

“Such as might have arisen only out of hell”: A Note on Poe’s Hellenic Motifs in “The Black Cat”¹

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Abstract. Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Black Cat” has received a great deal of scholarly attention over the years from a variety of perspectives, not least the domestic and symbolic presence of Pluto in the story. Kent Ljungquist (1980) saw Poe’s narrative in terms of classical literary tradition, specifically the notion of the *daemonic*, yet confined his study to Pluto’s demonic features, arguing that the cat may be an infernal spirit sent to castigate the narrator. Other studies, such as Clark Moreland and Karime Rodriguez (2015), have reached similar conclusions. However, there is a surprising absence in the literature of any discussion of Poe’s decision to name the ‘phantasm’ of his narrative after the Hellenic god of the Underworld. The present paper seeks to address this, and proposes that Poe’s Pluto may not simply function as a demonic spirit, but rather as the Pluto of Hellenic mythology himself.

Keywords: Poe; Greek mythology; Hades; Greek motifs; intertextuality.

[es] “Such as might have arisen only out of hell”: Un comentario sobre los elementos helénicos en “The Black Cat” de Poe

Resumen. “The Black Cat” de Edgar Allan Poe ha recibido la atención académica a lo largo de los años desde una variedad de perspectivas, entre otras la presencia doméstica y simbólica de Plutón en la historia. Kent Ljungquist (1980) vio la narrativa de Poe en términos de la tradición literaria clásica, específicamente la noción de lo demoníaco, pero limitó su estudio a las características demoníacas de Plutón, argumentando que el gato puede ser un espíritu infernal enviado para castigar al narrador. Otros estudios, como el de Clark Moreland y Karime Rodriguez (2015), han llegado a conclusiones similares. Sin embargo, en estudios relevantes hay una ausencia de cualquier discusión sobre la decisión de Poe de nombrar el “fantasma” de su narración en honor al dios helénico del inframundo. El presente estudio trata de examinar este aspecto y propone que Plutón de Poe no es solo un espíritu demoníaco, sino más bien el mismo Plutón de la mitología helénica.

Palabras clave: Poe; Mitología griega; Infierno; Motivos helénicos; intertextualidad.

Contents. 1. Introduction. 2. Hellenic Undertones in “The Black Cat”. 3. Conclusions.

¹ The principal idea of the article, the presence of Hellenic motifs in Poe’s “The Black Cat”, along with the analysis and the conclusions drawn were developed by Dimitrios Tsokanos. The Spanish version of the abstract, the introduction of the present article along with the investigation on the story’s final image in the main body of the text have been developed by Dr. José R. Ibáñez.

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1. Introduction

Among Edgar Allan Poe’s stories, “The Black Cat” can be counted as one of the most horrifying and enigmatic. The reader, bewildered and stupefied, is presented with the written confession of an unrepentant psychotic narrator who refers to the killing of his wife as “a series of mere household events” while awaiting execution in his cell. Such a lack of repentance has led reviewers to compare the protagonist to Montresor, the narrator of “The Cask of Amontillado”. After all, his words — “Here at least, then, my labor has not been in vain” (Poe 1987: 857) — only demonstrate that he shows not an iota of remorse when walling up his victim as an act of revenge. Poe employs a cruel narrator here once again, just like in the case of “The Tell-Tale Heart” where the protagonist kills an old man and then proudly dismembers his body.

First published in 1843 in an edition of *The Saturday Evening Post*, “The Black Cat” has been read as part of the author’s “psychological study of domestic violence and guilt, with supernatural overtones” (Silverman 1992: 205). The story relates a series of domestic events through the eyes of an unnamed narrator, whose psychological deterioration seems to progress gradually, with hints at its inevitability. Nonetheless, the story’s emphasis on the role of Pluto, the black cat, is a significant element, as well as a cryptic one. One of the earliest reviewers of the tale, Marie Bonaparte (1882-1962), soon established a relationship between the psychologically unstable narrator and Poe himself. For example, Bonaparte saw the narrator as an autobiographical projection of Poe (1950: 836). More recently, critical analyses have examined the tale through a direct consideration of its social context. As Daniel Hoffman claims, “The Black Cat” is first and foremost “a story of a dysfunctional marriage” (qtd. in Peeples 1998: 43). In his study, Peeples examines in detail the recurring motif of death, which is reduced in the story into the level of burlesque, and compares it to other narratives such as “Ligeia”, “Berenice”, and “Loss of Breath”.

