

Hethor, Descartes and the "paracoita"

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 21 Mar 2006

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James Machin — 21 Mar 2006, 16:19

I'm a new poster, so please ignore if I'm covering old, old ground. I've searched the archives but can't find any previous reference to this...

I recently came across a passage in a book I'm reading (a biography of Kant) about Descartes' personal "automaton". The following excerpt from an article in the Daily Telegraph gives a good summation of the story:

The great philosopher went on a sea voyage to Sweden, telling people he was travelling with his daughter Francine. As the journey went on, the girl never appeared, and curious sailors finally entered Descartes' cabin. They found only a mechanical doll, which horrified them so much that they threw her overboard.

(<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/arts/main.jhtml?xml=/arts/2002/03/05/bodoll02.xml>)

Of course, this scenario of the mechanical doll stowed in a cabin instantly reminded me of Hethor's lost "paracoita". Presumably, this is intentional on Wolfe's part...

Duncan Truter — 21 Mar 2006, 16:23 · in reply to James Machin

this reminds me a lot of the story in 'the island of doctor death and other stories and other stories'. can't remember the name, it's the one about the puppeteers, with human-sized puppets.

the protagonist seems to be a puppet/have some kind of relationship with his own puppet/all of the above, and there's a part where he meets someone who may be a puppet herself.

On 3/21/06, James Machin <jfmachin at hotmail.com> wrote:

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