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THE GLAMORAMA *AS SIMULACRUM*[1]

The 1998 *Glamorama*[2] bespeaks well those textual features which might be familiar from earlier works as the trade-marks of the author. Comparing it with the author's previous novels and short stories, indeed, the similarities strike us first: the main character due to the first person, present tense narration is a narrator at once; the characters are primarily individualized by the well-known brands of consumer society; and the recurring enumeration of the stratum of the represented entities evokes the feeling of familiarity, authenticity, and accuracy in the recipient. From the point of view of the Ellisian novel-poetics, the common features in connection with the above-mentioned and also with e.g. the contradictious nature of the main characters' disposition are especially relevant in the parallel of *Glamorama* and *American Psycho*.[3] From our standpoint, however, the differences are more important. Can *Glamorama* confront us with something new in comparison with the earlier texts, or is it simply a further combination of the usual narrative panels? The question is justified all the more since the reception of the novel strongly reminds us of the reception of the previous one. This time, years after the scandalous reception of *American Psycho*, the author had to refute in interviews again that Victor Ward would in fact be him and that his private life and the events of the novel would be identical in any way.[4] Although such an uncritical application of referential

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[1] The present and the following study of the volume summarize observations concerning *Glamorama* which originate in a common project investigating the aspects of Bret Easton Ellis's prose. Apart from their several parallels, the two studies, of course, come to different conclusions.

[2] Bret Easton Ellis, *Glamorama* (New York: Vintage Books, 1999). All subsequent extracts are from and all subsequent references are to this edition. The relevant page numbers always appear in brackets right after the given reference or extract in the text of the paper.

[3] Bret Easton Ellis, *American Psycho* (London: Picador, 1991).

[4] Cf. "[...] I really believe that the readers are smart and sophisticated enough to realize that the author is not the narrator of his novels. Writing fiction is an act of imagination and fantasizing, and it's not relating in prose what you've been doing for the last two or three years." (Joshua Klein, "Interview with Bret Easton Ellis," available: www.avclub.com/content/node/24229, access: 15 March 2006.) Nevertheless, an extract from another interview in which Ellis originates the character of Patrick Bateman in his father and in himself seems to contradict the afore-cited thought: "I identified with

reading has already been considered out-of-date for a long time, we cannot under-estimate such an attitude since it informs us about that fundamental interpretative uncertainty articulated even by a certain fraction of professional readers claiming that the quality of the novel is at least problematical.

In one of his interviews, Ellis pointed out that the chief novelty of *Glamorama* is the plot, more precisely, the fact that "it has a plot, or at least an identifiable narrative that [his] other novels really don't have", which, according to him, is in connection with the choice of topic, in particular with the theme of conspiracy.[5] With full knowledge of the novels preceeding *Glamorama*, it is obvious—though it does not become evident from the context of the interview—that the point here is not that a metafictional practice gets replaced by a story-centred, linear poetics;[6] the change could be rather measured by the fact that in *Glamorama*, an expansive narrative (a conspiracy) organizes the plot in contrast with e.g. *American* Psycho, whose subject (the "confessions" of a serial killer yuppie) favours a minimalist novel-structure based on loosely-joint micronarratives.[7] The atmosphere of the conspiracy is inherently characterized by a certain mysteriousness, enigmaticness. Perhaps we do not say anything new if we presume that the reader's expectations concerning a novel which thematizes a conspiracy is going to be organized around the actual enigma; or to put it in other words, the reception is going to be motivated by the promise of the unravelling of the enigma. Thus, what Catherine Belsey asserts about the plot in classic realism is going to be true just the other way round in the case of *Glamorama*, which is about conspiracy. While those texts narrating murder, war, journey, or love only employ enigma as one of their *possible* means,[8] it is the enigma itself that makes the main subject-matter here, and all the other themes get subordinated to this in service of the exposition, the narrative.

