

Lies, lies, lies

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 09 Nov 1999

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Ouroboros — 09 Nov 1999, 08:30

Roy wrote:

Now, these are just a few examples I stumbled

across without really trying, where Sev is either lying for no good reason that I can see, or, more likely...where Wolfe is showing the reader that Sev's memory is less than perfect--or both.<<<<

Let's just say it and be done with it: Severian does not have perfect memory inspite of his claims, certainly not in an objective sense - if he did, Wolfe would not let him keep repeating it. But Severian undoubtably *believes* he has perfect memory and that's the key to what Wolfe is deliberately saying about memory. Severian is IMO inspired by Jack Vance's Cugel from the Dying Earth series. In addition to Cugel's Severianish unheroic amorality (more extreme in Cugel's case), Cugel keeps calling himself "Cugel the Clever" as he get's himself in deeper and deeper trouble. In fact, Cugel calling himself "the Clever" is a signal that he is being or is about to be out-witted (or out-wit himself).

Roy's list of "lies" cannot be lies since (as he Roy points out) in those examples Severian has no apparent motive to lie. I have already discussed my suspicions about Severian's memory in my posting on Fri Oct. 29.

The swimming quotes and the variation in the charm are good examples of Severian's faulty memory (or possibly Wolfe's) but, again, see my earlier post. However the mausoleum/infancy "lies" don't even constitute errors in memory IMHO.

-Ouroboros