Meanwhile, domestic violence is unquestionably one of the story’s main themes. In this regard, William Crisman saw the cat as “a surrogate for the [narrator’s] wife” (1984: 87-90). On similar lines, Peeples noted that the “popularity of the ‘cool criminal’ figure” was actually written “to appeal to popular tastes, and some elements that seem bizarre or grotesque to modern readers were in fact conventional” (1998: 77), whereas Ed Piacentino argued that “the narrator’s motive for murdering his wife seems to be hidden in his subconscious, and, therefore, the crime was not premeditated” (1998: 153). Other reviewers have read the story as an example of social critique, one in which “Poe’s emphasis on murder, revenge, mutilation, and torture patently mirrors a deep-seated national disposition” (Kennedy 2001: 5). In the same vein, Peeples notes that David S. Reynolds and T. J. Matheson read the tale in terms of “contemporary temperance literature”, but also argued that Poe challenged the way writers who were associated with the temperance movement often trivialized the problem of alcoholism (1998: 78). The issues of alcohol abuse and the dangers of insobriety have also been discussed by Stephen Rachman, and the protagonist’s

psychopathy and criminality have been pointed out in recent studies, such as that of Hester and Segir (Rachman 2014: 1-19; Hester and Segir 2014: 175-193).

Having mentioned the different angles through which the story has been analyzed, it is noteworthy to mention that, save for some noteworthy exceptions⁴ little attention has been paid to a strain that we consider of utmost importance: the Hellenic elements that can be found in it. The purpose of this essay is to therefore draw a comparison between “The Black Cat” and Hellenic mythology, exploring Poe’s story from a Hellenic perspective that has been somewhat overlooked in Poe studies and one which has been merely referred to as a footnote in Mabbott’s 1978 seminal edition of the tale. More specifically, it will be argued that the narrative can indeed be seen directly in terms of the classical tradition. Such an intertextual assessment will propose that Poe’s cat may not be a mere ghost, but a chthonic deity, the Hellenic god of the Underworld. This note will also be an attempt to demonstrate that Poe’s frequently reprinted story indicates his own perception of the *daemonic* precisely as it is found in Hellenic thought.

2. Hellenic Undertones in “The Black Cat”

In “The Black Cat”, Poe presents his protagonist as a character who initially loves animals, living in a house with his wife and a variety of pets, including a vigorous black cat named Pluto. However, dipsomania soon presents the narrator with a notable predicament, one which will lead to his fits of rage and violence against the animal, and eventually against his wife. In one of these episodes—the narrator describes it as “one night, returning home, much intoxicated, from one of my haunts about town” (Poe 1987: 851)—his mental state deteriorates to the stage that he gouges one of the cat’s eyes out using a penknife. As he confesses, he was under the influence of “the spirit of PERVESENESS”. Later on, he kills the cat without any clear or obvious provocation. In fact, as Heidi Hanrahan (2012: 40) affirms, the story contains some of the most remarkable comments about a cat in Poe’s storytelling:

One morning, in cold blood, I slipped a noose about its neck and hung it to the limb of a tree;—hung it with the tears streaming from my eyes, and with the bitterest remorse at my heart;—hung it because I knew that it had loved me, and because I felt it had given me no reason of offense;—hung it because I knew that in doing so I was committing a sin — a deadly sin that would so jeopardize my immortal soul as to place it — if such a thing were possible — even beyond the reach of the infinite mercy of the Most Merciful and Most Terrible God (Poe 1978: 852).

Guilt and remorse seem to be ubiquitous sentiments haunting the narrator’s thoughts day and night; and the unsuspected event of his house destroyed by the fire one night, plus his constant thoughts of regret as to his evil deed, seem to confirm the continued presence of a sin for which atonement is necessary. Nevertheless, he soon adopts a second cat. As he notices, the animal seems to bear numerous similarities with Pluto, and this appears to alarm him. To the reader’s surprise, he states that this newly adopted cat was “like Pluto, it also had been deprived of one of its eyes” (Poe 1978:

⁴ See, for instance, Garcia Jurado et al. (2013) and González-Rivas Fernández (2013).

