

american psycho bret easton ellis

American Psycho Bret Easton Ellis: Exploring the Dark Genius Behind a Cult Classic

american psycho bret easton ellis—these words immediately evoke images of the 1980s Wall Street elite, a chilling narrative of excess and psychopathy, and one of the most controversial novels of its time. Bret Easton Ellis, the author behind this infamous work, crafted a story that transcends the typical thriller or horror genre, offering instead a sharp, satirical critique of consumerism, identity, and the hollowness of modern life. If you've ever wondered how American Psycho became a cultural phenomenon or what makes Ellis's writing style so distinct, this article unpacks the complexities of both the novel and its creator.

The Birth of American Psycho: Bret Easton Ellis's Vision

When Bret Easton Ellis published *American Psycho* in 1991, it wasn't just another novel hitting bookstore shelves; it was a seismic shift in contemporary literature. Ellis, already known for his debut *Less Than Zero*, brought a new level of raw honesty and unsettling intimacy to his portrayal of Patrick Bateman, a wealthy New York investment banker who moonlights as a serial killer.

Ellis's Background and Literary Style

Bret Easton Ellis emerged from the literary scene as a voice for Generation X, capturing the disillusionment and moral ambiguity of young adults in the late 20th century. His writing is characterized by:

- Minimalist dialogue and sparse prose
- A detached, sometimes cold narrative tone
- Detailed depictions of brand names, luxury, and consumer culture
- Unflinching portrayals of violence and psychological turmoil

This stylistic approach mirrors the superficiality and emptiness Ellis perceives in the world around him, making *American Psycho* both a cultural critique and a psychological exploration.

Understanding the Themes of American Psycho

At its core, *American Psycho* is not just a horror story. It's a complex commentary on several intertwined themes that resonate even decades after its publication.

The Critique of Consumerism and Materialism

One of the most striking features of *American Psycho* is its exhaustive cataloging of designer brands, trendy restaurants, and exclusive nightclubs. Patrick Bateman's obsession with appearances and status symbols is Ellis's way of highlighting how consumerism can mask a deeper spiritual and emotional void. The novel's fixation on luxury goods serves as a metaphor for the era's obsession with wealth and image, where identity is constructed through consumption.

The Duality of Identity and Sanity

Patrick Bateman's character is a study in duality—he is outwardly a charming, successful professional but inwardly a detached, psychotic killer. This split reflects broader questions about the masks people wear in society. Ellis uses Bateman's unreliable narration to blur the lines between reality and delusion, forcing readers to question what is real and what is imagined.

Violence as a Reflection of Inner Turmoil

The graphic violence in *American Psycho* is not gratuitous; rather, it is a manifestation of Bateman's fractured psyche and a metaphor for the brutal undercurrents of a society obsessed with surface-level perfection. Ellis's explicit descriptions shock readers but also serve to underline the horror beneath the polished veneer of the 1980s elite.

The Impact of American Psycho on Popular Culture

The influence of *American Psycho* extends far beyond the literary world. Its adaptation into a 2000 film starring Christian Bale introduced the story to a wider audience, cementing its status as a cult classic.

Film Adaptation and Reception

The movie adaptation captured the novel's satirical tone and dark humor while toning down some of the more graphic content. Christian Bale's portrayal of Bateman brought depth and a chilling charisma to the character, making the film a standout in the psychological thriller genre. The film's success helped revive interest in Ellis's work and sparked discussions about the relationship between violence and media.

Influence on Music, Fashion, and Art

American Psycho's imagery and themes have inspired numerous artists, musicians, and designers. The novel's depiction of 1980s excess has become a touchstone for exploring themes of capitalism

and identity in various creative fields. From fashion collections referencing Bateman's style to songs alluding to the novel's dark tone, Ellis's impact is unmistakable.

Bret Easton Ellis's Legacy and Continued Relevance

Though *American Psycho* was polarizing upon release, Bret Easton Ellis's work has gained recognition for its foresight and cultural critique. His exploration of themes like alienation, identity, and the dark side of human nature continues to resonate in a world still grappling with consumer culture and social facades.