Patrick Bateman initially because in a lot of ways he was like me. He was young, he was successful, he lived a certain kind of lifestyle, and so in that respect I saw him often as myself. That's why I consider the novel autobiographical. At the same time, I think it was a criticism of the way my father lived his life because he did slip into that void." (Jamie Clarke, "An Interview with Bret Easton Ellis," available:

http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Forum/8506/Ellis/clarkeint.html, access: 15 March 2006.)

[5] Cf. "An interview with Bret Easton Ellis," available:

http://www.randomhouse.com/boldtype/0199/ellis/interview.html, access: 15 March 2006.

[6] Such as in case of Paul Auster, at whom we can detect a similar tendency after his *New York Trilogy* (London: Faber and Faber, 1999).

[7] For the definition of minimalism cf. Zoltán Abádi-Nagy's study. "Minimalism vs. Postmodernism in Contemporary American Fiction," *Neohelicon* 1 (2001): 129–43.

[8] Cf. Catherine Belsey, *Critical Practice* (London–New York: Methuen, 1980), 70.

Right at the very beginning of the novel, we come across a self-reflexive part referring to such an enigmaticness:

> [...] so I don't want a lot of description, just the story, streamlined, no frills, the lowdown: who, what, where, when and don't leave out why, though I'm getting the distinct impression by the looks on your sorry faces that *why* won't get answered—now, come on goddamnit, what's the *story*? (5)

The sequence "what's the story?" refers to the events of the text in a way that at the same time it also indicates the distance between the narrator and the narrated. This gesture is interesting because it repeats one of the immanent functions of the present tense narration. The present tense here implicitly expresses that each event is happening 'right now' at the moment of our reading;[9] therefore, the narrator does not have an overlook on the whole story; it can only reflect on the current events. The afore-cited question "what's the story?" creates the same relation; its meaning is 'I don't know the story, somebody tell me'. All the same, in a paradoxical way, it also undermines the narrator's ignorance allowing for that 'right now'. How can it be that a person who can possess knowledge concerning exclusively the past and the present knows a story which assumes the knowledge of the future? Thereby, the relation between narrator and narrated suggested by the present tense gets shattered in its base. The fore-mentioned distance comes into being, which makes it possible that we attribute such level to the text where the how of the text's/the reception's operation is coded. In the narrative structure of the novel, we can find more similar discrepancies when the motivated first person narrator gives evidence of such knowledge to which he cannot have access through his own experience, through the reports of witnesses, or through the technics of reading-off, i.e. when the narrator infers information from external sources: the characters' appearace, acts, words. The discrepancy at issue is well represented by the following example:

> I hop on the Vespa, kick it into gear and speed up Park *without* looking back, *though if* I had been *I would've seen* Lauren yawning while she waved for a cab. (128, italics mine)[10]

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[9] Dorrit Cohn emphasizes three functions of the present tense: it can mean a single, momentary action, a repeated action, and generalizations or eternal truths. Dorrit Cohn, *Transparent Minds* (Princeton–New Yersey: Princeton University Press, 1978), 190.

[10] In the Hungarian translation (Bret Easton Ellis, *Glamoráma*, trans. Miklós M. Nagy, [Budapest: Európa Könyvkiadó, 2000]), the other place in the text which testifies the unreliability of the narrator is the consequence of an evident negligence on the part of the

