

"Tracking Song"

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 16 Feb 1999

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BMDoherty — 16 Feb 1999, 14:28

I've been on and off the list for the past year, so just tell me if this has all been hashed over and I'll search the archives, but I just read "Tracking Song" from the ISLAND OF DR. DEATH etc. collection yesterday, and was impressed with its similarities of tone to both TBOTNS and the Latro series---the character and "voice" of the narrator seemed as close to Severian as I've found in other Wolfe works, and the lack of memory (though not renewed daily, or dealt with as sophisticatedly) of the narrator of Latro. As usual with Wolfe, I'm not entirely sure I even understood what was going on in the story, though it's plethora of races, peoples, and weird underground cities gave it that Vance/old pulp adventure "feel" that makes you think you are reading something quite simple. I gathered that the narrator was not a native of the planet he was on, and was presumptively a human being; and from the conclusion guessed that the "humans" or whatever race the narrator was from were trying to terraform this planet in some way by raising its temperature. Was he then left behind deliberately as some sort of scout? Was his lack of memory deliberately induced by his people for some purpose of theirs? I got this impression, though I can't find solid textual support.

At any rate, and conclusions others have come to would be welcome.

Brian Doherty