

Examining the Personality of Patrick Bateman of *American Psycho*
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Abstract

Patrick Bateman of Brett Easton Ellis' *American Psycho* presents a unique challenge for personality theories. Examined is how psychoanalytic theory applies to this character. He represents an almost total lack of ego, a superego based on a deviant morality, and an id allowed to act out its most depraved fantasies. This shows how the superego and id can form a perverse pact capable of producing sadistic violence and a loss of distinction between reality and fantasy. These unique conditions also allow self-actualization to be explored from a viewpoint that any behavior can be actualizing. Though we could consider him evil, Bateman has his needs met along the hierarchy until his violent expressions become a perpetuation of deviant ideals that are, in a sense, shared with his victims. This atypical use of theories demonstrates the value of extreme characters in fiction for testing the limits of theoretical perspectives.

Keywords: Patrick Bateman, American Psycho, Psychoanalysis, Actualization, Personality, Violence

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Personality, or character, analysis to describe and understand theoretical perspectives is an art form that can allow exploration of unique combinations of theory and to examine less frequently used parts of theory. In this case Patrick Bateman, of the novel *American Psycho* by Brett Easton Ellis (1991), will be used to describe concepts of psychoanalytic and humanistic personality theory. This analysis will look at how an individual lacking a strong ego and having a superego script that follows an atypical moral code can lead to a disinhibition of the id. In turn, the unique conditions considered in psychoanalytic theory to examine Patrick's violent and sexually violent behavior in terms of actualization.

Both parts of this analysis look at nontraditional aspects of the respective personality theories. The closest analogues to Patrick Bateman in reality are persons

like Ted Bundy, Ed Gein, Jeff Skilling, and Donald Trump. Bateman is a serial murderer (if we believe his narration), who commits depraved acts against many of his victims, he is very successful in the world of finance, and he is fully in tune with the cutthroat rules of corporate finance, mergers, acquisitions, and the post modern urban landscape. A full description of what is learned about Bateman in the novel and film will provide the detail necessary to examine the personality theories selected.

Patrick Bateman Fully Considered

"Abandon all hope ye who enter here ..." (Ellis, 1991, p. 3) These are the first words from the mind of Patrick Bateman. They are also the words that grace the gateway to hell in Dante Alighieri's *Inferno* (1995). Words such as these could just as

easily preface a therapist's file on Bateman. If were to attribute personality disorders to Patrick Bateman, his behaviors and thoughts could qualify him as exhibiting comorbid presentation of borderline and schizotypal personality disorders (Millon & Everly, 1985). Using these disorders to examine the thought patterns and behaviors of Bateman will allow for a better perspective of how other theoretical model apply to this character.

Schizotypal Behavior Observed

A pervasive aspect of the narration by Bateman is his attention to detail and repetition (Ellis, 1991; Harron, 2000; Serpell, 2009). The morning routine of cleaning, fitness, and diet spans several pages of text and minutes of film. It details exact products used, brand names, and why specific products are used with the same level of emotional content present in catalogue descriptions. "You should use an aftershave lotion with little or no alcohol... alcohol dries your face out and makes you look older" (Ellis, 1991, p. 27). This ruminative almost autistic attention to detail and repetition is very distinctive to the schizotypal personality (Millon & Everly, 1985).

Additionally Bateman displays other behaviors, affective expression, and self perception stereotypical of schizotypal personality disorder. Fluent speech is often devoid of emotion and is characterized by use of language commonly found in press releases, reviews of products, or actual catalog descriptions. Many disturbances occur in Bateman's speech, this is most associated with any interruption to a thought or topic not covered by a newspaper or magazine Patrick has read or a topic that has not been on *The Patty*

Winters Show. Bateman substitutes "mergers and acquisitions" (his specialty in financial work) with "murders and executions," begins having to recite newspaper or catalog descriptions to fill gaps in conversation, more rarely his speech breaks down to broken. The occurrences where Bateman's speech falters include frequent pauses between words, jumbled or misused vocabulary, and recovery may be attempted with digressions that show no relation to the topic at hand such as recitation of racist poetry and serial killer trivia. Bateman's self perception as being totally vacant will be explored more fully in the analysis of ego below. His interactions with people as flat, almost lifeless, characters is made almost excusable by their inability to recognize or react to his clearly disturbed behaviors, though these interactions are clearly schizotypal in nature. However even this only describes Bateman's behavior in public; his private and violent behavior is best characterized by borderline personality disorder (BPD).