The frequent recurring of the questions concerning the circumstances of the story in the first part of the novel propounds that the text sooner or later will provide the answers. Part one—which embraces the organization of a club opening and the events of the first party (*what*) in New York (*where*) in the 1990's (*when*)[11]—ends on a note that seemingly gives all the answers, which then gradually ease the process of reception and foster the understanding of the story. According to these, Victor's (*who*) career (*why*) would stand in the focus of the novel since we have got over almost half of the text. To understand the plot of the first part, which parades hundreds of celebrities, and Victor's existential, power position, the reader's familiarity with popular culture, with its events (conceived as a text or intertext), illustrious participants and discourses will be a basic requirement, and the comparison of the signifiers demands an intertextual strategy. According to the model of popular culture taking shape in *Glamorama*, this space cannot be divided into active and passive consumer levels. Everybody is a potential producer and consumer at the same time: from door-keepers, waiters, through models on their way to the top, to 'real' stars. While *American Psycho* presented merely the endless enumeration of objects and items, *Glamorama* lists the actors/actresses, sportsmen/-women, models, the individuals of the media, and other important people literally (cf. the list of the invited for the opening party). Practically, they extinguish each other's *meaning*(fulness) because they gain their sign- and newsvalue not in comparison to other celebrities in a hierarchy fixed from an external point of view, but in the judgements of their currency given by this culture's consumers. On the other hand, only those signifiers mingle with the reliable signifiers, owning denotatum, which possess a designate, i.e. such signifiers whose signifieds do not exist in our actual world:

> People told us that they either were *vampires* or knew someone
> who was a *vampire*. (102, italics mine);

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translator: the Hungarian equivalents of the sentences "She looks over at where I'm shivering, slumped in a giant *white* chair." (202, italics mine) and "[...] I say, panting, sitting up in the giant *white* chair." (203, italics also mine) are "Rám néz, ahogy ott reszketek, összegörnyedve egy óriási, *fekete* [black] székben." (*Glamoráma*, 253, italics mine) and "[...] mondom zihálva, és felülök az óriási *fehér* [white] székben." (ibid., 256, italics also mine).

[11] The problems in connection with the handling of time unintentionally break down the diegesis of the present: there can be antinomies between the reader's knowledge and the informational base of the text, e.g. 2pac Shakur, the rapstar, who appears in the text as a living character, died in a street gun-fight after the publication of the novel (120).

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> [...] and in the main room the director, assistant director, lightning cameraman, gaffer, chief electrician, two more assistants, Scott Benoit, *Jason Vorhees' sister*, Bruce Hulce, Gerlinda Kostiff, scenic ops and a Steadicam operator stand around a very large egg [...] (113, italics mine);
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> [...] Henry Rollins, *Nike*, Kim Deal, *Beavis and Butt-head*, Anita Hill, Jeff Koons, Nicole Kidman [...] O. J. Simpson, Michael DeLuca [...] Bruno Beuilacqua di Santangelo, *Huckleberry Finn*, Bill Murr (212-3, italics mine).

Because the proper names referring to existing people and the names of the figures familiar from different fictional worlds become parts of the same semiotic chain (besides the so far mentioned, the characters appearing in Ellis's previous works also belong to the latter ones), and because in principle, every name can be substituted for any other due to the unarticulatedness[12] of their difference, the interpretative process of the referencialization of the signifiers splits, and the referential reading comes to a halt.

In spite of the fact that not only the products and objects of popular culture can be reproduced, duplicated, or substituted, but also the institutions and the participants of the cultural happenings,[13] from the point of view of the characters, it is still possible to actually set up various hierarchies since they themselves are active interpreters of the cultural events presented by the novel. These hierarchies are built around currency, which, however, never means constant positionedness. The momentously changing conditions of the ratability of currency vary so fast, they are so relative that it is impossible to follow the rules of the game unless one adjusts oneself to the movement determined by persistent change not free from contradictions either. A conversation being formed between Victor and one of his subordinates, JD clearly demonstrates that the token of currency does not call for comprehension, but for fast adaptability to the conditions:

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[12] Apart from a few exceptions, the names of the invited celebrities show up only once.

[13] Examples for similarity: "[...] and we're all eating muesli and have sideburns and everything would be flat and bright and pop if it wasn't so early." (50) and "All the guys basically look the same: cute head (one exception), great body, high hair, chiseled lips, cutting edge, naughty or however you want us." (66–7) and "[...] all the guys are so similar-looking it's getting tougher and tougher to tell them apart." (72).

"I mean," JD continues, "I think comparatively it's pretty in."

