

## Andy Warhol: When Junkies Ruled the World.

By Michael Angelo Tata

So when the doorbell rang the night before, it was Liza in a hat pulled down so nobody would recognize her, and she said to Halston, “Give me every drug you’ve got.” So he gave her a bottle of coke, a few sticks of marijuana, a Valium, four Quaaludes, and they were all wrapped in a tiny box, and then a little figure in a white hat came up on the stoop and kissed Halston, and it was Marty Scorsese, he’d been hiding around the corner, and then he and Liza went off to have their affair on all the drugs (*Diaries*, Tuesday, January 3, 1978).

### Privileged Intake

Of all the creatures who populate and punctuate Warhol’s worlds—drag queens, hustlers, movie stars, First Wives—the drug user and abuser retains a particular access to glamour. Existing along a continuum ranging from the occasional substance dilettante to the hard-core, raging junkie, the consumer of drugs preoccupies Warhol throughout the 60s, 70s and 80s. Their actions and habits fascinate him, his screens become the sacred place where their rituals are projected and packaged. While individual substance abusers fade from the limelight, as in the disappearance of Ondine shortly after the commercial success of *The Chelsea Girls*, the loss of status suffered by Brigid Polk in the 70s and 80s, or the fatal overdose of exemplary drug fiend Edie Sedgwick, the actual glamour of drugs remains, never giving up its allure.<sup>1</sup> Drugs survive the druggie, who exists merely as a vector for the

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<sup>1</sup> While Brigid Berlin continues to exert a crucial influence on Warhol’s work in the 70s and 80s—for example, *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol*, as detailed by Bob Colacello in the chapter “Paris (and Philosophy)” —her street cred. fades as the amphetamine abuse of the early Factory finds itself eclipsed by the cocaine orgies of the disco-era beautiful people. Speed loses its world-historicity as newer drugs take the top spot, and thus Brigid’s entertainment value diminishes. Furthermore, Warhol is particularly nasty to her at various points throughout his *Diaries*, especially those passages in which he tracks her weight: “Brigid Polk...called and said she’s down to 197. Ever since she saw herself in

ingestion of the controlled substance. Ever a delinquent, the druggie cannot be controlled, macrophaging what has been legislated to be outside the bounds of proper consumption somewhere beyond the law's glare—in a rented room at the Chelsea Hotel, inside a taxi cab, or in a bathroom at Studio 54, among other clandestine locales.<sup>2</sup> Even Warhol's own art openings attract the drug crowd: "The bathroom was crowded, I guess people were coking up" (this after the Dia Center for the Arts' Shadows opening; *Diaries*, Thursday, January 25, 1979). Worlds collide, as the art and club spheres take on the qualities of one another (one attends a Warhol opening to coke up, then zooms over to Palladium in the hopes of being Polaroided by Warhol and becoming an art object). Functioning as a sign of the subterranean, drugs authenticate Warhol as cool, giving his art and persona a special infusion of chic. In *Crack Wars: Literature Addiction Mania*, Avital Ronell sums up the urgency of the drug question pointedly: "[t]here is no culture without a drug culture, even if this is to be sublimated to pharmaceuticals" (96). Yet beyond the textual problem of what

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*Bad*...weighing 300 pounds and went on a diet, she's so boring to talk to—she never *does* anything, she just *lies* there in bed in her room at the George Washington Hotel and waits for the fat to roll off. I told her I'll give her a job—that she could let some roll off around the Factory while she answers phones, but she won't. It's taken her thirty-nine years to lose weight and it'll probably take her another thirty-nine years to get work" (Sunday, November 28, 1976). As the *Diaries* close, Warhol even jokingly prepares to fire her: "Oh, and Brigid *is* at the English fat farm and she's going to be fired when she gets back. I'll give her a pink slip, I'll give her *dogs* pink slips—Fame and Fortune will be fired!" (Tuesday, February 17, 1987).

<sup>2</sup> Regarding the law and its glare, Warhol's affiliation with various NYC "low-lives" alerted the FBI, which kept close tabs on the habits of the Warhol entourage. See Margie Kramer's *Andy Warhol Et Al: The FBI File on Andy Warhol* (New York: Unsub Press, 1988). De-bracketing the secret actions of, for example, the A-heads, Warhol placed their styles of consumption on display, thereby exposing himself and others to danger. See also Anthony Haden-Guest's *The Last Party: Studio 54, Disco, and the Culture of the Night* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1997) for Warhol's response to Steve Rubell's having surrendered information about the cocaine use of Studio 54 patrons to the U.S. government: "The reaction of Steve Rubell's host of friends to the melting away of his money, his drugs, his power, was interesting. It was true that some had actually been upset about the Cocaine Favors List. Diane von Furstenburg, for instance, and Andy Warhol (who usually in his diaries refers to Rubell as 'Stevie' before prison and 'Stephen' after)" (197-198). While Haden-Guest is not entirely accurate with regard to Warhol's shift in attitude toward Rubell, he is correct in his assertion that Rubell's "narking" posed problems for Warhol and his circle.

relation an intoxicated underground bears to a sober aboveground, drug intake poses an even more basic problem: “[d]rugs make us ask what it means to consume anything, anything at all. This is a philosophical question, to the extent that philosophy has always diagnosed health, that is, being-itself or the state of non-alienation, by means of its medico-ontological scanners” (63). Cultural production itself qualifies as an act of inebriation, or *Rausch*. Narcovoyeur, Warhol grasps the symbiosis of drugs and art, providing illustrious instances of drugs’ magical unworkings (*désœuvirements*).<sup>3</sup>

Throughout the sum of Warhol’s reports, various consciousness-altering chemicals achieve respective levels of notoriety and fashionability. Each receives its metaphorical fifteen minutes: chemicals, too, can be stars, as “The Tingle” indicates (“lemons” are the olfactory scent of choice for 1975, according to Brigid).

Developments in the synthesis and intake of psychotropic chemicals cause a history to crystallize: the intravenous meth and heroin craze of the 60s gives way to the nasal cocaine mania of the 70s and 80s; new psychiatric drugs, like Quaaludes, or Valium, make their mark; methods of drug consumption change over time, marking the emergence of new lifestyles and the erasure of older ones.<sup>4</sup> Always tracking the

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<sup>3</sup> “If the literature of electronic culture can be located in the works of Philip K. Dick or William Gibson, in the imaginings of a cyberpunk projection, or a reserve of virtual reality, then it is probable that electronic culture shares a crucial project with drug culture. This project should be understood in Jean-Luc Nancy’s and Blanchot’s sense of *désœuvrement*—a project without an end or program, an unworking that nevertheless occurs, and whose contours we can begin to read” (Ronell, 68).

<sup>4</sup> For Warhol, “chemicals” also refer to neurotransmitters: “The symptom of love is when some of the chemicals inside you go bad. So there must be something in love because your chemicals do tell you something,” for example (*Philosophy*, 47), or, “I think I’m missing some chemicals and that’s why I have the tendency to be more of a—mama’s boy. A—sissy. No, a mama’s boy. A ‘butterboy.’ I think I’m missing some responsibility chemicals and some reproductive chemicals” (*Philosophy*, 111). Like drugs, chemicals are interesting in and of their tropic potency. “Chemicals” relate to “problems”: “But when I was eighteen a friend stuffed me into a Kroger’s shopping bag and took me to New York. I still wanted to be close with people. I kept living with roommates thinking we could become good friends and share problems, but I’d always find out they were just interested in another person sharing

adventures of the drug user, Warhol passes from the frenzied early nucleus of amphetamine addicts or A-heads in his *a, a novel* to the cooler, more secretive coke heads of the Studio 54 set in the *Diaries*, ending his infatuation with the heroin-inspired antics of painter Jean-Michel Basquiat, also relayed in the *Diaries*. As a historical document, Warhol's novel *a* records the early optimism surrounding amphetamine use among the Mole People, professional amphetamine junkies with the roachlike tendency to congregate in nests. In *Factory Made: Warhol and the Sixties*, Steven Watson describes these subterranean creatures: "One such outcast family, the one most closely connected to the Factory, was referred to as the A-Men, or the Mole People. The first name not only paid homage to their drug of choice but also punned on the Catholic background that many of them shared. The second name, the Mole People, had several associations. 'We called them Mole People because they only seemed to come out at night,' said Danny Fields. 'Their skins were light, and they were very intense.' It was also a campy put-down—as if they were creatures from the B-horror movie *The Mole People*, released in 1956" (167-168).<sup>5</sup> Warhol's *a* documents the habits, attitudes and locutions of this outsider enclave:

(O) Six or eleven. Do you want to  
       take 'em right now? Oh, you  
       mean your orange juice?  
 Stick 'em in the grapefruit juice.  
 (D) I've just four left.  
 (O) Let me take those little orange  
       ones.

