

Gods

The Whorl list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 14 Jul 1998

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mary whalen — 14 Jul 1998, 01:15

note: forwarded msg attached.

Michael Straight — 15 Jul 1998, 16:50 · follows mary whalen

On Wed, 15 Jul 1998, prion lots of really nifty background on the names Wolfe used for the gods of the Whorl, including:

I think something important may be in an analysis of the Mainframe gods' names in relation to their characteristics.

Pas: Greek for all. Pseudonym Typhon uses. Typhon or Typhoeus was either a giant or a many-headed dragon that breathed fire who defeated the gods and cut out Zeus' muscles until Zeus regained them and buried him under Mt. Etna, or some other volcano or in the region of Tartaros.

Hmmm. Typhon the many-headed. Since the whole point of Typhon grafting his head onto a new body was to preserve his personal identity authority, it seems unlikely that he took a new name ("Typhon") after becoming many-headed. So perhaps he got the idea from his name?

Tartaros: Not a Greek word. God of the underworld, or the place itself. Child either of the original Chaos, or of Typhon and Echidna. Tartaros was said to be as far below Hades (also named after it's master) as Hades was below the Earth. In the Whorl Tartaros is the god of night, crime, and commerce.

'Tartaros' is not Greek? Or are you saying it's not the word for anything other than the god of the underworld? Webster's 17th lists 'Tartarus' and says it's from the Greek.

When you say "or of Typhon and Echidna" do you mean that in Wolfe's story he's their child, or is that also true in Greek myth?

Hierax. Greek for eagle. The eagle who tormented Prometheus, by eating his liver each day, which grew back. Child of Typhon and Echidna, or others. In the Whorl the god of death, who likes to torment others.

Again, is Hierax the offspring of Typhon and Echidna in Greek myth as well? I had no idea so much of the Whorl mythos came straight from the Greek.

Looking over the list, it seems that about every "god" has a serious mental problem. Typhon is monomaniacal, Scylla is egotistic, Hierax is sadistic, Sphigx is hyperaggressive, Molpe has fits of insanity, Thelxiepeia was probably a drug addict and poisoner, Phaea eats too much, and Kypris is a nymphomaniac. Any ideas about the others' possible problems?

Tartaros is blind. Not a mental problem, but a similar theme, perhaps. You'd think Typhon would have used genetic engineering or married better breeding stock to have more perfect children.

I love the bit where Tartaros tells Auk, "You can't see me because I'm blind."

-Rostrum