

Warholian Machinehood I

By Michael Angelo Tata

I really like to eat alone. I want to start a chain of restaurants for other people who are like me called ANDYMATS—"The Restaurant for the Lonely Person." You get your food and then you take your tray into a booth and watch television (*Philosophy*, 160).

Robo-Picasso

Machines promise Andy Warhol a perfectly dehumanized world in which anomie and alienation are meaningless problems because human nature itself has become fully mechanized. After all, issues of integration only have semantic value for human beings. Robots, cyborgs and automatons are not known for experiencing existential crises; disaffected, they work without contemplating their respective situations, concentrating their lives into a laser beam of pure performativity. As systems pioneer Silvan Tomkins has demonstrated in his work on affect, the mechanized device is unable to transcend its status as prosthesis because it cannot exhibit any interest in its context. Even a virus demonstrates interest in the world—hence its absorption by the job of transmitting its genetic material to other cells. Without the basic tropism sparked by interest there is no possibility of autonomy—nor is there any chance that affect will erupt into existence, therein compromising the device's ability to perform an assigned task. Orientation cannot take place without the drive to be situated: creatures interested in nothing perish.¹ Mechanisms and gizmos are not able to generate interest in anything, and are consequently unable to

¹ Arguing for the development of a viable affect mechanism for computers, Tomkins splits drive from affect, revising Freud such that drive and affect are differently motivated, drive lacking (1) the freedom of time, (2) freedom of intensity, (3) freedom of density of investment, (4) freedom of investment in possibility, (5) freedom of object, (6) freedom of membership in sequential central assemblies, (7) freedom to combine with, modulate and suppress other drives, (8) freedom of consummatory site, (9) freedom of instigation, and (10) freedom of substitutability of consummatory objects which affects possess (41). Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's and Adam Frank's *Shame and Its Sisters: a Silvan Tomkins Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995, 75-80) is my source for all Tomkins references in 2.3.

experience being-in-the-world, a quality reserved for higher forms of sentient life: “The automaton must be motivated. It must be equipped with a drive signal system which tells it when it is running out of cards, oil and electricity, and it must be motivated to store energy as it now stores information. It must also be motivated to reproduce itself. Turing, who demonstrated that a self-producing machine was theoretically possible, was a logician, and understandably limited the problem of self-reproduction to asexual techniques; but if we are interested in the problem of human simulation, the race of automata must be perpetuated not only by knowledge but by passion” (Tomkins, 41). Seeking to find the secret to artificial intelligence, Tomkins faults contemporary AI for its inability to infuse the computer with affect. Working laterally to Warhol-as-machine, I arrive at a new understanding of his obliviousness and nonchalance: like any good cyborg, he refuses humanism, even to the point of shirking off the Oedipal yoke so integral to Western notions of individuation.²

Warhol’s reports of his own affective states make him sound like an “unintegrated automaton,” or machine which has not as of yet acquired motivation. Wanting nothing, the unintegrated automaton fails at properly orienting itself in spacetime, and never transcends the servo-mechanism for which it was intended. Ever desiring not to desire, Warhol rejects affect in an effort to self-mechanize. Consummate bachelor machine, he produces a variety of sterility as his ultimate product.³ Making apathy chic, Warhol reflects the disaffection of the Youthquakers

² In her “A Cyborg Manifesto,” Donna J. Haraway identifies the cyborg as radically disaffected, a state she connects with the cyborg’s lack of Oedipalization: “The cyborg is a creature in a post-gender world; it has no truck with bisexuality, pre-oedipal symbiosis, unalienated labour, or other seductions to organic wholeness through a final appropriation of all the powers of the parts into a higher unity. In a sense, the cyborg has no origin story in the Western sense—a ‘final’ irony since the cyborg is also the awful apocalyptic *telos* of the “West’s” escalating dominations of abstract individuation, an ultimate self untied at last from all dependency, a man in space” (150-151). See *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991). Deleuze and Guattari are the first to ally the refusal of the Oedipal narrative with a revolutionary project; Haraway’s genius is to name the cyborg as anti-Oedipal ideal. See also Haraway’s *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium.FemaleMan[©]_Meets_OncoMouseTM* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

³ Regarding the bachelor machine, or *machine celibataire*, see “The Arts of Dying: Celibatory Machines” in Michel de Certeau’s *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986). “Having put an end to the *coincitadio oppositorum*, and having washed its hands of any ‘consolation’ overcoming difference, the machine’s essential characteristic is that it is male. It behaves as such at its place of production. It confesses (or flaunts, whichever you like) its relation to its limit, the limit of being masculine and nothing but. The celibate of the machine, in effect, returns to the essential, structuring form of difference—sexuality—and refuses to exercise any

while playing up his own physiognomic and corporeal strangeness. *Philosophy* begins with Warhol getting his inhuman look together:

“The bored languor, the wasted pallor...”

“The what?”

“The chic freakiness, the basically passive astonishment, the enthralling secret knowledge...”

“WHAT??”

“The chintzy joy, the revelatory tropisms, the chalky, puckish mask, the slightly Slavic look...”

“Slightly...”

“The childlike, gum-chewing naïveté, the glamour rooted in despair, the self-admiring carelessness, the perfected otherness, the wispieness, the shadowy, voyeuristic, vaguely sinister aura, the pale, soft-spoken magical presence, the skin and bones...”

“Hold it, wait a minute. I have to take a pee.”

“The albino-chalk skin. Parchmentlike.

Reptilian. Almost blue...”

