

**Seduce with Impunity: Manifestations of Robert Greene's Theory of Seduction in  
Edgar Allan Poe's "The Cask of Amontillado"**

يفغوي بحصانة : تجليات فن الاغراء لروبرت غرين في قصة ادقر الآن بو "برميل الأمونتيلادو"

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**Abstract**

This study examines the seductive/manipulative nature of Montresor in Edgar Allan Poe's "The Cask of Amontillado" in the light of Robert Green's theory outlined in *The Art of Seduction*. The theoretical frame recruits Green's three aspects of seduction; namely: the seductive character, the seductive process and the seductive time/environment and, hence, the study traces the seductive character, seductive process and seductive environment/time in the narrative. It turns out that there is a great deal of intersection between Green's theory of seduction and Montresor who, as a result, turns out as a flawless embodiment of Greene's notion of the perfect seducer.

**Key words:** Robert Green; Seduction; Edgar Allan Poe; "The Cask of Amontillado".

**Introduction:**

“The Cask of Amontillado” is not only one of the great short stories of world literature but also Edgar Allan Poe’s masterpiece. Indeed, “The Cask of Amontillado” perfectly represents Poe's theory of “The Unity of Effect” where, according to Walter Blair, every line, tone and detail in Poe’s narration engages to the totality of effect that Poe aimed to achieve (1944: 231). Thus, every sentence contributes to the total effect; it is a completely united work despite its shortness and apparent simplicity. Hence, Elena V. Baraban considers the story to “be among the Formalists' favorite texts,” being like “pieces of a mosaic, each of which serves the purpose of completing the whole”, being like a puzzle to be sorted out by the reader who, like a detective, should restructure the pieces (2004: 47-48). To enhance “The Unity of Effect”, Poe employs one of his main pillars in narration: the Gothic element. The Gothic atmosphere hangs over the story, reflected in the absence of a convincing motive behind the murder, the ambiguity of Montresor’s true character, the absence of other characters in the narration (except for Montresor and Fortunato), the cold underground basements and, finally, the terrible burial. As Zachary Bennett argues, Poe uses Gothic to build a psychological siege around his readers, through which he passes his heroes' ethics of right and wrong. Bennett clarifies: “Poe's Gothic writings are clearly an exercise in sadomasochism, and sadomasochism relates to ethics in one crucial way: by manipulating the reader's sympathies, it shapes his or her conception of what constitutes “right and wrong”, the equivalent of Stockholm syndrome (2011: 44). This emotional reaction will determine the reader’s final moral judgment.

Nonetheless, Baraban relates the burial of Fortunato to an allegorical class conflict between Aristocracy and the Bourgeois, whereby Montresor, the noble man with a worthy aristocratic background, never forgives Fortunato, the newly rich, for the “insults” and “injuries” he inflicted upon him (2004: 50). Moreover, Richard Benton clarifies that Poe imitates an old social tradition, exclusively set for Aristocracy, called the point of honor, according to which if a person hurts the honor of the other, he/she should face a duel to death (2021: par. 6). That is, Montresor could not pass the insult by Fortunato. He hence works on having him (Fortunato/the Bourgeois) buried alive. Audrey Saxton, however, takes the conflict between Montresor and Fortunato to represent a perpetual struggle between good and evil (2017: 139) whereas Bennett relates it to the longstanding hostility between Roman Catholic aristocrats and the Freemasons. (2011: 50).

In fact, most readings of the story seek to uncover the motive behind Montresor's crime and rarely account for the process Montresor followed to perform the felony. As

Richard Dilworth Rust notes, “The Cask of Amontillado "is not simply about revenge [...] it is in itself an “instrument” of revenge”(2001: 41), particularly that Montresor is so secretive and ambiguous about his real drive. We only see how Montresor lures Fortunato and shows up as a tempter or seducer. In fact, a study of the elements of seduction in the story are provocatively required. Therefore, the coming discussion examines the ability Montresor shows as a perfect seducer in compliance with Greene’s theory set in *The Art of Seduction*.

### **The Art of Seduction:**

Despite the ruggedness of writing on a bumpy controversial subject, the American author Robert Greene broke into this track adventurously by writing *The Art of Seduction*, which is the travail of Green's previous successful writing experience represented in *The 48 Laws of Power*. Green's writing centers on the themes of power and impact. The book itself has a seductive title. Despite the disreputable traditional notoriety associated with the concept of seduction, and presumptions about its legitimacy as a social taboo, Greene breaks down all these caveats by writing about seduction as an art and skill. Greene's *The Art of Seduction* (2003) achieved prominence amongst writings on the topic due to its comprehensiveness details. As Jorge A. Baca describes it, the book is “a masterful analysis of civilization's greatest seducers, from Cleopatra to JFK, as well as the classic literature of seduction from Freud to Kierkegaard and Ovid to Casanova” (2021: 2). It provides an all-embracing examination of seduction as a mental art and displays the authentic psychic techniques a seducer uses to achieve goals.

*The Art of Seduction* discusses in details the power of seduction, the seductive characters and the seductive process. Greene shows that seduction is a complex psychological process with its own rules and tactics: “Once you understand your target’s psychology, and strategize to suit it, you will be better able to cast “magical” spell” (xxii). Therefore, seduction is not arbitrary, it needs the seducer to plan, plot and master psychological strategies to achieve aims. Seduction is a tool, which transcends gender, language, age and culture. It is an exceptional language mastered only by those who can creep into others’ minds and souls. As such, seduction is methodical and so necessarily harmonic; it is a war plan: “Seducers have a warrior’s outlook on life. They see each person as a kind of walled castle to which they are laying siege”, the seducer hence being an experienced plotter and tactician (xxii).

