

**“NOTHING MAKES SO FINE A SHOW AS YOUR GREEK”: A FOREWORD TO POE’S PHILHELLENISM IN “HOW TO WRITE A BLACKWOOD ARTICLE” AND “A PREDICAMENT”<sup>1</sup>**

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*ABSTRACT: Poe’s “How to Write a Blackwood Article” and “The Scythe of Time” have both drawn the attention of a number of scholars due to their undeniable connection and their satirical tone. Studies such as those of Daniel Hoffman and Kenneth Silverman have made note of Poe’s satire which features allusions to foreign literatures. In fact, Poe does not hesitate to quote from several foreign authors in the text and he admits it right away. However, even though one can come across studies such as those of Gustav Gruener, Carl F. Schreiber, and Susan Levine all dealing with the German and Spanish influence in Poe, one may not encounter research that explores the Hellenic aspect of the matter systematically. This paper focuses on the importance of Hellenic language and literature for Poe’s literary devices, and it also offers additional links between “A Predicament” and Hellenic mythology that have perhaps been overlooked by relevant research so far.*

*KEYWORDS: Poe, A Predicament, Blackwoods, Greek, Hellenic literature.*

**“NOTHING MAKES SO FINE A SHOW AS YOUR GREEK”:  
UN PREFACIO A LOS TRASFONDOS FILOHELÉNICOS DE  
POE EN “HOW TO WRITE A BLACKWOOD ARTICLE” Y “A  
PREDICAMENT”**

*RESUMEN: El relato corto “How to Write a Blackwood Article” de Poe y su “The Scythe of Time” llamaron la atención de varios eruditos debido a su conexión innegable y su tono satírico. Estudios como los de Daniel Hoffman y Kenneth*

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*Silverman han tomado nota de la sátira de Poe que presenta alusiones a literaturas extranjeras. De hecho, Poe no duda en citar a varios autores extranjeros en el texto, y lo admite de inmediato. Sin embargo, aunque se pueden encontrar estudios como los de Gustav Gruener, Carl F. Schreiber y Susan Levine sobre la influencia alemana y española sobre la obra de Poe, no se han producido investigaciones que exploren sistemáticamente el aspecto helénico del asunto. El presente artículo se centra en la importancia de la lengua y la literatura helénica para los recursos literarios de Poe y también ofrece enlaces adicionales entre “A Predicament” y la mitología helénica que tal vez hayan sido pasados por alto por investigaciones relevantes hasta el momento.*

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Poe, A Predicament, Blackwoods, griego, Literatura Helénica.

## **« NOTHING MAKES SO FINE SHOW AS YOUR GREEK » : UN PRÉAMBULE AU TRÉFONDS PHILO-HELLÉNIQUE DE POE DANS « HOW TO WRITE A BLACKWOOD ARTICLE » ET « A PREDICAMENT »**

*RÉSUMÉ : Les nouvelles «How to Write a Blackwood Article» et «The Scythe of Time» de Poe ont toutes deux attiré l'attention de nombreux érudits et par leur lien indéniable entre elles et par leur ton satirique. Des études telles que celles de Daniel Hoffman et Kenneth Silverman ont pris note de la satire voilée de Poe contre certaines littératures étrangères. En fait, Poe n'hésite pas à citer plusieurs auteurs étrangers dans le texte et à l'admettre tout de suite après. Or, même s'il est possible de trouver des études telles que celles de Gustav Gruener, Carl F. Schreiber et Susan Levine centrées sur les influences allemande et espagnole sur l'oeuvre de Poe, il n'existe pas de travaux qui explorent systématiquement l'aspect hellénique de la question. Cet article met l'accent sur l'importance de la langue et de la littérature helléniques dans les textes littéraires de Poe et établit également des liens supplémentaires entre «A Predicament» et la mythologie hellénique, connexions qui ont peut-être été négligées, jusqu'à présent, par les études critiques sérieuses.*

