

## **PATRICK BATEMAN IS A MANIFESTATION OF URBAN VOICE IN AMERICAN PSYCHO**

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### **Abstract**

Psychology is a vital discipline to analyse the human behaviour, thoughts, emotions and mental health. The status quo of the materialistic world, delves people into an obsession with luxurious lifestyle, commodify emotions and accentuate appearance. The decline in understanding individuals develops a navigation towards emotionless complex relationships and end with anxiety, depression and trauma. The present paper focus on the disillusionments of elite in Patrick Bateman, who is a replica of urban voice stemmed from psychological tensions, violence and criminal acts. He is the prototype of the world, devoid of empathy marking the cessation of civilization. The novel American Psycho centers on Patrick Bateman, the Investment Banker of New York City, perpetrates gory acts of violence by night. The novel trademarks a psychopath epitomizing urban life as a fertile breeding ground for criminals. Childhood trauma underpins a profound impact on such disillusioned crazy individuals. Fuelled by the hunger for blue blooded lifestyle, Bateman evolves domineering, jealous and a tyrannical narcissist. His characterization executes a savage society forging a fearful apocalyptic posterity. The prime purpose of the paper is to perceive the struggles of people with American Dream with unethical means.

**Keywords:** Trauma, Perpetrators, Materialism, Crime, Jealousy and Savage society.

The major threat in the contemporary society is the augmented crime along the developments of scientific technologies. Crime rate increases every year. It has become unpredictable suspense integrated with horrendous murders. The abundance of social crimes and exploitation of the vulnerable are the sequel of the avaricious urban world. The decline of affinity with nature turned human beings to embrace

violence and transgressions. Individuals exhibit traits like insatiable desire for possessions, focus on luxury goods, prioritise status, and insane for brands to distinguish themselves in a developed society. Patrick Bateman in *American psycho* is the epitome of felony, brutal violence, and horrific murders. His concealed self is a battleground of the bizarre events in the novel. The urban culture that the antagonist developed in the novel symbolise a threatening atmosphere. The present paper focus on the disturbing incitement of Patric Bateman's violence and the impact of superficial urbanization.

### **Urban apocalypse:**

Unveiling the future of destruction is the objective of this paper. The role of apocalypse is evident from ancient myths where God punishes humans through prophecies. The novel *American psycho* is a prophetic revelation of the cursed progeny. In the current days the darker aspects of human lives are apparent in various disciplines. Urban environment plays a substantial role in shaping the protagonist indulge in nefarious activities. Patrick Bateman of *American psycho* is an exemplar of the urban elite gleaming materialism, violence, iniquity and misogyny. Beneath the facade of a charming and sophisticated member of the American society lies the hidden malevolent, perfidious and brutal personality. His narration is weaved with sadism that entails disturbing and barbaric sexual assaults. His addiction to compulsive purchase is an indication that he is psychopath. The uncontrollable urges in him to buy luxurious brands explores the dark narcissistic personality of Bateman who is engulfed by the century of Consumerism.

### **Disillusionments of elite:**

Patrick Bateman earns his self identity as a wealthy Investment Banker, presenting himself a normal member of the society hiding his mask of insanity. Beginning from the disillusionment with the American Dream, the novel examines the idea connected to wealth, status, and material possessions. As Patrick Bateman's character is focused solely on material gain he represents the dark side of this dream, revealing the emptiness and superficiality of a life. Disillusionment with 1980s culture, Bret Easton ellis satirizes the excessiveness of 1980s yuppie culture, revealing the shallow values and morals of the wealthy elite. Bateman's character embodies the worst aspects of this culture, including his obsession with status, wealth, and material possessions. Bateman is also disillusioned with the Social Hierarchies. The delusions of grandeur urban life of 1980s America, reveal that the wealth, status, and power of an individual are used to manipulate and control others. Bateman's is a product of using his wealth and status to exploit and decoy those around him. The absence of spirituality and morality are the components of a well constructed and enforced urban life. Bateman's himself is a man of moral vacuum, revealing distorted to justify even the most heinous acts. He uses his affluence to create a false sense of self hide his criminal psychopathy. He is

a psychopath who commits serious crimes with the assistance of groundless circumstances. Patrick Bateman cannot be spotted any abnormality in his behavior and is a more hazardous material created by urban tradition.