855). The protagonist's aversion of the second cat, though, is soon made evident and his feelings towards it consistently go beyond the limits of dislike, in that the cat in fact frightens him on several occasions. The plot then turns to the narrator's visit to the cellar accompanied by his wife. The narrator stumbles against the cat and fears to fall headlong. In a fit of madness, the narrator uplifts the cat and attempts to slay it with an axe. His efforts are interrupted by his wife, who in doing so receives the blow. As Poe's narrator graphically reveals, "goaded, by the interference, into a rage more than demoniacal, I withdrew my arm from her grasp and buried the axe in her brain. She fell dead upon the spot, without a groan" (Poe 1978: 856). In order to conceal his crime, he decides to entomb his wife's body behind one of the cellar walls. "I had walled up the monster within the tomb", are his concluding words, calmly indicating the crucial oversight that had ultimately revealed his criminal act (Poe 1978: 858).

The focus here on Poe's black cat is not unique; Heidi Hanrahan was among the first to consider Pluto's clearest, or at least most apparent, role in the tale: that of a domestic animal. As she pointed out, "'The Black Cat' is Poe's response to his contemporaries' celebration of domesticity" (2012: 53). Nevertheless, her study was limited to this particular aspect of the tale, and did not explore other interpretations that had been voiced at the time with respect to Pluto's function in the short story. Susan Amper in fact proposed that the whole incident involving the cat and the narrator's wife is a fabrication, indicating that he is entirely unreliable. In her intriguing reading she claims that "obviously the man is lying. Such would be the reaction of any adult in real life hearing the man's self-serving story", leading her to the assumption that "his tale is a fabrication, by which he seeks to conceal the true nature of his crime, exactly as he sought in walling up his wife's body to conceal the fact of the crime" (1992: 475). Indeed, Amper's alluring interpretation should stand out as one of the most plausible explanations of the narrative. However, one must also keep in mind James Gargano's assertion that the black cat "must be understood not realistically but symbolically"—either as a symbol of the narrator's psychological issues, or even of incarcerated black bodies (1960: 174).

Poe's story merges gothic with the supernatural and morality with remorse; thus, it inevitably raises questions as to his decision to name the "phantasm" of the tale after the ancient Greek god of the Underworld. The fact that Pluto shares his name with the god of Hades has been noted in various editions of Poe's works, including those of Thomas Ollive Mabbott, G. Thompson, and even a recent Spanish translation by Santoyo and Broncano in 2007; yet there has been no extensive study looking at the potential connection between Poe's story and Hellenic mythology. The narrator's violent spirit, his moral degradation, and his infrequent feelings of contrition indicate an internal struggle, a battle of good versus evil. A reading of the story as an antiphon to what Kennedy calls "the recrudescence of our national internal flaw" further clarifies Poe's critical engagement with the uses of the *daemonic* (2001: 5).

This reading of "The Black Cat" is indebted to Kent Ljungquist, whose study sets out a connection with the *daemonic* as in classical tradition that runs through a number of Poe's stories, among them "The Black Cat". Particularly captivating is his description of "the daemonic qualities of Pluto" to underline how the narrator's "vitality steadily diminishes, and by incremental turns, such power is absorbed by the cat" (1980: 31-39). Ljungquist considers the spiritual discourses surrounding the story, specifically focusing on Poe's engagement with the topic of *daemonology*, and

concludes that “‘The Black Cat’ can be approached instructively as a study of its narrator’s struggle with daemonic force, symbolized by the cat itself”. As he also shows, Poe’s exposure to the *daemonic* was through a number of sources: “Platonic philosophy, La Motte Fouque’s *Undine*, Near-Eastern lore, the poetry of the British Romantics, the works of Christoph Martin Wieland, the Gnostic philosophers, and the so-called ‘speculative mythologists’” (1980: 31). Ljungquist’s arguments are both compelling and convincing. That said, the present study proposes that Pluto is not simply presented as a demonic spirit, but rather as the homonymous Hellenic god of the Underworld himself.

