

Sev's direct denial of good memory

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 16 Aug 2000

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/2353>

Exported from an unofficial mirror of a public mailing list. Copyright in each message remains with the person who wrote it. Email addresses are obscured as `user at host`, the form the original archive published. This file was rebuilt from parsed fields rather than retained headers, so it is faithful in content but not byte-exact.

A Aramini — 16 Aug 2000, 13:06

One of my favorite lines in the whole Book of the New Sun (I'm sure this has been commented on before, but I haven't had the chance to peruse the old archives) is in The Citadel of the Autarch in Chapter V: The Lazaret. An inane conversation with Loyal to the Group of Seventeen hides a wonderful statement by Severian. They are talking about how the Ascians only speak with correct thought:

"The rest have thousands- I suppose actually tens or hundreds of thousands - of those tags memorized.'

'That's impossible,' I said"

Even though it at first appears that Severian is denying that the society and its practices are possible, he is directly denying that anyone's memory could be that good. What a great scene. In my mind, this is very condemning of Severian as a narrator, since he claims over and over to remember all those thousands of lines of his book that he will perfectly copy on the ship. He says several times that he cannot conceive of a memory that is less than perfect, yet here he is presented with simply good memory and denies that it can exist.