Borderline Behavior Observed

A disturbed view of self is also central to BPD (Millon & Everly, 1985). Once again, a lack of ego definition is a primary characteristic of Bateman. Many parts of Patrick's life feel like they are determined by others; his path through boarding schools, Harvard, and working at Pierce & Peirce (P&P), a major financial firm described as being practically owned by his father. He attests to hating his work but when asked why he doesn't simply quit -- he is financially secure enough to not require any employment -- his reply is "I... want... to... fit... in" (Ellis, 1991, p. 237). This conflict between needing some

affiliation or work to give to give life definition and the desire to rebel against a seemingly predetermined path may be the source of Bateman's break from reality.

Bateman also displays paradoxical behavior toward others and his opinions of others can rapidly change in antithetical ways at the merest slight, real or imagined. A milder presentation of these reactions to others manifests in verbal aggression though it sometimes escalates to extreme physical violence and murder. Manipulative behavior in BPD is typically associated with preventing feelings of abandonment. In the case of Patrick Bateman it may be related to a more abstract sense of abandonment. Rather than trying to prevent being abandoned by a specific person, Bateman focuses his aggressive behaviors on people who threaten his sense of success, masculinity, and the traits associated with success in a liberal capitalist system (Storey, 2005). The term used in literary analysis to describe this fear or sense of threat is pomophobia. Pomophobia is a neologism combining post (po) modern (mo) fear (phobia) and is defined as the literal fear of "things falling apart" (Byers, 1995; Storey, 2005). Patrick's violent behavior and relationships will be explored in detail in the analysis of his personality in terms of id function.

Other Relevant Facts

Patrick Bateman occupies a very specific part of the social hierarchy of New York life. As a vice president level executive in mergers and acquisitions at P&P, he lives by a set of conditions distinct from the majority population. Bateman has had the privilege of attending top level schools, has no need to work for an income, and has an almost fanatical dedication to fitness and

appearance. Outwardly he is a model of acceptable behavior and thoughts. His fiancé, who also occupies a VP or C-level executive position, refers to him as "the boy next door." All of this is a facade for the disturbances that lie beneath the carefully groomed surface.

Bateman actively hates minorities, homosexual males, and the poor or homeless. He also has a generalized hate of women, though he may be particularly brutal toward those who also occupy positions of power. However, this hate rarely spills into his daily life and he maintains a carefully created facade of political correctness in most social situations. While Bateman maintains a careful social appearance his exclusively male group of friends, also from P&P and other financial and law firms, are openly bigoted, racist, and misogynistic. In contrast to his carefully maintained public self Bateman is capable of horrifically depraved violence.

In the novel Patrick commits a total of 14 murders. Included in this total are seven male, one a child, and seven female victims (Jackson, 1991). He also kills multiple animals. In addition he hurts and maims a number of others and makes allusions to other violent acts in his history. However, assessment of his violence is problematic. Bateman narrates each murder in exact detail and with little to no emotion. Despite this detailed record of narration, almost every act of violence is, in all probability, imagined. Through the course of the book Bateman progressively degenerates further into hallucinations and erratic behavior that may be regressions of either borderline or schizotypal personality disorders or may represent fully schizophrenic symptoms (Ellis, 1991; Messier, 2004; Serpell, 2009; Storey, 2005).

The violence detailed by Bateman becomes brutal to the point of parody by the end of the novel. This ultimately culminates with a series of violent events, delusions, and a confession to his lawyers answering machine of such fantastic quality that it is thought by others to be nothing more than a strange joke. All of these events, though, are real to Bateman and remain persistent, in his environment. Other situations at work, home, normal sexual situations, etc., are clearly written to be lucid accounts. The line between fantasy and reality is at least blurred and quite possibly nonexistent. All of these problems give a rich set of material applicable to psychoanalytic theory.

