Original Article

Is Andy Warhol the Philosophical Godfather of the Internet? A Cyber-analysis of *POPism*

David Hoenigman

School of Social Informatics, Aoyama Gakuin University

Abstract: This study aims to show that the philosophical underpinnings of Andy Warhol's visual, cinematic, and literary works foreshadowed the attitudes and behavior of our current Internet obsessed society. Warhol's work is discussed in relation to social media, reality TV, and *YouTube*. As a display of the efficacy of online tools to contextualize literary passages, sections of Andy Warhol and Pat Hackett's *POPism: The Warhol Sixties* are analyzed using common Internet inquiry methods.

Keywords: Andy Warhol, *POPism: The Warhol Sixties*, the Internet, social informatics

Introduction

I was beginning to think I wanted to write about Andy Warhol's (1928-1987) literary work because I had a vague feeling it was somehow connected to my thoughts on the information society. While walking through the Shinjuku area of Tokyo and ruminating on the relationship of Warhol to the Internet; just as I came out of a walkway tunnel and turned up a narrow alley, I passed a shop with Warhol T-shirts displayed out front. The row of yellow T-shirts featured his familiar banana design (the cover of *The Velvet Underground & Nico* album) (see Figure 1), and the Warhol quote, "Pop Art is for everyone." It reminded me of another of his famous quotes, "A Coke is a Coke and no amount of money can get you a better Coke than the one the bum on the corner is drinking. All the Cokes are the same and all the Cokes are good" (Warhol, 1980, p.

14). Warhol was a proponent of widespread access of everything to everyone. That art was not something contained within a high-brow fortress cut off from our everyday lives was a crucial aspect of his work. He believed art lined the shelves of our grocery stores and filled the pages of our guilty-pleasure celebrity gossip magazines. In a way, what he was doing was leveling the playing field. If you did not have the opportunity, or felt you did not have the education necessary; to appreciate the fine arts then Warhol was bringing them to you by raising your awareness of the meaning of your surroundings. He believed the hyper-commercialism we were entrenched in produced items just as worthy of our consideration as objects from long past civilizations painstakingly preserved in museums. Perhaps because of this appreciation of the everyday and how it was pitted against the passage of time, Warhol was obsessed with documentation in its purest form; capturing things just as they were through videos and recordings (see

Figure 2). Reeve writes, "Warhol took his tape recorder everywhere. 'My wife, Sony,' he called it, and her tin and plastic ears captured every conversation –the more banal, the better –in a way that anticipated the current trend to capture every aspect of our daily lives (celebrity or not) by publicizing our activities through myriad social media" (Reeve, 2011, p. 662).
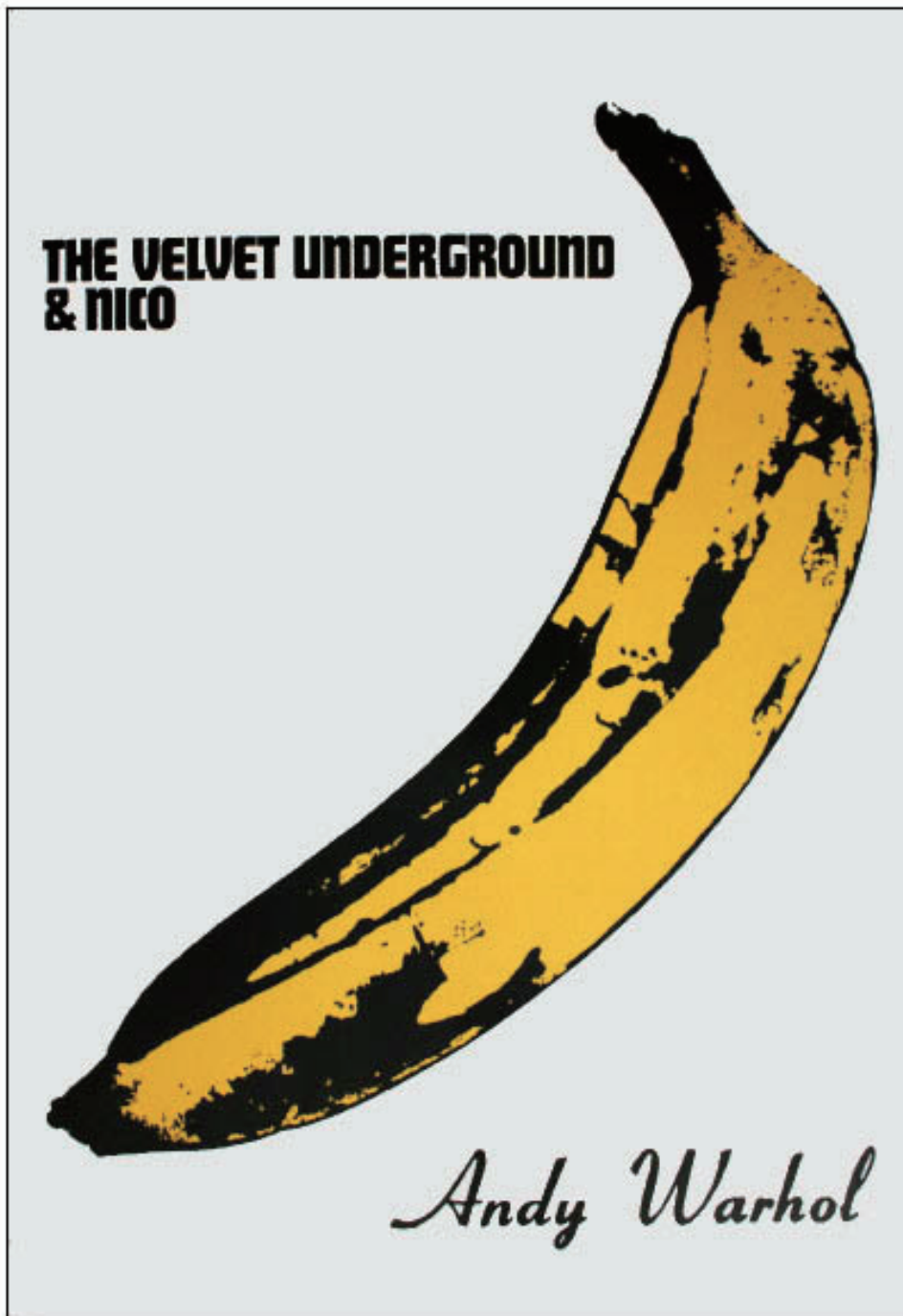