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the rent" (*Philosophy*, 22). Both problems and chemicals necessitate exchange, and as such interest Warhol, whom the *quid pro quo* never ceases to entrance.

<sup>5</sup> According to Watson (New York: Pantheon Books, 2003), the Mole People can be contrasted with two competing drug groups, the Street People (homeless users) and the Pod People (users with pads, or pods). Watson defines "nests" as follows: "Nests: the living quarters for people on amphetamines, often small and housing a few dozen people" (169).

Don't you want just four or you  
want five? They're actually ten.  
Five'll be . . . the MINute we  
get to Rita's they can be replen-  
ished. She has, she has this little  
tiny marble picture (6).<sup>6</sup>

Less euphoric, the *Diaries*, compiled eight years later, invoke a different intensity. In them, cocaine use is reported by Warhol, yet without the sense of delight and wonder present in *a* (perhaps the Controlled Substance Act of 1970 has taken its toll, or perhaps Warhol, no longer taking diet pills, is more of a drug outsider). Ironically, the *Diaries* begin with cocaine renunciation: "Victor Hugo picked me up and we went to the U.N. Plaza for Mrs. Kaiser's dinner for Halston (cab \$3). But then we realized we'd forgotten Bianca so we had to go back to pick her up at the Pierre. Victor gave her some coke but she didn't want it" (Monday, December 13, 1976). As such, Warhol's documentation of drug cultures from the "poke" posse of the Chelsea Hotel in the 60s to the cocaine blizzards at Studio 54 in the 70s and 80s to Jean-Michel Basquiat's rides aboard the white horse in the 80s, constitutes a sociological enterprise committed both to tracking the history of chemicals (old and new substances assume places in a chronology) and to examining one chemical at different points in history (for example, the heroin use of Edie Sedgwick is juxtaposed with the heroin use of Jean Michel Basquiat). The end product of Warhol's meticulous attention to the special class of ingestion represented by drug intake is a body of work in which art and filth interpenetrate one another with no hope of extrication (there

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<sup>6</sup> Throughout this passage, I have preserved the typography of *a* in order to give an accurate picture of its look. The book's basic pattern is double columns of text interspersed with more regular pages. Each page is flanked by an italicized blip; in the instance of the quote provided, the quote is *I go under like a wonderful third time*. It refers to the ecstasy of the Obetrol high: "That's a hundred milligrams, like pure gaiety" (7), muses Ondine.

simply is no way to remove the speed-freakiness from the voice of Brigid in “The Tingle,” or to imagine a cinematic shooting free of shooting up).

Underlying Warhol’s preoccupation with drugs is his very genuine passion for documenting the process of ingestion itself; in fact, drugs themselves become no more than a privileged case of ingestion, that paradigm of consumption by which the consumer suffers the delusion of transport. For Ronell, drugs invoke the biological paradigm of esophageal processing: “Where does the experience of eating begin? What of the remains? Are drugs in some way linked to the management of remains? How has the body been drawn into the disposal systems of our technological age?” (63). “Paracomestible” drugs surround and substitute for eating (the skin becomes a port of entry, the nose becomes a mouth).<sup>7</sup> At times, the magical scene of intoxication takes place at the outer limit of attention, as when a worn-out Gerard Malanga sniffs amyl nitrate at the end of *Vinyl*, though more often than not it takes center stage - as in the amphetamine pokes of Brigid Polk and Ondine in *The Chelsea Girls*, or in descriptions of Liza Minnelli’s and Halston’s cocaine escapades in the *Diaries*. Wherever such moments occur, someone clearly takes off for another zone of consciousness, and Warhol is present to make note of the change effected. As such, drugs tie to questions of sublimity, art’s prime mode of transport: like the sublime, drugs scramble consciousness, threatening it with annihilation in the form of ego loss. Creating what is for Ronell a “supplementary interiority,” drugs,

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<sup>7</sup> “As that which can swallow and throw up—naturally or artificially—the body rigorously engages the dynamics of becoming, surpassing itself without reducing itself to a passageway. These observations in fact model age-old concerns whose subscription to thought has been renewed by the way drugs negotiate the paracomestible substance” (Ronell, 64). Surrounding and substituting for ingestion, drugs achieve paracomestibility through their function as meal replacement, appetite suppressant, absorbed foodstuff.

themselves straddling the border between singular and plural, magnify individuality, permitting it to flower in a charmed elsewhere which is still “here.” Those who peddle drugs become as famous as those who pop, snort or shoot them: star dealers service a star clientele. Drug dealers become film stars, as when the Sugar Plum Fairy takes a role in 1965’s *My Hustler*, or when Brigid Berlin deals drugs on camera during her scene in *The Chelsea Girls* (“I’m peddling my wares on my bicycle...”). Whether we are in the Chelsea Hotel, Studio 54 or Jean-Michel Basquiat’s studio, the spectre of privileged (and outlawed) consumption hovers above us, tempting us with the glamour of the *demimonde*, a vogue rooted in closeness to the abject. Couched in secrecy, proximity to scenes of drug intake authenticates Warhol as anthropologist and bad boy. Near drugs, yet somehow impervious to them, Warhol instantly becomes radically chic, a fate not allotted to other contemporary Pop artists. Illegal drugs bestow glamour upon those brave enough to partake of them—and those savvy enough to share their habitats without succumbing to the pitfalls of substance abuse. Those aspiring celebrities courageous enough to flaunt their habits enrapture Warhol with their fragrance, and come down to posterity as a class of exemplary drifters. The Duchess, Edie Sedgwick, Rotten Rita, the Sugar Plum Fairy, Halston, Liza, Victor Hugo, Basquiat: as epistemological object, the druggie is priceless.

Encouraging others to consume what he does not, Warhol becomes a point of gravitation for those fringe-dwellers and stars obsessed with placing their sensoria on purée fulfilling his earlier fantasies of problem-exchange: “When I think of my high school days, all I can remember, really, are the long walks to school, through the Czech ghetto with the babushkas and overalls on the clotheslines, in McKeesport,

Pennsylvania. I wasn't amazingly popular, but I had some nice friends. I wasn't very close to anyone, although I guess I wanted to be, because when I would see the kids telling one another their problems, I felt left out" (*Philosophy*, 22). With drugs, Warhol finds a continual source of problems—but no problem himself. Trucking in “narcodollars,” Warhol transports the psychological fixation on the intoxicating paracomestible substance into the realm of aesthetics.<sup>8</sup> Living out a childhood dream of being a problem receptacle, Warhol is able to do so primarily by allying himself with one wild child after another. For though Warhol does self-admittedly take diet pills during the 60s, his use of this substance is sanctioned by both medical and legal communities, and does not rival the more cavalier use made of it by the A-heads. Warhol never becomes an addict. His high does not place him in biological or jurisprudential jeopardy: “Andy knew what he was doing with drugs. He was also very careful to take only what was legal, for as he started to gain notoriety, he knew that he would be a prime target for the police. At the beginning of 1963 he got a prescription for Obetrol, a diet pill that produced a sense of infinitely expanding time without inducing the teeth-grinding verbosity or the awful crash of Dexedrine and many of the other amphetamine pills so easily attainable in the sixties” (Bockris, 132). Even when he does consume a mood-altering substance, the report is couched in the language of contingency: “There was a Halloween party at Studio 54, Stevie kept giving me more drinks and then somebody shoved a Quaalude in my mouth and I was going to shove it to the side but it got stuck and then I drank vodka and it went

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<sup>8</sup> “What goes hand in hand with her [Emma Bovary’s] decline is a kind of crash economy, an exorbitant expenditure with no reserve: we call this ‘narcodollars’” (Ronell, 109). Unlike Emma Bovary, Warhol does not spend his own narcodollars, but manages the expenditures of others. In this sense, he qualifies as a sort of stockbroker.

down and that was a big mistake” (*Diaries*, Monday, October 31, 1977). At one point, Warhol jokingly entertains the notion of becoming a drug dealer himself: “Everybody gave me Quaaludes and I always accept them because they’re so expensive and I can sell them” (Sunday, April 1, 1979). A consummate lover of money, Warhol can’t help but gasp at the economics of drug ingestion—hence his affection for the junkie debutante epitomized by Brigid Berlin or Edie Sedgwick. Ever at the fringe of the illicit and the improper, Warhol deliberately positions himself at the scene of drug intake where as voyeur he can participate without participating (like his 1985 sculpture at New York City nightclub Area, he is there by not being there).<sup>9</sup>