What Sets Ellis Apart from His Contemporaries?

Ellis's ability to combine sharp social satire with psychological horror distinguishes him from many other authors. His willingness to confront uncomfortable truths without sugarcoating has earned him both admiration and criticism. Unlike conventional narratives, his stories often leave readers unsettled, encouraging reflection rather than easy answers.

Tips for Reading American Psycho

For newcomers to *American Psycho* or Bret Easton Ellis's work, approaching the novel with certain strategies can enhance understanding:

- **Embrace the unreliable narration:** Recognize that Bateman's perspective may be distorted or deceptive.
- **Focus on the social commentary:** Beyond the violence, look for Ellis's critique of 1980s culture and identity crises.
- **Pace yourself:** The novel's detailed brand references and repetitive scenes can be overwhelming but are intentional.
- **Discuss and reflect:** Sharing insights with others can help unpack the novel's dense themes and symbolism.

The Controversies Surrounding American Psycho

No discussion about *American Psycho* is complete without acknowledging the controversies that have surrounded it since its debut.

Public and Critical Backlash

Upon publication, *American Psycho* faced bans and censorship due to its graphic depictions of violence, especially against women. Critics were divided—some hailed it as a masterpiece of modern literature, while others condemned it as gratuitous and misogynistic. Ellis himself has addressed

these critiques, emphasizing the novel's satirical intent and the unreliable nature of Bateman's narration.

How Controversy Shaped the Novel's Popularity

Paradoxically, the uproar around *American Psycho* helped propel it to cult status. The debates sparked curiosity, drawing attention not only to the book's shocking content but also to its deeper messages. This phenomenon illustrates how provocative art can challenge societal norms and provoke important conversations.

American Psycho remains a provocative, challenging work that continues to captivate readers and critics alike. Bret Easton Ellis's fearless exploration of the darkest aspects of human nature and culture invites us to look beneath the surface of society's polished exterior—a task as relevant today as it was in the 1990s.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the plot of 'American Psycho' by Bret Easton Ellis?

'American Psycho' follows Patrick Bateman, a wealthy New York City investment banker who leads a double life as a serial killer, exploring themes of consumerism, identity, and morality in 1980s America.

When was 'American Psycho' by Bret Easton Ellis published?

'American Psycho' was published in 1991.

Why was 'American Psycho' by Bret Easton Ellis controversial?

The novel was controversial due to its graphic depictions of violence, particularly against women, and its satirical critique of 1980s yuppie culture, leading to bans and censorship in some countries.

Has 'American Psycho' been adapted into other media?

Yes, 'American Psycho' was adapted into a feature film in 2000 starring Christian Bale, and there have been stage adaptations as well.

What themes does Bret Easton Ellis explore in 'American Psycho'?

The novel explores themes such as consumerism, superficiality, identity fragmentation, materialism, and the emptiness of modern urban life.

How did Bret Easton Ellis' writing style contribute to 'American Psycho's impact?

Ellis' minimalist, detached prose style, combined with detailed descriptions of material culture and violence, creates a chilling and satirical tone that amplifies the novel's critique of 1980s society.

What influence has 'American Psycho' had on popular culture?

'American Psycho' has influenced various works in literature, film, and music by highlighting themes of narcissism and consumer culture, and Patrick Bateman has become an iconic character representing 1980s excess.

Is 'American Psycho' by Bret Easton Ellis based on real events?

No, 'American Psycho' is a work of fiction and is not based on real events, though it draws on cultural and social observations from the 1980s.

Additional Resources

American Psycho by Bret Easton Ellis: A Stark Exploration of 1980s Excess and Identity

american psycho bret easton ellis stands as a provocative and enduring work in contemporary American literature. Published in 1991, this novel by Bret Easton Ellis delves into the dark underbelly of 1980s yuppie culture, exploring themes of materialism, identity, and psychopathy through the eyes of its unsettling protagonist, Patrick Bateman. The novel's sharp social commentary, controversial content, and stylistic innovations have cemented its place as a critical text for understanding both the decade it portrays and the complexities of modern urban alienation.

