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**POSTMODERN IRONY IN BRET EASTON ELLIS'S  
*AMERICAN PSYCHO*  
BA thesis**

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## ABSTRACT

This paper analyses Bret Easton Ellis's novel *American Psycho* to see how irony is used to present alternative meanings. It also aims to determine whether the irony that is used in the novel is postmodern. This thesis is predominantly structured around the works of two postmodern theorists - Linda Hutcheon and Fredric Jameson, specifically Hutcheon's theories on traditional and postmodern irony, and Jameson's critique of pastiche. The theoretical section gives an overview of postmodernism and irony. It also introduces the two main terms used in the analysis. In the empirical section, examples from the text are used to show how irony and pastiche are used in the narrative and to discuss whether or not the irony present in the text is postmodern. The thesis ends with a conclusion about the findings.

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## INTRODUCTION

Bret Easton Ellis's *Less Than Zero* (1985) had been a critical success, with positive sale numbers, making Ellis a promising upcoming writer of the 1980s. Despite the relatively meagre commercial success of his second book *The Rules of Attraction* (1987), Simon and Shuster were confident in Ellis's abilities and anticipated great success for his next novel, giving him a hefty advance. Numerous copies were printed and ready for the masses to read, but certain passages of the manuscript were leaked just a few months before the official publication date, resulting in an uproar from the general public, who were appalled and shocked by the novel's gruesome details, where the reader "sees fingers nailed individually to wood planks, hears the hiss of brains escaping their skull cavity through the cracks the size of axe blades, watches victims be skinned alive" (Brusseau 2000: 35). The leaked passages resulted in a boycott from the National Organization of Women (NOW), which claimed that the novel was a "how-to manual on the torture and dismemberment of women" (Eldridge 2008: 20). An article in *The New York Times* instructed people to ignore the book all together, going as far as to say that *American Psycho* cannot even be considered real fiction (Eldridge 2008: 20). Scared of the repercussions of releasing such a scandalous piece of literature, Simon and Shuster cancelled the release, shredded the copies and sent the manuscript back to Ellis. The book was then picked up by Random House as part of the Vintage Contemporaries series in 1991 (Brusseau 2000: 35). Despite the novel's initial tumultuous start, *American Psycho* is now considered a postmodern classic (Eldridge 2008: 19), and its critique of consumerism and capitalist culture is something that rings even truer today, as it seems that consumer capitalism has intensified even further.

*American Psycho* follows the life of a wealthy Wall Street investment banker Patrick Bateman, who at first glance seems to have everything – good looks, good connections, a good job, money. But as things progress, we find out that Bateman is also a psychopath. Fuelled by the superficial values of the 1980s yuppie culture, Batemans slowly starts to lose his grip on

reality as descriptions and monologues of designer items, fancy restaurants, latest hi-fi equipment and the latest bands get replaced with gruesome descriptions of murders on an increasingly violent scale. Ellis's novel is an ironic and satirical commentary on the values of capitalist and consumerist culture and through this narrative the author shows how these values can have a detrimental effect when taken to the extreme.

Since its release numerous academic articles on various aspects of the novel have been published. Much research has been done on how violence is portrayed in the novel and its implications (Freccero 1997, Messier 2004, Schoene 2008, Abel 2001), how masculinity is displayed in the novel (Schoene 2008, La Berge 2010, Storey 2005) or how consumerism plays a part in the narrative (Jefferson 2018, Allué 2002, Szetela 2014). Much less research has been done from a formal narrative perspective. The aim of this thesis is to look at *American Psycho* as an example of postmodern literature, to analyse how postmodern irony is used throughout the novel and whether the irony that appears can be considered specifically postmodern.

The first part of the thesis gives an overview of postmodernism and irony, ending with postmodern irony. The theoretical framework of the thesis is developed, above all, around different works of Linda Hutcheon and, most specifically, her idea of irony's potential to "subvert from within" (Hutcheon 1992: 16). This subversive potential is a key aspect of postmodern irony and thus it plays an important role in the analysis. Another important source is Fredric Jameson and most notably his book *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, which, in addition to explaining the nature of postmodernism, also highlights one of the main techniques that *American Psycho* uses – pastiche. This will be a key notion discussed in the second half of the thesis, the empirical analysis of *American Psycho*, as a feature of postmodern irony. Differently from Jameson, this thesis considers pastiche as a potential tool of social critique, following Mark Fisher and Linda Hutcheon. Other authors are also cited to give a fuller picture of the history and nature of both postmodernism and irony.

## POSTMODERNISM

### **Defining postmodernism**

The easiest definition of postmodernism can be found in *The Cambridge Introduction to Postmodernism* (2015), which states “that postmodernism was the dominant cultural tendency (it might be safer to say a dominant tendency) during the second half of the twentieth century in the advanced industrial societies of the West, spreading eventually to other regions of the globe” (McHale 2015: 1). This definition merely indicates the time period of postmodernism but does not give a solid ground to analyse postmodernism in detail, as periodisation is only a small part of the whole picture.

Giving postmodernism a distinct definition that would go beyond periodisation is a much more difficult endeavour. Arguments regarding its meaning, whether it actually meant anything at all or was just an alternative meaning to “late modernism” have surrounded the term since its emergence (Geyh 2017: 2). The term was first used in the 1940s in architecture to differentiate it from the Modern movement. It gained wider recognition in the 1960s when cultural critics and commentators started to use it to describe new trends in literature that either rejected, adapted or extended the techniques of modernism (Nicol 2009: 1). The problem already arises from the definition of modernity, as the idea of what is modern is constantly changing, because being modern entails a distancing from the past and a simultaneous look to the future. This means that “the moment of a new beginning constituting modernity will incessantly produce itself again and again” (Behler 1990: 3). Modernism as a distinct cultural style of modernity was characterized by rapid innovation, as new ideas and modes of thought were constantly developed, with previously existing ideas “rendered obsolete”, as modernism constantly tried to distance itself from its previous creations. Ultimately a new era was needed as modernism could not reinvent itself endlessly (McHale 2015: 4).