In Ronell’s analysis, substance addiction in fact echoes the primordial longings of Being, which finds itself located in a thrown “there” that mysteriously becomes desirable (through addiction, Being rearticulates its ontological anomie). Rooted in what Martin Heidegger, in *Being and Time*, terms “the thrownness of Dasein,” drug addiction is a secondary development representing an earlier fluctuation within Being (just as, for Freud, secondary repression grows out of primary repression). Lost in the hallucinatory object, Dasein, or “Being-there,” fails to locate itself in an ever receding time and space (spaciotemporally excessive, it is “on the run,” “ahead of itself”) (41). Anxious, Dasein diverts its attention from care, or *Sorge*, concentrating it instead in the addictive substrate of the world, diminishing its anxiousness through a loss of consciousness. What results is a narcotic drive in league with Thanatos: “In anxiety, Dasein is taken back fully to its sheer uncanniness,

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<sup>9</sup> “Andy Warhol did an elegant piece, which has been inadequately documented, for understandable reasons. It was a sculpture that wasn’t there. He was given an alcove and if he was in the club, he might stand in it for a bit. Otherwise it was an invisible sculpture” (Haden-Guest, 266-267).

and hit with vertigo...But this rush gives Dasein its thrownness as something possible, and as something that can be repeated. However, it gives Dasein repeatability as something that can be taken up in a resolution (*Entschluss*) in Being-toward-death” (44). Recording the work of this narcotic thrust, Warhol captures the behavior and mores of Mole People, coke fiends and smackheads, beings unto an imminent death. Moreover, if space has been a primary concern for Warhol, then, through the intervention of the druggie, time reveals itself to Warhol as similarly troublesome. A fourth dimension of objects, time follows them like a shadow, revealing a temporal flux in which all consciousness is steeped without hope of extrication. Things are products of a specific temporal order; hence *POPism* and the *Diaries* make note of trends, fads and styles, social data spotlighting the immersion of taste in time.<sup>10</sup> From a phenomenological point of view, what Edmund Husserl termed an internal time-consciousness reveals its workings: somehow, the mind finds a way to represent time as time. The junkie’s contribution to phenomenological analysis comes with the shake-up he effects upon the ITC. Speeding it up, slowing it down, poking a hole in it, the junkie plays with time-consciousness as a way of subverting capitalist time. For Debord, the time of capitalist production becomes one commodity among others: “The time of production, time-as-commodity, is an infinite

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<sup>10</sup> See Edmund Husserl’s *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969). For Husserl, the problem of time is a problem of the consciousness of time: how is it exactly that the human subject is able to perceive temporal flux as temporal flux in the lived experience of time? “We can only say that this flux is something which we name in conformity with what is constituted, but it is nothing temporally ‘Objective.’ It is absolute subjectivity and has the absolute properties of something to be denoted metaphysically as ‘flux,’ as a point of actuality, primal sourcepoint, that from which springs the ‘now,’ and so on” (100). Husserl’s most fundamental point is that even the now-point involves recollection, retention and protention: time-consciousness is generated by a complicated relation among what is phenomenally given and what the mind can remember (that a melody can be perceived as a whole, despite the fact that each note immediately passes, points to the work of the internal time-consciousness).

accumulation of equivalent intervals. It is irreversible time made abstract: each segment must demonstrate by the clock its purely quantitative equality with all other segments. This time represents nothing in its effective reality aside from its *exchangeability*” (Thesis #147). Pseudo-cyclical spectacular time carves out a space for relaxation by reserving some temporal blocks for rejuvenation and play: “In its most advanced sectors, a highly concentrated capitalism has begun selling ‘fully equipped’ blocks of time, each of which is a complete commodity combining a variety of other commodities. This is the logic behind the appearance, within an expanding economy of ‘services’ and leisure activities, of the ‘all-inclusive’ purchase of spectacular forms of housing, of collective pseudo-travel, of participation in cultural consumption and even of sociability itself, in the form of ‘exciting conversations,’ ‘meetings with celebrities’ and suchlike” (Thesis #152). For the junkie, work and play know an alternate relation: (1) his work doesn’t matter, since it is illegal; (2) he works only to play, foraging for drugs on the charmed space of the street; (3) ultimately, all is play, including even perception itself.

Sabotaging spectacular time, the junkie erects a competing temporal order—for this reason the character of the drug user intrigues workaholic Warhol, whose triumph is to incorporate the druggie’s clock into his literary and cinematic ventures. Following *lumpenproletariat* time—that is, the time of the unproductive, or the counterproductive—the junkie knows only the twisted time of disorientation and ITC implosion. Taking in psychotropic pills, powders and liquids, the drug consumer facilitates poetic reflections on the meaning of time itself. The “sense of expanding time” referred to by Bockris—an intensity experienced first-hand by Andy in the

60s—is the era’s greatest illusion. The euphoric text of *a* demonstrates this sense of expansion. Filled with stutters, run-ons and fractured sentences, it testifies to the amphetamine rush and the work it affects on consciousness. When the Duchess exclaims “A poke, a pole is the, is the biggest, is the most beautiful up there is, is the most, well not intravenously because I was on it for two years, I was on meta-amphetamine,” her text veers frantically as she struggles to cram it all into one strain (208). Under these conditions, all that can result is *anacoluthon*, the explosion of one thought into supernumerary cosmic tributaries, each finding its own path, yet never converging. As drugs are administered, perceptions stray. Time no longer rests transparent, but thickens into an opaque quiddity which demands further processing. Treating time as spectacular commodity in keeping with Debord’s remarks, Warhol takes as his object the skewed time of the junkie. Isolating those special cases in which the ITC has been altered by chemical ingestion, Warhol continues the drug narrative tradition begun two centuries earlier by Thomas De Quincey, whose 1821 *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* set the trend for drug narration in motion and marked Romanticism’s preoccupation with chemically-induced liminal states. Like De Quincey, he documents the phenomenal changes effected by psychotropic drugs, giving the drug addict a literary legacy of which he is the impetus and star.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> See Thomas De Quincey’s *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* (London: Penguin Classics, 1986). Obsessed with his own psychic transformations as the drug opium, in the tintured form laudanum, floods his system, De Quincey makes the drug narrative central to Romanticism, packaging it for other eras and epochs.

**Miraculation<sup>12</sup>**

Drugs represent Warhol's Romanticism better than any other object or category of experience; placing him close to death, they articulate Warhol's liaison with the obscene and as such refer to other unsavory inclinations, such as his interest in pornography (as demonstrated by films like *Blow Job* (1963), *Couch* (1964), *Vinyl* (1965), *Bike Boy* (1967) or *Trash* (1970), the cocks he Polaroids, or his 1977 Torso series).<sup>13</sup> For with drugs comes the potential for overdose, the chance that death might follow ingestion, that privileged intake might produce an untimely exit. Yet if one is able to skirt the dangers afforded by overdose, there is, as in the special case of speed, the mania for performance, the overwhelming desire to act—the perfect counterpoint to the performative and biological zero of overdose. As described by Deleuze and Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus*, drugs perform the important function of turning the junkie into a body without organs—that is, as one in whom all differentials dry up and all that remains is a uniform, undifferentiated field preceding and giving birth to organic difference:

The body without organs is an egg; it is crisscrossed  
with axes and thresholds, with latitudes and longitudes

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<sup>12</sup> For Deleuze and Guattari, miraculation is that process by which the schizoid subject overflows its own bounds and, reversing the process of gastrulation, acquires a lost pluripotency: literally, the schizoid subject can be anything. Reborn as a miracle, the schizo, modeled after Judge Shreber, becomes a divine plaything through whose changes a cosmic presence is made incarnate. See Daniel Paul Shreber's *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness* (New York: New York Review Books, 2000).

<sup>13</sup> Holly Woodlawn recounts the day Warhol photographed her cock for inclusion in his cock collection in her *A Low Life in High Heels* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991): "Andy honed in on my crotch, released a soft gasp, and put his hand up to his mouth. 'It looks so big, Holly. How big is it?' 'Andy!' I snapped back in embarrassment. 'Please stop it. I'm a woman.' 'Can I take pictures of it?' 'What?!' 'You don't have to take off your clothes. I just want to photograph it, Holly, just like it is now.' 'Andy, you're just a dirty old man!' 'Come in the back,' he invited, and led the way as I followed. Sure enough, Andy dragged out the Polaroid and snapped away at my crotch. I didn't mind, though I made him promise not to tell anyone whose crotch it was" (291).

and geodesic lines, traversed by *gradients* marking the transitions and becomings, the destinations of the subject developing along these particular vectors. Nothing here is representative; rather, it is all life and lived experience: the actual, lived emotion of having breasts does not resemble breasts, it does not represent them, any more than a predestined zone in the egg resembles the organ that it is going to be stimulated to produce within itself. Nothing but bands of intensity, potentials, thresholds, and gradients. A harrowing, emotionally overwhelming experience, which brings the schizo as close as possible to matter, to a burning, living center of matter (19).

