The Creative Feud of Andy Warhol: A Philosophy of Communication Ethics

Sarah DeLuliis

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THE CREATIVE FEUD OF ANDY WARHOL:
A PHILOSOPHY OF COMMUNICATION ETHICS

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements for

the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

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May 2018
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“The Creative Feud of Andy Warhol: A Philosophy of Communication Ethics”

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ABSTRACT

THE CREATIVE FEUD OF ANDY WARHOL:
A PHILOSOPHY OF COMMUNICATION ETHICS

By
Sarah M. Deluliis

May 2018

Dissertation supervised by Professor Ronald C. Arnett

The Creative Feud of Andy Warhol: A Philosophy of Communication Ethics
begins with the assumption that the current historical moment is defined by Gilles
Lipovetsky’s philosophical project known as hypermodernity. The dominant paradigm of
hypermodernity, as consumption and commodity culture, elicits particularity of
embedded responsiveness situated within history. Ronald C. Arnett and Pat Arneson
contend that communication ethics are “value-laden philosophies of communication”
uniting background narratives with foreground communicative practices (Philosophy xi).
This dissertation positions Andy Warhol as a hypermodern communicative prophet.
Through his life, works, and human communication, Warhol utilized art to communicate
embedded ethical questions, responding to his historical moment before culture and
society recognized the values inherent within the communication between and among
others. This project offers Warhol as an exemplar of hypermodernity, arguing that Warhol contributes to the field of communication by living historically, granting access to emergent ethical questions requiring attentiveness and interpretation in and through philosophy of communication ethics.
DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation in loving memory of my grandparents, Ruth E. Beck, Kenneth E. Beck, and Michael J. Flinko. As they did in life, their spirits have continued to light and to guide my way.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I begin with my family, without whom I would not have had the courage and the tenacity to dedicate myself to the pursuit of my passions and dreams. I could not adequately thank my mother and father, Jeannie and Dennis Flinko, enough for a lifetime of love, support, and encouragement. My sister, Kelsey Flinko, has always walked shoulder to shoulder with me in all of my endeavors. Her compassion and spirit energizes me everyday. To my grandmother, Adeline Flinko, I thank you for your endless support, your faith in me, and your strength and determination that so inspire me.

I cannot thank my committee adequately for the intellectual support and sustaining conversations that resulted in this dissertation project. To Dr. Craig T. Maier, I offer my sincere thanks and appreciation for your encouragement, words of wisdom, and gracious support. I am indebted to Dr. Janie M. Harden Fritz, for her boundless enthusiasm and generosity of spirit guided my every step. To Dr. Ronald C. Arnett, I am indebted to you for your years of continued mentorship, support, kindness, and generosity of intellectual spirit.

It is without question that, without Mrs. Rita McCaffrey, I could not have accomplished this project. There is not enough space to thank you for all that you have done for me, but I am honored to work alongside you. The faculty of the Department of Communication & Rhetorical Studies at Duquesne University have provided me with a lifetime love of learning that has been indispensible to me in this project, and will forever remain a part of my life. To each member of this department, I offer you my sincerest appreciation for every moment that you have taken to teach me about the joy of
communication, the love of scholarship, and the passion for learning that will sustain me forever.

To my friend and colleague, Susan Mancino, I offer my deepest appreciation for your encouragement, endless inspiration, and thoughtful conversations that propelled me to write a dissertation project that I never thought possible. In addition, I would like to thank Hannah Karolak, for her constant support as we moved through our journey together. I would also like to thank the graduate students of the Department of Communication & Rhetorical Studies, all of who increased my knowledge of this project through a constant willingness to share ideas.

To my husband, David, you alone make all things meaningful.
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Chapter 1:
Andy Warhol: Sources of Selfhood and the Artful Life

André Warhola, later known as Andy Warhol, exemplifies a philosophy of communication ethics attentive to hyperreality, a term coined by Jean Baudrillard. Hyperreality refers to the multilayered nature of our historical moment where multiple goods are actively co-present (Eco). Warhol utilized the tools and values of his modern era to unmask and combat another era, ushering in the dawning of a new hyperreal moment. The creative feud of Andy Warhol manifested during a transition period of history, one that extended modern and postmodern goods in American culture. Gilles Lipovetsky termed this era hypermodernity, a moment of constant development glorifying modernity in its individualistic splendor in the midst of postmodern fragmentation and individualism. Hypermodernity calls forth a philosophy of communication ethics attentive to narrative and selfhood. Ronald C. Arnett and Pat Arneson understand communication ethics to be “value-laden philosophies of communication” uniting the ‘why’ of background narratives with the foreground ‘how’ of communicative practices (Philosophy xi). This project, The Creative Feud of Andy Warhol: A Philosophy of Communication Ethics, offers a hermeneutic entrance into the life and works of Andy Warhol, asking: What can Warhol’s creative feud, situated within hypermodernity, reveal about selfhood and narrative through a philosophy of communication ethics?

1.1 Introduction

History grounds communication ethics in the public sphere, praxially oriented toward uncovering the good. Arnett, Fritz, and Bell understand the good as the “valued center of a given communication ethic,” associated with what is right and proper for humans to do and to be (3). A philosophy of communication ethics perspective unites the philosophical why and the pragmatic
how of communicative encounters that shape experiences, identity, and interpretation of message, uncovering the interpretative goods that comprise human life. The relationship between Warhol and a philosophy of communication ethics responds to hypermodern ideals and values while simultaneously searches for narrative framework and sources of selfhood. Warhol’s work has received international acclaim, particularly as posthumous exhibits throughout Europe and into Eastern European countries like Poland. His international reputation extends his hypermodern project framed within philosophy of communication ethics, acting as the fulcrum point from which one may encounter history, the good, and communicative practices in the search for selfhood in a commoditized public sphere.

In the pursuit of identity, framed within a philosophy of communication ethics situated in hypermodernity, Warhol exemplified a commodity culture manifesting in the midst of human communication. This project’s interpretative ground frames Warhol’s importance in the field of communication while seeking to uncover the communicative potential of art, the role of history in understanding historical moments, and the nature of communication ethics grounded in Warhol’s creative feud. First, a brief biography of Warhol illustrates the formation of his narrative perspective and attentiveness to a philosophy of communication ethics as it unfolded in hypermodernity. Next, the work of Charles Taylor, renowned philosopher and scholar within the field of communication ethics, offers a framing argument that narrative frameworks are formative for sources of selfhood, though lacking potency in our historical moment. Next, a hypermodern understanding of Warhol’s historical moment pivots upon specific events illuminated by Hannah Arendt, political philosopher and communication ethicist, who offered an historical critique of modernity’s banal values that jeopardize and trivialize narrative. Finally, the work of Scott Stroud, professor of rhetoric and communication studies, and John Dewey, modern
American pragmatist, provides interpretative framing for aesthetic experience as morally cultivating. Stroud and Dewey’s united theoretical contribution, coupled with the insights from Taylor and Arendt, allow for the hermeneutic entrance into Andy Warhol’s creative feud.

The introduction of Warhol into the study of philosophy of communication ethics illuminates the hypermodern shift in moral sources of selfhood. Historical moments experience changes in the communicative and ethical landscape with far reaching consequences for contemporary times (i.e., modernity and postmodernity). Understanding the historical relevancy of history tied to a philosophy of communication ethics opens up the hermeneutic space for understanding Warhol’s creative feud. Communication ethicists and philosophers analyze a given good or communication ethic through “revision”—particular concepts no longer answer emergent questions in new eras (MacIntyre, After Virtue 2). The historical moment both offers constraints and exposes certain elements that allow for understanding of philosophical questions of ethics. Thus, MacIntyre contends that arguing for the morality or the conception of the good is illogical. Similarly, Taylor traces the evolution of the modern moral identity throughout the major historical periods, suggesting that philosophy of communication ethics must address tradition and history to understand the emergence of goods and moral sources of identity. Through the forces of globalization, the freedom of consumption and the freedom of access to the marketplace opened up access to the marketplace as a source of value (Bauman). Philosophy of communication ethics attends to this elevating of the marketplace in recognition that the ‘why’ of narrative frameworks undergird the ‘how’ of communication practices. Warhol attends to the dissolution of narrative bonds in his life and works, ever aware of the constraints of the marketplace and increasing preoccupation with commodity culture ever aware that the constraints trumped all other values and goods as central in the public sphere. Such a
preoccupation is a central issue in communication ethics; with commodification as a reigning good in hypermodernity, Warhol’s life and works are a communicative and responsive battle to this creative confusion.

1.2 The Commodification of André Warhola

Andy Warhol contended with and clashed against a hypermodern shift in value orientations that he witnessed from his humble beginnings as an immigrant in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 1928 to his infamous death in New York City in 1987. Victor Bockris, the most influential biographer of Warhol, offers a significant chapter in his seminal work that defines, for this dissertation project, the driving inspiration of Warhol’s life and commitment to making sense of his historical moment—“The Birth of Andy Warhol, 1959-1961.” Bockris’s reference is not to Warhol’s actual birth but to a significant moment in Warhol’s life—the move from André Warhola, commercial artist, to Andy Warhol, the Pop Art artist—or the commodification of André Warhola. Arthur C. Danto, philosopher of art and history, also acknowledges this pivotal moment in his work, Andy Warhol, recognizing that in this temporal shift, Warhol’s hypermodern creative feud began to take form.

Karl Marx, a central modern philosopher attentive to change tied to commercialism and capitalistic culture, defines a commodity as an “external object,” created by humans to satisfy “human needs of whatever kind” (125). In this vein, Warhol permitted the commodification of both himself and his art in an effort to unmask the mass commodification of persons and places privileged in the midst of his hypermodern historical moment. Warhol himself did not just work with art and commoditized objects but made himself into one as an announcement of the goods that he attempted to protect and promote. From the time Warhol was a young child, he was concerned with celebrity, fame, and with the communicative tools needed to achieve such status.
His fascination with American consumer commodities ultimately served as a source of inspiration for his work in the Pop Art movement. Warhol’s roots and background begin in the midst of a modern preoccupation with autonomy, efficiency, and progress—the secular trinity (Arnett, Fritz, & Holba). Warhol’s life and historical moment contextualizes his responsiveness to the emergence of commodification and sources of standards.

André Warhola was born to Ondrej and Julia Warhola on August 6, 1928 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Moving from the Hill District to Oakland, two areas associated with poverty-stricken immigrants during the turn of the twentieth century, Warhol, his two brothers, John and Paul, and his parents lived a life of poverty, often discriminated against for their Eastern European heritage. Andy grew up, and remained, a devout Byzantine Catholic, attending mass weekly and practicing his faith through various rituals such as routine prayer. Growing up a Byzantine Catholic, the iconography of the church, revelatory in nature, aesthetically and personally influenced Warhol. This revelatory influence of Catholic images would resonate with Warhol throughout his life (Bockris). Warhol graduated from Schenley High School and then from Carnegie Tech. Upon receiving his college degree, Warhol moved to New York City, where he worked primarily as a commercial artist through the 1950s, receiving many awards for his work in advertising (Bockris). The “birth of Andy Warhol,” by his own admission, began with his rise to fame as Pop Art icon on the heels of his success as a commercial artist. This shift reinvigorated Warhol’s understanding of commodity culture, personally living as a canvas and commodity. In the midst of the 1960s, Warhol himself writes of an art exhibit featuring his own work: “But then, we weren’t just at the art exhibit—we were the art exhibit, we were the art incarnate […]” (Warhol and Hackett 133). Thus, philosophers and Warhol alike agree—Warhol’s move into Pop Art was a move wholly into commodity and stardom, fully
communicating an identified hypermodern value that emerged situated with human communication and interaction.

Warhol, in his life and works, focused upon the “simulacrum” in that he contended with the values and goods emergent in society and achieved this through silk-screened, painted, and drawn photographs, searching for “the copy, the second-generation image” (Scherman and Dalton 17). The rise of the copy, for Warhol, was a direct reaction to the fascination with the popular image of America. Warhol’s most famous paintings—the Campbell soup cans, the Marilyns—centered upon images of already created images and advertisements, not simply the reproduction of external cultural objects. He selected subject matter dictated by the influence of increasing commodification and lack of narrative frameworks. These images became the basis from which he reflected on his historical moment.

Warhol was never embarrassed to seek out others’ opinions on what he should paint, as Pop Art took seriously exterior cultural symbols, turning them into high-culture works of art. For Warhol, pop represented American capitalism, which equated to sameness throughout the nation and mass commodification. Warhol’s choices for subject matter offered evidence of an external reality grounded in the persuasive power of images, mass production, and commodity culture, increasingly defining the historical moment of hypermodernity in relation these communication ethics goods. Art, for Warhol, was no longer an expression of a private soul, because the soul in this culture was not interior. The self in this historical moment superficially and externally constituted itself through a public “amalgamation of overt, public, cultural discourses, such as the image-saturated discourse of television, film, advertising, and commerce” (Morris 34). In the midst of Warhol’s own quest for selfhood and narrative identity, Warhol battled with
hypermodernity’s communication ethics, privileging the commercial, the mass produced, and the conforming nature of a society that looked to the marketplace as standard-bearer.

Warhol’s lasting legacy, continuing into our current historical moment, is emergent in Umberto Eco’s argument in *Travels in Hyperreality* is that artistic expression utilizes different forms of communication other than verbal expression, or codes, in order to meet various audiences in different places and historical moments. Eco, renowned semiotician and philosopher, argued that a fundamental requirement of signification, or the communicative encounter between the source of the message and the receiver of the message grounded in interpretation, is that the source and receiver share a code. However, aesthetic communication—art—is “deliberately ambiguous,” and does not adhere to this procedure. The artist utilizes different codes so that those in “different times and places” will encounter the work of art and still attempt to interpret the message (Eco, *Travels* 140). Warhol’s life and works offered ambiguous communicative media influencing public perception and understanding of his historical moment, ultimately guided by the emergence of a philosophy of communication ethics rooted in hypermodernity.

For Warhol, images became his primary mode of expression and communication in a moment where language failed in the public sphere to carve a space for his announcement of identity (Watney). Warhol struggled for the entirety of his life with his identity—Eastern European immigrant, poor, and homosexual. His personal struggle eclipsed the glamour of American capitalist culture that he had identified as valued and meaningful. Warhol spoke in images to communicate value and norms. He claimed to be a mirror—reflecting what he found in culture. Any examination of his life must take into consideration the creative application of these cultural values in their “role in his self-creation, self-promotion, and self-examination” (James
Warhol’s corpus of work illuminated a commodity culture that rejected the majority of his sources of self. Zygmunt Bauman (1925-2017), Polish philosopher and sociologist known for his work on postmodern consumption in an age of capitalism, contends that the desire to create and participate in community manifests organically in history when individuals believe or identify that they have been “denied the right to assimilation, […] deprived of choice” (77). Warhol’s various narrative commitments countered mainstream American culture, masked in complete conformity to social norms. He embodied those social norms in a quest to gain recognition while simultaneously combatting these problematic issues through utilizing the tools available to him in the rise of hypermodernity.

Warhol’s narrative background paved the path for his preoccupation with rejecting an elitist view of art. Certainly, he understood that a Campbell’s soup can “as a work of art was an obvious piece of irony, [but] he also saw it as a glorification of the commonplace” (Scherman and Dalton 78). Warhol’s painting reinforced the Pop Art attitude that the mediation of the American experiences in the beginning of the twentieth century and throughout Warhol’s lifetime filtered through a multitude of ethics and influences. Thus, Warhol’s work relied upon an image of culture already placed into the public sphere that he repeated, twisted, and turned on its head to signify a deeper virus of consumerism seeping into the very bonds of human communication and community. Warhol’s experience with American culture reveals the pragmatic implications of moral sources of selfhood formed, protected, promoted, and engaged within numerous historical periods. Warhol’s rejection of elite art and his commentary on the irony of consumer culture is a direct result of the narratives, frameworks, and sources of selfhood that drove his quest for celebrity and his identification of goods. These central themes announce the moral sources of his creative, personal, and public life. Charles Taylor’s central work,
Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity, renders further insight into the formation of Andy Warhol from André Warhola.

1.3 Sources of the Self

Warhol’s quest to reveal and combat hypermodern sources of selfhood and narrative is an exemplary struggle grounded within the study of rhetoric and philosophy of communication ethics. Hypermodernity is an extension and strange amalgamation of modern and postmodern values where institutional support also increasingly fragmented, ushering in a hyper-individualistic society that Warhol deeply immersed himself within, contended with, and faltered in as sources of selfhood and identity became increasingly interior. Calvin O. Schrag, renowned philosopher of communication, posits that, in our current moment, the issue of selfhood is a competing amalgamation of various perspectives and viewpoints. For Schrag, to know one’s self is to know one’s story, and, thus, narrative provides “the ongoing context in which the figures of discourse are embedded and achieve their determinations of sense and reference” (Self After 19). Schrag offers an account for the importance of narrative, reflecting the creative confusion that plagued Warhol’s battle with the loss of narrative framework, selfhood, and identity. Schrag’s communicative insight regarding the importance of narrative reflects the work of Taylor, who offers a historical analysis on the role of narrative and moral sources framing identity and providing guidelines for moral action.

In a review of Sources of the Self, Alasdair MacIntyre, philosopher and communication ethicist, contends that Taylor’s praiseworthy work offers an important element to the engagement of sources of self in the study of communication ethics. That element is “incompleteness,” for it permits the ability for others to utilize his ground, further uncovering Taylor’s most “central claims” (MacIntyre, “Critical” 187). While offering critique for Taylor’s
account, MacIntyre also reaffirms the importance of Taylor’s project, suggesting that it opened space in philosophy and rhetoric to explore these issues further. Much like MacIntyre in *After Virtue*, Taylor offers an examination of ethical positions, identities, and notions of selfhood grounded in the historical evolution of the good, right action, and the good life.

Taylor’s project acknowledges that historical philosophies are the articulations of something already enacted and experienced within society, while simultaneously pointing to future developments of explorations of sources of selfhood. While philosophy does not necessarily create the historical, social, and cultural landscape, philosophy encapsulates “the spirit of some of the changes, and in turn deeply influenced the form they took” (Taylor, *Sources* 308). Thus, Taylor’s account explicates the philosophical ground from which differing sources of the self manifest in multiple historical moments. His project centers upon three axes of moral thinking that exemplify the “important” ways in which “our age stands out from earlier ones”: 1) commitment to respect for and obligation to others, 2) human understandings of a good life, and 3) human dignity afforded as both a right and universal maxim (Taylor, *Sources* 16). Currently, we experience disillusionment with these three axes, living in an age where meaninglessness is rampant with the loss of narrative frameworks, tied explicitly to the naturalist impulse to rationalize and reject moral frameworks as projections onto a neutral, value-free world. Taylor’s driving question, “Why do certain life goods become prominent, virtually undeniable, in a given age?” provides the theoretical and historical foundation from which Warhol’s creative feud may be understood and framed within a philosophy of communication ethics in hypermodernity (Taylor, *Sources* 316). Taylor’s work traces the historical development of the modern conception of identity, further explicating the hypermodern reality of Warhol’s historical moment, lending insight into the importance of narrative and sources of self. Taylor’s project is a reclamation of
our need to articulate our commitments to right action and the framing of a good life tied to our strong evaluations.

Taylor focuses upon three major facets of the modern identity—an identity that Warhol contended with and responded to, made manifest in his life and works. Those facets include: 1) the modern “inwardness” of the self, 2) the “affirmation of ordinary life,” and 3) the “expressivist” nature of inner sources of selfhood (Taylor, Sources x). The reclaiming of the modern identity draws upon the interplay of the good life and right action, through which background narratives provide frameworks for individual identity. Our moral intuitions—our “strong evaluations” of right and wrong—involve culture, history, and upbringing, or background narratives that provide the “why” for our “how” of communicative action (Taylor, Sources 5). The modern penchant for questioning narrative frameworks offers a renewed sense of individual autonomy, constructing identity through a public demand for personal rights to a multitude of freedoms. For Taylor, the public nature of the demand is a troubling sign of modernity.

Narrative frameworks are crucial components to human engagement with others, offering background for our judgments situated within communication ethics and the three major axes that anchor Taylor’s project. Moral frameworks are intrinsic to human nature, providing limits and openings that intimately orient our identity in a moral space. This space permits discernment of questions of what is important to us. Our strong evaluations turn upon these moral spaces, constructed by (in)articulate frameworks encapsulating ethical standpoints. To be a self, argues Taylor, is to be a self with others, in community and in language where I am defined by what matters to me. Taylor calls these “webs of interlocution,” which define identity through both moral space and encounters with others (Sources 36). The modern identity has begun to develop
counter conceptions of the human person, which declares that he or she finds his or her moral
sources of selfhood, identity, and orientation outside of these webs of interlocution. Yet, for
Taylor, this is a falsity, for these webs always embed a communicative agent, even if one
ultimately rejects that narrative later on in one’s life.

The construction of one’s self depends specifically on the moral topography of space, says Taylor (Sources 41). The modern inwardness that characterizes his depiction of modernity rejects the explication of individual feelings and thoughts. However, a moral topography localizes experiences as both inside and outside, turning upon the fulcrum point of self-interpretation in relation to an external narrative or good. Taylor contends that the measurement of the orientation manifests in the explicit understanding of how one situates one’s self in relation to that good and subsequently whether or not one engages with it. Individual aspirations for fulfillment and meaning take many forms, such as preoccupation with immortality and fame, but this aspiration can be a “pattern of higher action” which provides meaning in the way one is oriented toward multiple goods (Taylor, Sources 43). Thus, Taylor returns to the contention that the basis of our existence is the question to make sense of our identities, manifesting in and through narrative. Communication ethics questions of right action and living a good life emerge through meaningful narrative frameworks providing answers that guide a constant becoming. MacIntyre called this a ‘quest,’ or a search for such a meaning (After Virtue 203-204). Selves, thus, are not neutral beings, but grounded within the emergent questions grounded in particular temporal and physical spaces that raise concerns related to and addressing the goods that one orients him or herself to and around. When one finds oneself within community, cultural, social, and personal constraints and opportunities lay claim upon and make sense of identity.
Taylor recognizes the constraints of culture that shift moral sources and create differing perspectives. A multiplicity of goods, or constitutive goods, exists, falling under what Taylor would term a “higher-order good” or hypergood (Taylor, *Sources* 63). The notion of the hypergood changes throughout history, is subject to interpretation, is a source of conflict, and is continually living under the realization that it expands beyond and gains privilege above previous hypergoods, eventually superseded by others. Taylor’s project argues, from the position of modernity, that strong evaluations offer reasons and ethical guidelines to form identity and to articulate ethical decisions and motivations in the midst of a multiplicity of goods. The hypergood acts as an overarching transcendental framework, for Taylor. While the notion of hypergood is formative for Taylor’s modern work, Warhol’s historical environment, and this dissertation project, is situated within a hypermodern framework. Hypermodernity is not death of modern and postmodern values but the integration and rebirth of the logic of the marketplace, which privileges and enacts a mentality of consumption, individualism, and fragmentation. The individual framework dissolves a transcendental good.

Taylor’s project points to the necessity of understanding narrative as one considers, forms, and articulates one’s sources of selfhood and guiding frameworks for moral cultivation. Warhol’s life and works illustrates an exemplification of Taylor’s modern illustration of selfhood—narrative frameworks disappear and individual inwardness trumps. The modern impulse for turning inward for sources of morality and identity begins with the ancients and medieval philosophers, where morality, ethics, and identity were localized within one’s self yet dependent upon one’s moral and rational capabilities to lead one to the Forms, values, practical wisdom (phronēsis) and religious narratives in the external realm. Enlightenment thinkers offered the beginning of a modern turn toward individualized conceptions of morality, whereby
rational “self-mastery” superseded external standards (Taylor, Sources 147). Language and artistic creation, for Taylor, capture the attention and the fascination of individuals within our society, for they are the media via which we can express our inner portrayals of ourselves, and he argues that artistic creation became windows for peering into reality. Warhol embodied his own contention and confusion in the emergence of hypermodernity.

Taylor moves to the modern affirmation of ordinary life through explication of a shift in orientation to attentiveness to nature. He traces this affirmation with a beginning in Judeo-Christian religious perspectives, where ordinary life became synonymous with the belief and subsequent commitment to the enjoyment of all that God had provided to mankind, found in nature. The Deist movement introduced an order whereby God oriented nature with total focus on human will and expression. It was “demeaning” to assume that God would be “concerned in his dealings with anything but our good,” and nature oriented human happiness as a “fulfillment of our natural desires” (Taylor, Sources 270-271). This turn to nature moved away from Deism, which still acknowledged a providential order, to a radical Enlightenment that secularized mainstream Western thought by repressing belief in God and committing to nature. The uncertainty of religion mutated into a radical Enlightenment utilitarianism that derived self-responsible reason as a constraining factor in communicative life. This move questioned the need for man to find identity and meaning in an external world. Rather, the voice of nature was an interior source of meaning.

The radical Enlightenment paved the way for the expressivist turn in Romanticism that moved modern moral theory into exemplifying impulses as an inner voice of nature, imbued with language and practical reason. The notion of expressivism emerged in finding this inner voice and making manifest sources of selfhood through communicative media—including art. For
Taylor, art borders the “numinous” and reflects the creativity of the artist who is expressing his or her inner nature (Sources 376). What results from this turn is the new historical order whereby the moral domain is within ourselves, involving self-exploration as a way to reveal an individual space of moral interpretation. The depth of inner exploration tied to the notion of a “subtler language” begets a cultural expressive individualism that emerges as a primary symptom of the modern self. Culture became the replacement for religion in the face of the declining of faith and a depletion of public moral values. Romantic expressivism offered an alternative to the Enlightenment disengaged and instrumental reason whereby individuals were responsible for defining his or her natural purpose in life.

Taylor turns to modern art as a response to Romanticism’s preoccupation with inner voice, privileging hypermodern ideals of efficiency and individual autonomy. Taylor argues that art can be an epiphany, shedding light on significant moral sources and significant values. He counters authorial intention with audience interpretation, articulating that the artistic image is not discourse but symbolic as a fulfillment of a higher good, a higher will, a symbol of what is morally good. The image also expresses an “ambivalent relationship” between artist and culture (Taylor, Sources 425). The opposition between artist and society has created a distance that offers ideals and values of commerce. Of course, says Taylor, Andy Warhol exemplifies this ideal—if anyone can be famous for fifteen minutes, if self-expression can offer ideas for advertisements, and avant-garde art avoids elitism yet influences values, art primarily offers value-laden interpretation subject to human communication. Art as symbol is revelatory—articulating something that may or may not be impersonal but yet still involves a “creative imagination” that gives us a snapshot of reality (Taylor, Sources 427). As Taylor has contended,
modern moral sources affirm everyday life. Thus, art as a moral source carries within it a legitimate communication ethics function.

Taylor’s conclusion is that the subtler languages of the arts depict an epiphanic reality that retains and affirms goodness within everyday life. Twentieth-century artists—Warhol among them—were encroached upon by instrumental reason in a world “dominated by technology, standardization, the decay of community, mass society, and vulgarization” (Taylor, Sources 456). Post-Romantic epiphanic art responded to an increasingly mechanistic world that marginalized nature in the midst of a boom of culture. Various philosophies emerged during this period to answer the question: “What is the place of the Good, or the True, or the Beautiful in a world entirely determined mechanistically?” (Taylor, Sources 459). The idea of lived experience, emerging with the rise of phenomenology, captured the modern philosophical mind, and experience moved into the interior realm of experiential phenomena. The self fragmented into ordinary experiences of time and communication, lacking a unity of connection, which continues to plague the hypermodern mind—uniting modern values of autonomy and postmodern fragmentation. This lack of fullness and meaning manifested in subtler languages, again, through a distance between artist and interpreter, whereby images depicted and transfigured meaningless and everyday (ordinary) experiences into objects of beauty and desire.

Taylor argues that art captures the spirit of a particular historical period, intellectually driven and attentive to ethics and morals situated within the revelatory possibilities of something transcendent or above existence, not simply the product of purely subjective responses or outlooks. He terms this an “epiphany of interspaces” completed through the images between artist and audience (Sources 476). Through art, reality presents, and perhaps reifies, the ordinary, transfigured and affirmed by one’s interpretation. This framing capacity is inherent in the way
that art opens up the communicative and hermeneutic space beyond the art object itself, offering itself in particularity but not dependent upon various interpretations or ethical questions that the object might reveal through the lens of an audience. For good or for ill, art is a communicative medium through which we can affirm and recover moral sources of identity, empowering in a (hyper)modern culture, dominated by a paradigm of consumerism as expression. This society has erased the background of beliefs and moral sources. However, art and the arts have opened up a “domain” in which a background “articulation of personal vision” becomes a “publicly available background, what we all lean on and count with while we communicate” (Taylor, Sources 492).

Thus, subtler languages allow for the major moves in modernism that exist as a counter to and response from ethical and moral sources that converge and diverge in this historical perspective. Taylor concludes with a return to the malaise of modernity; while subtler languages offer various areas of reclamation, they are also subject to criticism. Expressivism can violate moral frameworks through preference for the individual. Modernism emerges from Romanticism in the midst of a deeply divisive conversation on standards and sources that construct ethics and morals. Taylor argues that it is a mistake to live in such divisive terms—morals, moral intuitions, and strong evaluations are subject to a “cut through time” where “views coexist with those which have arisen later in reaction to them,” much like hypermodernity (Taylor, Sources 497). The layering of history explains the resulting philosophical and moral questions that plague the modern quest for identity. Taylor laments the collapse of “expressive objects” with the replacing “commodities which we now surround ourselves” with, obscuring our strong evaluations and individual identity with lack of moral frameworks (Sources 501). However, Taylor argues that it is a mistake to view modern identity as conflicting with constitutive goods. Rather, one must attend to space for a plurality of goods privileging and guiding human history and individual life.
Rejecting a cultural turn to the “therapeutic,” where the “primacy of self-fulfillment” engages a loss of “substance” and an “increasing thinness of ties and shallowness of the things we use,” Taylor seeks to reclaim constitutive goods in all of its many forms (Taylor, *Sources* 508). Subjective expressive fulfillment may superficially appear thin, but may also be one good in a number of other goods that comprise the human individual. New language—subtler language—may make crucial distinctions that reclaim goods in our modern moment. Taylor’s project is a project of resurfacing those goods that we have lost or that have eclipsed our moral sources of selfhood, arguing for reclamation. Such a framework, one in which various goods may compete, conflict, and exist within an individual attempt to express and fulfill identity, resounds within Warhol’s philosophy of communication ethics. Buried goods exist in a present engaged unreflectively. Hypermodernity does not equate to the death of modern values—rather, it is the unreflective extension of modern and postmodern values (Lipovetsky). Warhol’s life and works exemplifies a commitment to various constitutive goods expressed through media as both self-fulfillment and a reification of moral sources that comprised his historical moment. His project framed within a hypermodern philosophy of communication ethics begins with Taylor’s seminal understanding of moral and philosophical inquiry and extends into a historical and contextual engagement of a lived philosophy of communication ethics.