**MOTS CLÉS:** Poe, “A Predicament”, “Blackwoods”, grec, Littérature hellénique.

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## 1. Introduction

Edgar Allan Poe's "How to Write a Blackwood Article" has regularly elicited a number of different interpretations. Extensive studies such as those of Kenneth Silverman and Stephanie Sommerfeld have all stressed the story's satiric tone. The narrative was originally published in 1838 in the *American Museum* under the title "The Psyche Zenobia". It was printed alongside another narrative of his, "The Scythe of Time," whose title was changed to "A Predicament" a few years later by Poe. Over the years, Poe scholars seem to have adhered to Killis Campbell's (1933) suggestion that the two stories are intertwined; as a matter of fact, this literary critic was one of the first academics to openly argue that the latter story is a 'sequel' of the first. Joseph R. McElrath also characterizes them as companion pieces (1970: 38) and such claim can also be encountered in Susan Levine's and Stuart Levine's (1986) more recent study. Undeniably, all these remarks hint continuity between the two works, justifiably so, if one considers their sentimental mutuality and their common protagonist.

In the following pages, I analyze both stories while paying close attention to Poe's literary devices, his Hellenic references, among others, and I stress the importance of the Greek language and literature for the Bostonian writer's literary message. This goes toward indicating a philhellenism in his storytelling without disregarding the centrality of self-parody in these two works, since they epitomize and ridicule elements that Poe brilliantly transformed and employed in these otherwise dark and grotesque tales. I also aim to point towards additional Hellenic allusions in Poe's "A Predicament" which, to my knowledge, have somewhat been overlooked by relevant literature. More to the point, this paper focuses on the importance of Hellenic sources for Poe's literary devices in an attempt to offer additional links between the two tales and the Hellenic literary spheres. To achieve that, I shall provide a brief summary of the tales while also revisiting past criticism; the state of the art will ultimately allow a re-evaluation of previously discussed links between Poe and Greece, and it will also lead to further assertions that establish philhellenic patterns in the American author's works.

Like most critics, I have tried hard to observe Poe's satiric tone, but despite these efforts, I failed to find any research that delves into the significance of Poe's allusions to the ancient past and his plain use of Hellenic words in his text. In an attempt to explore this aspect, I intend to indicate that "How to Write a Blackwood Article" and "A Predicament" may not solely be two tales in which

“human stupidity is particularly mocked,” as Ecaterina Hantiu interestingly asserts in her study (2010: 29). In fact, I wish to suggest that these short stories may be conclusive hints of Poe’s literary sources of inspiration and of his further engagement with the Hellenic literary spheres. Such approach is indebted to McElrath’s (1970) inquiry on Poe’s prose technique. In his study, this critic meticulously explores the two narratives and the satiric portraits they draw. As he rightly observes, Poe intentionally pursues bizarreries and self-parodies in order to “successfully ridicule the absurd lengths to which contemporary hacks would go to shock the public’s sensibilities” (1970: 38). His arguments are reasonable and convincing; yet, he takes his assertions one step further as he delves into the subject matter of the two works in an effort to indicate a pattern in Poe’s literary techniques. Therefore, he carefully indicates the following literary patterns in Poe: he begins by highlighting the recurrent motifs of horror, intense sensations, metaphysics, and erudition that can also be noticed in “The Premature Burial” (1970: 38-9); he then adds that a “curt” or “snappish” tone can be distinguished in the auguring lines of “A Predicament,” one that aligns with the style in a large number of other tales such as “The Tell-Tale Heart,” to name one (40). McElrath also reconsiders Poe’s repetitive use of “interrogatory statements, expletives, and emotion-packed words such as ‘shrieked’ and ‘screamed’” as well as “mechanical devices such as the dash, exclamation and question marks, and italics” while intriguingly demonstrating the existence of identical cases in “The Black Cat” and “The Tell-Tale Heart” (41). Poe undeniably seeks to emphasize his narrators’ personalities, and I am inclined to agree with McElrath’s claims that a “curt” tone is present throughout his storytelling—readers may observe that ‘inflection’ in “The Black Cat”, for instance when Poe’s narrator describes his horrific crimes. To be sure, Psyche Zenobia bears a unique temperament; as McElrath adds, “rather than explicate her madness, or hyper-rationality, in ‘A Predicament,’ she tends to drive the reader mad” (42).

