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**Opening the Mindscape: Revealing Psycholinguistics Study of
Language and the Thoughts in American Psycho**



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Abstract

This study explores the language of the protagonist in Bret Easton Ellis's *novel American Psycho* through the lens of the uncanny and psycholinguistic. The focus is on how Patrick Bateman's dialogues and internal monologues reflect elements of the uncanny, contributing to the novel unsettling and ambiguous atmosphere. By employing a qualitative research method, the study conducts analysis of Bateman's dialogues in the novel, identifying linguistics features that invoke the uncanny. The research also integrates theoretical framework from psycholinguistics and studies on the uncanny, by analyze the protagonist's language uncovering patterns and correlations with the uncanny. The finding reveals the Bateman's language, characterized by repetition, fragmentation, and ambiguity, creates a sense of unease and psychological instability, hallmarks of the uncanny. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the interplay between language, psychology, and the uncanny offering new insights into the complex narrative of *American Psycho*

Introduction

Bret Easton Ellis is an American author best known for his satirical and controversial novels that often depict the excesses and moral decay of modern society .Born in 1964 in Los Angeles, Ellis grew up in wealthy family and attends Elite school before going to Bennington College in Vermont.

His first novel was published when He was 21, was an instant success and established his minimalist writing style and penchant for autobiographical elements .Subsequent words like *American psycho* cemented his reputation as a provocative writer unafraid to tackle taboo subjects with graphic violence and dark humor. Ellis is also being praised for his sharp work, social commentary and ability to capture the reality of every era.

In addition Ellis has written short stories, and his works have been adapted into films. He is still considered a major writer in contemporary American Literature, whose writing earned him the reputation of possessing a very distinct voice in the exploration of the realities of the contemporary world.

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American Psycho by Bret Easton Ellis has become widely popular to appreciate the subject of graphic violence and social satire through the protagonist Patrick Bateman. The novel was published in 1991 and it depicts an unpleasant image of a prosperous man, an investment banker, who is a murderer who kills many women. At its core, perverse sensibility, class consciousness, cruelty, and identity between dream and reality constitute the narrative body of the novel. This novel explores these ideas, exploring how Ellis uses psycholinguistics and storytelling to present an uncomfortable vision of modern America.

This is an attempt at a psycholinguistics and language production of the transgression phenomena in Bret Easton Ellis's novel, which occupies a significant place in the development of American fiction abounding in outrageously frightening scenes of cruelty and violence. It was one of his successful novels. Easton Ellis was an American author and screenwriter and well known for the controversial *American Psycho*. In this novel, He also highlights the cruel masculinity and consciousness of high social rank through the protagonist of the novel who's mysterious and strange conclusively.

Uncanny refers to something strange or the feeling that has been repressed or the things that are difficult to explain or called concernment as well. It's a situation when an individual feels both familiar and unfamiliar at the same time. It tells about the dark psyche of humans. In other words, the outcome of the dark human psyche reveals repressed desires and memories. When the concept comes as a framework we see glimpses of it in art, culture, and literature in novels, short stories, and dramas. Uncanny is a recurring theme in literature, going beyond the mysterious to embody the strangely familiar or unholy.

We also have a look at the Uncanny in arts and a film which encompasses narrative dissonance, where the story initiates disquiet elements that challenge the conventional perception and invoke psychological tension. Producers leverage uncanny elements to invoke discomfort and to make a scene mysterious that blurs the line between the ordinary and the strange. The same is going in Bret Easton Ellis's novel *American Psycho* and it is also highlighted in the character of the movie as well. It's a complex and intricate novel that also highlights the lens of Uncanny through the

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language of the protagonist.

As the narrative unfolds we delve into the twisted mind of Patrick Bateman through his language. He becomes increasingly obsessed with his own desires through language. Moreover, it can also discover his dark psyche as well. The narrative blurs the line between reality and fantasy leaving the reader questioning the reliability of Patrick's phrasing and verbiage. The research has both literary and philosophical significance, and on the other hand, as a distinguished phrasing style of transgressive fiction, the author also concludes through language production.