Contextualizing American Psycho within Bret Easton Ellis's Oeuvre

Bret Easton Ellis first gained notoriety with his debut novel, *Less Than Zero* (1985), which painted a bleak picture of disaffected Los Angeles youth. *American Psycho*, his third novel, marked a stark shift in tone and subject matter, presenting a more visceral and disturbing narrative. By embedding his story in the affluent milieu of Manhattan's financial elite, Ellis critiques the hollowness of consumerism and the moral bankruptcy that can accompany wealth and privilege.

Ellis's writing style in *American Psycho* is notable for its clinical precision and repetitive detailing, which mirrors the obsessive nature of the protagonist while emphasizing the superficiality of his social environment. Through this narrative approach, Ellis forces readers to confront the banality of evil and the desensitization that can arise in a culture obsessed with image and status.

The Portrayal of Patrick Bateman: A Study in Contradictions

At the heart of *American Psycho* lies Patrick Bateman, a wealthy investment banker whose outward appearance of success masks a chilling psychopathy. Bateman is depicted as both a product and a victim of his environment—his identity fragmented by the relentless pursuit of perfection and social acceptance. Ellis creates a character who embodies the extremes of narcissism, violence, and alienation.

Bateman's dual existence as a polished professional and a remorseless killer challenges readers to question the nature of identity and reality. The narrative's unreliable perspective blurs the line between fantasy and fact, prompting debates about the literal versus symbolic interpretation of Bateman's actions. This ambiguity has been a focal point in literary criticism, highlighting Ellis's use of postmodern techniques to unsettle and engage his audience.

Thematic Exploration in *American Psycho*

American Psycho's exploration of consumerism is one of its most salient features. The novel meticulously catalogs brands, restaurants, music, and fashion, creating an exhaustive inventory of 1980s pop culture. This attention to detail serves a dual purpose: it satirizes the era's obsession with status symbols while underscoring the emptiness beneath such material wealth.

Violence and psychopathy are central themes that Ellis uses not merely for shock value but to probe deeper societal issues. Bateman's actions can be interpreted as metaphors for the destructive consequences of unchecked capitalism and the loss of empathy in a hyper-competitive world. The extreme violence serves as a grotesque exaggeration of the emotional detachment and dehumanization that permeate the novel's social landscape.

Gender dynamics also play a critical role in *American Psycho*. The portrayal of women is complex and controversial, often criticized for its graphic and unsettling nature. However, this aspect of the novel can be understood as a reflection of Bateman's distorted worldview and a critique of misogyny within the social strata he inhabits. Ellis's narrative forces a confrontation with uncomfortable truths about power, control, and objectification.

Literary Techniques and Narrative Style

Ellis employs a distinctive narrative voice that is both detached and obsessive. The first-person perspective immerses readers in Bateman's psyche, revealing his compulsions and fragmented thoughts with stark clarity. The repetitive structure of the novel, including recurring lists of consumer goods and social interactions, reinforces the monotony and superficiality of Bateman's life.

Furthermore, Ellis's use of irony and dark humor adds complexity to the narrative. Moments of absurdity punctuate the grim subject matter, creating a dissonance that compels readers to reflect critically on the social critique embedded within the text. This stylistic choice aligns *American Psycho* with postmodern literature, characterized by self-awareness and skepticism toward grand narratives.

Reception and Cultural Impact

Upon its release, *American Psycho* sparked significant controversy due to its explicit depictions of violence and sexuality. Critics were divided, with some condemning the novel as gratuitous and others praising its incisive social commentary. The polarized reception contributed to the book's notoriety and eventual cult status.