"But in is out," I explain, squinting to see where we're heading.

[...]

"What are you saying, Victor?"

"Out is in. Got it?"

"In is... not in anymore?" JD asks. "Is that it?"

I glance at him as we descend the next flight of stairs. "No, in is out. Out is in. Simple, non?"

[...]

"See, out is in, JD."

"Victor, I'm really nervous as it is," he says. "Don't start with me today."

"You don't even have to think about it. Out is in. In is out."

"Wait, okay. In is out? Do I have that down so far?"

[...]

"Right. Out is in."

"But then what exactly *is* in?" JD asks, his breath steaming.

"*Out* is, JD."

"So... *in* is *not* in?"

"That's the whole p-p-point." It is so cold my biceps are covered with goose bumps.

"But then what's *out*? It's *always* in? What about specifics?"

"If you need this defined for you, maybe you're in the wrong world,"

I murmur. (16–7).

At this point, Victor Ward appears as an expert of the laws of the fictional world, i.e. as an authoritative person. As not a paticular class of things appear to be trendy ("in"), but everything that is not trendy ("out"), we get an ostensibly simple logical formula based on contrast and inversion for the definition of the notion of trendiness. However, JD's question, "What about specifics?", from this aspect, does not only tell us about incomprehension and methodical disorder, but also about an arbitrariness lying in the determination of the quality of trendiness and untrendiness, and about the fact that the rule is actually that there are no rules, only subjects with more or less power, who attempt to obscure this fact precisely by their rule-forming activities. Victor has the right to declare what is "in" while JD's inferior position does not allow him to do that. Although Victor is not always able to articulate verbally this power of his in relation to everybody (e.g. he begs for pocket money from his father in vain; his boss, Damien humilates him again and again; in the interview he gave to Music Television, it is his cultural obtuseness which gets revealed; and Lauren strives to make herself independent from the values of the presented world), due to the

pretences, lies, cheats, what is more, occassionally to his own idiocy, he obtains such an advantage which provides predominance or at least an equal position for him in relation to those people who are interested in the events of this subculture. The turn of the plot is precisely anticipated by the unveiling of the arbitrariness and eventuality of this power, i.e. by the fact that more and more characters begin to turn his own reasoning against Victor:

> "You think you know everything, Chloe."
> "I think a fuck of a lot more than you do, Victor", she says.
> "Everyone knows a fuck of a lot more than you do and *it's not cute*." (182);

> [...] and Hurley's [...] hissing into my ear, "I know what you did, you fuck, I know what you said, you dumb fuck," and then he steps on my face [...] (189);

> He [Damien] sighs, studying me, rubs a hand over his face. "You act very hard to be cool, Victor, but really you're very normal." Pause. "You're a loser." He shrugs. "You're an easy target with a disadvantage." (196).

After Victor's moral, professional, and private-life fiascos, according to the traditional "up-and-down" moral of the career novels, it is Victor's rise that should follow due to F. Fred Palakon's commission, worth $300,000, according to which Victor has to travel to London to search for the lost Jamie Fields, whom he dated as a college student. Besides the concretization of the conspiracy (it turns out that a group consisting of models organizes different terror actions all around the world), one of the most important development of the second content unit is that Victor is not only compelled to gradually give up his power postions, but he also loses his autonomy in his role as a narrator.

The presence of the different crews, film-makers, photographers determines the layer of the stratum of the represented entities in *Glamorama* from the very beginning: owing to his job, the visual media ab ovo has a great influence on Victor's life; under the title THE MAKING OF A CLUB, they shoot a videofilm about the details of the club opening (6); Victor struggles to get a role—among others—in the movie called *Flatliners II* (31); he gives an interview to Music Television (203–6), etc. Moreover, the frequent use of film jargon—besides the importance of a permanent presence in the media, which is one of the standards of trendiness—also testifies that the differences among the rules working in the fictional worlds presented by the media, in the empirical world presented by the media, and in the empirical world experienced by the

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characters are unimportant in Victor's approach: "The whole point of Super Mario Bros. is that it mirrors life." (25). By the end of part 1, this metaphorical equivalence becomes literal: the crews quasi take over the control of the plot. The first unequivocal reference to this reads as the following: "[...] and the director leans in to me and warns 'You're not looking worried enough,' which is my cue to leave Florent." (194).