### **Literature review:**

In the contemporary era of modernity, human beings are excessively self concerned producing a cocky lineage. Individuals are disconnected with the society and exhibit callous attitudes. They are obsessed with lavish modus vivendi that they rely on luxury brands where Courtney says,

"I also survived a business school in Switzerland. But I was in Geneva. Evelyn was in Lausanne" (13) and Bateman comments,

"My secretary, Jean, who is in love with me and who I will probably end up marrying, sits at her desk and this morning, to get my attention as usual, is wearing something improbably expensive and completely inappropriate"(61)

The novel's portrayal of toxic masculinity and misogyny has been widely criticized. Bateman's violence and aggression towards women have been seen as a manifestation of a broader cultural problem (Faludi, 1991; hooks, 1994). Bateman turns lunatic, aggravated by narcissistic disorder. The peak of his uncontrollable rage is prevalent in the chapters that follows. The bold and obdurate exhibition of yuppie culture of the late twentieth century in him was praised by some critics and others sentenced it to be a menacing and a threatening novel of crime. (Palgrave, 2000). Apocalypse is a metaphor for the psychological disintegration of the protagonist, Patrick Bateman. Bateman's descent into madness and violence serves as a symbol for the collapse of his own identity and the disintegration of his social world (Krystal, 1988; Simeon, 2006). The depiction of a society of violence, greed, crime, superficiality, Consumerism, materialism, victimization, sexual assault, torment, with Nil empathy and nil emotions. The central figure is a pure psychopath who enrages women with sadistic sex. The illustration of world in chaos, skeptic culture, racial paranoia and cruel anxiety are the representations of the time (Baudrillard, 1991). The metropolitan tradition with a superficial hero who is emotionless is disillusioned by the vanity of its lifestyle. His inner vacuum and purposelessness of mortal existence bestowed him, defeat. the novel's apocalypse as a postmodern trope, reflecting the collapse of grand narratives and the fragmentation of social and cultural identities. The novel's depiction of a world in disarray, marked by chaos, violence, and uncertainty, serves as a commentary on the postmodern condition (Debord, 1967; Harvey, 1990).

### **Methodology:**

The beginning of the novel, with the chapter "April Fools" records the assortments of mundane daily activities of Patrick Bateman with his brutal homicides. His darker impulses and traits of malfeasance begin to surface more explicitly. By explaining the series of events his narration becomes unreliable and

fragmented with intolerable surrealism. Patrick, a man of just 26 years, is an investment banker who works at Pierce & Pierce. Timothy Price, his colleague at Pierce & Pierce, is a rival in the burgeoning materialistic consumerism. A group of harmful, corruptive, and brutal young aspirants of the capitalist society tie up together to form a vicious cultureless- future. They haunt the society vehemently through their shallow understanding of life. Timothy Price boasts, "I'm resourceful... I'm creative, I'm young, unscrupulous, highly motivated, highly skilled. In essence what I'm saying is that society cannot afford to lose me. I'm an asset"(3)

Evelyn Williams the beautiful and wealthy girlfriend of Bateman, is also exposed to be a product of materialism. She is a hallmark of a materialistic adolescent girl who ruminates more about her social status. Paul Allen and Courtney Lawrence are also introduced as compromising urbane products in Patrick's social circle. In his monologue, his true thoughts and feelings about the people around him gets unveiled which are often cruel and dismissive. The chapter is ironic, as it is a prank on Evelyn, labelling her a cheat which in turn causes her upset and exasperated. Because the objectification of women with Bateman's violent projections are the central theme of the novel. He represses his true feelings and desires, behind a mask of charm and sophistication. This repression leads to a buildup of unconscious tension, released through his violent fantasies and behaviours. His ego is his rational, logical self, which attempts to mediate between his id and superego. However, his ego is weak and ineffective, allowing his id to dominate his behavior. The impression of superficial charm is often produced by a mixture of good looks, youth, and a cheerful disposition." (Freud, 1915, p. 137).

Patrick delineates his everyday morning routine, in the "Morning" chapter that clears the way of his entire narcissism. It includes a series of meticulous and precise actions that stills his avariciousness. Beginning from the six foot by four foot portrait of a naked woman- David Onica, washing his face, brushing his teeth with Rembrandt onto a four-tortoiseshell toothbrush, facial massage off with a spearmint face scrub made from Australian gold-black brass, and on weekends or before date he prefers Gerund Natural Revitalizing Shampoo are the highlights of his affliction to the consumerist Culture. His pretentious values postrate when he admits, he's not really in love with Evelyn, but rather uses her as a status symbol. He is an appearance freak who narrates,

"After I change into Ralph Lauren monogrammed boxershorts and a Fair Isle sweater and slide into silk polka-dot Enrico Hidalgo slippers I tie a plastic ice pack around my neck.... Then I squeeze Rembrandt onto a tortoise shell toothbrush... Then I use the ProBright tooth polisher and next the Interplay tooth polisher... Over the weekend I plan to go to Bloomingdale's or Bergdorf's and on Evelyn's advice pick up a Foltene European supplement and shampoo for thinning hair... Luis