Critics have not explored this line of investigation as yet, with the notable exception of Ljungquist. Nevertheless, Clark Moreland and Karime Rodriguez demonstrate that the narrator “believes an innocent cat is actually a demon sent to torture him” (2015: 204). Robert Shulman appears to support the idea of the demonic figure when he claims that “the evil the narrator personifies in the black cat may be metaphysical and is certainly personal.” (1972: 256). In the same study, he added that “by the end of the story, we are made to realize that, in cutting out the eye of the black demon, the narrator is also irrationally slashing and seeking to destroy his own demons, his own unacknowledged impulses and affinity with evil” (1972: 256). He explains that the black cat could in fact symbolize the incarnation of a nightmare, one from which the narrator is unable to escape. A number of other scholarly responses to the story during the twentieth century reflect similar interpretations to those of Ljungquist, Moreland, Rodriguez and Shulman.

In emphasizing Pluto’s identity as the Hellenic god, it is important to draw on Peeples’s seminal *Edgar Allan Poe Revisited*, which discusses the theme of “Loss of Breath” that is present in “The Black Cat” and in several other tales (1998: 43). Based on such assertions, we can argue that this motif should be interpreted as the death experience itself. Peeples does not hesitate in going a step further, portraying this experience as correlating closely to the narrator’s soul. In other words, Poe’s exploration of the *daemonic* could serve to signify annihilation and eternal damnation, both physical and spiritual, by a demonic spirit or even by death. It is perhaps for this reason that Richard Badenhause raises the issue of a “condemned narrator” in his analysis of the tale (1992: 488). In the same vein, Kennedy also notes the narrator’s logic, claiming that “better a self grandiosely damned to eternal abuse and punishment, goes this male logic, than the experience of real pain, the experience of loss inseparable from subjectivity” (2001: 120-121). Taking into account Peeples’s and Kennedy’s studies, it thus follows that Poe may have been interested in portraying the eternal battle between heaven and hell and the narrator’s metamorphosis into a soulless, unmerciful creature whose condemnation to an afterlife in the Underworld is inevitable. Indeed, Kennedy appears to have reached such a conclusion since, as he affirms, the “degradation of soul” is one of Poe’s hidden messages; and he clearly portrays this conflict when explaining that “Poe transforms this particular domestic ‘angel’ into an uncomplaining victim and then, finally, into a corpse. The Angel in the house becomes the Dead Wife in the basement” (2001: 134). Based on the above, one may well argue that Poe’s female protagonist and Pluto in fact stand for heaven and hell respectively. Interestingly, as Stephen Rachman reminds us, the images of heaven and hell are found not only in “The Black Cat,” but also in many others, including “Al Aaraaf” and “Eureka” (2014: 1-19).

Following this line of approach, we are reminded of Lucia Impelluso's research on the Hellenic and Roman traditions which states that "Pluto was assigned the world of the dead. The Greek name of this god is Hades, which means 'the invisible,' for the ancients named him very rarely, believing that the god flew into a rage by simply hearing his name" (2008: 448). John Lempriere clarifies that Pluto was known as "Ades" or "Hades" and he was "the god of hell among the Greeks" (1812: 44). Above all, Impelluso presents Pluto as a demon who was identified with indignation, violence, and rage. Consequently, her portrayal bears out the conclusions of various studies on Poe's Pluto and its role in the narrative — after all, the narrator's erupting rage mostly occurs at the mere sight of the black cat. To be sure, one must not confuse Pluto, the king of the Underworld, with Thanatos, the Hellenic god that personified death in the eyes of the Greeks. As Tsaktsira and Baharaki specify, Thanatos was Death himself and he is often confused or identified with several other demons of death (2006: 122). Be that as it may, the narrator's own words may reveal that Poe's Pluto might indeed signify a spirit which is more than a mere demon—Poe uses the phrase "Goaded by the interference into a rage *more than demoniacal*" (emphasis added).

Our attention now falls naturally on various interpretations relating to the alleged reincarnation of the narrator's first cat, in that reincarnation has traditionally been connected with divinity. Several scholars have claimed that Pluto returns from the world of the dead, and that the narrator's second cat is in fact a ghost. Hence, Peeples affirms that "the black cat that replaces Pluto is certainly a kind of doppelganger" (1998: 97). Meanwhile, Ljungquist affirms that the narrator's second cat could be Pluto himself and he also argues that "the cat is a daemon of fate whose strategic reappearances enforce a form of psychological punishment" (1980: 37). The above claims are reasonable, especially bearing in mind Susan Amper's compelling argument that "there are not two black cats; there is only Pluto: *the* black cat" (1992: 482). In this regard, Amper focuses on Poe's choice of the title "The Black Cat" rather than "The Black *Cats*", seeing in this a convincing argument for the claim that Pluto did not actually die, in contrast with what the story in fact describes. Thus, the cat can be perceived as a demon whose powers are beyond the natural world, destined to punish the narrator, similarly to the way in which the ancient Greek god punished sinners in Hellenic mythology. The degradation of the narrator's soul appears to be irreversible, and it is quite possible that Pluto's strategic reappearance is a manifestation of the ancient Greek god's power to punish constantly, disguised as a black cat. Similarly, as Impelluso notes with reference to the Hellenic tradition, "no one who enters his kingdom can hope to leave it, save for rare exceptions that the gods themselves instituted" (2008: 448).