The logic of the *simulacrum*—in Baudrillard's words, "to simulate is to feign to have what one hasn't"[14]—becomes noteworthy from this point on. Here, every boundary gets utterly abolished between the original and the model, the represented and the representer. Of course, simulation does not become the upmost feature of the fictional world at one blow, right from the given page; rather, this possibility gains a contextual support from this point on, i.e. those references which were so far incomprehensible, or seemingly comprehensible merely in connection with the opening of the party and with Victor's intricate private life, obtain new meanings in the light of the conspiracy. Although we previously treated the scenarios as sources, which, of course, suggests the validity of the above oppositions, the changing scripts and crews (the latter ones even liquidate each other), the actors playing themselves, the actors' alter egos (or rather, the actors playing the actor alter egos?) who perform their deaths, finally convince us that neither the conspiracy, nor the narration has a definite starting point.

That is, as soon as we assign the people or group responsible for the conspiracy, it emerges almost immediately—by the same or even by different reasons—that those in belief of being able to manipulate others are also wire-pulled. Hence, in chronological order, we could presume the following people to be the potential heads of the conspiracy: (i) those who know more compared to Victor (Alison, Chloe, Hurley Thomson, and Damien); (ii) the scenarist, cameraman, producer, and director of every crew, who provide Victor with scripts and (sometimes inconsistent) instructions (Felix and the American crew, the members of the French crew, and other not named crews); (iii) Bobby Hughes and his gang of models; (iv) acquaintances, friends from the years spent at Camden College (Sean Bateman, Jamie Fields, Lauren Hynde, and Bertrand Ripleis); (v) the Japanese; (vi) F. Fred Palakon; (vii) the mysterious Mr. Leisure, who organizes Victor's last journey, to Milan; (viii) and finally the senator father. Although it is very likely that the father settles Victor's European stay in the interest of his own political career, on evidence of the allies of the originally hostile forces, the betrayals, the operations of the double or triple agents, we can come to the conclusion that no source, no defined objective, or any kind of regularity can

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[14] Cf. Jean Baudrillard's study: "Simulacra and Simulations," in Mark Poster ed., *Selected Writings* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 166–84.

be attached to the conspiracy. This is fully supported by the fact that after the pseudo-Victor's appearance in New York, who is in full service of the father's political reputation, the murders, outrages, explosions, memorizations of codes and passwords still go on.

Nevertheless, as the conspiracy is getting more and more complicated, it is not purely the illusion of Victor's existential autonomy that gets wrecked, but his narratory competence also becomes questionable. Therefore, the narrative structure of *Glamorama* practically gets exposed to the earlier mentioned forces. From the point on that Victor starts to act according to directorial commands, his narration for the most part confines to the repetition of scenarios, i.e. to something that has been worded by someone else earlier. Although we can appreciate the descriptions of the shootings, rehearsals, dropped scenes, and shooting breaks as Victor's narratory achievements, the source of this kind of narration will be the text of the scenarios.[15] Thus, Victor not only proves to be an unreliable narrator because occassionaly he turns out to know more than the present tense narration would allow him, but also because in other cases he pretends that his knowledge is enough for the comprehension of the conspiracy, whereas it seems that most often, he cannot even understand the meaning of the most elementary-level happenings.