In order to differentiate itself from modernism, postmodernism had to highlight a new and unique quality. One option would have been to contradict the idea of modernism by stopping the constant change and to “adopt a temporality of *stasis*” (McHale 2015: 4) or, instead, to try to accelerate the speed of change and constantly reinvent itself at breakneck speed (McHale 2015: 4). It is from these circumstances that the term postmodern has originated. It also carries within itself the paradox that has troubled modernity – how can we describe what is modern and present, if the act of describing essentially makes it part of the past? Postmodernism takes the paradox even further, as the prefix *post* suggests a new period, yet how can something be more modern? Hence postmodernism by its nature is an ironic notion, as it puts forward the idea that it is impossible to describe and discuss modernity in a meaningful manner. Postmodernism is aware of this paradox, as the ideas of modernity carry over to postmodernism, which then tries to tackle these ideas in a new way. So, in a sense, postmodernism further explores the ideas of modernism, while actively criticising them. Postmodernism is not a new era, as the prefix *post* would suggest, but “a critical continuation of modernism which is itself both critique and criticism” (Behler 1990: 3-5). Different periods of history are usually distinguished from one another by “historical discontinuities” or “breaks”, but that is not always the case, because periods are not always strictly contained, as ideas from one period can still be found in the next. This is especially true in the case of postmodernism (McHale 2015: 6).

At the same time, postmodernism can also be seen as a point in time where the previous ideals of modernity have been exhausted. It gives up the idea of a universal concept of truth and no longer believes in the existence of “all-embracing systems of meaning, or uniform foundations of knowledge” (Behler 1990: 6). Instead, postmodernism is characterized by a variety of thoughts and opinions and the assumption that such a system can never be accomplished (Behler 1990:6). Modernism tried to heroically impose order in a world that

lacked a clear purpose, where multiple perspectives and interpretations existed simultaneously. Postmodernism presents itself as “consciously antiheroic” by giving up this effort by adopting an attitude of uncertainty towards the meanings and relations of the world: “in short, a world in need of mending is superseded by one beyond repair” (Wilde 1980: 9).

### **Postmodernism and history**

The postmodern relation to history has been characterized by an eagerness to understand history while at the same time being sceptical about whether such an understanding can ever be achieved. This was due to the horrific events of the twentieth century which made people realise that not everything can be looked at in a straightforward manner. After the 1950s, writers started to stray away from the “heavy seriousness” that characterized modernist writing and instead started to opt for a more comical and ironic outlook, breaking away from the “traditional aesthetic innovation” of earlier literature (Eburne 2017: 10). Instead of recalling the past in an act of nostalgia, it turns to it to critique and to reflect. This allows writers to be self-conscious about the history that came before them, while also “managing to reconnect its readers to the world outside the page” (Hutcheon 1988: 5). While the modernists tried to experiment with language in order to convey “deep cultural” ideas or generate some form of “political significance”, postmodernism gives up the claim of achieving either of them (Eburne 2017: 11). “It refuses to posit any structure or, what Lyotard (1984a) calls, master narrative—such as art or myth— which, for such modernists, would have been consolatory. It argues that such systems are indeed attractive, perhaps even necessary; but this does not make them any the less illusory” (Hutcheon 1988: 6).

Modernist writers tried to understand how we know and how can we be sure of the validity of knowledge. The modernist pursuit was epistemological. With the emergence of postmodernism, the focus shifted to more ontological questions, questions regarding our existence and relation to the world around us. This does not mean that epistemological questions

disappeared completely; they were simply no longer the priority. Postmodern fiction started to view the world in a more sceptical and doubtful manner: “postmodernism multiplied and juxtaposed worlds; it troubled and volatized them” (McHale 2015: 15). No longer are the answers to questions clear and concise, they become ambiguous and uncertain (McHale 2015: 15-16). This does not mean that postmodernism signifies some sort of loss of meaning, but rather that the “status of knowledge” has changed in a computerized society (Nicol 2009: 11). Knowledge is now translatable into computer language and thus becomes a valuable resource: “the old ideal of knowledge as a formation of the mind and the personality dies out and is replaced by a conception of knowledge in terms of suppliers and users, of commodity producers and consumers” (Behler 1990: 11). This means that knowledge is no longer something universal, but rather more fragmented. This is why people no longer believe in a universal truth, as there is always more than one way to look at a group of events (Nicol 2009: 11). Narratives that were previously thought to be universal are now being questioned in a society “in which social reality is structured by discourses” (Hutcheon 1988: 7).

Due to the waning belief in metanarratives, the postmodern attitude is prone to irony, as it is actively aware of itself – we know that the existing narratives and ideologies can never be taken for granted, do not have some real and inherent value and that meanings can change depending on the context that they are used in, yet they are used nonetheless: “Postmodernism, in a word then, is incredulity in the face of such universal metanarratives. They have not been refuted but simply become outworn; they no longer fulfil their function of bestowing sense and meaning upon human activities” (Behler 1990: 12). Postmodernism also shifts the boundaries in art and genres of art, including literature. It is harder to differentiate between literary genres, as techniques and conventions of different genres are merged. These texts also often relate to the different conventions in a parodic way, by incorporating and simultaneously challenging these conventions. While some theorists see this merging of styles as something negative, others

view it as a way to challenge the definition of subjectivity and creativity: “the fiction of the creating subject gives way to the frank confiscation, quotation, excerption, accumulation and repetition of already existing images. Notions of originality, authenticity and presence... are undermined” (Hutcheon 1988: 11).

### **Signs, capitalism, and the postmodern environment**

Another attribute of postmodernism is the relation between the signifier and the signified. Signs no longer indicate a clear or stable idea, but simply relate to other signs (Behler 1990: 6). Words no longer have an inherent meaning, but their “meaning is derived from the relations between elements in the system rather than their capacity to refer to something outside it” (Nicol 2009: 7). This stems from the effects of the logic of late capitalism that have extended into every area of society, including the media and the arts. Information that can be used for monetary gain is king, meaning that the postmodern society is saturated by products that “are essentially *reproductions* or *abstractions* – images, advertising, information, memories, style, simulated experiences” (Nicol 2009: 3). Our time is increasingly spent on interacting with things that are no longer authentic, but rather abstract representations (Nicol 2009: 3-4, 7). The objects themselves as physical entities lose their importance and simply serve as a means of producing signs, or in the words of Baudrillard:

The empirical “object”, given its contingency of form, color, material, function and discourse (or, if it is a cultural object, in its aesthetic finality) is a myth. It is nothing but the different types of relations and significations that converge, contradict themselves, and twist around it, as such – the hidden logic that not only arranges this bundle of relations, but directs the manifest discourse that overlays and occludes it (Baudrillard 1981: 63).