Critics of Poe's work have also made note of the deeper sarcasm in the shocking final scene. When the narrator taps with such confidence on the cellar walls behind which the woman has been concealed, the reader is stunned by a sudden answer from the grave. Poe vividly describes the bizarre occurrence as "a cry, at first muffled and broken, like the sobbing of a child, and then quickly swelling into one long, loud, and continuous scream, utterly anomalous and inhuman" (Mabbott 1978: 859). Hanrahan's analysis of this incident led to her inference that "the second cat's screeching reveals the limitations and weaknesses of an elaborate domestic system set up to control evil impulses" (2012: 53). This scene portrays the dynamism of the black cat's role in the tale, and also creates the perception that punishment is inevitable.

Just as with the god of Hades, even though the cat may be invisible until the concluding scene of the story, the punishment which it demands is inescapable. Moreover, this is in keeping with Impelluso's description of the ancient Greek tradition, in which she lays particular stress on the inevitability of the punishment at the hand of Pluto.

In addition to the above, it is worth focusing on one of the story's final images, and perhaps the most eloquent one. With the protagonist's hideous crime exposed, the narrator mentions "a wailing shriek, half of horror half of triumph, such as might have arisen only out of hell" which accompanies the revelation of the woman's corpse and the cat on her head (Mabbott 1978: 859). A further parallelism between this scene and Hellenic antiquity can be perceived here if one considers the scene in light of *A Classical Manual*, in which it is stated that the Hellenic god was a frightening figure to the world of the living (Anonymous 1833: 34). In fact, the Greeks were even reluctant to swear using his name, and made sacrifices in his honor, these being acts of bloodshed. As the *Manual* describes, such sacrifices were "propitiated by with blood, various animals, and sometimes even human victims"; they "were either black heifers or sheep, and the hair from the forehead of the victim" (1833: 34-35). Peter Bolt not only confirms the above, but also alludes to the fact that black pigs were traditionally used as an offering to Pluto (2003: 152). For his part, Arthur Fairbanks argues that when it came to the chthonic deities *Zeus chthonios* and *Ge chthonia*—Pluto was also among the principal chthonic gods of the Underworld—"there was a direction to sacrifice yearly black offerings" (1900: 246). These observations come to agree with comments in Lia Tsaktsira's and Doukeni Baharaki's edition of a chapter dealing with the worship of Hades and his perception by the ancient Greeks (Tsaktsira and Baharaki 2005: 271-272). As they note, "the cult of Hades in antiquity was relatively limited and few temples were dedicated to this dark god. When they made sacrifices to him all the animals that were sacrificed and all the utensils had to be black" [our translation] (271-272). Bearing this latter idea in mind, it seems probable that Poe's choice to place a remarkably black cat in his tale, characterizing it as "entirely black, and sagacious to an astonishing degree", was no mere coincidence (Mabbott 1978: 850). The color was of great significance for Hades, and Poe was perhaps aware of this, not least because the *Classical Manual* was published ten years before "The Black Cat".

The image of the black cat on top of the wife's head, this latter described with a "red extended mouth and solitary eye of fire", is undoubtedly Poe's way of showing that the cat had been feeding on the entombed corpse as a means of its own survival (Poe 1978: 859). In this regard, it seems intriguing to note that the vision of the cat on top of the head of the corpse could be seen in terms of an image of Hades who, as the ruler of the underground realm, might appear on top of those no longer alive upon their passing to the Underworld; the ancient Greek god fed upon these corpses in order to prolong his reign. The similarities are even more obvious if we bear in mind that Poe's cat and its retribution could not have survived the burial had it not fed on the corpse. Furthermore, we cannot ignore artistic representations of the tale, which over the course of time have tended to illustrate Pluto on top of the dead wife's head—this upright position being chosen by Victorian artist Aubrey Beardsley in his illustration to Poe's 1895 edition of "The Black Cat". Hades is the chief of the Underworld in Hellenic mythology, and according to Tsaktsira and Baharaki, "[t]he ancient Greeks depicted Hades in a strict form, usually seated in his throne" [our