Deterritorialized, the body without organs, or *le CSO*, comes into existence as a sign of ego-loss; the undifferentiated, egglike body also becomes a site of *miraculation*, or magical production coincident with the schizoid experience of being strung out: “An attraction-machine now takes the place, or may take the place, of a repulsion-machine: a miraculating machine succeeding the paranoiac machine” (11).<sup>14</sup> Outside itself, and hence outside normal coordinates of space and time, the junkie-CSO knows no impossibility: all that it dreams achieves instant reality. There is no outside, no exterior, either temporally or spatially: the present moment expands infinitely forward and backward into an actualized future and a present past, while the body’s matter regresses to a magical state of pluripotency. A miracle itself, the organless body knows only immediacy and euphoria.

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<sup>14</sup> Deleuze’s and Guattari’s use of the term *miraculation* bears direct reference to Marx’s employment of it in the service of political economy: “Machines and agents cling so closely to capital that their functioning appears to be miraculated by it. Everything seems objectively to be produced by capital as quasi-cause. As Marx observes, *in the beginning* capitalists are necessarily conscious of the opposition between capital and labor, and of the use of capital as a means of extorting surplus labor. But a perverted, bewitched world quickly comes into being, as capital increasingly plays the role of a recording surface that falls back on (*se rabat sur*) all of production” (11). Capital thus switches cause and effect such that all becomes the result of capital, which persists as a full body on whose plenitude all else is dependent.

Warhol “Girlettes” - Jackie Curtis, Holly Woodlawn and Candy Darling, among others, all become miraculating machines, conduits for the magical, metaleptic process of glamour production, as demonstrated by Woodlawn’s reports of Curtis’ drive to be a star in her *A Low Life in High Heels*: “‘If you don’t dress right, Curtis, you’ll never get on TV,’ warned Jackie’s mother. ‘But I do dress right,’ defended Curtis. ‘People try to copy me, they really do.’ ‘Oh, Curtis, please,’ the mother said. ‘What are you going to do with your life?’ ‘Listen, Ma,’ Curtis barked. ‘What are you going to say when I win the Oscar?’ ‘Nothing’” (77).<sup>15</sup> As miraculating machine, the body of Jackie Curtis transcends its existence as mere “ambulatory archive” of female poses, since through the chemical pep of speed it becomes an actual female body, at least from its vantage point as CSO.<sup>16</sup> Documenting the process of miraculation, and thereby miraculating his own dreams of fame and glamour, Warhol directs his gaze toward those individuals in whom drugs produce the schizoid state necessary for both ego dissolution and aggrandizement—hence the

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<sup>15</sup> Woodlawn’s quote is actually taken from Curtis’ unpublished and unfinished autobiography, *A Storm of Kisses*. For other examples of glamour as miraculation, see Woodlawn’s descriptions of Candy Darling’s state of mind: “Candy was still blond as ever! She was aloof and arrogant and would show up on the set with her manager at her side constantly fussing over her. Miss Darling had a severe case of Norma Desmonditis” (187). Woodlawn uses the epithet “Les Girlettes” to describe the trio Woodlawn/Curtis/Darling, as it has been these drags in particular who have dominated Warhol’s screens (Woodlawn stars in *Trash* (1970) and *Women in Revolt* (1972); Curtis and Darling star in *Women in Revolt*). Finally, outside the Warhol *oeuvre*, Divine’s performance as Dawn Davenport in John Waters’ *Female Trouble* (1972) provides an important example of the schizoid’s relation to glamour. Identifying as “the top model in the country,” she turns her obese body and acid-scarred face into works of beauty via the work of insanity.

<sup>16</sup> The full quote reads: “Among other things, drag queens are living testimony to the way women used to want to be, the way some people still want them to be, and the way some women still actually want to be. Drags are ambulatory archives of ideal moviestar womanhood. They perform a documentary service, usually consecrating their lives to keeping the glittering alternative alive for (not-too-close) inspection” (*Philosophy*, 54). My argument is that a drag queen like Jackie Curtis does not primarily perform a documentary service, but rather uses her body as site of miraculation—this process taking place with the presence of uppers, since it is these chemicals which psychologically induce the magical experience of plenitude.

attention he gives to a tripped-out Eric Emerson in *The Chelsea Girls*, preserving his delusional monologue for posterity as social relic and miracle:

And Eric's reel is the most retarded of them all, though also the most ecstatic. He undulates, by himself, while colored lights play over a body—his own—that he finds supremely desirable, sufficient unto the day: "Do you ever groove on your own body?" he asks, rhetorically. He speaks for himself and to himself, but he is also speaking to Andy the filmmaker, and may be speaking *for* Andy, especially when he says, "Sometimes I hate to be touched." Eric is saturated with sensation but also seems afloat in a sensory deprivation tank: "I can't see a thing, except me—that's all there is to see, as far as I'm concerned" (Koestenbaum, 124).

Existing at that strange vantage point from which ego becomes all and nothing, Emerson dramatizes the schizoid's transcendence of the law of contradiction itself. Set against a reel in which various colors are projected onto cast members, Eric's trip highlights the fact that, for Warhol, everybody is a screen, except the body without organs, which resists outside projection through its own manic maneuvering. Giving way only to its own projections, the CSO uses its surface to project personal fantasies of magical production much in the way that, for the Freud of *The Ego and the Id*, the ego represents a corporeal projection in its own right.<sup>17</sup> Warhol's unwavering attention to miraculating machines like Eric Emerson or Jackie Curtis of course underscores his own skewed relationship to celebrity, the twist being that documenting the trips, hallucinations and psychotic episodes of his coterie bring him

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<sup>17</sup> Even though Reel 10, "Color Lights on Cast," contains a soundtrack, projection instructions are that the reel is to be run in silence, to the effect that the coincident reel, "Eric Says All," provides the only dialogue. Though silenced, Reel 10 presents some important moments, as when Eric states "I'd do anything to get someone to care. I'd do anything to get someone to listen," or "I hate comedowns." Regarding Reel 10, Warhol demonstrated a similar attachment to the psychedelic technique of projection in paintings as well. 1986's *Camouflage Statue of Liberty*, *Camouflage Joseph Beuys* and *Camouflage Last Supper* and 1988's camouflage *Self-Portraits* provide related examples of psychedelic projection, a 60s technique which Warhol would never lose.

fame proper, while burdening the drug users in his vicinity with the dubious psychoanalytic celebrity reserved for the case study. Taking their place beside Little Hans, the Wolf Man, Dora and the Rat Man, Eric Emerson, Jackie Curtis and others become perpetual oddities and objects of curiosity. Famous for being “off,” they present their schizoid pleasures to the public, whose appetite for freaks ensures their place in history.

Yet in terms of *The Chelsea Girls*, the best example of miraculation comes not with Eric’s disembodied conversation with himself, but with Ondine’s transformation into Pope Ondine. While at first it appears that papal ascendancy might be purely performative for Ondine, *né* Bob Olivo, a nasty battle with penitent Rona Page ensures that another schizoid delusion has been taken literally: Ondine *is* the Pope, and don’t forget it! Reassuring us that there are no roles in *Chelsea Girls*, that what you see is what you get (the business acronym would be WYSIWYG), Ondine throws the tantrum to end all tantrums when he feels that his performance has been read as virtual, not actual. While in Reel 2, shown coincidentally with a reel of Nico trimming her bangs in the presence of Eric Emerson and her son Ari, we witness Ondine’s succor of Ingrid Superstar as he observes her confession and dispenses expert advice (Reel 1), in Reel 11, shown coincidentally with a reel of Nico crying (Reel 12), we see Ondine run amok with crazed anger at a disbelieving parishioner who has dared question his authority and authenticity. Out of the loop, she has forgotten that the characters in the film are not acting, that the point of *Chelsea Girls* is to present reality, not to simulate it. When Rona Page, supposedly “in character,” yet fast leaping out of it, makes the *faux pas* of intimating that Ondine is not the real Pope, all

hell breaks loose. Throwing Coca-Cola violently in her face, Ondine defends his Popedom with the nastiness and vehemence appropriate to one whose mortality has been threatened: “Who are you supposed to be? Little Miss Wonder?” Berating her as a “bitch,” “cunt” and “whore,” Ondine beats her mercilessly, obviously breaking character and forcing her to do the same. Performing no small miracle, Warhol has created a social chain reaction producing the real from the simulated; erupting onto the screen, reality puts its grit and grime on display. Stephen Koch describes the scene in more vivid detail:

“Well, let me tell you something, my dear little Miss Phony. You’re a phony. You’re a disgusting phony. May god forgive you.” And Ondine slaps her again, more violently, then leaps up in a paroxysmic rage. With his open hands he begins to strike the cowering bewildered girl around the head and shoulders. “You Goddamned phony, get the hell off this set. Get out.”...”Stop it,” she says. “Stop it. Don’t touch me.” She is unable to move, but her voice is, as last, authentic. Ondine rages on. “How dare you call me a phony? Little Miss Phony, you disgusting fool,” he begins to strike her again. She leaps up and runs (95-96).