The above study indeed sets forth some interesting remarks on Poe’s satiric tone. Be that as it may, what particularly draws my attention is McElrath’s claim that “‘How to Write a Blackwood Article’ and ‘A Predicament’ may be viewed as extended commentaries on some of the techniques Poe employed in his own fiction” (38). Beyond doubt, Poe satirizes the material of *The Blackwoods* and he does not wish to mask his criticism. He nevertheless was “in every likelihood a close reader”, as Killis Campbell discloses, and he “borrowed materials from its pages for several of his stories” (1933: 385-6). Kenneth Leroy Daugherty also makes similar remarks as she reminds us of “Poe’s indebtedness to *Blackwood’s*” (1930: 289). In that sense, these two works may indeed demonstrate a philhellenism

in Poe’s mind which has been observed by a number of Poe scholars; it has nonetheless been explored insufficiently, as relevant systematic studies have yet to be undertaken.

## 2. Hellenic Undertones in “How to Write a Blackwood Article”

“How to Write a Blackwood Article” is a considerably humorous narrative which satirizes horror stories typically published in *Blackwood’s Magazine*. The narrator, Signora Psyche Zenobia, introduces herself by claiming that her antagonists call her “Suky Snobbs” (Mabbott 1978: 336). It immediately becomes obvious that Poe stresses the need for promoting emotions in writing up until the very end of a story, usually involving death during the final moments. He does so through the words of Mr. Blackwood, the editor of the *Blackwood Magazine*, who ultimately advises Signora Psyche Zenobia to use different tones of writing or, in his own words, a “heterogeneous” and “judicious mixture, in equal proportions, of all the other tones in the world” (342). After a nuanced reading of relevant criticism, one may observe the ironic tone of these lines. In his classic *Mournful and Never-ending Remembrance*, Kenneth Silverman plainly argues that the author has followed this method himself, hinting that Poe may have committed plagiarism on several occasions (1992: 72).<sup>2</sup> Zenobia is told by her editor to commit suicide in order to record the emotions she would feel, and this shocking suggestion has been considered by Marshall Trieber as Poe’s concealed criticism on female writers (1971: 32). Clearly, though, the story is meant to be sarcastic and, according to Trieber, its humor is based on the *schadenfreude* (34).<sup>3</sup>

When one tries to unveil the mysteriousness of Poe’s writing, his devilishly clever use of allusions to foreign literatures, and his playful incorporation of different languages in his works, they are led to an inevitable feeling of helplessness. That feeling has most certainly puzzled researchers who attempted to delve into the significance of the female protagonist’s name. This appears to have been inspired by an amalgam of Hellenic and Roman language and history. In this regard, we must first and foremost pay close attention to the etymology of the name Zenobia as it offers a clear link to the Hellenic past. There are two

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2. Silverman is among the scholars who openly question the American author’s “independence of thought,” clearly implying cases of plagiarism in Poe when it came to the creation of some of his tales and poems (1992: 72).

3. This German word is in fact translated as “harm-joy,” transporting us to the idea of pleasure derived from the misadventures of others.

