

Jim, about those scientists....

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 02 Nov 1999

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Daniel Fusch — 02 Nov 1999, 04:34

Hi, Jim!

Superior evidence can be a decided advantage!

Actually, I was wondering exactly the same thing...are there any good scientists in The Book of the New Sun? That is--scientists who aren't burning children, eviscerating their captives, or sewing new heads on people....

I don't remember any right off hand. Father Inire, physicist...but as you said, he's the alien. And there's Master Ash, but he's more of a historian than a scientist. I think.

I just remembered that in "The Sword of the Lictor," Severian speaks of the scientists to whom people go when they want to become zoanthropes. Are these good scientists or bad scientists? They'd be pretty awful in OUR society, I imagine. But in Severian's society?

The curators in the Botanic Gardens are botanists, and they don't seem malevolent. Their task is the preservation of extinct forms of plant life, after all.

Yes, I guess the curators are the good scientists, then.

Hmmm, how come Severian always meets all the bad (or should I say "mad"?) scientists?

Well, Jim, I would surmise that in Severian's age, there are no government-funded scientists (or not many, anyway), and science is an individual pursuit--often for individual gain. Presumably there are also a few good scientists who are acting for the greater good of mankind, but they seem to avoid Severian. It must be his torturer's outfit that scares them away.

Oh, well.

William H. Ansley — 02 Nov 1999, 00:22 · follows Daniel Fusch

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This irresistibly conjures up (to my mind at least) an alternative version of _The Wizard of Oz_ (perhaps it is one of the stories in the Brown Book we don't get to see) where Dorothy steps out of her flying house in (what is taken to be) a white lab coat and is asked by the Scientist of the North...

You fill in the rest (or ask alga).

William Ansley