As Deleuze and Guattari point out, the schizoid knows no representation or simulation: for this boundary creature, all attains the status of reality. Living at “that unbearable point where the mind touches matter and lives its every intensity, consumes it,” the miraculating machine actualizes every conceivable possibility (Deleuze and Guattari, 20). From its vantage point, nothing is phony, and any assertion of the world as phony will produce the requisite outburst—an overflow or *bornage* rooted in self-preservation. In light of Deleuze’s and Guattari’s plans for an

anti-Oedipal, de-territorialized project, the rabidity of Ondine's outburst alludes to far more than postmodern debates surrounding any crisis in authenticity or collapse of the legitimizing metanarrative. Rather, Ondine acts out because, from his sped-up perspective, he truly is the Pope and must be respected as such.

Another drug fiend commanding respect both in *The Chelsea Girls* and in Factory life in the 1960s is Brigid Polk, Pop's famous Duchess. Like Ondine, she too occupies a major role in the film, catapulting Warhol into the limelight with her camera-friendly junkie behavior. Most importantly, unlike so many of Warhol's beloved addicts, she will not miraculate, displaying little interest in generating glamour or in attaining the insane levels of notoriety craved by so many members of the Warhol entourage—hence her dislike of so many Warhol ingénues and proto-celebs, as when, in *Chelsea Girls*, she relays to Ingrid Superstar, “I hate movies. The Underground is not my scene.” In *Chelsea Girls*, and in her off-screen life, the Duchess refuses the role of miraculating machine, focusing instead on pushing pills, poking girls with needles and holding court for Ingrid Superstar (and others). No transformation is effected by what passes into her system—no psychological trick convinces her that she has become another entity, or that she will, through the magic of chemical alteration, metamorphose into a larger-than-life fashion creature. Though referred to as “Duchess” by Ingrid Superstar in the film, the nickname makes perfect sense, since Brigid truly is “royal” in her own right: publishing tycoons for the Hearst empire, her parents are loaded, and she qualifies both as heiress and debutante (as well as, to use the later language of the Area crowd in the 80s, celebutante).<sup>18</sup> Thus

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<sup>18</sup> For a closer look at the celebutantes and their involvement with NYC nightclubs Area and Tunnel, see “Kamikaze Kids” in *The Last Party* (317-327). Warhol's influence on this fresh crop of freaks

while Ondine's claim of Popedom is clearly the product of magical thinking, Brigid's acceptance of the Duchess role finds its basis in socioeconomic fact. Her other nickname with the Warhol crowd, Brigid Polk, also demonstrates a refusal of miraculation, referring not to some mysterious transformatory process, but rather to a simple act: the amphetamine poke. If her first sobriquet, "Duchess" functions as a riff on her riches, then the second, "Brigid Polk," uses the coyness of the homonym to indicate her identification with skin-popping.<sup>19</sup> For Brigid does not merely receive pokes, but, along with Pope Ondine, gives them: she too is a center of generosity, a bearer of gifts.<sup>20</sup> Yet unlike Ondine, the injections she bequeaths upon the faithful in her entourage do not cause her to glamourize her role. Antithesis to Ondine's extravagance, Brigid's pragmatism does not entail a papal transformation. While he assumes the role of spiritual guru, she selects the more grounded persona of "poker." For Brigid, pokes are not miraculous, nor do they precipitate mystical events: pokes are pokes.

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cannot be elided: "James St. James was talking into my tape recorder. We were in a small room in the Chelsea Hotel on Twenty-third street. 'This is James St. James. I moved here when I saw the *Cars* video by Andy Warhol. It was Dianne Brill who inspired me. I wanted to *be* her,' he intoned. St. James has frail, fine features. A metal crescent several inches long was piercing his lower lip and chin. Michael Alig, who was alongside him on the bed, interjected, 'With me, it was an Edie Sedgwick T-shirt. I bought it in a thrift shop in Chicago—'"(317). Haden-Guest, pace Michael Musto, credits Warhol's death with precipitating the "death of downtown," a void which the celebutantes and clubkids will rush to fill. Again, party monster Dianne Brill figures as a sign: "Musto notes gloomily that a trimmed-down Dianne Brill had 'showed up at the Tunnel looking like any other tasteful blonde and escorting her good friend Cheryl Tiegs (this was before her birthday luncheon at Le Cirque)'" (302).

<sup>19</sup> "The Factory A-men were mostly fags (they knew each other from Riis Park in Brooklyn), except for the Duchess, who was a notorious dyke. They were incredibly skinny, except for the Duchess, who was incredibly fat. And they all mainlined, except for the Duchess, who skin-popped" (*POPism*, 62).

<sup>20</sup> In Reel 11, Ondine casually rinses a needle in Coca Cola before using it to inject himself. Such behavior points to the film's value as documentary of drug praxis. The wonderful naïveté of Ondine comes across as shocking, given the current prevalence of the AIDS virus. Like pre-AIDS pornography, *The Chelsea Girls* contains real danger—a danger known only to future generations, yet imperceptible to those budding stars obliviously performing perilous actions on camera.

As pragmatic entity, the Duchess comes across as no more than a shrewd businesswoman. When compared with the film's other stars, such as a blathering Eric Emerson, an abusive Mary Woronov or a pussy-whipped Gerard Malanga, she appears under the guise of the Reality Principle.<sup>21</sup> As we watch the Duchess in action, we learn the ins and outs of drug dealing, including a new vocabulary and onomastics. "I'm gonna call Dropout now," she announces, then, slightly later, "I moved my stash out of the air conditioner and Dropout took it." Speaking street-jive, the Duchess, street creature herself, leads her audience through the workings of a subaltern, criminal order. Like Hanoi Hannah in the film's Reels 5 and 6, Brigid dominates those around her, who have no choice but to obey her every word: neither she nor Hannah take no for an answer, subjugating all within reach.<sup>22</sup> "Getting all the bubbles out," the Duchess prepares a poke for Ingrid, who nervously interrogates, "What are you gonna do with me?" Yet the Duchess is not solely a supplier of ups: downs are hers to give as well. "Want a downer?," she asks Ingrid just after administering intravenous meth, implying the existence of a chemical rollercoaster available to all. "I need a pill. Where's my down bag?" she inquires, making it clear that ups and downs are stored separately, that each inhabits its own niche, and that the

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<sup>21</sup> I refer to Malanga as "pussy-whipped" on the basis of his response to his mother's behavior in "The Gerard Malanga Story" (Reel 8). In this *tableau vivant*, Gerard is berated by his mother, played by Marie Mencken, for having chosen Mary Woronov as paramour: "What is she *doing* here? Tell me—who is she?" Throughout the reel, Mary seethes in silence while Marie harangues Gerard, who seems more interested in his manicure and coiffure than in either Mary or Marie. Koestenbaum describes the scene's hateful nuances in greater detail: "Marie is hard on Gerard, who wears unmanly rebel apparel (striped pants, mesh shirt, beads): she whips the bed, berates him for his 'filthy towel,' whips the towel, and scornfully calls it 'last night's towel.' How dare he leave last night's towel on the bed! 'I wish I had a daughter!' she cries. Marie and Mary are doubles, though they don't address each other, and though Marie's voluble cruelty, ultimately maternal and solicitous, can't rival Mary's silent spite" ("Torture," 123).

<sup>22</sup> Mary Woronov plays the role of Hanoi Hannah. As Hanoi, she keeps Ingrid Superstar confined under a desk as her personal sex slave, initiates various catfights with co-star International Velvet and causes Pepper to suffer a psychological breakdown. Cold, cruel and downright nasty, Woronov is the film's quintessential harpie.