potential interpretations of the word based on its compound nature: the first dictates that its meaning is “the life of Zeus” as the name unites the words Zeno (Ζήνο) meaning Zeus and, most likely, the word bios (βίος) meaning life; the second interpretation points towards a similar yet different understanding as the name could mean “the force of Zeus” given the fact that the second part of the compound word—bia— could actually be the ancient Greek word βία meaning force or violence. That Hellenic allusion should not surprise readers of Poe as the author has resorted to Greece for inspiration in many instances in other works of his. Relatedly, we should reconsider his recurrent use of the word “Psyche”, this time as a name for his protagonist<sup>4</sup>, as it is a direct reference to the Hellenic ψυχή meaning “soul.” Zenobia’s nickname is undeniable proof of the author’s exploration of Hellenic language and history and Poe does not hide this; he clarifies that “Suky is but a vulgar corruption of Psyche, which is good Greek, and means ‘the soul’ (that’s me, I’m *all* soul)” (Mabbott 1978: 336). In this regard, recent studies have explored a number of connections between Poe’s narrative and foreign literatures. The links between his *how-to satire*, Cervantes and Marryat have been indicated by Susan and Stuart Levine’s inquiry (1986). After all, Poe quotes some of Cervantes’s most famous lines and he admits it right away. A variety of older studies, such as Gustav Gruener’s (1904) and Carl F. Schreiber’s (1930), have also delved into the German influence which is present in the tale by connecting it to the author’s knowledge of German. Be that as it may, and despite the fact that allusions to Hellenic history and language appear to be unmistakable, the Hellenic aspect of the tale remains insufficiently explored to date, as I formerly mentioned.

Even though Poe satirically stresses the importance of Spanish, Italian, French, and German in a Blackwood article, he seems to further underline the importance of Hellenic language and literature. He does that through his narrator’s following words:

In Greek we must have some thing [sic] pretty—from Demosthenes, for example. [...] In a Blackwood article *nothing makes so fine a show as your Greek*. [...] Only observe, madam, the astute look of that Epsilon! That Phi ought certainly to be a bishop! Was ever there a smarter fellow than that Omicron? Just twig that Tau! In short, *there is nothing like Greek for a genuine sensation-paper* (Mabbott 1978: 346; italics mine).

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4. Poe also alludes to the Hellenic *psyche* in a number of other tales and poems, including “To Helen” and “Ulalume”.

Poe’s ironic tone is once again unmistakable; yet, even in irony, he repeatedly highlights the gravity of a Hellenic presence in a manuscript. His attempt goes even further by inaccurately quoting Menander (c. 342/41 – c. 290 BC), the ancient Greek dramatist, while plainly using Hellenic characters—“*Ἀνερ ο φευων και παλιν μαχήσεται*” [sic] (Mabbott 1978: 308). The Bostonian writer was obviously able to read Greek texts. However, his efforts to write in Greek were, in truth, ineffective. In his classic edition of the tale, Mabbott makes clear references to Poe’s typographic mistakes in various notes. To that end, I draw on Burton Pollin’s essay on Poe’s engagement with Greece which asserts that “there are many discussions of Poe’s misconceptions about the Greek quantitative and the English stress systems of poetical metres, which indicate his meager grasp of Greek metrics and of the proper pronunciation of the language” (2001: 72). Pollin reconsiders “instances of his shaky sense of Greek spelling and even of the letters” and, after examining several cases of mistakes found in Poe’s manuscripts, he concludes that the American author “was obviously confused” (72-3). Hence, one can safely assume that, despite Poe’s incontestable efforts to impress readers and critics with his Greek, his experiments were fruitless. Be that as it may, his repetitive demonstrations of his profound knowledge in the field justify John Sanidopoulos’s claims (2014) of a noticeable philhellenism in his storytelling.

Upon taking a closer look at all the references to foreign literatures in “How to Write a Blackwood Article”, I also observe that brief references to Spanish (Miguel de Cervantes), Italian (Ariosto), German (Schiller), or French sources which come to contrast the author’s extensive use of Hellenic allusions that can be encountered throughout his narrative. In that sense, we should observe the narrator’s recount of “the Ionic and Eleatic schools – of Archytas, Gorgias, and Alcmaeon” (Mabbott 1978: 342) as we also encounter an allusion to the river Alpheus, the longest river in the Peloponnese, along with a direct reference to the three Muses of ancient Greece – “Melete, Mneme, Aoede” (343). We may thus infer that the author’s concept of a remarkable paper is dominated by an evident Hellenism.