Carruthers recommended the Aramis Nutriplexx system a nutrient complex that helps increase circulation."(26)

Patrick walking through a tunnel in New York City, senses disorientation and claustrophobic, who turns increasingly agitated and undergo a surreal vision. It blurs his reality with fantasy reflecting the instability of the mental condition. Patrick meets with his colleagues, Timothy Price, Paul Allen, and Luis Carruthers, to discuss business deals after the hallucinations created by the murder of a woman. His growing instabilities, need for control and sadistic impulses escalated his psychopathy to commit a brutal murder. He enjoys the aesthetics of rampage rather than moral implications. His Id superpowers his ego and super ego. In the lens of Sigmund Freud, "The 'charming' individual is one who knows how to exploit his charm, that is, his capacity for arousing libidinal impulses in others." (Freud, 1921, p. 105)

Dorsia is the restaurant of haute cuisine, with expensive and exotic ingredients that includes Bateman's expectations of elaborate and sophisticated dishes like "pan-seared foie gras" and "wild mushroom risotto". The atmosphere too serves elegant and refined, with a sophisticated decor and is portrayed as a place where the wealthy and powerful ones visit. According to the theory of Postmodernism, "The world of commodities is a world of simulations, where the image, the sign, the symbol have replaced the real" (Baudrillard, 1981, p. 119). Patricia is represented a complicit in Patrick's objectification and degradation. She wishes to tolerate his abusive behavior and shallow conversation which serves intolerance that enable and perpetuate misogyny. His routine is a scathing critique of toxic masculinity, superficiality, and the objectification of women. He is infused with music and lacks humanity which is explicitly described in chapter Genesis through the rock band specifically, their 1980 album "Duke". The album "Duke" by Genesis includes the songs like, "Behind the Lines", "Invisible touch", "No reply at all", "Man on the corner", "Misunderstanding", "Take it all away", "Turn It On Again", "Alone Tonight", "illegal alien", "invisible touch" and "the last domino"(131) are of Patrick Bateman's musical tastes. It shows his appearance as a connoisseur of 1980s pop music as he name-drops various artists and bands. However, his interest in music is largely superficial that turns to be an useless grandiosity, with lack of empathy, and his need for admiration may be indicative of narcissistic personality disorder. "Narcissistic personality disorder is characterized by a grandiose sense of self-importance, a need for admiration, and a lack of empathy" (Kohut, 1971, p. 151). The Patty Winters Show is a fictional television talk show which disturbed Bateman's mind as the topic of the day was Toddler-Murderers. He is stricken by emotionless consumerism as he shifts his mood from sympathy to celebrations. The sudden shifts in mood and behavior, as well as his

tendency to prioritize his own desires and needs is seen in the next chapters where he narrates,

"Would Courtney like me less if Luis was dead? ... Would Courtney spend more time with me - the time she now spends with Luis-if he was out of the picture, no longer an alternative, if he was perhaps... dead? If Luis were killed would Courtney be upset? Could I genuinely be of comfort without laughing in her face, my own spite doubling back on me, giving everything away? Is the face that she dates me behind his back what excites her, my body or the size of my dick?... Would I ruin things by strangling Luis?"(151)

According to Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, defense mechanisms are unconscious psychological processes that protect the individual from anxiety, stress, and other forms of psychological distress. In him are found, rationalization, denial, projection, displacement, sublimation, and repression. As Anna Freud, the prominent psychoanalyst and daughter of Sigmund Freud, writes, "Rationalization is a defence mechanism which consists in creating a logical explanation for unacceptable behavior" (A. Freud, 1936, p. 186). Patrick Bateman, exemplifies the use of defense mechanisms to cope with the demands of his societal expectations and his own dark impulses.

Patrick becomes increasingly envious and agitated by the relationship between Luis, his rival business man with Courtney, his recent girlfriend. Patrick feels threatened by the charm of Luis and develops an unnerving possessiveness concerning the superficiality rather than genuine relationships. His vision blurs slightly around the edges to circle Luis' neck where his thumb meet at nape and index finger at Luis' Adam's apple. Patrick delineates his interest to strangle Luis as he is consumed by envy towards his intimacy to her. Patrick's uncontrollable narration is so exaggerated and unbelievable,