Patrick Bateman in Psychoanalytic Theory

Most broadly psychoanalysis focuses on how the id, ego, and superego interact to create personality (Friedman & Schustack, 2009). The id represents the most basic and primal instincts. The id demands to be satisfied and has no qualms about pursuing pleasure through violence toward others. It eats, mates, and kills. The superego is the manifestation of morals that have been ascribed by the society. The superego is just as demanding as the id, the only exception is that it demands that the individual strictly follow the rules it has learned to the letter without regard for how unrealistic these rules may be. The ego is the moderator of these unrealistic demands from each side of the spectrum. It guides realistic behavior that satisfies urges and follows rules. It is the manifestation of the ego we consider the emergent personality.

Bateman represents a special case in what may happen if the normal interaction of these parts of the personality is disrupted. The most profound disruption is

Patrick's weak or nonexistent ego. It is this lack of ego that creates Bateman's inability to distinguish fantasy from reality. His superego is formed around a set of rules and morals unique to work in mergers and acquisitions, a specialization known for brutality in the business world. These conditions allow for a disinhibition of the id, which is allowed to fulfill its unrestricted desires in ways that mirror the perverted superego. Each part of the personality, ego, superego, and id, and the role it plays in Bateman will be examined in detail.

The Diminished Ego and Self-Concept

Bateman does not consider himself to be real, or at least to not be a complete personality. These feelings of absence of self are best described by his own internal monologues. When being questioned by Kimball, a private detective hired to investigate the disappearance of Bateman's first victim, Paul Owen, we have a reflection by Bateman about this fundamental absence. "Kimball is utterly unaware of how truly vacant I am. There is no evidence of animate life in this office, yet still he takes notes" (Ellis, 1991, p. 275). A longer quotation may better detail exactly how Patrick Bateman views himself:

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 am simply not there*. It is hard for me to make sense on any given level. Myself is fabricated, an aberration. I am a noncontingent human being. My

personality is sketchy and unformed, my heartlessness goes deep and is persistent. My conscience, my pity, my hopes disappeared a long time ago ... if they ever did exist.

(Ellis, 1991, pp. 376 -77, emphasis in original)

This self description is a rich source of information. Bateman views himself as a collection of clashing and ill-defined motivations that have little coherence, features very typical to both BPD and schizotypal disorders (Millon & Everly, 1985). Important features can be identified in these self descriptions to ego function in Bateman. The recognition of heartlessness, lack of pity, and in this his level violence is reminiscent of Nietzsche's maxim "He who despises himself still nonetheless respects himself as one who despises" (Nietzsche, 1990, p. 92). He is therefore capable of observing and understanding that his behaviors are wholly inappropriate.

This indicates the presence of an observing ego (Hausner, 2009). That ego is able to evaluate behavior as rational or irrational. In this case though the ego is too weak to control behavior in many situations. The weakness of this ego can also be seen in Bateman's inability to distinguish between real and imaginary events. In the mind of Patrick, every murder, maiming, and fantasy event is real. They not only seem to happen at the moment, but the bodies of many victims and acts are persistent in his world. The fact that piles of bodies do not deter later victims or attract the attention of neighbors provides further evidence of the delusional quality of these events. Regardless of the realness of these acts, why and at who Bateman lashes out may be best examined in how Bateman's superego functions.

The Superego as a Source of Violence

Individuals are not born with a superego *a priori*. Instead the superego is an accretion of observations early in life that calcify to create perceptions about what law, morality, and correct behavior is (Friedman & Schustack, 2009). As an *a posteriori* part of the mind, there can be room for significant differences to be present between individuals. In most cases significant differences would be expected between cultures or distinct groups rather than showing extreme differences in each individual (Lonner & Malpass, 1994). There is one fact, though, that may give the conditions necessary for Bateman to develop a superego distinctly different from mainstream America; his father practically owns P&P.

The father is an obvious source of inspiration and example. Freud did not focus on parental relations for an arbitrary reason, they are present from our moment of birth and will be those that we assume are the proper example of how others, and therefore we, should act (Friedman & Schustack, 2009). The world of finance, especially mergers and acquisitions, is not a gentle world. Companies are cannibalized by others for profit. Those companies with weak leadership but the ability to turn a profit are actively hunted down for buyout. Only strength, independence in market, and aggressive pursuit of the bottom line ensures survival. This is a hyper-masculine environment that uses appearance and brand labels as designators of personal success. It is a game where the only way to advance is to denounce any traits which may signal weakness or even compassion. This is the example presumably set for Bateman by his father. The superego of Bateman is dominated by the rules of the

capital market; rules very different from any set forth by Judeo-Christian beliefs, the constitution, or anything contrary to the idea of social Darwinism. The irony that corporations stand legally as individuals in most respects should give a further reference point for understanding the behavior of Patrick. That Bateman believes in a very different set of rules, though, does not create violence.