Greene divides his book into two sections: The Seductive Characters and The Seductive Process. In the first, Green discusses the nine types of seducers: The Siren, The

Rake, The Ideal Lover, The Dandy, The Natural, The Coquette, The Charmer, The Charismatic and finally The Star. Whereas, in the second part, he details twenty-four mechanisms systematically used by the seducer to act out his/her plan:

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- 1 Choose the Right Victim.
  - 2 Create a False Sense of Security—Approach Indirectly.
  - 3 Send Mixed Signals.
  - 4 Appear to Be an Object of Desire—Create Triangles.
  - 5 Create a Need—Stir Anxiety and Discontent (xiii)
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Within these two main parts, Greene builds his methodical theory on seduction, clarifying that the seductive process has caveats so that any extra dose will lead to reversal results.

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As for readings of *The Art of Seduction*, Baca explains that the title of the book gave a suggestion to the reader that it would only be another superficial book in the category of popular guidebooks. Discussing a taboo, numerous readings of the book formed a wrong interpretation and misinformation about it. Nonetheless, more readings dug into its depth considering it a masterful analysis of civilization's greatest seducers (Baca 2021: 2) and a considerable reference proof of the legitimacy of seduction as a sexological topic (Peláez 2021: 2-3). On the other hand, some researchers think that *The Art of Seduction* is a call for objectifying others and dealing with them according to Machiavellian rules. Lisa Starrett, in her examination of the factors that may influence perceptions of sexual willingness, finds that the popularity of Green's book as a help-self book does not fit its content due to the aggressive language used throughout the book (2020: 5). In short, the previous reactions tell us that due to the sensitive, controversial nature of the subject at hand, *The Art of Seduction* has created a whirlwind of reactions between proponents and opponents. In this regard, we may evoke a valuable opinion that distinguished modern psychology from its traditional frames: "traditional psychology is overly concerned about how and why we run, not how and why we fight. By "fight" I don't mean physical violence. Rather, I mean the forceful goal-directed energy we all expend to get the things we want" (Simon, 2009: par. 3). Being an untraditional author who rebels against traditional psychology. Greene, in *The Art of Seduction*, untraditionally breaks the constraints around such a cultural taboo to extract out hidden fighting strategies from keen observations of the greatest seducers of the world. Writing the book, Greene admits that seduction is an essential element that permeates

everyday fighting, whether people legitimize it or not, whether they are aware of it or not. The bottom-line, however, lies in checking out the validation of Greene's findings. This study will apply Greene's ideas to Montresor, the Seductive Character, as well as the Seductive Process in "The Cask of Amontillado".

### **Montresor's illusive seduction:**

"The climax of seduction is to give the illusion that you're not trying to seduce."

Mathias Malzieu

Montresor in "The Cask of Amontillado" vows a revenge to punish Fortunato for "The thousand injuries" (3) he causes him. This point was decisively settled for him, his present problem was not in taking revenge; it was, rather, in "I must not only punish, but punish with impunity" (3). If the story is aesthetically self-contained, this condition is, indeed, a pillar of its aesthete. As such, the story and its reading are conditioned. That is, the story's reading should be governed by such a condition. Montresor thinks that his revenge will lose its value if "A wrong is unredressed when retribution overtakes its redresser" (3). Building on this base, he executes his revenge. Montresor directs his recounting to "You, who so well know the nature of my soul, will not suppose, however, that I gave utterance to a threat" (3). This statement is so closely directed to the soul, whereby an understanding of the nature of Montresor's introvert or insidious intentions will remain deeply covered as he will never reveal his depths by voicing an "utterance to a threat". Hence, Montresor with a satisfactory tone admits the exclusivity of his soul which is devoid of any transparency as he frames his character within a system of mystery, secrecy and indirectness as well. So, only those who have the same profound and vague nature frequency of Montresor may grasp his point as he leaves them clues while retelling his revenge story and in the meantime seeking their total understanding and excuse.

"The Cask of Amontillado", is a story of a gruesome revenge. However, the whole plot revolves around how the protagonist executes his revenge within an impunity zone. The story describes at length the details of the calculated and planned steps of luring Fortunato at the expense of the convincing reason behind that murder. Also, a general vagueness covers the identities and backgrounds of the main characters, yet we have a full coverage of the chilly movements through which Montresor creeps his victim. This fact is supported by Leonard W. Engel in "Victim and Victimizer: Poe's "The Cask of Amontillado"" when he

assures that “In "The Cask of Amontillado" Poe centers the entire plot on the journey through the catacombs and into the vault in which Fortunato is finally walled up” (1983: 26). “The journey” which Engel refers to is actually a journey of enticement leading to the final ambush where Fortunato is buried alive. A similar opinion is adopted by Rust who states: “The Cask of Amontillado' is not simply about revenge [...] It is in itself an 'instrument' of revenge” (2001: 41). Rust highlights a very crucial point that Poe through Montresor provides a perfect revenge guideline with “impunity” furnished with a plan and the needed strategies.

Through the first-person narrator, the revenge events are told by Montresor (the murderer), fifty years afterwards. Through the narration, we have an access to the tiny details he endures to slip Fortunato into the net. After fifty years of committing the murder, Montresor has a mellow fresh memory to remember and retell every particular detail. Usually, a remorseful person tries to evade gruesome memories, but Montresor's details revenge flow smoothly on his tongue, simply boasting the seductive plan he had engineered to “punish with impunity”. In line with the same idea, James Phelan writes:

Because Montresor recites these conditions so coolly and confidently, we infer that he is telling the story as a way of boasting to his friend about his successful revenge. Moreover, this inference gains further support as the story develops and Montresor recounts with apparent satisfaction how effectively he manipulated Fortunato. (2007: 289)

Thus, perhaps as a kind of anniversary celebration, Montresor recounts the seductive intelligence conducted in a fifty-years-old unrevealed perfect crime.