Warhol contends with this hypermodern mindset through his visual communication ethics, engaging and critiquing commercialism and commodification through mass production in an effort shake loose the chains that permitted the individual to be sovereign. In Warhol’s contentious and creative battle with hypermodernity, he engaged in a struggle for moral cultivation as both individual and as a member of a community, historically and culturally bound. Inquiry into the historical nature of the hypermodern worldview reveals the depths to
which society had engrained the individualistic impulse that Warhol fought against and further extends Taylor’s project. History and historicity are crucial components to Taylor’s framework and to Warhol’s creative feud, driving an in-depth understanding of the questions emergent in Warhol’s historical moment.

Historicity understands that knowledge, value, and action are not static entities, but converge and co-present themselves (Arnett, Fritz, and Bell). While history suggests a chronological progression of events, historicity suggests that communication ethics questions and goods can transcend historical limitations, offering knowledge as a dynamic and fluid construct. Hans-Georg Gadamer understood historicity to be the emergence of ethical questions confronting us across historical periods, even if responses to those questions differ. Gadamer argues that “a historical hermeneutics [interpretation via history] that does not make the nature of the historical question the central thing, and does not inquire into a historian’s motives in examining historical material, lacks its important element” (Truth 348). One cannot exist outside of history, and consciousness of one’s situation and oneself is always subject to the affects of history, meaning that one must respond to the particulars of the hermeneutical situation. To understand the “historical situation,” one must identify the “right questions to ask” which exist historically (Gadamer, Truth 312). Warhol begins to answer for historicity—similar questions in given historical periods—in his life and works. A focus on a particular moment in historicity follows to demonstrate the role of communication ethics in a hypermodern world.

1.5 Historicity and Communication Ethics in a Hypermodern World

Historicity invites overlapping concepts and questions that merge across time, offering reflecting “positive remnants of the past and appropriate response to the present” (Arnett and Arneson, Dialogic 101). Hypermodernity, the extension of modern and postmodern values
within a new historical era, depends upon historicity as a facet in understanding the extension of modern and postmodern values in an increasingly commoditized environment characterized by loss of narrative and meaning in life. In order to explicate how Warhol attempted to address questions central to hypermodernity, this section points to events tied to historicity, offering historical glimpses into the interplay of historicity and hypermodernity, governed by three driving issues—banality, commodification, and artificial light. These examples provide the groundwork for understanding the significance of political philosopher and communication ethicist Hannah Arendt’s understanding of the human condition in hypermodernity, which frames this historical account of Warhol’s quest for sources of selfhood. Arendt provides the primary interpretative framework for the historical overview of Warhol’s life and works, contextualized with the modern and postmodern voices of Edward Bernays, exemplar of the problematics of modernity, and Neil Postman, seeking to provide a reflective alternative to modern and postmodern values. John Dewey and Scott Stroud, in a similar philosophical trajectory as Postman, offer a reflective stance toward moral cultivation in a hypermodern moment, seeking to tame such a moment with lack of sources of selfhood tied to narrative frameworks.

Taylor argued that our “cultural life, our self-conceptions, our moral outlooks” are formed and constructed through the “great events” of history and, in particular, of the historical phenomena that led to the modern moment (Sources 393). Taylor and Arendt portray a moral picture of the relationship between history, narrative, and action, offering interpretative ground for the historical relevance of Warhol’s hypermodern project. Warhol’s historical moment offers touch points that yield implications for its examination with historicity, utilizing Arendt’s discussion of the ushering in of modernity with examples of historicity via ongoing
communication scholars central to this ongoing saga. The interplay of these ideals led us into hypermodernity. This hypermodern discussion of major events further explicate the modern self’s ability to identify and rest within sources of moral and narrative frameworks.

Modernity morphed into postmodernity, which similarly gave way to hypermodernity. Hypermodernity is an acknowledgement of the values of the modern and postmodern mindset, simultaneously converging and offering new entrances into understanding a philosophy of communication ethics. Arendt offered a critique of modernity that holds true in hypermodernity, detailed by three events explicated in *The Human Condition*: the founding and discovery of America, the invention of the telescope, and the Reformation. Arendt and Taylor extend historical and philosophical understandings of the modern condition by specifically addressing the need to engage narrative and the public sphere in moral cultivation. Taylor offers that Arendt’s contention that the “‘human world rest[s] primarily on the fact that we are surrounded by things more permanent than the activity’ by which they are produced’ has come “under threat in a world of modern commodities,” seeking to reclaim Arendt’s conception of the “‘reliability’” of humanness (Taylor, *Sources* 501). Arendt’s discussions of the historical events that usher in modernity are exemplary of the metaphors that this project turns upon.

The question of the elevation of banality emerges in both modernity and hypermodernity through two specific events—the invention of the telescope and *Sputnik*. Arendt points to these historical moments in a moment that turns its back on tradition through contending with the commonplace. She understands banality rooted within an unreflective mindset that often emerges as disrespect, or “modern loss” tied to “conviction that respect is due only where we admire or esteem,” which, in turn, “constitutes a clear symptom of the increasing depersonalization of public and social life” (Arendt, *Human* 243). Arendt’s discussion of the invention of the
telescope exemplifies the condition of the elevation of banality at the expense and disrespect of tradition. The telescope permitted the elevation of humanity over the confines of earthly physical space, allowing one to catch a glimpse of the universe for the sake of progress. For Arendt, this changed historical viewpoints, rejecting inner “contemplation” in favor of the creative “fabricating” privileged by “homo faber” (Arendt, Human 274). For Arendt, the idea that man could trust his senses became a primary vehicle for engaging the world.

In another historical period, but riddled with the same communication ethics question, Arendt responds to a newspaper headline on Sputnik, the Russian satellite that launched in space in 1957, that ushers forth a similar hermeneutical situation that calls for particularity of response. Arendt lamented the “relief about the first ‘step toward escape from men’s imprisonment to the earth’” (Arendt, Human 1). Arendt argued against it for the loss of respect for tradition and for roots, viewing it to be disrespectful to the privilege of the everyday human condition. Sputnik signaled a new impulse to transcend earthly limitations and, simultaneously, give into the demands of the everyday without reflection or questioning. Furthermore, her example demonstrates the hypermodern nature of Warhol’s moment—Sputnik and the telescope allowed for overlapping questions of limits of progress and impulses of escapism that undermined tradition based upon the tide of public opinion and commitment to progress. This culminated in the elevation of the commonplace without regard for roots nor attentiveness to the human condition. Warhol’s creative feud that manifests a hypermodern philosophy of communication ethics attends to this elevation of the commonplace and banality, turning upon the unreflective disrespect of tradition, searching for narrative frameworks in the midst of shifting foci of attention on notions of the good and selfhood.
The question of the privileging of commodification is central to two historical events arising across two periods: Arendt’s discussion of the Reformation and the rise of advertising and public relations. Arendt considers commodification in the midst of mass consumption and production. She argues that the “progress of accumulation of wealth” has dissolved stability for the sake of “possession” of ‘heaped up’ and ‘stored away’ things, into money to spend and consume” (Arendt, Human. 124). The Reformation, according to Arendt, ushered in this modern moment of commodification. She describes the Reformation as the “expropriating [of] ecclesiastical and monastic possessions [which] started the two-fold process of individual expropriation and the accumulation of social wealth” (Human 248). The Reformation gave rise to a capitalist society concerned with social capital and wealth whereby populations are alienated through labor forces and means of accumulation. This historical event signaled a shift in the ideals of public and private in society as well as in attentiveness to mass consumption.

In another historical moment, the question of commodification demanded response with the rise of advertising and public relations. Once the Reformation ushered forth the privileging of accumulating wealth and social capital as the basis for class and status, modernity created culture as a “form of utility or weapon” in the leveling of the public sphere into “production” and “social commodity” with “exchange” as primary (Arnett, Communication Ethics 57). Advertising and public relations emerged in a commodity culture as a particular response to mass production of goods and services in an increasing preoccupation with the exchange of goods for social status in such a mass culture, understood by Arendt. Edward L. Bernays, the father of modern public relations practices, manipulated this desire to consume unrestrained by needs in an attempt to “induce resistant” individuals to products, services, and political ideals (Ewen 112; Bernays). Advertising and public relations became a persuasive vehicle engaging in the progressive
accumulation of ideas and products. Warhol’s project unites the ideals of the Reformation, advertising, and public relations within historicity in his quest for sources of selfhood. These events privileged continuous accumulation of goods and services where the marketplace acted as standard-bearer and various narratives, like religion, were no longer important.

The question of the distinction between artificial and genuine light, made by Arnett in his explication of Arendt’s work, encapsulates Arendt’s discussion of the discovery of America as well as the rise of new hypermodern communication technologies. Arendt considers artificial light in her work *Men in Dark Times*. For Arendt, light is a mechanism by which we find our way—false light further deepens darkness in the midst of artificial promises. She centers upon “dark times,” which are not “rarities” in the course of history and are driven by expectation of some “illumination,” even if that illumination is false (Arendt, *Men* ix). False illumination deeply connects artificial light to the further rendering of one into dark times. The discovery of America, for Arendt, signaled the limitless possibilities of exploration once the entire earth was conquered. This ushered in the “famous shrinkage of the globe” where “speed has conquered space,” making “distance meaningless” (Arendt, *Human* 250). The discovery of America, at first glance, appears to be an instance of genuine light. However, for Arendt, this process opened up artificial light; those that discovered America intended to “enlarge the earth, not shrink her into a ball” (Arendt, *Human* 250). Arendt laments the advent of technologies continuing this shrinkage. The man-made object of the telescope provided an escape from lack of knowledge and victory of progress. No longer did the Earth appear out of reach—man could understand the earth by his own reason through his own instruments.

In another historical moment, artificial light manifests with the rise of technologies such as the television, extending Arendt’s lament of communication technologies that shrink the
globe. Neil Postman, foundational media ecologist, carries forth a programmatic response
through examination of the unreflective use of communication technologies, offering artificial
light in the false promise of progress and efficiency. Specifically addressing the rise of the
television, Postman laments that television has turned all subject matter into entertainment,
erasing the need to interact with others as we unreflectively interact with the world via the
screen. He writes that, “in the Huxleyan prophecy, Big Brother does not watch us, by his choice.
We watch him, by ours” (Postman 155). Postman is arguing for reflection by pursuing genuine
light. Postman provides an alternative in the midst of the loss of reflection. For Postman, choice
matters when engaging new technologies, innovations, and modern conceptualizations of
progress inherently tied to culture.

As the engagement of historicity through Arendt’s lens comes to reveal the responses
Warhol attempted in his own creative feud, further communication ethicists lend insight into the
communicative and ethical landscape that call forth necessity of response and attentiveness to
emergent questions. Scott Stroud attempts to address the sources from which moral cultivation
occurs when sources of selfhood shift in changing historical moments. He adds to this
conversation the voice of John Dewey, another major voice in modernity and a philosophical
pragmatist that argued for aesthetic experience as moral cultivation. Pragmatism emerged in the
United States in the beginning of the 20th century seeking to uncover and “understand meaning
between people in shared experiences and contexts” (Arnett and Holba 132). For Dewey,
experience is co-created. Stroud’s explication of Dewey’s work on art and moral cultivation in
aesthetic experience argues for the everyday lived artful experience. Stroud unifies an artful life
and moral cultivation of self through Dewey, achieved through phenomenological attention
toward sources of selfhood and narrative framework.
In his text, *John Dewey and the Artful Life: Pragmatism, Aesthetics, and Morality*, Stroud utilizes major works from Dewey to argue that *art* is “careful and skillful *creation,*” and thus an everyday experience (Stroud 2). Stroud contends that art offers communicative channels for uncovering, obtaining, and contextualizing values and ethics in practical matters. Through Dewey’s work, art is an everyday experience. While the art object itself does not give rise to moral value, the art object offers a phenomenological experience that deepens attentiveness to the present. This attentiveness is the reclamation of artful living and moral cultivation in the midst of our surroundings. Dewey sees art as the most “universal mode of language” (Dewey 349). Art provides a phenomenological experience of understanding and illustrating experience, illustrating specific values and ethical frameworks, which guide communication ethics and goods that necessitate reflection and creation. Dewey encourages a reflective and reflexive encounter between author and audience to test space for moral value engagement, differing dramatically from authorial intent and granting preference toward audience interpretation.

Stroud connects moral cultivation to aesthetic experience by focusing upon experience as a significant and morally forming phenomenological attitude that is attentive to the uncovering of sources of selfhood in the midst of a modern, hypermodern, and postmodern philosophical environment. Furthermore, he does not divide intrinsic (means) and instrumental (ends) value but unites them to argue that art is a communicative tool to explicating goods one seeks to protect and promote within a particular historical moment. Dewey contends that the bifurcation of means and ends is a false dichotomy and an “aberration of modern thought;” art is an exemplar of the unification of this dualism (Stroud 51). Art is an immediate consummation and an end-in-view that is reflective and ideal in respecting the past, attentive in the present, and consistent in
preserving the future. In aesthetic experience, the art itself is both a means to other moral
cultivating factors and an end in the immediate appreciation of the situation, requiring reflection.

Art acts as moral cultivation, in Stroud’s philosophical project, intentional and formative
for the creation and interpretation of meaning and cultural significance emergent in the process
of human communication. Art, thus, is evocative, prompting reflection and experiential
determination in the present situation. An artist depends upon an audience’s receptivity to it for a
strictly “communicative purpose,” needing as a “precondition” a “receiver orientation” (Stroud
102). This permits a unity of openness and creativity—the experiencer must create his or her
experience through attentiveness to the aesthetic experience and art object. While art, according
to Stroud, is created and framed with communicative intent, it “lacks the immediate human
intentionality that is behind a conversational utterance,” thus permitting responsibility on both
the part of the artist and the audience in the communicative interaction (Stroud 104). For Stroud,
the artist is either attempting to convey 1) a particular experience, 2) an inarticulate experience,
or 3) the employment of the artistic medium of art as evocative and experiential so that the
audience creates an evaluation. Art, thus, is a crucial and strategic form of human
communication in that it provides the “means and end of an important type of communication—
the direct communication of experience” (Stroud 114). Dewey contends that this necessitates
both judicial (evaluative) and impressionist (emotional and/or interpretative) evocation for
reflective experience of ends and means. It is the unification of both sorts of criticism, however,
that gives rise to an orientation toward temporal judgments.

Stroud presents a case for the role of artful living with resounding ramifications for
Warhol’s creative project. What is inherently valuable in the art object is the question: “what
type of experience could the (possibly unknown) author be trying to convey?” (Stroud 125). This
prompts the reflective activity of moral cultivation, ushering forth practical decision making, deliberation, and moral evaluation, insofar as one must reflect upon either an the ethical implications of various experiences. Stroud makes the case for artful living by beginning with an attentive orientation cultivated within the aesthetic experience termed orientational meliorism. Meliorism is a reconstructive approach to philosophy, conditioned by the convergence of ends and means with openness to the reconstruction of the future through reflective attentiveness to the present. Stroud argues that the unity of mindfulness and action unite in orientational meliorism in one’s mental habits, asking: 1) “what is in the world;” 2) “what is of value;” and 3) what are the “recommended paths of action” (Stroud 142). Growth occurs in moral space that considers mental orientations as attitudes toward challenges, providing sources of selfhood illustrating our very beliefs and foundations in relation to our positions within our worlds. Artful communication takes the aesthetic experience as a springboard, and necessitates that one “attends to” and “values means and ends” for growth (Stroud 179). Everyday communication becomes artful in one’s orientation in a moral space, living through meaningful narrative. Stroud argues “in a very real sense, we create the world in which we find ourselves” and this world is one of community (Stroud 205). The artful life is attentiveness to the present, with roots in the past and focus in the future.

These significant historical events, which exemplified disrespect, commodification, and artificial light, converged to reveal a hypermodern moment that reified sources of selfhood. Taylor, Arendt, and Dewey are exemplars and philosophical voices that offer textured understanding of the problems of modernity that arise in Warhol’s hypermodern moment. These modern voices unify themes of moral cultivation, aesthetic experience, and historicity in the midst of hypermodernity. Warhol’s creative feud, framed within a philosophy of communication
ethics, begins with the convergence of Taylor, Arendt, Dewey, and Stroud, considering moral cultivation and sources of selfhood in the midst of hypermodern combat. Warhol engaged a historical moment that increasingly searched for entertainment, chasing artificial light that led to the commodification of the person while simultaneously disrespecting tradition and narrative. Warhol’s work and life offers a form of resistance to the banality of commodity culture, exemplifying both a need to reclaim moral cultivation and a submission to the demands of his historical moment that had emerged in other periods, exemplifying historicity. His project echoes moral cultivation of the self through aesthetic experience. Taylor and Arendt gave rise to the philosophical and historical importance of narrative framework and sources of the self in the quest to articulate ethical standpoints in hypermodern times. Historical events, historicity, and progression of emergent questions that characterize communication ethics offer an interpretative and historical space from which Warhol’s hypermodern combat offered moral cultivation and continues to suggest moral cultivation with Warhol’s aesthetic legacy.

1.6 A Philosophy of Communication Ethics: Moral Cultivation and Hypermodern Combat

Warhol’s artful life and aesthetic works offer insights and implications for moral cultivation of sources of selfhood in a hypermodern moment wrought with dissolving narrative frameworks and goods. The insights that can be gained from an inquiry into Warhol, the artist, through a philosophy of communication ethics, centers upon his battle in a historical moment that evolved from a lineage of philosophical and historical narrative frameworks. The beginning of the Pop Art movement began with artists who, similarly, concerned themselves with “American consumer culture” as the basis of artistic innovation (Scherman and Dalton xi). Pop Art was a response to cultural events during the period of the 1960s. For the first time, large cultural shifts began to impact American society, culture, and artistic endeavors. Throughout
much of the 1950s and the 1960s, the United States increasingly gave in to new industries, new technologies, and a tireless desire for commodities demonstrated by one of the most influential, and largest, generations in the United States. In every home, media, specifically the television, offered glimpses into the shrinking of the public sphere, and American culture began to pivot and turn around consumer culture. Pop Art, as a movement, shifted the aesthetic focus of attention to the cultural, historical, and social climate that gave rise to Warhol, *the* Pop Artist. Historicity demonstrates that history, knowledge, and communication ethics questions are not static, but recurrent. The confluence of numerous historical events repeated through a multitude of eras created the conditions that allowed Warhol to combat a hypermodern culture with the tools of modernity (banality, commodification, and artificial light).

Taylor and Arendt, among others, gave voice to the increased search for meaning, sources of selfhood, and narrative tradition, embracing historicity in the overlapping of questions situated within communication ethics that Warhol would reveal through his artistic endeavors. His hypermodern combat was the battleground for moral cultivation in his historical moment. A philosophy of communication ethics is attentive to the unification of meaningful practices and theoretical guidelines that act as formative approaches to engaging the communicative landscape. This opening chapter began Part I of this dissertation project, offering a communication ethics framework that situates Warhol within the field. His hypermodern voice formed a unique understanding of the dangers of reifying a communication ethic within modern quests for sources of selfhood. Warhol’s contribution exemplifies a hypermodern philosophy of communication ethics that considers interpretative ground. The voices of Taylor, Arendt, Stroud, and Dewey formed the theoretical argument that will structure and guide the explication of Warhol, the unknowing philosopher of communication ethics.
This project commences with the following assertion: Warhol did not exploit hypermodernity. He did not attempt to tame hypermodernity. Warhol did something considerably different. He called forth reflection with the commodities of a commercial world dominating the public domain to a place of extreme banality. Warhol “lean[ed] into the rapids” of his historical moment (Arnett, McManus, and McKendree 208). Referring to whitewater rafting, Arnett, McManus, and McKendree remind us that, as an instinct, in the midst of whitewater rafting, one has a tendency to pull backwards from the rapids, allowing water to surge beneath the raft and “push the raft skyward, leading it to capsize and eject the occupants” (208). One must lean into the rapids, or into the problem, to allow one to stay on top of the problem at hand. Warhol leaned into a historical moment characterized by narrative confusion and lack of moral cultivation. His creative feud centers upon a quest for sources of selfhood surfaced in the midst of a hypermodern moment. Warhol launched counters against artificial light, mass commodification, and the elevation of banality. However, it is both Warhol’s artistic works and his artful life that announce his significance, demonstrating the unification of how and why in the midst of narrative and creative confusion. Warhol argued that Pop Art offered sameness, a similar read that capitalism offered to American culture. Pop Art placed everyone in the midst of culture, allowing individuals to be culture as long as they had the purchasing power to turn it into a status-fulfilling commodity. Warhol uncovered the need for sources of selfhood, narrative, and moral topography in hypermodernity.

As an exemplar of hypermodernity, he simultaneously combatted the roots of the moment with the tools that his historical moment offered him. Warhol himself addressed a world where moral cultivation and sources of selfhood were shrouded in artificial light, tied to the pursuit of a commodity culture that disrespected both the need for tradition and the commitment to
historicity emergent in a era of virtue and narrative contention (MacIntyre, *After Virtue*). His life and works exemplify an artful life responding to the collapse of institutionally led narrative frameworks that provided guidelines for the pursuit of a good life. In a moment where a modern inwardness of selfhood called forth an affirmation of ordinary life apart from roots and narrative, Warhol argued for a worldview that was internally cultivating by reflecting upon pure exteriority of inspiration, aspiration, and influence. His philosophy of communication ethics unites a ‘why’ and a ‘how’ that exemplifies a hypermodern communicative framework, inviting us, today, to question the elevation of banality, commodification, and artificial light in our own quest for sources of selfhood.
Chapter 2:
Situating Andy Warhol: Art and Embedded Responsiveness within Hypermodernity

Andy Warhol (1928-1987) lived and created during a historical moment comprised of increasing fragmentation, divergent perspectives, and resurgence of past (modern) values. This chapter articulates the rationale for situating Warhol’s work and artistic corpus as a response to and identification of emergent cultural values and norms grounded within hypermodernity. The term *hypermodernity* emerges from the philosophical work of Gilles Lipovetsky, French philosopher and professor of philosophy at the University of Grenoble. Lipovetsky contextualized hypermodernity as a social, cultural, and historical phenomenon marked by the recycling of modern individualism and postmodern fragmentation through a variety of excessive channels. “Situating Andy Warhol: Art and Embedded Responsiveness within Hypermodernity” responds to hypermodernity by following the philosophy of art conceptualized by Arthur Danto. Danto suggests that historical conditions give rise to artistic contributions, and hypermodernity made possible the significance of Warhol’s contribution to a philosophy of communication ethics. Danto argues that a work of art acts as an “externalization of the artist’s consciousness, as if we could see his way of seeing and not merely what he saw” (Danto, *Transfiguration* 164). Warhol’s art encapsulates values prevalent in hypermodernity through embedded responsiveness. Through the primary voices of Danto and Lipovetsky, Warhol’s artistic creative feud opens in the space of a philosophy of communication ethics, embedded in a cultural and historical period, responsive to Warhol’s perceived emergent communication ethics and existential questions.

“Situating Andy Warhol: Art and Embedded Responsiveness within Hypermodernity,” conceptualizes hypermodernity as a defining element to the evolution of Warhol’s project with implications for philosophy of communication ethics, demonstrated through attentiveness to
lived experience, historical moment, and philosophical works. First, the role of philosophy of art through the work of Arthur Danto situates the argument for Warhol’s creative feud as an instance of embedded responsiveness. Danto’s work articulates the communicative power granted to art to encapsulate and comment upon historical conditions. Next, the philosophical emergence of hypermodernity through the work of Lipovetsky suggests that embedded responsiveness counters a hypermodern commitment to excess and consumption. Warhol then emerges in the context of hypermodernity as one who witnessed his historical moment, recognized change, and sought to communicate that change through ethical considerations emergent in his art, achieved through a summary of the work of Danto and Lipovetsky connected to one another. Through this philosophical inquiry into the historical dimensions of hypermodernity, art gains definition in the context of emergent social, cultural, and historical conditions. By bridging the voices of Danto and Lipovetsky, a philosophy of communication ethics emerges suggesting that art is communicative and rhetorical, uniquely creating opportunities for embedded responsiveness.

Sébastien Charles, French philosopher and professor at the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, argued that hypermodernity is a period of “excess,” defined by a market orientation toward an intensification of consumption, coupled with the mandating of radical modern values (such as human rights and democracy) as well as the domination of science over future possibilities (“For a Humanism” 392). Modern and postmodern values recycled themselves within hypermodernity, ensnaring individual behaviors in excess. One should not conflate this period of excess with modernity or postmodernity; rather, the work of hypermodern scholars dictates the central role of a historical and philosophical understanding of hypermodernity in the context of social and cultural knowledge. For Charles, hypermodernity acts as a reference point for the collapse of postmodern values into a radicalized modernity where the foundations of
social and cultural exchange celebrate the excess of individuality, preoccupation with the present as offering opportunity, and hesitancy in a future characterized by risk and uncertainty. Likewise, for Danto, art communicates an era through rhetorical depictions of the period’s values and beliefs, illustrating the social and cultural norms experienced by those that lived in the age and allowing for consciousness of time from a distance. Danto’s philosophy of art and Lipovetsky’s historical and philosophical account of hypermodernity highlight the excessive nature of Warhol’s historical conditions, devoid of the traditions that bind, raising new communication ethics questions that demanded embedded responsiveness.

2.1 The Elevation of Banality: Art and Hypermodernity

Hypermodernity, a historical era marked by the recycling of values found in modernity and postmodernity, suggests an excessive attitude toward the present marked by a profound mistrust of the future (Lipovetsky). The rise of hypermodernity philosophically marked a historical consciousness found in the minds of those that lived through the period. This project argues that Warhol offered an artistic project with implications for philosophy of communication ethics that bore witness to the rise of hypermodernity through art as communication. Through his life, works, and communicative interactions with others, Warhol exemplified a hypermodern attitude while, simultaneously, offered a counter that attended to the rising values of excess, consumption, fear of the future, and recycling of tradition. Danto, philosopher of art, offers a bridge between Warhol and hypermodernity through his 1981 work, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace: A Philosophy of Art*, elucidating the conditions from which Warhol’s project as formative for philosophy of communication ethics became possible.

Danto’s contribution to a philosophy of art lies in his creative explication of the role of art in hypermodernity. While Danto does not use the term “hypermodernity” in his work,
Danto’s coordinates situate the value of hypermodernity connected to Warhol’s work. In his ‘Preface,’ Danto seeks out a complete and total reconfiguration and transformation of banality and low art to high, or elite, art. This celebration of the commonplace began with Marcel Duchamp, whose artistic corpus set precedent in the history of art for his ability to transform objects of ordinary everyday living to objects of high or elite art. Danto credits Warhol as contributing the most important philosophical and artistic body of work of all, offering banal objects that celebrated their commonplace status, leaving unquestioned their “potentiality” for appreciation (Danto, Transfiguration vi). He highlights the 1964 ‘Brillo Boxes,’ which had relatively no material difference between those that were created with cardboard in order to carry product (Warhol’s were made with plywood). Thus, Danto seeks to define the notion of art through a Warholian lens; how might a definition of art contain within it the ‘Brillo Boxes,’ which yield no significant differences between the art and the commonplace object?

Danto argues that it is through the impossibility of the definition of art that the term ‘art’ itself has simply ended. However, this conclusion has not effectively destroyed the notion of art, but allowed the idea of art to pass into a philosophy situated within the field of communication. Danto contends that, especially throughout the 1960s and 1970s (during the time that Warhol produced the most), art and philosophy found common purpose in one another, each offering support, and differentiation, for one another. Danto’s project situates art as a philosophy of communication ethics through seven major areas, which will guide this analysis. They include: 1) the distinction between an artwork and a commonplace object, 2) the interplay of content and its causes, 3) art and philosophy, 4) aesthetics, 5) the act of interpretation in defining art, 6) art and representation, and 7) rhetorical dimensions of the definition of art. Each area offers

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1 Duchamp (1887-1968) was a French-American artist, widely regarded as an artistic pioneer in the area of conceptual art during the twentieth century.
philosophical insight into the definition and role of art in the midst of shifting and evolving historical, social, and cultural conditions.

2.1.1 The Distinction between an Artwork and a Commonplace Object

Danto begins his project with the description by Sören Kierkegaard of a painting of the Israelites crossing the Red Sea. Encapsulated within the painting is a single red square, said to represent that the Israelites had already crossed the Red Sea, and that the Egyptians had drowned. For Kierkegaard, the red square represents a mood color, pointing to the agony embedded within the narrative. Danto creates a fictitious gallery opening pivoting upon the “Red Square” as a theme—a Danish artist painted one red square to represent Kierkegaard’s mood, another “Red Square” represented a landscape in Moscow, one famous artist painted a red canvas, and another created a still life of a red table cloth. In Danto’s fictitious gallery, one new individual, J, is appalled at the acceptance of such banality as art, and submits a painting of a red square that resembles the original Danish artist’s squares, titling it ‘Untitled,’ which is subsequently displayed in Danto’s gallery.

J invades Danto’s fictitious gallery while simultaneously maintaining the division between an artwork in the gallery and the sphere of mere real things. After all, J had declared his red square a work of art—and, so, it is a work of art. Danto contends that it is the task of philosophy to explicate this striking conundrum of a gallery filled with “indiscernible counterparts” with “radically distinct ontological affiliations” (Transfiguration 4). He differentiates art and ‘mere real things’ through Ludwig Wittgenstein’s philosophy of action, which considers the distinction between purposeful action and bodily movement. This theory suggests that a purposeful action is bodily movement plus meaning, or \( x \). Through Wittgenstein’s analysis, Danto contends that art is a similar philosophical matter, where art is a material
object—a mere thing—plus meaning, or y. One is able to define both action and art by solving for x and y. Central to this distinction is the mental activity of expression, highlighting the desire for self-expression via artistic communication. An artwork, thus, is expressive because of its ability to create and cause emotional and expressive responsiveness by both artist and audience. Art is intentional, purposeful, and open to interpretation. It is communicative and can be an ethical, given the ramifications for human expressivity in the midst of interpretation and communication.\textsuperscript{ii}

Danto traces the history of art as communication, situated within ethics, by reflecting upon the theoretical advances of Plato and Shakespeare, both of whom considered art to be a reflection of everyday experience. Plato’s argument against mimesis is concerned with the functions of art as the imitation of reality—a twice-removed appearance that is deceptive and harmful (Havelock). Specifically concerned with poetry, Plato charges that a poet strategically attempts to shape, mold, and inform poetry via language and linguistic choices that exaggerate experience. The act of imitating reality, for Plato, produces adornment and an enchantment over the audience that robs the audience from reflective and active engagement. Plato writes that poetry is corruptive for those audience members that ignorant to the reality of poetry’s intent. For Danto, the reflective mirroring done by art can act as “instruments of self-revelation,” which is a different conclusion that Plato arrives at in his inquiry (Danto, \textit{Transfiguration} 9). Art exists as self-revelatory which functions as an avenue for one to see oneself as for an Other—as object and self at the same time, implicating one’s self within an ethical dimension of identity construction and human communication with and for an Other. One is first conscious of one’s

\textsuperscript{ii} Scott Stroud’s discussion of the artful life offered in this project’s chapter 1 further elucidates this point.
self through observing the world, and then comes to realize that one exists as an object in the world for others.

