Murder and Retribution: Identifying Literary Techniques that Forward the Idea of Revenge in the Cask of Amontillado

“The Cask of Amontillado” is a very interesting short story which uses the literary techniques of Symbolism, Dramatic irony and foreshadowing make the theme of Revenge even more prevalent. Edgar Allen Poe uses symbolism in his short story when Montressor references his coat of arms, “A huge human foot d'or, in a field azure; the foot crushes a serpent rampant whose fangs are imbedded in the heel” (Poe 3). This represents Montressor’s feud with Fortunato, like the foot Fortunato harms Montressor who as a snake bites Fortunato back as revenge which represents how Montressor murders Fortunato. This symbolism pushes the idea of Revenge since in the coat of arms it is representing Montressor taking revenge on Fortunato. Dramatic irony is also used, when Fortunato is coughing Montressor tells him”’ we will go back; your health is precious. You are rich, respected, admired, beloved; you are happy, as once I was”(Poe 2). As we know Montressor does not care for Fortunato’s health making it ironic and somewhat comedic to the reader that Montressor says the nice words to Fortunato while we know he is going to harm him. This irony increasingly gives the reader this suspense and wonder since the reader knows Montressor means to do harm to Fortunato, to take revenge however he acts nice and polite to Fortuanto. Finally foreshadowing is used, in the beginning of the Cask of Amontillado, Montressor says that “I must not only punish but punish with impunity”(Poe 1). This represents that Montressor vows his revenge against Fortunato and he will punish him with impunity. This creates suspense and the idea of revenge, we know Montressor from the very beginning of the story thirsts for revenge and wishes to harm Fortunato emotionally and physically, we just are sitting on the edge of our seats waiting for Fortunato’s demise.

**Works Cited**

Poe, Edgar A.p “The Cask of Amontillado”. Philadelphia, PA, Godey's Lady's Book, 1846