The condition Montresor sets in the beginning of the story provokes the seducer inside him. Hence, if seduction is a game, Montresor will prove that he is one of its masters. Regarding seduction, Greene thoroughly theorizes within *The Art of Seduction* that it is based on two main elements: The Seductive Character and the Seductive Process. Amazingly, a profound reading in “The Cask of Amontillado” will unfold great intersections between Greene's theory on seduction as being a methodical process based on psychological tactics, and the calculated systematic plan Montresor engineers to lure Fortunato. Accordingly, through “The Cask of Amontillado”, Montresor's manipulative/seductive attitude will be examined in the light of Greene's theory on seduction. Greene inaugurates his talk about The Seductive Character with this key note: “Successful seductions rarely begin with an obvious maneuver or strategic device. That is certain to arouse suspicion” (3). Greene hints that before practicing any psychological tactics, a seductive character should pave the way for the

luring methods. As such, the seductive maneuvers should lie within a comprehensive seductive character, a charming character that hypnotizes the victim not to notice the hidden maneuvers, whereby the seduction “will then be child’s play to mislead and seduce them” (3). This guide step is perfectly evident in the decision with which Montresor inaugurates his revenge plan: “It must be understood that neither by word nor deed had I given Fortunato cause to doubt my good will” (3). Consequently, Montresor bases his revenge on the indirectness of his seductive character.

Interestingly, Greene presents the Seductive Character within nine types. Subjected to these frames, Montresor highly fits “The Charmer” type, about which Greene illustratively says: "Charm is seduction without sex. Charmers are consummate manipulators", whose method relies on "masking their cleverness by creating a mood of pleasure and comfort. Their method is simple: they deflect attention from themselves and focus it on their target. They understand your spirit, feel your pain, adapt to your moods" (79). That is, Charmers understand well their victims and employ such understanding to control their seduces: "In the presence of a Charmer you feel better about yourself. Charmers do not argue or fight, complain, or pester... By drawing you in with their indulgence they make you dependent on them... by aiming at people's primary weaknesses: vanity and self-esteem" (79). The previous description clearly corresponds to the image through which Montresor displays himself. Some critics argue that Fortunato was naive enough to be tricked that easy, like Tomasz Kalaga highlighted “Fortunato’s naïve blindness which borders on idiocy” (2014: 22). Likewise, Frank Langer calls Fortunato the “unsuspecting friend” (1966: 1036).

On the other hand, the comfort mood that Montresor is keen to radiate, plays a serious role in building Fortunato’s required trust. Thus, from the very outset, Montresor plans to surround Fortunato with a “mood of comfort”; “I continued, as was my wont, to smile in his face, and he did not perceive that my smile now was at the thought of his immolation” (3). The smiley face coupled with the warm ovation are the charming mask he wears to lure Fortunato. The Charmer Character manifests itself through Montresor when he points directly to Fortunato's flaw and vanity. Montresor skillfully plays on the egoism of Fortunato: “He had a weak point—this Fortunato—although in other regards he was a man to be respected and even feared. He prided himself on his connoisseurship in wine” (3). The previous lines assure that Fortunato is not that simple person to be easily deceived; he is “A man to be respected and even feared” (3), yet Montresor shrewdly reads between the lines to exceed that surface respect, and dig deeply inside Fortunato’s soul in search of a fatal point

of weakness; “He prided himself on his connoisseurship in wine” (3). Next, with the Charmer spell, Montresor tickles intensively yet smoothly the pride of his prey:

My dear Fortunato, you are luckily met. How remarkably well you are looking to-day! But I have received a pipe of what passes for Amontillado, and I have my doubts.”

“How?” said he. “Amontillado? A pipe? Impossible! And in the middle of the carnival!” “I have my doubts,” I replied; “and I was silly enough to pay the full Amontillado price without consulting you in the matter. You were not to be found, and I was fearful of losing a bargain.”

“Amontillado!”

“I have my doubts.”

“Amontillado!”

“And I must satisfy them.”

“Amontillado!”. (4)

Deliberately humble, Montresor neutralizes his deep expertise in wine and admits: “In this respect I did not differ from him materially: I was skillful in the Italian vintages myself, and bought largely whenever I could” (3). Montresor rises the egoism of the prey to maximum. Montresor here is in harmony with Greene’s interpretation: “Deflect attention from himself and focus it on his target” (Greene: 79).

Actually, every tiny detail Montresor provides us with reveals his skill in reading others; therefore, he does not work arbitrarily, he has a systematic plan he under-works according to the victim's psychological data. The Charmer Character is reflected in Montresor by the warm tone he shows when meeting the victim, which deepens Fortunato’s sense of comfort in the presence of Montresor. Another important trait of the Charmer Character is revealed in Montresor during the journey inside the cellar; he abides by Greene’s tip “Lull your victims into ease and comfort” (Greene 82). Within the journey, Fortunato feels generally weak out of the damp, the niter and of being heavily drunk. Montresor offers his hand to help Fortunato stay balanced: “And again offering him my arm. He leaned upon it heavily” (6). This obviously shows the way Fortunato relaxingly depends on the predator, seduced by the charming comfort with which Montresor surrounds him along the cellar journey.

According to Greene's classifications of the seductive character, Montresor adapts the Coquette Character. To characterize the Coquette, Greene cites a saying of Ovid: “She who would long retain her power must use her lover ill” (71). Greene argues that the Coquette



seducer concentrates on delaying the satisfaction while “The victim is held waiting in thrall” (67). The Coquette, “Orchestrating a back-and-forth movement between hope and frustration [...] They bait with the promise of reward; this only makes their targets pursue them the more” (Greene: 67).