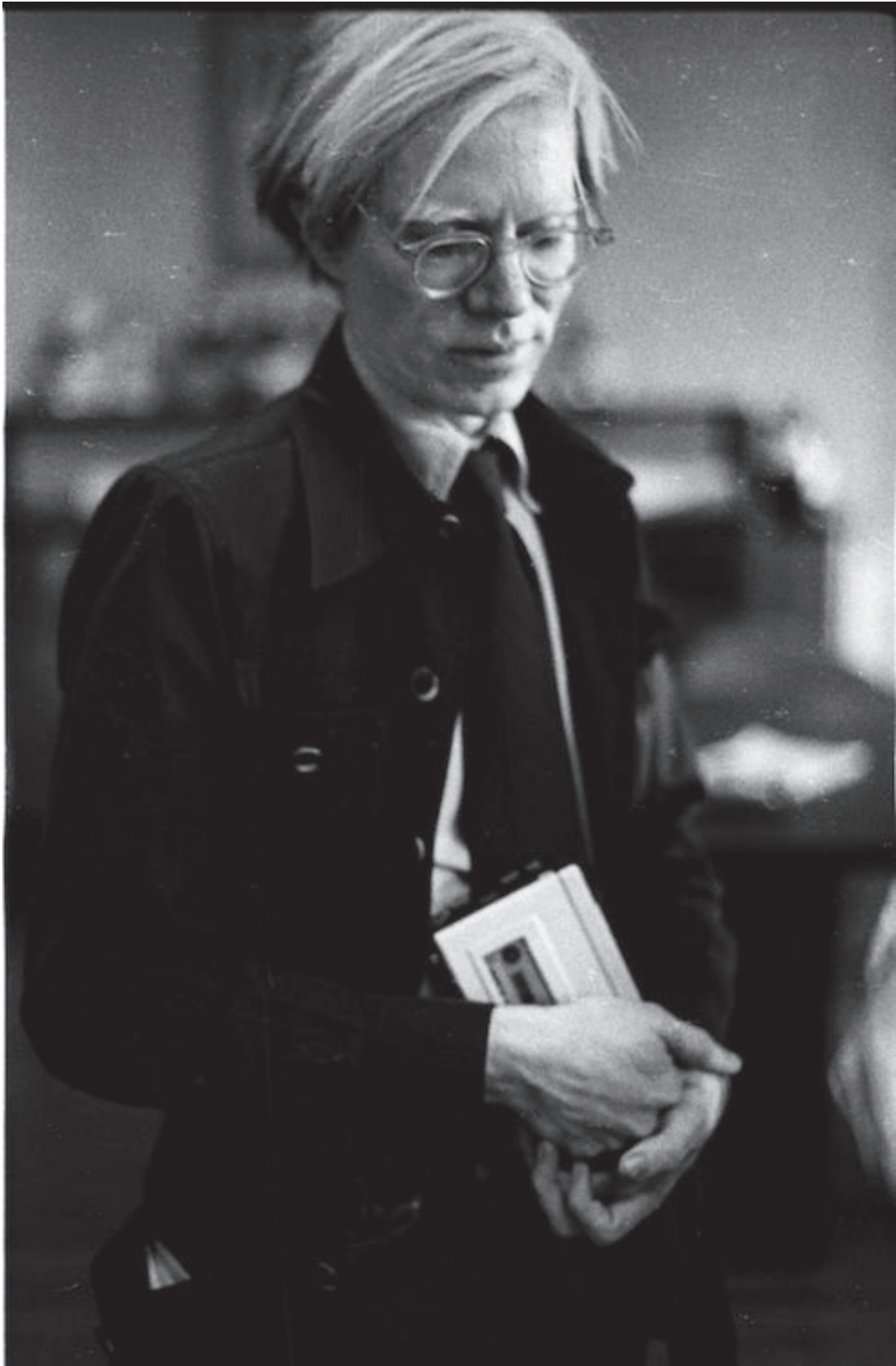Fig. 1 Warhol, A. (1967). *The Velvet Underground & Nico* [album cover]. Retrieved from https://www.az-art.net/shopdetail/001000003641/.

