gmail.com <mailto:danldo at gmail.com>> wrote:

Rick, you got it in one.

I'm someone who occasionally says some of those rude things. I'm old enough to remember when it was "normal". But I come down fully on the side of "political correctness", or, as it is properly know, /politeness/.

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

/Maka ki ecela tehani yanke lo!
/--/T?a???ke Witk?

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Rick

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Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2020 2:15 PM
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Subject: [EXTERNAL] (urth) Wolfe & Women

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António Pedro Marques — 31 Jan 2020, 04:54 · in reply to Ryan Dunn

I knew I liked you from the first time you wrote on the list, Ryan!

No dia 30/01/2020, ?s 18:56, Ryan Dunn <ryan at liftingfaces.com> escreveu:
(sensible no-nonsense stuff)

Norwood, Frederick Hudson — 31 Jan 2020, 12:20 · in reply to Charles Gillingham

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Rick

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Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2020 2:15 PM

To: urth at lists.urth.net<mailto:urth at lists.urth.net>

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Eric Bourland — 31 Jan 2020, 15:06 · in reply to Norwood, Frederick Hudson

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On the Gene Wolfe page on Facebook, someone invited people to read Pirate Freedom, for the purpose of convening later to discuss. Later meant about four weeks or so in the future, and that was a couple of weeks ago I guess. Anyway a bunch of folks hopped on, and I grabbed PF and read it in a couple of nights and it was as wistful and lovely (and violent and brutal) as ever. It's been noted that Crisoforo's voice seems at times too boyish — he is an educated Catholic priest, after all ! ? but his voice changes appropriately I think; he is a pirate boy in lost history; a troubled priest in the modern world. Different person / voice in different times. He is different when his Novia is near, and marauding with Capt Burt. Anyway my point, if I have one, and maybe I don't, is, I think many times in his heart Wolfe wrote as a young person filled with wonder and a yearning for romantic adventure. And so we get wistful moments like the poignant endings of Evil Guest and Pirate Freedom. And Wizard Knight, and so on. Severian, even when old and care-worn, was still a boy in his heart. A boy with his dog, a little lost, slightly thoughtless, the way young people can be.

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Eric

Eric Bourland

<https://www.hwaet.com/>

From: Urth <urth-bounces at lists.urth.net> On Behalf Of Norwood, Frederick Hudson Sent: Friday, January 31, 2020 7:20 AM To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net> Subject: Re: (urth) [EXTERNAL] Wolfe & Women

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--T?a???ke Witk?

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Norwood, Frederick Hudson — 31 Jan 2020, 15:45 · in reply to Eric Bourland

Very good observation.

Rici

From: Urth [mailto:urth-bounces at lists.urth.net] On Behalf Of Eric Bourland Sent: Friday, January 31, 2020 10:07 AM To: 'The Urth Mailing List' <urth at lists.urth.net> Subject: Re: (urth) [EXTERNAL] Wolfe & Women

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Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 31 Jan 2020, 17:01 · in reply to Norwood, Frederick Hudson

Agreed!

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Free says??You like women, don't you, Mr. Barnes??

"Like them?" Taken off guard Barnes considered for a moment. "Not really. I want them, and since I can't have them, usually, I don't like them. But I want them, I suppose you could say that. I admire Madame Serpentina."

I wouldn't be surprised if this was Wolfe's own attitude toward women speaking through Barnes. He could find things to admire in some women, but he didn't really like them. Just my guess, for what it's worth.

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