Duchess has access to both worlds—an access she is more than willing to share. Silver, the color so dear to Warhol, takes on a new tenor here, as Brigid connects it specifically with the storage of amphetamines in aluminum foil: “...one little silver packet under my pillow,” she coos. When Brigid points to some aluminum foil and makes the assertion “This is where it all started,” she both assumes ownership of the Factory look while rooting that look in the drug experience.<sup>23</sup> Unlike other cast members, only Brigid pulls Warhol directly into the fray. Warhol figures negatively into her life as poke-giver: “This is why I don’t go around the Factory—Andy’s paranoid about me and my drugs.” Claiming his *argentomania* and underscoring his hypocrisy with regard to substance abuse, she forces Warhol to appear. When Ingrid asks Brigid, “You really like to destroy people, don’t you?,” the question could be directed to Andy himself, pointing to Brigid’s existence as Warhol double (and making sense of the special form of disdain and love Warhol reserves for her alone). Rattling off a catalogue of pills and their respective colors, the Duchess seems to offer a cornucopia of sensation. Codeine, Morphine, Demerol: the contents of her Down Bag promise a panoply of colors and a variety of cerebral states, while also alluding to the experience of pain. When she claims “I only have ten more for the night,” it becomes apparent that the Duchess will soon be out foraging for more pills, riding her famous bicycle through the West Village. Implying a continuum, the druggie’s pills come one after the other without interruption like so many Campbell’s Soup cans. A paradigmatic example of serial reproduction, pills and aluminum packets multiply promiscuously, comprising a mathematically infinite series.

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<sup>23</sup> By “Factory look,” I refer to the silvered surfaces of the early Factory. Covered in silver foil, the Factory instituted the space-age interior design which made it famous as postmodern locus.

While *The Chelsea Girls* reveals the Duchess as non-miraculating, the best description of her pragmatism comes at the conclusion of Mary Woronov's *Swimming Underground*, when the Duchess' body-image is at stake (in fact, its stability precipitates Woronov's exit from the Underground).<sup>24</sup> Furious at the Duchess for arranging to have best friend and roommate Jane strung out on heroin through a mutual acquaintance named Crocodile (or the Cockadial, as Jane calls him), Woronov seeks to destroy Brigid: "The minute he [Woronov's dealer] was gone I went to his refrigerator, which was stuffed with little aluminum packets. I got down on my knees and whispered, 'Please, God, you fucking monster, take whatever you want, but give me one last fuckin' crack at the Duchess. Just let me see her again, I'm begging you, you prick'" (219). Discovering from Ingrid that Brigid and Andy are lunching at Rockefeller Plaza, Woronov devours the refrigerator's amphetamine contents and marches across town to raise a ruckus. What she encounters stuns her: though morbidly obese, the Duchess demonstrates more physical grace than even a svelte vixen like International Velvet or any of Warhol's other "Big Babies" could have hoped to muster.<sup>25</sup> Space is no mystery to Brigid, who hasn't the slightest difficulty cutting through it while balanced precariously on blades:

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<sup>24</sup> For a discussion of the phenomenological construct of the body-image, see Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* (London: Routledge Classics, 2002), as well as Elizabeth Grosz's *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994). For both Merleau-Ponty and Grosz, the ability of the human organism to navigate successfully space and time points to the phenomenal existence of a body-image, without which there is only uncoordination and chaos. I also read the stability of the Duchess' body-image metaphorically, transferring it to her intellectual image as well (hence Warhol's reliance on her in, for example, *Philosophy*).

<sup>25</sup> "In '65 a lot of the girls had the Big Baby look—short little-girl dresses with puffy little sleeves—and they wore them with light-colored tights and those flat little shoes with the straps across them. The tights weren't really tights, though, because when the girls bent over you could see the tops of their stockings where they were attached to garter belts. It's hard to believe that young girls were still wearing contraptions like panty girdles, but they were. (Underwear wouldn't completely disappear until '66, when girls like International Velvet would walk down the street in the dead of winter with no

They were easy to spot; it was after lunch and no one else was there. Andy sat ringside at a table with a pink tablecloth, applauding and laughing over his seafood salad, while the Duchess skated by him, as graceful as a little killer whale. I couldn't believe it. She wasn't just good, she was show class, skating beautifully—backwards, figures, dives, leaps—her great form balanced effortlessly and swooping past me in perfect circles. I couldn't hate her, she was too good; instead I felt condemned, the victim of my own brutal search, when the oddest thing happened. I vanished. I was screaming like an enraged Lucifer but nobody heard, and while Andy ignored me and the Duchess stared straight through me, I was dragged by the attendant out of the icy white ring of heaven (220).

Rooted firmly in her own body, the Duchess knows only the miracle of existence, the incredible thickness of reality. Unlike Ondine, she has no need of taking off for an outer space of alternate identities; as Duchess, she finds her end internally, and thus surprises with sudden bursts of grace and *savoir faire*. Brigid Polk knows her body intimately, and so she is able to use her body-image to perform complicated physical tricks—a shocker, when one considers that Warhol junkie-stars generally end up possessing the least amount of influence over their physical destinies. Never falling prey to the dual traps of miraculation or overdose, the Duchess skates by both pitfalls. Outside Ondine's heaven and Edie Sedgwick's sleep, Brigid Berlin comes off as the strangest of Warhol's junkies—strange by virtue of her incredible ability to survive and to retain grace in a vortex of instability and volatility.<sup>26</sup>

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stockings and no underwear. Granted, they'd have on fur coats—but then they were fur *minicoats*!)” (*POPism*, 115).

<sup>26</sup> Pat Ast also demonstrates grace and talent, as relayed by Woodlawn: “Pat Ast was always offering free entertainment on the beach. There she was, her stout legs planted firmly in the sand, her face painted brighter than the neon in Times Square, her dazzling eyes big and alive as she sang arias to the two muscle boys flanking her sides. She swayed back and forth, her fabulous Halston chiffon muu-muu rippling in the brisk sea wind, belting out operas to anyone who'd listen” (266). Ast stars in *Heat*,

## Narcosis

If uppers like speed and cocaine cause their user to condense into a single performative point, then opiates like heroin and downers like barbiturates and sleeping pills lead their consumers to the existential edge separating life from death. Thus Jean-Michel Basquiat continually falls asleep throughout the *Diaries*: opiates produce narcolepsy, poisoning him at the brink of life and death. Carrying one away from pure performativity and egomania, heroin inspires sleep, pushing its user in the direction of the vegetative. The hypnagogic state induced by opiates and the collapse following barbiturate ingestion initiate a hallucinatory streaming which is a prelude to mortal end—the disembodiment and disorientation produced by opiate and downer ingestion wed the dream and the dreamer to death, causing the heroin and sleeping pill user to walk the thinnest line possible between existence and nonentity. As such, “sleep” functions as an important trope for Warhol: while one class of junkies never experience slumber, another slips into an unconsciousness from which it might never emerge. Consequently, sleep becomes a Factory in-joke, achieving its maximum resonance when in 1963 Warhol makes poet and boyfriend John Giorno the star of his first full-length silent film *Sleep*.<sup>27</sup> According to Warhol in *POPism*, while the film would be read by Factory outsiders as no more than a visual ode to semiconsciousness, it would be more correctly read by insiders as an elaborate drug joke:

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and is Halston’s assistant. Though other sources describe her obesity as revolting—for example, the July 1, 1971 *L.A. Times* article “Skinny the Only In Thing? Fat Chance” in Time Capsule 7, or *WWD*’s July 16, 1971 article “Fatty Acid” in Time Capsule 7—Woodlawn’s presents Ast in a more positive light. Like Brigid Polk, Pat Ast surprises her skinny counterparts by her relationship to the delicate.

<sup>27</sup> Technically, *Kiss* was Warhol’s first silent film, but since it was intended to be viewed in truncated blips before various films at Mekas’ Film-Makers’ Coop, *Kiss* functions more as a series whose elements might be removed and repositioned, while *Sleep* is more of an unbroken totality.

I could never finally figure out if more things happened in the sixties because there was more awake time for them to happen in (since so many people were on amphetamine), or if people started taking amphetamine because there were so many things to do that they needed to have more awake time to do them in. It was probably both...I only slept two or three hours a night from '65 through '67, but I used to see people who hadn't slept for days at a time and they'd say things like "I'm hitting my ninth day and it's glorious!"...

Seeing everybody so up all the time made me think that sleep was becoming pretty obsolete, so I decided I'd better quickly do a movie of a person sleeping ("1960-1963," 33).

Thus although even Warhol allies the film with the world of the speed freak, a more sinister reading of the film places it closer to the heroin and prescription medication user's domain, where sleep is not so much a reference to the obsolescent as a mortal threat. Unlike the amphetamine poke, which expands, projects and rejuvenates, the heroin poke and the digested Demerol slow, arrest and enervate.