The novel's adaptation into a 2000 film directed by Mary Harron further amplified its cultural footprint. Christian Bale's portrayal of Patrick Bateman was widely acclaimed, capturing the character's chilling duality and the novel's satirical tone. The film adaptation also brought renewed attention to Ellis's work, introducing *American Psycho* to a broader audience and sparking further discourse on its themes.

In academic circles, *American Psycho* has become a subject of extensive analysis, particularly regarding its postmodern narrative style, critique of capitalism, and representation of violence. The novel's influence extends beyond literature into popular culture, inspiring music, fashion, and discussions about the ethical boundaries of art.

Pros and Cons of American Psycho as a Cultural Text

- **Pros:** Offers a profound critique of 1980s consumer culture; innovative narrative style; complex character study; sparks important conversations about violence and identity.
- **Cons:** Contains graphic and potentially disturbing content; portrayal of women has been criticized as problematic; ambiguity in narrative can be challenging for some readers.

American Psycho by Bret Easton Ellis is not a novel for the faint of heart, but its unflinching examination of materialism, identity, and morality renders it an essential work for understanding the cultural dynamics of its era. Through Patrick Bateman's chilling lens, Ellis exposes the fractures beneath the polished veneer of American capitalism, leaving readers to grapple with unsettling questions about the human condition and the price of excess.

[American Psycho Bret Easton Ellis](#)

american psycho bret easton ellis: Bret Easton Ellis Naomi Mandel, 2010-11-18 This collection of critical essays on the American novelist Bret Easton Ellis examines the novels of his mature period: *American Psycho* (1991), *Glamorama* (1999), and *Lunar Park* (2005). Taking as its starting-point *American Psycho*'s seismic impact on contemporary literature and culture, the volume establishes Ellis' centrality to the scholarship and teaching of contemporary American literature in the U.S. and in Europe. Contributors examine the alchemy of acclaim and disdain that accrues to this controversial writer, provide an overview of growing critical material on Ellis and review the literary and artistic significance of his recent work. Exploring key issues including violence, literature, reality, reading, identity, genre, and gender, the contributors together provide a critical

re-evaluation of Ellis, exploring how he has impacted, challenged, and transformed contemporary literature in the U.S. and abroad.

american psycho bret easton ellis: *American Psycho* Bret Easton Ellis, 2010-06-09
INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER • In this modern classic, the acclaimed author of *The Shards* explores the incomprehensible depths of madness and captures the insanity of violence in our time or any other. A seminal book." —The Washington Post One of The Atlantic's Great American Novels of the Past 100 Years Patrick Bateman moves among the young and trendy in 1980s Manhattan. Young, handsome, and well educated, Bateman earns his fortune on Wall Street by day while spending his nights in ways we cannot begin to fathom. Expressing his true self through torture and murder, Bateman prefigures an apocalyptic horror that no society could bear to confront. "A masterful satire and a ferocious, hilarious, ambitious, inspiring piece of writing.... An important book." —Katherine Dunn, bestselling author of *Geek Love*

american psycho bret easton ellis: *Bret Easton Ellis's American Psycho* Julian Murphet, 2002-01-11 This is part of a new series of guides to contemporary novels. The aim of the series is to give readers accessible and informative introductions to some of the most popular, most acclaimed and most influential novels of recent years - from 'The Remains of the Day' to 'White Teeth'. A team of contemporary fiction scholars from both sides of the Atlantic has been assembled to provide a thorough and readable analysis of each of the novels in question.

american psycho bret easton ellis: *American Psycho* Bret Easton Ellis, 2002 Chokerende afsløring af den amerikanske drøms bagside. Hovedpersonen er en ung finansmand i New York, og romanen registrerer minuttiøst hans overfladiske yuppietilværelse og hans natlige eskapader af pervers sex, vold og mord

american psycho bret easton ellis: *American Psycho* Jason Huff, Mimi Cabell, 2012

american psycho bret easton ellis: *American Psycho* , 2011

american psycho bret easton ellis: *White* Bret Easton Ellis, 2019 This is a Borzoi book published by Alfred A. Knopf.