“Stop it! I have to pee!”

“The knobby knees. The roadmap of scars. The long bony arms, so white they look bleached. The arresting hands. The pinhead eyes. The banana ears...”

“The banana ears? Oh, A!!!”

“The graying lips. The shaggy silver-white hair, soft and metallic. The cords of the neck standing out around the big Adam’s apple. It’s all there, B. Nothing is missing. I’m everything my scrapbook says I am”

(10).

Appearing in the guise of other species, and with a skin made of paper, Warhol has visually left his *Homo sapiens* ancestry behind, having launched off for a robotic, post-human existence. The interior picture comes off as equally bizarre. For Warhol, the ultimate end is the experience of emptiness, as his words of *POPism* indicate:

“Most people love watching the same basic thing, as long as the details are different.

But I’m just the opposite: if I’m going to sit and watch the same thing I saw the night

masculine power of expressing the feminine in speech [*dire la femme*]” (166). Since de Certeau primarily refers to writing as arena of celibacy, his work on literature as bachelor machine immediately recalls references to Warhol’s *a*: celibate text, it too refuses to *dire la femme*. Pace *POPism* and *Philosophy*, the femme must articulate both text and self (Pat Hackett, Brigid Berlin, even a feminized Colacello).

before, I don't want it to be essentially the same—I want it to be *exactly* the same. Because the more you look at the same exact thing, the more the meaning goes away, and the better and emptier you feel” (*POPism*, 50). Assimilating to his camera lens, Warhol, like the Bolex or Auricon, can watch an unchanging tableau without blinking. In such a boring and emptying place, the questions Romanticism lays out for art—issues surrounding legitimacy, authenticity, originality, novelty, inspiration and genius—turn to so much gibberish. Parodied, these permeate Warhol's works, which seek to drain them of semantic value in an effort to maximize nonfeeling and nonsensation. Positing the machine as ideal endpoint, Warhol envies the mechanized entity its ability to enact a production uninterrupted by affect.

Walter Benjamin's predictions about mechanical reproduction as spirit of an age receive confirmation by Warhol, who envisions a time and place when and where machines can fabricate anything, including those products of human enterprise thought to be most resistant to technological mediation: works of art and literature. More than any other artist, Warhol bears out the ramifications Benjamin identifies as resulting from the displacement of original by copy in the modern (and postmodern) world. In his essay “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” Benjamin diagnoses the machine-dominated epoch as suffering a loss of aura due to the detachment of objects from tradition. As image separates from object via the logic of infinite reproducibility, a crisis in authenticity makes its presence known: “To pry an object from its shell, to destroy its aura, is the mark of a perception whose ‘sense of the universal equality of things’ has increased to such a degree that it extracts it even from a unique object by means of reproduction. This is manifested in the field of perception what in the theoretical sphere is noticeable in the increasing importance of statistics. The adjustment of reality to the masses and of the masses to reality is a process of unlimited scope, as much for thinking as for perception” (*Illuminations*, 223). Replacing the cult value of an older hand-made art with the exhibition value of machine-fabricated art, the industrial era paradoxically re-invests the human face with a fetishistic quality: “In photography, exhibition value begins to displace cult value all along the line. But cult value does not give way without resistance. It retires into an ultimate retrenchment: the human countenance” (225-

226).⁴ Warhol embodies this tendency. His own paintings are indebted to the human face, however ironic that cathexis may be. Silkscreening faces onto canvas, Warhol demonstrates the proof of Benjamin's assertion that, in a dehumanized age, the face becomes a fetish. Perhaps seeing the humanoid countenance from the automaton's point of view, Warhol gazes upon it as a relic or trace from a lost order. The face should not be; that it persists generates the same interest displayed by a paleontologist unearthing a fossil. Only a machine could find the human face so atavistically riveting. A cyborg gazing wistfully at a humanoid landscape long since obliterated, Warhol experiences AI's nostalgia for its antiquated creator.

Converting affect into the cold, digitalized language of the computer, Warhol lives out a personal version of Systems Theory. As Habermas discusses in his *Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, Systems Theory counters Hegelian pan-subjectivity with an all-consuming objectivity: "It [systems functionalism] allows the subjects themselves to degenerate into systems. It tacitly sets a seal on 'the end of the individual,' which Adorno encircled with his negative dialectic and protested against as self-inflicted fate" (353). Losing himself in crude objectivity, Warhol produces a painting, cinema and literature obsessed with the status quo, which entralls him as a result of its sheer being-there. Machines fill his spaces to the point of saturation. Tape recorders, telephone answering machines, Bolex, Auricon, Polaroid and Big Shot cameras, robots and automats: the self-regulating entity becomes an ideal for Warhol, who marvels at its capacity to work without interruption. Machines always bring home the bacon. When they cease doing so, they are junked, and a new bacon-bringer is installed. Half android himself, Warhol envies machines for their ability to maintain a functional homeostasis day in and day out—unlike human beings, machines keep going with a minimum of input, spitting out product without respite. This technophilic extreme remains a limit for the Romantics and the Surrealists—a threshold nonchalantly crossed by Warhol. Keats' idea of negative capability and

⁴ "Works of art are received and valued on different planes. Two polar types stand out: with one, the accent is on the cult value; with the other, on the exhibition value of the work...With the different methods of technical reproduction of a work of art, its fitness for exhibition increased to such an extent that the quantitative shift between its two poles turned into a qualitative transformation of its nature" (225). While the mechanically reproduced work of art initially abnegated the human trace, it ultimately returned to it as obsessive relic. All Benjamin quotes are taken from *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken Books, 1968).

