

Digest Urth, or brains thereof

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 16 Jul 1998

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/996>

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Craig Christensen — 16 Jul 1998, 08:04

From: "Mark Millman" <Mark_Millman at hmco.com>

Subject: Re: (urth) Digest Urth, or brains thereof

Date: Wed, 15 Jul 1998 12:04:38

Rostrum wrote:

...

I have to admit some confusion on that point.
Wouldn't anyone judging the Autarch also
have to know the words in order to recognize
them? Shouldn't any such person be able to
speak "the words" and pose as the Autarch?

...

And Mark Millman replied:

... For one thing, many of the words command mechanical
contrivances, so all a putative Autarch would have to do, for
example, would be to open the door behind the throne...

This was my thinking, too- the Autarch's oldest personalities remember how to operate the voice-recognition machinery. The episode I remembered was near the end of CITADEL (Father Inire's Letter) where Severian opens the door to the Autarch's quarters with a word. I scanned this at home last night, and I noted a mention of 'words' a little further on, at the beginning of his conversation with the homunculus. The homunculus opens by saying (something like) "Why have you interrupted my contemplation of your world?" and Severian replies (something like), "I now know this world to have seven continents, of which only part of this one honor the holy words."

Where I had thought that the use of words was a simple use of old technology appearing magical in this age, I think that this last tidbit indicates something more. It seems that the use of 'words' elicits control over the populous. Or maybe just voluntary allegiance.