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'Literature is ~~the~~ question, minus the answer.' As Roland Barthes once suggested, significant texts have the ability to explore and pose questions about traditional <sup>of culture</sup> notions and values through the manipulation of language form and feature. The texts 'Orlando' by Sally Potter, 'American Psycho' by Bret Easton Ellis, 'If on a Winter's Night a Traveller' by Italo Calvino and 'Name of the Rose' by Umberto Eco all employ dynamic techniques to explore profound ideas about culture and values of fiction itself.

'Orlando' challenges traditional views of narrative and history as a linear and logical process, portrayed through the protagonist, Orlando's colourful four hundred year journey, prompted by the Queen's request to 'never fade or grow old.' Orlando stays true to immortality, transcending time and history as society crumbles and evolves around him. Potter suggests that narrative is not always progress, ~~so~~ by constantly frustrating textual closure in revealing that a story does not always end in the capitulated satisfaction of regaining what was once lost or the heterosexual closure of marriage, challenging ~~the~~ widespread cultural perceptions. The division of Orlando's journey into seven autonomous episodes beginning with death and ending with 'birth' events

natural order and explores the idea that history is not always logical progress.

American Psycho showcases a similar postmodern scepticism towards progress by relaying the futility of existence through a violent and inaccessible protagonist, Patrick Bateman, whose nonchalant attitude towards violence perturbs the responder. Ellis ~~states~~ rejects the Platonic belief that a pure and ~~an~~ essential truth exists which hinders endeavour to discover by relaying Bateman's life as a mere search for sensory pleasure ~~existing~~ through consumerism, mind-altering drug episodes and fateful killing sprees. Ellis ~~relays~~ <sup>highly detailed</sup> Bateman's life is portrayed through fragmented lists of consumer items which prove the ultimate hollowness of Bateman's life and society by extension. Ellis manipulates traditional ~~to~~ narrative through this excessive fragmentation and puts forth profound challenges towards ~~the~~ contemporary societal values of consumerism through his dark cross-section of 1980's social culture. Furthermore, Ellis's <sup>is</sup> ~~is~~ rejection of progress is encapsulated in Bateman's speech, 'Define reason. Desire meaningless. Intellect is not a cure. Justice is dead.' Italo Calvino's novel reflects a similar rejection of traditional values of progress, as each incipit begins promisingly but ultimately the reader is

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left frustrated as excerpts are left humourously open-ended, exploring ~~the~~ values of ~~the~~ progress and the value of reading itself.

Umberto Eco manipulates narrative structure by subverting linearity through excessive fragmentation, as each day of which there is seven is divided into eight subchapters, resulting in an erratic read. Eco's fragmented style also creates meaning through its emulation of the genre murder-mystery to which it loosely belongs, as disjointed pieces of a puzzle. Eco explores ideas about linearity through undermining his own credibility, thus drawing attention to his own subversion of it. This is done as time is presented as linear ~~with the~~ by the characters in the novel, as one monk states 'one would be foolish to attempt to elude the flow of time and death...'. Thus, Eco challenges the value of a text itself by manipulating the reader's response.

Cultural perceptions of gender are explored and challenged within Orlando as Potter draws attention to the similarities between the sexes.

~~and~~ Orlando wakes from a prolonged sleep as a woman due to the resolute desires of her, only to exclaim 'same person, different sex'. The idea that gender is

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Merely a construct built externally around a person is then enforced as Orlando is forced roughly into a corset. Potter challenges engrained cultural values about gender and the difference between man as worker as she continually confronts biological determinism. This is portrayed as while Orlando remains intrinsically unchanged, but is unable to live up to shifting English colonial expectations in her new identity as a woman. Potter, <sup>further</sup> explores the profound idea of gender ~~gender~~ as a social construct through the casting of effeminate Billy Zane as Steverdice and gay icon Quentin Crisp as the virginal Queen Elizabeth.

Literary expert Roland Barthes ~~and~~ challenged traditional perceptions and the value of the grand narrative form by claiming the ~~the~~ true meaning of a text lay not with the composer but with the interpretation of the reader, stating 'the unity' of a text ~~lay~~ not in its origin but in its destination', thus, 'the author is dead'.