Resemblance does not always suggest imitation, like Danto’s ‘red squares’ exhibition. Rather, Danto argues that one must turn to Aristotle’s pleasure (eudaimonia) principle to further understand the relationship between art and mere things, suggesting that an audience’s knowledge of the art object is enough to ensure that the imitation is still relevant without being a real object. Audiences are capable of distinguishing between imitation (appearances) and reality. Thus, for any art enthusiast, one’s ability to engage a work of art with pleasure is contingent upon that person’s ability to apply a logical distinction between reality and appearance. However, as Danto contends, one’s belief in something that may be false does not necessarily imply that one’s belief is misplaced or irrelevant, which he explicates through an application of Nietzsche’s detailed analysis of representation. In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche distinguishes between two forms of representation. The first, re-presentation, is illustrated through the example of Dionysian rituals, where audiences worked themselves into such a state of frenzy, that they believed Dionysus was present in reality. The second sense of representation is a symbolic reenactment of the rituals or the stories of Dionysus—something that acts as a placeholder for reality. In re-presentation, the thing itself manifests. In representation, it is simply the imitation of the thing itself. However, as art becomes representation rather than re-presentation, it creates an audience, not a participant. One’s interpretation is a central component to the art-life relationship. Art functions in a manner that allows for distance, or what Danto terms psychic distance, involving a bracketing of attitude.

Danto follows Kant’s philosophical thought as the basis for his distinctions between various attitudes and distance. The difference, for Danto, in art and reality is more a difference of
attitudes. This is not a matter of the engagement of content, but, rather, the manner in which we approach the content. Danto introduces ethics, and argues that while one may argue that it is immoral to create a distance toward some ethical objects and, subsequently, immoral to represent issues of this nature in art, he notes that this process of approval and judgment is subject to history. For example, high Baroque art did not approach the subject with any degree of disinterestedness, but aimed to engage a person’s inner being. The relationship between art and mere things takes on an ethical dimension that allows for the transfiguration of values via art seeking to change or preserve attitudes, beliefs, and value systems.

Works of art juxtaposed with the mere thing itself points to the banality of some art objects, yet does not fully explicate the definition of art. Danto considers the dividing line between art and life—the appropriateness of that line—to be a question obscured by contestable philosophical questions lacking accountability for the human capacity for relations. For example, he points to Euripedes who offers ‘rational’ plays as art because they are discontinuous with life itself—subject matters are not found in everyday existence. One does not find a Greek chorus revealing a hero’s thoughts and feelings in everyday life. As time passed on, a hero’s thoughts and feelings were developed through the introduction of banal characters—ordinary persons like “housewives, jealous husbands, difficult adolescents”—that allowed the audience to “assimilate their conduct to the beliefs and practices through which we rationalize one another’s behavior” (Danto, Transfiguration 25). This development in art, however, still cannot answer the question raised by Socrates and Plato: why does one have need to answer questions about right behavior through imitation when life presents the same objects and things?

Danto terms the issue of defining art and dividing art from life the Euripidean dilemma, and seeks to answer this dilemma through attentiveness to content, philosophy, aesthetics,
hermeneutics, representation, and style. This dilemma suggests that once art has produced an object, existing to some degree in reality, the problem of definition arises. By attempting to escape this dilemma through emphasizing “non mimetic elements,” one loses connection to the art in entirety (Danto, *Transfiguration* 29). Art is not distinguished through convention, as certain pieces of art lose social meaning based on changes inherent within culture and society. Danto turns to content and causation, seeking to answer three driving questions. First, what is the relationship between the creation of an invention and art, if art must be discontinuous with reality? Second, what does one say about a work of art that lacks non-mimetic elements? Finally, what is the relationship between intrinsic forms of art and the convention of art? The superficial answer to such questions would be to allow that the definition of art manifests in the conventions associated with the institution of art. Yet, notions of convention lack the ability to articulate purpose in shifting temporal attitudes. Danto’s turn to content and causation suggests that the discernibility of art, and art’s purpose, may not necessarily lie within institutional frameworks.

2.1.2 *The Interplay of Content and Its Causes*

Social norms, cultural considerations, and history situate the relationship between content and that content’s causation. Danto’s example of this lies in the juxtaposition of Cervantes’ *Don Quixote* and Pierre Menard’s rewriting of the classic literary masterpiece—a juxtaposition that Danto explores through the work of Borges in *Pierre Menard, Symbolist Poet*. Danto questions the label of art applied to both Cervantes’ work and Menard’s work. Through a philosophical analysis, Danto arrives at the conclusion that Menard’s work is not a copy of the work, but a retelling of the classic story. Danto argues that the two texts, while resembling one another, exist as products of different historical contexts written by two separate authors coming from distinct backgrounds with particular intensions. The two works are individually important pieces of art
because they are specific to a historical moment. In fact, these external, socio-cultural factors allow the work to have an “essence” (Danto, *Transfiguration* 36). The content of both works have significantly different causations; yet, the works resemble one another in subject matter. Menard’s work is not an imitation—it stands on it’s own.

Danto suggests that this approach to art has manifested in other historical eras. In Holland during the seventeenth century, artists began to recreate and repeat particular subjects for consumption and commercial sale, creating a “stigma” attached to the commodification of art objects (Danto, *Transfiguration* 39). In an act of embedded responsiveness, the ethos of the work as well as the labor and emotion engaged by the artist can be understood solely in connection with the historical, temporal, and geographic conditions of the work. Thus, the historical and philosophical situation grounds an art object’s subject and material content, focusing its appreciation. The ability to transfigure a mere thing into a work of art is an activity dependent upon precedent and social conditions, from which an artist responds to in his or her particular historical conditions.

Danto offers an imagined anecdote of an exhibit of neckties to solidify this point. He describes a “necktie” exhibit filled with the work of a number of artists, including Picasso. He remarks that one man casually suggests that his child could produce a similar necktie—there is relatively no difference between the work of his child and that of Picasso. This returns to Danto to the question of what differentiates these two objects. Following the work of other philosophers, Danto contends: “When we are *living* in a period of history, we do not necessarily know what that period will look like to a future historical consciousness” (*Transfiguration* 43). Differences emerge over time, delineating a work of art from a mere thing. Individual perception does not differentiate between art and mere real things, however; causation of content is
essential. This is the difference between Picasso’s necktie and that of the child’s. While Warhol’s Brillo Boxes received critical acclaim while the original designer of the brillo box did not (in fact, the original artist was forced into advertising due to lack of money), Danto suggests that this would not have been possible during a different time. Context, history, and social norms permit certain value systems, beliefs, and attitudes to manifest and reign over others. The shape of such content and the recognition of its causes depend upon one’s appreciation of these factors. Danto argues that philosophy renders historical insight into defining art as a historical construct, and turns to a detailed discussion of this in order to further redefine and refine the constitution of art.

2.1.3 Art and Philosophy

A philosophy of art that defines content and causation is difficult to conceptualize because the historical progression of a philosophy of art has not seen one philosopher who dedicated himself or herself to art as a sole subject. Philosophy takes as its reference points the embedded subjects of everyday life. However, art intersects human life. Philosophy and art are not reducible to the same thing, but philosophy of art offers definitional properties of art. Danto dissects the relationship between works of art and mere things as a philosophical result of the relationship between content and causation. Yet, philosophy as a whole resists definitions of art. For example, Wittgenstein proposed that philosophy itself is problematic in that is does not attend to the reality of everyday living (Danto, Transfiguration 57). Art resists definition because it defies possibilities for criterion. In addition, one need not give a definition, for art appeals to intuition. Danto turns to Morris Weitz (1916-1981), an American aesthetician granted the Guggenheim Fellowship for Humanities, who contended that art contains no common “properties” but “strands of similarities” (Danto, Transfiguration 27). Thus, any appeal to intuition would be equally as difficult as it depends upon individual capabilities of recognition.
A generalizable definition of art, historically and culturally grounded, emerges during periods of static conceptualization of art. Yet, periods of revolution push art past boundaries and redefine art in ways never been permitted before. Art, thus, is not relational nor abides by relational conventions; this would turn any aesthetic or philosophical mind to mastery of concepts. Art accomplishes a vastly different experience with audiences. Danto returns to the relationship between imitation and art to offer a counter. Imitation does not require an original; an Indian shaman may imitate the conduct of the cultural Fire God though the shaman has not witnessed the conduct of the Fire God. Yet, the imitation is both significant and culturally relevant. Imitations are “vehicles of meaning,” manifesting in two primary ways: sense and reference (Danto, *Transfiguration* 71). Sense and reference philosophically merge in imitation to create communication, bridging together content and causation through resemblance and representation. Imitation and representation act as a language with concepts and notions socially and culturally understood. Danto traces the rise of philosophy and language, primarily through Wittgenstein, to argue that art and imitation have become the manner of representation that language once laid claim over. This gap between art and reality forced philosophy and art to rise together with one another as they both offered contextual reference points for understanding externality.

Danto moves to J. L. Austin’s 1970 work, *Philosophical Papers*, to conclude his linkage between philosophy and art. In this work, Austin argues that communication depends upon the common acknowledge of “stock symbols,” or words; yet those words may not be a part of a language in its traditional sense, but might, for example, “signal flags, etc.” (Austin 55, qtd. in Danto 81). Words are both within the world and external to the world—part of everyday life and representing everyday life at the same time. This is the heart of Danto’s proposal. Danto suggests
that art, much like words, represents real objects and are real things, distanced, philosophically, from their counterparts in a similar manner that language stands at a distance from reality. Representation is not imitation, but is the heart of human and philosophical existence, directly communicating experience. Art is not, for Danto, another language, but ontologically manifests similarly as language. He contends “the philosophical value of art lies in the historical fact that it helped bring that concept to consciousness along with itself” (Danto, *Transfiguration* 83). Art is both an instance of an object in the world, and brings to consciousness a subject matter. This complexity leads Danto to move to aesthetics, creating the distinction between subject matter and composition, a uniquely important facet that further delineates the essence of art.

2.1.4 Aesthetics

Art and aesthetics connect with one another in a philosophy of art, although aesthetics do not contribute to a definition of art. Danto offers that art, as a whole, speaks to current historical conditions through attentiveness to subject. Aesthetics do not offer the definition of what constitutes an artwork. As Danto contends, “we are repelled, disgusted, even sickened by certain works of art” (Danto, *Transfiguration* 92). This does not make an artwork any less noteworthy or important. While a work of art possesses many qualities, those qualities are not necessarily aesthetically pleasing, which makes no different to an artwork’s identification as such. Danto argues that aesthetic sense may be grounded in cultural norms, much like humor or taste, and is a matter of responsiveness, embedded within particular historical contexts. This responsiveness is an ethico-moral question that involves the human person’s capability to relate to the world as well as to the artwork, outside of the five senses of touch, smell, taste, sight, and hearing. Responsiveness involves discernment, emphasizing morality tied to subject outside of material content. No accumulation of knowledge of a subject matter embedded within a cultural climate
can change the aesthetic qualities of that object. Thus, aesthetic responsiveness is often a direct 
result of one’s assumptions about the object, and is not necessarily a result of one’s perceptions 
and senses. The recognition of an artwork is historically embedded, ontological in nature, and 
outside of mere aesthetic appreciation.

To strip an artwork to its material content would destroy any distinction between a work 
of art and a mere real thing. The relationship between the artwork and its material content is as 
deeply complex and “intricate” a relationship as that “between mind and body” (Danto 104). 
Phenomenologically, the audience’s interpretative approach to an artwork recognizes the 
constitution of the thing itself—the artwork itself—that demands response and consideration. 
Danto examines the Ben Day dot method, which operated as a symbol inherent within the artistic 
technique for the period of the Vietnam War, demonstrating in full force Marshall McLuhan’s 
notion of the medium as message. The dot method depicted images of cultural norms through 
mechanical reproduction and media-based techniques. For Danto, artworks are brief glimpses 
into cultural periods, understood only through historical context, transfiguring “spirit” without 
dependency on aesthetic qualities (Danto, Transfiguration 111). In fact, to bypass the historical 
context of an artwork is to lack appreciation for the artwork itself. Danto argues that philosophy 
of art necessitates the act of interpretation grounded in history. Thus, he turns to the role of 
interpretation in understanding art to further conceptualize a definition of art.

2.1.5 The Act of Interpretation in Defining Art

Interpretation guides Danto’s description of the defining characteristics of art, a crucial 
human and communicative element in art acting as a guiding structure. We privilege certain 
elements of an artwork based on our individual interpretations, which gives rise to meaning and 
narrative formations. When one interprets a work of art, the entire artwork is transformed and
takes a different meaning than those works of art that exist without an interpretative lens. Just as a reader interprets a writer, an audience member inextricably intertwines interpretation with the artistic creation. The viewing of an artwork necessitates a judgment and an interpretation, which acts as an explanation and an identification of subject and message that is communication-bound. Individualized interpretations of subject matters within an artwork constitute and transform that work differently. Any neutral description of an object relegates that object to a mere real thing, and not as an artwork. To interpret is to engage in meaningful discussion and evaluation, which is never neutral, never value-free. Every new interpretation reconfigures the work of art, allowing the artwork in question to undergo a transformative experience that takes on new meanings, and new properties, in given historical eras.

A mere real thing becomes an artwork through elevation associated with artistic identification, formulated through the act of interpretation. This still does not resolve Danto’s original question of how the commonplace becomes an artwork, however. He argues that interpretation is limited. Before one can attend to the commonplace, one must acknowledge that one’s interpretation is limited. The limits of interpretation with a work of art are direct results of the beliefs and attitudes of the specific artist. An artist’s ability to contend with subject matter is a direct result of his or her historical moment and the language available. Danto reminds us that “you can call a painting anything you choose, but you cannot interpret it any way you choose, not if the argument holds that the limits of knowledge are the limits of interpretation” (*Transfiguration* 131). When one possesses historical knowledge, one is better able to interpret the situated artwork. For Danto, a theory or philosophy of art is the place to begin to understand how one may interpret a commonplace or banal object in the context of art. Interpretation constitutes the physical environment before us, filled with objects subject to that interpretation,
which subsequently offers a language permitting interpretation to rest within historical responsiveness, even with objects of commonplace or representational natures. The interpretation of art offers a unique experience, different than a simple identification of representation, which Danto turns to in his quest to understand the world of the commonplace.

2.1.6 Art and Representation

Danto differentiates art from other modes of representation through a philosophical analysis distinguished by subject matter—or the content of an object. Genres do not create specific enough boundaries; the avant-garde artists often pushed those boundaries that divide art and representation. Material content may be the same between art and other objects, but can belong to “distinct ontological orders”—for example, whenever two “confusable things” offer “representational propert[ies]: where at least one of the counterparts is about something, or has a content, or a subject, or a meaning” (Danto, Transfiguration 129). Following Nelson Goodman’s theory of repleteness, materiality of art versus a mere real thing lies in the distinction between constitutive and contingent materials. Goodman suggests the difference between a picture and a diagram demonstrates repleteness—various parts, like ink, constitute the diagram, but the ink is a contingent facet of the diagram. The subject matter constitutes a dividing line. For example, Warhol’s Campbell Soup can and the label of the Campbell Soup can are two different objects—visually no different, perhaps, but in terms of content, they are of vastly different concerns.

Pop artists, as a whole, preempt the conversation on content and form in an age of “mass communication” by presenting the “charged images of our history;” these artists turned the medium into the form “in which the message is given” by allowing us consciousness of the structure of the medium (Danto, Transfiguration 146). Art made a point in commenting on the presentation of the content, and not simply about the content itself. Pop art expresses something
about content, in various forms and orders. Danto illustrates this through da Vinci’s experiment with a pane of glass acting as a mediator between the artist and the represented motif. The Impressionist movement found this to be a failed sense of observation, but their failed sense, in reality, acted as a violation of art as representation. Representational art focuses upon the eliciting of experiences through numerous stimulating environmental factors. If one’s aim is illusion, one must ensure that the viewer does not perceive the properties of the medium—like the pane of glass, it is not something we see but something that we see through. Danto argues that this reduces art to its mere content, and content alone cannot define the value of art.

Danto contends that the medium is simply the “glass we see darkly through, a metaphysical cataract, a prosthetic of vision we would like to be able to throw away and see face to face what there is to see” (*Transfiguration* 153). The medium moves the content away from reality itself. Within the artworld, however, as one is able to identify art, one must also utilize language to describe that art—language not always suited for the reality of the object itself. For example, Danto explicates that a drawing of a flower can be powerful and, yet, we would hesitate to describe the flower as powerful as an object itself. The question of language moves to Danto to begin his final descent into the definition of art, which elevates and transfigures the commonplace into those works of art worthy of celebration. He argues that art is a way to see externality through the eyes of another, of the artist who created and who interpreted the world around them. Whether or not an initiation of a mere real thing is good or bad is irrelevant. The artists who sought the form of imitation and representation were not inherently concerned with questions of ‘good’ or ‘bad,’ but sought to express a particular and interpreted reality. Da Vinci’s pane of glass becomes a non-necessity in the realm of art, and Danto suggests that rhetorical
considerations, such as style, expression, and metaphor, are the final places were definitions of art, as distinct from mere real things, emerge.

2.1.7 Rhetorical Dimensions of the Definition of Art

Danto concludes his attempt to differentiate works of art from mere real things by introducing rhetoric, expression, and questions of style as three major concepts that inherently concern the communicative expressions associated with art. The intersection of expression, rhetoric, and style allows Danto to offer a definition of art that distinguishes between it and its motif or outward object. He begins with rhetoric, suggesting that rhetoric creates a particular discourse within an audience propelling responses to the subject or object of the given discourse. Rhetoric is intentional and creates opportunities to persuade or influence audience attitudes. Art is rhetorical and communicative. Like rhetoric (or perhaps because of it), art intends to create attitudes and action in particular audiences. Danto moves to metaphor to articulate this point, suggesting that Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* was highly concerned with emotional responses, or pathos inherent within rhetorical practice that successfully and appropriately aroused attitudes in the audience members. This functions most notably by an enthymeme, creating a gap in communication that the audience must fill as an active participant, motivating an audience to act. It is through rhetoric and metaphor that life becomes transfigured. Art acts as a reflective image for selfhood, metaphorically offering an audience member an interpretative inquiry into everyday existence and elevating the commonplace into otherwise impossible possibilities. To understand a metaphor, however, Danto argues, one must demonstrate a competency in cultural norms.

Metaphors are intentional and structured marks that are contextually driven. While metaphors require a mindset to engage, Danto contends that not all metaphors are intentional, or driven by exercises of the mind. Mental metaphors refer primarily to representations and
references. Quotations, modalities, psychological ascriptions, and texts are forms of metaphors that act as embedded responses to contexts, involving choice and particularity in discernment. For example, Danto argues that the text is “performative” in its nature, embedded in a context allowing metaphor to be understood by an audience (Danto 187). Art acts as a text, allowing the formation of form and content. Metaphor in art is an instance of particularity of expression in both form, or material, and content, or meaning, situated within the cultural norms and values found within historical conditions. Metaphors represent both subjects and the contents of those subjects in the process of standing in as a representation.

Expression is the midpoint between rhetoric and style. To further elucidate this, Danto describes Nelson Goodman’s suggestion that expression is an amplification of metaphoric language and artistic intention. Under this theoretical framework, exemplification is what Plato meant by mimesis, acting as a representative model that stands in place of the mere real thing. However, this presents a philosophical problem in that artworks can metaphorically and literally exemplify emotional as well as expressive grounds. Artistic foundations often require judgment and evaluation on the part of the audience members, helping to identify and explain expression while simultaneously involving the audience. Thus, artwork and expression cannot be reduced to superficial levels, but become metaphors through the act of connecting a represented subject, or content, with the way the representation of the material subject emerges. This leads to Danto to style, tied to the substance of the work.

Rhetoric offers for art the relationship between audience participation and object representation in a similar manner to that by which style offers the relationship between the one who creates the object and the subject represented. Thus, an artwork is about a representation of the world in addition to the way an artist expresses himself or herself and the way that the artist
sees the world. Thus, Danto answers his question—what distinguishes a work of art from a mere real thing? The answer belongs in the sphere of philosophy of communication ethics, with moral judgments. Aristotle makes the distinction between being of temperate character and merely fulfilling the obligations required of temperance; it is a distinction of “acting from and merely acting in conformity” (Danto, *Transfiguration* 203). Just as Socrates worried that Ion was successful due to his manner, and lacked the knowledge or art to generalize moral solutions, an artist’s style reveals an artist’s character, acting rhetorically through the artwork itself. Style is a property of the artist, and is the artist. The artist, philosophically, is also simply a representational system of the world—and a philosophy of art acknowledges that representational art mirrors representational man. An artist’s style is the way in which he presents the world. However, there exists an inward nature of those individuals that live through a given time period, which affords an aesthetic eye and mirrors the internal and external spheres of the human person. Style offers a glimpse into the artist’s historical ability to engage in representation, enabling the capacity of an artist to allow audience members to experience their particular interpretation of the world. Art encapsulates the human practices available as communication for others to interpret.

Danto ends with a return to Warhol, offering a bridge between art as communication and Warhol’s creative feud situated within a philosophy of communication ethics. He returns to Warhol’s *Brillo Box*, which revolutionized the artworld by challenging the culturally and social acceptable values by permitting the commonplace object to be celebrated as high art. History permitted the introduction of the *Brillo Box*, as distinct from any commercial brillo box, to enter the structures of art. Danto explicates:

As a work of art, the Brillo Box does more than insist that it is a brillo box under surprising metaphoric attributes. It does what works of art have always done—
externalizing a way of viewing the world, expressing the interior of a cultural period, offering itself as a mirror to catch the conscience of our kings. (*Transfiguration* 208).

Warhol’s Brillo Box did more than elevate the commonplace object of a brillo box through metaphor and rhetoric. The artwork exemplifies the definition of art by making external a person’s interpretation and perspective on the everyday world. This externalizes the internal experience of a historical period. Danto acknowledges art as communication, offering historical commentary on both the artist who creates and the people who lived. Warhol’s contribution, however, is a unique introduction of the commonplace into the common psyche and the world of high or elite art. This project questions: what historical conditions allowed Warhol’s artistry to influence a philosophy of communication ethics situated in what Gilles Lipovetsky offered as *hypermodernity*. This historical condition emerged in coincidence with Warhol’s birth as an artist, noted by Bockris, which occurred upon his arrival in New York City. A turn to hypermodernity further elaborates Danto’s project and opens up the hermeneutic space that allows for Warhol’s creative feud to be understood within the context of a philosophy of communication ethics.

### 2.2 The Recycling of the Past and Celebration of the Present in Hypermodernity

Danto’s definition of art allows for artistic movements, as well as artists, to gain access to the world of high or elite art through historical conditions that transfigure commonplace values into norms worthy of celebration and commemoration. His conclusion offers a definition of art that understands Warhol’s creative feud as both artistically important and crucial to understanding philosophy of communication ethics in hypermodernity. Lipovetsky offers a philosophical account of hypermodernity, which does not signal an emergence of a new historical moment. Rather, it announces the recycling of modern and postmodern values,
manifesting as a shift in ethical and moral valuation based upon communicative patterns and cultural norms. Hypermodernity emerged with the transformation of society during the 1950s, at a time in which consumption exploded in society as a mass culture phenomenon, giving the historical conditions upon which Warhol was able to emerge as the Pop Artist. Hypermodernity “contaminate[d] society as a whole,” particularly during the decade of the 1960s (Charles, “Paradoxical Individualism” 9). Charles and Lipovetsky consider the various waves of consumption and hypermodernism, offering insight to the norms and values that characterized society as a whole.

In the midst of the blurring of public and private domains (Arendt, The Human), hyperconsumption, a symptom of hypermodernity labeling the manic need to consume for individual pleasure, led to an absorption of “hedonistic logic” (Charles, “Paradoxical Individualism” 11). This turn replaced traditional structures with casual and individualistic attitudes toward belief structures, economic success, and public discourse. This section, “The Recycling of the Past and Celebration of the Present in Hypermodernity,” will offer the work of Gilles Lipovetsky and, in particular, his essay “Time Against Time: Or the Hypermodern Society,” through major metaphors to reveal the significance of Lipovetsky’s work. First, hypermodernity offers a philosophical and historical context. Next, the metaphor of temporality considers the interplay of past, present, and future in connection to communication ethics. Subsequently, the metaphor of self-expression situates hypermodernity in its entirety. Finally, the metaphor of consumption ultimately argues that hypermodernity privileges the present in constant preoccupation with the individual.

Hypermodernity emerged through a philosophical and historical trajectory attentive to the fluxes and fluidity of temporality and existential/moral questions. In a foreword to the 2005
republication of Lipovetsky’s work, Pierre-Henri Tavoillot, French philosopher and lecturer at the Paris-Sorbonne University—Paris IV, argued that hypermodernity is a recycling of modern tradition, sentiment, and values, engaging both a staunch individualism and a fragile inclination toward collective inclusivity, while simultaneously relying upon a postmodern foundation. Lipovetsky’s work offers the coordinates needed to consider hypermodernity in the context of philosophy of communication ethics. This examination points to the situated need for embedded responsiveness in such historical conditions.

2.2.1 Hypermodernity: The Recycling and Revamping of Modern and Postmodern Values

Hypermodernity is uniquely positioned as a historical, cultural, and communicative framework, recycling values within a perspective attentive to excess and pursuit of individual desires. Hypermodernity bridges modern values and postmodern cultural and social norms and characteristics. Modernity ushered into cultural consciousness a preoccupation with the future as a source of possibility and opportunity. However, promises of individual autonomy led to “total alienation” of the human population rather than liberation, dependent upon technological advancements, and “market liberalism” permitted consumption began to reign (Charles, “Paradoxical Individualism” 3). Modernity offered new coordinates that successfully shifted personal and cultural viewpoints and perspectives on lifestyle, communication, and ethical/moral questions. Ultimately, modernity created the conditions from which the catastrophes of the modern moment were possible. Values of individualism and belief in the future subjected cultural and social norms to temporal rejections of the past and traditional structures in favor of individual possibilities.

Postmodernity’s emergence coincided with the total restructuring of social time—from a “capitalism of production” to an “economy of consumption” (Lipovetsky 36). Lipovetsky
acknowledges Jean-François Lyotard’s 1979 work, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, which contributes the linkage between postmodernity and temporal orientation toward the present. Postmodern values rejected institutional authority in favor of individual aims through the liberation of social constraints and roles. Lipovetsky argued that a modern logic fixated on fashion extended into postmodernity, where consumption was not status seeking, but also without meaning nor structure. Under a postmodern framework, the future lost its splendor, and society lost political consciousness in the midst of total preoccupation with mass communication. The present completely dominated all other temporal pockets by disregarding and substituting community characterized by traditional roots with private interests within the present. Globalization and information technologies combined to erase the space-time distinction, increasing a manic desire for accumulation and commodification. An intensification of this postmodern spirit led to sensitivity and insecurity in the present, manifesting in the breakdown of institutional authority and a turning inward by individuals within society to make sense of a fragmented reality.

All of life morphed into ‘hyper’ overdrive with the introduction of hypermodernity. Driven by three constitutive modern goods (the market, increased efficiency in the realm of technology, and individualized autonomy), hypermodernity is a constant reintegration and development of past presumptions, molded and reinterpreted to fit the logic of consumption. Hypermodernity philosophically engages a new orientation to temporality. This new temporal preoccupation privileges the present over future opportunities, disregarding any conceptualization of public goods as well as privileging both individual and corporate interests without regard for community. Hypermodernity recycles the past by breaking from tradition and
privileging individual interests, rejecting institutional authority and engaging a fragmentation of narratives manifesting as a celebration of the present, forsaking the future.

2.2.2 Temporality: The Interplay of Past and Present and an Uncertainty of Future

The emergence of hypermodernity signaled a new moment of unrest, ambiguity, and insecurity in the unknown, the unreachable, and the unclear. Hypermodernity rejects modern optimism with future opportunities due to the risk and uncertainty associated with an ever-changing communicative and ethical landscape. No longer would faith in the future suffice, as there was no guarantee of anything better than what the present offered. Progress was a false master, making promises met with ambivalence toward their reality. Progress also manifested a series of man-made disasters and horrific incidents (i.e., the Holocaust, nuclear weaponry, etc.), making the future seem less glorious and more problematic. This new temporal orientation that privileged future opportunities reduced life to that which was known and controllable—the present—subsequently inviting a disillusioned attitude toward time and resources. This new temporal orientation involves a short-term attentiveness and a lack of imagination in regards to future opportunities and circumstances.

In this new model of temporality, the hypermodern man “has not replaced faith in progress by despair and nihilism,” but with an “unstable, fluctuating confidence” that is situational (Lipovetsky 45). The hypermodern man cannot abide by a carpe diem mentality due to the overwhelming ambiguity of the future containing within it the risk of anything but happiness. Lipovetsky warns that the hypermodern individual is still oriented to a future that privileges self-centered pursuit of interests and ideals. However, that future folds into a present in which the hypermodern individual hyper-prepares for a life of risk. The hypermodern man attends to questions of present pleasures and present priorities in the quest for ensuring that a
future lacks ambiguity. Such questions illuminate the temporal dichotomy inherent within the hypermodern man’s uncertainty with the future and preoccupation with present and individualized interests. Such interests lead, explicitly, toward a recycling of romantic notions of the importance of self-expression and the pursuit of the announcement of individualized self-identity in the public sphere. As one seeks to determine answers to the questions that drive the hypermodern man, social actors emphasize the inward nature of the self-expression of identity, depicted as the only avenue to realize such interests.

2.2.3 A Revamping of Individual Self-Expression

The privileging of individual self-expression and self-consciousness forces decisions between a present and a future, driven by the prioritizing of life at a constant crossroads of collective participation and individualized self-expression. Hypermodernity is inherently concerned with the ability to perform one’s selfhood while, at the same time, increasingly turns time into a rare commodity, which, for Lipovetsky, becomes a new form of socio-economic differences and class struggles. As modern traditions and postmodern institutions lost authority over collective societies, time became unique to an individual’s access to it. This manifested in a hyperperformative culture imbued with a preoccupation with consumption for an individual’s sake, manifested in the midst of cyber-proximity. Performance, access to time, and individual self-expression were luxuries afforded to those that could afford to consume them. Hyperactive performance offered a “frenzy of ‘always more,’” granting individuals “social visibility” and a “new mass legitimacy” (Lipovetsky 55). This performance-obsessed culture created the conditions for individual feelings of inadequacy. Less collective demands for normalized behaviors and an increase in social mobility allowed for the opportunity to feel less than or not a
part of, driving the hypermodern individual to hyperperform to an even greater degree, and exhausting oneself in the process.

The hypermodern privileging of self-expression in the midst of one’s present manifests in the collective prioritization of consumptively memorializing the past. In age where anyone is granted access to the ability to self-express, hypermodernity belongs to everyone, where we collectively share in past heritage, and, subsequently, the commemoration of this heritage. Lipovetsky argues that this is most notable in the museums and memorials that are marked as cultural and tourist destinations. Hypermodern society celebrates past traditions by memorializing our shared history through a human-made expansion of commemorative sites linked to an increase in desires to turn a profit. Hypermodern commemoration demonstrates a new spirit of commodification in which consumption is mass entertainment and pure spectacle. Under this framework, consumption of leisure and memory as commodity perpetuates a modern and postmodern consumerism bridging this new temporal orientation with hyperperformance and new social inequalities.