Problem Statement

Bret Easton Ellis novel *American Psycho* discloses class consciousness, cruelty, sexual violence, and narcissism through different phrasing. The novel problematizes the issues of production of language with the help of the main character of the novel Patrick Bateman, keeping in view the uncanny concept in this novel. This research aims to investigate how the protagonist produces language from his hallucinations. This study also focuses This on Patrick Bateman's speech act, language violence, social communication, and exploring how language constructs his Identity .The primary focus will be on text syntactic structures, lexical choices and narrative techniques that invoke the uncanny .Additionally ,researcher will explore how Ellis's stylistics decision enhance the novel's themes and reader's emotional response .Ultimately, this research aims to contribute to the broader understanding of *American Psycho* by highlighting the intricate interplay between language and the uncanny .Furthermore the purpose of this research is to understand how Bateman 's language reflects his disturbed psyche.

Research Objectives

To investigate the author Bret Easton Ellis's language to imprecise the line between reality and hallucination

To explore the contribution and impact of psycholinguistics in Bret Easton Ellis's *American Psycho*

Research Questions

How does the author Bret Easton Ellis use the language to vague the line between reality and hallucination?

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How do the psychology and linguistics in Bret Easton Ellis's *American Psycho* contribute to the overall impact and reception of the novel?

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Hypotheses

In Bret Easton Ellis novel *American Psycho* the protagonist Patrick Bateman's language exemplifies the concept of uncanny through psycholinguistic mechanisms, which include the juxtaposition of the familiar and the unfamiliar, the blurring the reality and fantasy, and the disruption of identity. These linguistic strategies not only reveal Bateman's psychopathic nature but also contribute to the novel's unsettling atmosphere, demonstrating how language can invoke deep psychological discomfort in the reader. The study will focus on analyzing specific passages of dialogues in the novel to identify and examine the psycholinguistic elements that contribute to the uncanny. By exploring how Ellis employs these linguistic strategies, the study aims to uncover the psychological and emotional impact of Bateman's language on the reader, providing deeper insights into the novel's exploration of human psyche through language.

Literature Review

Arini W.D, (2018) explored the Patrick Bateman's Narcissistic Personality Disorder in Bret Easton Ellis *American Psycho*. Researcher highlights the Narcissist Personality Disorder in Protagonist Patrick Bateman. It takes place due to lack of Parental attention because both His Parents Divorced, and outcome is Patrick's dual personality, also His friends feel comfort to humiliate others and consider them inferior this also impact Patrick Bateman's life. Patrick must have broken relationships with people and He became depressed. These are the consequences of Narcissist Personality Disorder. This study also provides a brief overview of it plot, themes, and characters, with a specific emphasis on Patrick Bateman. It may then transition into a discussion of Narcissistic Personality Disorder, defining the disorder, its symptoms, and its prevalence in society. Furthermore, the review might explore how literature has been utilized as a medium to depict and analyze psychological disorders, including Narcissistic Personality Disorder.

Helyer R,(2000)threw light on the Postmodern Gothic of *American Psycho*. This literary work gives us the picture of suppression of desires and emotions through Patrick Bateman a psychopath having plenty of transgression. This turn his personality in extreme unpleasant way and the outcome is He become harmful, He

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can't stop his self from doing wrong behavior and things. Heyler delves into the intricate relationship between postmodernism, the gothic genre, and Ellis's *American Psycho*. This article explores how functions work within the framework of postmodernism, utilizing elements of parody and pastiche to deconstruct traditional gothic tropes and critique consumerist culture. This work also employs gothic motifs, such as the haunted house to create the sense of unease and disorientation within the narrative. However, rather than adhering strictly to the conventions of the gothic genre. Through a close reading of key scenes and characters, the critic demonstrates how this novel engages with the themes of identity, violence, and commoditization. The protagonist, Patrick Bateman, embodies the contradictions of late capitalism, oscillating between conformity, rebellion, sincerity and irony.

Sahli S, in (2010) explores the complex interplay and sadism and subjectivity within the novel. This chapter, included in examining aspect of sexuality and self, provides a critical analysis of how Elli's protagonist, Patrick Bateman, embodies a profound absence of subjectivity through his sadistic behaviors. The critic argues that Bateman's extreme acts of violence and detachment from his actions underscore a critical void in his sense of self. This lack of subjectivity is not just a personal defect but a broader commentary on the dehumanizing effects of capitalistic society, where individual identities are subsumed by consumerism and superficiality. This analysis delves into the psychological and societal implications of Bateman's sadism, positioning it as a symptom of a deeper existential and moral emptiness. This approach enriches the analysis of Ellis's novel because this perspective is shifted from viewing Bateman as a monster towards viewing him as a negative result of certain societal problems.