Fig. 2 Sedgwick, E. (1972). *Andy Warhol with tape recorder* [silver gelatin print]. Retrieved from https://www.pinterest.com/pin/86694361552173041/.

In this paper, I aim to show that Andy Warhol was a central figure in pushing society's consciousness in a direction that would allow it to emphatically embrace the Internet. That he passed away years before the web would become intricately woven into everyone's lives only further convinces me of the prescience of his work and his message. In 2010, marveling at how up-to-date his ideas still were Graw wrote, "Warhol seems more alive, more present, closer to us than ever" (Graw, 2010, p. 99). I feel that using online technology to delve into his 1980 memoir *POPism: The Warhol Sixties* allows me to kill two birds with one stone. I can demonstrate the multi-faceted ability of the Internet to allow us to contextualize the written word, while justifying my belief that Warhol had in many ways prepared society for the technological revolution that was to come.

LITERARY RESEARCH USING THE INTERNET

While considering how the Internet has affected the realm of literary research, I was drawn to Lloyd's study "Poetry's Blackberry Season: Baudelaire and the World Wide Web." The study portrays how, with the vast amount of online information now at our fingertips, an enthusiast of Baudelaire's poetry can gain much deeper insight into his work by isolating certain aspects of his poems and subjecting them to in-depth (yet speedy) Internet analysis. Lloyd explains how online technology "has allowed readers and critics to draw with previously unheard-of speed and ease on a vast array of contextualizing sources. Whether we look out from the text to its contextual framework or inward to the history of its production, we now have at our disposal countless potential readings of a poem" (Lloyd,

2008, p. 323). I was fascinated by Lloyd's work and eager to find more studies like it, but when I reflected on the argument she was presenting I began to question if it was not a little flimsy. That the Internet can to some degree enhance our knowledge on any subject seems a point hardly worth mentioning. Lloyd's article was written in 2008, and I assume there are now Internet tools available that are more advanced than the ones she was praising. If she was answering an overly basic question then, was she not simply stating a blatantly obvious point now?

However, the more I read of these studies the more I began to see that an interesting discussion was taking place. Some praised the Internet's efficiency while others were wary of the damage it was doing to our traditional research skills. Victorian scholar Patrick Leary marvels at the speed in which online technology is progressing, praising the Internet's "ability to search and locate strings of characters in unimaginably vast stretches of text" (Leary, 2005, p.73). While Miall expresses concern that the Internet is "raising the possibility that central features of literary studies may be in danger of being disregarded or marginalized" (Miall, 2001, p. 1405). Dupuy sees the issue as not enclosed within literary studies, and worries our society will become "a place which is void of grace" (Dupuy, 1980, p. 3) by being too reliant on external technological sources to supply us knowledge. Johnson-Eilola can foresee the Internet eroding scholars' historical perceptiveness, since much of the available information is similarly presented we encounter it flat and out of context. "In such a geography" he explains, "there is no future and no history, only a timeless succession of instants" (Johnson-Eilola, 1997, p. 167).

Using online tools to delve into a pre-Internet

literary work demonstrates how fundamental online skills allow us to contextualize the material on a much deeper level than those who first encountered the work at the time of its publication. This process allows us to take inventory of what the Internet has to offer and assess our own online abilities, all the while gaining a deeper understanding of the author or work we are investigating. As an information literacy course may teach us to gather and assess scholarly materials, I feel it is also appropriate to explore what less formal online research can produce for our educational benefit independent of such distinctions. I am especially interested in ways original source materials such as images, photographs, audio recordings, and videos now available online can enrich our understanding of the artist, the work, and the time period. While these materials may have been found in libraries, bookstores, record stores, personal collections and film archives in the past, the amount of effort it would have taken to gather them would have stifled the enthusiasm of all but the most rigorously dedicated researcher. A casual enthusiast of the work, for all practical purposes, would have simply been cut off from many of the materials that I will demonstrate are invaluable to fully understanding a work within the context of its time.

WHY *POPism*?

First I would like to briefly substantiate my opinion that *POPism: The Warhol Sixties* is a work of literary merit worthy of our consideration. Co-authored by Warhol's secretary Pat Hackett, it deals with the community of artists surrounding Warhol in the 1960's, mostly centered around his New York City studio known as the Factory. It was compiled using unorthodox techniques involving multiple co-writers and recording devices. While scrutinizing his methods, some critics question his integrity. "Warhol's literary career was not so much a calling as a strategy," Schmidt accuses, "an extension of the Warhol publicity machine, dependent on transcribers, co-authors, and the portable tape recorder" (Schmidt, 2009, p. 794). That *POPism* hums with an awareness of itself is not an observation limited to this one Warhol literary attempt. Tillman called *a, A Novel*, "an exercise in –consciousness and self-consciousness" (Tillman, 2005, p. 39). In reference to the same novel, Mulroney adds that the work includes "his special talent for exploiting the mechanisms of publicity" (Mulroney, 2012, p. 49). While many slight Warhol for manufacturing his image through his writing, it is something that simply does not bother me. Didn't Henry Miller do the same? Didn't William Burroughs? Schmidt seems to be saying the Warhol literary output should be regarded suspiciously for shirking the trials and tribulations of traditional authorship for a quick fix reliant on staff and technology. Documentarian Ric Burns points out that whatever the medium Warhol enjoyed baiting some into accusing him of not exerting enough effort, saying Warhol "tried to claim he always did it the easy way and there was nothing to it" (qtd. in Miller, 2007, p. 79). By downplaying the effort he put into things he invited a certain breed of detractors to fall into his trap, welcoming them to suggest his success was effortless thereby unwittingly proclaiming his brilliance. I do not see Warhol's innovativeness and efficiency as shortcomings. I find the *POPism* assembly line tactics intriguing and consider the resulting text a victory of conceptual art. I feel it is an enthralling read, very interestingly structured and presented with