american psycho bret easton ellis: *Violence and Consumerism in Bret Easton Ellis's "American Psycho" and Chuck Palahniuk's "Fight Club"* Michael Frank, 2009-11-08
Examination Thesis from the year 2009 in the subject English Language and Literature Studies - Literature, grade: 1,5, University of Heidelberg, language: English, abstract: Art has always reflected society. [...] *Fight Club* examines violence and the roots of frustration that are causing people to reach out for such radical solutions. And that's exactly the sort of discussion we should be having about our culture. Because a culture that doesn't examine its violence is a culture in denial, which is much more dangerous. This assessment of *Fight Club* by Edward Norton, who plays the narrator in the novel's movie adaptation, explains the reasoning behind this thesis, which examines the basic principles of today's consumer culture, its connection to aggression and violence, and the way these topics are presented in two contemporary novels: Bret Easton Ellis's *American Psycho* and Chuck Palahniuk's *Fight Club*. In these books, the respective protagonists face similar deadlocks connected to life in the consumerist world of the 1980s and 1990s. Despite, evidently, having everything a person could ask for, both main characters' lives remain unfulfilled, leaving them frustrated and dissatisfied. As it turns out, acts of violence become the only thing that lets them get away from the boredom of their daily routine and gives them a sense of satisfaction.

american psycho bret easton ellis: *Consuming and Consumed People. Violence in American Psycho* Florian Burkhardt, 2005-11-04 Seminar paper from the year 2005 in the subject American Studies - Culture and Applied Geography, grade: 2,0, University of Stuttgart, language: English, abstract: Bret Easton Ellis' *American psycho* has been a highly controversial book. Many critics condemned this novel before it had been published so Ellis even had to search for a new publishing company. The indignation at *American psycho* had been so fierce, it verged on hysteria and some interest groups (feminist and religious groups for instance) agitated against the author and his work¹. The main reason why critics reacted that outraged was the explicit and detailed description of violence in this book². In this paper I will discuss the appearance of violence in *American*

psycho. But first I want to create a picture of social phenomena in the USA of the 80's as they are described in the novel, in order to provide the setting, the atmosphere in which the violence takes place. This will help to give an opinion of this violence and to interpret it. Then I will discuss how violence is presented in the text. In the fourth

american psycho bret easton ellis: The Informers Bret Easton Ellis, 1995-08-01 From the New York Times bestselling author of American Psycho and Less Than Zero comes a nihilistic novel set in the early eighties that portrays a chilling descent into the abyss beneath L.A.'s gorgeous surfaces. • "Skillfully accomplishes its goal of depicting a modern moral wasteland.... Arguably Ellis's best." —The Boston Globe The basis of the major motion picture starring Billy Bob Thornton, Kim Basinger and Mickey Rourke, The Informers is a seductive and chillingly nihilistic novel, in which Bret Easton Ellis, returns to Los Angeles, the city whose moral badlands he portrayed so unforgettably in Less Than Zero. This time is the early eighties. The characters go to the same schools and eat at the same restaurants. Their voices enfold us as seamlessly as those of DJs heard over a car radio. They have sex with the same boys and girls and buy from the same dealers. In short, they are connected in the only way people can be in that city. Dirk sees his best friend killed in a desert car wreck, then rifles through his pockets for a last joint before the ambulance comes. Cheryl, a wannabe newscaster, chides her future stepdaughter, "You're tan but you don't look happy." Jamie is a clubland carnivore with a taste for human blood.

american psycho bret easton ellis: American Psycho Bret Easton Ellis, 1993 Een seriemoordenaar vertelt gedetailleerd over de moorden die hij pleegt en over zijn leven.