The superego should be a source of guilt, criticism, and a protector from committing immoral acts (Merkur, 2009). Merkur's work explores a much darker side of the superego that was proposed by Freud but received little attention. Because the superego sets unrealistic levels for behavior to follow it is inevitable that we will commit transgressions. Feelings of guilt, or a sense of badness, are dealt with by a need for atonement (Merkur, 2009). This need can manifest as unconscious self-punishing behaviors that, if not properly restrained, can become extremely masochistic. These unconscious masochistic behaviors may further produce a situation in which "an unconscious standard of morality [forms] that is, paradoxically, grossly immoral" (Merkur, 2009, p. 946). In that Bateman lacks a strong, functioning ego; development of a grossly immoral standard of morality, one already based on an aggressive foundation, is highly likely.

Because Bateman's ego is too weak to moderate behavior, it may also lack the substance to remain a target by the superego for masochistic punishment. Instead the superego may displace this need for punishment to external objects; people who offend Bateman in some way. This externalizing of the superego to commit violent acts and atrocities can best be observed at the societal level

(Schweidson, 2005; West-Leuer & Westerfield, 2009). If self-punishment or even recognition of guilt causing flaws would endanger the society it will actively displace those feelings and actions to a population it can strike out at. An example given by Schweidson (2005) is the displacement of guilt and flaws in the German society on to Jewish populations so that those undesirable traits could be destroyed in a literal way. This provides the critical link between superego transgressions and sadistic behavior. A behavior that can be exhibited at the societal level can be present in the individual even if the expression of the behavior may be modified to adjust for the single actor. However, the actual punishment for transgressions is not meted out by Bateman's superego but by his id.

The Id Set Free

Thus far very little detail about the murders, real or imagined, committed by Bateman has been included. His acts range from the simple use of an axe to kill Paul Owen to the use of a nail gun to pin an ex-girlfriend to his floor who is then systematically tortured and raped before dying (Ellis, 1991). The darkest passions of the id are fully explored as Bateman gradually loses more and more connection to reality. Though some victims are picked at random most are consciously chosen. The selection process appears to be controlled by the superego while the violence committed is an unrestrained expression of the id.

While there is an even distribution of victims between the genders the level of violence committed is unequally distributed. Paul Owen is killed swiftly with an axe, a gay man is killed by cutting of the

throat. Women receive the full brunt of violence Bateman is capable of. Women are systematically tortured, raped, dismembered, and in some cases partially eaten. One exception that stands out from the pattern is a homeless man who is tortured but not killed. This variation in level of violence and expression of the id is best looked at through the lens of Patrick's superego.

Men targeted by Bateman generally represent a violation of only one core value held by the superego. Paul Owen is manager of one of the single largest and most lucrative accounts in their shared industry. The gay man is a chance encounter who only violates Bateman's expectations about sexual orientation. Others similarly fit into this model. Bateman appears to view these people simply as obstacles or threats to his ability to continue unimpeded. Thus they are dealt with by the id in an analogous manner; with the efficiency of the business world. The homeless man who is attacked, tortured, and blinded by Bateman represents a different sort of threat. The homeless man represents the general threat of the collapse of the capital system. However, poverty may be a necessary condition of the rules which are embraced by Bateman. He may deny, distort, or mutilate the treat of poverty but it cannot be eliminated in the zero sum game of free market capitalism. In this case the superego, perhaps the ego, sets limits on the extent to which violence is allowed against a certain threat. There are no such limits imposed in his violence to women.

There is very little distinction in the status or occupation of women targeted by Bateman. He kills multiple call girls and prostitutes, Bethany is an ex-girlfriend, another woman was an acquaintance from

school. In almost every case, excluding that of Bethany, violent acts are preceded by sex. The initial sexual contact is often consented to, either accepting Bateman's sexual invitations or in exchange for payment, though the sex engaged in is identical to that in more degrading forms of pornography. Initial contact with women represents the general libidinal urge for sex. His styling of sex after pornography may characterize his narcissistic focus on image and the most superficial properties of intercourse (Tylin, 2001). In contrast, the violence stems from the threat posed by women to the superego.