Breton's passion for aesthetic automatism receive fresh confirmation by Warhol's work, which refuses insemination while paradoxically never stopping to reproduce.⁵ Externalizing the creative process, Warhol redefines negative capability, intensifying the traditional Aeolian harp metaphor such that active contribution approaches zero. Furthermore, he increases the impersonality of automatism, resulting in a creativity of almost total renunciation. The work of art is no longer pseudo-external, but external in its own right. Not merely arising as if created by another, art is actively fabricated by others. Their psyches bubble through the work's perforations, as when Warhol's typists make *a* their own: "Billy Name supervised the typesetting, and made sure that every spelling mistake and typo was left intact so that Andy's intention of making a 'bad' book would be realized" (Bockris, 243). Untouched, the artist's id refuses to reveal itself, languishing safely at a distance (that is, if it even exists).

Making nothing, Warhol offers something after something in the hyperfabrication of a delicious zero-calorie nonsense. Desired objects lurk off-screen, as in the 1963 silent film *Blow Job*, which shows only the face of a fellated rebel without ever granting visual access to the act of fellatio itself: "Much in *Blow Job* is unverifiable. We don't know whether a man or a woman is fellating the actor. Perhaps several different men or women, perhaps one per reel. We may even wonder whether Warhol himself is servicing his star, while someone else mans his Bolex. Thus we don't know the recipient's sexual preference: he looks like trade (a straight man who, especially if paid, lets another man blow him). We don't know whether he truly reaches climax, or merely fakes it. There is no money shot: evidentiary ejaculation, a porn staple" (Koestenbaum, 84). Similarly, Warhol's attention runs out

⁵ Keats defines negative capability in a December 27, 1817 letter to George and Tom Keats: "I had not a dispute but a disquisition with Dilke, on various subjects; several things dovetailed in my mind, & at once it struck me, what quality went to form a Man of Achievement especially in Literature & which Shakespeare possessed so enormously—I mean *Negative Capability*, that is when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact & reason—Coleridge, for instance, would let go by a fine isolated verisimilitude caught from the Penetratum of mystery, from being incapable of remaining content with half knowledge" (370). In his first *Manifesto of Surrealism*, Breton equates surrealism with automatism: "SURREALISM, *n.* Psychic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express—verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other manner—the actual functioning of thought. Dictated by thought, in the absence of any control exercised by reason, exempt from any aesthetic or moral concern" (26). As a "disinterested pay of thought," automatism represents a machine-like productivity. Like Keats' negative capability, it refuses interruption, making writing an externalized practice emanating from without.

the moment important events occur, as when, in the 1965 film *Camp*, the camera bleeds into whiteness as black model Donyale Luna works it in a fur coat, or when, in “The Tingle,” Warhol takes a urination break during Brigid’s discussion of her vibrator.⁶ The question of what Warhol makes looms large: what exactly does he offer his audiences in terms of product? Appearing to offer the strange gift of nothingness, Warhol is that queer machine which makes zero-ness a tangible commodity. Whether Warhol paints his paintings, writes his books or films his films doesn’t matter—in fact, if we can attribute them to someone else, he glows even brighter. Negating nothing—that is, making nothingness palpable, concrete, “there”—Warhol pulls off the inimitable stunt of making emptiness salable. Glamourizing emptiness, Warhol perfects absence, which persists as a species of presence after it exits his machinery.

System Toxicity

Machines are closed systems. Complete with a structure, an organization and a motivating source, they continue to generate product until they break down, at which point they can be repaired and set in motion once again. No stranger to the artworld, Warhol the commercial success gleaned the industrial power of the paintings, sculptures and wisdom of Marcel Duchamp, who made the poetics of the machine central to his Cubist and Dada projects.⁷ The glamour of the machine as

⁶ Dorothy Dean also vaporizes in *My Hustler*. Like Donyale Luna, she brings the film to a close at a moment of maximum interest. While Hilton Als sees the disappearance of the black queen as demonstrating Warhol’s disinterest in her, I disagree. In Warhol, what disappears is often of high importance. Though figurative, he alludes to figures outside his lenses and screens. These become the displaced and unvisualizable locus of fulfillment.

⁷ Duchamp is also the basis for the idea of the bachelor machine. His *Large Glass* depicts a bachelor machine attempting to strip bare and penetrate a bride—unsuccessfully, of course. “Michel Carrouges has identified a certain number of fantastic machines—‘celibate machines’—that he has discovered in works of literature. The examples he points to are of many different sorts, and at first glance do not seem to belong to a single category: Marcel Duchamp’s painting ‘La mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même’ (‘The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even’), the machine in Kafka’s ‘In the Penal Colony,’ Raymond Roussel’s machines, those of Jarry’s *Surmâle* (*Supermale*), certain of Edgar Allen Poe’s machines, Villiers’s *Eve future* (*The Future Eve*), etc.” (Deleuze and Guattari, 18). Warhol first met Duchamp at his 1963 Pasadena Art Museum retrospective (Warhol was in LA for the Ferus Gallery’s exhibition of his Elvises). Oddly enough, Duchamp was more enamored of Taylor Mead than of Warhol. Dressed in an oversized knitted sweater and dancing the night away with Patti Oldenburg, Mead was the evening’s star (Watson, 113).