a matter-of-factness that humanizes those involved with the amazing artistic breakthroughs that were taking place. In my opinion, it can sit alongside Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*, Ernest Hemmingway's *A Moveable Feast* or Tom Wolfe's *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* as a literary chronicle of the origins of a counterculture. Hitchens, who admired Warhol as a filmmaker sees a connection between the artist's literary and cinematic work, "He understood at once the idea of the non-fiction novel, because it comprised one of his own definitions of film" (Hitchens, 1996, p. 22). Uhlin expands the idea a bit, "Warhol's artwork in fact frequently interrogated the properties of one medium by use of another –photography as painting, film as portraiture, and tape recording as novel" (Uhlin, 2010, p. 3). Despite actively pushing artistic boundaries, what makes *POPism* dear to many readers' hearts is its readability. A Martin Scorsese blurb on the back cover calls it, "A vivid recreation of a great time." That Penguin Books decided to release it as part of their Modern Classics series is no surprise to me.

THE ULTRA-QUOTABLE WARHOL

The phrase "Andy Warhol quotes" entered into *Google* brings up approximately 9,360,000 results. That he had a knack for expressing complex ideas in concise statements, that he was not media shy, that he produced four books: *a, A Novel* (1968), *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol: From A to B and Back Again* (1975), *POPism: The Warhol Sixties* (1980), *The Andy Warhol Diaries* (1989); and that he was a compulsive documentarian would certainly have added to the number of quotes he generated during his lifetime. However, these quotes would not have been compiled and presented all over the Internet if they had not struck a chord with people. I would like to present a few of his quotes (all taken from *andywarholquotes.org*), expand on what I think they mean and portray how they relate to our twenty-first century Internet-obsessed lives.

"I'm the type who'd be happy not going anywhere as long as I was sure I knew exactly what was happening at the places I wasn't going to. I'm the type who'd like to sit home and watch every party that I'm invited to on a monitor in my bedroom."

–Andy Warhol

I think this quote gives us a deep insight into the kind of person Warhol was. It is interesting that he claims to be able to do without the personal interactions that many feel are the whole point of party-going. Much of what Warhol said about himself was self-deprecating, it is obvious that on some level he felt unworthy of the many glamorous friends he had. However, I do not think it is the point he is trying to make here. He seems to have had an unrelenting desire to reduce everything to its essence; then tweak that essence into something absurd, yet mildly alarming. Here all human social endeavor is simplified and demeaned. All we really want from each other are the superficial tidbits. It is a trait of humanity that people would be reluctant to admit about themselves, but I believe it has become more prevalent in the age of social media.

Warhol's imaginary monitor became a real thing when *Facebook* took off, and we became all too eager to thrust the inconsequential trivialities of our lives into each other's faces: pictures of our meals, pictures of our new purchases, our reactions to widely watched TV shows and sporting events, and our reactions to celebrity gossip and news. Warhol is saying that we think we are driven by a desire to interact in a meaningful way

with other people, but really we are just eager to be absorbed into a collective worship of things that we know will never really bring us happiness. Yes, Warhol is making a statement about his own personality, about how he would rather be entertained than entertain; but I believe that at some point he realized that if he was honest about his own superficiality, it empowered him in a way. He could distance himself from a society that took itself too seriously and was too embarrassed to admit what made it tick. When he could express these thoughts through his artwork and his words, he was praised for possessing a deep insight into his times. He saw that the art world was receptive to his message. Warhol pushed society towards an admittance of its own frivolousness. In increasingly wider circles, his work was reluctantly accepted as a valid comment on human character. It was an awareness that wore away at our self-perception until we eventually conceded it as true, and began sharing photos of our lunch with hundreds of our *Facebook* friends.

"In the future everyone will be famous for 15 minutes."
–Andy Warhol

This quote is so well-known that I had considered trying to get through this study without using it, just for the sake of not presenting something that had already been analyzed to death. However, as is the case with many oft-repeated quotes, it is simply too relevant to omit. It seems that Warhol himself had misgivings about the popularity of this quote, often tweaking it to mean something entirely different (e.g., "In 15 minutes, everybody will be famous") when prompted by the media to reiterate the famous line. Warhol predicted that celebrity would become hyper-disposable. Many of the art films he made explored the concept that the actors did