The hyperperformance of one’s individualized identity coupled with collective consumption of the past relegates the pursuit of religious narratives and spiritual identity to individualized decisions. Religious traditions are celebrated in a greater individualized manners with an “intensely emotional set of beliefs and practices,” reflecting the recycling of tradition in a new hypermodern manner (Lipovetsky 64). One cannot consider such an emotional charge as an eradication of religion but, rather, the emergence of a subjective focus on religion which gives rise to one’s ability to feel a sense of communal participation. Lipovetsky contends that communal participation becomes a “means of constructing oneself” in that one became one through interaction with another, announcing identity by affirming oneself with others
(Lipovetsky 64). In a perpetual quest of self-realization and identity, one rejects all that could
potentially bring about feelings of unhappiness or unsettlement. A risky or uncertain future
prompts feelings of discontent and questioning. Hypermodernity acknowledges a postmodern
orientation toward our past coupled with hypersensitivity to the roles of the marketplace that
manifests through a number of hypermodern preoccupations, including consumption outside of
the pursuit of class status and orientated toward individualized self-expression.

2.2.4 Consumption, Tradition, and Hypermodern Status

Through his philosophical project, Lipovetsky cautions that the past no longer offers
traditional and institutional structures providing foundations for norms and social expectations.
Commemoration exists as a commodity, the past is “exploited for commercial ends,” and one’s
orientation toward time and tradition became a nostalgic means of consumption (Lipovetsky 60).
Excess drives hypermodernity, and this includes consumption, manifesting as an individualized,
emotional activity that fulfills much more than one’s class status. Consumption serves to express
one’s identity in this historical moment. Hyperconsumption frees the hypermodern man from the
ties of tradition, spending money with no inclination for saving and lacking any meaning, which
would inherently provide structure and articulate a belief system or institutional framework from
which one engages the present. Charles, influenced by Lipovetsky, warns that the indefinite reign
of consumption is false, and it is not the only principle that guides the hypermodern society,
contrary to its increased stronghold over individual thoughts and behaviors. Rather, the increased
fragmentation of culture and society has eliminated ideologies forcing citizens to make choices
housed within those ideologies, leading to individualized communication based upon preference
and will. However, we are not, as a society, devoid of ethical systems. We care, perhaps more so
than ever, about the value of human life and human rights. Charles argues that society obsesses
with superficial, evidenced in hyperconsumption. However, as a society, we have entered into an increasingly responsive communicative environment opening up opportunity for choice and action through new media. Traditions find legitimacy through individualized self-fulfillment; the institutional structures from which they once emerged are delegitimized through choice and individual preference exercised by consumers.

Lipovetsky’s work announces a significant philosophical contribution to the understanding of philosophy of communication ethics through a historical and cultural perspective and analysis. Hypermodernity, offering historical context, considers the major metaphors of temporality, self-expression, and consumption to argue that the preoccupation with the individual has manifested in total obsession with the present at the expense of all else. Lipovetsky’s project provides the historical ground that situates Danto’s project. For Lipovetsky, hypermodernity is a “technocratic and market-driven spiral that is accompanied by a unanimous endorsement of the common roots of humanist and democratic values” (Lipovetsky 68). In a world no longer focused upon rejecting the past but simultaneously afraid of the future, individuals find selfhood in a present moment that is the convergence and recycling of a multitude of modern and postmodern attitudes and values. These historical conditions act as the ground from which embedded responsiveness is crucial in identifying the larger questions that drive philosophy of communication ethics.

2.3 Implicating Art as Communication in Hypermodernity

Embedded responsiveness requires the appropriate historical conditions that give rise to relevant questions driving communication practices. Lipovetsky’s insights shed light onto the communicative power of Warhol’s life and works, which unknowingly announce the emergence of hypermodernity. His metaphors of hypermodernity including recycling of modern and
postmodern values, temporality, individual self-expression, and consumption, points to the increased preoccupation with individualized pursuits in a controllable present that is characterized by everyday existence. For example, consumption is no longer the pursuit of status, but the pursuit of the self in one’s everyday situatedness. Danto offers a philosophy of art that bridges the realm of art into the context of hypermodernity. His work suggests a link between hypermodernity and Warhol’s project, one in which art is utilized as a communicative medium through which the commonplace is glorified as both high art and a means by which the present is further celebrated. The appropriate historical conditions—hypermodernity—permit such work into the common consciousness of culture.

Danto’s definition of art suggests that art transfigures the commonplace, which is only permitted through particular historical conditions. Likewise, Lipovetsky identifies those historical conditions that allowed Warhol’s art to act as a creative feud with influence over a philosophy of communication ethics, transforming the commonplace. Warhol identified cultural values embedded within culture and society that others could neither perceive nor adequately respond to with full attention. Noted art critic and gallery assistant Ivan Karp, who knew Warhol personally, noted that Warhol acted as an “observer […] outside of himself […] able to see himself and the world” (qtd in Bockris 421). Warhol’s observations lend insight into a philosophy of communication ethics attentive to the everyday act of living. He created an “iconic image of what life was all about,” responding to the embedded communication ethics questions and cultural norms and values unreflected upon by society (Danto, Andy Warhol 4). Warhol’s observations led to a response to historical and cultural conditions that were shaping the communicative landscape and forever changing the questions that continue to drive philosophy of communication ethics. This communicative landscape, shaped by Lipovetsky’s philosophical
insights concerning hypermodernity, announces the historical conditions that manifest in Warhol’s work. In an era of hyperperformance, excess of consumption, and preoccupation with a present that manifests in individual self-expression, hypermodernity serves as the historical conditions that Warhol responded to in his situated connection with that particular culture and society.

Danto suggests that our embeddedness within a historical moment has both an interiority and externality that requires different conscious approaches to identifying values and communicative patterns. It is only through the passing of time that we become conscious of the way we have seen the world, and are able to reflect upon that. Lipovetsky’s philosophical project points to a historical condition of excess, consumption, and superficiality captured, commented upon, and created in Warhol’s artistic corpus. His art was work of embedded responsiveness. Situated in hypermodernity, Warhol created art that transfigured the commonplace concepts of consumption and individualized self-expression rooted in modern and postmodern values and norms. Never stepping away from religious traditions, Warhol’s work offers a response to hypermodern historical conditions through art. Warhol’s project attends to the dissolution of the separation between art and life, revealing and mirroring the social values privileged, protected, and promoted within American culture. Warhol’s creative feud embodies the emergence of Danto’s philosophy of art, suggesting that the definition of art is dependent upon what history permits, and Lipovetsky’s philosophy. Hypermodern conditions paved the way for Warhol to give rise to his art and works, with significant implications for a philosophy of communication ethics.
Chapter 3:
André Warhola to Andy Warhol and Back Again

André Warhola, later known as Andy Warhol, is an exemplar of the philosophical work outlined by communication ethicists, scholars, and philosophers such as Charles Taylor, Scott Stroud, and John Dewey. Through these voices, this project argues that art is inherently communicative and rhetorical, suggesting embedded values and norms in deeply human ways. One’s sources of selfhood are never static, often dictated through cultural constraints and freedoms. Arthur Danto argued the definition of art is contingent upon the historical conditions permitting certain forms of art to enter into cultural consciousness. Gilles Lipovetsky offered a philosophical portrait of hypermodernity, the historical frame in which Warhol worked, that glorified modern individualism while, simultaneously, found influence in postmodern fragmentation. Throughout his fifty-eight years of life, the identity of André Warhola was not static, shifting from Andy Warhol and back again, communicating sources of his selfhood influencing his life, works, and relationships that manifested in an aesthetic attentiveness to a philosophy of communication ethics. Warhol responded to questions immersed in hypermodernity. He dedicated his life to the creation of art that revealed what culture privileged, making evident overlooked cultural norms. Warhol could not separate his art from the social constraints and boundaries inherent within American culture. His own behaviors, silent and reflective, appear in retrospect as a “warning” (Koch 15). Such scholarly considerations act as a constructive hermeneutic entrance into understanding the unique contribution of Andy Warhol in philosophy of communication ethics.

The performative biographical portrait of Andy Warhol in the context of hypermodernity, depicts a historical moment allowing for the rise of his work, influencing a philosophy of
communication ethics. The explication of Warhol’s biography commences by considering the content of his works, separated into four subsections: 1) *From André Warhola to Andy Warhol: August 1928 to 1959*; 2) *Warhol and the Revolutionary 1960s*; 3) *Chasing Celebrity in the 1970s*; and 4) *Back to André Warhola: A Hypermodern Quest in the 1980s*. A detailed examination of Warhol’s biography reveals a hypermodern quest to uncover sources of selfhood in the midst of shifting and fragmenting narratives, unveiling Warhol’s contribution to understanding philosophy of communication ethics in hypermodernity.

This performative biographical sketch argues that Warhol’s sources of selfhood were constantly in flux, reflecting a hypermodern philosophy of communication ethics that he communicated about through his highly rhetorical artistic corpus. Follow Danto’s call and the work situated within philosophy of communication ethics, hypermodernity offered Warhol an interpretative avenue into his creative feud, which encapsulated social, cultural, and communicative norms, values, and ethics. Yet, Warhol’s body of work and life were never static, and morphed along with the historical landscape. Bob Colacello, one of the editors of *Interview* magazine, argued that Warhol was a complicated yet historical individual, allowing his achievement of fame as an artist to morph his ideals of his sources of selfhood. However, in 1968, Warhol experienced a life-altering event that would bring him back to reality again, changing his view of the world and his ability to engage with others. Colacello suggests that the years of his life were a roller coaster ride of being André Warhola, then Andy Warhol, and back again, finding sources of selfhood that converged in his artistic corpus as the Pop Art artist.

### 3.1 The Life of André Warhola

Understanding André Warhola depends upon the variety of voices and figures that witnessed his historical life. This performative biography, situated as an in-depth discussion of
both his life and works, commences with and through four primary voices: 1) Victor Bockris, 2) Arthur Danto, 3) Stephen Koch, and 4) Bob Colacello. Known as one of the most important biographies produced on Warhol, Victor Bockris’ 1989 work, Warhol: A Biography, offers an intimate portrait of Warhol through a man that knew and interacted extensively with Warhol. Arthur Danto, art critic and professor emeritus at Columbia University, penned Andy Warhol in 2009, one of the only philosophical discussions of the life and works of Andy Warhol. Danto credits Warhol’s 1964 showing at the Stable Gallery, which Danto attended, as a “transformative experience,” turning him into the philosopher and art critic that we know today (Danto, Andy Warhol xiii). Stephen Koch, eventual chairman of the Writing Division of the School of Arts at Columbia University and associate of Warhol’s during the Silver Factory years, offers an in-depth and personal portrait of Warhol and his films of the 1960s, attentive to Warhol’s biography as a driving influence. Finally, Bob Colacello, one of Warhol’s closest business allies, offers a personal account of his time as editor of Warhol’s inter/VIEW magazine, revealing an intimate biographical sketch of Warhol. These four voices converge to offer a number of perspectives on Warhol’s life.

3.1.1 From André Warhola to Andy Warhol: August 1928 to 1959

André Warhola was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on August 6, 1928 to Ondrej and Julia Warhola in a small home located between the Monongahela River and Pittsburgh’s Hill District. André and his brothers, Paul (born June 26, 1922) and John (born May 31, 1925), were born into a difficult historical period for the city of Pittsburgh, one unrecognizable for residents of the city today. Pittsburgh’s strategic location at the confluence of three rivers made the location ideal for facilitating the transportation of coal and steel across an industrial United States. Capitalistic corruption plagued Pittsburgh, inherent within governmental structures. A
city of stark differences, a group of millionaire industrialists (Carnegie, Frick, Heinz, Mellon, and Westinghouse) made fortunes while a majority of families struggled in the midst of the Great Depression. In addition to the deplorable living conditions (with smog so great that cars were forced to turn on headlights during the day), extreme immigrant discrimination threatened social cohesion. Deepening social divides and lack of concern with human rights Pittsburgh was an exaggeration of “the twentieth-century American spirit: confidence, drive, ambition, greed, power, naïveté, hope, chance, corruption, perversity, violence, entropy, chaos, madness, and death” (Bockris 21). These themes would manifest in totality in Warhol’s later rhetorical work.

The history of Warhol’s parents would significantly inform Warhol’s own selfhood. Warhol’s father, Ondrej, was born in Mikova on November 28, 1889, a town in the Carpathian Mountains region of Eastern Europe known as Ruthenia. Ruthenia is now where many Eastern European counties’ (Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Poland) boundaries converge. As historically impoverished people, Ruthenians lacked identity. The boundaries of their homeland constantly shifted and morphed due to international struggles, considered neither Russian nor Ukrainian nor Czech. Ondrej immigrated to Pittsburgh at seventeen years old, only to return to Mikova two years later to find a bride. That bride was Julia Zavacky, born in Mikova on November 17, 1892. Ondrej and Julia lived in Mikova for three years after their marriage, and separated for nine years beginning in 1912 while Ondrej moved to the United States, again, to serve in the war and to work. In 1921, Julia joined Ondrej in Pittsburgh.

While Warhol lived in extremely impoverished circumstances, several lifelong traditions enriched his life. Julia, a nurturing and kind woman, was devoted to her Byzantine Catholic faith that she instilled in her three sons, like most Ruthenians. So important was this faith to Julia that, twenty-two days after his birth, Julia brought Warhol to St. John Chrysostom Greek Catholic
Church for baptism and confirmation (Warhola, “Certificate”). Julia starkly contrasted Warhol’s father, who worked tirelessly and was often noticeably absent from the household. In his absence, Paul, Warhol’s older brother, took control of the decisions related to Warhol, and enrolled him into first grade at the tender age of four years old. Warhol was sensitive and rebellious, known for swearing at his family members and friends, while, at the same time, unable to deal with public conflict. After a confrontation, as a four year old, with a young girl at his elementary school, Julia made the decision to pull Warhol from the school system, drawing pictures with him, instead. Eventually, the Warhola’s purchased a home in the city neighborhood of Oakland. This move would characterize Warhol’s experience of Pittsburgh until his move to New York City.

As a young boy, Warhol made friends with young girls. His personality seemed to merge with his female companions—he continued to form relationships with women more easily than with men throughout his life. Warhol went to films and ice cream bars with female companions, collecting publicity photos of stars that later manifested in a preoccupation with both celebrity and accumulation. As early as six years old, Warhol was a competent artist. However, he suffered from a variety of physical ailments, which would prevent him from regularly attending school. In autumn of 1936, Warhol succumbed to St. Vitus’s Dance, a disorder of the nervous system. While no permanent physical damage occurs during the intense spasms of St. Vitus’s dance, the onset can cause severe psychological damage (Bockris 37). For over a month, Warhol did not leave his home. When he suffered a relapse of St. Vitus’s Dance shortly after recovery, Julia became even more eccentrically protective, and Warhol’s “two-sided character” emerged—a sweet and humble boy coupled with an “arrogant little prince” (Bockris 41). This dual-nature
personality led his Factory co-workers to label him Drella in the 1960s—a combination of Dracula and Cinderella.

In 1942, Ondrej died at the age of fifty-five after a bout of jaundice from drinking contaminated water at a job site in Wheeling, West Virginia. One of Ondrej’s dying wishes, to his son John, was to send André to college—he, above Ondrej’s other two sons, had the most aptitude and intelligence. Warhol refused to see his father’s body throughout the duration of the funeral, and this fear of death would eventually lead him to some of his most important work. Julia began to depend upon Warhol in much the same way that he had depended upon her as a child. Their shared Byzantine Catholic faith would remain one of the most important traditions that Warhol continually engaged. A devout and practicing Catholic, Warhol attended mass with Julia every Sunday (and continued that practice after her death). As Colacello would describe it, Warhol would spend hours in his church, staring at “the iconostasis, the screen that closes off the inner altar in Eastern Rite churches,” which influenced later portraits (17). As late as 1984, Warhol received various religious materials from family, pointing to his personal opinions, attitudes, and beliefs. For example, on April 14, 1984, his aunt Anne sent him an envelope that contained a missal, several prayer cards, a letter, an Easter card with three Latin masses, and a brochure (Warhol, “Envelope”). Such deep-seated commitment to the Byzantine Catholic tradition would remain a crucial element to Warhol’s life in New York City.

In the 1930s and 1940s, the millionaires living in Pittsburgh, including the Carnegies, Mellons, and Fricks, were among the leading art collectors in the world, and opened many museums, schools, and centers. Warhol lived in the right moment at the right time. As a young child, even toward the end of his high school career, Warhol attended Carnegie Museum art classes, taught on Saturday mornings, and led by Joseph Fitzpatrick, an artist who would
eventually teach Warhol at Carnegie Tech. In September of 1941, André entered Schenley High School, where he would constantly draw in preparation for his collegiate and professional career. Increasingly active in his social life as well, Warhol sought out popular American culture as influence and inspiration. He worked tirelessly to make money in order to visit the movies, listen to the radio, and read the press.

Upon graduation from Schenley High School, Warhol attended the Carnegie Institute of Technology (now Carnegie Mellon University). Located at the edge of Oakland near the mansions in the city where the millionaires lived, Warhol found himself immersed in the type of culture that he longed for as an impoverished young man in an immigrant family. In his freshman year, André struggled with his coursework, and eventually, the university dropped Warhol from their enrollment for his lackluster academic performance. Granted probationary status for the summer, the review board tasked Warhol with producing work to submit for readmission in the fall. As a response, Warhol joined his brother, Paul, whose business of selling fruit and vegetables took him door to door throughout the city, desiring to produce a series of sketches of Pittsburgh’s neighborhoods. In an article published in “The Pittsburgh Press” on November 24, 1946, the journalist describes Warhol as an artist who utilized satire in depicting the housewives he saw every day, earning Warhol an award at the Leisser Art Fund. His work prompted readmission into Carnegie Tech for his sophomore year.

Warhol met a number of like-minded artists during this time, including Philip Pearlstein, Leonard Kessler, and George Klauber. He worked closely with friends, and rented a studio in 1947 where he mastered the blotted-line technique that he incorporated in his own commercial work throughout the 1950s. The blotted-line technique permitted Warhol to remove himself one step from his art, as his own hand was not responsible for the final product. Blotted-line
techniques were a series of steps through which one took two pieces of paper and laid them side-by-side with one another. Then, one would attach the two papers with a piece of tape, and draw an image on the right-hand sheet. Before the ink dried, one would fold the piece over onto the next sheet, creating the final product. Warhol would take this distance one step further, finding objects in photographs to blot, “removing personal comment from the work” and, instead, keeping the attention on the design of the work (Bockris 70). Warhol’s work received significant attention. In the spring of 1948, Larry Vollmer of Joseph Horne’s, Pittsburgh’s premier department store, hired Warhol, where he painted window backdrops. Between his commercial work and the work that he submitted in March of 1949 for graduation, Warhol began to transition into Andy Warhol, Pop Artist, experimenting at this time with changing his name. Warhol received his Bachelor of Fine Arts in pictorial design from Carnegie Institute of Technology on June 16, 1949—conferred to Andrew Warhola (Warhola, “Carnegie Tech”).

Upon graduation, Warhol made the decision to leave Julia and move to New York City with Philip Pearlstein.

André entered an art scene in the New York City of June of 1949 in the midst of abstract expressionism. During this period, advertising was expanding to a $9 billion industry, privileging the persuasive in an increasingly commoditized world. Warhol sought out commercial assignments for magazines, including Glamour magazine, where he received his first assignment—shoes. In the commercial art sector, competition was fierce, and did not pay well, but the abstract expressionists—the elite artists—rejected Warhol for his overtly homosexual charisma as well as his penchant for the commercial. By 1951, Warhol had begun to create illustrations for various publications, exploring dark commercial themes of “hidden aggression and loneliness, status seeking and sex appeal” dominating advertising in the 1950s (Bockris 89).
Such themes explored by Warhol resulted due to the overt rejection of open homosexuality in 1950s America. Warhol lived a life of isolation while also exploring an underground dedicated to this intimate facet of his selfhood. His art began to reflect this extensively.

Known affectionately as the Cockroach Period, Warhol’s deplorable living conditions during the 1950s gave rise to one of his favorite anecdotes to share later in life. During an appointment with Camel Snow, the editor-in-chief at Harper’s Bazaar, Snow opened Warhol’s portfolio to find a cockroach, which crawled out and scurried across her desk. Warhol would claim that she felt such sympathy for him that she immediately offered him work. This period was short-lived, however. By the spring of 1952, Warhol was producing work, and his first opening took place on June 16, 1952 at Iolas’ Hugo Gallery. Attended by only a handful of Warhol’s closest friends, Warhol did not sell any art. Simultaneously, Julia moved to New York City to be closer to him. The two shared a bedroom in their small living space on East 75th Street. Julia dedicated herself to Andy’s success, while Andy isolated her from his friends and coworkers. Like many who came before him (Allen Ginsberg, Tennessee Williams, Truman Capote, and Elvis Presley), Warhol appeared to be “haunted” by his mother (Bockris 98). Many argued that the relationship between Andy and Julia was not a healthy one. However, Julia served as assistant, motivator, and companion to Andy throughout many decades of his career.

By the summer of 1953, Warhol had made enough money, through projects with a number of different outlets (Vogue, Ladies’ Home Journal, and Harper’s Bazaar) to sublet a new, spacious apartment on Lexington Avenue. This move ushered in a new era, where Andy and Julia cared for an overwhelming cat population (between eight and twenty) and fought regularly about Warhol’s personal life. Warhol met his first love, Alfred Carlton Willers (Carl), in 1953. Willers ushered in many important activities for Warhol. They attended many parties
(emulating the stars that Warhol admired so). Carl even convinced Warhol to begin buying gray wigs (so that no one would know his age) after he began to go bald, a practice that he would continue throughout his life. It was during this time that Julia developed a drinking problem. 

Warhol would never develop one of his own, but frequently attended Alcoholics Anonymous meetings for being a “para-alcoholic,” or a person that depends upon relationships with alcoholics, “enjoying their craziness while acting as if he is trying to get them to stop drinking” (Bockris 107). These problematic and varied relationships would only increase and develop as Warhol continued on his path to fame and fortune.

In 1954, Warhol had had a showing at the Loft Gallery on three separate occasions, and hired Vito Giallo until 1955 as his first assistant. Warhol began to focus on outward appearance (going to the gym regularly and attending to his skin condition that was developed during his struggle with St. Vitus Dance), while, simultaneously, pushing his career in commercial art to new levels. He eventually secured an account with a weekly ad for I. Miller, a shoe store in New York City, in the New York Times in 1955. After he and his assistant, Giallo, parted ways, Warhol hired Nathan Gluck, who would work with him for the subsequent nine years. During this time, Warhol continued to draw shoes with overt homosexual tones to them, a clear indication of his desire to defy the overt standards of artistic convention. In February of 1956, he opened a show in David Mann’s Bodley Gallery from a portfolio entitled “Drawings of A Boy Book,” a rejection of the culture’s own rejection of homosexuality. He continued upon this trajectory, opening the “Crazy Golden Slippers” show at the Bodley Gallery in 1956, shown after in a double-page write-up in Life magazine. Into 1957, Warhol obtained the Art Director’s Club Award for his shoe advertisements. This medal secured his place in the field as one of the most
“sought-after commercial artists in the field” (Koch 140). His commercial success led him to establish Andy Warhol Enterprises to protect his earnings.

By the time that 1959 arrived, Warhol had been in New York City for a decade, facing continued ostracism by the art world for both his overt homosexuality and success in advertising. Yet, Warhol thrived upon a hypermodern excessive drive for more in order to grip a form of identity in the public sphere allowed him transformation, personally and professionally, by openly acknowledging his sexuality. As Danto suggested, historical conditions make possible the transformation of the commonplace, and Warhol’s contribution understanding a philosophy of communication ethics in hypermodernity emerged through historical undertones, permitting his individuality and sources of selfhood to drive his career. This paralleled the rise of Pop Art, coined in 1958 by British critic Lawrence Alloway, who believed that the artifacts of Pop Art were worthy of serious study and attention (Danto, *Andy Warhol* 26). While the term did not originally mean exclusively painting and film, it eventually became synonymous with the work done by artists such as Johns, Rauschenberg, and Warhol. Pop Art exploded on to the scene as a direct reaction to abstract expressionism. Its emergence signaled a break with postmodern fragmentation while still maintaining and commenting upon the “spirit of Modernism”—in essence, Pop Art signaled hypermodernity (Danto, *Andy Warhol* 31). Caught in the midst of a changing historical moment, Warhol capitalized on an opportunity to reflect what he saw in society. Warhol ended the 1950s with hardly any money saved and no promises for a serious and permanent gallery to house his work, forcing him to rely upon all that commercial art had taught him. This Warhol opened doors in the revolutionary 1960s closed to him; he rewrote the rules for elite art and made a name for him that would exceed his lifetime. Surrounded by the emergence of hypermodernity, Warhol met the 1960s with an attentive eye for a morphing communicative
environment that would eventually pave the way for his incredible suggest and philosophical contributions.

3.1.2 Warhol and the Revolutionary 1960s

André Warhola shifted into Andy Warhol in the midst of a convergence of his public artistic and philosophical brilliance coupled with the right historical moment. Danto argues that Warhol, more than any other comparable Pop artist, “intuited the great changes that made the 1960s the ‘Sixties,’” inherently molding the decade that he emerged in so that his “art both became part of his times and transcended them” (Danto, Andy Warhol 47). In the Revolutionary 1960s, the Warhol aesthetic celebrated the mundane and ordinary as valuable and worthy of the label of art. Danto argued that the 1960s modeled what Nietzsche termed a ‘transvaluation of values’—it “condemned to irrelevance everything that belonged to art appreciation” (Danto, Andy Warhol 28). Stephen Koch remarks that, of all the years that Warhol worked, the 1960s were his decade—within these years, he developed an image obsessed with repetition and mechanistic distance between persons. As Warhol moved into the decade of the 1960s, he altered forever the way the public writ large understood and appreciated art and, as this project argues, philosophy of communication ethics.

In the first eight years of the 1960s, Warhol’s Factory was a silver-painted space where 1950s counter-cultures presented themselves in order to shine and shimmer, masked as the elite culture of the 1960s. By the summer of 1960, Warhol was on his way to a major breakthrough. Warhol met Emile de Antonio, one of his most influential assistants, at the end of the 1950s at a crucial moment in his career, where he helped Warhol deal with the rejection that he saw in the art world. De, as Warhol called him, visited Warhol one night and found two pictures of Coca-Cola bottles approximately six feet tall. De remembered that one was flat and uninspired.
However, the other, created in Pop Art style, reflected the inner core of American society unencumbered by frills and prejudices. He recommended immediately that Warhol discard the first one and submit the Pop Art Coca-Cola bottle for show. He demanded of Warhol to create images of what American culture truly was. With such encouragement, Warhol contacted Leo Castelli’s art assistant, Ivan Karp, who began to bring collectors to Warhol’s home. Warhol greeted those collectors with an eccentric flair (for example, wearing a mask made of jewels and feathers). Pop Art, the movement, reflected the decade of the 1960s more so than any other medium, and Warhol capitalized upon it promptly. By the fall of 1960, galleries across the city were showing the beginnings of Pop Art. Warhol took this a step further and, subsequently, found fame as the “first to give preferential, as well as reverential treatment, to the every day object” (Gruen). These galleries did not immediately show Warhol’s work, which often ridiculed as being absurd and not as serious as other artistic endeavors. For example, Karp was once able to convince his boss, Leo Castelli, to visit to Warhol’s studio in January of 1961—but to no avail. Castelli refused Warhol, who had begun to experience significant financial difficulties.

Warhol would work with collectors, such as Robert and Ethel Scull, to move some of his paintings in the hope of securing funds. In 1961, he secured a showing of his art, both advertisements and cartoons, in a Bonwit Teller’s window behind various mannequins, receiving no critical acclaim. Yet, Danto argued that this showing, and the art that subsequently followed, perfectly reflected the historical era, cultural values, and social norms more than any other artists during that time period. By the conclusion of 1961, Warhol was emerging from another nervous breakdown, terrified of his prospects as his work, while showing, was not selling. Admitting to seeking influence and ideas wherever he could, Warhol’s breakthrough came during an infamous night, when he visited with friends Ted Carey and Muriel Latow, who owned her own gallery
(Bockris 142). Toward the end of the evening, Warhol proclaimed that his work was no longer appropriate—he needed to differentiate himself from other Pop Art artists. Imploring Muriel to supply him with ideas, Muriel responded: “Money […] You should paint pictures of money. […] You should paint something that everybody sees every day, that everybody recognizes … like a can of soup” (Bockris 143). As legend would have it, Warhol simply smiled. The advice that Warhol received from his friends perfectly reflected the protected and promoted goods of his hypermodern time, and the soup cans became, arguably, some of his most important work.

In a newspaper clipping from 1962, Warhol claimed that his work was an attempt to uncover the “monotony in the way things are” (Lamkin). Muriel’s advice spurred Warhol’s most important work, and he began to seek out the everyday—the ordinary—and turn them into works of high or elite art. This year would begin the celebrity status that Warhol would continue to possess throughout his life, sparking the moment he decided to paint both the dollar bills and the Campbell’s Soup Cans. The soup cans were a result of his own reflection on what he most wanted to paint—and that was his mother’s kitchen. Warhol asked his mother to purchase each of the thirty-two varieties of Campbell’s soup cans, and proceeded to, first, draw and then silkscreen those images. The process of silkscreening privileged total mechanical reproduction, eerily reminiscent of the Byzantine iconography that he had grown up with and continued to celebrate (Danto, *Andy Warhol* 34). The process resembled a mass production, factory style of labor, removing emotion and value and focusing, instead, upon repetition.

In 1962, Irving Blum, owner of the Los Angeles based Ferus Gallery, visited Warhol in May, where he found him in the midst of his sixteenth painting of a Campbell soup can. Blum offered to show the Campbell’s soup cans in its entirety at his gallery in July, for $100 per painting. Warhol would receive fifty percent of the sales. Instantly, Warhol’s paintings generated
publicity and shock, dividing the art scene between those that appreciated the work, and those that did not. Blum made the decision to keep the series together, after the show failed to generate serious interest. Only a few of the pieces sold; however, Blum was able to rescue those paintings, and kept the original series together. While not generating much money or critical acclaim, the paintings had generated publicity before the show had even taken place—Time magazine featured the soup cans in May of 1962, paving the way for Warhol’s icon status (Danto, *Andy Warhol*). Such publicity reinvigorated Warhol, as the Campbell’s Soup Cans would be Warhol’s ticket to a true place in art history, secured because of his ability to “transform[…] something so commonplace and so all-American they become icons of our culture” (Colacello 27). This transformation of the commonplace was a result of history and Warhol’s uncanny ability to read those conditions.