Simulation for the second time can arise in relation to Victor's drug addiction, which makes the story of the conspiracy appear as the endless float of Victor's psychedelic hallucinations: Victor gets prepared for his European journey with a plastic bag of magic mushrooms. According to the report of Albert Hoffman, the researcher of LSD and other hallucinogenic drugs having approximately the same effect,

> in the LSD state the boundaries between the experiencing self and the outer world more or less disappear, depending on the depth of the inebriation. [...] A portion of the self overflows into the outer world, into objects, which begin to live, to have another, a deeper meaning. This can be perceived as a blessed or *as a demonic transformation imbued with terror, proceeding to a loss of the trusted ego.* [...] In both conditions, which often last only for a timeless moment, a reality is experienced that exposes a gleam of the transcendental reality, in which universe and self, sender and receiver are one. (italics mine).[16]

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[15] E.g. "That just isn't an acceptable *scenario*, baby, but I'm at an automated teller right now with my Vespa [...]" (19); "Pause, while I consider this *scenario* [...]" (20); "The *music in the background* is mid-period Duran Duran." (24). (Italics mine.)

[16] Cf. Albert Hofmann, *LSD – My Problem Child*, Jonathan Ott trans., in *Flashback*,

From this aspect, the occassional shifts of narration into second and third person can be derived from the self-perception of the experiencing self in this narcotic state. Likewise, the narcotic experiences could account for the last chapter, recounting the moment of death.

> One day a normal-looking rainbow appears and *you* vaguely notice
> it [...] (217, italics mine);

> A shot of *Victor* forcing a smile, looking down, a subtle refusal, a
> small movement of the head, a gesture that says *I*'m not interested.
> (365, italics mine)

The third significant factor which unsettles the reality of the fictional world is Victor's memory since on his own confession, he does not only suffer from short-term, but also from long-term memory disfunction. Although in the original context, by the admission of his deficiency, he only wants to evade an uneasy situation, and though a few chapters later, he recognizes every pop song, citing the performer of the hit, the title of the record, the name of the publishing company, furthermore, even the length of the song to the second, suspition arises that Victor has real problems with recalling the past supposedly because of the damage of his autobiographical memory, which helps us reconstructure the events of our life.[17] Nonetheless, his amnesia is not complete; according to the present state of memory research, he rather shows similarity with those suffering from autobiographical confabulation. The intellect of these individuals—in comparison with other amnesic patients—usually remains integral, and they are able to relate their past fluently, with remarkable detailedness; however, these reports appear to be very bizarre due to their countless contradictions.[18] The reason for this lies in the fact that these patients have difficulty in separating their real memories and the associations created by their fantasy, and instead of the obscure real memories, they frequently choose fantasy.[19] Insofar we conceive the narration as the series of an extensive unit's unadjustable story segments which overwhelms the reader with a book of unreliable information due to the clouded autobiographical memory, the novel

available: http://www.flashback.se/archive/my_problem_child/, access: 03 May 2006.

[17] Cf. Alan Baddeley, *Human Memory: Theory and Practice* (Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon, 1990), 293.

[18] For the concepts of 'clouded autobiographical memory' and 'autobiographical confabulation' cf. ibid., 315–8.

[19] Cf. ibid., 316.

tells us the story of a character's search for identity and its various constructions. Since eternal youth, the ideal of Victor's generation, appears to be achievable only through the acts of a continuous presence excluding any other time aspects (i.e. being present on the covers of magazines, on MTV, in the movie *Flatliners II*, etc.), Victor denies his past and his identity.