not especially have to do anything. If they had style, if they were attractive, Warhol believed audiences would be interested in looking at them. He had become famous as a painter, and knew that his celebrity meant people would be interested in seeing what he could do with film. He referred to many of the kids who hung out at the Factory and ended up in his movies as his "superstars," and knew that he could make people pay attention to them as a result of his fame. It was like Warhol delighted in manipulating the fascination his actions received. He knew he would cause some to see him as a fraud and others to rejoice in the profundity of the statement he was making. His films can be seen as an extension of the point he made with his iconic painting *Campbell's Soup Cans* (1962) (see Figure 3), -it is art because I say it is, you are looking because I told you to. Or as Livingston puts it, "Andy challenged the viewer to really examine what he was looking at" (Livingston, 2010, p.137). Carrier writes, "for Warhol, the sublime becomes the superficial, which attracts attention" (Carrier, 2011, p. 333). Warhol's work seemed to strike a very strange balance between worshipping someone or something and at the same time promoting the idea that his subject was not special. Considering the concept that fame is not always contingent on value, it would be interesting to know what Warhol would have thought of reality television. The essence of reality TV echoes the previous quote I used about watching unattended parties on a monitor. Warhol foresaw that fame would be easier to achieve the more visible individuals became through technology. He knew that those who were willing to use their celebrity as a tool would be able to thrive in this new society. As depth became less of an issue, the audience would simply demand a face it had not seen before.

Fig. 3 Warhol, A. (1962). *Campbell's Soup Cans* [synthetic polymer paint on thirty-two canvases]. Retrieved from https://www.sothebys.com/en/articles/the-story-of-andy-warhols-campbells-soup-cans?locale=en.

The rate of turnover would accelerate, anyone could be pushed into the limelight to enjoy our adulation while it lasted. In Warhol's films, it was his fame that attempted to make his subjects significant. Eventually, with reality TV, it became fame itself that generated celebrity. The person on the TV screen is significant to us because he or she is said to be, much like one of Warhol's soup cans.

"I like boring things." –Andy Warhol

Again we can go back to the soup can, one of the most unspectacular things you can possibly imagine, suddenly given meaning and prestige because it is presented in a way that demands you give it significance. I think Warhol would have been fascinated by *YouTube*. The idea that anyone can upload anything and (theoretically) have the entire world look at it, seems to somehow relate to Warhol's soup can. His eight-hour movie *Empire* (1964) was simply a continuous slow motion shot of the Empire State building at night. Many of his

cinematic projects were made as almost anti-entertainment, as if to challenge the notion that all art must conform to similar ideals. Where mainstream television and film will always strive for popularity and financial success, it is not hard to find a *YouTube* clip that can leave you utterly bewildered as to the motivations of its creator. As a demonstration, I go to *YouTube* searching for the most boring video clips I can find; fully expecting to encounter some echo of Warhol. There is a ten-hour clip of grass growing (MyAbridged, 2018). There is a ten-minute clip of a Superman alarm clock whose hands rotate in real time, the alarm never ringing (10minutesofyourlife, 2010). There is a ten-hour clip of paint drying that has been viewed 393,510 times (MyAbridged, 2018). It is not hard to believe that the creators of such clips have some knowledge of Andy Warhol. I am not suggesting that such obscure *YouTube* clips have any real impact on society, I only mean to illustrate that even Warhol's least accessible work still inspires

others to experiment with his concepts today. Warhol freed the creative impulses of artists to go in any direction they pleased, the Internet is the perfect realm to allow his devotees to run wild.

While *Empire* represents an extreme exercise of his ideas that did away with the need for actors, those expecting to be conventionally entertained once he put his "superstars" on film had another thing coming. Navarro points out, "Several of Warhol's films feature only a subject performing ordinary – albeit studied –actions. Awkward monologues and unrehearsed exchanges substitute for coherent plotlines, thus leaving us with the unstructured pleasures of digression and spectacle" (Navarro, 2012, p. 137). "Awkward monologues" may have been rare to see in the 1960's. Today I go to Google, type in "awkward vlogs" and get 1,760,000 results. A *vlog* is a video blog, very common on *YouTube*, where a contributor will film himself or herself prattling on into the camera on any topic under the sun. I go to *YouTube*, simply type in "vlog" and click on a few of the more awkward looking ones. One shows a woman proudly presenting her newly dyed hair (ErnaLimdaugh, 2019). Another boasts the world's biggest mango (durianrider, 2014). There is one of a man lifting weights (Hunter Eck, 2018). There is an older man whose vlog shows him using a chainsaw in the woods (StumpjumperVideos, 2019). There is a vlog of a young woman driving around town while explaining that she just quit her job (theperksofgee, 2019). It appears we have all become Warhol's "superstars."

I think everybody should like everybody. –Andy Warhol

Here again, as with his thoughts on Coke, Warhol is singing the praises of universality. I think the beauty of many of his quotes is how far reaching they are, how they can offer insight into multiple areas. I chose to use the quote about watching unattended parties on a private monitor to draw a parallel with *Facebook*, but I could easily have portrayed the notion as a precursor to *YouTube*, reality TV, or the Internet in general. I linked his famous 15 minutes quote to reality TV but feel it applies just as readily to *Facebook*, *Twitter*, or *YouTube*. His quote about boring things I linked directly to *YouTube*, but could have taken it in dozens of different directions. There is something about Warhol that always seems to be moving the conversation back to us. I am not saying that all these developments have been good for humanity; I only wish to show that Warhol was onto something, that comments his detractors had dismissed as attempts to be arty or abstruse are actually turning out to be incredibly farsighted.