Baudrillard used the term “simulacrum” which for him is not a copy of the real, but the depiction of something that has no original. For him, in contemporary society reality has been replaced by signs and simulacra help to conceal the fact that reality is no longer accessible beyond these constructed realities (Greer 2010: 73).

This leads to a reality where it is increasingly harder to distinguish between what is real and what is not, a distinction that was clearer in modern society. This is because in a postmodern environment, signs no longer have a clear origin, as they are constantly “recodified and detached”, as society shifts its focus from production to simulation (Greer 2010: 69). Objects lose their meaning as signs become the ultimate end goal of consumption:

In the logic of consumer capitalism, reference to a concrete or “real” is not only unnecessary, it simply does not exist. Consumption practices do not function on the principle of practical operation, but on the principle of difference, and this “process of signification is, at bottom, nothing but a gigantic *simulation model of meaning* (Weinreich 2004: 67).

Because of simulation, the differences between real and imaginary are harder to detect, as copies become the main focus and thus are increasingly distanced from the original. The easiest illustration of this would be the example of fashion magazines, where models are digitally enhanced to produce an idealized version of reality. Consumers then view this enhanced version as if it were real and attempt to replicate it in real life by “undertaking surgery or rigorous dietary regimes” (Greer 2010: 69). Thus, the difference between real and imaginary gets mixed up, as people start to view the artificial version as reality. An analogous example can be made in the context of social media, where digitally enhanced photos are viewed as the norm, despite them being an artificial version of reality. Similarly in the case of *American Psycho*, fancy restaurants and designer clothing should represent some form of the real and thus carry meaning, but if the focus shifts on the mere attainment of this image, it loses its ties to the reality that it initially was supposed to represent.

### **Realism and unreliable narration**

A couple of attributes in postmodern literature are a result of the overall postmodern condition described previously. One of these aspects is the relationship with realism. Realism was the main technique used in the nineteenth century literature to represent a world that would be as similar to the real world as possible. It was coupled with a philosophy that literature should present the world objectively and “in precise detail” (Nicol 2009: 18). Modernist writers started

to doubt in this technique, as it did not leave room to explore subjectivity in a meaningful manner, because “the conscious mind experiences reality not just as something that can be measured by universal norms, but as something deeply personal and particular” (Nicol 2009: 19).

Postmodern fiction is also sceptical when it comes to realism. It does not reject it in its entirety, but rather dismisses the idea that the world can be represented as straightforwardly as it had been before. The fictional world is no longer something that the narrator simply mediates to the reader but instead is “wholly the creation of the narrator’s ego” (Nicol 2009: 20), meaning that narrators become more unreliable than before (Nicol 2009: 18-19). This unreliability is the result of the constant challenge to traditional notions of perspective. The narrator of a text is no longer viewed as an all-knowing entity. There can be more than one narrator and often they can undermine their own existence in the text (Hutcheon 1988: 11).

In literature, unreliable narration can be described as follows:

Unreliable narration is generally associated with a homodiegetic narration shaped in such a way as to allow readers to adopt an understanding of diegetic reality which differs from the narrator’s account. The discrepancy between these two assessments establishes a distance that accords a privileged position to the reader from which he or she can obtain an understanding unavailable to the narrator (Brütch 2015: 221-222).

This means that the narrator can no longer be objectively trusted and thus the reader of a novel is more active, as both are experiencing the same story for the first time (Nicol 2009: 20). This makes the reader more aware of the text, as one must consider alternative meanings to those that are presented. Hence narrative unreliability encourages ironic interpretation, as readers must navigate between a host of different meanings, while also building up their own version of the story that conflicts with what the narrator is trying to establish:

Conflicts between the narrator’s statements and the reader’s understanding usually arise early on, and the discrepancy between the two often persists until the end. This narrative constellation can be considered ironic. The narrator’s statements themselves, however, are not ironic. He really means what he says. But the narrative text as a whole is shaped in such a way so as to suggest an alternative or even opposite interpretation (Brütch 2015: 222).

Thus, unreliable narration requires active engagement from the reader, as one must detect discrepancies in what the narrator is describing. This means that there is a probability that the reader simply does not notice these discrepancies, but most of the times there are obvious textual references that indicate unreliability, as the goal of using unreliable narration is not to confuse the reader, but rather open up the possibility for alternative meanings.

## IRONY

Irony as a rhetorical tool has been around for centuries and its meaning is constantly expanding. This difficulty in achieving a unitary meaning might simply be an attribute of irony, as it has always been seen as something that undermines clarity and either liberates or destroys existing ideas (Booth 1975: IX). Already Socrates used irony to subvert the views of other people and to challenge existing worldviews in a time of social insecurity. We still live in a world of “quotation”, “simulation” and social uncertainty (Colebrook 2004: 1,2). This is why irony still merits discussion despite its lengthy history, especially in its postmodern variant.

Irony has its roots in the plays of Aristophanes dating back to the years 257-180BC, where the word *eironeia* was at first used to describe lying instead of what we define as irony today. It was a bit later that *eironeia* started to refer to the act of disguising one’s true thoughts and “irony intersected with the political problem of human meaning” (Colebrook 2004: 1). It is during this time that irony as a concept was no longer used to refer to just lying or deceit, but an intended act of saying one thing but meaning another. The nature of irony requires the interpreter to distinguish between statements that are true and statements that are made simply to ridicule (Colebrook 2004: 2).

It was not until the eighteenth century that irony took on more meanings and started to resemble the irony that we know today. While before irony had been seen as “essentially intentional and instrumental” (Muecke 1970: 19), it was now also seen as something

unintentional, something that can either be recognized or not – it became ‘double-natured’ and more general in its meaning (Muecke 1970: 19). Up until then irony was considered to be simply a way of making one’s arguments stronger and was mainly used for speeches, that is, it was a rhetorical tool with a very limited scope. The term was not used for having an ironic outlook or calling a situation ironic (Colebrook 2004: 7). When previously it had been seen as a limited action, it now could be seen as a “permanent and self-conscious commitment” (Muecke 1970: 19). It was no longer a one-time trick to be used in an argument, but something broader in its meaning. Another important development was the idea that someone could be the ‘victim’ of irony. This so-called victim could either be the subject of an ironic remark or someone who failed to detect the irony. This is important because it introduces the idea of someone “being the ironic” or calling a situation “ironic” (Muecke 1970: 19).