The composers in question have explored this profound idea through the use of metafiction, a language device which ~~the~~ self-consciously addresses the devices of fiction in order to shatter literary illusion and ~~also~~ force the reader to acknowledge their status as texts, thus placing emphasis on their own interpretation. Critic Patricia Waugh suggested authors

also  
used reflexion to provide critique of their own work, and to imply the possible fictionality of reality. These ideas are explored in Calvino's novel as he manipulates traditional style, ~~rather~~ employing the metafictional technique of 'mise-en-abyme', which is a story within a story. In this case however, the story is basically the same as the story being told. For instance, a reader reading the novel 'If on a winter Night a Traveller' would find themselves inside a novel where a character called 'you' is reading a novel called 'If on a winter Night a Traveller'. Calvino creates a dynamic relationship between author and responder by placing the reader inside the fictional world as a character in the novel itself, suggesting an overlap of reality and fiction, ~~and~~ a challenge to ~~the cultural~~ ~~or~~ widespread cultural perception that the two are separate. This is strengthened as Calvino blurs boundaries between framing and embedded text in the novel, ~~as~~ as well as decreasing authorial intrusion by directly addressing the reader as 'you'. Ultimately Calvino explores the value of writing, as his novel is essentially a novel about novels. Furthermore, he dynamically interacts with the responder ~~and~~ in order to challenge ideas about fiction. Additional writing space on back page.

and reality. American Psycho also ~~explores~~ employs dyadic  
relaxation and ~~provides~~ <sup>explores</sup> ideas about reality and  
fiction by providing the responder with a  
variety of interpretations to which they can  
decide if the events of Balven's life are fiction  
or fact. This is achieved as Balven narrates his  
grotesque murders, but his identity is  
constantly questioned and when he finally  
confesses his crimes, other characters laugh at  
him and assure it is a joke, saying they have  
seen Balven's 'victims' alive and well after he  
has killed them. In ~~leaving~~ leaving these events ambiguous,  
Ellis places significance on the reader's interpretation  
by allowing them to decide, as well as drawing  
attention to the novel's status as a text by  
having Balven suggest 'There is an entity of  
Patrick Bateman, and if you stare my hand I  
will return your odd gaze but I am simply  
not there.'

Potter similarly interrupts literary illusion and  
disrupts immersion in the film by following the  
modernist tradition of 'breaking the fourth wall'  
and having Orlando directly address the audience,  
for instance 'what a marvellous play'. This  
manipulation of cinematic techniques forms a  
golden thread between Orlando and the responder,  
and places emphasis on You may ask for an extra Writing Booklet if you need more space.

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This - our understanding of the cultural and social values portrayed within the text.

Umberto Eco explores notions of the grand narrative, challenging its ability to provide meaning by dynamically demonstrating the limitations of narrative form. Eco draws attention to the text as a construct by ~~foregoing~~ foregrounding chapters with a pre-emptive summary of what will entail in the respective chapter. Eco ~~states~~ unravels the process of representation by acknowledging features which only exist within the extratextual world, for instance 'in which, though the chapter is short' the word 'chapter' is referential of narrative structure, thus ~~acknowledges~~ forces the responder to acknowledge the novel is no more than a fictional construct, limiting its ~~its~~ value. Eco further portrays ~~the~~ values about literature by suggesting society can only internalise meaning through learned conventions, overturning cultural expectations. Eco uses individuality as the character Brother William is a direct mirror image of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes, appropriating Doyle's description as both are 'tall ~~lean~~ and lean with piercing eyes and 'shrike the attention of the most casual observer. His description is included despite another character's claim that they 'do not indulge in the

description of prisons; only to point out that ~~to texts~~ words alone lack the ability to create meaning, which can only be universalised through learned genre convention, this is supported by critic ND Hembree who stated 'in order to identify with a text a reader ~~is~~ must find grounding in convention'. Thus, Eco ~~is~~ suggests that texts have little value as meaning is only universalised through cultural convention.

Essentially, the texts ~~is~~ manipulate traditional form and employ dynamic techniques to explore profound ideas and challenges ~~to~~ toward traditional ~~is~~ perceptions of culture and values.

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