During the summer of 1962, Warhol continued his work, painting those commonplace objects that characterized American culture, such as coffee cans, Coca-Cola bottles, and soup cans. During this period, the use of repetition became an “autobiographical” artistic technique, allowing a feeling of the “banal and meaningless” to categorize his career (Bockris 150-151). At the end of that summer, Marilyn Monroe committed suicide, leading Warhol to create one of his most important silkscreens. Utilizing a publicity photograph for the 1953 film *Niagara*, Warhol reproduced Monroe’s face endlessly, celebrating the mistakes and the misprints as an opportunity to remind his audience that she was not simply a product for public consumption, regardless of the repetition that would suggest otherwise (Bockris 152). While many read the work as about as “sentimental as Fords coming off the assembly line,” Warhol’s technique morphed into a social commentary obscured by the immersion in a historical moment consumed with commodity culture (Bockris 152). The blots and mistakes found in the *Marilyn* silkscreens
transformed her face into a commodity while, simultaneously, reflecting that she was not simply a repeating image for our consumption; no one, says Danto, could stand before the *Marilyn* and accuse it of superficiality. The equality and sameness inherent in his use of mechanical repetition was reminiscent of an American culture concerned with individual desires for total access to all, offering a mirror into a hypermodern commodity culture that affirmed social status.

On Halloween 1962, Warhol featured ‘200 Campbell’s Soup Cans’ at a show at the Sidney Janis Gallery in New York City. He commented: “I feel very much a part of my times, of my culture, as much a part of it as rocket ships and television” (qtd. in Bockris 155). Warhol undoubtedly recognized a gap within his historical moment that he could fill—by revolutionizing the way society talked of aesthetics, value, and culture. A week later, Warhol showed at the Stable Gallery. Quiet, withdrawn, and embarrassed, he spoke to no one, huddled in a corner, staring at his surroundings with wide eyes, pale skin, and a silver wig. Many felt Warhol’s behavior and art to be outside of artistic tradition, and therefore neither serious nor noteworthy. However, Warhol created attitude, and rejected ideology. Bockris contends that Warhol’s ability to disregard boundaries shed light on his communication capabilities. For Warhol, art was accessible to the middle class and a way of living. After the first Stable Gallery show, Warhol became a public celebrity, leaving behind his identity as André Warhola.

Into 1963, Warhol began to experiment with and become addicted to Obetrol, an amphetamine that he began to take as a diet-restrictive. As he focused on his body and his work ethic, he also began to detach himself from emotion and connections to others, claiming to *Time* magazine in May of 1963 that he envied machines for their lack of human issues and problems. Pushing his machine metaphor to its limits, Warhol hired Gerard Malanga, one of the most important decisions of his life, to assist him with his silkscreening. Malanga would work side-by-
side with Warhol, gaining such close experience that it became difficult to separate whether Warhol or Malanga had created the image. That summer, Warhol painted a number of portraits, paying his respects to his childhood heroes like Elvis Presley. The Elvis show took place in September 1963 in California at the Ferus Gallery, inviting Warhol into a celebrity-filled scene that characterized the West Coast (although not one painting was sold during his trip out West, and he desperately needed the money). Warhol’s move into celebrity culture created within him a desire to make portraits; Ethel Scull became one of his first subjects. In 1963, Warhol also began the infamous *Death and Disaster* series, hoping to mirror the voyeuristic and American worldview toward death perpetuated by mass media. Much of Warhol’s fascination with death occurred in November of 1963, after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. While, within the United States, the reception to this series was not warm (this quickly began to deteriorate the relationship between Warhol and Elinor Ward, director of the Stable Gallery), the series opened in Paris’ Sonnabend Gallery in January of 1964. Europe embraced the series.

By the end of November 1963, Warhol had moved into the Factory, an old warehouse on East 47th Street. Billy Linich, a young 21-year-old lighting man, entered Warhol’s fold at this moment, and, immediately, the two became friends. A drug-addicted artist, from January to April of 1964, Billy (eventually called Billy Name), would transform the space into the ‘Silver Factory,’ covering every inch in silver paint and aluminum. Billy unofficially moved into the Factory, and, consequently, his friends began to frequent the Factory—friends addicted to “extravagance, outrage, and excess” (Bockris 192). While Warhol would claim to not participate in the drug use, his frantic work ethic suggested otherwise. He slept for an hour or so at a time, and returned to the Factory to continue his projects. This also prompted his experimentation with the medium of film. During this time, he created a number of silent films, shot entirely in black
and white that resembled photographs in their lack of action depicted in these media. Early films included *Kiss, Haircut, Eat,* and *Sleep.* Warhol’s films allowed the element of immediacy into his work through the distance created with the gaze of the camera, most notably in his earlier films marked by a theme of silence. In particular, *Sleep* encapsulated, for Warhol, the American desire to consume and commoditize the person. For five hours and twenty-six minutes, one could do nothing but consume the image of a person fast asleep. *Eat,* in addition, released in 1963, was what Koch termed the first of the “film portrait[s],” which subjected the human person to both an absence and a presence (Koch 45). Warhol, behind his camera, is always there, and yet impersonal, at a distance from the subject of the film itself. These films played with the medium of film to comment upon a prevalent facet of American consumer culture—the gaze of one over another without comment, simply for the purposes of consumption.

In 1964, Warhol began to introduce Factory Superstars to the Pop Art spotlight. Those superstars included the actors and artists who surrounded Warhol during this time, often vulnerable and lost drug addicts that saw in Warhol their chance for fame. His first superstar was Baby Jane Holzer, and Warhol took Baby Jane to every party and public appearance that he made, attracting press and attention that Warhol dearly desired. Under the influence of celebrity-induced mania, Warhol began to dress in black leather jackets, tight jeans and t-shirts, boots, a silver wig, and dark glasses. He also began to model his speaking tone like that of Jackie Kennedy, rarely speaking in public. The new Andy Warhol embraced a superficiality that transcended his artwork—he, himself, came to symbolize art and, with it, his lifestyle came to symbolize American culture.

In April of 1964, Warhol delivered a 20 foot by 20 foot black and white mural titled ‘The Thirteen Most Wanted Men’ to that summer’s World’s Fair in New York, comprised of the
mugshots of some of the most wanted criminals in the country. A few days later, Warhol opened a show at the Stable Gallery with his *Brillo Boxes*, to wild success, throwing an after party at the Silver Factory. The *Brillo Boxes* are a point of philosophical discussion, as they revolutionized the very definition of what constituted art in the 1960s. Warhol entered into both a philosophical and aesthetic discourse and communicated an art attentive to values and questions of ethics through the mechanical reproduction of grocery boxes. Danto argues that, prior to 1964, the *Brillo Boxes* would never have been possible, but that Warhol ushered in a moment where real objects and art objects are indistinguishable from one another. Warhol became the symbol for Pop Art; yet, in 1964, he turned almost exclusively to film, and stopped producing art objects traditionally understood. His focus was his desire to capture life and culture.

Warhol’s films captured the behaviors and communicative relationships between and among the members of the Silver Factory. Both Malanga and Taylor Mead commented in Bockris’ biography that Warhol was a voyeur, fascinated by those that suffered to the point of using them for his own personal gain. However, Colacello notes that, while he did use these individuals, he also granted them their biggest desire—fame and recognition. Warhol filmed the everyday activities of those that would spend time in the Factory, creating interpersonal distance through the medium of the camera. In July of 1964, Warhol filmed *Empire* with the help of his associates, running for a total of eight hours. Malanga commented: “Empire was a movie where nothing happened except how the audience reacted” (qtd. in Bockris 207). For the first time, through the visual medium of film, the success of the work depended upon audience reaction, participation, and interpretation—it was not simply a matter of the artist creating, but the artist creating for the express purpose of communicating. In November of 1964, Warhol painted and showed his *Flowers* series at the Castelli Gallery, selling out immediately. He followed this with
several films as well as over 300 Screen Tests, inviting individuals to simply sit before his camera. Warhol released films at an astounding level of productivity, demanding the creation of one to two films a month (Koch 64). In the films produced under his watch, the gaze became the primary metaphor to influence his superstars, dominating the scene by capturing incident alone, with no narrative and a Warholian distanced turn to the passing of time.

During the second half of the 1960s, Warhol, the person, gained more fame and inspired more discussion than his own art. He continued to show his work nationally and internationally, but what took center stage were the relationships that he formed and dissolved. In 1965, Warhol and Edith Minturn Sedgwick met, marking one of the most important relationships Warhol would foster during the Silver Sixties. Warhol had been searching for an alter ego, and found that alter ego in Edie, a young 22-year-old socialite and heiress. According to Bockris, Andy saw in Edie his own reflection. He immediately began to place Edie in his films, the first of which was Poor Little Rich Girl. The two became inseparable, adopting similar aesthetics. Andy desired a partner and Edie desired an identity, which Warhol bestowed upon her. Edie, along with her friend Chuck Wein, and Malanga, traveled to Paris in May of 1965 for the opening of the Flowers series in Europe, breaking all attendance records. Upon their return, the Factory produced films like Kitchen and Beauty #2 which depicted elements of the relationship between Edie and Andy, demonstrating his manic need for interactions with others and the voyeuristic manner in which he sought fulfillment in his relationships. Warhol’s films were a constant dehumanization of the subjects that he selected. However, Warhol believed that the dehumanization of persons and value were quintessentially American; thus, he placed it into his work (Bockris 228). The camera never stopped rolling as Edie struggled with drugs and
depression, falling deeper into an addiction fed by her association with Bob Dylan. By August of 1965, Edie and Andy had begun to separate.

After the dissolution of his relationship with Edie, Warhol found a new technical assistant, Paul Morrissey, one of the most controversial figures in Warhol’s Factory. Under his leadership, the members of the Silver Factory slowly began to leave Warhol. Morrissey was the reason, according to Koch, that Warhol’s films went from silent, avant-garde homages to particular subject matters unified upon hypermodern themes to conventional narratives that would sell in commercial outlets. According to Colacello, Morrissey believed in all things counter to what most in the Factory stood for, reveling in his desire to espouse Republican ideals and the spirit of capitalism juxtaposed with rampant liberal attitudes. As time wore on, Morrissey created distance between Warhol and the wild members of the Silver Factory. He acted as Warhol’s manager, making suggestions for new media—like music—and as well as gatekeeper to Warhol’s inner world, increasingly significant as Warhol’s popularity grew.

Warhol’s experimentation in both art and in people culminated in an American public fascinated with Warhol’s personhood, exemplified during the opening of Warhol’s first American retrospective on October 8, 1965 in Philadelphia at the Institute of Contemporary Art. The audience pushed Edie (in one of her last public appearances as a member of the Factory) and Andy into the space, audience screaming and demanding access to Warhol mirroring the experiences of rock concerts where crowd control is necessary and challenging. The Warhol group was able to finally find safety on a staircase, having to leave through a hole chopped into the ceiling above them. This overwhelming popularly, however, allowed Warhol to move into various partnerships with others. For example, through Morrissey’s influence, Warhol made an
informal agreement with a theater producer to take over a club, name it “Andy Warhol’s Up” and create a multi-media experience tied to music and film for four weekends in April of 1966.

Preoccupied with his new media venture, Warhol befriended a rock n’ roll group named the Velvet Underground. Entering into a financial agreement with the group, the band wrote music in preparation for April 1966 while, simultaneously, Billy Name scheduled a test run at the Cinematèque in New York City, which took place in February of 1966. Edie danced that night while the Velvet Underground performed and Warhol films played as background. Eventually, April 1966 arrived, and the Exploding Plastic Inevitable, the name eventually bestowed upon the multimedia experience, did remarkably well—visited by famous guests such as Salvador Dalí as well as art critics and club goers. The environment assaulted all senses and became so famous for its use of media that Marshall McLuhan, in his work *The Medium is the Massage*, placed a photograph of the experience in the work and remarked that, in experiencing the EPI, “‘time’ has ceased, ‘space’ has vanished. We now live in a global village…a simultaneous happening” (63). The obliteration of the ego, which Koch describes, as a result of the total assaulting environment that was generated by the experience, at first felt to be liberating. Koch argues, however, that it was subconsciously an act of aggression, raging and emotional outbursts that manifested in a display of pent-up frustration.

After one final show of cow wallpaper and silver, helium-filled balloons, Warhol announced his retirement from painting and Pop Art, which lasted for several years. After a few failed trips to create more music with the Velvet Underground, Warhol returned to his primary goal—to film a successful movie. It was no secret that in the summer of 1966, Warhol was making less than he had as a commercial artist and, yet, had steadily increased his expenses. Between June and September of that summer, Warhol filmed a number of different scenes at
locations all across the city, catching genuine (and scripted) moments of chaos and conflict, as well as attempting to depict a day in the life of some of his famous Factory workers. The result was *The Chelsea Girls*, a successful film that ran for three hours, two reels spinning simultaneously (Bockris). *The Chelsea Girls*, arguably one of Warhol’s most successful ventures, overwhelms all senses by introducing what Koch terms the “tyranny of the clock” (90). In this particular work, one must actively choose to disregard one reel in order to attend to the other, offering a spectacle of decision, attention, and perception. This work highlights one of Warhol’s most important themes—that of mirroring culture and society. The camera, in the film, acts as a mirror, and acknowledges nothing but the passage of time. *The Chelsea Girls* became one of the last avant-garde films of the Factory. Shortly thereafter, the conflict surrounding Warhol would force this era to end.

Much of the conflict at the Factory had to do with money. For example, Billy Name was paid $10 a week for most of the duration of his time spent with Warhol. Warhol was able to blame much of the conflict on the fact that most of his superstars were drug addicts, thus explaining away any less than favorable behavior on his part. In addition, the *Velvet Underground and Nico* album accumulated lackluster sales and sparsely attended events. *Chelsea Girls* gained enough interest to secure a screening at the Cannes Film Festival, but was pulled right before release due to graphic language. The relationship between Warhol and the *Velvet Underground* deteriorated, and the Factory was a mess. Finally, Gerard Malanga, after a few years of tension between himself and Warhol, left for Italy in a fit of rage, purchasing a one-way ticket. During Malanga’s time in Italy, he would find himself in trouble with the law after attempting to forge some of Warhol’s paintings. Such was the nature of Warhol’s Silver Factory in the fall of 1967, when all felt as if it were on the verge of deterioration.
Warhol ceded control of filming to Morrissey, allowing Morrissey to turn Warhol’s avant-garde filmic art into commercial projects aimed at mass consumption. With this loss of involvement in his films, Warhol launched a nationwide tour of college campuses, speaking on both his films and screening those films for students. Warhol (when he did show up) did not speak nor interact with those students. Instead, he sat quietly as Morrissey and Viva interacted with the crowd, quickly earning the crowd’s disdain. Billy Name commented that much of the hatred for Warhol stemmed from Warhol’s incessant desire to unmask American culture, and this culminated on college campuses during the latter half of the 1960s. Warhol later asked a proxy to continue the college tours, which left him in both financial and legal trouble when publically revealed. Those campuses forced him to repeat his lecture circuit to boos and hisses. Around this time, Warhol met Fred Hughes, who became the business mind behind Andy Warhol Enterprises, securing for Warhol more money for his paintings than he had seen throughout his entire career. Hughes was responsible for the rise of Andy Warhol into a world of “real riches,” through orchestrating the “commissioned-portraits goldmine” and driving up the prices of Warhol’s work (Colacello 95). Perhaps due to the new mindset propelled by Hughes’ arrival or because he had begun to recognize the chaos of the Superstars, Warhol decided to remove himself from the violent and uncontrollable nature of his Factory superstars. Andy, Fred, and Paul, as well as Gerard’s replacement and Andy’s most influential lover Jed Johnson, reestablished their work on 33 Union Square West.

Of the things that 1968 would entail, nothing would quite be as important to Warhol as the day in mid-summer when Warhol almost lost his life (Danto would refer to this as his First Death). Valerie Solanas, an outspoken feminist, first appeared in Warhol’s life in 1967, making a brief appearance in the film *I, A Man*, after submitting a script to Warhol which he subsequently
rejected. Solanas would request payment for the script, which she never received (this script was far too offensive for even Warhol to produce). Suffering from her own rage and mental issues (she was responsible for the advent of SCUM, or the “Society for Cutting Up Men”), Solanas exacted revenge for her perceived slights. On Monday, June 3, 1968, Solanas arrived at the Factory, looking for Warhol. Warhol did not arrive until 4:15 p.m.; Solanas waited patiently outside the Factory. That afternoon, Warhol and Jed Johnson stepped out onto the sidewalk of 33 Union Square West. Solanas approached Warhol and rode the elevator up with him. After waiting for a few moments, Solanas took out a .32 automatic handheld gun and shot at Warhol three times, eventually hitting him in the right side of his body. The bullet “passed through his lung and ricocheted through his oesophagus, gall bladder, liver, spleen, and intestines before exiting his left side, leaving a gaping hole” (Bockris 303). She also shot Mario Amaya, art critic and curator, in the flank. She approached Fred Hughes, but the gun jammed. At that moment, Solanas took her exit, leaving the members of the Factory to deal with the fallout. Warhol barely survived the incident. He was declared clinically dead at 4:51 p.m., often referring to this moment as a death, his return to life merely a “loan” (Koch ii). By 8 p.m. that evening, Solanas had turned herself in to the police. Eventually declared incompetent, a judge remanded her to a mental institution. She continued a pattern of release and rearrest for three years, eventually reclaiming a moderate degree of freedom. Solanas subsequently spent years making threatening phone calls and writing letters to Warhol, eventually fading from public memory. Undoubtedly, this incident marked a turning point in Warhol’s career. He would live a life of fear and trepidation from this point on.

In an image taken after Warhol is shot, Warhol is lying, bandaged, in his hospital bed, talking on the telephone with a crucifix placed immediately above his bed. The image reflects
Warhol’s continued commitment to his religious tradition even though he embodied many hypermodern characteristics. Surrounded by his religion and connected to those he loved, cared about, and worked with, Warhol attempted to heal (“Andy Warhol”). Warhol’s shooting awoke in him a new recognition of all of the individuals and activities that characterized the Factory. The shooting and near-death experience left Warhol in a permanent state of caution and anxiety. Warhol himself stated: “I realized that it was just timing that nothing terrible had ever happened to any of us before now. Crazy people had always fascinated me because they were so creative—they were incapable of doing things normally” (qtd. In Bockris 306). It is widely acknowledged, however, that the Warhol before the shooting and after the shooting are two different people and two different artists. Danto refers to the shooting as the “dividing line” (Andy Warhol 120). This event would come to define him as a scarred artist, working to reclaim his creativity and vivacity.

Released from the hospital at the end of July, Warhol spent August of 1968 recovering in his home. Upon his return to the Factory, his career immediately began a new trajectory, simultaneously invoking a vast array of media to propel his communicative account of hypermodernity. He worked with Morrissey on the film, Flesh. He also produced three additional films, including Lonesome Cowboys, which premiered on May 5, 1969, as well as Easy Rider and Blue Movie. With the release of Flesh, Warhol’s name and working relationship with Morrissey began to flourish. Morrissey acted as Warhol’s manager, interacting with the press to expand Andy’s role as a communicative artist with significant influence in a number of cultural spheres. Warhol’s paintings, after the shooting, increased in value from $200 to $15,000. In addition, Warhol published his first novel, a, with Grove Press, based on unedited and, often, rambling tape recordings from 1965 and 1967 completed with former Factory associate Ondine.
As Warhol’s career expanded, however, his associations with his former life in the Factory diminished. By November 1971, Billy Name had disappeared, leaving a note: “Andy—I am not here anymore but I am fine. Love Billy” (Bockris 328). Thus, by the end of the 1960s, Andy, and a number of his new associates, created a new working environment that would catapult Warhol into a new era and a new cultural milieu—one preoccupied with celebrity. Having begun to achieve commercial success, Warhol’s resurrection from his first death shifted his priority as well as his sources of selfhood, a recurring theme that would continue through the rest of his life.

3.1.3 Chasing Celebrity in the 1970s

The 1970s dawned a new era for Andy Warhol and his associates, and 1970-1971 solidified Warhol’s social life, celebrity status, and a new preoccupation with television as a form of art. Colacello called the decade an era of “hedonistic restlessness” that continued into the 1980s (163). Everyone sought freedom to celebrate the present in all of its hypermodern meaning. Warhol himself continued to personify hypermodernity. In fact, he himself once remarked that, during his infamous visit to the Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia: “we weren’t just at the art—we were the art exhibit, we were the art incarnate […]” (Warhol & Hackett 133). From the start of his life, Warhol’s obsession with fame bordered upon desperate manipulation, and he lived life (and formed his career) as if celebrity was the quintessential mode of being. By the end of 1969 and into 1970, Warhol and Morrissey produced Trash, which eventually grossed $1.5 million (Bockris 330). Morrissey continued to make more and more of the movie decisions, centered upon commercial success rather than avant-garde art, and so Warhol turned increasingly to tape recordings and his magazine as his focus of attention.

In April of 1970, Bob Colacello joined inter/VIEW magazine, intending to become a permanent fixture in Warhol’s Factory. The magazine became a form of relationship between
Warhol and celebrity culture. Furthermore, the working relationships Warhol began to cultivate demonstrated an increase in attentiveness to what he would later term Business Art (Warhol). In addition to new working relationships, by the spring of 1971, Warhol’s paintings, including the soup-can paintings, were earning more money. The Parke Bernet Gallery auctioned one of his soup-can paintings for $60,000, which became the “highest price ever paid at an auction for a work by a living American artist” (Bockris 335). As a result, Warhol formally established Andy Warhol Enterprises, Inc., and, as a corporation, began to create portrait commissions for some of the most influential celebrities of the 1970s.

*InterVIEW* magazine began to capitalize on the wave of the emotion of nostalgia; while not a new concept in the history of art, Warhol breathed vitality into nostalgia as avant-garde. He also began to take a number of international trips, filming *L’Amour* in Paris in September of 1970. Warhol’s reputation in European countries far exceeded his celebrity status in the United States. For example, Warhol’s *Flesh* attracted three million fans in Germany, and he continued his success throughout the European continent, returning home to a press release dated April 26, 1971 hailing his European tour as a total success. Shortly thereafter, the Whitney Museum in New York opened a retrospective that solidified both his reputation and the importance of his philosophy and art to the American public. Bockris cited Mary Josepheson, who remarked: “If he were French, our universities would have embraced him in innumerable theses” (qtd. in Bockris 343). Warhol continued to inspire both the ordinary and the celebrity, most notably David Bowie, who would go on to model himself upon Warhol’s lifestyle and reputation. He would also influence a number of other artists that defined the music industry during this time; for example, he designed the logo for the Rolling Stones for their album, *Sticky Fingers*. His influence seemed to know no boundaries. As time would continue on, it was clear that Warhol
saw his work as an artist to be the mere means to another end, an end of continuing to play with art as communication situated in the gap between art and life.

In February of 1971, Julia Warhola, Andy’s mother, suffered a stroke and, shortly thereafter, Warhol insisted that Julia return to Pittsburgh; he could not care for her with the level of attention that her health required. Julia’s health rapidly deteriorated. She spent the rest of her life confused and in and out of hospitals, suffering more than one stroke and spending time in a coma. She eventually died on November 22, 1972. Warhol did not attend his mother’s funeral, insisting that he preferred to remember her as she lived. Warhol’s distance from his mother’s illness and death were not out of the ordinary for Warhol. He continued this pattern throughout the early 1970s. For example, Edie Sedgwick died in November of 1971; Warhol barely batted an eye. He would eventually paint a silkscreen of Julia in 1974. Warhol’s relationship with his mother was one of the most formative and important relationships he would ever have. He would lament her passing until his own death in 1987.

Warhol fully returned to painting by 1972, completing some of his most famous and well-publicized political silkscreens, including those of Chairman Mao (of which he made 2,000) and the ‘Vote McGovern’ series, all portraits of Richard Nixon. Warhol donated the proceeds of the Nixon portraits to the Democratic Party, becoming one of its largest donors. In consequence, however, the Internal Revenue Service routinely subjected Warhol to financial inquiries for the rest of his life. By the end of the 1972, Warhol had begun working with secretary Pat Hackett to dictate a diary and his thoughts (this working relationship would catapult his writing career). He also created *Heat* with Morrissey, released during the Venice Film Festival in September of 1972. During the summer of 1973, Warhol traveled to Rome, where he filmed both *Frankenstein* and *Dracula* in partnership with Italian film producer Carlo Ponti. *Frankenstein* opened on May
19, 1974 to overwhelming reception, grossing $1 million in the first two months. However, Warhol hardly saw the profits from the film. *Dracula*, while considered the better film, received hardly any profits or critical acclaim. Colacello paints a different picture, hailing both *Frankenstein* and *Dracula* as commercial successes, and marked these as the last two Factory films directed by Morrissey. Simultaneously, *Interview*, whose name underwent edits in the previous four years, passed editorship to Colacello, who became executive editor in 1974. The title shortened, *Interview* is still one of the most influential magazines in the industry today.

The mid-1970s (1973-1976) were some of the most creative years for Andy Warhol Enterprises, Inc. Colacello describes the period as some of the most productive moments for the Factory, more creative and frantic than the Silver Factory but with a different focus and different goal altogether. *Interview* acquired significant editors and writers, and served as a true encapsulation of American celebrity culture in the 1970s. Advertising, particularly through *Interview*, significantly increased profits, and promoted Warhol’s own work. In August of 1974, Andy Warhol Enterprises, Inc. moved to 860 Broadway, and created a corporate hierarchy that would outlast Warhol himself. Ronnie Cutrone, who joined Warhol during the period of the Exploding Plastic Inevitable, became Warhol’s painting assistant in 1973 for the next decade and Rupert Smith became the silk-screen printer and director. Warhol surrounded himself with trusted individuals to run almost every aspect of his life neatly and competently. In addition, the new (and third) Factory was set up as a business, run in an orderly and organizational fashion, which dissuaded the old Superstars from returning to Warhol.

The task of silkscreening commission portraits, a quick source for significant income, embalmed the subject matter with the famous Warhol repetitive method that, while reading superficially, possessed depth and an acute sense of detail. Thus, these portraits began to
generate significant interest. Warhol worked seven days a week, and encouraged his corporation to do the same, eventually producing commissioned portraits of over 1,000 individuals (Colacello 89). Warhol’s focus on art as corporate life dissuaded him from involving himself in the politics associated with his subjects (although, as Colacello recalls, Warhol saw politicians as celebrities with significant power). Thus, in 1974, Warhol had dinner at places like the Iranian embassy, making friends with the Shah and royalty, and would travel to places like Paris, Milan, and Tokyo, visiting with some of the most important diplomats and celebrities within the cities. He sought, however, to maintain political distance, even while culturally shifting worldviews and perspectives. On May 15, 1975, President Ford invited Warhol to the White House for the State Dinner held for the Shah of Iran. This occasion paved the way for a formal invitation from Betty Ford to interview Jack Ford for Interview magazine. Conducted by Bianca Jagger, the interview found Jack as candid as possible, much to the chagrin of Betty Ford.

Warhol’s dealings with political and cultural issues worked to his advantage. His book, The Philosophy of Andy Warhol, appeared shortly thereafter (accompanied by a cross-country tour in September of 1975 and achieved the bestseller list in London in October of 1975). The work, a combination of the talents of Colacello, Hackett, and Warhol, gained attention due to the gossip and scandal surrounding Andy Warhol Enterprises, Inc. In Warhol’s philosophy, many found him to be the “cultural portrait” of the “‘me’ generation” (Bockris 390). Warhol’s political and cultural success created an instant influx of money, allowing Warhol to purchase a six-story home on 57 East 66th Street, in the Upper East Side of New York City. Gone was the Silver Factory, and the persona of the 1960s Andy Warhol. Warhol returned to his 1950s identity, pulling from the past to inform his present. Interview, simultaneously, began to creatively find ground as a mirror of Warhol’s new persona, offering a publication that reflected Warhol’s every
day experience. The publication moved away from pure journalism to an entertainment expose. The Wall Street Journal described Interview as a mirror of Warhol’s aesthetic; the publication lacked depth as it privileged the superficial nature of the everyday experiences of the ordinary person. Interview morphed into a work of art that elevated the commonplace into high art.

Warhol produced his last film, Bad (the only 1970s film not produced by Morrissey), during the spring of 1976 with a budget of $1.2 million (which would flop in mid-1977). The production required so much film that Warhol pressed his employees to fund the project (which Hughes eventually succumbed to). Warhol involved himself in an enormous variety of social groups and scenes, keeping the pulse of an increasingly fragmented American public while moving in and out of his professional and personal relationships. Colacello remained responsible for engaging in diplomatic efforts that would lead to commissioned works, eventually landing Warhol a commission from the Shah of Iran to paint the portrait of the Empress. Warhol also began the work for his first major show since the silver pillows in 1966—the Hammer and Sickle series, as well as the Skulls series. The Hammer and Sickle series manifested from his 1975 Ladies and Gentlemen series, which drew upon the experiences and aesthetic of several drag queens that he met during his political tours of Europe. After the opening of Ladies and Gentlemen in 1975 in Italy, most of the Italian press wanted to know if Warhol considered himself a Communist, given his constant exposing of the problems within the American capitalism (Colacello). Hearing this question, and influenced by the symbol, Warhol desired to create Communist images—the Hammer and Sickle series. The show opened in January of 1977.

Interview magazine continued to flourish, with Warhol bringing in Catherine Guinness, one of the last of Warhol’s superstars. At approximately the same time, Studio 54 opened and became the central place for celebrity-filled nighttime parties. Warhol was always at the center,
considering Studio 54 to be another office as he searched for individuals who may consider commissioning a portrait. Warhol’s social life permitted him to achieve superstar status. In addition, Hughes worked tirelessly to recover the significant losses of Bad, and secured a series of art, known as the ‘Athlete’ series, involving Kareem Abdul Jabar, Muhammad Ali, Chris Evert, Dorothy Hamill, Jack Nicklaus, Pele, Tom Seaver, Willi Shoemaker, and O. J. Simpson, that generated $25,000 per painting. Warhol united public and professional life with private and problematic sources of selfhood, both of which resulted in a creative feud attentive to the embodiment of hypermodern values and, often, a counter to his historical moment.

Warhol continued with commissioned portraits, in addition to a Native American series of paintings, and the Oxidation series. However, the end of the 1970s returned Warhol to a similar point as his Silver Factory a decade earlier. The commitment to parties combined with a rigorous and unyielding work ethic drove many (apart from Vincent Fremont) into drug and alcohol problems. Warhol still managed to paint the portrait of the Shah of Iran’s sister in November of 1978 and open the Shadows series at the Heiner Friedrich Gallery in January of 1979. He published Andy Warhol’s Exposures in October of 1979. In addition, 1979 was the year that Interview finally broke even as a corporate enterprise and created its own advertising campaigns (Colacello 396). Simultaneously, between 1978 and 1980, Warhol produced his own television program, Andy Warhol’s TV. While wildly unsuccessful, it still became a cultural time capsule of his historical moment. The television program featured Warhol as the center and the star. Danto explains that, while on the surface not many would be fascinated by a simple object like a soup can, there hardly existed a person that was not “fascinated by an artist who actually painted so aesthetically unpromising an object” (Danto, Andy Warhol 86). The return to a focus on Warhol’s identity prompted a reflective engagement of his sources of selfhood. While the
1970s opened up a new space for Warhol to explore his identity, the 1980s bore witness to his return to André Warhola in the midst of hypermodernity, privileging much that had been lost through his life.