The issue of sincerity is the main element of irony, as the key to understanding it is based on the ability to tell when someone is not sincere. In order to talk about irony, we have to understand irony and “understand each writer’s specific culture or context” (Colebrook 2004: 3). To analyse irony, we have to maintain a distance from the source that we are analysing. Reading and understanding irony means looking beyond the standard use of words and considering alternative meanings to what was originally written (Colebrook 2004: 3). Irony requires active engagement from the reader, as one has to be both attached and detached while reading to recognize both what is said and also what is actually meant (Shugart 1999: 434). The ability to understand irony brings with it the questioning of ideas and everyday language. This questioning, however, is hierarchical, as it means claiming a point of view that is above what is being perceived.

It seems to be a common belief that irony can be misunderstood. There can exist ironies that were not intended yet are interpreted as such. Similarly, ironies that were intended can remain undetected by others. Hence irony is “risky business” as there is always a chance that

an intended irony will remain unnoticed or be interpreted in a way not originally intended (Hutcheon 1994: 11).

Booth attempts to define what he calls “stable irony” (Booth 1975: 3), a form of irony that presents itself to the reader in a straightforward way and which works as a tool that would allow us to analyse whether something is ironic or not. He provides four traits that characterize stable irony. Firstly, irony has to be “intended” (Booth 1975: 4). The ironist uses irony deliberately to present an idea. Secondly, the irony has to be hidden, one cannot simply state that a situation is ironic. The reader must read between the lines and construct alternative meanings to the ones that are presented. Thirdly, they are stable in the sense that they have a fixed meaning that the reader is supposed to grasp and, once that meaning is grasped, no further questioning is required. Finally, stable irony has to be “finite” (Booth 1975: 6) in application. This means that irony has to be constrained to a particular subject matter and have a clear endpoint when it comes to its interpretation. Stable irony does not attempt to make grand claims about the world (Booth 1975: 6).

There is an aspect of irony that distinguishes it clearly from other figures of speech. This something is what Linda Hutcheon calls the “edge” (Hutcheon 1994: 35) of irony. Irony has a way of making people uncertain, it “can put people on edge” (Hutcheon 1994: 35), as it drives a wedge between people who understand it and those who do not. It also is often used to ridicule or critique certain viewpoints, so it is no surprise that it can put people on edge. Another reason why irony is edgy is because the reader of an ironic text has to adopt “an evaluative, even judgemental attitude” (Hutcheon 1994: 35).

## POSTMODERN IRONY

Irony was originally used in specific contexts, where it was easier to detect, as one simply had to see that what happened was different from what was expected. But today we live

in a time that is “characterized by contradictions and inconsistencies” (Shugart 1999: 435) where it is increasingly harder to see the truth. Some theorists believe that, because of this, irony will no longer be prominently used as a rhetorical device, while others believe that irony is perfectly suited for the postmodern environment, where meanings are no longer something “single, decidable, or stable” (Hutcheon 1992: 13). Because meaning is muddled and not straightforward, postmodern irony has the ability to “subvert from within” (Hutcheon 1992: 16), to use the language and ideas of a certain discourse, while actively constructing a new one. This “doubleness” also acts as a way to undermine the idea of authority when it comes to universal values (Hutcheon 1992: 16). But, since it uses the same “premise” that it aims to dismantle, there is always the risk that it simply reinforces the very ideas that it aims to contest (Shugart 1999: 436). When the reader fails to notice the irony, he or she simply views it as a sincere attempt to present a premise, resulting in a drastically different effect than intended. This raises the question whether postmodern irony can have a subversive function and dismantle the premise that it uses (Shugart 1999: 436).

In order for postmodern irony to function subversively, there has to be a clear premise – the reader has to be made aware of “congruent and incongruent meanings” (Shugart 1999: 452). A clear idea has to be presented at the start so that the reader can grasp the plethora of different meanings that characterize postmodern irony. Superiority, which is a key aspect of irony, is also evident in subversive irony to an even greater extent. In the case of traditional irony, a distinct group of people are formed, who understand the irony and knowingly participate in it. Postmodern irony takes this even further, as it caters to a “particularly postmodern audience” (Shugart 1999: 452) who is well versed in tackling a multitude of different meanings. For readers who are not able to do that, postmodern irony can be confusing. Readers who are not accustomed to postmodernism may still detect the irony that is present in a work, but they do so in a superficial way. This means that the audience for postmodern irony

is not necessarily postmodern, but because of this, the ideas that postmodern irony tries to convey, can get mixed up, as different readers interpret the text in different ways (Shugart 1999: 452-453).

### **Pastiche**

One prominent technique used in *American Psycho* is something that Jameson calls *pastiche*. He describes pastiche in relation to parody: “Both pastiche and parody involve the imitation or, better still, the mimicry of other styles and particularly of the mannerisms and stylistic twitches of other styles” (Jameson 1998: 2). Parody differs from pastiche in the sense that, instead of simply imitating some distinct style, it also reflects on and critiques it. But to critique, there has to exist an alternative that would allow for comparison, some form of “linguistic norm” (Jameson 1998: 3). While parody has an ulterior motive, pastiche is repetition without any motive, mindless reproduction. It must be noted that when Jameson talks about styles, he means linguistic and literary styles like “the Faulknerian long sentence, for example, with its breathless gerundives; Lawrentian nature imagery punctuated by testy colloquialism” (Jameson 1991: 22). He does not specifically use the term irony but states that “Pastiche is thus blank parody, a statue with blind eyeballs: it is to parody what that other interesting and historically original modern thing, the practice of a kind of blank irony, is to what Wayne Booth calls the “stable ironies” of the eighteenth century” (Jameson 1991: 23). Stable irony in this case is irony that has a clear and distinct intention (Booth 1975: 5-6) and is in contrast with blank irony, which lacks a clear intention. This means that pastiche and parody relate to each other the same way as stable and blank irony, one presents clear and distinct ideas while the other does not.

This does not mean that the use of pastiche in the novel is somehow meaningless. Yes, pastiche poses the risk of not presenting any meaning, as Jameson has warned, but this is not the case for *American Psycho*. Pastiche is knowingly used in the novel because of its inherent

meaninglessness, as through constant repetition of designer brands and product names the banality of shallow values is revealed.