Through his plan to hunt Fortunato, Montresor closely sticks around the Coquette Character's essence. Montresor admits Fortunato's expertise in authentic wine “But in the matter of old wines he was sincere” (3) Thus, he chooses a bait masterfully designed to fit his victim's interests; “A pipe of Amontillado” a rare hard reaching bait, that making the word glitters as a chant on the tongue of Fortunato: “Amontillado”. After exposing his precious bait, Montresor expresses his true need for the consultation of Fortunato since he is a sincere wine connoisseur, and he (Montresor) then systematically makes a step back when he says: “As you are engaged, I am on my way to Luchesi. If anyone has a critical turn, it is he will tell me——” (4). Montresor reflects the Coquette Character here, as he sways between yes and no streams; streams of hope and frustration; he surely trusts Fortunato's consultation, but in case Fortunato is engaged, there is a substitute: Luchesi. Seemingly, Fortunato enjoys the carnival, but that withdrawal from Montresor's side arouses a feeling of challenge that he easily could be replaced by Luchesi. At once, Fortunato thoughtlessly asks Montresor to hurry “To your vaults”. At this point, Montresor goes to the extreme when he says: “My friend, no; I will not impose upon your good nature. I perceive you have an engagement. Luchesi——” (4). Decisively Fortunato answers: “I have no engagement; —come” (4). Wavering between tides, between heat and coolness, coquettes with indifference, Montresor directs Fortunato to his end. Further, along the catacombs journey, Fortunato keeps on asking for the Amontillado, while Montresor cunningly keeps on delaying the bait. Fortunato is literally held in thrall waiting for the rare alleged Amontillado, following his predator deeply inside the cellar until he is buried alive. Barehanded of Amontillado and powered with the Coquette traits, Montresor knows how to utilize the seductive power in arousing the desire and shrink it at once, in order to create a sense of worry and instability; he gives Fortunato a sign that he is in desperate need for his critical view and then, in a fast retreat to Luchesi, he turns Fortunato's zeal into disappointment. So, pushed by unstable tides, Fortunato satisfactorily pursues Montresor to the waiting tomb.

Elaborating around the same point, Greene divides the Coquette character into two parts: The Hot Coquette and the Cold Coquette. About The Cold Coquette, Greene explains that narcissism is a key trait in this type of seducers: "To adopt the power of the Coquette, you must understand one other quality: narcissism", a trait which Freud linked to a

pleasurable childhood "feeling of self-involvement" (74). This is so relatable to Montresor, if we decide that his spirit is saturated with narcissism. A keen observation reveals that narcissism forms a bedrock in defining Montresor's seductive character; an incense of pride and high self-esteem scents along the story. From the very outset Montresor decides not to take any more injury, seemingly they are injuries of the kind that touch dignity. The condition on which he builds his revenge, to "Punish with impunity", reflects a spirit that refuses to be re-punished. Montresor arrogantly gives himself the right to be a judge who sets rules and punishes. Also, the silence that covers his character is a sign of a narcissist character; he never objects to Fortunato's insults; he does not show up his bleeding soul. Further, a strong relishing bragging tone prevails while recounting the crime. The majestic black cloak in which he appears mirrors a haughty psychology.

The general coldness and confidence in which he indulges himself with suggest a boastful tend. Montresor's motto is "Nemo me impunelacessit" (6), which means "No one provokes me with impunity", shows that pride is inherited from his family, as he should "punish with impunity" but never to be provoked "with impunity" a principle which represents a rooted narcissism within the family. Montresor imbibes this pride from an authentic family "The Montresors," I replied, "were a great and numerous family" (6). Finally, the narcissistic traces best shown in Montresor appear when he buries Fortunato alive and never reveals his reason for that atrocity. Revengers usually relish when revealing the harm they have received and how they repay for their victims. Yet, Montresor chooses silence at that moment, aloof silence. As the target is in thrall, there is no need for useless interpretation.

As previously mentioned, Greene considers narcissism one of the most effective traits The Cold Coquette owns. He ranks The Cold Coquette as one of the most effective seducers since they have the skill to "Keep their victims in their clutches long after that first titillation of desire" (74). Narcissism, as Greene shows, endows the Cold Coquette of the needed coldness, self-sufficiency and the quick readiness to dispense. For Greene this ability of dispose is critical in seduction, as it endows the seducer with mystery and the victim with insecurity. The Cold Coquette must first and foremost be able to excite the target of his or her attention, then to retreat swiftly, as a fleeing sweet dream; in his/her trying to grasp that dream, the victim lies under the mercy of the Cold Coquette. This was the hinge seductive point of the Cold Coquette; as Greene clarifies: "The less you seem to need other people, the more likely others will be drawn to you" (75). This is proved to be workable, when Montresor says "I suffered him to hurry me to my palazzo" (5). Thus, so matching to

Montresor's case, Montresor is indisputably a Cold Coquette; with high narcissism, he could trap Fortunato emotionally by drawing his attention, then lukewarmly he hints to dispense, keeping Fortunato in a case of off-balance and insecurity.

Psychologically, many studies confirm what Greene theorizes regarding the close link between narcissism and the manipulative/seductive attitude. In "Self-reported Emotional and Social Intelligence and Empathy as Distinctive Predictors of Narcissism", it is argued that "Manipulation is a characteristic of narcissists so we could expect higher EI (Emotional Intelligence) in narcissists, which would allow them to manipulate others to get what they want" (Delić et al 2011: 480). Hand in hand, narcissism and psychological maneuvers are interrelated when defining Narcissism as "A personality trait characterized by grandiosity, a sense of specialness and entitlement, as well as manipulateness" (Leunissen et al 2017: 379). Within the same context, narcissism is considered one of the Dark Triad in partnership with Machiavellianism and psychopathy "as a tool to a self-serving and manipulative end" (Naglar et al 2014: 51). Within an obvious match, the previous psychological studies state a serious connection between narcissism and the manipulative attitude, a perspective that harmonizes with the case of Montresor, which also proves what Greene brings up that the Cold Coquette derives much of his/her manipulative power from the narcissistic seeds blossoming inside his/her spirit to give such seductive character.