Interested in muteness and silence, Warhol quite deliberately casts his gaze in the direction of heroin users Edie Sedgwick and Jean-Michel Basquiat, who for him contrast significantly with upper aficionados like the Duchess, Ondine or Liza Minnelli.<sup>28</sup> In a chapter aptly entitled "Stillness," Stephen Koch traces out the implications of Warhol's attachment to the unspeakable: "Such is the allure of Warhol to the critical mind, the intuition that his silence is—or was—connected to something that a good critical work-over would make speak. I'm convinced that

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<sup>28</sup> Edie's favorite form of heroin intake is the speedball: "Speedball! Speed and heroin. That was the first time I had a shot in each arm. Closed my eyes. Opened my arms. Closed my fists, and jab, jab. A shot of cocaine and speed, and a shot of heroin....A speedball is from another world. It's a little bit dangerous. Pure coke, pure speed, and pure sex. Wow! The ultimate in climax" (Stein, 216).

Warhol has a theme—indeed, one of his grand Themes—from which all his important work grows. And I think that by now we have descended through enough circles of perception to name it flat out, without orotund hysteria of further hermeneutical flower picking. The theme is death. Death” (133). Placing himself in the creative vicinity of those individuals who push their physical limits in an open courtship of death, Warhol sets up camp on a biological abyss. To approach death is to transcend anxieties of exchange, to defer infinitely the question of acquisition. Seen in this context, the *Giorno of Sleep* is riveting because he has gone beyond exchange, regressing it to its most basic formulation: the lungs’ metabolic and automatic swapping of oxygen for carbon dioxide. On the subject of death, Warhol is reticent; *Philosophy*’s “Death” chapter promises to be “all about it,” yet delivers only the words “I’m so sorry to hear about it. I just thought that things were magic and that it would never happen,” and “I don’t believe in it, because you’re not around to know that it’s happened. I can’t say anything because I’m not prepared for it” (121-123). Master of vicariousness, Warhol lets others die for him. Even the near-death experience inspires him, as in Billy Name’s overdose and Warhol’s shooting by Valerie Solanas.<sup>29</sup> Death constitutes Warhol’s prime limit, the asymptote he bumps up against through the actions of others, some of whom cross the threshold, making his art even hipper through the glamour of their departure. Watching *Giorno* sleep,

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<sup>29</sup> Koch relays Billy Name’s overdose in “Stillness” (134). Born Billy Linich, Billy Name became the inspiration behind much of the earliest Factory. Warhol credits him with the Factory’s silver look: “Billy was responsible for the silver at the Factory. He covered the crumbling walls and the pipes in different grades of silver foil—regular tinfoil in some areas, and a higher grade of Mylar in others. He bought cans of silver paint and sprayed everything with it, right down to the toilet bowl!” (“1960-1963,” 64). His departure marked the end of an era: “One morning when we got to the Factory, the door to the darkroom at the back where Billy had locked himself in for two years was open and he was gone. The room smelled horrible. There were literally thousands of cigarette butts in it and astrology-type charts all over the walls.” His final words are contained in the note he tacks to the wall: “Andy—I am not here anymore but I am fine Love, Billy” (299-300). Significantly, his words end *POPism*.

we experience the catharsis of mortality, witnessing the liminal state represented by somnolence. Whether we haven't slept in a month or have just woken up from a heroin coma, the film speaks to our trip.

Youthquaker Edie Sedgwick represents Warhol's first important overdose. Although by the time death claims her she has left Warhol's orbit and returned to her family's home in Santa Barbara, California, her demise by barbiturate overdose cannot shed its affiliation with Warhol, who is blamed for it by Factory insiders and outsiders alike—this despite the fact that she had severed ties with him of her own accord by the time of her death. Even *Chelsea Girls* star Marie Mencken erupts in anger after Edie overdoses, as her words on an envelope in *Time Capsule* -17 chillingly proclaim: “You made her take the needle she says...SOB! Bastard—Cock!...Blow your bra(ins) out...See what you have done to our Edie! Creep.”<sup>30</sup> Jean Stein's *Edie: An American Biography* presents Warhol's response to Edie's death as surprisingly disconnected. The words of Bruce Williamson reveal Warhol's coldness regarding his most important protégée and double:

Brigid told Andy that Edie had suffocated, and Andy asked *when*, not sounding particularly surprised or shaken. But then, that's Andy. Brigid pointed out to him that Edie hadn't died of drugs, she had suffocated in her sleep. And Andy asked how she could do a thing like that. Brigid didn't know. Then Andy asked

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<sup>30</sup> Mary Woronov describes filmmaker, painter and actress Marie Mencken in *Swimming Underground* as being Gerard Malanga's patron and surrogate mother. Married to the queer filmmaker Willard Maas, she is another of Warhol's famous zaftig starlets, dominating those around her in the imperious style of Brigid Berlin, Pat Ast and Sylvia Miles. “She looked like my future in forty years; we both had the same big old Slavic cheekbones, and she towered over Willard just like I towered over Gerard. The whole thing was funny and too close for comfort. In spite of the fact that Willard was gay, Gerard said that Marie met him when she was a virgin and never fucked anyone else, and here they were at sixty, drinking and shouting their way through dinner till she passed out” (31). As Woronov's text indicates, the plot of “The Gerard Malanga Story” relies upon the real-life Malanga/Mencken/Woronov triangle, which it mines and mimes.

whether *he* would inherit all the money. (I took the *he* as a reference to Edie's young husband at the time of Edie's death.) Brigid said that Edie didn't have any money. Then, after a pause, Andy continued with something like, Well, what have *you* been doing? Then Brigid started talking about going to the dentist (Stein, 342).<sup>31</sup>

Even beyond Warhol's obliviousness to Edie's demise, the question of who made whom plagues Warhol. Did Andy make Edie? Did Edie make Andy? Whose fame is primary? Poet René Ricard is especially pointed on Edie's priority in *Edie*: "Edie brought Andy out. She turned him on to the real world. He'd been in the demi-monde. He was an *arriviste*. And Edie legitimized him, didn't she? He never went to those parties before she took him. He'd be the first to admit it" (152).<sup>32</sup> Whether or not Warhol's engagement of Edie intensified her drug addiction, her death taints his work with death's odor. Staining Warhol, Edie's barbiturate-infused exit serves as a sign of the dangers he and his art skirt—dangers that survive the 60s, continuing into drug scenes of the 70s and 80s. Henry Geldzhaler, curator of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Twentieth Century Art and one-time Commissioner of Cultural Affairs for the City of New York, connects Warhol's destruction of Edie with his ruination of *My Hustler* star Paul America: "Paul America was a wasted creature after

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<sup>31</sup> When Tennessee Williams dies, Warhol's response is similar to his Edie reaction. "How could Tennessee Williams choke on a bottlecap, do you think? How could that happen?" he asks, implying that death involves volition (Thursday, March 3, 1983).

<sup>32</sup> In the *Diaries*, Warhol recalls an important fight with Ricard, who remains critical of his work. The drama unfolds at the afterparty of his *Shadows* opening at Dia: "Philippa invited René Ricard—her Dia Foundation just signed him up for benefits as the first poet—so he arrived at 65 Irving and was saying that my work was just 'decorative.' That got me really mad, and I'm so embarrassed, everybody saw the real me. I got so red and was telling him off, and then he was screaming things like that John Fairchild, Jr. was my boyfriend—you know how horrible René is—and it was like one of those old Ondine fights, and everybody was stunned to see me so angry and out of control and screaming back at him" (199). Much of Warhol's anger centers on the fact that Gerard Malanga has just become Ricard's agent.

they had finished with him. They finally washed their hands of him and let him float away. He's a poor burned-out thing living in a commune in Indiana and trying to pull himself together" (*Edie*, 176-177). Like Mr. America, Edie, a veritable Miss America (after all, hers is an "American" biography), cannot pull herself together, leaving the Factory a total mess as she wafts away toward an uncertain horizon.

Emulating the workings of Hollywood, Warhol becomes a center of attraction for New York City's lunatic fringe. Seeking out those people living on a neural precipice, Warhol takes in one fragile ego after another, making matters worse by magically transforming them into superstars and making them feel momentarily gratified. Under such circumstances, withdrawing his attention has the deleterious effect of shattering a bloated ego erected upon an insecure foundation. In the case of Edie, her replacement by Ingrid Superstar is the cataclysmic event. Ricard tells a story also relayed by Woronov:

The Warhol people felt Edie was giving them trouble—they were furious with her because she wasn't cooperating. So they went to a Forty-second street bar and found Ingrid von Schefflin. They had noticed: "Doesn't this girl look like an ugly Edie? Let's really teach Edie a lesson. Let's make a movie with her and tell Edie she's the big new star." They cut her hair like Edie's. They made her up like Edie. Her name became Ingrid Superstar...just an invention to make Edie feel horrible (*Edie*, 227).