Ross R, (2016) delves into the consumerism and its impact on the portrayal of women and the protagonist of the Ellis's novel. This article highlight the critical examination of how consumerist culture in the novel contributes to the objectification and dehumanization of women, as well as the erosion of individual identity. Researcher shows a systematic destruction or erasure, possibly referring to the repeated dehumanization of female characters in the novel and its border implications for society. This concept hits at the idea that consumerism perpetuates harmful

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narratives and behaviors that strip individuals, particularly women, of their agency and humanity.

Lang J, (2023) examine more carefully the sex acts of Patrick Bateman and explore how he manipulates the reader through pornography and horror in Ellis's novel, and their effects on the reader. This article begins with an overview of the novel's narrative and its protagonist, Patrick Bateman, a wealthy and narcissistic investment banker who descends into the world of violence and depravity. Researchers may delve into the portrayal of explicit sexual content, graphic violence, and visceral descriptions of gore throughout the novel, highlighting their shock values and the discomfort they provoke in readers. The use of pornography and horror may serve to disorient and disturb the reader, blurring the boundaries between reality and fantasy, and prompting critical reflection on societal attitudes towards sex, violence, and power. This study may draw on literary theory and criticism to analyze the ways in which Ellis subverts traditional narrative structures and employs transgressed themes to elicit specific emotional and psychological responses from readers.

Sarpell C.N.(2010) explore the narrative technique and ethical implications in the Ellis's controversial novel. The critic delves into how the novel's repetitive structure and graphic content challenges readers' expectations and moral boundaries. This work situates *American Psycho* within the broader context of contemporary fiction, emphasizing the unique way it manipulates narrative repetition to engage readers in a continuous ethical reflection. Researchers argue that the novel's repetitive nature is not merely a stylistic choice but a deliberate strategy to invoke a sense of disorientation and discomfort. This repetitive pattern forces readers to confront the violent and materialistic excesses of the protagonist, Patrick Bateman, thereby creating a space for ethical questioning. By suspending the conventional flow of reading, Ellis compels readers to repeatedly face the same scenes of horror and banality, highlighting the desensitization to violence in modern society.

Methodology and Theoretical Framework

The study employs a qualitative content analysis to identify and interpret linguistic patterns that contribute to the uncanny effects in the novel. This analysis is supported by a theoretical framework from psycholinguistics, which provides insights into how

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language reflects psychological states and manipulates reader perception. Additionally, the methodology integrates a psychoanalytic theories of the uncanny, particularly those developed by Freud, to understand and the strange, creating a sense of discomfort and ambiguity. How Bateman's language blurs the lines between the familiar and fantasy.

Going through the existing literature, the novel still needs researcher's attention to analyze the protagonist's dialogues from the perspective of psycholinguistics and the concept of uncanny.

Theoretical Framework

The concept of the uncanny, introduced by Sigmund Freud in his 1919 essay "Das Unheimliche" ("The Uncanny"), serves as a powerful analytical tool in the exploration of literature. Freud describes the uncanny as something strangely familiar, yet foreign, that evokes a feeling of discomfort. To be more specific, Patrick Bateman, a main character from Bret Easton Ellis's novel *American Psycho* shows what can be described as the uncanny through both, language and behavior. From a psycholinguistic standpoint, the presence of the element of the uncanny in Bateman's language can potentially be broken down to further analyze how the linguistic constructions help to create the sense of eeriness in the novel. This framework will analytically discuss the language that is used by Ellis that creates the feelings of the uncanny and relate it to the personality of the protagonist Bateman.

Having defined the term "The Uncanny," as something that is both similar to and different from the familiar, which makes the people scare. Homely familiar and unhomely/ unfamiliar analyzed by Freud – the two terms are not always absolutely opposite but in some ways can coincide. The uncanny refers to phenomena whereby something that has been concealed and expelled from the conscious realm re-emerges and thus makes us think of our psyche. In literature and fiction, the uncanny is linked to the return of repressed infantile complexes as well as affirmation of surmounted primitive beliefs.