In the second section of *The Art of Seduction*, Greene claims that the successful seduction needs a seductive process in addition to the Seductive Character, regarding the seductive process Greene brightens up that the perfect seducer should not depend permanently on his charming character as source of enticement, for "Seduction is a process that occurs over time—the longer you take and the slower you go, the deeper you will penetrate into the mind of your victim. It is an art that requires patience, focus and strategic thinking" (161). Hence, Greene assures that to guarantee a fruitful seduction, a seducer should arm him/herself with series of enticing tactics to reach aims.

Examining Montresor seductive attitude, he seems as if he has a previous glance at Greene's book, since he applies different strategies of the claimed tactics on his prey. The first strategy Montresor abides to, as reflected by Greene, is to "Create Temptation: As the serpent tempted Eve with the promise of forbidden knowledge, you must awaken a desire in your targets that they cannot control" (229). Conforming to this tip, Montresor fabricates a promise of a pipe of Amontillado to lure Fortunato. Indeed, Poe entitles his masterpiece in "The Cask of Amontillado", in a reference to the crucial role the Amontillado plays in firing

an uncontrolled attractive desire within Fortunato and consequently pulling him to death. It was the manipulative spark Montresor starts with.

Another tactic that Montresor adheres to is “Create a False Sense of Security—Approach Indirectly” (177). Greene explains that any directness early on, will arouse the risk stirring up a resistance that will never be lowered. Montresor is alert to this point, so, he puts his rule which is “It must be understood that neither by word nor deed had I given Fortunato cause to doubt my good will” (3). Montresor realizes that he should build a false sense of security by wearing a fake smile or the prey will flee in panic. Along the events, Fortunato in different spots, calls Montresor ‘my friend’, which reflects Montresor’s success in propagating a fabricated sense of security. With a clever indirect approach, Montresor creeps the victim, by creating the illusion that they had met by chance. Indeed, Montresor investigates Fortunato, but chooses to make their meeting seems a coincidence during the carnival “During the supreme madness of the carnival season, that I encountered my friend” (3). Montresor wears a fake kind mask as he welcomes Fortunato so warmly “I was so pleased to see him, that I thought I should never have done wringing his hand” (4). Thus, with calculated smooth steps Montresor approaches the target.

One more of Greene’s methods that Montresor practices on Fortunato is “Appear to Be an Object of Desire—Create Triangles” (195). Greene means that the seducer should arouse the jealousy of the victim by finding a third party, which keeps the manipulator the desired target. Greene elaborates: “Practices like these not only stimulate competitive desires, they take aim at people's prime weakness: their vanity and self-esteem [...] The sense that a rival is more desirable than we are—that is unbearable” (200). Montresor subjects this fact to his benefit; he mentions the name of Luchesi throughout the events for six times, Luchesi is as Montresor refers is a depended wine connoisseur, in order to stir Fortunato’s jealousy as well as to threaten his pride. Montresor keeps reminding his victim that he has another depended alternative: Luchesi, who is in hand. As soon as Montresor utters the possibility of resorting to Luchesi if Fortunato is engaged, Fortunato madly conquers his ego by degrading Luchesi’s expertise when he says: “Luchesi cannot tell Amontillado from Sherry” (4). Touching this indicator of jealousy, Montresor repeats Luchesi's name over and over to guarantee that emotions of jealousy are heightened enough to attract Fortunato like a magnet to him as well as to keep the victim in a nervous mood, frightened of Montresor’s shift towards Luchesi.

Further, one of the most important maneuvers within the seductive process, as Greene claims, is to “Isolate the Victim”:

An isolated person is weak. By slowly isolating your victims, you make them more vulnerable to your influence. Take them away from their normal milieu, friends, family, home [...] Once isolated like this, they have no outside support, and in their confusion, they are easily led astray. (309)

Literally conducted, Montresor is even aware of this vital detail; he hence makes use of the 'supreme madness of the carnival season' where people are full of joy, usually amazed and distracted. At this moment, Montresor decides to meet Fortunato and to draw him calmly to his palazzo, thinking it is a precious moment to manipulate. Busy and totally engaged with the carnival activities, Montresor is confident that no one will notice their quiet withdrawal of the general scene. This is the first step Montresor executes to isolate the victim, yet he masterly prepares a pre-plan to ensure a full isolation of his victim. Montresor proudly tells us his devilish plan to free the palazzo from any attendants while the victim is accompanying him:

There were no attendants at home; they had absconded to make merry in honor of the time. I had told them that I should not return until the morning, and had given them explicit orders not to stir from the house. These orders were sufficient, I well knew, to ensure their immediate disappearance, one and all, as soon as my back was turned. (5)

With a shrewd mastermind, Montresor secures an empty palazzo at the revenge time. He knows that the servants are longing to attend the carnival, so he was so clear and decisive about the comeback time (morning).