formulated by Marinetti in his *Manifesto of Futurism* achieves new luminescence with Warhol, who removes the destructive properties of machines from the equation, focusing almost exclusively on their productive and reproductive potential (machine make things; machines record things).⁸ Even when machines do produce destruction, as in his electric chair and atom bomb images, their power seems to be minimized, subverted: “This ‘modern’ form of legal electrocution impressed Warhol as a typically American way to go...Perversely, he silkscreened the image of lethal furniture against monochrome backgrounds in decorator colors, as in *Lavender Disaster*” (Bourdon, 154). Overall, machines allude to industrialism, that process by which mechanization was installed in both the West and its colonized territories as culturally determining praxis. Thus Warhol would name his atelier “The Factory,” implying that it could produce almost anything—corrugated cardboard, ball bearings, ketchup. Factory work is impersonal; it refuses any attempt to wash over it with a poetics. Yet on closer examination, the factories central to the industrial revolution itself actually regressed poetry to *poiesis*, or the unqualified act of making. Factories make: they produce on a large scale, serially emitting products from their assembly lines with presumably minimal interruptions. Factories refuse authorship as well—although labor is performed on a large scale, the labor produced involves only anonymity. Communal, these entities merge individualities into the collective worker, that fictive creature whose actions produce merchandise. As demonstrated by Marx, they represent the ultimate degree of alienation—the kicker being that Warhol embraces that aloneness and separation, incorporating it directly into his aesthetic. Finding joy in factory work, especially when others undertake it, Warhol brings a little bit of Pittsburgh to Manhattan: modeling aesthetic production on the activities of the steel mill, he imports its brute reality into the creative act.

From the vantage point of autopoietic theory, a discipline dedicated to describing and analyzing the ways in which systems self-organize, self-regulate and self-propagate, Warhol’s obsession with automatic entities makes even more sense, as

⁸ Marinetti fetishes the machine, saturating it with ecstasy: “We say that the world’s magnificence has been enriched by a new beauty: the beauty of speed. A racing car whose hood is adorned with great pipes, like serpents of explosive breath—a roaring car that seems to ride on grapeshot—is more beautiful than the *Victory of Samothrace* (“Manifesto of Futurism,” Thesis #6).

it ties to his fixation on relations (how groups aggregate, how individuals respond to larger entities, etc.). Developing as an offshoot of evolutionary biology, the work of Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela, foundational to autopoietic and Systems Theory alike, speaks to Warhol's love of the machine. For Maturana and Varela, systems are defined by their self-regulatory ability, referred to as "recursion." Whether they be a machine, cell or, as in the famous Belousov-Zhabotinsky reaction, molecule, systems are first and foremost "dissipative structures."⁹ Through their homeostatic workings, entropy is made to dissipate—as happens to that theoretical precursor to the system, the vortex.¹⁰ Machines (and vortices) are recursive because they fall back on themselves in the homeostatic act. Managed from within, machines require human labor and input only until the moment they are produced, after which they run themselves with minimal external intervention: as such, they are also *heteropoietic*, or produced from without (as Tomkins has commented, no machine can yet self-replicate due mainly to problems in motivation). Organized such that they are able to maintain an essential balance between intake and excretion, anabolism and catabolism, systems remain radically self-reliant. According to these definitions, machines qualify as systems by virtue of their insularity. As productive entities, they also qualify as *allopoietic* (they create potentially new systems) For Maturana and Varela, allopoiesis contrasts with autopoiesis in terms of what exactly

⁹ In their *Looking Glass Universe: The Emerging Science of Wholeness* (New York: Cornerstone Library, 1984), John P. Briggs and F. David Peat discuss this important chemical reaction: "In 1958, two Russian researchers stumbled upon a far-from-equilibrium structure occurring in a chemical environment. When they mixed malonic acid, bromate, and cerium ions in a shallow dish of sulfuric acid at certain critical temperatures, what is now called the Belousov-Zhabotinsky reaction created a structure of concentric and spiral 'cells' that pulsed and remained stable even as the reaction secreted more cells. The reaction is clearly chemical and does not involve DNA, but in its structure it looks like the growth of a life form!" (164). Using an autocatalytic loop, the reaction produces a low-degree autopoiesis, raising serious questions about the nature of life. Since, as Maturana comments, there is no reproductive criterion for autopoiesis, only the stability of a structure over time, the entities produced by Belousov and Zhabotinsky redefine the threshold of existence. My source for Maturana and Varela here and in the text is *Autopoiesis and Cognition: The Realization of the Living* (Boston: D Reidel Publishing Company, 1980).

¹⁰ Physicist Ilya Prigogine first theorized the vortex as dissipative structure in the early 80s. His interest is in self-regulating entities, among which the vortex figures most importantly. Emerging as a stable structure in a zone of wild energy fluctuation, the vortex maintains its structural integrity, despite surrounding chaos. Thriving on that chaos, it creates an autocatalytic loop which guarantees the its longevity. Briggs and Peat provide a more detailed discussion of Prigogine's work—specifically, its relevance for autopoiesis. Entropy is defined as any system's increase in disorder over time. According to the second law of thermodynamics, all closed systems exhibit increased chaos irreversibly.

gets produced via automatism. While the autopoietic entity essentially makes only itself, the allopoietic entity acts like an assembly line. Spitting out product into an extra-systemic world, it creates a not-self. Thus for Maturana and Varela even sexual or asexual reproduction qualifies as allopoietic, since the organism generated must necessarily pinch off from its parent to assume a life all its own. Technically speaking, autopoiesis is not marked by reproductive viability: only self need be produced and maintained in order for there to be autopoiesis. Hence through allopoiesis, the self-enclosed autopoietic system creates potentially new systems, which pass into an extra-systemic space where they will be dispersed. Incorporating only bonding and production, the allopoietic device fabricates product in the same way that a crystal branches out, oblivious to problems of regulation or maintenance, bent only on making more.