As previously stated, Bateman works in and has a superego governed by a world of hyper-masculine, aggressive rules. Women represent both a desired object and also the antithesis to what he must be for success. Additionally, a major rule of the consumption based world of Bateman is the absolute disposability of pleasure. Drugs, art, the best table at a high end restaurant, and even women can be acquired with almost the same simplicity as a toothbrush and all are equally disposable in his mind. In this way the id of Bateman does need to exercise restraint, any object it breaks or destroys in the pursuit of pleasure can be replaced by other interchangeable objects. This combination of threat to the superego and disinhibition of the id creates in Bateman the full capacity to commit violent and sexual acts on the same object (woman). This creates a level of violence and depravity that might typically describe violence and atrocity in war (Schweidson, 2005). Further, this violence mirrors the world of mergers and acquisitions.

How the id systematically destroys the objects it targets is nearly identical to practices in the world of finance. Patrick's

violence starts at a small scale, almost like a fledgling business. As it escalates the degree of violence becomes more considerable, but even then follows a systematic course. Both the constant description of physical items -- clothing, restaurants, gym equipment -- and the description of and course of sexual and violent events becomes repetitive (Serpell, 2009). The sex follows a script that could be likened to filling out standardized forms. The violent acts use the same jargon as is used in mergers and acquisitions. The women are often pinned down and restrained. They are dismembered or dissected, a process common to large corporate takeover as company divisions are sold to multiple parties, being reduced to their constituent parts. To a limited degree some of the women are cannibalized, another common term more frequently seen in industrial takeovers and reuse of their machinery and vital workings by other companies or factories. Each of these acts, sex, eating, and elimination of threat in order to satisfy pleasure is mirrored in a business world which has become the basis for Bateman's moral reasoning. His course from VP to serial killer provides a chilling indictment of how easily the world of fantasy and reality can be blurred and how acceptable rules of business produce profoundly disturbing behavior in the individual. This process of evolution toward violence may also give a unique way of looking at the actualization process.

Bateman as an Actualizing Character

When thinking of humanistic psychology and the self-actualization process this is almost exclusively a realm

that examines positive examples of behavior and life (Friedman & Schustack, 2009). However, actualization does not need to be restricted to positive traits. Self-actualization "refers to the [person's] desire for self-fulfillment, namely, to the tendency for him to become actualized in what he is potentially" (Maslow, 1943, pp. 382–383 as quoted in: Koltko-Rivera, 2006, pp. 303). This definition of actualization leaves room for negative pursuits to become actualized.

Bateman is capable of reaching self-actualization because his lower needs are satisfied. He has access to the top quality food, drink, and other necessities. His housing is well above what would be needed for survival. While it was posed that Bateman suffers from pomophobia this should not interfere fulfillment of his safety needs. There is very little threat that Patrick would have his safety threatened by others, and his fear of "things falling apart" is not related to physical safety. If there is a weakness in the argument for reaching self-actualization it could be found in his love and belongingness needs. Bateman is engaged, has a group of friends who respect him and has a secure position in that group. However, his marked lack of coherence as a personality, feelings of vacancy, and inability to feel true emotional attachment to any other person does make his fulfillment of this level of needs tenuous. The relationships Bateman does have are largely there because he feels the need to fit in, not necessarily because he wants or needs those attachments. He does meet the requirements of this need on the surface level, it may be that having those surface level attachments is all Bateman requires, so while it leaves room for debate those needs will be considered as met. As a VP at P&P, Bateman, also has his needs for esteem met. Though his

father may nearly be in charge of the company, Patrick, has risen through the ranks of elite schools and does manage major accounts very successfully with no disturbances at work ever reported in the narration. Despite being a significantly disordered personality it can be allowed that Bateman is still an actualizing personality.