The Freudian theory of the uncanny is particularly associated with the return of repressed material and one can see Bateman's murderous alter ego as the return of repressed material. His crimes, which he takes ample time in executing, are the

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manifestations of the repressed – the animal in him that he has locked away. The unnatural or the eerie is therefore witnessed when these suppressed desires that ought to be concealed emerge and interfere with the smooth surface that Bateman puts up in the society.

The dialectology features of Bateman's dialogues in the novel donate to the uncanny effect.

The Uncanny and Psycholinguistics

Psycholinguistics, the study of the interrelation between linguistics and psychological elements. It is the relation between language and human psyche. Tells that how human psyche can produce language and how it effects. The key areas of the study include language comprehension, production .Psycholinguistics include linguistics factors such as syntax, phonetics, pragmatics. And shed light on them that how they enhance by human psyche and come into being. On the other hand uncanny refers to something familiar and unfamiliar at the same time .In the novel *American Psycho* psycholinguistics can seen in Bateman's dialogues and phrases .He create a sense of unease and discomfort among the readers through his selection of words and phrases.

Analysis and Discussion

The novel *American Psycho* by Bret Easton Ellis presents Patrick Bateman, a protagonist whose language reveal the unsettling depths of his psyche. By applying the concept of uncanny and examining the psycholinguistic as aspects of his dialogues, we can uncover the ways in which his speech pattern contribute to the eerie and disturbing nature of the narrative and the sense of the uncanny.

The Uncanny in Language

The uncanny in language touching to something that create the atmosphere of discomfort and unease among and readers .Same things noticed in the novel *American Psycho*, Bateman's dialogues often roll between the common and fantasy irrational world. The purpose of the study is to highlight the linguistics features in his dialogues.

Linguistic Features in Bateman's Dialogue

Repetition and Redundancy

Repetition and Redundancy both are similar in nature, refers to something that is repeatedly over and over again. Researcher highlight the things in the Bateman's

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dialogues his phrases and ideas which can create a sense of unease and discomfort. The repetition may reflect his narcissist nature, contributing to the feeling of uncanny. He describe the same statements and details, often repeating the same observations over different context. An example taken from Batman's dialogue: "I use an exfoliating gel scrub to clean my skin on my face .In the shower, I use a water activated gel cleanser...." In other words, consider Bateman's detailed descriptions of his morning routine: "I'll need to return some videotapes .I have a lunch meeting with cliff at the Harvard club. I'm supposed to meet stone and Brewster at 4:00 to go over the ICAP portfolio .And at 8:00 I have a date with Courtney at Orson."

Contrasts and Juxtapositions

The word contrasts refer to difference between two things, On the other hand juxtaposition refers to the placement of two opposite things next to each other. Bateman frequently juxtapose things with brutality, that invoke the uncanny effect by blending the simple things with violence .Same as, "I'm thinking Dosria, but I'd settle for Arcadia or Floret if it mean I could split open her rib cage and...."

Formality and Precision

These two are the vital concepts in linguistics that relate to the language used in different context for clarity of communication. Formality indicate to the professional tones used in language, while precision refer to using language that conveys the planned meaning.

Bateman's used formal and precise language, that lineup with the uncanny, and his letters shows the sophistication. For instance, "I carefully slice the tape on the package with an ivory-handled letter opine

Fragmented and Disjuncture Language

One of the most highlighted linguistics feature in *American Psycho* is fragmented and disjoined nature in Bateman's dialogues. Fragment refer to the language having lack of linguistics features, on the other hand disjuncture means something that is unessential in the sentence and it reflects the attitude of the person. It can also see in the Bateman's dialogues where he easily jump from one to another, unnecessary topic and making reader question to his perspectives .

Taking the expression as fragmented, "I'm into, oh murders and executives

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mostly .it depends. Some I'd just like to, you know, watch it happen .Other times I like to get involved .I mean, nobody's perfect .But, I certainly have my preferences. And I don't want to get too specific here .But let's just say I'm a guy who likes to get his hands dirty.”