Inevitable in any discussion of Warhol's relevance for autopoietic theory is his use of the silkscreen—especially given that this particular technology ensured his centrality to Pop art and garnered him instant celebrity (a fame capable of regenerating and recharging itself like Prigogine's vortex). Through this advertising technique, Warhol even produces other silkscreening machines, as when, in *POPism*, he reports teaching the technique to Rauschenberg: "David [Bourdon] went on, 'He was very interested in the silkscreens and asked where you got them. Up to then he'd been transferring images by putting lighter fluid on magazine and newspaper illustrations and then rubbing it onto the paper—a very painstaking process. He was impressed when he saw that with a silkscreen you could get an image larger than life and use it over and over again'" (23). In the *Diaries*, he describes a Mike Bidlo installation at P.S. 1 which might have rolled off a Warhol assembly line: "Rupert came by and told me about the show at P.S. 1 where they created a replica of the old 47th Street Factory. They had a silver room and people passing out LSD and an Edie running around" (Monday, April 16, 1984). Transplanting his technique of commercial art into the zone of high art, Warhol causes a commotion: What does it mean that important painting is now generated by machines? Surely some paradigm

of humanism has been violated—as well as a principle of organicism.¹¹ Opting for his half-dead look, Warhol complicates matters by appearing to be only slightly human himself. Hence his perpetual use of the wig, which turned his coiffure into a silver-rinsed cyborg’s mane.¹² Managerial ghoul, Warhol uses the toil of others to create his paintings, which remain the products of his authority despite the fact that he has not authored them in a traditional way. For there are authentic Warhols and inauthentic Warhols. The *Diaries* is quite clear on this point, especially when Warhol expresses displeasure toward ex-assistant Gerard Malanga, who uses Warhol’s electric chair silkscreens to create his own fakes: “Julian Schnabel came by with his little girl. We’re talking about maybe doing some different image on top of a fake or mine that he bought—one of those paintings I think Gerard Malanga did. Julian didn’t know it was a fake when he bought it” (Friday, November 14, 1986). Warhol encounters his own fakes in an exhibit: “And then we went to Mary Garage. What’s the name of that gallery? Gracie Mansion. On Avenue A. And there were five fakes of mine. Electric Chairs. And some Jackson Pollock fakes. I didn’t say anything” (*Diaries*, Saturday, January 28, 1984). In addition, not only Warhol’s art is fakeable: Warhol himself can be cloned quite efficiently, at least in the popular imagination. At a Prom Night Party for Neil Bogart, Warhol’s authenticity is challenged by a reporter,

¹¹ Haraway’s cyborg is not a humanist creature, nor is it organic: “Pre-cybernetic machines could be haunted; there was always the spectre of the ghost in the machine. This dualism structured the dialogue between materialism and idealism that was settled by a dialectical progeny, called spirit or history, according to taste. But basically machines were not self-moving, self-designing, autonomous. They could not achieve man’s dream, only mock it. They were not man, an author to himself, but only a caricature of that masculinist reproductive dream. To think they were otherwise was paranoid. Now we are not so sure. Late twentieth-century machines have made thoroughly ambiguous the difference between natural and artificial, mind and body, self-developing and externally designed, and many other distinctions that used to apply to organisms and machines. Our machines are disturbingly lively, and we ourselves are frighteningly inert” (*Simians, Cyborgs, and Women*, 152).

¹² For de Certeau, “wig” or “perruque” has another—yet related—meaning: “Take, for example, what in France is called *la perruque*, ‘the wig.’ *La perruque* is the worker’s own work disguised as work for his employer. It differs from pilfering in that nothing of material value is stolen. It differs from absenteeism in that the worker is officially on the job. *La perruque* may be as simple as a secretary’s writing a love letter on ‘company time’ or as complex as a cabinetmaker’s ‘borrowing’ a lathe to make a piece of furniture for his living room” (*The Practice of Everyday Life*, 25). Diverting time, the wig-act gels with Debord’s idea of *détournement*, as described by Len Bracken in *Guy Debord: Revolutionary* (Venice, CA: Feral House, 1997): “Debord rediscovered and amplified Lautreamont’s method of *détournement* (diverting an existing phrase by changing or adding a few choice words), using texts by Hegel, Freud, the civil code, science fiction novels as well as comics and films. The exciting hubris of these appropriations elicited charges of megalomania, which Debord and his cohorts shamelessly accepted with equal arrogance” (42).

causing him joy: “She said she was a second-string reporter at *Stern* and they didn’t get her the *real* Andy Warhol to interview, they got her the double, and what was she doing in such a second-rate position, and somehow he believed her, he just got right up and left, and he wouldn’t talk to me for the rest of the night. He thought I was a fake Andy Warhol. Isn’t that great?” (*Diaries*, Wednesday, May 6, 1981).¹³

Claiming to be a machine, Warhol places himself in the precarious position of having to defend his originality in the face of non-Warhol Warhols. Catching a glimpse of Warhol encountering his faked paintings and personae, we experience a precious humor—for while many artists find their work cloned, only Warhol has made the stakes so high regarding the authenticity of even “authentic” Warhols.