On the other hand, to prevent any later suspicion, he ordered them strictly not to leave the palazzo during the night (carnival time). Psychologically, what Montresor did is that he strongly and circuitously inspired them to leave the palazzo during his false absence until his coming back, which means that they were expected to leave the palazzo during the night until morning; the time of conducting the revenge. Manipulation seems to be the game of Montresor; he never exhausts himself with transparency, inspiration will fulfill the task. To Greene, this previous procedure that Montresor followed with the servants is called "Master the Art of Insinuation"; as he expounds:

There is no known defense, however, against insinuation—the art of planting ideas in people's minds by dropping elusive hints that take root days later, even appearing to them as their own idea. Create a sublanguage—ambiguous comments, banal talk combined with alluring glances—that enters the target's unconscious to convey your real meaning. Make everything suggestive. (211)

That is exactly what Montresor does with his servants, he throws a passing hint, combined with alluring message to leave the palazzo, hence, he comes back to the palazzo sure that it is empty. As such, the tactic of “Master the Art of Insinuation” leads Montresor to successfully execute the tactic of “Isolate the victim”. Undoubtedly, Montresor is not an ordinary manipulator, throughout the events he keeps amazing us with number of psychological tricks he masters, which shows a manipulator of a high level of proficiency.

Chasing the cask of Amontillado, Fortunato insists on accompanying Montresor “Let us go, nevertheless. The cold is merely nothing. Amontillado! You have been imposed upon” (4). Utilizing Amontillado Montresor not only does “Create a Temptation” but he also performs one more process of Greene’s seductive processes: “Enter Their Spirit” (219). Greene highlights the process with this example:

The lark is a savory bird, but difficult to catch. In the field, the hunter places a mirror on a stand. The lark lands in front of the glass, steps back and forth, entranced by its own moving image and by the imitative mating dance it sees performed before its eyes. Hypnotized, the bird loses all sense of its surroundings, until the hunter’s net traps it against the mirror. (226)

Likewise, Montresor fathoms the spirit of Fortunato, plays on its taste and its tones. Thus; he places a mirror in front of Fortunato through which he can see a reflection of his dear experiences; contemplating in the victim’s soul, Montresor chooses Amontillado to simulate Fortunato’s talent in wine connoisseurship. Hypnotized with Amontillado, as Fortunato admits “You have been imposed upon” (4), he hurries to the ambush.

Throughout the events Montresor was keen to indulge Fortunato with simple yet profound touches This deliberate behavior from Montresor's side is a seductive process that Greene called “Pay Attention to Details” (265) which is summarized as follows: “Lofty words of love and grand gestures can be suspicious: Why are you trying so hard to please? The details of a seduction—the subtle gestures, the offhand things you do. Mesmerized by what they (targets) see, they will not notice what you are really up to” (265). In a close approach, Montresor more than once, shows a touch of tenderness that helps the victim to lay safely within the murderer's zone. So, many times Montresor refers in sympathy to the cough that accompanies Fortunato. Cunningly, he asks Fortunato to refrain from going to the basement with him, fearing for his health from the growing humidity there. This is shown as Montresor suggests, ““Come,” I said, with decision, “we will go back; your health is precious”” (5). Naturally, Fortunato should be blown by this attention. Also, with a gesture of care Montresor presents his victim some wine to keep him warm inside the basement:

“you should use all proper caution. A draught of this Medoc will defend us from the damp” (6). Montresor continues to offer his frequent warm gestures, helping Fortunato during their journey inside the vaults “And again offering him my arm. He leaned upon it heavily” (6). Showing a consonant concern towards Fortunato’s fragility, he gradually arouses extra feelings of safety, friendship and trust inside Fortunato, consequently, “Fortunato possessed himself of my arm” (4), which shows the victim’s total dependence on the predator. Rhetoric will never compensate the spontaneous care, Montresor crawls not with direct grand words but with friendly warm touches, caring to small but sensitive details through which he lowers his victim defenses to the lowest level.

Paradoxically, while Montresor sympathetically offers Fortunato constant draughts of Medoc, he was actually adhering to Greene's method “Disarm Through Strategic Weakness and Vulnerability” (285). Acting the role of the tender sensitive friend, Montresor, indeed, disarms the target of intact awareness in order to gain a low resistance when he finally pounces on him. Meandering at the same point, Megan Gundrum elaborates: “When Fortunato’s cough continues, Montresor shows his concern for his friend by offering him some more alcohol to make him feel better, when his goal was only to intoxicate him even more, causing more vulnerability within Fortunato to fall under Montresor’s control” (2018, Par. 6). Mesmerized with the kind gestures from a caring friend, Fortunato is sure he is in safe hands.

To ensure a harmonious full seduction, Greene discusses the vitality of the seductive time and environment in supporting the elements of the seductive character and the seductive process, as they work as a complement. Greene explains how some occasions or environments hold us away on their wings from our monotonous daily routine. Occasions and environments like festivals or theatres soar us up with a world of fantasy. Offering a time out from our duties as well as responsibilities (433). The physical environment greatly affects moods and psychological status of individuals. Out of this point, Greene believes that a sincere seducer should pay full attention to snap or to create a perfect seductive time and environment. Greene claims that the master seducer should create a moment resembles in itself the glory of festival in order to empower his/her spell.

Then Montresor does not create a moment as much as he seizes the moment to his good. Montresor fits the carnival to his plan's measures. He times his revenge on the carnival season “It was about dusk, one evening during the supreme madness of the carnival season, that I encountered my friend. He accosted me with excessive warmth, for he had been drinking much” (3). Montresor snaps “supreme madness of the carnival” to execute his

revenge, where the folk are carousing, out of control, distracted and indulged in pleasures, which suggests a perfect time to draw his victim out while the folk is engaged in celebration. Infected by the carnival hysteria, Fortunato is in severe drunkenness, which means a man with low defense, a status that Montresor madly waits, and so, Montresor calculatingly harnesses the “supreme madness of the carnival” to meet his seductive needs.