The disjointed phrasing, sudden shifts in topic ,and Bateman's use of vague qualifiers like “you know” and” lets just say” create a sense of unease and uncertainty ,hinting at the dark and unstable nature lurking beneath Bateman's outwardly composed façade.

Lexical Choices

The novel lexical choices often veer into the uncanny, with Bateman using clinical, dehumanizing language to describe people and situation. He frequently refers to other characters by their physical attributes or material possessions rather than their names, such as “the Patty Winters Show guests” or “the guy in the Valentino trench coat”. This linguistic objectification mirrors the novel's broader themes of consumerism and the co modification of identity.

Bateman also exhibits a tendency to use technical, jargon-heavy language, particularly when describing acts of violence or his own mental state. For instance, he refers to the “Kublers-Ross grief cycle” and the “the Grimes-Boetticher model” when discussing his emotional detachment. This uncanny juxtaposition of clinical terminology with extreme violence creates and unsettling effect, further blurring the lines between the mundane and the monstrous.

Semantic Field

The novel's semantic field are dominated by terms related to consumerism, materialism, and surface-level identity. Bateman and the other characters are constantly evaluating each other based on their clothing, ground coming, and material possessions. Entire conversations revolve around comparing business cards or discussing the merits of different types of paper. This linguistic focus on the superficial and the material reflects the novel's broader critique of a society obsessed with appearances and status.

Interestingly, the semantic field of violence and horror also permutes the novel, often intruding into the character's conversation about more mundane topics.

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Bateman and his colleagues frequently make casual references to torture, mutilation, and murder as if these acts are no more significant than discussing the weather. This linguistics normalization of extreme violence contribute to the novel's uncanny atmosphere, as the reader is forced to confront the disturbing implications of such casual cruelty.

Metaphor and Simile

The novel's use of metaphor and simile often takes on an uncanny quality, with Bateman comparing people and situations to inanimate objects or animals. Like He describes a woman's breast as "like two fried eggs dangling from a cloth line" and refer to a homeless man like a "stray dog". These linguistics comparison serves to further dehumanize the characters, reducing them to mere objects or animals to be consumed or discarded.

Bateman also frequently employs metaphor related to consumption and waste 'such as describing a woman's body as "a piece of meat" or referring to a murder scene as a "buffet of red meat". These linguistics choices reflect the Bateman literally and figuratively devours those around him.

Intertextuality

American Psycho is rife with intersexual references, with Bateman frequently quoting from or alluding to other texts. These references range from pop and movies to literary works and philosophical treatises. However, Bateman often misquote or misunderstands these references, revealing the hollowness of his own culture knowledge and the superficiality of his identity.

Psycholinguistics Elements in Bateman's Dialogues

From psycholinguistics perspectives, the novel provides a fertile ground for analyzing how language reflects and amplifies the psychological states of characters, especially Bateman, whose speech and internal monologues are laced with elements of the uncanny. This analysis will explore the psycholinguistics features that contribute to the uncanny in Bateman's character, focusing on familiarity and DE familiarization, that blurring of reality and fantasy, and the disruption of identity.

Uncanny Juxtaposition

In *American Psycho* uncanny juxtaposition manifest through Patrick Bateman's

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behavior and thoughts. He stuck between his super rich lifestyle and the grotesque violence he inflicts, highlighting the absurdity of his existence. Consider the passage, where Bateman casually describes a brutal murder: “I take the axe and swing it down onto her skull, which makes a sickening thud .Blood and brain matter spray out from the impact. She’s still alive, though, and I have to hit her again, and again until finally she’s dead. “Bateman uses clinical tone for his gruesome act, and creating an unsettling effect.

Uncanny Doubling and Identity Confusion

In the novel also employs linguistics device that create a sense of uncanny doubling and identity confusion. It represents something that is familiar and unfamiliar at the same time. For instance, in one scene, Bateman recounts: “I ’m at Nell’s and I see Evelyn and I wave at her, but she doesn’t wave back .Later I realize it wasn’t Evelyn, it was probably Elizabeth. “This type of linguistic slippage and identity confusion further contributes to the overall sense of unease and unreliability, as the reader is left questioning the stability of Bateman’s perception and the nature of reality within the narrative.