Self-enclosed yet prolific, Warhol himself epitomizes the best of both worlds: autopoietic, he obsesses over his relationality and catalysis; allopoietic, he imports the assembly line into the world of *kunst*. Letting his gaze alight upon those machines which both maintain themselves and create an ontologically distinct product, he turns the problem of exchange into a question of maintenance. In this context, entropy is an integral concept. As John P. Briggs and F. David Peat comment in *Looking Glass Universe: The Emerging Science of Wholeness*, the question of entropy is intimately connected with the problem of the perpetual motion machine (Warhol’s dream): “Scientists discovered that this barrier to the free exchange of energy was the key to why perpetual motion machines are impossible...the new science of thermodynamics showed engineers that in each cycle alone some of the energy would be converted into an unusable form and, without an independent input of power, the machine would quickly run down. Thermodynamics related this problem of the running down of all machines to ‘the law of increasing entropy’” (155). Desiring to be in perpetual motion, Warhol wishes to maximize his efficiency by using everything, omitting

¹³ In 1967, Warhol sent out impostor Allen Midgette onto the college lecture circuit; he is Warhol’s most famous fake. “The faux Andy Warhol lectured at four western campuses during a week in October, and both Morrissey and Midgette felt the anxiety of pulling off the hoax. Paul Morrissey recalled arriving in Salt Lake City, where the wind from the airplane propellers blew powder from Midgette’s hair, and Midgette recalled moving his head and chewing gum to divert attention from his face. But Midgette got away with it until, a few months later, the hoax was discovered” (Watson, 349).

nothing.¹⁴ Consequently, the leftover tantalizes him with its possibilities, challenging his frugality with the prospect of waste. Whether the leftover is a remnant of his art (the out-take, the junked print) or of some other productive system (camp taste), it represents a quantum of potential energy, which, from a utilitarian perspective, must not be overlooked:

I'm not saying that popular taste is bad so that what's left over from the bad taste is good: I'm saying that what's left over is probably bad, but if you can take it and make it good or at least interesting, then you're not wasting as much as you would otherwise. You're recycling work and you're recycling people, and you're running your business as a by-product of other businesses. Of other *directly competitive* businesses, as a matter of fact. So that's a very economical operating procedure. It's also the funniest operating procedure because, as I said, leftovers are inherently funny (*Philosophy*, 93).

Refusing to succumb to entropy, Warhol's motto is to put each and every leftover to use—a sort of casserole mentality possibly rooted in Depression-era, immigrant poverty and displaced to the sphere of art. For Warhol, there are leftover questions: “So then he [Steve Aronson] said he just interviewed Roy Cohn and that he was going to ask him, ‘Aren't you a big fag?’ but then he ended up liking him and he didn't, so he still had the leftover question and he asked me if *I'd* like to admit that *I* was” (*Diaries*, Wednesday, July 15, 1981). Workers are also leftovers, as Warhol comments with respect to *a's* typists: “I would glance over at them sometimes with admiration because they had me convinced that typing was one of the slowest, most painstaking jobs in the world. Now I realize that what I had were leftover typists, but

¹⁴ One crucial parallel between capitalism and totalitarianism is that each exhibits a tendency toward perpetual motion. Hence phenomena like Trotsky's idea of permanent revolution, Hitler's “constant radicalization of the principle of racial selection,” or Stalin's supernumerary purges kept totalitarianism in motion, preventing any stabilities from forming (see Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 391). Warhol's love of perpetual motion figures into this context, since, for example, through social gradients and minefields at his Factory, he too kept his art in play. Working to achieve a non-equilibrium situation, he created a fragile order whose survival depended for a large part on movement. I mention this state of affairs only as a way of exploring the complicated relationship between totalitarianism and capitalism, both of which seem to share certain constitutive traits.

I didn't know it then" (*Philosophy*, 95). Excised from the work of art proper—or an interrogative order, or the workforce—the leftover constitutes a productive supplement. Like the mighty atom, it demonstrates the power of the miniscule, the force of the infinitesimal.

Fighting entropy on a personal level, Warhol the artist worked hard to survive the sixties, which threatened to subsume him under a limiting Pop stereotype. Recycling his traditional imagery in series like his Reversal Series and Retrospectives (1979), Warhol responds to his sixties fame by treating it, too, as an object which might be run through the homogenizing silkscreen process—only in this instance the silkscreen itself is being silkscreened, and fame is being made famous. Forever affiliating himself with young blood, Warhol literalizes the nickname “Drella” by his coercion of “the kids”—creatures who might be film stars (Joe Dallesandro), pop stars (Grace Jones), art stars (Kenny Scharf), or street-smart freaks (Victor Hugo). Opposed to the more respectable members of the ruling class, they entrance Warhol, even in the midst of high-society mavens and pundits: “The Herreras were back from the royal wedding and they invited me to dinner with Jerry Zipkin and said they’d call at 6:00. I said I’d go but I knew I’d cancel because I’m so tired of elegant people, I just wanted to be with some kids” (*Diaries*, Tuesday, August 4, 1981). Through association with younger generations, Warhol rejuvenates his own art, which finds its gears lubricated by the freshness of youth. Desiring even to incorporate his most terrible moments into his aesthetic legacy, Warhol muses about exhibiting his failures: “I still want to do the ‘Worst of Warhol,’ all the stuff that didn’t come off. I’ll (*laughs*) have to do more, though” (*Diaries*, Friday, January 16, 1987). In this context, Warhol’s laughter resonates and ripples. Truly, his failures have all been successes—attempting to fail, he could only succeed (such is the paradigm of the professional loser, as formulated by Quentin Crisp in books like *How to Have a Life-Style*, *The Naked Civil Servant*, or *Resident Alien*).¹⁵ Ultimately, Warhol’s work is