3.1.4 Back to André Warhola: A Hypermodern Quest in the 1980s

The dawning of 1980 returned Warhol to the various eras that he had lived through, manifesting in various forms. He would continue to paint commissioned portraits. He began the decade with the *Ten Portraits of Jews of the Twentieth Century*, which featured Albert Einstein, Sigmund Freud, Franz Kafka, Martin Buber, Golda Meir, Gertrude Stein, Sarah Bernhardt, George Gershwin, the Marx Brothers, and Louis Brandeis. Warhol continued to write with longtime secretary Pat Hackett. Together, they penned *Popism: The Warhol Sixties*, his personal memoirs of the 1960s. While outwardly dismissed, the memoirs captured Warhol’s state of mind, turned back toward his past. Simultaneously, many of his most important relationships were dissolving, including the ending of longtime relationship with Jed Johnson. Warhol developed a moderate problem with alcohol, of which he would shortly thereafter turn to an obsession with exercise, and began to collect, hoping that the possession and accumulation of items would fill the gap that had gotten larger throughout his life. After passing through this dark period, Warhol moved on with his life as best he could. By 1981, he had begun to flourish overseas again, particularly in Germany.

From 1981 to 1983, Warhol had moved on in his various relationships, both personally and professionally. Most notably, Colacello left *Interview* and Andy for good, after demanding a share of the magazine, subsequently turned down by Warhol. The artist also had a series of successive failures of art shows in 1981 and 1982, including an exhibition of *Athletes* at the Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art and the *Dollar Signs* at Castelli’s. While both exhibitions
did better in Europe, Warhol introduced the *Guns, Knives, and Crosses* show in December of 1982 in Spain. His work would continue to garner significant amounts of money—a 1983 exhibition of *Endangered Species* earned Warhol over $1 million (which he subsequently put into a new home between 32nd and 33rd streets, buttressed by Madison and Fifth Avenue). In addition to the large income (and large expenditures) that Warhol would now worry about, he would begin to make weekly visits to a chiropractor, and became deeply dependent upon healing crystals for spiritual wellness, influenced by boyfriend Jon Gould. In the last few years of his life, Warhol’s spirituality became his primary focus, as many of his former lovers and friends succumbed to Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). In addition, his gallbladder problems (that had begun in 1973) were becoming much worse.

From 1982 to 1984, Warhol found solace and return to the Sixties in new and innovative professional relationships with various up and coming artists in the Pop Art/Neo-expressionism movement, including Jean-Michel Basquiat. At first completely negative about Basquiat’s work (Warhol would refuse him admittance to the Factory), the pair formed a “symbiotic” relationship; Jean-Michel depended upon Warhol’s fame and Warhol depended upon Basquiat’s youth (qtd. In Bockris 461). The relationship, as with most of Warhol’s relationships, eventually soured in 1985 as Basquiat continued to spend money haphazardly, take extensive drugs, and treat others with a disdain that Warhol could no longer tolerate. Warhol’s life in the 1980s revealed an inner battle with Andy Warhol and André Warhola. In the face of his own desire to return to his past, once again, Warhol created an impersonal distance between himself and some of his closest advisors, including Fred Hughes, who was suffering from multiple sclerosis.

However, Warhol had lost much of the inspiration that he found in the 1960s, surrounded by many malicious individuals. While he would continue to work frantically from 1985-1986,
his loneliness was often overwhelming. Bockris describes the conclusion of his hypermodern quest, writing: “In the end it seemed that the overriding emotion of Andy’s self-penned script was the same one he had keenly felt as a child when he had started out by cursing everybody around him—disappointment in people” (476). From 1985-1987, Warhol filmed *Andy Warhol’s Fifteen Minutes*, where he offered the opportunity to entertain his own desire of being one of the most important celebrities in a world filled with countless celebrities. Even in the process of attaining and achieving celebrity, Warhol’s loneliness was palpable; thus, he turned back once more to the comfort that had never truly left him—his belief in God and in his faith.

Warhol had not lost his commitment to his long-standing Byzantine Catholic tradition. Colacello remarks that, even in the 1970s, he realized that Warhol’s faith commitment provided an existential ground, neither simply a show nor act for attention. It was a guiding force in a wavering life. A 1980 photograph depicts Warhol and Fred Hughes at the Vatican in Rome, meeting Pope John Paul II in the midst of a large crowd. The photograph shows Pope John Paul II holding Warhol’s hand (“Pope John Paul II”). The faith that Warhol maintained also provided him with roots that extended back beyond his commercial career, temporally connecting him to a childhood in Pittsburgh, surrounded by his parents and brothers. With this return to his past, Warhol also began to paint images connected to his Catholic faith. In particular, Leonardo Da Vinci’s *Last Supper* made its way into the silk-screen, overlaid with images from Beethoven and his sheet music as well as corporate logos. Warhol utilized a photocopy of the *Last Supper* to create this work (“Last Supper”). For Warhol, Leonardo da Vinci’s *Last Summer* belonged to common culture, and, subsequently, this religious image, again, became ordinary enough that he wanted to silkscreen it. In January of 1987, Warhol released a series of photographs that
encapsulated some of the best reviews he had received in many years. It seemed as though Warhol’s rediscovery of his past was manifesting into a bright future.

During the first month of 1987, Warhol began to feel extreme discomfort in his abdomen, related specifically to his gallbladder. Koch reminisces that doctors had recommended a gallbladder operation for years, but his manic fear of dying in a hospital gripped him completely. By Friday, February 20, Warhol had been admitted to New York Hospital; he had continued to lament to his friends and family, “‘Oh, no, I’m not coming out of the hospital’” (qtd. in Bockris 487). His gallbladder had become gangrenous due to an intense and prolonged infection. On Saturday, February 21, Warhol underwent surgery upon his gallbladder, which had no complications. He settled in his own hospital room by 4:00 p.m. that day, attended to by a private nurse, Min Chou. Investigations later revealed that Chou did not return to Warhol’s bedside throughout the night to check on his vital signs nor to assist him with any medication or medical needs. On Sunday, February 22, 1987, at 6:31 a.m., André Warhola died from complications from this routine gallbladder procedure; the final death, as Danto refers to it, was unexpected and startling to all that knew him. Warhol’s family laid him to rest at St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Ceremony in Bethel Park, a small suburb outside of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

After his death, Sotheby’s opened Warhol’s townhome to reveal decades of collections of cultural items. A collector—borderline hoarder—many felt that his estate needed to be examined in order to effectively sell off his belongings (much of which were auctioned off). Within Warhol’s home lay time capsules, 610 of them. As Warhol collected throughout his life, he also maintained boxes of all that he felt to be important in his life. In fact, when finally opened, the time capsules revealed a collection of materials that mattered very much to Warhol. These included several of Julia’s aprons, with thank you notes still in the pockets (“Apron”), religious
brochures including one on St. Jude (“Brochure”), and letters from his nephews and nieces in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (“Envelope”). Hidden with the time capsules are countless letters, prayer cards, religious icons, correspondence with family, and items associated with Julia. The Pop Art prince had left behind a trail of all that he privileged—in his life, his works, and his relationships with others.

3.2 Communication Ethics: Warhol on a Hypdermodern Quest

This intimate yet performative biographical sketch of Warhol the man and Pop Artist describes a hypermodern individual highlighting the communication ethics questions that drove American culture on a number of levels. As Colacello would describe, on one hand, Warhol exemplified the complete embodiment of the “American dream” as the son of two Ruthenian immigrants who had found success, though a work ethic and innovative creativity, in a world of promise and opportunity (Colacello 11). However, and simultaneously, Warhol also turned that dream on its head in uncomfortable and strange ways. Warhol’s double-edged nature illustrates the hypermodern angst that Warhol not only felt but also encapsulated through his life and works.

Koch describes Warhol’s self and identity as pure “Presence” (Koch 8). Warhol’s corpus of artistic work, as well as the life that he inevitably led, consisted of a personality of overt commentary on the meaning of Presence. Koch describes Warhol’s nature as simultaneously delicate and hard, as overt and subverted. For those that knew him, Colacello and Koch both describe a man that assumed a persona, and could not portray himself, in life, as an ordinary human person. Warhol did not reveal his sources of selfhood throughout his life in a public manner, although he lived a public life and took advantage of the fame that he accrued through his Pop Art mastery. Those sources of selfhood are not evident in the biographical sketch offered
by all Warhol experts; yet, Warhol’s values and sources shine through in his hypermodern art, which communicated ethically and with purpose, offering interpretative possibilities and moral cultivation for future audiences. Koch argued that Warhol’s choices and behaviors were revelatory of what he stood for, and of who he believed himself to be. His public career as an artist, public persona as a celebrity, and his writings, offer a framework that illustrate a philosophy of communication ethics in hypermodernity, attending to both liberating the self of social constraints and the enslavement of the self to social whims. His philosophical aesthetic provides guiding principles for navigating a hypermodern world.

In 1971, Barbara Rose, journalist for *New York* magazine and *Vogue*, offered a commentary on Warhol in *New York* magazine regarding Warhol’s work through the sixties into the seventies. Calling him a “reporter” and now a “judge,” Rose contended that, unlike any of his contemporaries, Warhol had timing and the ability to dissolve all cultural predispositions to reveal the false “pretensions” that American society capitalized upon (qtd. in Colacello 65). She suggested that Warhol’s artistic brilliance shone in his uncanny ability to utilize media as a form of artistic inquiry into the reality of existential life, making him one of the most important artists of his century. More than any other artist of his time, Warhol, for Rose and for so many others, created images that turned out to be “the permanent record of America in the sixties: mechanical, vulgar, violent, commercial, deadly, and destructive,” and hypermodern (qtd. in Colcello 64). Rose also suggests, however, that it is not enough to simply talk about Warhol’s works in order to understand him and his project as it affects a philosophy of communication ethics in hypermodernity. His life, his relationships, and his entire body of work reveal an intimate and deep portrait of hypermodern America itself.
This biographical portrait offers the ground from which this project argues that Warhol’s hypermodern creative feud offers extensive and crucial implications for understanding the study of philosophy of communication ethics, commenting upon and communicating about the values in play during his lifetime that so many were unable to see and to understand. As his life demonstrates, he, himself, as a hypermodern individual, struggled with these same communication ethics questions leading him from André Warhola to Andy Warhol and back again. He sought out fame to escape mortality in a world of an uncertain, ambiguous, and risky future. However, he also regarded fame with a distance, recognizing the hypermodern impulse to achieve that immortality by escaping the riskiness of the future.

Part I of this project, chapters one through three, argued for three essential elements to Warhol’s project in hypermodern philosophy of communication ethics. First, art is an act of communication that rhetorically distinguishes between ethical values and yields significant consequences for identifying and expressing sources of one’s selfhood. Warhol exemplified this through his artistic corpus and through a life lived as an artwork. Second, art can only be considered art based on historical conditions, of which hypermodernity, as Lipovetsky understood it, allowed for Warhol’s creative feud. Finally, Warhol’s life embodied a hypermodern thirst for recognition and consumption, which he both celebrated and identified as empty and meaningless. Working from the philosophical ground offered in Part I, Part II, consisting of chapters four through six, offers an intensive read of the following major metaphors that characterize Warhol’s creative feud: 1) Warhol’s Pop Art (paintings, film, and various uses of media) to comment upon an elevation of the commonplace central to hypermodernity; 2) the individuals connected to Warhol that exemplify a hypermodern choice for mass commodification; and, 3) Warhol’s primary writings to consider the metaphor of chasing
artificial light characterizing so much of hypermodern life. These chapters unite a philosophy of communication ethics tied to the deep and contradictory nuances of Warhol’s personality and his understanding of the temporal relationship between past, present, and future.
Chapter 4:

A Phenomenology of the Commonplace: Warhol, the Silkscreen, and the Silver Screen

This chapter, “A Phenomenology of the Commonplace in the Age of the
Hyperconsumption: Warhol, the Silkscreen, and the Silver Screen,” begins Part II of this project. Part II examines the primary metaphors that drove Warhol’s creative feud situated within a hypermodern philosophy of communication ethics. Those three primary metaphors include: 1) the elevation of the commonplace, 2) the mass commodification of persons, and 3) the chasing of artificial light. The elevation of the commonplace signaled an embedded practice in hypermodern mass society, acting as a byproduct of hyperconsumption within hypermodernity. In the context of this historical moment, the elevation of commonplace centered upon the acknowledgement of banality as central, taking the common, everyday experience of tradition and human communication and playing with it a repetitive pattern that trivialized even the most significant and celebrated the banal by depleting the object of any and all gravity. Warhol’s creative feud exemplified this metaphor primarily through his artwork and his films, demonstrating a philosophy of communication ethics grounded within hypermodernity. Through pursuing the sources of his selfhood in hypermodernity, often driven by hyperconsumption as a form of status, Warhol’s elevation of the commonplace reveals an embedded attitude and belief that characterized the communication ethics of his historical moment.

A phenomenology of the commonplace offers an interpretative lens for understanding Warhol’s continued elevation of banality into structures of high or elite art and culture, inherent within the structures of hypermodernity. Warhol’s art spoke to a deep-seated phenomenological elevation of the banal that called into question elements of tradition. Three major scholars give voice to such a phenomenological and philosophical perspective on art and human
communication in the midst of the dissolution of tradition. First, Zygmunt Bauman conceptualized the move from modernity into Warhol’s historical moment as a drawing forth of culture that acts as a pivotal fulcrum point upon which the elevation of the banal could and did take place. Walter Benjamin offers a philosophy of communication ethics responsive to the dichotomies of Warhol’s historical moment, drawing upon art in a moment characterized by the primary metaphor of reproduction which signals a significant shift in historical values and communication ethics. Finally, Hans-Georg Gadamer textured interpretation and tradition in the midst of fragmentation through a phenomenological and hermeneutic encounter with the art object. Having drawn upon these scholarly voices, an analysis of the paintings and films of Warhol offer an illustration of his creative feud situated within philosophy of communication ethics that encapsulated a hypermodern moment, shedding the shackles of tradition and replacing it with the banal.

Warhol’s hypermodern moment permitted the elevation of the banal by philosophically texturing a recycling of the past through rejection of tradition. Hyperconsumption existed as the manifestation of an individual’s emotional response to fulfilling much more than class status. Likewise, commemoration became a pure commodity, which meant that the past and the present morphed into commercial property and tradition simply a form of nostalgia that existed for consumption—an emphasis exploited in Warhol’s art and films. As a weaving of philosophical voices, a phenomenology of the commonplace rises most notably in the age of hyperconsumption as performance of status. If the phenomenological tradition is a philosophical discovery of lived experience, Warhol’s artistic corpus suggests that a phenomenology of the commonplace in hypermodernity yields significant implications for a philosophy of communication ethics.
4.1 Culture and Commodity: The Beginnings of the Rise of the Commonplace

The elevation of banality through an attentiveness to the commonplace has a textured phenomenological history that begins in the rise of the relationship between culture and hyperconsumption, most notably elucidated by Bauman who writes under the assumption that postmodernity trumps all other values and norms. His work, deeply embedded in the sociological tradition, responds to postmodern ideals of capitalism, but also inherently announces the convergence of modern and postmodern ideals in the midst of competing cultural norms taking root in unreflective consumer culture. His work yields similar implications to Gilles Lipovetsky’s hypermodernity, a unification of modern individualism and postmodern fragmentation in the form of petit narratives, engaged in an era of excess, the driving assumption of this project. Bauman contends that, in a transition from modern nation-building cultures to a postmodern condition of globalization, diaspora, or the dispersal of groups of peoples all of the world, shrunk the distance between strangers, at once compelled by stark differences and competing viewpoints in an increasingly small space. Simultaneously acknowledging a new moment, Bauman recognizes that we have not lost modernity to history—modernist impulses have morphed into a postmodern condition, and, this project argues, a hypermodern one.

Culture, according to Bauman, is comprised of three significant characteristics: 1) optimism in the limitless potential of human nature, 2) universal assumptions that the potential for change is the same for all, and 3) eurocentrism, or the conviction that communal and individual life is exemplified by specific institutions. Bauman writes in defense of the European Union, calling forth the need to celebrate difference and invite clashing perspectives to create new realities. The result of globalization, according to Bauman, is that we have replaced ideologies of cultural supremacy with desires for difference, yielding clashes between and
among the individuals who protect and promote various perspectives and narrative viewpoints. The great diasporas of globalization created minorities with mutual feelings of isolation and self-protection as a means to guard against clash and conflict. Segmentation and fragmentation between and among various cultural identities reigned, and continue to reign, in place of collective entities of like-minded individuals. Bauman offers a call for the celebration of all identities and differences, respecting the particular nature of each culture and erasing hierarchical boundaries in the quest to learn from one another.

Bauman defines our historical moment as liquid modernity because of its “self-propelling, self-intensifying, compulsive and obsessive ‘modernization,’” which results in a liquid-like form of social life and human communication, constantly morphing and reshaping to attend to the present changes inherent in a social world struggling for identity and recognition (Bauman 11). Culture focuses upon the individual quest for selfhood through excessive notions of needs, struggles, and challenges that become problems of excessive consumption in this historical era. Bauman reads modernity as a great unifier that melted away into postmodern fragmentation with preference for individual decision-making and choice. While not calling it hypermodernity, both Bauman and Lipovetsky announce a historical moment with significant ramifications for Warhol’s project and for philosophy of communication ethics.

Bauman cites Oxford sociologist John Goldthorpe, who claimed that culture, in this historical moment, supplanted the cultural elite with a new phenomenological commonness that permits all access to high or elite art within the public sphere. Culture is a mixture of all that high art previously defined itself as coupled with a turn toward popular culture and popular consumption—television, various forms of music, etc. Thus, Bauman announces the elevation of the commonplace and the banal in a turn away from traditional standards of cultural elitism. The
bridge between high art and low art, as such, is not a conflict of taste but a desire to consume everything and all things, coupled with a selective mindset that acknowledges class struggles manifesting as identity crises. While writing under the auspices of postmodernity, Bauman’s characterization resounds with Lipovetsky’s understanding of the call of hypermodernity to hyperconsumption as a means of individual expression—and this manifested in the world of art, as well. Once, in Bauman’s estimation, art fragmented various audiences by social class. Now, current cultural norms and communication ethics announce a fragmentation that collapsed upon itself as a pattern of rejection of traditions. Under this framework, selfhood emerged as a primary means of historical interpretation, and subsequently communication, of events and value systems. In this vein, pop art surfaced as a response to cultural disrespect of various backgrounds and, yet, turned that very attitude in on itself through a commitment to superficiality through aesthetic, visual, and verbal communication inherently manifesting cultural values and ethics.

According to Bauman, the modern basic assumption related to culture was that few elites would be able to educate the masses and to reveal that which they guarded—a possessed intellectual disseminated to the ignorant through cultural artifacts. Much of the colonizing attitude emerged from this basis. Intellectual citizens during the Enlightenment felt a responsibility to pull the disenfranchised out of their “monotonous routine” into a “modern nation” and state (Bauman 52). Modernity’s rejection of tradition in the favor of individual autonomy manifested in the new conditions that the cultural elite gave to the masses in education and cultivation of spirit. The rise of the modern nation-state signaled the rise of a singular historical culture, calling forth progress at the expense of the local. The product, however, was hegemony of culture and an enlightened class with assured status, thus stagnating culture into a
homeostatic function of tranquilizing the masses not by inducing change but by depicting a state of affairs.

Bauman offers a warning, which resonates within the life, relationships, and works of Warhol. He contends that, in the midst of a changing public that challenges cultural elitism, or the status quo, one must have courage in the face of institutional constraints. That quality reserved itself for the intellectual elite, the academic experts, the celebrities, and the stars. Bauman points to German word *Bildung*, later explicated further by Gadamer, to refer to the signifying of culture as force for change and upheaval, rather than the great equalizer or preserver of the status quo. Warhol’s works were a direct challenge to the status quo, and acted as an elevator of banality and the commonplace in direct opposition to traditional modes of understanding within art, communication, and art as communication. Culture and high art, elitist forms of enjoyment, were shifted and torn down by Warhol’s penchant for the superficial and for repetition. His choices were direct and targeted, and offered a communicative stance of responsiveness to his historical moment. Just as Bauman argues for a European Union that encourages the merging of difference, Warhol’s move toward creating works of art that reflected cultural values allowed for the merging of identities and narratives under the collapsed distinction of high/low art.

Culture’s hypermodern endeavor was to ensure individual freedom, whereas individual choice trumps communal commitments. A sense of belonging in a community gives way to the need to choose an identity. Production supplanted duty and seduction and temptation bypassed commitments to change. Thus, consumer society is a byproduct of a changing culture, and one experiences hypermodern culture through consumption of goods, without standards and without preference, lacking tradition and respect for tradition. What seems to have occurred as a
byproduct, however, is that art lacked the revered ethos it once possessed in the traditional nature of art. If art is anything that you can get away with, as Warhol once stated, and artists are preoccupied with the creation of art for the sake of fame and fortune, where is the value of a cultural artifact? Warhol heard this question as he transitioned into the Warhol of the 1960s. He witnessed the dissolution of modern impulses for a post-modern, or liquid modern, preoccupation with individual choice, personal expression, and a taste for consumerism as a source of high art. Warhol’s life and works elevate the banal to the extremes by recognizing the commodification of the commonplace in a hypermodern moment, flattening into a superficial read of life, standards, and traditions. Bauman’s philosophical and sociological inquiry offers a hermeneutic entrance into the role of culture and consumption in aesthetic objects for purposes of human communication. Walter Benjamin, aesthetic philosopher and communication ethicist offers an interpretive extension of Bauman’s project in understanding art’s response to an age of consumption and commodification.

4.2 Walter Benjamin, Art, and Reproduction

Walter Benjamin’s *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, originally published in 1936, offers a unification of culture, history, and tradition under the umbrella of the work of art, yielding significant implications for understanding Warhol’s creative feud through philosophy of communication ethics emergent within his artistic corpus. Benjamin’s work responds to the politicizing of the work of art in his modern era, the host of two world wars juxtaposed with the rise of consumer culture as a way of life within the United States (commented upon by Bauman). His historical moment set the stage of hypermodernity, and Benjamin saw the work of art as a place where a phenomenology of the commonplace rejected the structures of tradition in the midst of an increasingly political public sphere.
For Benjamin, the rise of mechanical reproduction was a new historical advancement in both society and in the world of the art form. Through a series of historical developments, a rise in reproduction placed drawing and art at the same speed and rate as human speech and thus revealed hidden norms and values embedded within culture—most notably in the reproductive nature of art, writ large, and the introduction of the medium of film as an artistic endeavor. Benjamin is skeptical of art and mechanical reproduction, articulating that any reproduction of art lacks the embedded values grounded within the original’s particularity of time, space, and history. Mechanical reproduction puts at risk the idea of authenticity. The “presence of the original” acts as a necessity for authenticity, which means that the original conditions authenticity exclusively (Benjamin, *Work of Art* 13). Thus, if one utilizes reproduction in the work of art, Benjamin argues for a process reproduction, emphasizing details perhaps overlooked within the original, suggesting that, inherent within process reproduction, the art object may posses even further reach to audiences outside of what would be possible for the original. This age of mechanical reproduction destroys the “aura of the work of art,” or, more specifically, reproduction severs the link between an art object and tradition, privileging reach rather than authenticity (Benjamin, *Work of Art* 14). With film as the exemplar of his point, Benjamin considers the elevation of the commonplace as a rejection of tradition and a result of permitting the reproduced object into cultural consciousness devoid of historical, social, and cultural ties. Benjamin, like Bauman, considers this age one that liquidates tradition and value.

Benjamin, like Danto, acknowledges that historical conditions and circumstances alter human perception and willingness to embrace various media, allowing art to emerge at specific instances in time and space. Both art and film play with time and space, contending with mass perception of distance and relationship between creator and interpreter in a manner that is deeply
phenomenological, rhetorical, and communicative. One’s experience of the work of art is contingent upon the “fabric of tradition” that binds one’s creative purposes and intentions to specific times, places, and spaces (Benjamin, Work of Art 19). Yet, interpretation can change in meaning and importance, as a liquid culture morphs in the midst of shifting cultural norms, values, and social cues. For example, Benjamin explains that, at some point in the history of art, the aura of a work of art dedicated itself to the ritualistic nature of art in traditions such as religion. As the age of mechanical reproduction began to rise, art began to push back on such an ideology, and adopted the doctrine of l’art pour l’art, or a form of elite art that would become the target of Warhol’s Pop Art. Mechanical reproduction is the emancipation of l’art pour l’art from ritualistic dependency, and allows the work of art to become a form of politics.

Benjamin offers that photographing the images of the dead is the last stand of the ritual within the artistic tradition. Yet, Benjamin turns to other philosophers to acknowledge that even the photographing of the face of the dead has highly politicized implications that transcend the ritual into evidence for historical time frames—something that Warhol capitalized upon particularly in his portraits of others. Furthermore, and especially within the medium of film, the relationship between artist and audience is completely transformed. Specifically, the camera permits the actor to identify with the camera—and no other person. Thus, the actor acts for the machine, not the person consuming the product. When one steps in front of the camera, in addition, one is overcome with a “strangeness … and…estrangement” allowing one to feel as if the camera is a mirror image of one’s self (Benjamin, Work of Art 31). The actor understands that the creation of the film depends upon marketplace hyperconsumption—for the consumer alone. Thus, history and tradition, under this framework, are irrelevant. The creation exists for the consumption, and all identities are bound to that alone.
Benjamin distinguishes between painting and filming in the age of mechanical reproduction. Painting, says Benjamin, inherently creates distance for existential reality. In juxtaposition, filming makes obvious the distance between audience and creator through the equipment while simultaneously depicting a reality. Thus, for Benjamin, the age of mechanical reproduction alters mass reaction to art at a level that upends the tradition of the experience of the art object. Art is experiencing a crisis of perception, says Benjamin, because the traditional work of art requires deep contemplation, a value rejected writ large by the public in response to the rise of reproduction that privileges the superficial over the ritual. Film, and not as much painting, allows for collective interpretation, culturally significant with repetition reigning. The lens of the camera reveals an existential reality of life, rather than a distance of an artist’s subject matter. It expands our considerations of time and space through movement and distraction.

Ultimately, art is subject to historical and cultural eras by fundamentally altering and revealing value systems embedded within society. For example, Benjamin points to Dadaism, a movement within the elite realm of art that countered norms of social conduct with distracting creations aiming to destroy the aura of art in the midst of the banal and commonplace. Dadaism sought shock through inviting art consumers and spectators to contemplate the detachment of object and value. For Benjamin, film allows no disassociation, but constantly shocks the viewer through motion, change, and images that may not exhibit quality, but attends to quantity in order to distract and suspend. Thus, in the mechanical age of reproduction, the public superficially consumes and examines, without offering depth of analysis. The audience member—the art consumer—is not a critic with contemplative offerings but a pure hypermodern consumer who superficially attends to the art object itself. Benjamin ends his work by returning to his historical moment, explicating that the mechanical predisposition, which highlights destroying the aura of
the beautiful, has only politicized art and encouraged a political aesthetic. This turn to his historical moment reveals the dialogic nature of culture and aesthetics, particularly in an age of reproduction. In an age seemingly rejecting tradition, affirming status through consumption, and seeking expression through rampant individualism, Benjamin’s historical and cultural analysis positions film and art as dialogic indicators of communication ethics. Similarly, Hans-Georg Gadamer offers a perspective on tradition and art that further exemplifies the importance of dialogue in uncovering identity and communication ethics.

4.3 The Phenomenology of Tradition and Art: A Gadamerian Perspective

Bauman and Benjamin argue that culture offers specific touch points for understanding communication ethics. Gadamer (1900-2002) further offers a phenomenological framework that delivers an embodied practice of situating oneself in a world of culture, of Bildung, and of art while simultaneously acknowledging bias formed from an individual’s identity and tradition. Gadamer explicates his phenomenological inquiry into the relation of hermeneutics and tradition in his seminal work, Truth and Method. According to Dermot Moran, professor of Philosophy at the University College Dublin specializing in phenomenology, Truth and Method developed a theory considering the meaning, history, and value of human experience that pursued truth claims and cultural values, much like one’s experience with art and with others. For Gadamer, the metaphor of method lacks the capability to accomplish such existential truth claims. Method is unique to the natural sciences in its process and procedure guidelines to universal outcomes. Truth and Method stands as Gadamer’s exemplary text for discerning the role of hermeneutics in cultural discourse, in conversation with others, and in the formative power of tradition over and upon an individual. Gadamer offers a phenomenological inquiry into the reality of living embedded with tradition. Gadamer asks all to question what it means to “appropriate,” to
preserve, and to “transform” a tradition that we live within and that we explicate through language and communication (Moran 267). Gadamer’s phenomenological inquiry into tradition rests within the aesthetic object, and points to a phenomenology of Warhol’s creative feud that embodied a hypermodern philosophy of communication ethics emergent in his art and films.

To distinguish between the human sciences and the natural sciences, Gadamer turns to a metaphor of supreme importance to Warhol (although never explicitly referenced by the artist) and explicated by Bauman—Bildung, closely associated with the idea of culture, and focusing upon one’s human capacity for the development of one’s self. However, this definition, according to Gadamer, lacks its inherent importance, which is more about the “process of becoming,” or one’s inner formation through culture and education (Gadamer, Truth 10). The concept of Bildung is both historical and traditional, focusing upon the notion of cultivating a self-image that manifests in the preservation of past traditions. Gadamer unites theoretical Bildung and practical Bildung, or universality and practicality, in a manner that suggests that one who lives in the world both experiences the world and then transcends that world—interacts with others while cultivating oneself simultaneously.

The individual is responsible for both dialogue with others and for cultivating one’s self in the preservation of tradition, carrying one’s self forth into encounters with others, texts, and objects. The individual possesses authority in the midst of dissolution of tradition and institutions. This, furthermore, called into question notions of legitimacy, inherently discovered through collective and communal reasoning. This form of authority is a Romantic ideal. Tradition and culture grant legitimacy to specific customs (for example, ethics and morals emerge from tradition, collectively identified). Tradition, thus, is a collective granting of legitimacy and validity to questions of value systems, morals, and ethics. For Gadamer, tradition
is, thus, not simply rooted in the past, but constantly in flux, cultivated and preserved through various cultural norms and objects, affected by history and by society. Tradition is an active process, requiring others to respond, protect, and preserve the past for the sake of the future within the present. Gadamer roots this within historicality.

Historicality unites reason and tradition by contending that reason can only operate within and because of tradition, inherently providing sources of selfhood within historical moments. Gadamer’s challenge with tradition is to permit the self to be in conversation with tradition throughout a lifetime. For Gadamer, this is inherently just as true when one confronts one’s world as it is in when one confronts a text—literary and artistic. One can understand a given text by understanding the tradition from which the text emerged. Gadamer understands tradition as ongoing—never ending and never complete. If we accept this premise, then understanding other cultures moves from a right and wrong dialectic to a space in which cultures inform the very identities of people and dictate that we respect that identity through providing space for others to announce their sources of selfhood through various forms and formulations.

Once one announces the ground upon which one stands, a fusion of horizons may occur. Gadamer defines a horizon as “the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point” (Gadamer, *Truth* 313). To have a horizon means that one sees both within that horizon, as well as outside of it. One must allow one’s horizon to remain open and accepting to other horizons, as horizons can overlap with one another when we meet another. This, for Gadamer, is the ‘fusion of horizons,’ or the meshing of our horizons together in order to permit human understanding to flourish and to take place in dialogue with others. Gadamer considers the fusion of horizons situated in the horizons of both the past and of the present. For
Gadmer, our past molds and shapes our present, understood only within this context. This unity informs our future, opening up space for multiple interpretations, narratives, and traditions.