However, at the point where one of the conditions of staying alive is the understanding of the system of the conspiracy, and thus inevitably self-comprehension as well, the past drifts back to Victor's life, giving him a chance to reach self-identity, which is nothing else, but the knowledge of the vanity of his existence since the father wants the alter ego. So, in quite a paradoxical way, comprehension becomes possible during such a narration whose moral refuses the sense of the desire for comprehension. In Foucault's view, every kind of narration is at once the procrastination of death.[20] Here, however, as the procession of the narration places the attainment of identification or reidentification within the frames of the understanding of the conspiracy, the situation is exactly the reverse. The narration postpones death, but self-comprehension, which gets completed quite slowly and quite imperfectly, precisely finds its subservience in a destiny which has been temporarily eliminated. The changes of condition in the novel correlate with the changes of consciousness, which can come to rest exclusively if this consciousness ceases to exist. The ultimate reference of the text is thus nothing else, but the certainty of death, passing away, which, on the other hand, due to the logic of substituteability and exchangeability arises as a persistent presence, repetition, eternal recurrence. This is referred to by the last reminiscence, which tells us about the moment of release over non-existence and about the intentional erasure of this moment from memory. (Cf. 542) All this means that despite the fact that there remained loose threads in the conspiracy, the text allows the possibility that there are answers for the posed questions; however, it is obvious that the locus of those is situated outside the space of the text, or from Victor's point of view, in a dimension beyond this world:

> I'm drinking a glass of water in the empty hotel bar at the Principe di
> Savoia and staring at the mural behind the bar and in the mural is a
> giant mountain, a vast field spread out below it where villagers are

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[20] Cf. "To speak of heroes or as a hero, to desire to construct something like a work, to speak so that others speak of it to infinity, to speak for 'glory,' was indeed to move toward or against this death maintained by language; to speak as a sacred orator warning of death, to threaten men with this end beyond any possible glory, was also to disarm death and promise immortality." Michel Foucault, "Language to Infinity," Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon trans., in James D. Faubion ed., *Aesthetics Method and Epistemology* (New York: The New Press, 1998), 94.

celebrating in a field of long grass that blankets the mountain dotted with tall white flowers, and in the sky above the mountain it's morning and the sun is spreading itself across the mural's frame, burning over the small cliffs and the low-hanging clouds that encircle the mountain's peak, and a bridge strung across a pass through the mountain will take you to any point beyond that you need to arrive at, because behind that mountain is a highway and along that highway are billboards *with answers* on them— *who, what, where, when, why*—and I'm falling forward but also moving up toward the mountain, my shadow looming against its jagged peaks, and I'm surging forward, ascending, sailing through dark clouds, rising up, a fiery wind propelling me, and soon it's night and stars hang in the sky above the mountain, revolving as they burn.

The stars are real.

The future is that mountain. (543, italics mine).

By committing the elaboration of the answers to the readers in the long run, *Galmorama*, even if not in a traditional way, still relieves tension deriving from the theme of alter egos, conspiracy, the alternation of time levels and focalization.

Furthermore, besides the so far covered cases of simulation, one more is still left to discuss. It does not concern the plot or the mode of narration, but the person of the author. The last, sixth part of the text—where the numbering of the chapters, differing from the other parts, is an increasing one—does not only relate the unnarratable end. In the retrospective chapter 0, Victor gets authorial functions when a girl gives voice to her appraisal concerning his short story he read out in one of the workshops of the college (529). Although no other place in the text justifies Victor's being as an author, yet owing to the simulative logic of *Glamorama*, to Victor's unreliability as a narrator, and to the positioning of all these moments to one of the most emphatic places of the novel, we can rightly regard Victor as the author of the text, the plot, i.e. the story or the short story, namely as a person who is responsible for the produced text as its composer, creator. If we attempt to understand the allegory of the quest of the self or of (re)identification from this point of view, we always find the traces of an authorial presence which reveals itself only indirectly, which is the most difficult to recognize when it is the most apparent (cf. "Who the fuck is Moi?", 5), and which can become perceivable only when it tries to cover, abolish its own operation, cf. Victor's application as a narrator, who is at once tremendously foolish, dumb, ignorant, but all the same, has kowledge about the whole story. Therefore, in *Glamorama*, the formation of the text concerning the imagined future gets realized in a way that metafiction originating from different

simulacra and simulative acts gains its most probable explanation in a concept having been considered invalid for a good while—at least within Hungarian literary convention—i.e. in the incalculability of the authorial intention, or if you choose, in the arbitrariness of the author.

Translated by Zsuzsanna Maczák

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