¹⁵ Quentin Crisp’s *How to Become a Virgin* (London: Flamingo, 1996) begins: “I am not a drop-out; I was never in” (7). Setting himself up as a professional failure, Crisp never hesitated to dismiss himself as unglamorous—this dismissal setting himself up as paradigmatically glamorous. Like Warhol, Crisp comprehends that if one sets oneself up as a loser, and then succeeds, he has lost at losing; if he succeeds at failing, he fails, which is what he expected to do, anyway. Hence for the professional loser, losing at losing has the pleasant byproduct of incurring fame. See Crisp’s *How to Have a Life-*

“bad,” to divert the title of his final film—and this badness sells. The Warhol machine runs on this badness, which guarantees that even its most malformed products will be successes in their own right. Celibate yet promiscuous, he packages failure for a hungry throng eager to consume and to embody his offness. The proposed name for his TV show, *Nothing Special*, is decidedly honest, revealing Warhol’s commitment to zeroes. For he, too, is nothing special—yet in his unspecialness, he has miraculously managed to fathom the delirious heights of celebrity.

Allopoietically, Warhol’s commitment to the assembly line alludes to a Fordist order which, in Mandel’s rubric, qualifies as pre-postmodern, or middle-capitalist (it occupies the imperialist slot). Poised at the end of an era—that moment just before the onset of Daniel Bell’s post-industrial society—Warhol demonstrates a nostalgic attachment to the model of factory production (in Bell’s theory, production gives way to information-management).¹⁶ Throughout his career, Warhol never tires of the assembly line, which for him ensures maximum productivity as well as incessant collaboration and multiple authorship—and, *de rigeuer*, an energizing source of interpersonal conflict. Alluding to the Fordist staple the division of labor, the silkscreen embodies the very order subverted by Marx—that efficient scenario in which work is parceled out into a finite number of sub-jobs, therein draining the joy from production and inciting alienation. Even books are produced according to the assembly-line’s logic, as detailed by Colacello, one of *Philosophy*’s ghostwriters in *Holy Terror*:

When I finished the chapter, I handed it to Andy. He counted the pages, as he counted the ads in *Interview*, and said, “Only twelve?” He took it home that night and read it over the phone to Brigid Berlin, taping her

Style (Los Angeles: Alyson Books, 1997) for additional descriptions of Crisp and the loser-winner paradox.

¹⁶ In his *Postmodern Cartographies: The Geographical Imagination in Contemporary American Culture* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), Brian Jarvis explains Bell’s idea of a post-industrial society. According to Bell’s mapping, “America’s economic landscapes are no longer under the shadow of reifying technologies and the Fordist production of goods, rather, they are the site of disalienating services, of interpersonal contact and the circulation of information. As the evanescent factoriescapes of industrial capital fade from view, individuals’ primary geographical experiences are of office spaces, university campuses, places of recreation and aesthetic activity” (16).

reaction. Then he gave the tape to Pat Hackett, telling her to “make it better.” So now the ghostwriter had a ghostwriter, Factory-style. A literary assembly line was set up: Bob to Andy to Brigid to Pat to Andy to HBJ [Harcourt Brace Jovanovich], with a quick stop at Fred’s desk, to make sure we didn’t put in anything “funny” about Lee Radziwill or Jackie Onassis (208).

Other literary assembly lines follow. Developing a potential book on film star Paulette Goddard—*HER*—Warhol sets up another productive flow: “A friend of Fred’s, Christopher Hemphill, a young scribe from an old family, was hired to redact those tapes. Paulette to Andy-and-Bob to Chris to Fred for the Lee-and-Jackie check to Andy-and Bob to HBJ” (208).¹⁷ Adding fuel to the fire, Warhol ensures that his assembly-line operators are never secure enough to claim authorship (Malanga never achieves this, while Hackett’s is only partial and Colacello’s does not arrive until Warhol has died). When Pat boldly requests either more money or more credit, Warhol gives her the Solanas treatment: “‘Pat’s freaking out,’ he moaned, scurrying out of the cubicle they shared. You’ve got to do something, Bob. Pat’s going crazy.’ It was Andy’s standard last recourse, and just in case I missed the implication, he added, ‘I don’t know what she might do’” (208).¹⁸ Manning his literary mechanism with skilled laborers too demoralized to refuse him anything, Warhol embodies capitalist allopoiesis, or the production of potentially self-sustaining entities by a self-sustaining entity, in perhaps its purest form.

After Warhol’s death in 1987, fashion designer Stephen Sprouse exhibited the most apropos reaction: “‘Who will we do things for now?’” (Colacello, 495).

¹⁷ Perhaps a “Worst of Warhol,” Paulette Godard’s book never reaches completion. Like Warhol’s other books, *HER* involved the taping-and-transcribing method. According to Colacello, Godard loses interest, and Harcourt Brace rejects two manuscripts. By then, the book title had changed from *HER* to *Her, Him and Them* after Harcourt Brace had discovered a porno titled *Her*. True to form, Warhol blamed his ghostwriter for the book’s failure: “‘It’s all Paulette’s fault,’ Andy said, because she never really talked. And that’s *your* fault, Bob, because you didn’t pay the price” (290).