In the same manner, Greene considers that the environment has an effective seductive dimension. In his regard, Greene refers to the masks and costumes worn by celebrators during ancient carnivals, endowing them with new suggestive identities, in a way that cast a shadow of mysterious seduction on the wearer (433). Aligning Greene's assumptions, Montresor was mindful to the carnival costume detail, so like a shadow he veils his face in a silky black mask, pulling a long cloak tightly to his body. Wearing solemnly, Montresor lends a touch of power, mystery and charm to his general appearance. The black mask not only surrounds Montresor with foggy dramatic aura, but also it perfectly helps to hide his true intentions, while the cloak intended to envelop Fortunato as they proceed to the palazzo. Inspired by the sober theatrical appearance of Montresor, Fortunato impatiently urges him to the palazzo “Fortunato possessed himself of my arm. Putting on a mask of black silk, and drawing a roquelaire closely about my person, I suffered him to hurry me to my palazzo” (4). The previous sentence suggests that Montresor's shadowy majestic appearance provokes senses of reliance and suspense at the same time within Fortunato, who rushes with the predator towards the palazzo.

Moreover, Poe is a master in depicting suggestive environment; the Gothic surrealist atmosphere is the art that Poe excels at highlighting. Since Greene suggests that the profound seducer should transfer the victim to a world similar to the festival one, he also guesses that creating a touch of mystic tenor will have its spiritual influence on the victim, in a way that allows him/her to travel in the seducer's galaxy. Greene explains: “Manufacture mystical effects: spiritual or mystical effects distract people's minds from reality, making them feel elevated and euphoric” (434). In a parallel context, most of the events are carried out in a surreal, mysterious atmosphere within the vaults.

Montresor moves Fortunato from the public carnival, to his own private one; the general scene in palazzo suggests a special ritual ceremony; an empty wide palazzo, with only two men holding flambeaux, passing damp catacombs in search for a pipe of Amontillado, the time is “about dusk”, and a secretive Amontillado is about to reveal, Fortunato anxiously asks “The pipe?” said he. “It is farther on, said I” (4). Amontillado is the delayed bait, the treasure which lies deep within cold catacombs, which makes the journey



more enticing, mystical and full of odd enthusiasm to get involved. Montresor creates festive auras inside the vaults by breaking a bottle of an authentic Medoc, from the cellar, and offers it to Fortunato. This special ceremonial status Montresor succeeds to inspire, left Fortunato 'elevated and euphoric'. When Montresor provides him wine, Fortunato "raised it to his lips with a leer. He paused and nodded to me familiarly, while his bells jingled. "I drink," he said, "to the buried that repose around us" (6). Cheering up the deaths joyfully, Fortunato does not know that he cheers up his own death. Further, the vaults let Fortunato live a status of weightlessness a way from all responsibilities. He finds himself in the company of a gentle, considerate friend, who is worried about his health, who offers old wine to keep him warm. Thus; the vaults seem less gloomy in the presence of a caring friend. Rebellious over time frames, the cellar detaches Fortunato from the outside world, inviting him to revolve in Montresor's seductive galaxy within a mysterious search over an elusive Amontillado.

Through "The Cask of Amontillado", Montresor creeps his victim calmly and softly until the deceive moment; he does not seduce arbitrarily, to the contrary, he is a premeditated seducer; hence, he works according to a harmonic plot. Every step towards the target is accurately measured. This point leads to the sense of consciousness Montresor experiences along his seductive attitude. Regarding how much the manipulator is aware of his manipulative behavior, Maria Monich and Ludmila Matveeva argue that "The trick of conscious manipulation is that the activity is completely controlled by consciousness; all the moves are calculated in advance. The manipulator knows what levers to push to get the desired result" (2012: 317). According to this, Montresor is fully aware of committing manipulation, since he is fully aware of the 'levers' he should follow and, therefore, his awareness is directly connected to the plotted strategies he adopts.

This conscious realization manifests in more than one spot. The story is titled with the main bait: 'Amontillado', which reflects the significance of it as a tool of a deliberate seduction. Also, the boastful tone Barabano underscores assures Montresor's awareness of his seductive process "The tone or manners his telling makes it clear that he has not atoned, for he enjoys in the telling himself too much- as much, in fact, as he did when he committed the crime itself" (2004, 48). The 'too much' Barabano hints are reflected in the planned steps as well as dialogues Montresor engineers to prey Fortunato. Besides, Montresor's recurrent boastful reciting proves he is fully aware of what he has done. Alongside, Juliana Miles Belino discusses the scarce information regarding the two main characters compared to the plot details "The narrator never clarifies what Fortunato had done in order to make him

plan and execute such a cruel revenge, he only gives evasive tips referring to what had happened...it is also unclear what kind of relationship they have” (2017: 232).

In fact, Montresor did so because he wants to celebrate his seductive egoism, which lies in how he plots for revenge and focuses on successfully conducting the revenge, neglecting the logical reason of it. Further, what deepens Montresor's full consciousness of his manipulative maneuvers is the ironic hint he cast during the conversation between him and the victim as soon as Fortunato inquires about the Amontillados ““It is farther on,” said I; “but observe the white webwork which gleams from these cavern walls”” (5). Montresor makes metaphorical clues that Amontillados is the web Fortunato soon will be hunted by. All previous testimonies prove that the methodical approach of Montresor confirms his complete awareness of his seductive processes. The sense of arbitrariness is lost in Montresor's dictionary. His revenge resembles a mosaic; every designed step participates in completing the whole profile. As Barbara Shapiro interestingly states in *Revenge: Narcissistic Injury, Rage, and Retaliation*:

Revenge is on a spectrum of hot to cold. Hot revenge is, well, hot. It doesn't involve much executive function. It is immediate, stormy, impulsive, and poorly planned. Cold revenge is carefully planned, and executed so as to have the pleasure of getting back at someone without being caught. This requires a high level of executive function. (2013: 36)