### **3. The Hellenic god of Time in Poe’s “A Predicament”**

The above story’s companion piece, “A Predicament”, has undergone severe criticism over the past decades. Most of the negative remarks over the past few years focus on the narrative’s structure and content. In 2000, Thomas

Disch characterized the story as truly awful, not hesitating to mention the words “moronic parody” upon his analysis (48). A few years later, Hantiu argued that “if the tale were conceived as a moronic piece of nonsense, Poe certainly did it on purpose” (2010: 31). According to this scholar, Poe’s aim was to destroy logical thinking and to satirize the successful journalists of his time (31). Stephanie Sommerfeld’s study focuses on the tale’s connection to the sublime, including it in “the large number of Poe’s tales that dramatize the failure of self-aggrandizing sublimity *a la* Edmund Burke and Immanuel Kant” (2012: 33).

Poe employs Psyche Zenobia once again, who now appears to be walking her dog in a city accompanied by her servant named Pompey. She is soon led to a large Gothic cathedral and, while standing on Pompey’s shoulders, she places her head in a small opening which is located inside an enormous clock, as she quickly realizes. While observing the city, she soon becomes aware of the fact that the knifelike minute hand has begun to touch her neck. Unable to escape, she is ultimately decapitated. During her decapitation, her eyes fall to the street below her and, as the story unfolds, she surprisingly seems to be happier rather than sad or horrified. She then encourages the reader to wonder if her soul is, in fact, her headless body or the decapitated head itself. In spite of all that pain and anguish, she continues narrating even though she is headless. Startled, Pompey flees the place, and the narrative is concluded when Zenobia sees that a rat has eaten her dog.

Beyond doubt, the racial implications in the tale are strong and they have not escaped the attention of Poe scholars. Gerald Kennedy, for instance, urges us to notice how “Poe clearly thinks it’s very funny that Psyche Zenobia’s black servant Pompey is only three feet tall, about seventy years old and without a neck” (2001: 116). He also makes note of Poe’s playful tone as he intentionally employs a main protagonist who is a woman, particularly “a white woman [who] works”. Indeed, as Kennedy argues, “in the early 1840s, Poe’s white-black doublings and crossings intensify their ambiguous destabilizations of the master-slave relation” (116). Notwithstanding the importance of this theme, readers should notice the large number of evident Hellenic references in the text which attest to the author’s indisputable inclination to foreign literatures. In this regard, Sommerfeld’s study revisits the tale by contending that Psyche Zenobia intends to reach the sublime through death and dismemberment (2012: 37). This scholar also argues that the American author refuses to provide “a unity of mind (head) and matter (body)” claiming that “Poe dramatizes that the subject deliberately and artificially summons the fear of death to experience his or her own apotheosis



and is only rewarded with annihilation" (37-8). Sommerfeld also points out that this story is closely connected to Post-Kantian Sublimity; yet she does add the following remark: "The fact that the hands of time are made of steel makes them betray the imprint of the industrial age, which illustrates that—contrary to Emerson's trivialization of technological advancements—the effects of industrial process potentially do interfere with natural sublimity and also offer a new, technological version of the sublime" (47). Her arguments are both convincing and accurate and we must note that she is among the few scholars who explore Poe's engagement with *time*—after all, it is important to bear in mind that Psyche Zenobia is decapitated by an enormous clock.