Jameson sees pastiche as being separate from irony, yet Hutcheon states that these two terms are often mixed: “It is interesting that few commentators on postmodernism actually use the word ‘parody’. Many critics, including Jameson, call postmodern ironic citation ‘pastiche’ or empty parody, assuming that only unique styles can be parodied and that such novelty and individuality are impossible today” (Hutcheon 1989: 94). Hutcheon does not agree with the predominant idea that postmodern parody (or pastiche) offers a view that is devoid of any ulterior motive: “this parodic reprise of the past of art is not nostalgic; it is always critical” (Hutcheon 1989: 93). Taking an ironic stance on a previously used convention does not simply result in “some infinite regress into textuality” (Hutcheon 1989: 95) but instead opens it up for reinterpretation. This willingness to question previous ideas means that “it both legitimizes and subverts that which it parodies” (Hutcheon 1989: 101).

While pastiche can be used for humour and irony (which *American Psycho* does extensively), there are some critics that view the life in postmodern society in a much bleaker way. Fisher, while discussing the movie *Children of Men*, where humanity has reached a catastrophic point, as no new children have been born for an entire generation, states that: “*Children of Men* connects with the suspicion that the end has already come, the thought that it could well be the case that the future harbors only reiteration and re-permutation. Could it be that there are no breaks, no 'shocks of the new' to come?” (Fisher 2009: 3). When Jameson was defining postmodernism and its dangers, capitalism was a vibrant political and economic system, and it was still possible to imagine alternatives for it. Now a few decades later this hope has withered and the saying that “it is easier to imagine the end of the world than it is to imagine the end of capitalism” (Fisher 2009: 2) no longer sounds like the ravings of a lunatic. The fact that capitalism would slowly become part of our unconscious is now taken for granted and is

no longer even worth mentioning (Fisher 2009: 8). Fisher sees pastiche as something even more malevolent, as a practice which “brings with it a massive desacralization of culture” (Fisher 2009: 6) as exchange value is more important than anything else. Since the only main law of capitalism is profit, everything else suffers: “When it actually arrives, capitalism brings with it a massive desacralization of culture. It is a system which is no longer governed by any transcendent Law; on the contrary, it dismantles all such codes, only to re-install them on an ad hoc basis” (Fisher 2009: 6).

This is a very bleak view of postmodern capitalism and it is not strictly related to Jameson, but it serves as an illustration of why pastiche can be seen as something negative, as different forms are used interchangeably without taking into account their original purpose: “Jameson famously claimed that postmodernism is the 'cultural logic of late capitalism'. He argued that the failure of the future was constitutive of a postmodern cultural scene which, as he correctly prophesied, would become dominated by pastiche and revivalism” (Fisher 2009: 7). This also means that pastiche is no longer a tool for mere imitation but can instead be used to project irony and perform social critique in an environment where it has become the norm. Because if pastiche is the dominant tendency in the postmodern environment, it cannot simply be viewed as mindless repetition.

## POSTMODERN IRONY IN *AMERICAN PSYCHO*

### **How to read irony: methodological notes**

The basis for this analysis stems from the general definition of irony, which is that “irony has been characterized by incongruity between literal and intended meanings – between what is stated and what is meant, or between what is expected and what occurs” (Shugart 1999: 434). This novel has been chosen for analysis with the presumption that there exist alternative

meanings to what is stated in the narrative, as without them, any sort of deeper analysis would be rendered futile.

Two main techniques that induce an ironic reading are analysed – pastiche and unreliable narration, as both serve to distance the reader from the text and thus provide alternative meanings to what is presented in the narrative. Examples from the text that will be cited have been chosen due to their ability to best portray these two techniques. In the case of pastiche, any example from the novel would suffice, as it is a stylistic choice that is used throughout the novel.

A note must also be made about literal and intended meanings, as these terms appear in the analysis. Referring to the general definition of irony, literal meanings are the ones that are literally stated in the text, while intended meanings refer to what is actually meant. Literal meanings happen when the reader takes the text at face-value, without giving it any further thought. Intended meanings are the ones that are hidden between the lines and not explicitly stated. Since the postmodern environment caters a host of different meanings and the intentions of irony can often be misinterpreted, intended meanings can also be misunderstood, but the extent and context in which irony is used in the novel should be enough to provide grounds for correct interpretation.

### **Patrick Bateman as the unreliable narrator**

The first instance that makes the reader question the reliability of the main narrator happens quite early in the novel, during first chapter of the book, when Bateman and some of his acquaintances are having dinner at his fiancée's apartment:

“See, Bateman agrees with me,” Price says smugly.  
 “Oh he does not,” With a Kleenex Evelyn wipes off whatever she rubbed on. “Patrick is not a cynic, Timothy. He’s the boy next door, aren’t you honey?”  
 “No I’m not,” I whisper to myself. “I’m a fucking evil psychopath.” (Ellis 1991: 15)

This example is not as direct as some of Bateman's later confessions and outburst, but since it is found in the very first chapter of the novel, it sets the tone for the rest of the narrative

and has the reader question the narrator, as Bateman's psychotic comments start to seep more and more into everyday conversations. The reliability is also questionable because of the sheer abruptness of their appearance. Most of the time they appear amongst everyday situations and people around him either do not hear them at all or simply ignore them as a joke. When someone notices what Bateman actually said, it is quickly turned into a joke and conversation continues about which restaurant someone managed to get a reservation in:

"So what did Ed say?" Hamlin asks, interested.  
 "He said," I begin, "'When I see a pretty girl walking down the street I think two things. One part of me wants to take her out and talk to her and be real nice and sweet and treat her right.'" I stop, finish my J&B in one swallow.  
 "What does the other part of him think?" Hamlin asks tentatively.  
 "What her head would look like on a stick," I say.  
 Hamlin and Reeves look at each other and then back at me before I start laughing, and then the two of them uneasily join in.  
 "Listen, what about dinner?" I say, casually changing subjects." (Ellis 1992: 89)

At other times, Bateman's confessions are heard, but misinterpreted:

"She inhales on the cigarette, then blows out. "So what do you do?"  
 "What do you think I do?" And frisky too.  
 "A model?" She shrugs. "An actor?"  
 "No," I say. "Flattering, but no."  
 "Well?"  
 "I'm into, oh, murders and executions mostly. It depends." I shrug.  
 "Do you like it?" she asks, unfazed.  
 "Um ... It depends. Why?" I take a bite of sorbet.  
 "Well, most guys I know who work in mergers and acquisitions don't really like it," she says.  
 "That's not what I said," I say, adding a forced smile, finishing my J&B. "Oh, forget it." (Ellis 1992: 197)

It could be argued that these examples do not prove that Bateman is an untrustworthy narrator, as the things that he says are either misheard or interpreted as a sick joke, but this argument can be overruled by the sheer amount of such confessions that happen throughout the novel. Since no one reacts to what he is saying, it creates the impression that all of them are simply a figment of his imagination. This creates confusion in the reader, as it is never clarified whether the killings happened or not. This is because "the irony of postmodernity denies a difference between what is real and what is appearance and even embraces incoherence and lack of meaning" (Coletta 2009: 856). The ambiguity of the murders is not resolved because that is not the aim of the novel, as the murders are here to give forward a message. Whether or not Bateman committed the murders is not the main focus.