"I want him to know who it is who is killing him. I want to be the last face, the last thing, that Luis sees before he dies and I want to cry out, 'I am fucking Courtney. Do you hear me? I'm fucking Courtney. Ha-ha-ha'"(152). Freud's psychological analogy can be related to the interest of Patrick to strangle Luis. Freud's idea is that a charm of a child lies to a great extent in his narcissism, and his self-contentment. The primary narcissistic personality disorder that Freud puts, "The individual's first love-object is himself." (Freud, 1914, p. 77) matches Patrick's narcissistic behaviour. In contrast to the scene of egoism, a queer theory touches the narration. Psychological instability manifests in Patrick as mood swings, impulsivity, and distorted thinking. His fragmented self disconnected him from the socio-cultural constructions. He encounters a sexual and erotic talk with Luis who sighs, rubs Patrick's shoulders and trembling in want of him. That was the first time when Patrick noted him wearing unzipped pants without difficulty. The shift of queer

relationship to a violent and sadistic impulse with no remorse. The capacity for cruelty and his gradual descent into madness is oblivious, where in one swift mood he picked up the dog by the neck preventing it's throat to bark as it wa tight grip of the throat. Patrick let his hand run seductive across the dog's back infront of its owner and made an embarrassment. In contrast to it, he commits an emotionless murder of that dog. It shows his profound lack of empathy and how he has grown desensitised to aggressive violence viewing it as a mundane and enjoying the same experience. The immediate change of mood that night shifts to an infuriating dinner with Christie, how Patrick calls her but is not her real name. He describes women as commodities, reducing them to mere objects for his sexual gratifications. He relies on cliched erotic expressions of women's physique. She stared up at him with a seventeen years old' gaze. He expressed his interest to watch her private parts and touch in an unimaginable way. He encounters two women sexually, Christie and Sabrina at a time. He also compares Sabrina with Christie and end with worth paying her by the hour. He also made both the women engage in a lesbian relationship. His brutal and savage sexism can be found when he narrates, " then I lay Christie over her, placing the two in a sixty-nine position... still aching from the force of my ejaculation, and I close my eyes, my knees weak and shaking... I hold these items out and explain in a hoarse whisper, we are not thorough yet". (168,169).

An hour later he led them impatiently out to the door where both were bleeding but were well paid. He also adds Sabrina will encounter a limp and Christie scratches across her buttocks. Patrick's lack of remorse or guilt after engaging in sexual activities with the two women is consistent with the psychopathic trait of lack of remorse (Cleckley, 1941, p. 38-40). Patrick disregards women's autonomy, boundaries, and consent, demonstrating his sexual pleasure, rather than recognizing them as human beings with agency and dignity. In this context, a defense mechanism employed by Patrick's ego is repression. He represses his true feelings of anxiety, insecurity, and rage, instead presenting a facade of confidence, charm, and sophistication. As Anna Freud notes, "The repressed is... pushed back into the unconscious, and its existence is only betrayed by the symptoms which are produced by the conflict" (A. Freud, 1936, p. 147). Patrick's repressed emotions manifest in his violent outbursts followed by disparate fantasies. On another level, Patrick's murders can be seen as a way to cope with the emptiness and superficiality of his life. Regardless of his successful outlook, he feels unfulfilled and disconnected from the world around him. In this way, his murders serve to temporarily fill this void and provide a sense of thrill and excitement. His pretentious culture of patriarchal murders are to assert his power and control over others. He also feels entitled to do as he pleases and is triggered by feelings of insecurity, anxiety, or frustration. According to Freud's theory, the superego in

Patrick is responsible for regulating the id's impulses and enforcing moral standards. However, his superego appears to be severely impaired, allowing his id to run rampant. Despite his heinous crimes, Patrick shows little remorse or guilt, indicating a lack of superego functioning.

Patrick Bateman murdered his ex-girlfriend Bethany after getting her drunk at lunch. He even stabbed a young child to death in a public park without any reason. And on another occasion, he sees a man playing saxophone on the street corner. Bateman quickly pulls out a gun and shoots the man who played saxophone to death, not noticing that he is within the sight of a police car.

The extremity of narcissism is obvious in the chapter 'Tries to Cook and Eat Girl'. His cannibalistic behaviour traumatised the reader. He explains, " I want to drink this girl's blood, as if it were champagne and I plunge my face deep into what's left of her stomach scratching my chomping jaw on a broken rib... This is my reality. Everything outside of yhis is like some movie I once saw. "(331-332). Frenzied, Bateman makes a phone call to his lawyer, Harold Carnes, and confesses all of his crimes, including the murder of the missing Paul Owen. Carnes tells him, Bateman couldn't have killed Paul Owen because the situations are opposing the counsels with Patrick. The novel ends just like as it began with Bateman's out for drinks with his friend, discussing clothing, their work, and other fatuous things. As the purpose of the paper is to perceive the struggles of people with American Dream with unethical means, Patrick Bateman exemplifies it with exact narration. He fails in his motives to come up in the creamy layer of the society. He hides from the mainstream society and exploit his own self destroying a whole community of human beings.

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