



## 'At the edge of art and insanity'

*Sabine Buchholz*

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Seminar paper from the year 2006 in the subject American Studies - Literature, grade: 1,0, University of Siegen (FB 3 (Literatur-, Sprach- und Medienwissenschaften)), course: „Postmodern Fiction“, 26 entries in the bibliography, language: English, abstract: With the attention-grabbing novel "American Psycho" Bret Easton Ellis entered quite a dangerous ground. The bizarre mixture of yuppie satire and splatter horror caused reactions of scathing criticism, indignation, yes, even murder threat. As a consequence, the publishing house that had the first contract with Ellis and was supposed to edit the novel, namely Simon & Schuster, responded to this radical refusal and cancelled the deal already made. This decision, not to publish a book due to the negative responds against it, meant another scandal since it was a sensation in the American publishing business. Anyway, brushing aside all moral standards, Ellis' shocker was published in 1991 by Vintage books, and for a while, the young writer became the "meistgehaßte[...] Autor der Welt" - evidently, because critics considered his narration too pornographic, sexist, anti-women, disgusting, boring and beyond belief. Yet, American Psycho was regarded with interest - probably last but not least because Bret Easton Ellis had been celebrated as a great talent when publishing "Less than Zero". Meanwhile, countless studies with many diverging approaches manifest that American Psycho may not be condemned and dismissed as a pure splatter work glorifying violence. There are works analysing the publication and the reception of the novel as well as the socio-cultural background; other studies focus on content and stylistic device, or on the motif of the serial killer as postmodern anti-hero. Additionally, some special analyses examine the position of the novel within the American history of censorship or even attempt to draw a parallel from Ellis' Bateman to Goethe's Faust. Thus, it is substantiated that the interest in "American

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