According to this, Shapiro finds that *The Cask of Amontillado* is the best story that presents a cold revenger who heavily leans on pre-planned tactics to conduct his revenge. Again Shapiro sheds more light on the nature of Montresor's revenge:

This sort of totally cold revenge described by Poe requires a quite high level of executive function, along with a lack of or dissociation of conflict, guilt, or the sort of moral masochism that would involve getting caught as punishment. The plotting of the murderous revenge is entirely ego syntonic. (2013: 37)

Shapiro's point of view serves much in explaining that randomness is excluded from Montresor's revenge since he is in search of 'impunity', which, therefore, stems from a strong feeling of narcissism. Moreover, her point strikingly intersects with Greene's vision on *The Cold Coquette* whose narcissism is a core formative demand of his/her character. As a result, conducting this 'quite high level of executive function' needs an exclusive personality, a character that can creep softly, calmly and foremost persuasively; a character with a smart seductive potentiality.

Another important point to be discussed is that Montresor would never be successful in conducting these seductive strategies if he was not aware of having incubating environment; that is, his seductive character. Montresor realizes that he obtains the seeds of the seductive character by nature; which enabled his systematic cold revenge to be easier, more effective and more predictable; his seductive character works as the convincing background through which he executes his psychological enticing maneuvers. Thus, these tactics are not fortuitous, they need a potential pillar to prop them. These seeds of a general seductive character are demonstratively camouflaged by Montresor when he, from the very beginning of the story, complains that “The thousand injuries of Fortunato I had borne as I best could” (2). The verb “had borne” suggests a cold calm character, that takes the blows silently, whereas the phrase “as I best could” deepens the sense of the powerful self-control that he has, showing no reactions on the surface. Also, Montresor’s self- reflection: “You, who so well know the nature of my soul, will not suppose, however, that I gave utterance to a threat” (2) shows seeds of a perfect seducer who never utters his mind and, never shows his true colors. Montresor contemplates that he has his own individual psychological side, by which he differs from others; only a few who know well this type of character will understand and expect at the same time his seductive as well as manipulative nature; those who possibly knew or have similar seductive natures to fathom Montresor's signals.

Intrinsically, the gap Montresor creates between appearance and reality draws the main profile of Montresor as a mature seducer. The number of illusions he masterly depicts - - the pipe of Amontillado, Luchesi, coming back to palazzo in the morning, the considerate friend -- are all testimonies of a unique luring character who has a high level of self-control in a way that allows him to show only the emotions he wants to install in the target’s mind. The unexpected gab between appearance and reality manifests in Fortunato’s unbelievable shock when Montresor chained him and started to wall up him alive, Fortunato still waiting for Amontillado, oblivious of the serious situation he got involved: ““The Amontillado!” ejaculated my friend, not yet recovered from his astonishment” (9). The friendly sympathetic attitude showed by Montresor prevents Fortunato from comprehending that uninterpretable behavioral shift in Montresor’s attitude; Fortunato is therefore still stuck into ‘The Amontillado’. Fortunato cannot pass the bout of amazement, thinking it is a mere joke from a funny friend ““Ha! ha! ha! —he! he! —a very good joke indeed—an excellent jest. We will have many a rich laugh about it at the palazzo—he! he! he! —over our wine—he! he! he!” (10). In fact, Fortunato’s unbalanced response to such a situation mirrors the unbalanced attitude between the poles of which Montresor represents: friend/enemy. Such gap draws the

basic lines of Montresor's seductive character, as it floats between two poles of characters: declared and hidden.

## **Conclusion:**

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In closing, through *The Art of Seduction*, Greene with a philosophical compendium, gets to the heart of the character of the seducer and his or her tactics and maneuvers, uncovering the seducer's many faces and his/her seductive strategies. He sets his theory by leaning on the most famous historical seducers in the world. Applying Green's theory to Poe's Montresor, obvious intersections have been noticed, regarding the seductive character, the seductive process and finally the seductive time and environment. Montresor's seductive talent is greatly shown while fulfilling a cold revenge sealed with a privilege of 'impunity'. To win this 'impunity' Montresor sneaks his victim through the gate of seduction; Montresor harnesses his seductive character employing seductive tactics making use of the seductive time and environment to be the effective tools through which he fulfils his revenge. Reviewing Greene's seductive characters, the faces of The Charmer and The Coquette are the seductive frames in which Montresor fits since his revenge story is a meticulous recounting to the psychological seductive stages quite mentioned in Greene's book. Showing a considerable analogy to what Greene propounds, Montresor proves a masterful synthesis of the seductive character and process Greene outlined. As such, "The Cask of Amontillado" is the engineered seductive tool in the hand of the professional systematic seducer Montresor and, by analogy, Poe the maker of Montresor.

"The Cask of Amontillado" reflects Poe's perspective about the good piece of writing as he presents it in an essay "The Philosophy of Composition" where he claims that writing in itself is a task of methodical nature, whereby the author's distinction goes beyond mere talent or intuition(1846: 163-167). In short, Poe bequeaths much of his seductive power to Montresor. He proves, as Greene suggests, seduction is an art. It is not arbitrary or accidental, it needs attention and care. Seducers are fascinating despite their amorality, since they are rare, unique and smart. They provide pleasure, excitement and adventure. Their enticement is penetrating and fatal. For example, Fortunato accompanies Montresor hypnotically to his grave. We are equally victimized like Fortunato; we are artistically seduced by Poe's narrative. As such, Montresor manifests Poe's dedication to the ultimate unity of the effect of his seductive prose; as Greene calls it "The ultimate form of power and persuasion" (xx).

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