american psycho bret easton ellis: "Abandon All Hope" - consumerism and loss of identity in Bret Easton Ellis's "American Psycho" as an example of blank fiction Anja Schiel, 2008-04-23 Thesis (M.A.) from the year 2005 in the subject American Studies - Literature, grade: 1,5, University of Hamburg (Sprach-, Literatur- und Medienwissenschaft), language: English, abstract: Bret Easton Ellis's American Psycho has been labeled many things from "Brat Pack Fiction" to "Generation X" to "Minimal Realism". While the classification of the novel might be difficult and it has often been misunderstood for its extremely violent scenes, what is clear to the attentive reader is its critique of consumer culture Critics have acknowledged an emergence of a large number of writings dealing with this topic in contemporary American literature in the recent past. These novels focus on the relationship of American youth with consumer culture with a seemingly non-elaborate content and style. Attempts of explaining this kind of writing, which has also been called "fiction of insurgency", "new narrative", "downtown writing" and "punk fiction", range from millennial angst to the classification of this literary movement as part of the postmodern culture. What seems clear is that these narrations are closely related to the society they have been created in. The way these texts incorporate products of their time as a constant accompanying element places them very clearly in a specific time period. The apparent non-existence of complexity concerning the style, which at times reminds the reader of a movie script or a sequence of an MTV video, has, in the case of American Psycho, caused many critics to classify the novel as boring and deny the author the status of an artist. Exactly this seeming meaninglessness of these novels argues in favor of a term introduced by critics James Annesley and Elizabeth Young: Blank fiction, or Blank Generation Fiction. The term Blank fiction seems to capture perfectly the emptiness created by consumer culture that has found its way into these narratives not simply in its context but also by means of its language, incorporating consumer goods into the narrative as secondary characters, in the case of American Psycho ascribing more character to these objects than to the protagonists.

american psycho bret easton ellis: Less Than Zero Bret Easton Ellis, 2010-06-09 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • The timeless classic from the acclaimed author of American Psycho about the lost generation of 1980s Los Angeles who experienced sex, drugs, and disaffection at too early an age. • The basis for the cult-classic film Possesses an unnerving air of documentary reality. —The New York Times They live in a world shaped by casual nihilism, passivity, and too much money in a place devoid of feeling or hope. When Clay comes home for Christmas vacation from his Eastern college, he re-enters a landscape of limitless privilege and absolute moral entropy, where everyone

drives Porsches, dines at Spago, and snorts mountains of cocaine. He tries to renew feelings for his girlfriend, Blair, and for his best friend from high school, Julian, who is careering into hustling and heroin. Clay's holiday turns into a dizzying spiral of desperation that takes him through the relentless parties in glitzy mansions, seedy bars, and underground rock clubs and also into the seamy world of L.A. after dark.

american psycho bret easton ellis: American Psycho (Spanish Edition) Bret Easton Ellis, 2021-03-23 La novela más infame de Bret Easton Ellis: un clásico contemporáneo que se ha convertido en símbolo de una generación. El sofisticado, inteligente y vanidoso Patrick Bateman trabaja en Wall Street, idolatra al joven magnate Donald Trump, cena en los restaurantes de moda de Nueva York y es capaz de distinguir un traje Armani a cincuenta metros de distancia. También le gusta violar, torturar, asesinar y desmembrar. American Psycho, la novela más polémica de Bret Easton Ellis, se ha convertido en el reflejo más descarnado de la sociedad hipermaterialista de finales de los 80 y en una de las obras maestras de finales del siglo xx. Bret Easton Ellis lanza una crítica corrosiva hacia el egoísmo y la depravación del capitalismo exacerbado: un retrato desolador, irónico y rabiosamente vigente de un mundo al borde del colapso en el que todavía vivimos. La novela más infame de Bret Easton Ellis: un clásico contemporáneo que se ha convertido en símbolo de una generación. «American Psycho sigue siendo la exégesis literaria más indispensable y salvaje sobre la sociedad que hemos construido.» Irvine Welsh. ENGLISH DESCRIPTION The modern classic, the basis of a Broadway musical, and major motion picture from Lion's Gate Films starring Christian Bale, Chloe Sevigny, Jared Leto, and Reese Witherspoon, and directed by Mary Harron. In American Psycho, Bret Easton Ellis imaginatively explores the incomprehensible depths of madness and captures the insanity of violence in our time or any other. Patrick Bateman moves among the young and trendy in 1980s Manhattan. Young, handsome, and well educated, Bateman earns his fortune on Wall Street by day while spending his nights in ways we cannot begin to fathom. Expressing his true self through torture and murder, Bateman prefigures an apocalyptic horror that no society could bear to confront.