Familiarity and De Familiarization

One of the core elements of the uncanny is the simultaneous presence of the familiar and the unfamiliar. In “*American Psycho*”, Bateman’s language often presents familiar objects and routines in way that defamiliarizes them, creating an unsettling effect .This is evident in the detailed ,almost obsessive descriptions of his daily routines and consumer products.

For instance, Bateman’s morning routine is described with a precision that borders on the pathological .He enumerates every products and step with clinical exactitude: “In the shower I use a water-activated gel cleanser ,then a honey-almond body scrub, and on the face an exfoliating gel scrub.” This meticulous attention to detail transforms the mundane act of showering into something robotic and inhuman. The language is familiar in its content –everyone showers-but defamiliarized in its obsessive specificity. This defamiliarization generates a sense of unease, as the reader is confronted with a character who appears hyper-normal yet profoundly alien.

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Blurring Reality and Fantasy

Bateman's narrative style frequently blurs the line between reality and fantasy, a hallmark of the uncanny. His accounts of violent are interpressed with banal social interactions and observations, creating a dissonance that leaves the reader questioning what is real and what is imagined. This narrative instability is a key of psycholinguistics features that contributes to the uncanny.

For instance, Bateman's descriptions of his murders are detailed and graphic, yet delivered in the same detached tone as his descriptions of his consumer habits. This juxtaposition is jarring: "I am spraying Mace into his eyes, then slashing his throat open in a cartful motion, and the blood comes spurting out in fast gushing jets." The flat, unemotional delivery of such horrific acts contrasts sharply with the expected emotional response, creating a surreal and unsettling effect. This linguistic dissonance make it difficult for the reader too difficult for the reader to distinguish between Bateman's real actions and his fantasies, blurring the boundaries of reality.

Disruption of Identity

The uncanny often involves a disruption of identity, where the familiar self becomes strange. Bateman's fragmented identity is reflected in his language, which often mimics those around him, suggesting a lack of coherent self. This mimicry is a psycholinguistics strategy that underscore his role as a social chameleon, outwardly conforming while concealing his true nature .Ellis uses first-person narration to delve into Bateman's psyche, revealing a mind that is both disturbingly rational and profoundly irrational. Bateman's internal monologues often shift from coherent rational thoughts to disjointed, irrational rambling: "I have to return some videotapes." This phrase, repeated throughout the novel, serves as a linguistic placeholder that disrupts the flows of conversation and thought. It reflects Bateman's inability to engage meaningfully with the world, highlighting the hollowness at the core of his identity. Throughout the use of all these linguistic features and psychoanalytic style of *American Psycho* serves as a mirror and amplify the novel's underlying themes of dehumanization ,violence ,and the erosion of individual identity within the context of late capitalist consumer culture. These features work in tandem to create an unsettling ,uncanny reading experience that challenges the reader's assumptions and

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understanding of the world .These linguistic techniques work in tandem with the novel's broader stylistic and narrative strategies to create a deeply unsettling portrait of late capitalist consumer culture and the erosion of individual identity.

Detachment and Objectification

The idea to detachment means absence of identity or a kind of inversion and objectification refers to the act of treating a person as an object or a thing. It is a part of dehumanization, the act of disavowing the humanity of others. Bateman language often objectifies people, reducing them to mere objects or roles .This detachment from human emotions and relationships adds to the unsettling nature of his character. Example "There is an idea of Patrick Bateman, some kind of abstraction, but there is no real me"

Conclusion

The researcher focuses on the topic psycholinguistics by applying the concept of uncanny on the main character Patrick Bateman in novel *American Psycho*. This study finds the uncanny in the dialogues of the Bateman by examining the psycholinguistics and linguistics features of his dialogues and phrases. This thesis has explored the linguistic portrayal of character Patrick Bateman in *American Psycho* is a masterful example of how language can evoke the uncanny. Through meticulous attention to detail, narrative instability, and the disruption of identity, Ellis crafts a protagonist whose language mirrors his psychopathic nature. This study highlights the psycholinguistic analysis of Bateman's speech and narrative style reveals how linguistic elements contribute to the eerie, unsettling atmosphere of the novel, reflecting the profound horror at the core of his character. Understanding these linguistic strategies not only enhances our appreciation of Ellis's work but also provides deeper insights into the psychological complexities of the uncanny.

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