Patrick may, in fact, reach both the fifth and sixth levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Koltko-Rivera, 2006). Despite not having a true sense of self, being significantly disordered, and living by rules that deviate from any recognizable norm, Bateman does reach peak experience, and perhaps a flow state, in the violence committed in his fantasy world. Bateman continues to escalate his level of violence and depravity in a meaningful attempt to explore the limits of his own indulgence in these dark passions. In a chilling continuation of a quote earlier in this paper (page 8) Bateman goes on to have this thought:

Each model of human behavior must be assumed to have some validity. Is evil something you are? Or is it something you do? My pain is constant and sharp and I do not hope for a better world for anyone. In fact I want my pain to be inflicted on others. I want no one to escape. (Ellis, 1991, p. 377)

While there is a clear recognition of pain, be it related directly to the conflict of personality considered in the discussion of possible personality disorders diagnosable or some other existential pain is not clearly described, what stands out his desire to inflict it on others. This has an interesting relation to self-actualization.

The final level in the hierarchy of needs later hypothesized by Maslow is self-

transcendence. The definition given for self transcendence is to "[seek] a further cause beyond the self and to experience a communion beyond the boundaries of the self through peak experience" (Koltko-Rivera, 2006, p. 303). The extreme behaviors of Patrick Bateman may represent the furthest edge or a perversion of this ideal but fall within the categorical description of these actualizing behaviors. His murder, mutilation, and attempts to eat others becomes a literal interpretation of attempting to transcend the self and merge with others. Rather than sharing a positive experience with others, as a musician might share music, Bateman finds flow in his limitless violence and shares that pain with others.

This different view of self-actualization is possible only by the synthesis between the characteristics described both in the disordered personality of Bateman and the analysis of the total character through psychoanalytic theory. This shows the power of how the novel use of theories in combination can result in unexpected applications of theory. *American Psycho* as a literary work is also built to facilitate this type of examination by giving us a perspective that is a detailed present tense narration of a character that exhibits many extreme traits.

Conclusions

"This is not an exit." (Ellis, 1991, p. 399)

Those are the final words from the mind of Patrick Bateman. Just like the first words, "Abandon all hope ye who enter here," these are not an original thought they are simply words over a door Bateman

sees. However, these two statements may be the most powerful and revealing lines about not just Bateman but also the intent of the author and the effect on the audience (Messier, 2004; Serpell, 2009; Storey, 2005). The life of Bateman is not one that gives hope for recovery, safety, or adequate explanation for what Bateman is or how he became the way he is. In fact, Bateman has no desire for recovery and even when faced by the fact that significant portions of his life have been lived entirely in fantasy shows a desire to either perpetuate the fantasy or perhaps make that fantasy a reality. There is also no exit from the delusional world of Patrick.

Once the story has been read the reader will carry a part of Bateman with them. Bateman is just as much a prisoner, he cannot escape his pain, his desire for violence; the reader cannot escape having indulged in this violence, depravity, and autistic description of detail as entertainment. Also inescapable is the fact that Bateman does not stand out from anyone else. Quite to the contrary mistaken identity is common throughout the text. Just like cells in a larger body, each is interchangeable, replaceable, and each designed for a purpose. Bateman may simply represent a malignant cell, a figure that will naturally arise from the system (Bloom, 1997). Even attempts to rationalize a character like Bateman away, even to say such is not possible, is confronted by a long history of serial killers, insane or evil leaders of nations, and other extreme deviations from normal behavior that have existed in reality. This may not be an exit, but what might Bateman say about an examination of himself?

Bateman says this about himself and the narration of his tale:

... there is no catharsis. I gain no deeper knowledge about myself, no new understanding can be extracted from this telling. There has been no reason for me to tell you any of this. This confession has meant *nothing*... (Ellis, 1991, p. 377)

However, this confession *has* meant a great deal. There may be no hope for Bateman, there may not be hope for a world driven by the ideals he accepted, there may not be an exit from the knowledge that beneath the veneer of appearance unspeakable rage and violence can exist. However, knowing these things, even in the context of fiction, has considerable value.

Bateman is an extreme example of almost everything he represents. He is the extreme end of consumer culture and liberal capitalism. He is an extreme example of comorbidity of personality disorders. He bends the way in which the ego, id, and superego should interact. He shows us that even theory meant to analyze the most positive aspects of life can be used to dissect ideas and behavior at the opposite end of the spectrum. Characters, and real people, who represent outliers of this nature force the issue of understanding how theory must be pushed to cope with the range of experience possible. We may despise Patrick Bateman, but we must nevertheless respect that we can despise. We can be entertained or repulsed by what is despised. There is the same value in learning from the most evil of acts as there is in the study of the most beneficent.

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