american psycho bret easton ellis: Imperial Bedrooms Bret Easton Ellis, 2011-04 De nihilistische rijke jongeren uit de roman 'Less than zero' (1985) hebben zich ontwikkeld tot narcistische delinquenten in de Hollywoodse filmwereld.

american psycho bret easton ellis: Lunar Park Bret Easton Ellis, 2006-08-29 NATIONAL BESTSELLER • From the New York Times bestselling author of American Psycho and Less Than Zero comes a chilling tale that combines reality, memoir, and fantasy to create a fascinating portrait of this most controversial writer but also a deeply moving novel about love and loss, parents and children, and ultimately forgiveness. "John Cheever writes The Shining." —Stephen King, Entertainment Weekly Bret Ellis, the narrator of Lunar Park, is the bestselling writer whose first novel Less Than Zero catapulted him to international stardom while he was still in college. In the years that followed he found himself adrift in a world of wealth, drugs, and fame, as well as dealing with the unexpected death of his abusive father. After a decade of decadence a chance for salvation arrives; the chance to reconnect with an actress he was once involved with, and their son. But almost immediately his new life is threatened by a freak sequence of events and a bizarre series of murders that all seem to connect to Ellis's past. His attempts to save his new world from his own demons makes Lunar Park Ellis's most suspenseful novel. Look for Bret Easton Ellis's new novel, The Shards!

american psycho bret easton ellis: Mary Harron's movie adaptation of Bret Easton Ellis's "American Psycho". A feminist movie Tobias Utz, 2013-08-28 Seminar paper from the year 2013 in the subject American Studies - Literature, grade: 1,0, Catholic University Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, language: English, abstract: "I'm always shocked when people want to make movies out of my books. [...] They have cinematic scenes, they have a lot of dialogue, but often they don't have that narrative momentum a movie needs" (Shulman, par. 12), said Bret Easton Ellis, the author of the novel American Psycho, in an interview about movie adaptations of his books. Ellis wrote a total of seven novels and became one of the most famous authors of postmodern American

literature. His third novel *American Psycho* was published in 1991 and turned into a movie in 2000 by Mary Harron. Yet, the missing narrative momentum Ellis mentioned was not Harron's only problem while adapting the novel. When *American Psycho* was published in 1991, it was not well received. Because of its extremely graphic scenes of violence and pornography the novel caused a chorus of outrage among critics. Female activist groups complained that it was "a how-to novel on the torture and dismemberment of women" (McDowell, par. 1). Ellis even received death threats and had to face furious outcries from women... Ellis was surprised that the novel provoked such reactions because he intended the novel to be a black comedy and a critique of the capitalist society in New York City in the 1980s. His intention was to decry the greed, envy and the urge for conformity present at Wall Street at that time. However, the satiric elements of his novel were almost completely overshadowed by the violent and pornographic passages which led many people to misinterpret the novel's message. The reactions to Mary Harron's movie adaptation of *American Psycho* were much friendlier: Watching *American Psycho* is like witnessing a bravura sleight-of-hand feat. In adapting Bret Easton Ellis's turgid, gory 1991 novel to the screen, the director Mary Harron has boiled a bloated stew of brand names and butchery into a lean and mean horror comedy classic. (Holden, par. 1) In view of this change of opinion from the novel to the movie adaptation, it is justified to take a closer look at how Harron adapted Ellis's novel. In the framework of the seminar Literature and Media: A Kaleidoscope, this paper analyzes the rehabilitation of the novel focusing on internal changes and the resulting changes in the effect on the audience. Mary Harron rehabilitated *American Psycho* by turning it into a feminist movie.