"Everybody should like everybody" almost sounds like it could be a slogan for *Facebook*, despite the fact that Warhol uttered this long before anyone knew about clicking a "like" icon. It is a rather beautiful way to view the world –we are all the same, we all like Coke and movie stars, we should all like each other. But Warhol was not naïve, he knew the world was much more complicated than he suggested it was. I think a lot of what he said and did was tongue-in-cheek, not to take away from its value, but the longer I consider him the more I begin to see that humor was infused into everything he did. I imagine him and his "superstars" laughing heartily at the rise he was getting out of people, that once one paused to question his sincerity it was already too late. Perhaps he was saying –*it's great if you think there's depth to what I'm doing, but I'm really only asking you to like me. My soup cans made you stop and look, didn't they? Isn't that enough?*

CYBER-ANALYZING POPism

POPism: The Warhol Sixties is separated into six chapters: "1960-1963", "1964", "1965", "1966", "1967", and "1968-1969." As Warhol felt it necessary to split the memoir into chapters this way, and since he stresses that at certain points in the decade the atmosphere seemed to change drastically from year to year, I feel compelled to specify which chapter I am taking a passage from as I begin each cyber-analysis. Due to length restrictions, I will only analyze passages from two of the six chapters here.

1960-1963 (The first chapter of POPism)

The following *POPism* excerpt portrays a conversation between Warhol and documentary filmmaker Emile de Antonio:

> As we sat at "21" (I remember I had the *National Enquirer* in my lap –I
> was fascinated by all the Thalidomide stories) we talked about the art around town
> –about Claes Oldenberg and Jim Dine's street exhibit at the Judson Gallery, about Oldenburg's beach collages in a group show at the Martha Jackson, about Tom Wesselmann's first exhibit of the Great American Nude series at the Tanager Gallery…
> (Warhol, Hackett, 1980, p. 13-14)

Though I knew a bit about Andy Warhol before I read this memoir, I have to admit that the above passage meant almost nothing to me. I understood that in the scene Warhol was discussing art with his friend at a place called "21" somewhere in New York City, but other than that it was just a string of references I could not follow. That the scene takes place early in the chapter, and considering how the book is laid out, I can assume that the incident occurs around 1960. Using the Internet, I will delve into this passage and try to extract as much context as possible. First I go to *Wikipedia* and type in "21," using the disambiguation function I soon find myself on the entry for "21 Club" that states it is often known as simply "21," a NYC restaurant established in 1922. *Wikipedia* may not be well-regarded by all scholars, but in this case it seems the perfect tool to give us quick context as to where the scene is taking place. We learn interesting tidbits, like 21's trademark is the line of 33 lawn jockeys that adorn the balcony out front, and that it was originally a speakeasy. The list of celebrities that frequented the restaurant is so impressive (e.g., John F. Kennedy, Elizabeth Taylor, Frank Sinatra, Marilyn Monroe) that it does not even mention Andy Warhol, the most significant NYC-based artist of the last century. It lists dozens a references in movies and TV shows that indicate 21 is widely regarded as a swanky exclusive restaurant. The references begin with Gregory Peck and Grace Kelly films and go right up to current popular TV series like *Breaking Bad* and *Archer*. It is almost too much context to handle, but we get the point that by the early 60's Warhol was already financially established enough to frequent such a restaurant. *Wikipedia* has a link directly to 21's homepage. I take a quick peek but decide it would be more relevant to try to find a picture of what 21 would have looked like in the 1960's, or perhaps a shot of Warhol hanging out there. I come up empty on this, so I move on to the next point.

I am intrigued that the infamous supermarket tabloid *The National Enquirer* was already around in the early 60's. A quick *Wikipedia* check tells me it has been around since 1926,

rather amazing. Warhol was fascinated by the *Enquirer* stories on Thalidomide. Another quick Wikipedia check tells me that Thalidomide was a German drug claimed to help insomnia, cold symptoms, and headaches that lead to severe birth defects in the 1950's. The public was intrigued by the story, and *Enquirer* sales went up due to people's morbid curiosity to see photos of babies born with "seal flippers." That Warhol appears to fondly remember these photos says something about his eagerness to become a desensitized consumer. We must remember that he very self-consciously presented his version of events, the little flourishes are certainly included for effect. One could draw a connection with Warhol's callousness concerning these disturbing photos, and the detached way the Internet society views online violence and pornography. One could also see a precursor to Warhol's more ghastly works like *Silver Car Crash (Double Disaster)* (1963) or *Big Electric Chair* (1967). The restaurant Warhol was sitting in or the magazine he had in his lap may seem like inconsequential trivialities, but they are significant for the simple fact that he mentions them in his writing. Using the Internet to quickly look into these references may spark one to draw connections previously undetected. Given the convenience of conducting such searches, it would be difficult to argue that the results are not worth the effort.