## Irony in *American Psycho*

Before the narrative of *American Psycho* even begins, the reader is offered a clear sign which leads the reader to distance him or herself from the text and adopt a critical viewpoint:

Both the author of these Notes and the Notes themselves are, of course, fictional. Nevertheless, such persons as the composer of these Notes not only exist in our society, but indeed must exist, considering the circumstances under which our society has generally been formed. I have wished to bring before the public, somewhat more distinctly than usual, one of the characters of our recent past. He represents a generation that is still living out its days among us. In the fragment entitled "Underground" this personage describes himself and his views and attempts, as it were, to clarify the reasons why he appeared and was bound to appear in our midst. The subsequent fragment will consist of the actual "notes," concerning certain events in his life (Ellis 1992: 3)

By bringing attention to the fact that the following narrative is purely fictional, the reader is distanced from the text, thus making him or her consider alternative meanings to what is being said from the very beginning. After this introduction we are thrown into the first-person narrative of the novel's protagonist Patrick Bateman. At first Bateman seems like another twentysomething man focused on looking good and making a lot of money, but quite early on we start to sense that something else is at play here. This first instance happens quite early in the novel, as Bateman describes his apartment for the first time:

Next to the Panasonic bread baker and the Salton Pop-Up coffee maker is the Cremina sterling silver espresso maker (which is, oddly, still warm) that I got at Hammacher Schlemmer (the thermal-insulated stainless-steel espresso cup and the saucer and spoon are sitting by the sink, stained) and the Sharp Model R-1810A Carousel II microwave oven with revolving turntable which I use when I heat up the other half of the bran muffin. Next to the Salton Sonata toaster and the Cuisinart Little Pro food processor and the Acme Supreme Juicerator and the Cordially Yours liqueur maker (Ellis 1991: 27)

This example is not as striking as some of the others, but this example is important, as it sets the tone for the rest of the novel and brings out a trope that is central to the whole narrative – Bateman's obsession and almost downright fetishism of consumerism. The naming of different products is excessive and hard to ignore, as it creates a feeling as if one were reading a mail-order catalogue from top to bottom.

Irony is at play because there is an inconsistency between literal and intended meanings (Shugart 1999: 434). The literal meaning is that the novel's protagonist Patrick Bateman embodies the belief that having the newest products makes your life valuable. The intended

meaning is the exact opposite, that focusing solely on material goods and looking good leads to superficiality and meaninglessness, as indicated by the constant and exhaustive listings of brand and product names. However, this type of irony is not only postmodern, as literal and intended meanings have always been relevant to irony long before the postmodern era. Rhetorical irony is traditionally “defined by internal contradiction and inconsistency that must be actively detected” (Shugart 1999: 434-435). These two traits are apparent in this example, as there is a contradiction between what the novel’s protagonist is trying to convey and what the novel is trying to present. Bateman fully believes in the world that he is portraying, but we as the reader are encouraged to take a step back and be critical about what we are reading, as constant repetition of products and brand names becomes exhausting after a while, forcing us to think about how we view consumerist culture.

For irony to be postmodern, it has to take a step forward from these traditional attributes. One of these ways is postmodern irony’s potential to “subvert from within” and its ability to “deconstruct one discourse, even as it constructs another” (Hutcheon 1992: 16). In the case of the previous example, the discourse of the “dominant order” (Hutcheon 1992: 16) would be the belief in consumerism, the fact that buying new and expensive things somehow creates value. This is quite clear. Things get more difficult if we try to define that other discourse, the one that irony is supposed to construct. The reader understands that with this example, Ellis ridicules and condemns consumerist ideology, but the reader is seemingly not offered any clear alternative (Matthews 2023: 809). Matthews points out that Ellis indeed critiques consumerism, but his critique does not provide alternatives “because he seemingly has none to offer” (Matthews 2023: 809). What can be seen in this example is the deconstruction of the value of consumerism by the listing of extensive kitchen appliances but there is no suggestion of their use for actual cooking or enjoyment of life. After their initial introduction they are never mentioned again. Bateman, whose life prominently exist outside his apartment in the firm that

he works in and in fancy restaurants, has no actual need for such a ridiculously equipped kitchen. They are simply there to produce an image, as is everything else in Bateman's life. Most people who visit Bateman's apartment end up murdered, thus making his apartment a physical replication of his being – seemingly furnished, but lacking any real meaning.

The second and most notorious technique that Ellis uses throughout the novel is violence, as Bateman commits horrific murderous deeds besides his everyday activities. Excessive lists of brand names and products are replaced by detailed accounts of gruesome killings. What is the most interesting when it comes to irony is not how these accounts are written, but how these are juxtaposed with the rest of the narrative. Since the book is written in first person narrative, malicious inner thoughts of Bateman are scattered throughout the novel, often appearing in simple everyday contexts, as can be seen from this example:

I have a knife with a serrated blade in the pocket of my Valentino jacket and I'm tempted to gut McDermott with it right here in the entranceway, maybe slice his face open, sever his spine; but Price finally waves us in and the temptation to kill McDermott is replaced by this strange anticipation to have a good time, drink some champagne, flirt with a hardbody, find some blow, maybe even dance to some oldies or that new Janet Jackson song I like. (Ellis 1991: 50)

Irony is at play here because again there is an inconsistency between literal and intended meanings. The gruesome aspects of this novel are here to illustrate how the emptiness of consumer society, which is presented through pastiche, ultimately leads Bateman to go to the extreme. This is done using irony's distancing function, one of its main functions (Hutcheon 1994: 47). The use of violence is "shocking" (Nicol 2009: 198), thus distancing the readers and forcing them to think about what they are reading and what is actually implied. However, distancing is not something that is solely attributed to postmodern irony, because "it has for centuries been a commonplace to assert that irony is the trope of the detached" (Hutcheon 1994: 47).