¹⁸ Holly Woodlawn recalls a personal example of “going Solanas” in *A Low Life in High Heels*. When Warhol refuses to grant her an audience, she turns to her drag friend Estelle for help: “Then Estelle turned to me and said, ‘Hey, listen, Jackie showed me where the powerbox is in the basement. If they’re going to fuck with you, let’s fuck with them’” (163). Cutting off Warhol’s power supply, she next climbs the fire escape to personally harass Warhol: “‘It’s Valerie!’ I screamed, banging on the windows with my fists. ‘I’m back and I know you’re in there. I’m gonna getcha—and your little dog, too!’” (163).

Sprouse's statement rings true, since Warhol's mystery is that he is able to entice others to do his work for him. While these significant others achieve a sort of proletarian glamour all their own, they of course never accede to authorship in the way that Warhol does. Warholian allopoiesis mystifies. That disgruntled employees like Colacello or Malanga would continue to make his art despite grave misgivings marks Warhol as a master manipulator and cultural pimp (even at his September 14, 1985 joint show with Basquiat at Tony Shafrazi, Malanga, by then long alienated from Warhol, asks for an autograph). Running his engine on the egos of these sub-creators, he taps into the perpetual energy source of intrapsychic instability. Recycling cultural leftovers—drag queens, junkies or political crackpots, like Valerie Solanas—he sets these otherwise overlooked energy sources in motion. Encouraging wackos to perform for the glaring lens of his camera, he set his stars up for true failure (as opposed to his pseudo-failure). In her introduction to the *Diaries*, Hackett comments on Warhol's diminution of her role in the ominous project. Referring to Hackett's work as her "five-minutes-a-day job," Warhol elides the fact that Hackett expended many kilocalories of daily energy recording, redacting and transcribing Warhol's notes and observations about his social and business lives (xix). With Colacello, Warhol displays a mixture of overt hostility and sexual puerility. Peppering their conversations about *Philosophy* with lines like "Oh, Bob, I'm soooo hot for your cock," "Why don't you shove it up your agent—then she'll really work for you?" and "Well, you can dance fast, you can come fast, you can whip off pages fast..." Warhol torments Colacello, living up to his reputation as a "holy terror" (Colacello, 185). In such a system, volatility is bound to erupt. Solanas' shooting of Warhol is the most famous example of Factory volatility, but others exist—as when, for example, in 1964, Sammy the Italian, one of Ondine's friends, forces Paul Morrissey to play Russian roulette, shoots a blank, then forces Warhol to wear a plastic rain bonnet and threatens to take him hostage, or when, also in 1964, Dorothy Podber waltzes into the Factory and shoots a bullet through a stack of Marilyns (Bockris, 213). Perfecting the autocatalytic loop, Warhol ensures the permanence of his vorticality while offering a nearly continuous product flow. Harnessing the

volatility generated by social friction, he fabricates a startling personal and aesthetic stability in the midst of wild energy fluctuations.

Bibliography.

- Arendt, Hannah. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. San Diego: Harcourt, 1976.
- Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations*. Trans. Harry Zohn. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1968.
- Bockris, Victor. *The Life and Death of Andy Warhol*. New York: Bantam Books, 1989.
- Bourdon, David. *Warhol*. New York: Abradale Press, 1989.
- Bracken, Len. *Guy Debord: Revolutionary*. Venice, CA: Feral House, 1997.
- Breton, André. *Manifestoes of Surrealism*. Trans. Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1972.
- Briggs, John P., and Peat, F. David. *Looking Glass Universe: The Emerging Science of Wholeness*. New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1984.
- Colacello, Bob. *Holy Terror: Andy Warhol Close Up*. New York: Cooper Square Press, 1990.
- Crisp, Quentin. *How to Become a Virgin*. London: Flamingo, 1996.
- _____. *Resident Alien: The New York Diaries*. Los Angeles: Alyson Books, 1996.
- _____. *The Naked Civil Servant*. New York: Penguin Books, 1997.
- _____. *How to Have a Life-style*. Los Angeles: Alyson Books, 1997.
- de Certeau, Michel. *Herterologies: Discourse on the Other*. Trans. Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986.
- _____. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Trans. Steven Rendall. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Guattari, Felix. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Trans. Helen R. Lane. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989.

- Habermas, Jürgen. *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*. Trans. Frederick G. Lawrence. Boston: MIT Press, 1990.
- Haraway, Donna J. *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. New York: Routledge, 1991.
- _____. *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium.FemaleMan[©]_Meets_OncoMouseTM*. New York: Routledge, 1997.
- Jarvis, Brian. *Postmodern Cartographies: The Geographical Imagination in Contemporary American Culture*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998.
- Keats, John. *John Keats*. Ed. Frank Kermode. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- Koestenbaum, Wayne. *Jackie Under My Skin: Interpreting an Icon*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1995.
- Marinetti, Filippo Tommaso. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1972.
- Maturana, Humberto and Varela, Francisco. *Autopoiesis and Cognition: The Realization of the Living*. Boston: D. Reidel, 1991.
- Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky and Frank, Adam, Editors. *Shame and Its Sisters: A Silvan Tomkins Reader*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1995.
- Warhol, Andy. *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol (From A to B and Back Again)*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1975.
- _____. *The Warhol Diaries*. New York: Warner Books, 1989.
- Watson, Steven. *Factory Made: Warhol and the Sixties*. New York: Pantheon Books, 2003.
- Woodlawn, Holly, with Copeland, Jeff. *A Low Life in High Heels*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991.

Filmography

- Warhol, Andy. *Blow-Job*, 1963.
- _____. *Camp*, 1965.