I go to *Wikipedia* to see what they have on Claes Oldenberg (1929). I see that he is still alive and living in New York City. I see that he is known for doing gigantic replicas of everyday ordinary objects, and something instantly clicks in my head –he must have made the giant "free stamp" that sits majestically in a downtown Cleveland (my hometown) park. This sculpture has been a great topic of conversation among Clevelanders for many years. I had never known its creators until just now. *Free Stamp* (1991), the world's largest rubber stamp, was made by Claes Oldenburg and his wife Coosje van Bruggen. I had not expected a quick search of Oldenburg to lead to pangs of homesickness, I must say I find the coincidence rather charming. Doing a *Google* image search of "Warhol and Oldenburg" I find another connection to my Ohio roots, an image of Oldenburg's *Giant Toothpaste Tube* (1964) displayed in front of Warhol's *Marilyn x 100* (1962) at the Cleveland Museum of Art. I do not recall seeing the Oldenburg piece when I visited there last spring, and a quick check of *Clevelandart.org* informs me that the piece is still in the CMA collection but not currently on view. Wanting to get back to Oldenburg in NYC in the 60's, I go to *YouTube* and enter his name. There are dozens of short video pieces that showcase his work. There are lectures by him, interviews with him and historical retrospectives.

Wanting to see exactly what Oldenburg work Warhol is referring to in this passage, I am linked through to the Museum of Metropolitan Art's website, where there are a collection of beautifully put together short films discussing his various exhibitions. I am able to figure out that Warhol must be referring to Oldenburg's *The Store* exhibit which debuted at the Martha Jackson Gallery in the spring of 1961. The MoMa site explains that *The Store* presented "wall-mounted reliefs depicting everyday items like shirts, dresses, cigarettes, sausages, and slices of pie." A video clip takes us on a virtual tour of a retrospective display of the work. Not expecting to be anything other than pleasantly entertained, I am suddenly stunned by what I see. As part of this show, in 1961 – the year before Warhol's *Green Coca-Cola Bottles*, hangs Oldenburg's *Pepsi-Cola Sign*.

It was my understanding that Warhol was the first to take brand name items off the shelves and put them in the art galleries, I had never known that in this respect Warhol owed such a debt to Oldenburg. Watching the clip again, I see that near his Pepsi sign is also a work entitled *7-Up* (1961) depicting the label of yet another popular soft drink. These works are lumpy sculptures applied with heavy paint and medium-wise look nothing like Warhols, but the concept is there, a concept Warhol simply needed to refashion using his own sensibilities. He must have seen *Pepsi-Cola Sign* and *7-Up*, applied his background as a slick commercial artist to the notion, and a year later gave us *Green Coca-Cola Bottles* and *Campbell's Soup Cans*. I actually was not expecting to find so much context so soon. It is information that cannot help but to some degree change how I view Andy Warhol.

I next look into who Jim Dine is. *Wikipedia* tells me he is still alive, and that he was born and raised in Cincinnati, Ohio. He was involved in the Neo-Dada and Pop Art movements, and gained attention through his Happenings; performance art events involving Dine, Oldenburg, Allan Kaprow, and John Cage. These Happenings became the center of a thriving scene of bohemian artists in late 50's, early 60's New York City. It seems a worthy topic to delve into deeper, but for our current purposes I want to focus on Dine's visual art. *YouTube* has dozens of lectures, interviews and retrospectives. I choose a short clip uploaded earlier this year entitled "The Art of Jim Dine – Artist with a Heart." It is simply a presentation of Dine's well-known works to the sound of The Beach Boys' hit "Good Vibrations." It appears to be a do-it-yourself, fan-made tribute to the artist. One of the paintings that strikes me is *Drag –Johnson and Mao* (1967), as it instantly reminds me

of Warhol's *Marilyn* series. The painting depicts Linden B. Johnson and Chairman Mao as floating heads wearing clown make-up. Although the subject matter (images of famous people shown in an unsettling light), has a strong Warhol connection, it is somehow more the visual aspects of the eye make-up and the lipstick that bring me back to *Marilyn*. Warhol began experimenting with Marilyn Monroe's image in 1962, so it can be argued that *Drag* is a manifestation of Warhol's influence on one of his peers. Although I soon see that the exchange of concepts between Warhol and Dine was not a one way street. In 1960, Dine began a performance piece and a series of visual works that explored the theme of a car crash. Though visually nothing like Dine's work in this case, Warhol could very well have been expanding on this concept when he produced his own images of auto accidents such as *Orange Car Crash Fourteen Times* in 1963.

Rather amazed at how illuminating my analysis of just this one passage has already been, I now move forward to Tom Wesselmann. *Wikipedia* tells me he is also from Cincinnati, and that he passed away in 2004. *The Great American Nude*, that Warhol mentions in the passage, is listed as a notable Wesselmann work. I enter his name into a *YouTube* search and am yet again pleased with my findings. There are more than twenty relevant clips, most appear to be short retrospectives of his work (though a very well-done clip is just over 30 minutes long), some in foreign languages that give us context into how Wesselmann is regarded overseas. The images are breath-taking, a mixture of sexuality and hyper-domesticity that certainly must have delighted Warhol. I find his obituary on *The Guardian* website, which includes a brief description of his style, "the 100-piece *Great American Nude* series of the 1960s, with flat billboard colours

and faceless but curiously erotic naked women painted with ruby Mae West lips; the still lifes, kitchen interiors with refrigerators, wireless sets, paper towels, bottles of beer and 7 Up…" (McNay, 2004). So Wesselmann was yet another artist from the era that used well-known products as a device in his work. One of the Wesselmann *YouTube* clips points me in the direction of British artist Peter Blake who was already using Pop Art imagery in his work in the 1950's. While making my way through all this material, I discover that Jasper Johns, Roy Lichtenstein, James Rosenquist and others have played significant roles in Pop Art's development; and I begin to see Warhol as the tip of an iceberg.