Similarly to pastiche, the violence is also excessive, as all the murders are described in detail, sometimes taking up whole pages. Since Bateman is never satisfied with the things that

he has, as it is always possible to get *more*, he turns to alternative ways to fill the empty space inside himself. For some people this would mean finding a new hobby, but Bateman instead fills that void by slaughtering women. His excessiveness in killing mimics the excessiveness that surrounds him every day. Because Bateman is essentially numbed by this excess, he is also oblivious to the extent of his actions. Going to the club and murdering women seem equal to him. Irony is at play here because Bateman's thoughts of severing someone's spine with a serrated blade are quickly replaced by a "strange anticipation to have a good time" (Ellis 1991: 50). In a world filled with excess and pastiche, Bateman does not see his actions being any more excessive than the everyday world that he inhabits.

### **Pastiche in the novel**

Jameson's contempt for pastiche stems from his belief that imitating and repeating a distinct style leads to meaninglessness, as nothing new is created. This is tied to his broader critique on the nature of postmodernism and especially the idea that postmodernism does not have a style of its own and instead is simply the repetition of styles that came before it. So, pastiche to Jameson is heavily linked with the past, as that is where postmodernism gathers its inspiration from (Jameson 1991: 17).

When it comes to *American Psycho*, apart from references to very distinct works from the past, pastiche in the novel does not imitate the past, but parodies the present time that the novel takes place in. This raises the question whether the exhaustive repetition of brands that appear in *American Psycho* can be considered a distinctive style and thus categorized as pastiche. This question lacks a straightforward answer, mostly because pastiche in *American Psycho* does not imitate a distinct literary style, but something more abstract – life in a postmodern capitalist society where people are constantly bombarded with advertisements that should seemingly make their lives better and the idea that wearing a distinct brand carries value within itself. Instead of the main character revolting against these ideas, Bateman has

internalized this logic and sees it as a normal aspect of his life. Thus, the ideas of consumerist culture are taken to the extreme by showing what happens when things are taken too literally and when simulacra replace reality. One of the main ways that this is illustrated in the novel is the way in which Bateman describes other people:

Through the eyes of Patrick Bateman, a total consumer, the commodity really is "all one sees," as his description of the environment never exceeds an abstracted matrix of commodity objects. The most obvious example is the generic expression by means of which Patrick continuously places himself and his associates into the narrative by scrupulously referring to his and any other character's apparel, a phrase repeated throughout the novel ad nauseam: "I am wearing a suit by [brand X], Price is wearing a shirt by [brand Y], Evelyn is wearing a dress by [brand Z]," etc. (Weinreich 2004: 66)

An example from the novel would be as follows:

"He's wearing a linen suit by Canali Milano, a cotton shirt by Ike Behar, a silk tie by Bill Blass and cap-toed leather lace-ups from Brooks Brothers. I'm wearing a lightweight linen suit with pleated trousers, a cotton shirt, a dotted silk tie, all by Valentino Couture, and perforated cap-toe leather shoes by Allen-Edmonds. Once inside Harry's we spot David Van Patten and Craig McDermott at a table up front. Van Patten is wearing a double-breasted wool and silk sport coat, button-fly wool and silk trousers with inverted pleats by Mario Valentino, a cotton shirt by Gitman Brothers, a polka-dot silk tie by Bill Blass and leather shoes from Brooks Brothers. McDermott is wearing a woven-linen suit with pleated trousers, a button-down cotton and linen shirt by Basile, a silk tie by Joseph Abboud and ostrich loafers from Susan Bennis Warren Edwards." (Ellis 1992: 29).

As Weinreich said, Bateman's view of the world is dominated by commodity, as he describes everyone around him by the clothes and brands that they wear. But this obsession with commodity is not simply related to the people around him, it also dominates his own image:

After this I get dressed to pick up groceries at D'Agostino's: blue jeans by Armani, a white Polo shirt, an Armani sport coat, no tie, hair slicked back with Thompson mousse; since it's drizzling, a pair of black waterproof lace-ups by Manolo Blahnik; three knives and two guns carried in a black Epi leather attaché case (\$3,200) by Louis Vuitton; because it's cold and I don't want to fuck up my manicure, a pair of Armani deerskin gloves. Finally, a belted trench coat in black leather by Gianfranco Ferre that cost four thousand dollars" (Ellis 1992: 155)

This example is noteworthy because apart from naming brands, he also specifically brings out how much some of these items cost, as if the price would further prove the worth of everything. It also illustrates how commodity dominates every area of his life, as going on a grocery store run would normally be done in comfortable clothing, as there is no need to impress someone in such an ordinary setting. The same commodified look applies to his body, as he

refers to his manicure and the need to preserve it, even before a murder spree. Prior to this, Bateman also states how he did “two thousand abdominal crunches” (Ellis 1992: 155) at home, which further shows how the excess of commodity has also influenced his realm of physicality, as two thousand crunches is an obscene number of repetitions for one single exercise when it comes to fitness, as better results could be achieved with a more diverse set of exercises.

Examples similar to this can be found throughout the novel when Bateman is either alone or spending time with his so-called friends and the effect of them is increasingly numbing as the novel goes on, as the brand names dominate the passages, making it increasingly difficult to actually tell the difference between the different characters in the novel.

This leads to what Plato coined as the “simulacrum”, and which Baudrillard has used extensively in his critique of postmodernism. It is “the identical copy for which no original has ever existed” (Jameson 1991: 23). In a society where image is king, constant reproduction ultimately means that things lose meaning, as they are simply copies of copies that have no inherent value besides the image, as image becomes the end goal and loses its ties to reality. This loss of meaning is illustrated in the novel with two very distinct instances. One happens at the end of the novel, when Bateman himself realises and blatantly admits how empty his existence is:

...there is an idea of a Patrick Bateman, some kind of abstraction, but there is no real me, only an entity, something illusory, and though I can hide my cold gaze and you can shake my hand and feel flesh gripping yours and maybe you can even sense our lifestyles are probably comparable: I simply am not there. It is hard for me to make sense on any given level. Myself is fabricated, an aberration (Ellis 1991: 362).