For Gadamer, the fusion of horizons presented within tradition opens up the possibilities for historicity. Historicity, or historically effected consciousness, acts as a space for understanding in that it opens up the potential for “finding the right questions to ask” (Gadamer, Truth 312). For Gadamer, we stand in a moment that is historical, effected and affected by history. Thus, understanding and responding to emergent questions affecting communication ethics questions exists within the framework of both the historical situation and the hermeneutical situation, a concept defined by Gadamer as the individual capacity to be conscious of our being affected by history. However, the luxury of objective knowledge is not a possibility for the course of human communication because of the hermeneutical situation. We are always within history, within our particular circumstances, and never outside of a given situation. Therefore, the task of understanding history can never be complete, or “to be historically means that knowledge of oneself can never be complete” (Gadamer, Truth 313). Constantly cultivating and becoming—Bildung—we never stand above or outside of history. Rather, we must interpret and engage our ongoing situation. The act of interpretation, never complete and in a constant state of flux, thus, rejects a technique-driven formulation, if it is an ongoing process that structures and constitutes human understanding via language. For Gadamer, the human being makes sense of a world that is constructed and constituted through language because that history situates human communication and human be-ing.

Gadamer articulates one’s being as grounded within a historical situation, and, thus, takes on a dialogical character that further characterizes Gadamer’s phenomenological inquiry. The interplay of history, being, culture, and tradition serves to create the hermeneutic entrance into
Gadamer’s discussion of art, experience, and prejudice, concepts that Warhol’s creative feud hinges upon while framed within philosophy of communication ethics. In artistic experience, the dialogic concept of Bildung offers one’s interpretative stance in the midst of a historical situation. One must be open to the “otherness” of a work of art while simultaneously attuned to one’s interpretation and bias (Gadamer, *Truth* 16). One comes to understand a tradition through human communication and interpretation with others over common ground emergent through dialogue—either with others or through art objects. Central to Gadamer’s project, however, is the acknowledgment that one always communicates from a bias. Gadamer rejects the Enlightenment ideal of prejudice and counters it with bias as an inherently human condition. Prejudice is the predisposition to evaluate a situation before considering all other factors. Prejudice does not prevent us from understanding or arriving at a specific truth. Rather, prejudices become the ground from which we are able to attempt all efforts at understanding or communicating.

Gadamer suggests that our prejudices announce our narrative and cultural traditions, allowing for the acknowledgement of viewpoints without presupposing agreement.

Gadamer argues that a rehabilitation of prejudice is vital in order to truly appreciate and acknowledge the nature of man as a historical being, situated within temporality. For Gadamer, prejudice can be a legitimating and necessary component to human engagement with the world. We constantly, and irrevocably, are grounded within and speaking from a narrative tradition. Thus, subjectivity distorts one from the realities of one’s selfhood. An individual’s selfhood is a small matter of human existence within history. For Gadamer, “that is why the prejudices of the individual, far more than his judgments, constitute the historical reality of his being” (Gadamer, *Truth* 289). As prejudice becomes the reality from which the subject can speak, Gadamer
explains that this is the legitimacy of prejudice. We cannot escape it—and thus, we must announce it.

The Enlightenment operates from a prejudice that rejects prejudice. For this reason, the Enlightenment also rejected authority and privileged individual capacities for reason as the only true source of authority. Gadamer posits that commitment and faith in authority is juxtaposed by the Enlightenment call to trust and to listen to one’s own reason—to move away from a position that blindly follows all authority but rather interprets and considers positions for one’s own self. Gadamer notes that art, in particular, finds structure and meaning within the context of communities, history, and tradition, suggesting ties to prejudice in this area of communicative life and engagement with the world. Any art object expresses a notion of truth that reveals an artist embedded in history. Simultaneously, however, it is not just simply the creator’s intention, but an aesthetic and communicative experience between artist and audience. The realm of hermeneutics and interpretation situates art precisely because of both its intended meaning by the artist, who exists with a prejudice and historical trajectory, and the presentation transcending temporality of the historical condition. The art object announces an historical moment and the transcendental nature of art that moves into other historical periods. To confront the interpretative text of the artwork is also to confront the self, requiring the full integration of the experience of art into one’s phenomenological experience of the world, offering insights into how one is able to understand the self. In art, an “excess” of meaning exists that simultaneously reveals an artist’s creative intentions as well as audience interpretative possibilities (Gadamer, *Philosophical 102*). The interpretation of a work of art is bound to history and, yet, is subject to interpretation within and outside of a given tradition of aesthetic consciousness.
Gadamer’s work joins tradition, bias, and hermeneutics into an aesthetic quality of creation that communicates and expresses given historical truths. This theoretical and phenomenological groundwork situates the interplay of tradition, culture, bias, and experience in the meeting of others as well as the co-creation of meaning that occurs in dialogue with others who are in the world—often occurring through texts and art objects. The act of interpretation makes human communication possible while simultaneously acknowledging the existence of bias in the realm of tradition and culture. Rhetoric and hermeneutics depend upon a dialogue that involves multiple actors that search for and discover identity simultaneously. Gadamer’s phenomenology of tradition opens up space for the interplay of culture, creativity, self-expression, and identity in the midst of various historical moments. Gadamer’s acknowledgment of individual bias and interpretation reaches back into Benjamin’s comment on an age of mechanical reproduction arising in the midst of a new shifting culture explicated by Bauman. These three voices, taken together, paint a philosophical picture, rooted within communication ethics, that acknowledges the complex interplay of culture, tradition, audience bias, and art in hypermodernity. Through this phenomenological lens, Warhol’s art and film offer a primary metaphor of his feud: the elevation of banality through considering the commonplace in hypermodernity.

4.4 Andy Warhol and the Silkscreen: Phenomenology, Tradition, and the Commonplace

A phenomenology of the commonplace presupposes that culture, tradition, and bias acknowledge a new hypermodern hyperconsumption that creates and influences individual experiences in the everyday life-world. Warhol’s work—particularly his silkscreens and his films—offer the metaphor of the elevation of the commonplace speaking to a deep-seated hypermodern value that impacted communication ethics, with long-standing consequences and
implications. Warhol’s career spans four decades, in which he produced, created, painted, filmed, and expanded an artistic corpus touching a significant portion of media and industries. However, biographer David Bourdon explains that Warhol, Pop Art prince, was a calculated attempt to achieve celebrity status in his lifetime. “A mirror of his age: that’s what many people called Andy Warhol,” says Bourdon (9). As a mirror of his age, his genius lies within his ability to identify cultural, social, and moral circumstances that characterized his historical moment, and to utilize this in his artwork. Never one simply to allow the work of art to speak for itself, Warhol utilized both his talent and his reputation to achieve fame, forever altering the way that the masses perceived art. Warhol’s subject matter reflected a consumerism rampant with American culture, and implicated American culture as superficial, lacking the value systems that had inherently been in place before the rise of modernity.

It is without question that Warhol entered into the art world with the attitude of forcing that world to accept him “on his terms,” terms that many would find an utter rejection of traditional art and originality (Bourdon 10). Yet, what many failed to recognize was that his art and his films mirrored a continuing elevation of the commonplace as a rejection of tradition already present in American society. Warhol’s performative biography suggests that he dedicated his entire life, works, and relationships exclusively to the elevation of banality—one of reflecting a clear celebration of the commonplace through cultural communication about tradition and bias. In an age where culture gives way to pure consumption, and tradition lacks the significance needed to understand the dialogic nature of human communication, the age of mechanical reproduction rose through Warhol in a way that philosophically yields significant implications for the study of philosophy of communication ethics.
A phenomenology of the commonplace, and in particular the question the elevation of banality in hypermodernity, extends itself into the work of Warhol through four of his primary works: 1) the 1962 silkscreen *Marilyn Monroes*, 2) the 1963 film *Sleep*, 3) the 1964 artistic sculpture and silkscreen *Brillo Box* and 4) the 1976 *Hammer and Sickle* series. These selected objects reflect the scholarship dedicated to these artistic masterpieces and to Warhol, suggesting that these four works speak most directly to Warhol’s own breaking of tradition from the world of art as previously understood. As Bob Colacello stated, Warhol’s greatest gift was his capability of understanding and knowing his historical moment as it unfolded before him, which enabled Warhol to “not only to join the latest trend but to leap to the head of the line” (341). By identifying the trend, these four works illustrate exclusively and extensively Warhol’s comments upon the elevation of banality through a rejection of tradition happening in his historical moment.

Warhol moved into his most important work in the dawning of the 1960s, a decade in which he sought out the commonplace in order to elevate and transform the everyday object into a work of high or elite art. What Warhol loved most about the objects that he chose to depict was that these brand names were equally available across the United States. He viewed consumption as an equalizing force in the American marketplace, and celebrated that consumption was a “tradition where the richest consumers buy essentially the same things as the poorest” (Bourdon 76). Warhol’s artistic corpus centers upon two primary innovations. First, Warhol’s use of repetition as representation significantly enabled to highlight a superficial aesthetic, commenting upon a flat read of the commonplace objects that he elevated into high or elite art. Second, Warhol’s use of silkscreening appeared, on the surface, to remove the “mediation” of an artist’s viewpoint and worldview upon the art object, allowing that object to essentially speak for itself
These innovations reveal a phenomenology of the commonplace that inherently reveals the rise of hypermodernity and, in addition, paints Warhol as an exemplar of the hypermodern condition.

The process of silkscreening is the quintessential technique that encapsulates Benjamin’s age of mechanical reproduction, and became synonymous with the name Andy Warhol. The grid and repetition suggest mass commodification and production that highlights and glorifies commercialism and consumption within the United States. Warhol adopted in the process in the spring of 1962. Silkscreening is a mechanical “stencil process” that works with a fabric screen treated with a variety of chemicals in such a way that some areas cannot be dyed, or reject pigmentation, while others on the canvas allow the pigment to stain the area (Bourdon 108). The silkscreen stretches tautly across a wood frame and over a canvas, and, subsequently, one pours the paint or pigment along one inside “edge of the frame” (Bourdon 108). Then, the artist takes a rubber squeegee and moves the device across the silkscreen and the canvas to force paint through the mesh of the silkscreen and onto the canvas. The process is a mechanical avenue to reproduce a given image, and secured Warhol’s place in history as one of the most important artists of the century, elevating the commonplace through mechanical reproduction in what was uniquely his own style.

Importantly, Warhol acknowledged that what mattered most in the work of art, for him, was audience interpretation. After the production of the *Campbell’s Soup Cans* in 1962, Warhol argued that it did not matter at all what the soup cans meant to him personally. What mattered the most was what each individual who consumed the image thought about the image. His artistic style significantly responded to Benjamin’s rising age of mechanical reproduction, and he embraced both the grid and mass-production of multiple copies, which removed any personal
connection to the work of art. Warhol’s contribution to Pop Art specifically could be found in his ability to argue for his work as original, although it was mass-produced and influenced by pure reproductions of images. Warhol’s 1962 *Marilyns* most notably achieved this elevation of banality, and the series became some of his most famous and most important work.

Bourdon argues that, from the very beginning, the *Marilyns* were “considered the most desirable of all his prints” (262). The day after Warhol’s *Campbell’s Soup Cans* show in Los Angeles, Marilyn Monroe died of an apparent suicide. Within days, Warhol had purchased a publicity photograph from the film *Niagara*, cropped the image, and turned it into a silkscreen, allowing Warhol to reproduce her image countless times throughout his career. In the course of reproducing the image, while certainly regimented in their repetition, the strips of images resembled more of those from a film, as each frame differed from the other. This was a result of the different amount of pigment placed into the silkscreen or the pressure applied to the squeegee. The *Marilyns* are powerful instances of Warhol’s aesthetic contribution to philosophy of communication ethics, detailing and capturing the elevation of the commonplace that was culturally accepted and perpetuated in mainstream society. However, Warhol’s ability to suggest meaning in his artwork allowed the invitation of interpretation through the mechanical grid, and suggests the communicative power of art in that value manifests in the attachment to the object by the viewer.

In one of the reproductions of the *Marilyns*, Warhol used one silkscreened image onto a gold background, which harkened back to Warhol’s childhood in Pittsburgh, sitting in St. John Chrysostom Church with its “rich gold background” filled with religious figures—Warhol attempted to “symbolically canonize” Marilyn (Bourdon 130). Warhol would return to the *Marilyns* in 1967, reviving his work with an additional set of ten silkscreens of the star, painted
with even more intense colors. Most notably, however, were the silkscreens produced in hues of gray and black. These images were both “austere and funereal,” calling forth the death theme so impactful in his other works (Bourdon 262). These, however, were printed reproductions of his earlier works, even further distancing himself from the subject matter. He returned to them again in 1980 in his Reversal series, taking the images and reverse all tones, as if one had taken a photographic negative and silkscreened that into a repetitive grid.

David Morris, whose primary scholarly interest lies in literature, points to the Marilyns as the “archetype” of the historical moment, in which the image of a troubled woman is commercialized into reproduced image after reproduced image, lacking emotional content (31). The selection of the publicity still of Marilyn from her 1953 film Niagara is repeated constantly, making her face available for public consumption as a common image in the public culture. However, Warhol allowed each reproduction to differ in color and consistency—proving, as he said, that mistakes in the silkscreening reminding those consumers that Marilyn was more than a “plastic” marketplace item (Bockris 152). The inconsistencies permitted Marilyn to enter into a commodity culture while, simultaneously, suggesting a deep meaningful window into a woman that had lived a lonely and tragic life. Warhol, the artist, utilized this image to comment on hypermodernity, a society’s obsession with commodity, and an overall rejection of distance. Bauman’s discussion of a liquid modern culture permits the elevation of the commonplace, made possible because of tradition and history, as Gadamer suggested, and communicative through the adoption of mechanical reproduction as understood by Benjamin.

The Marilyns, in addition to his Death and Disaster series, played with the theme of death that manifested in his life as well. Specifically, Warhol approached his art from the vantage point of machinery, and adopted a persona that pointed to his own life as a work of art.
After the *Marilyns*, he continued to engage in portraiture that appears to fulfill Benjamin’s cult/ritual requirement of art while, at the same time, distanced himself from his subject matter. By the summer of 1963, however, Warhol had turned his interest to a new form of media—film. Warhol viewed film as part of a common consciousness, situated within vernacular of the commonplace, as opposed to art objects often associated with high culture. Warhol’s films existed as moving portraiture of objects, and he filmed *Sleep* in the midst of a drug-fueled world that rejected resting the body. In fact, during the mid 1960s, Warhol’s Silver Factory was a nest for amphetamine addicts. *Sleep* depicted an activity that was alien and foreign to many of the individuals that worked in the Factory.

*Sleep* stars John Giorno, and is approximately five and a half hours in length. The idea germinated during Memorial Day weekend of 1963, when Warhol joined Giorno and a few others at a colleague’s home in Old Lyme, Connecticut. Warhol filmed the original attempt with a 16mm camera, terrifically underexposed and, thus, unusable. However, the idea continued to plague Warhol’s conscience, and Warhol began production again in July and August of 1963. The camera focuses upon Giorno’s sleeping figure, offering his body for pure consumption. The camera hardly moves at all. Bourdon’s point, in describing the film, was that not many would admit to wanting to watch a film of someone’s slumber, and, yet, the theme of sleep has been a traditional art object for centuries. Warhol deliberately made films that involved “inconsequential activities” that were stretched across incredibly long stretches of time, and *Sleep* was no different, offering the audience the opportunity to voyeuristically consume the image of a sleeping Giorno (Bourdon 168). However, and just like the *Campbell’s Soup Cans*, no one had to watch the film *Sleep* to be impacted by the idea of the film, yielding its significant
implications. For those that did watch the film at its premiere, the movie theater nearly rioted, with over two hundred audience members demanding their money back.

Watson describes the moment that Warhol asked Giorno if he was interested in starring in one of his films. Giorno replied, “‘I want to be like Marilyn Monroe!’” (Watson 104). However, Giorno’s claim to stardom and opportunity to achieve fame as an actor in the same vein of Monroe would take place in the throws of his unconsciousness. John Cage remarked: “Andy has sought by repetition to show us that there is not repetition really, that everything we look at is worthy of our attention” (qtd. in Watson 107). However, in the process of shooting what was meant to depict a full eight hours of rest, Warhol did not appreciate the complexity of his avant-garde undertaking. His camera required him to stop filming every three minutes, unload the film, rewind the used film, and then reload the camera. The film itself offered Warhol immediately as an “avant-garde filmmaker” (Scherman and Dalton 172). Warhol’s *Sleep* took the most mundane and commonplace of activities and elevated that activity to an act of avant-garde filmic art. In particular, this film was noteworthy as Warhol had shot hundreds of feet of footage, and required extensive assistance in editing that footage into an actual film that depicted one night of sleep. In essence, his editing was a process of repetition that encapsulated the commonplace for the purposes of mass consumption.

Garnet C. Butchart offers a compelling argument for the role of ethics in documentary and film through a communication lens. While Warhol would not claim to create documentaries, *Sleep* is nothing but a documentary of John Giorno achieving eight hours of restful slumber. Butchart articulates that there are three specific ethical questions related to the documentary: 1) the rights of the participants or subjects of the documentary, 2) the right to information related to social problems and subjects, and 3) claims of objectivity by the creator. Specifically, in
Butchart’s third claim, the debate is centered upon the overarching assumption that the “camera does not lie” and that the documentary has simply captured the unfolding and “unbiased, unfiltered” scene (Butchart 428–429). However, and as articulated by the second primary ethical question, the camera can in fact lie by concealing or distorting information in the presentation of social issues or phenomena. Furthermore, the possibility of obscuring the rights of the participants exists through concealing of the creator’s intentions in the producing of the documentary. Thus, the question of the notion of truth lies at the heart of the communication ethics of documentary.

Butchart contends that the “visual mode of address in documentary” can be understood through a phenomenological lens, namely that of the “structure of intentionality” or the “perceptual process through which phenomena are constituted as meaningful objects of consciousness” (435). The audience and the creator intentionally link together through the experience of the signification of the art object through the mediation of the camera. This visual process contributes to understanding audience intention and reaction while, at the same time, contributes to understanding the communication ethics of film and media. Warhol’s work with the camera, particularly in Sleep, is a direct exemplification of Butchart’s work. Warhol’s film is intentional toward Giorno, offering a documentary of sleep that hinges upon participant awareness, the delivery of information through the lens, and an objective view of the sleeping subject—lacking any interference from the medium. This reproduction and elevation of the commonplace suggests a deeply phenomenological move away from commercial film to avant-garde art that privileged value systems—deeply superficial and common. Bauman’s concept of the culture of consumption led Warhol to reproduce and repeat the banality of slumber, situated within a hypermodern context.
Much like the reproduction of life through the medium of film, Warhol moved to sculpture to further enhance his comments upon mechanical creation in hypermodernity. In 1964, Warhol moved to his “grocery-carton sculptures,” which were completed in various stages and involved carpenters to create hundreds of boxes, made from wood, that were indistinguishable from “cardboard prototypes” (Bourdon 182). The decision to introduce these sculptures arrived after his second showing at the Stable Gallery, when Warhol decided that he wanted something “more ordinary” (Watson 127). This grocery box show was conceptually brilliant. Warhol even created the gallery hosting the show to resemble a warehouse with boxes to be distributed. The boxes, and particularly the *Brillo Boxes*, were inspired by Marcel Duchamp’s ready-mades, simply ordinary objects presented as high art by disregarding the original purpose of the object, transfiguring that purpose in a different context. Warhol’s unique contribution, however, was that he re-created the object through another medium.

Warhol’s technique in creating the grocery-store sculptures was flattening and superficial, resembling Benjamin’s discussion of mechanical reproduction in its entirety. The actual boxes were flattened and delivered to a third party (Harry Golden), who would subsequently silkscreen the particular logo onto the box (Warhol completed, in addition to Brillo, Mott’s apple juice, Heinz tomato juice, Del Monte peaches, and Kellogg’s Corn Flakes) (Watson 127). Malanga, Warhol’s assistant, simultaneously found a carpenter to construct hundreds of boxes made from plywood, all within the same dimensions. Danto commented that this outsourcing of creating the plywood boxes reflected Warhol’s penchant for mechanical reproduction and distance. The artist created the idea, so there was no reason why the artist would need to create the materials that “embodied those ideas” (Danto, *Andy Warhol* 54). Once the boxes were constructed, Billy Name painted the box either white or tan to resemble
cardboard and Malanga would prepare the silkscreen as the boxes dried. Then, the Warhol team repeated this process for each of the sides, handling approximately two sides a day and repeating the process until all six sides were completed.

The grocery box sculptures opened at the Stable Gallery on April 21, 1964, and the gallery resembled a warehouse in an increased homage to mechanical reproduction. Patrons of the exhibition were forced to walk through the aisles, as if they were in a supermarket, and installation created the sense that the gallery was packed with people, requesting those present to stand in line to catch a glimpse of the commonplace commodities. The Brillo Boxes became increasingly controversial, even though none sold. The original designer of the Brillo box logo, James Harvey, attempted to take credit for the work of art as it stood in Warhol’s gallery. He publicly accused Warhol of artistic plagiarism, which made its way into Time and other press (Watson 150). In addition and, perhaps, even more unbelievable, Warhol had scheduled a showing of the boxes at a gallery in Canada in March of 1965. However, the Canadian border patrol stopped the Brillo Boxes at the border. Canadian law allows original sculpture to cross the border and to be imported duty-free—after deliberation by a number of different experts, the Brillo Boxes were not deemed sculpture, and were subject to a 20 percent duty (approximately $4,000).

Danto contends that, prior to 1964, the Brillo Boxes could not have been considered a true work of art. In fact, Warhol’s grocery box sculptures forced the world of high or elite art to as the question: how could it be possible for two commoditized objects, resembling one another completely, to be simultaneously a work of art and a simple ordinary and commonplace object meant to be consumed? Warhol’s Brillo Boxes uniquely elevated an “entirely vernacular object of everyday life” (Danto, Andy Warhol 64). The sculptures remain one of the most important
works that characterize his artistic corpus, for it was this moment that questions about the
definition of art became major philosophical inquiries. Thierry de Duve, modern philosopher of
art and art critic, contended that Warhol produced art based on desire and, “thus on a principle of
consumption” (3). For de Duve, Warhol’s art as consumption reflected much more than
mechanical reproduction, but hypermodernity at its core. Warhol’s art reflected his desire for
fame, which is to live as a superficial entity. Furthermore, de Duve contends that Warhol’s
work—of which, he specifically names the *Brillo Boxes*—“promises nothing; it testifies” (6).
This testimonial about American consumer culture, at its core, appears to be superficial and
deeply meaningless, exemplifying the unification of Bauman, Benjamin, and Gadamer. Tied to
Bauman’s understanding of a liquid culture where values are fluid, Warhol engaged in
Benjamin’s form of mechanical reproduction in a manner that announced a new emergent
dialogue, as Gadamer understood, between artist and audience.

With both his Pop paintings and his films, argues Bourdon, no deep or “weighty loads of
profound meaning” existed within the art objects, although many find deeper interpretations of
the works (206). Warhol, according to many who knew him and studied him, articulated that
Warhol’s primary objective was to simply mirror what he saw in society. In fact, Bourdon argues
that those granted the opportunity to study him in the future may see a man with more depth and
philosophical understanding than his contemporaries. However, and undeniably, Warhol offered
and communicated a “crystal-clear reflection of the world as he perceived and interpreted it”
(Bourdon 418). Without exception, Warhol’s work is both a commentary on his world and
communication about his own interpretations. Thus far, these works manifested in the 1960s.
However, after the shooting of Warhol on June 3, 1968, Warhol’s aesthetic changed, and one can
even consider this as a ‘before’ and ‘after’ phase in his artistic corpus, making the 1976 *Hammer and Sickle* series exceptionally important and a reflection of Warhol’s ultimate aim and purpose.

The 1970s encapsulated a period of intense preoccupation with wealth and status in Warhol’s art, manifesting in a series of portraiture that remained his main source of income until his sudden (and second) death. Warhol’s 1976 *Hammer and Sickle* series, created in 1976 and shown in January 1977, were inspired during a trip that he took to Italy. During that time, he noticed that the Hammer and Sickle symbol of the Soviet Union was some of the most commonplace objects found as graffiti around the walls of the country. For Warhol, the commonplace signified Pop, losing all meaning and gravity through the consistent repetition and lack of political statement—those symbols were simply “decoration” (Bourdon 354). However, Warhol, upon return to New York City, could not find an image that appeared to be three-dimensional of the symbol. His assistant at the time, Ronnie Cutrone, visited a nearby hardware store and purchased a sickle and mallet, and, together, they created the image that would eventually become this important series in Warhol’s repertoire.

Glyn Davis, of the University of Edinburgh, published an article for the *Journal of European Popular Culture*, explicitly detailing the symbolic nature of the *Hammer and Sickle* series. Specifically, Davis ties the series to European popular culture due to the nature of Warhol’s artistic and political involvement at the time of this creation. While Davis acknowledges that much of the commentary related to the *Hammer and Sickle* series emphasized the symbol in the context of the United States (and the history of communism within this country), Davis terms the hammer and sickle a “reified symbol” that was reproduced and mass produced in European contexts during the time of Warhol’s trip (109). The series utilizes harsh colors and fascinating compositional techniques, playing upon shadows and positioning to draw
attention to the communist symbols. The series, again, are devoid of political commentary. Warhol’s primary objective was to identify a commonplace object that had symbolic significance left open to interpretation by his audience.

Warhol utilized shadows in the *Hammer and Sickle* series, giving the images a depth that previous works had subsequently lacked, suggesting a marked turn from his previous aesthetic, although not any less important. Warhol had utilized the Communism theme prior, and communism as an ideology had altered the public sphere throughout all the major decades of Warhol’s work. While communism itself was not a commonplace object, the symbol, for Warhol, had become commonplace across the globe, and he took the repetitive nature of the symbol and elevated the commonplace to high art, reading as extreme banality and an exact response to Benjamin’s idea of art as mechanical reproduction. Davis, citing Danto among others, argues that Warhol’s series was deeply political, though he claimed to remain apolitical throughout the entirety of his career. Interestingly enough, the *Hammer and Sickle* series played upon a symbol that, as of 1977, had lost its potency within the USA, but had still maintain cultural relevancy and repetition in Europe. Thus, Warhol’s work solidified his standing both in American and European markets. The elevation of the commonplace also elevated Warhol into something other than banality.

Danto argued that the 1960s were a historical period that permitted Warhol’s work into the cultural artistic milieu. Specifically, the decade destroyed many common and traditional boundaries, and permitted the unification of the vernacular and the avant-garde to merge through artistic endeavors, bridging art and life. The four artistic achievements described in this section (the *Marilyns*, *Sleep*, the *Brillo Boxes*, and the *Hammer and Sickles* series) reveal the first metaphor related to Warhol’s creative feud framed within a hypermodern philosophy of
communication ethics: the elevation of the commonplace into a banality of consumption. The cultural landscape (articulated by Bauman) gave rise to an age of mechanical reproduction (described by Benjamin) inherently acknowledged the bias and prejudice inherent within the historical moment (as understood by Gadamer). These philosophical and phenomenological concepts lend themselves to further implications tied between Warhol, the commonplace object, and a philosophy of communication ethics.

4.5 Warhol and the Commonplace: Implications for Philosophy of Communication Ethics

Warhol’s ability to elevate the commonplace speaks to a deep-seated issue grounded within the public sphere in hypermodernity—an issue understood and commented upon by communication ethicists and scholars alike. In hypermodernity, as understood by Lipovetsky, modern and postmodern values united to usher in a cultural consciousness preoccupied with the alienation of the self who lives in fear of the future. The autonomy promised by modernity did not lead to liberation, but led to that very alienation where mass society became dependent upon technology and market liberalism, leading to hyperconsumption and new moral questions that emerged in human communication (Charles, “Paradoxcal Individualism”). The rise of market liberalism presupposes that commodity culture has become the reigning value of the day, and Warhol’s project understood through philosophy of communication ethics underscores and emphasizes this through his choice of commonplace subject matter, seeking to privilege the banal in the face of a rejection of traditional standards.

Danto argued that Warhol’s guiding framework, while not manifesting in a predictable pattern, offered an original consistency within his artistic and philosophical corpus that transcended the various media he utilized throughout his career. Warhol’s subject matter was the common culture of hypermodernity, or the “ordinary life-world as phenomenologists designate
the world in which we are all at home” (Danto, Andy Warhol 88). This work, however, reflects a larger understanding of philosophy of communication understood today as the unification between the ‘how’ of practices and the ‘why’ of human experience. Current scholarship at the national level in the field of communication underscores the unique and hypermodern problem that has privileged the ordinary elevation of the commonplace. For example, Henry A. Giroux, an accomplished scholar publishing extensively in critical and cultural studies, unites Bauman and Benjamin in his work, “The Crisis of Public Values in the Age of the New Media,” further lending insight into Warhol’s contribution. He suggests that Bauman recognizes the rise of neoliberalism as a guiding factor in the weakening of democratic citizenship by society writ large (9). Thus, and through the lens of Benjamin, public values generate nostalgic emotional responses to what has been lost, a consequence of the rise of the commodification of American society (Giroux 9). Giroux argues, through the lens of these two philosophers, that public values became individualized, and, thus, solutions to social issues, became private matters—the public sphere was overburdened with demands for individual rights, and, in Bauman’s terms, the current market-driven society is characterized by uncertainty and social anxiety that disengages the subject from collective reasoning and participation.

Giroux argues that now, instead of a public sphere, we have “entertainment spheres” that trivialize the commonplace even more so than ever before (10). His work reflects the current understanding of hypermodernity articulated by the communication scholars explicated throughout this project. Uniquely, Warhol’s rise in the 1960s adds Gadamer’s voice to this conversation. The 1960s went beyond a formal decade, and stands for an era of “rebellion, America’s great rupture” (Watson 32). At a cultural level, Warhol uniquely positioned himself in history and, as a product of his history, worked with what Gadamer termed bias to announce the
given communication ethics questions that propelled individuals living in during his time. Warhol was part of the hypermodern culture during the four decades that he worked, produced, and created. Giroux suggests that Warhol’s historical moment was an exceptionally important snapshot in time. He contends that the “second Gilded Age in the late 1970s” further pushed these boundaries, and “erased from the social landscape” a shared commitment to the social good (10). Warhol’s internal drive and commitment to the pulse of public culture exemplifies hypermodernity through both his work and his life. Warhol morphed into an icon because of his work, which elevated the commonplace and celebrated the neoliberal and market-driven historical moment that called forth hyperconsumption as a way of being.