My reading of "A Predicament" and my focus on the dominant presence of *time* is owed to its auguring title ("The Scythe of Time"). Literary critics should notice the connection between that heading and the plot itself; the American author playfully employs *time* by portraying a clock and its dreadful passing in a literal manner. Quite surprisingly, research has not observed a probable connection between "A Predicament" and Hellenic mythology. Upon his description of the manner in which ancient Greeks measured time, Professor Christos Tsamis (2009) directly refers to Χρόνος [Time], one of the secondary deities in Hellenic mythology. *Chronos*—often mistaken by scholars as the Hellenic god Κρόνος [Cronus]—was *time* in Hellenic thought. We must make a clear distinction between Χρόνος, the Greek god of time, and Cronus, Zeus's father, as the similarity of the two names has caused a confusion among the Greeks that has lasted for over two thousand years. After a nuanced examination of *The Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, I was able to ascertain that this Hellenic god was also identified as the Hellenistic deity known as Αἰών [Aion] (Van der Horst 1999: 367). Nevertheless, as Doro Levi adds, the notion of *time* represented by Aion is endless and absolute. In the case of *Chronos*, a later personification of time, the concept is personified as a perfect unity of three: the past, the present, and the future (1944: 274). Tsamis goes as far as to describe *Chronos* in the eyes of the Greeks: "Απεικονίζεται δε φέρων δρεπάνι, με το οποίο θερίζει τις ζωές τερματίζοντας την ίδια την ροή του γι' αυτές. Ακόμα και σήμερα διατηρείται ο συμβολισμός με τον δρεπανοφόρο θάνατο. Είναι άμεσα συνυφασμένος με την εξέλιξη του μικρόκοσμου, του μεσόκοσμου, του μακρόκοσμου, του σύμπαντος" (2009).<sup>5</sup>

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5. Translated: "He is depicted bearing a *scythe*, reaping people's lives while pausing his own flow for that purpose. Even today he is thought as the scythe-bearing death. He is intrinsically linked with the evolution of the microcosm, mesocosm, macrocosm and of the universe itself". (My own translation)

Whilst paying close attention to the similarities between Poe's plot and the role of *Chronos* in Hellenic antiquity, one may infer that Poe might have had the Hellenic god in mind while composing his tale. *Chronos*'s use of his scythe to harvest lives inevitably reminds us of Zenobia's dreadful death by a clock's sharp hand. In fact, the narrator's own words may also hint this connection: during the final moments of her tragic death, he had "now discovered the literal import of that classical phrase [Scythe of Time]" (Mabbott 1978: 354).

Ultimately, I would like to stress Poe's choice to place Psyche Zenobia on top of a tower right before her eerie death as it might conceal a connection to Hellenic mythology. The American author portrays his protagonist climbing a staircase that "would never have an end" (1978: 349) and that remark led me to the legend of the mythological Psyche and her journey to the Underworld. According to Lucia Impelluso (2008), Psyche was a woman renowned for her supernatural beauty, a fact which eventually enraged Venus, the goddess of love, beauty and desire. Venus soon decided to punish her with the help of Cupid. However, as the myth has it, the ancient god of love ultimately fell in love with her and concealed Psyche in his palace, without ever revealing his true identity to her, as Impelluso vividly describes (2008: 292). Curious as Psyche is portrayed, she attempted to uncover the secret by visiting Cupid in the middle of a night, only to enrage the god who then disappeared. In her desperate attempts to find Cupid, she ended up at Venus's palace once again; the latter subjected her to several trials. One of these, as Impelluso reminds us, was "to descend to the infernal regions and deliver to Proserpina an urn into which the goddess of the netherworld should put a little of her beauty" (306). In order to achieve that, "Psyche climbed a tall tower and threw herself into the void, intending to end her life and thus reach the kingdom of the dead as quickly as possible" (306). It is thus intriguing that Poe chose to place his own Psyche on a tall tower of a Gothic cathedral right before her death. Both homonymous protagonists perish on a tall tower ultimately passing from the world of the living to the world of the dead on their pursuit of the sublime. Such a connection may become even more certain if one goes back to Sommerfeld's formerly mentioned assertion regarding Poe and transcendence (2012: 37). In that sense, even though Christian Drost suggests that "Poe's description of the Signora was certainly influenced by the image of women as projected by the contemporary magazines, in particular by *Godey's*" (2006: 242), I argue that the Bostonian author may have had the mythological Psyche in mind while composing his chilling narrative.