I start to wonder if there are not any artists or critics from this scene who are resentful of Warhol's elevated status. With the influx of fascinating ways to present similar concepts, there must be some who disagree that Warhol was the clear-cut winner. Using *EBSCOhost*, I find a Newsweek article that says just as much, "While Johns and Robert Rauschenberg were inventing pop, and Oldenburg and Lichtenstein refining it, Warhol had been conquering the world of advertising as an illustrator" (Wallace-Wells, 2009, p. 67). The article also states that what really drove Warhol to fame was Valerie Solanas' gun-wielding attempt on his life in 1968. Wallace-Wells believes those who praise Warhol's prophetic vision in connection to current media trends are really just blindly applauding whoever was first through the gate. I was looking for backlash aimed at the Warhol legacy, and it appears I have clearly found it.

Now that I have used the Internet to analyze the 21 scene, I pause to consider how my thoughts on Warhol have been altered. I had always considered Warhol's enormous stature when approaching his work. I had never tried to see him as one of the many talented artists of the time; as the one who just happened to be fortunate enough to slip through obscurity and capture our collective imaginations. Had I thought he existed in a vacuum? Had I thought his ideas were entirely independent of all others in his field? It is hard to imagine I ever thought such things considering how often throughout *POPism* Warhol specifies the ongoing changes in cultural atmosphere. With his eagerness to mention the other artists on the scene, it is obvious that it is more my fault than *POPism's* that I had lacked the proper context. I now see that I had been too focused on Warhol the individual to begin to understand the times.

1966 (The fourth chapter of POPism)

My interest in Andy Warhol was originally linked to Lou Reed and The Velvet Underground. I heard "Walk on the Wild Side" on classic rock radio when I was a teenager and shortly afterwards bought Lou Reed's *Transformer* album. I eventually began listening to his earlier work with The Velvet Underground. I had some idea of who Andy Warhol was when I was still a kid in the mid-80's. He was in The Cars "Hello Again" video that was being played on MTV. I also recall reading a magazine that had a section about celebrity Jack-o'-Lantern carving techniques, Warhol said he could not bring himself to carve a pumpkin because he liked them the way they were. He said he tried to keep pumpkins on display throughout his house all year long. At the time I thought that was just about the strangest thing I had ever heard. Though it would be years before I was familiar with his work, I knew his name and his face; and that somehow he was allowed to be as weird as he wanted. When I eventually found out his connection to The Velvet Underground, my

opinion of him soared.

POPism begins to focus on The Velvet Underground in the chapter "1966." Andy Warhol became their manager and producer, and involved them in many performance events at The Factory and elsewhere. I was intrigued by mention of a song called "Do the Ostrich" that a pre-Velvets' Lou Reed recorded for a budget record company, hoping to score an off-beat hit. Warhol recalls the song and how there would always be a copy of the single lying around Stanley Amos' apartment where the Velvet Underground lived:

> (Lou) had tuned all his guitar strings to the same note and bashed away like crazy screaming, "Do the Ostrich!" till the record people made him stop. But then, later on, when the company was low on products, they listened to it again and decided why not, that maybe it could be a hit after all. So they pressed it, but people kept returning it to the stores for refunds because it was a defective pressing. There'd always be someone new at Stanley's who didn't know what that record was who'd say, "Oh, what's this?" and put it on (Warhol, Hackett, 1980, p. 200-201).

As a great fan of Lou Reed I was dying to hear this rare recording as soon as I read this passage. I went to *YouTube* and, of course, there were two uploads of the song. "Do the Ostrich" is absolutely wonderful. Yes, the Internet can help us contextualize literary research and all that, but sometimes it simply enhances our lives.

CONCLUSION

Hopefully I have convinced some people to consider Andy Warhol's connection to Internet culture. It may all depend on what role you think art and philosophy play in determining societal trends. We have all come to regard George Orwell as an artist who was capable of showing us where we were heading; many claim Orwell's vision becomes more of a reality with each passing year. I have begun to think this way of Andy Warhol. He is never far from my thoughts when considering how the information society has affected us; and I am beginning to see more and more how our behavior has begun to align with his views.

I was taken aback by David Wallace-Wells' attitude concerning Warhol. He wants to dismiss those of us who praise the prophetic aspects of Warhol's work. I have a hard time understanding why. In my case, the more I reflect on what Warhol was saying the more relevance to our modern lives I see. For the time being, I am happy to reject the opinion of Mr. Wallace-Wells. If the 1968 Solanis shooting is what drove Warhol to fame, how does Wallace-Wells explain Warhol being mobbed by adoring fans at his Philadelphia art opening in 1965? Warhol was not above gimmickry, but I believe it never took away from the substance of his art.

I feel I have demonstrated how the Internet can give a literary work context. I see no reason to pit traditional research skills against the benefit of online tools. Both options are available to us, let us use them to complement each other as we advance our literary knowledge. For those who firmly feel that traditional research methods are superior whatever the situation, I challenge you to locate a recording of "Do the Ostrich" without using the Internet at all.

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