translation] (2005: 272). What draws our attention in particular, though, is their subsequent comment: “He was holding a scepter and the keys of the Underworld and the head wearing the *kinei*, a special helmet that had been given to him by the Cyclopes during the Titanomachy; it ultimately gave him the ability to become invisible” [our translation] (2005: 272). It is as if Poe had access to the ancient myth of Hades before he had wrought out the events of his narrative. His final depiction of the cat, standing on top of the wife’s head, might actually signify that his own Pluto represents the *κυνέη* [“helmet”] itself, making the corpse invisible until its “crown” is removed. Quite remarkably, no scholarly analysis of the story has thus far focused on this probable allusion, despite *invisibility* being among the main themes of the work.

3. Conclusions

It is no secret that Poe had been introduced to the Greek language and the works of Homer and other classics early in life, prior to his teens. John Sanidopoulos underlined the Hellenic influence on the author’s life in recalling that “in 1822 he entered the University of Charlottesville where he studied Greek” (2014). Dwight Thomas and David Jackson have also looked into Poe’s enrollment in the University of Virginia at Charlottesville in February 1826 (1987: 68). As their detailed report specifies, Poe paid sixty dollars “for attendance on two professors, George Long, School of Ancient Languages (Greek and Latin), and George Blaettermann, School of Modern Languages (French, German, Italian, and Spanish)” (1987: 68). Richard Benton not only confirms the above, but adds that Poe later continued his Hellenic studies by reading Plato’s masterpieces (1967: 293-297). His affection for ancient Greece has also been noted by Jeffrey Myers, who asserts that the American author regularly lied about having travelled to the land of the Hellenes (Myers 2000: 267). Above all, Poe considered himself a competent Greek speaker, somewhat unjustifiably so, according to Burton R. Pollin (2001: 71-73). Based on this, Sanidopoulos did not hesitate to conclude that his philhellenism is evident.

Bearing in mind Poe’s knowledge of classical lore, we might recall past claims of plagiarism in a number of his works. Poe was notorious for passing off original material as his own, such as text taken from Isaac Disraeli’s *Curiosities of Literature*, and in fact several prominent Poe scholars have shown how Poe borrowed notions and ideas from classical literature, ultimately presenting them as his own. Kenneth Silverman, for instance, openly questions the American author’s “independence of thought” in an exploration of Poe’s sources of inspiration (1992: 72). He continues by claiming that “Edgar’s ease in taking over and passing off as his own the ideas, opinions and expressions of other people does imply a feeling of not being someone definite” (72).

Hence, taking into account Poe’s indisputable knowledge of Hellenic mythology, his tendency to imitate other literatures, and the uncanny similarities between “The Black Cat” and various points of Hellenic tradition, it seems plausible to argue that Poe might indeed have had the ancient Greek Pluto in mind when composing his chilling story. In spite of this, we must not overlook Scott Peeples’s remarks here (2004: 121). According to his extensive review of relevant literature, most of the readings he surveyed “somewhat surprisingly, work together well to convey the perplexity of Poe’s work and his world”, even though they appear to bear a striking

number of dissimilarities (2004: 121). This study concurs with this, and it is part of an ongoing investigation on the Hellenic allusions in Poe. Our understanding here does not reject conclusions of previous studies; what we have argued for might be seen as an addition to the interpretations that have been proposed by Poe scholars so far. In opting for Pluto's alignment with the ancient Greek Pluto, we are simply noting a specific connection that can be established between his work and Hellenic literature, one which had scarcely been commented upon hitherto. In revisiting Poe's work from a Hellenic perspective, the reader could also consider relevant research such as Dimitrios Tsokanos's (2017) recent essay. In order to explore in more depth the issue of whether Poe deliberately intended to create this particular connection, the research must expand to encompass other stories, focusing on other possible mentions of Pluto in Poe's storytelling, as well as the role that the dark god might have played in his reading and intellectual development.

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