american psycho bret easton ellis: Phenomenological Approaches to Popular Culture

Michael Thomas Carroll, Eddie Tafoya, 2000 Within popular culture studies, one finds discussions about quantitative sociology, Marxism, psychoanalysis, myth criticism, feminism, and semiotics, but hardly a word on the usefulness of phenomenology, the branch of philosophy concerned with human experience. In spite of this omission, there is a close relationship between the aims of phenomenology and the aims of popular culture studies, for both movements have attempted to redirect academic study toward everyday lived experience. The fifteen essays in this volume demonstrate the way in which phenomenological approaches can illuminate popular culture studies, and in so doing they take on the entire range of popular culture.

american psycho bret easton ellis: *American Psycho* Bret Easton Ellis, 2023-01-17 Der schockierende Kultroman über einen Serienmörder in der glitzernden Welt der Wall Street. Patrick Bateman ist gut aussehend, gut erzogen und intelligent. Tagsüber sitzt er in seinem Büro an der Wall Street und vermehrt seinen Reichtum. Doch seine Nächte verbringt er auf unfassbare Weise – als brutaler Serienmörder, der seinen ganz eigenen amerikanischen Traum lebt. »American Psycho« läuft drohend, grollend wie ein Unwetter an, und plötzlich schlägt der grausame Blitz ein: Die Banalität des Schrecklichen, die wir verdrängen wollen, trifft uns und zwingt uns, das Unerträgliche wahrzunehmen: die Oberflächlichkeit, die Brutalität, mit der wir uns abfinden.« Elke Heidenreich Bret Easton Ellis' schonungsloser Roman ist eine verstörende Erkundung der dunklen Seite des modernen Lebens. In einer Welt aus Konsum, Drogen und Gewalt führt er uns die Abgründe der menschlichen Seele vor Augen. »American Psycho« ist ein literarischer Schock, der unter die Haut geht.

american psycho bret easton ellis: *Violence In American Psycho. Forms And Function* Till Neuhaus, 2020-07-24 Seminar paper from the year 2015 in the subject American Studies - Literature, grade: 1,7, Bielefeld University (Linguistik und Literaturwissenschaft), language: English, abstract: Why was there such a public outcry about *American Psycho*? To add further dimensions to this question, this paper will try to provide a deeper insight on the functions of violence in *American Psycho*. To pursue that goal, this paper follows a certain structure: After providing background information on the author, historical context and also the creational process of the book itself, violence as portrayed in *American Psycho* will be analyzed. Therefore, a theoretical framework, which ascribes specific functions to certain forms of violence, will be created. In a second step, the forms of violence as presented in *American Psycho* will be discussed and

classified on the basis of the previously constructed framework. After having found, named and classified distinct features of violence and their functions in the novel, it will be investigated to what extent the horror Bret Easton Ellis has created differs from traditional illustrations of violence and horror. The overarching question of this segment will be: What did Bret Easton Ellis do differently which would explain the audience's intensive feeling of horror? The introductory hypothesis is that American Psycho was able to use violence on various levels and with multiple functions. Violence is not solely used to assign certain character traits to the protagonist and the society he lives in but also serves as vehicle to overcome the protagonist's problems, namely anonymity of the cold-hearted world presented in the novel. Furthermore, violence also serves as a symbol for a constant and omnipresent threat, which creates the feeling of horror. Additionally, violence is also used as a provocation while simultaneously hinting at the absence of ethics, which then again turns out to be social criticism of the protagonist's world. In addition to this, the horror Bret Easton Ellis creates unites well-known concepts, brands, locations, etc. and combines those with an, until then, unknown feature, namely irrational and thereby uncontrollable violence. This creates a feeling of realism which, together with the absences of ethics, moral judgment and rationality, leaves the reader behind in a more vulnerable state than solely explicit violence in a surreal setting. This hypothesis will be taken up by the end of the paper and will then be verified, falsified or further modified.

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