#### 4. The Reasons behind Poe's Philhellenism

Poe routinely lied about having set foot on the land of the Hellenes; to stress that fact, I will draw on Jeffrey Meyers's careful research on Poe's legacy in which he openly argues that Poe was a liar whenever he advertised that he had been to Greece (2000: 267). Even though Poe rarely admitted his oversights, he appears to have admitted his exaggerations in this regard. Timothy P. Jones's recollections (qtd. In Thomas Dwight and David K. Jackson 1987: 114-5) on his friendship with Poe during the period when they both joined the army a few years after the latter left his studies prove the above. Jones perceptibly mentions the following:

On the morning of the 6th [19th] of March [February], when Poe was ready to leave West Point, we were in our room together, and he told me I was one of the few true friends he had ever known, and as we talked the tears rolled down his cheeks... He told me much of his past life, one part of which he said he had confided to no other living soul. This was that while it was generally believed that he had gone to Greece in 1827 to offer his services to assist in putting down the Turkish oppressors, he had done no such thing, that about as near Europe as he ever got was Fort Independence, Boston Harbor, where he enlisted, and was assigned to Battery H, First Artillery, which was afterward transferred to Fortress Monroe, Va. Poe told me that for nearly two years he let his kindred and friends believe that he was fighting with the Greeks, but all the while he was wearing the [page 115:] uniform of Uncle Sam's soldiers, and leading a sober and moral life (1987: 114-5)

Poe's literary idol, Byron, a major philhellene, may be the reason behind this inclination towards the Hellenic past in the American author's storytelling. Hoffman does not omit to examine "how very like Byron is Poe" (1972: 28), and Matthew Goodman also contends that the author had been enthusiastic for Byron while carefully trying to compose verses (2008: 150). Silverman adds that "Edgar created this portrait of the artist largely from conventions of romantic pessimism, especially in the works of Byron. Widely printed and reprinted in America, Byron's poems inspired many young American poets to portray themselves as similarly moody, lonely victims of early blight and later world-weariness" (1992: 41). He continues by explaining the following: "How deeply the Byron image impressed Edgar is apparent in his six-mile swim on the James River, emulating Byron's celebrated swim of the Hellespont, and the stories in Richmond that he had joined the Greeks, as Byron had, in their quest for independence" (41).

## 5. Conclusions

The aim of this note has been to revisit two of Poe's most renowned works focusing on their apparent Hellenic references due to the fact that a systematic examination of this aspect has yet to be undertaken. Its main aspiration is to indicate promising evidence of connections between Poe's selected works and Greece, and to offer additional links between Poe and the Greek mythology in "A Predicament". Having revisited relevant criticism, we were able to verify that Poe demonstrates an enthusiasm for a number of foreign languages and literatures. However, we must note that his rather extensive previously discussed use of Hellenic paradigms and notions, his attempts to write in ancient Greek (unsuccessful though they have been), or even the name Psyche Zenobia itself, may justify my argument that Poe's affection for the Hellenes has not been explored by Poe scholars at a sufficient level. My study also demonstrates the additional connection between "A Predicament" and Chronos as the story's initial title and the dramatic manner in which Zenobia loses her life by a minute hand both lead us to the conclusion that Poe may have been inspired by Hellenic mythology while composing his tale. This affection for the Hellenic literary spheres may be confirmed by the fact that Poe routinely lied about having set foot on the land of the Hellenes. Added to that, his unquestionable eagerness to follow Byron's steps hint a profound respect for the Hellenes which has affected his storytelling through Hellenic allusions and an overall philhellenic undertone.

Having said that, I must acknowledge that the extent of the present essay cannot hope to undertake a systematic approach to the proposed topic. Any ambition to formally explain Poe's Hellenic allusions in these intertwined works or even their reception from the Hellenic audience would require more extensive research. Future studies should further delve into the semantics of Psyche in Poe while examining additional connections between his works and the Hellenic realm. Scholars should also re-examine other works, such as "To Helen," where the Hellenic Psyche is present in an effort to fully comprehend its significance for Poe's reasoning.

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