This perfectly encapsulates the hollowness that Ellis tried to convey using pastiche, as Bateman himself realises that the things he valued have no actual value and how he is simply another cog in the machine. It also illustrates how focusing too much on commodities essentially strips people of their personality, as they join the rat race of trying to always have the newest things. This loss of personality is also illustrated by this second example, which happens when Bateman gets mistaken for another investment banker:

Owen has mistaken me for Marcus Halberstam (even though Marcus is dating Cecelia Wagner) but for some reason it really doesn't matter and it seems a logical faux pas since Marcus works at P & P also, in fact does the same exact thing I do, and he also has a penchant for Valentino suits and clear prescription glasses and we share the same barber at the same place, the Pierre Hotel, so it seems understandable; it doesn't irk me. (Ellis 1991: 86).

Pastiche is here used for comedic effect, or rather this is where pastiche leads to – human beings also have become endless copies that have lost their meaning.

While the repetition of brands in *American Psycho* might not directly be attributed as pastiche, it is hard to ignore the similarities between the effects of pastiche and the effects of repetition in the novel. Postmodernism is characterized by “the disappearance of the individual subject” (Jameson 1991: 16), in other words the disappearance of a distinct and individual style that was characteristic of modernism. Instead of creating something new, postmodernism plays around and experiments with already existing styles. This means that “this omnipresence of pastiche is not incompatible with a certain humour, however, nor is it innocent of all passion: it is at the least compatible with addiction – with a whole historically original consumers' appetite for a world transformed into sheer images of itself” (Jameson 1991: 17).

## CONCLUSION

This analysis has shown how *American Psycho* successfully creates irony through pastiche, unreliable narration and violence. While Jameson has viewed pastiche as something negative and devoid of meaning, with the help of Hutcheon, Fisher, and the book itself, it has been shown that while pastiche can pose the risk of not giving forward any new ideas and simply repeat already existing conventions, it also has the potential to use these same conventions to invoke new layers of meaning. Because pastiche is a predominant technique used in the postmodern environment, its potential to give forward new meanings must be taken into consideration, as it can no longer be viewed as mere imitation. Thus, Jameson's critique of pastiche as being something blank can be challenged, as *American Psycho* provides alternative meanings to those that are originally presented. While the novels critique

of capitalism and the dangers of consumer culture are not as direct and clear coded as might be expected from critique, the excess that is presented in the novel through the techniques mentioned earlier, gives way to the discussion about the nature of our cultural environment that we live in. This environment is characterised by the accumulation of signs and simulacra that have become detached from a perceptible reality. Ellis's novel allows us to see how this accumulation of signs functions, making our reality sufficiently defamiliarized to give us room for potential social critique.

The successful film adaptation in 2000 and the rumours around a possible remake today, serve as examples that Ellis did not simply write a blank piece of fiction without any meaning. However, they may also signal that *American Psycho* has itself become a brand or sign that is being copied in an endless loop of postmodernist entertainment culture, especially as film adaptations often pose the risk of simply being an imitation of the source text without the underlying reasoning that is apparent in the novel itself.

When it comes to the question whether the irony used in the novel is postmodern or not, the answers are not as clear. This is because the term "postmodern irony" does not have a universal definition. At times it simply used to refer to irony that happens in a postmodern setting, while other times, for example in the case of Hutcheon and Shugart, it is used to refer to a distinct type of irony, one that "subverts from within". Instead of being a distinct form of irony, postmodern irony may refer to irony that is used in a postmodern setting. But if irony's potential to subvert from within is taken as the main attribute of postmodern irony, then *American Psycho* successfully fulfils that requirement, as it actively uses but also criticises the conventions that it represents. Although *American Psycho* was written as an exaggeration, describing a distinct group of people in a distinct time, and not as an all-encompassing critique on capitalism and commodity, it has still managed to prove its worth throughout time, and its critique still rings true today and perhaps even to a greater extent.

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## RESÜMEE

TARTU ÜLIKOOL  
ANGLISTIKA OSAKOND

**Hendrik Lõhmus**

**Postmodern Irony in Bret Easton Ellis's *American Psycho***

**Postmoderne iroonia Bret Easton Ellise raamatus „Ameerika psühhopaat”**

Bakalaureusetöö

2025

Lehekülgede arv: 34

Annotatsioon:

Antud bakalaureusetöö eesmärk on uurida, millist rolli mängib iroonia Bret Easton Ellise romaanis „Ameerika psühhopaat” ning vaadata kuidas seda on kasutatud selleks, et anda edasi mitmetähenduslikkust. Samuti püüab see töö kindlaks teha, kas romaanis kasutatav iroonia on just spetsiifiliselt postmoderne. Töös kasutatav metoodika on peamiselt üles ehitatud kahe postmodernismi teoreetiku – Linda Hutcheoni ja Fredric Jamesoni – tööde põhjal. Teoreetilises osas antakse ülevaade postmodernismist ja irooniast, visandades nende põhijooned. Samuti defineeritakse kaks peamist analüüsis kasutatavat terminit – postmoderne iroonia ja pastišš. Empiirilise analüüsi osas näidatakse tekstinäidete põhjal, kuidas irooniat raamatus kasutatakse ning arutletakse selle üle, kas seda irooniat saab pidada postmodernistlikuks.

Teose analüüs näitab, kuidas pastiši, ebausaldusväärse jutustaja ning vägivalla abil on edukalt edasi antud irooniat, luues seeläbi mitmetähenduslikkust. Jamesoni jaoks on pastišš miski, mis pelgalt jäljendab juba olemasolevaid motiive ning ei ole seetõttu suuteline uusi tähendusi looma. Teose, Hutcheoni ja Fisheri abil aga näitab käesolev bakalaureusetöö, et kuigi pastišš oma loomu poolest võib tõesti olla lihtsalt puhas jäljendus, on sellel siiski ka potentsiaal kasutada neidsamu motiive uute tähenduste loomiseks.

Samuti näitas analüüs, et romaanis kasutatav iroonia on postmoderne siis, kui võtta aluseks Hutcheoni definitsioon postmodernsest irooniast kui millestki, mis on suuteline kasutama juba olemasolevaid motiive selleks, et luua uusi tähendusi. Samas jääb õhku rippuma küsimus, kas postmoderne iroonia on üldse omaette termin, sest sellel puudub universaalne definitsioon ning tihti kasutatakse seda terminit lihtsalt selleks, et viidata irooniale, mida kasutatakse postmodernistlikus olustikus.

Märksõnad: postmodernism, iroonia, postmodernistlik iroonia, pastišš, ameerika kirjandus, Bret Easton Ellis, „Ameerika psühhopaat“.

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Tartus, 14.01.2025

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**Lõputöö on lubatud kaitsmisele.**

Raili Marling

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