Excising Edie from *The Chelsea Girls* and replacing her reel with one of Nico crying, Warhol deflates her ego, removing her from the limelight and ending her world-historicity. Holly Woodlawn voices the anxiety experienced by Edie and others—an anxiety based upon the radical instability of Factory celebrity: "Finally, I came to

realize the ugly truth behind my popularity. These party people weren't interested in me as a person...I was a conversation piece; a curious bauble on display. I felt used by them because I was a good laugh or something to talk about. I felt like a joke and it hurt" (181). Edie feels like the same species of sight gag. Over cocktails at the Russian Tea Room, Edie confesses her fears in the wake of a proposed Edie Retrospective: "Everybody in New York is laughing at me...I'm too embarrassed to leave my apartment. These movies are making a complete fool of me! Everybody knows I just stand around doing nothing and what kind of talent is that?" (Bockris, 173). Frail creatures, Edie and other Warhol stars suffer the fate of being elevated, then dropped. When Andy ponders, "I wonder if Edie will commit suicide. I hope she lets me know so I can film it," his words come as prophetic (Bockris, 178). Flopping out in a swimming pool on her mother's estate, Edie ends her life both miraculating past glamour (she fantasizes about phone conversations with *Vogue* editors) and plunging into a narcotic pit from which there is no return.<sup>33</sup>

Unlike Edie, Jean-Michel Basquiat does much more than stand around vapidly—although Warhol does indicate that his fame is built upon the automatic repetition of a pose, as when, in the *Diaries*, he comments: "Bruno just called—at the Christie's auction Jean Michel's painting went for \$20,000. I think he's going to be the Big Black Painter. It was one of his sort of big paintings. I think Jean-Michel's early stuff is sort of better, because then he was just painting, and now he has to think about stuff to paint to sell. And how many screaming Negroes can you do? Well, I

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<sup>33</sup> David Weisman's 1972 film *Ciao! Manhattan* documents Edie's last moments. It is a masterpiece of *schadenfreude*.

guess you can do them forever, but...” (Wednesday, October 31, 1984).<sup>34</sup> Through Basquiat, heroin becomes associated with inspiration: “Jean Michel called three or four times, he’d been taking smack. Bruno came by and saw a painting that Jean Michel wasn’t finished with yet, and he said, ‘I want it, I want it,’ and so he gave him money and took it, and I felt funny, because nobody’s done that for me in so long” (Wednesday, October 3, 1984).<sup>35</sup> Letting heroin lead him, Basquiat makes it a crucial part of the productive process: “Jean-Michel was painting back in the images he’d painted out when he was on smack and he came up with some masterpieces” (Sunday, November 4, 1984). Heroin refers to a history of abuse: “He got a hole in his nose and he couldn’t do coke anymore, and he wanted to still be on something, I guess. I guess he wants to be the youngest artist to go” (Wednesday, May 18, 1983). Though Basquiat does not overdose until 1988, his collaboration with Warhol is fueled by his association with heroin; like so many stars intersecting his path, Basquiat is the junkie-of-the moment. Basquiat himself indicates the knowledge-producing capacity of drugs: “He’s not even a drug addict—how can he write a book? About *what?*” asks Basquiat, upon discovering that his father has fancied himself a writer (Thursday, November 27, 1986). The special knowledge provided by the drug experience entices Warhol, causing him to affiliate himself with one junkie after another. Perhaps they *do* know something, after all!

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<sup>34</sup> “Big” is Warhol’s word for Basquiat, as when he remarks “Jean Michel and I went to the back of the plane and he was smoking joints, and then I realized that he’d left his brand-new Comme des Garçons coat in the hotel room when he’d been rolling, and he called and I called but they’ll never send it. He just knows what looks good on him. He’s 6’—or 6’1” with his hair. He’s really big” (*Diaries*, Wednesday, November 7, 1984). Basquiat’s cock is also huge: “He fell asleep and then he got up and he was up front by the phones with a big hard-on, like a baseball bat in his pants” (Thursday, April 12, 1984).

<sup>35</sup> While Jean-Michel’s name is hyphenated, the *Diaries* spell it without the hyphen. Consequently, I have retained the use of “Jean-Michel” throughout, “normalizing” *Diary* spellings for the sake of consistency.

If Liza is the *Diaries*' coke star, then Basquiat is their junk star. Saturated with smack, Basquiat becomes their indecent "Big Black" insider, even bigger and blacker than Grace Jones, who also functions as subversive center by virtue of her racial and sexual alterity. With Basquiat, Warhol veers away from earlier, more cavalier attitudes toward drug use, since he seems to wish genuinely that Basquiat would clean up his act: "Jean-Michel called, back from the Ivory Coast. He said they sell meat with four million flies on it—they cut off a piece and just sell it with the flies. He sounded normal, like he was off drugs and missing old times, he wants to do prints together" (Tuesday, October 31, 1986). Linking "on drugs" with not wanting to collaborate, Warhol indicates that heroin had played a role in the emergence of more distant "new times." The period following their 1985 joint show at Tony Shafrazi left Basquiat with the feeling that Warhol had used him to sustain a faltering career as painter, the space between them multiplied. When *The New York Times* identified Basquiat as Warhol's "mascot," Basquiat receded. In his Sunday, November 24, 1985 diary entry, a jilted Warhol complains, "Jean-Michel hasn't called me in a month, so I guess it's really over," giving credence to ex-girlfriend Paige Powell's assertion that Warhol is Basquiat's lover.<sup>36</sup> In keeping with other famous Warhol addicts, like Sedgwick or the Duchess, amorous overtones permeate their relationship, as when Warhol gives Jean-Michel a Come painting, or when the two swap hair follicles.<sup>37</sup> With Basquiat, Warhol speaks the language of love.

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<sup>36</sup> "And Paige and I are fighting. She keeps making these digs about Jean Michel, she said, 'Are you starting up your gay affair again with Jean-Michel?' and so I got *my* dig in and said, 'Listen, I wouldn't go to bed with him because he's so dirty, and I can't believe that anyone would. I mean, *you're* the one who had the affair with a dirty, unwashed person" (Sunday, January 11, 1987). As in other entries, Basquiat is connected with filth.

<sup>37</sup> "What happened was I'd given Jean-Michel a Come painting and he had it with him when he and Richard got drunk together, and Jean-Michel didn't have anything to write his phone number on for

Warhol even subjects Basquiat to a symbolic golden shower, producing a *Piss Painting in his image (Jean-Michel Basquiat, 1982)*. In *Unseen Warhol*, Basquiat's father Gerard describes the painting: "Jean-Michel brought the portrait Andy had painted of him to my house. I said, 'What are all those strange, green dots?' He then told me the story about Andy having people piss on the wet copper paint to get that effect. We laughed about that" (106). Pissing on Basquiat and on his other addicts, Warhol showcases and toys with the drug narrative, whose protagonists influence him for three decades.

Jean-Michel Basquiat is Andy Warhol's last junkie. Closing out a rollicking series beginning with Warhol's earliest amphetamine coterie, Basquiat represents the final installment in the Pop drug narrative. Nodding off, Basquiat's sleeps adumbrate his eventual heroin overdose. Both brilliant and braindead, Basquiat becomes the true genius of the late *Diaries*: "Jean-Michel came over to the office to paint but fell asleep on the floor. He looked like a bum lying there. But I woke him up and he did two masterpieces that were great" (Tuesday, October 2, 1984). Within this context, *Sleep* continues to generate shockwaves. Like John Giorno, Basquiat might slip into REM; unlike him, he might never awaken, as history will eventually prove. Mixing a non-miraculating performativity, having less to do with the energies and talent of either the A-heads or Les Girlettes, with an unpredictable tendency to slip into semiconsciousness at the drop of a hat, Basquiat owns a celebrity which his drug

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Richard Gere except this painting of mine, so he wrote it on that and gave the painting to Richard. Then when Richard woke up the next morning he said he saw it and thought it was disgusting and threw it into the fire. I told him it was *my* come but actually it was Victor's" (Sunday, November 13, 1983). Basquiat first gives Warhol his locks on August 31, 1983; Warhol responds by providing Basquiat with one of his wigs on December 19, 1985. Julian Schanbel's *Basquiat* (Miramax, 1996) dramatizes this hair exchange.

habits do not eclipse, but rather enrich. Literally a product of the street, NYC's most important second-generation Pop artist dies a death commensurable with the myth of the burnout. Along with Edie, he persists as caveat to drug euphoria. For while Liza and Halston have a blast with cocaine, and while even the Factory A-heads whoop up skin- and pill-popping, Jean-Michel and Edie are characters in a darker story. That Warhol should have experienced such close and complicated relationships with the pair is not a factor of his status as master exploiter. Rather, his affinity with them is the outgrowth of a deep and abiding infatuation with those individuals who actively seek out the limit situation and throw themselves into it without a care in the world. Terrified of death, Warhol preserves his own precious mortality by letting them toy with their own. Such consumption is toxic—yet heavenly.

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