Warhol’s work elevated the banal through commodification and an understanding that the market drives decisions in all spheres of life. His art took lowbrow culture and elevated it into a cultural elite, positioning his person as an iconic artist for those individuals never before been admitted into the realm of elite or high art. He symbolized and “embodied” a way of life that “embraced” and pointed to what life was about in his historical moment—a feat that, according to Danto, “no other artist came close to doing” (Andy Warhol 4). Through the Marilyns, the film Sleep, the Brillo Box sculptures, and the Hammer and Sickle series, Warhol developed a phenomenology of the commonplace that a deep, philosophical, communicative way of engaging lived experience. With the rise of the Silver Factory in the 1960s, which led to these important works, Warhol embraced an age of mechanical reproduction by enforcing “repetitive, factory-like labor,” utilizing assistants and producing large numbers of paintings, sculptures, and films in an industrialized manner (Danto, Andy Warhol 49). His goal was recreate art objects that, originally, could be produced for other functional purposes by machines, diving into an aura of the impersonal and, like Benjamin forewarned, destroying the aura of the art work. In an age of
mechanical reproduction that Benjamin warned of, Warhol identified the current of culture and commodity that Bauman philosophically detailed, and offered an aesthetic framing of hypermodern philosophy of communication ethics through a Gadamerian bias and narrative, exemplified through his historical-consciousness.

Warhol always claimed to be a mirror and, as such, attempted to reflect and symbolize a way of life that was deeply American and philosophically rich. This world that Warhol communicated about and exemplified substantially was one “largely predictable through its repetitions,” but subject to a hypermodern fear of the uncertainty of the future (Danto, *Andy Warhol* 126). After all, the phenomenology of the everyday experience could be destroyed by any number of catastrophes or ideologies—a suicide, like Marilyn Monroe, a fall from consciousness like Giorno in *Sleep*, a removal from the marketplace, like the *Brillo Box* from the aisle of the supermarket, or the fall of an ideology, represented by a hammer and a sickle. Perhaps the everyday certainty of a future crumbles beneath the accidents and dangers that Warhol identified in his subject matter, perpetuated by the mass press and technological advances that hyperconnect a hyperaware world.

The elevation of the banal and the commonplace manifested in and through Warhol’s art and films directly communicated the dialogic nature of prejudice within history and within an age of mechanical reproduction. However, Warhol’s art and films shed light on one aspect of his project tied to philosophy of communication ethics. In the midst of the creation of his art and films, the relationships he cultivated and the individuals that surrounded him reflect his own embodied hypermodern practices that drove his life and works. This project turns to those very practices perpetuated by some of his closest family members and friends, further contextualizing Warhol’s project—the mass commodification of the person. Mass commodification constituted
hypermodern practices that drew forth questions on human communication and engagement in the midst of increased hyperconsumption and lack of public value or virtue standards. Such practices offer grounds for narrative, or publicly understood practice. This project turns to a snapshot of Warhol in connection with three major individuals that inspired and influenced Warhol’s life: Julia Warhola (his mother), Billy Name (one of his closest assistants), and Edie Sedgwick (his most infamous superstar). Such a snapshot considers the impact of a practice of mass commodification of the person in relation to its influence and meaning for philosophy of communication ethics.
Chapter 5:

Icons, Superstars, and Celebrities: Warhol and the Hypermodern Commodification of Persons

Andy Warhol exemplified a hypermodern age, as detailed by Gilles Lipovetsky, through a multimedia approach to life and to art. Warhol both communicated about a hypermodern moment through his art, films, and writing, and, simultaneously, lived a life that exemplified communication ethics within hypermodernity. Warhol’s brilliance and contribution to understanding an aesthetic philosophy of communication ethics manifested in his desire to achieve fame, his recognition of hypermodern values, and his finger upon the pulse of American public and popular culture. His colleague of the 1960s Silver Factory, Stephen Koch, remarked that the “mild master of the instantaneous and reproducible [Warhol]” did not simply collect markers of his hypermodern moment; he gave “form to the present” through life and art, unified under a philosophy of communication ethics (28). His present emerged through both hypermodern popular culture and the practices of the individuals that lived during his historical moment. Practices constitute narratives, and the practices of the individuals that Warhol celebrated and condemned reveal the narrative traditions and the communication ethics of Warhol’s moment. Warhol surrounded himself with icons, superstars, and celebrities, all of whom reveal the centrality of the mass commodification of the person—the second metaphor of Warhol’s project, framed within a philosophy of communication ethics.

“Icons, Superstars, and Celebrities: Warhol and the Hypermodern Commodification of Persons” attends to the mass commodification of human persons through the exploration of three central metaphors: 1) icons, 2) superstars, and 3) celebrities. Beginning with a discussion by Umberto Eco, the necessity of understanding popular culture and consumption offers a contextualization of the mass commodification of human persons in hypermodernity. Next, a
description of the three primary metaphors (icon, superstar, and celebrity) situates this metaphor’s implicit and explicit importance within the field of communication and communication ethics, explicating the role of practices in narrative traditions. Finally, an analysis of the practices of three of the individuals who influenced Warhol most and characterized his worldview most explicitly forms the understanding of Warhol’s project as revealing for a hypermodern philosophy of communication ethics shaped, by Warhol, in his pursuit of selfhood. Those individuals include: 1) the Icon, Julia Warhola (Warhol’s mother); 2) the Superstar, Edie Sedgwick (arguably the most important of Warhol’s acquaintances); and 3) the Celebrity, Billy Name (one of the most infamous of those that worked with Warhol in the 1960s Factory). Icon, superstar, and celebrity characterize many of the individuals that comprise Warhol’s world. However, Julia Warhola, Edie Sedgwick, and Billy Name exemplify the three metaphors, illustrated in their narrative practices that influenced Warhol’s life and works.

In their 1985 work, Habits of the Heart, sociologist Robert N. Bellah, joined with authors Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, and Tipton, lament the rise of rampant individualism inherent within American culture in their historical moment. Bellah et al. offer a communicative response to such individualistic behaviors with an emphasis on the central role of practices, engaged as a primary attentiveness to habits of the heart, or practices that both ground and focus human lives in a particular direction. Arnett and Holba extend Bellah et al.’s work into philosophy of communication, arguing that it is through habits of the heart that we “begin to shape patterns of our interpretative lives” (Arnett and Holba 11). Thus, practices offer repetitive patterns that invite the recognition of meaning in narrative and in life. Warhol, and the individuals that he surrounded himself with, invited particular practices that shaped a hypermodern narrative situated within the Factory. Warhol’s contribution to understanding a hypermodern philosophy
of communication ethics frames practices molded by cultural codes and cues rampant within his historical moment. Umberto Eco, Italian novelist and academic, extends the understanding of cultural codes and cues situated within popular culture. His work draws forth significant implications for understanding mass commodification of persons as cultural practices embedded within social discourses that influenced and shaped patterns of hypermodern life.

5.1 Umberto Eco and Popular Culture: Understanding the Commodification of the Person

The elevation of banality through a penchant for the commonplace permitted the acceptance of Warhol’s exemplification of superficiality in his flattening of standards into repetitious symbolic works of art. This exemplification, while made public through Warhol’s art and film, grounded the narrative practices that constituted the individual identities of those persons associated with Andy Warhol Enterprises, Inc. The hypermodern condition morphed into a commodity-centered society, in which continuous consumption reigned. Umberto Eco’s semiotic framework provides a rich, philosophical grounding for engaging culture and art as semiotic analysis that attends to the influence of a commodity-based culture that permits nothing to remain sacred—including the human person. In fact, Eco is often credited for uniting popular culture with academic inquiry, suggesting that culture is formative in understanding, evaluating, and describing the conditions of society (Mangion). Eco bases his theory of semiotics in the work of Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914), influenced by the foundations created by Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913).

Saussure introduces into philosophy of communication the study of structural linguistics, primarily attended to in his posthumous work *Course in General Linguistics* (published in 1983). Saussure attempts a scientific study of language, viewed as a system of symbols and signs, to legitimate its academic study. In his posthumous work, Saussure contended that linguistics and
language form and shape much of the life-world, existing as a system of signs and conventions that convey meaning between and among human agents. He refers to ‘sign’ as both the spoken and written word (or sound, which those that study semiotics refer to as the ‘signifier’) tied together to point to a given concept or meaning (commonly referred to as ‘signified’) (Mangion 21). The sign, says Saussure, is arbitrary, meaning that language is a product of both history and culture, and man is ultimately a product of this system. From Saussure, in addition, comes signification, which refers to and describes the connection between the life-world and the spoken and symbolic word.

Inspired by Saussure, Peirce offered a theory of semiotics in order to approach various subjects like perception, science, and religion. Claude Mangion, professor of philosophy at the University of Malta and accomplished scholar writing on subjects such as popular culture, communication, and philosophy, connects Pierce’s work to the study of hermeneutics, situated within rhetorical inquiry. Fundamentally, Pierce offers a phenomenology that influenced a number of academic disciplines, including fields such as communication, mathematics, and logic. His major contribution lies within his discussion of Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness, Pierce’s triadic explication of phenomenological perception, as well as the phenomenological and semiological notion of abduction. Firstness exists as a pre-conscious act of perception—it is the “realm of the possible” (Mangion 39). Secondness refers to the world of tangible elements. For example, Mangion points to pavement, which exists in Firstness as long as we are hardly aware of it beneath our feet. The moment that we acknowledge pavement as such, it becomes a product of Secondness. Thirdness, on the other hand, is representational, and presupposes that we are conscious of what has occurred, requiring our action. Thus, the Third possesses the capability of moving into a particular category and functions writ large in social contexts.
Abduction concerns itself with Firstness, and is the process by which a human person groups together information in order to arrive at an explanation and offer a hypothesis. According to Pierce, abduction suggests what may be while deduction is concerned with what must be and induction shows what is. Abduction permits one to gather data and information—to perceive the world around oneself—and to explain that world through a given hypothesis.

Pierce’s semiological inquiry is both complex and foundational. His account of signs is an embodied phenomenological activity, requiring active interpretation of a symbolic object. This brief, albeit necessary, snapshot of the development of the study of semiotics is foundational for understanding Eco’s contribution in revealing Warhol’s philosophy of communication ethics. Eco introduces his philosophical inquiry into semiology in his 1976 work *A Theory of Semiotics*, extending the field of semiotics into a study of culture. He contends that semiology is foundational for introducing the legitimate study of culture as it influences signification. In his *A Theory of Semiotics*, Eco differentiates between communication and signification, with the former being a process of information transferal (of which machines are capable) and the latter being the process of semiological information transferal upon which interpretation by human agents are made possible. The semiotic sign, under this framework, is dependent upon culture. In fact, Eco writes, “the laws of signification are the laws of culture” (Eco, *A Theory* 28). For Eco, culture permits a constant capability of signification, permitting the study of popular culture through a semiotic analysis and, in addition, privileging culture as a determinant factor in human communication and interpretation.

Eco uses the terms “meaning” and “referent” as a way to distinguish between conventional understandings of signs, images, and representations. Eco explains that the words ‘meaning’ and ‘referent’ are differentiated by the fact that any symbol can exist within the world
within a specific ‘referent’ attached to that symbol (Eco, *A Theory* 99). Eco’s semiological and theoretical framework, thus, is concerned with the cultural implications and signification associated with symbols specifically in the midst of the co-creation of meaning between and among individuals. Cultural conventions open up understanding “why” a sign signifies something to us behind the “how” of communication, permitting space for multiple interpretations of symbols and words, particularly in cultural contexts.

For Eco, there are three different types of semiotics that impact interpretation. First, “specific semiotics” articulates a primary concern with particular “sign systems” creating rules and codes for signification, permitting human communication” (Mangion 103). Second, “applied semiotics” generally concerns itself with a specific knowledge set that contributes, abstractly, to matters as diverse as politics to literary (Mangion 103). Finally, a “general semiotics” involves categories related to philosophy that “posits the category of ‘sign’” similarly to the way that a philosopher thinks of the “good” (Mangion 103). Each type of semiotic inquiry engages texts—writing and reading them—in order to open up space for questions of interpretation. This relies upon the relationship between author and reader. Eco points to both an Empirical Reader and a Model Reader to further open this distinction between the various branches. An Empirical Author writes with an intention toward meaning, directed toward a Model Reader. However, no guarantee exists that that Model Reader will identify the intention and subsequently interpret it the way that the Empirical Author intended. The Empirical Reader is any one person who engages a text and issues an interpretation (Eco, “An Author” 60). The text simply provides a sign—a signal—and the creator must hope that the interpretation is accurate.

Eco’s metaphors of open and closed texts offer touch points for the conception of the author-audience relationship, signifying the importance of hermeneutic inquiry that emerges
through encounters with texts. The closed text is, in reality, open to many potential interpretations because the text itself cannot disclose an interpretation originally intended by the author. The interpretations that are opened in a closed text are “external to the text” itself (Mangion 110). This text has no limitations to the various manners of engaging it. The open text is “closed” to many interpretations, effectively engaged by “sophisticated readers” (Mangion 110). The open text opens the author’s intended interpretation up to the reader, avoiding confusion. For Eco, interpretation of texts is not unlimited—multiple interpretations exist but you cannot have an interpretation completely contrary to the limitations in place by cultural codes and linguistic norms. Eco contends that limits of interpretations are established by audiences that lay out rules for interpretation—for him, unlimited semiosis contains within it criteria for casting judgment and making decisions within a particular horizon.

Aesthetic texts are important for Eco’s work, as well. Eco contends that a narrator (or an author, an artist—a creator) is not responsible, nor should he/she provide the blatant interpretation of the work presented for consumption. Eco writes: “a text is a machine conceived for eliciting interpretations” (Eco, “An Author” 59). He points to his 1962 work, Opera aperta (The Open Work, 1989), in which he argues for the “active” role of an audience member in a text containing “aesthetic value” (Eco, “An Author” 59). History and culture ground such texts for an interpreter, allowing for a cultural code of signification permitting specific acts of interpretation. Eco’s semiological and theoretical framework, thus, offers an analysis of the cultural codes of signification that permits human communication, opening up the “why” of a signs ability to generate meaning coupled with “how” communication can take place, permitting space for multiple interpretations of symbols and words, particularly in cultural contexts.
Eco studies culture under a semiotic framework concerned with interpretation, opening up space to understand the resounding cry that commodification gave life to in hypermodern cultural contexts. Eco argued that the United States of America is a country obsessed with realism—with the “iconic” and “perfect likeness” of objects in all of their representation (Travels 4). He was concerned with aesthetics, acting as human communication in an American culture that privileges a “philosophy of immortality” emergent in a preoccupation with “duplication” (Travels 6). The reproduction of life replaces any desire for authenticity and originality. Thus, the privileging of imitation over authenticity, as a characteristic of the human spirit detailed by the ancient Greeks such as Plato and Aristotle, provides us with the realization that imitation trumps in hypermodernity, and suggests that reality is vastly inferior to the art of imitation. Eco argues that we are returning to the Middle Ages in terms of historical characteristics and questions of communication ethics. Eco attributes the desire to return to the Middle Ages to be a result of mass media. The “medieval parallel” is a result of an “excess of population” coupled with an excess of “communication and transportation” (Eco, Travels 77). In this historical moment, the bridge between high culture and popular culture finds prominence through visual communication—art. Communication has evolved into an industry, where information is commodity, and contents of messages are dependent upon choice of media. Information as commodity privileges both a capitalistic culture and a capitalistic mindset demonstrating how cultural codes infiltrate human communication.

Eco was one of “the first Italian academics” to take seriously popular culture as a source of communication and semiotic analysis (Mangion 95). Eco contended with cultural elitism in much the same way that Warhol contended with it. Through the process of semiotic analysis, Eco believed that popular culture was an impactful point of study that requires serious attention
in this historical moment. He points to the 1960s, the same period of time when Warhol’s most important work and his commodification of persons became most prevalent, as the governing moment in academics when semiotics and structuralism became crucial areas of inquiry. For Eco, culture is “governed by a system of rules or by a repertoire of texts imposing models of behavior” (Eco, “Universe” 56). Thus, the codes and sign systems of culture impose practices that shape narratives. Society generates cultural texts that implicitly and eventually impose rules and meaning, asking culture to follow and imitate.

As a process of uncovering signs and codes, the codes that semiologists contend with, primarily through Eco’s voice, act as historical “products of a culture at a particular point in time” (Mangion 95-96). Eco’s work reflects this inherent connection of semiology to culture and historical moments, implicating practices as narratological in nature. His work with signs and codes takes culture to be the very basis of signs, communication, and signification. Eco offers a semiological theory that acknowledges the communicative and significant function of all texts—including aesthetic texts, which manipulate and create cultural content that privilege codes through the production of new interpretations of the life-world and of lived experience. These aesthetic texts, while giving the impression of not communicating at all, communicate a vast array of meanings eventually shifting into a cultural and historical form of knowledge. This project cannot fully address Eco’s significant body of work, which significant implications for the study of communication and communication ethics. However, his project of semiotics reveals significant implications for Warhol’s metaphor of the hypermodern mass commodification of the person—namely, that culture creates and shifts codes embedded within society which influence and create patterns of behaviors, or practices, ultimately lending themselves to narrative. This yields implications for understanding the emergence and role of narrative as significant to
philosophy of communication ethics. Narratives, practices, and culture offer guiding frameworks to understanding the larger questions that shape human communication situated within particular eras. Narratives draw forth philosophies of communication ethics. Warhol’s own life, works, and relationships with others point to practices that encapsulated the various metaphors characterizing hypermodernity.

5.2 Engaging Practices: Hypermodernity and Narrative

Before one can understand the importance of interpretation, symbol, and art in the midst of a hypermodern mass commodification of the person, one must engage and uncover the practices that constituted a narrative permitting such communication ethics questions to emerge in the particularity of a historical moment. Arnett and Holba point to Richard Rorty to understand narratives. According to Rorty, narratives are stories, dependent upon a set of practices that find common agreement between and among groups participating within that given story. The unification of narrative and practice emerge through what Calvin O. Schrag in *Communicative Praxis and the Space of Subjectivity* offered as the metaphor of communicative praxis, inviting of texture and learning from difference. Textured learning from difference emerges from communicative praxis, uniting theory and action between and among others. As three major metaphors guide the active process of communicative praxis—human communication is *about* something, *by* someone, and *for* someone else (Schrag). For Schrag, historical contexts embed communicative praxis within narratives, within temporality, and within a given historical moment.

Practices are constituted by habits of the heart (Bellah et al.), foundational and formative patterns that shape “communicative meaning” in particular historical moments (Arnett and Holba 11). One’s active engagement of meeting existence and the human person rest upon one’s
commitment to the repeated patterns and practices that shape meaningful human communication, an extension of philosophy of communication ethics. Narratives take root in historical moments, which, according to Arnett and Holba, are communicative dwellings that paint communication ethics pictures detailing particularity of questions and textured responsiveness. Specifically, and in the philosophical lineage of Charles Taylor, Arnett and Holba understand communicative dwellings to be “historical periods […] that embody questions relevant to a unique moment in time” (Arnett and Holba 35). Thus, Arnett and Holba advocate for an approach to philosophy as a historical enterprise. Again, Arnett and Holba turn to Rorty, who understood that philosophy historically essentially suggests that a historical moment, particularly those embedded within that moment, take for granted that historical time because of communication ethics questions grounded within given narratives (Rorty). Alasdair MacIntyre also contends with this historical mode of being, suggesting that distance permits one to truly understand those particular questions within a historical moment (distance, perhaps, obtained by Warhol, who was capable of such judgment).

Arnett and Holba’s understanding of philosophical pictures yields significant and impactful insight for Schrag’s notion of narratival neighborhoods. These neighborhoods are comprised of the unification of both philosophy and communication grounded within history and time, revealing deeply communicative interactions between ideas that help shape and illuminate human capacity to understand and engage historical moments. Thus, philosophical pictures, comprised of practices that yield insight into narratives, formed within these neighborhoods, clarifying the co-creation of meaning by “revealing the emergence of a lived historical memory” (Arnett and Holba 41). These neighborhoods suggested that our worlds are shaped by the Other, and that we engage that world through “perspectives, behaviors, and communication conditions”
that necessitate interpretation and attention (Arnett and Holba 41). Thus, one’s responsiveness to a historical moment shapes, and reshapes, practices, constituted by one’s commitment to a particular moment.

A given philosophy of communication ethics points to practices that shape narratival patterns, hinged upon a historical moment. In the tradition of philosophical hermeneutics, according to Arnett and Holba, the interpreter, the text, and the historical moment unite as three coordinates influenced by narratives. The unification of these three coordinates resonate within a philosophy of communication ethics, which “informs one’s approach to interaction and works as a fulcrum that gives energy, direction, clarity, and strength to one’s communication” (Arnett and Arneson xi). A philosophy of communication ethics presupposes that communication ethics questions require weight through our communicative practices, dictated by our given historical moments. For example, Charles Taylor, in his 2007 work A Secular Age, suggests that historical moments allow for interpretive lenses. This lends itself back to his 1989 masterpiece Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Age. Both works contend that man’s search for being manifests in and through a human’s capacity to discern and make sense of communication ethics questions dictated by history.

Arnett and Holba suggest that philosophical pictures create windows into practices that constitute narratives. Furthermore, the inclusion of history and historical moments shapes our own interpretative understanding, opening up a hermeneutic entrance for interpreting a given text further. These major metaphors shape the philosophical background (or the “why” of given narratives) privileging foreground behaviors (or the “how” of narrative practices). The practices that constituted Warhol’s hypermodern moment emerge in description of three primary individuals most formative for Warhol’s life and career: 1) the icon (Julia Warhola), 2) the
superstar (Edie Sedgwick), and 3) the celebrity (Billy Name). These three individuals exemplify the primary metaphors of this chapter, metaphors offered by Warhol himself.

The “icon” has had a profound impact on Warhol’s work for its Byzantine orthodox influences and shaped his hypermodern narrative from beginning to end. The “icon” has a number of complex meanings, ranging from philosophical understandings to semiotic signs. A number of scholars including Erwin Panofsky (1955), Dana Cloud (2004), and Lester Olson (1987) have defined “icon” as an image that carries cultural currency. Eric Jenkins, who uniquely synthesizes the communication field’s definitions of icons, contests that icons refer to visually suggestive images that call forth significant social meanings and affect cultural landscapes. Jenkins points to Pierce and Eco, suggesting that an icons acts as a “signifier that bear[s] a resemblance to their signified” (469). However, his most important contribution is his turn to Eastern Orthodox theology, which understands a more potent definition of icon with roots in Byzantine iconography rising in response to the reign of Emperor Constantine V. The icon became a “unique mode of seeing,” unifying form and content to create a “nonarbitrary relationship between the signifier and the signified” in both spiritual and earthly realms (Jenkins 473). The icon establishes a visual practice inherent within particular narratives. An icon with cultural currency translates into the relationship between icon, superstar, and celebrity—each metaphor, in a hypermodern context, suggests a visceral commitment to revering and celebrating.

Warhol directly utilized the notion of ‘superstar,’ the term most closely associated with Warhol’s Factory. Throughout Popism: The Warhol Sixties, Warhol utilizes this terminology to refer to the vulnerable and, often, out of control individuals that he worked with during the years of the Silver Factory, directly reflecting a hypermodern mass consumption of the actor or star.
Steven Watson, one of the principal biographers of Warhol during the 1960s, contends that ‘superstar’ specifically refers to the movies made by Warhol beginning in 1965, although the term had possessed cultural relevancy before that. The notion of ‘superstar’ suggested a systematic attempt by Warhol to identify “nobodies” and place them in front of a camera (Watson 183). These underground stars found identity in the B-movie screen, searching for a level of fame that would catapult them to the silver screen. These ‘superstars’ were real individuals, tasked with remaining so when the camera turned on—they were not actors, developing a character for popular consumption. They permitted the commodification of their very selves, consumed by public audiences. Specifically, Warhol created films for his Superstars, highlighting and illuminating the personalities and the attitudes of the individuals comprising the Silver Factory. While he would always idolize Hollywood celebrities, he would not conflate his Silver comrades with those glamorous stars. His superstars found respite in front of a camera revealing the hypermodern practices of some of the most troubled individuals that Warhol found. Nothing was sacred to the Superstar, and the embodied practices of those individuals reflected a hypermodern narrative that lacked identity, lived within the present, and permitted the commodification of all things.

Warhol did not conflate Superstar with Celebrity, another important metaphor for Warhol. In *Popism: The Warhol Sixties*, Warhol discusses celebrity as a defining and magical status granted to individuals that went beyond simply the ordinary and the everyday. The “celebrity” was “worshipped,” famous, and beautiful, privileged to a status that was unattainable to most (Warhol and Hackett 111). “Celebrity” exists in a historical trajectory, as explicated by communication scholar Joshua Gamson, who offers an in-depth analysis of celebrity in the historical moments that characterize twentieth-century America. Gamson suggests that obsession
with fame began in early Roman and Christian discourses related to public action and hierarchies within narrative traditions. The celebrity reached its pinnacle in the mid-nineteenth century when communication permitted the established of celebrity as a “mass phenomenon”—primarily through new technologies such as the newspaper and the telegraph (Gamson 3). P.T. Barnum was one of the first to utilize publicity in order to promote and commoditize the person, according to Gamson. The practices were concerned with generated attention and managing the images of professionals. This would eventually translate into the practices of public relations and publicity, specifically addressed by individuals such as Ivy Lee and Edward Bernays that suggested that public attitude toward people was of particular importance. Gamson contends this period marked the “birth of modern American consumer culture” which translated the concept of celebrity into one of primary consumption and entertainment (4). Gamson terms this a star system, whereby the commodification of the celebrity person simply molded that person to fit a form. He suggests that consumer capitalism privileged cults of character or turning people into mass commodities and enslaving celebrities to their audience members. Celebrities exist as images beholden to the consuming public, groomed to embody practices that point to such a public narrative.

Linked together, practices constitute narrative traditions, or publicly agreed upon stories that serve to exemplify given communication ethics questions situated within historical moments. The three major metaphors of icon, superstar, and celebrity exemplify and illustrate Warhol’s unique creative feud in the midst of hypermodernity. His relationships with his mother, Julia Warhola, one of his most infamous superstars, Edie Sedgwick, and his closest assistant in the 1960s, Billy Name, exemplify a hypermodern creative feud that uncovers practices in narratives, offering particular insights for a philosophy of communication ethics. Practices
constitute narratives, and the practices engaged in by these three important figures in Warhol’s life and works reflect Lipovetsky’s philosophical description of a historical moment characterized by hyperconsumption and terror in the face of ambiguity and uncertainty. In hypermodernity, the practices of these three individuals reveal a deeply conflicting yet personal account of Warhol’s embodiment of hypermodernity’s malaise of the human spirit. The unique condition of the hypermodern commodification of persons further illuminates Warhol’s contribution to understanding philosophy of communication ethics through an analysis of these individuals.

5.3 The Silver Factory: Commodity, Culture, and Persons

As an artist, Warhol sought out images in culture, grounded in particular cultural codes with influence on communication ethics, and provided a visual medium—an aesthetic text—that he communicated about and through, offering and encouraging the interpretation and consumption of his works and his life. Pop Art emerged out of the 1960s, when culture and American capitalism and consumerism began to shift into an exterior, intent fascination with the new. Warhol contended that, in the midst of his historical moment, the notion of “pop” confronted everyone within American society because it was a way of life—“once you thought Pop, you could never see America the same way again” (Warhol and Hackett 39). Warhol was a juxtaposition of Eco’s claims on culture—he rejected the commonplace and commonly accepted persona of elite art—refusing to reject his various sources of selfhood and facets of his identity—and, instead, focused on becoming a “commodity” through embodying Pop Art and, subsequently, hypermodernity (Tata 26). The commodification of the person began with Warhol’s unofficial rebirthing to Pop Art artist at the conclusion of the 1950s, once Warhol began to publicly express that which he had witnesses and realized from early on.
Warhol encouraged an organization of individuals around his name with disregard for
etiquette, mission, and rules. The Factory, for Warhol, was not a home. Rather, he permitted
insanity to ensue, granting that, at the end of his day (approximately 4AM), he could retire to his
townhome that he continued to share with his mother. However, Warhol could be blamed for
communicatively constructing the chaos and insanity, insisting on parties, inviting others into the
Factory through his rhetoric, through invitation, and through talent and, yet, when things became
troublesome, Warhol would absent himself from the situation. He continually insisted that he
was not responsible for the communicative culture of the Silver Factory and would read anything
published by visiting reporters and photographers to get a sense of what was actually happening
there. Yet, Warhol knew that “glamour was what everyone was looking for” in American culture
(Warhol and Hackett 131). His understanding of sixties’ glamour emerged from a celebrity-
filled, drug-flowing Hollywood that he had admired since the time of his childhood. Warhol
carried out the practice of commodifying persons throughout his life, most notably manifesting
in his relationships with others. His work, life, relationships, and death demonstrates the driving
metaphors of postmodernity that allowed for the elevation of the commonplace and
commodification of person in the never-ending pursuit of the artificial light of capitalism,
consumerism, and celebrity.

5.3.1 The Icon: Julia Warhola

Julia Zavacky, Warhol’s mother, was born in Mikova, Ruthenia on November 17, 1892. Ruthenia, once an Eastern European country, no longer exists on any map or globe. It existed
within the Carpathian Mountains, north of Transylvania, where the borders of “Poland,
Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, and the Soviet union meet” (Colacello 11). The Ruthenian
people were “systematically denied the identity of its people as a distinct nationality,” and, as
such, many Ruthenians felt the lack of identity to their very core (Colacello 11). Many of Warhol’s family members recall the extreme poverty, the lack of culture and a national flag, and the need for a language, of which no one could truly perfect. Illiteracy was rampant in Ruthenia, and, thus, the people of the country—if it could even be called that—united under the Catholic Church to find common ground, common identity, and common cultural codes that shifted reality into a cultural text open for collective interpretation. This upbringing influenced Julia, who would pass these practices on to her children.

Julia claimed to be one of fifteen—though, as Bockris explains, six must have died because, as Julia arrived in her teenage years, there were nine children in total. Her elder brothers John and Andrew had emigrated to Lyndora, Pennsylvania—she remained in Mikova with her brothers, Steven and Yurko, as well as her sisters, Mary, Anna, Ella, and Eva. As Bockris recounts in his seminal biography, Julia would reminisce of the village that she grew up in, where she worked in the fields. Julia described a childhood filled with imagination and laughter, though not without emotional problems. In fact, most of the Zavacky women would become alcoholics as they aged into adulthood.

As a young woman, Julia was a “gifted folk artist,” painting and sculpting (Bockris 25). When she turned sixteen, her father declared that it was time for Julia to marry. As fate would have it, the eldest Zavacky son, John, had married in Pennsylvania that year, and Andrei Warhola was his best man. Andrei met Julia in Mikova in 1909, nineteen years old and engrossed in American life. Julia described the encounter between the two as less than serendipitous—he was a silent and stern man, while she was exuberant, young, and filled with humor. Julia would refuse to marry Andrei—at first, that is, until he brought her candy.
After they married, Andrei and Julia lived in Mikova for three years until 1912, during the outbreak of the First Balkan War. Andrei decided to return to Pittsburgh in order to avoid serving the army, which would force him to fight “against his own people” who lived across the border in neighboring Russia (Bockris 26). At that time, Julia was pregnant; thus, she remained in Mikova with her mother and two sisters. They would separate for nine years. In 1913, conditions were harsh without Andrei. In addition, Julia gave birth to her first daughter, Justina, who contracted influenza and died at barely six-weeks-old. This would mark a breaking point for Julia, who would then shortly learn that her brother, Yurko, had died in the War. Her mother died “of a broken heart” a month later, and Julia alone felt responsibility to care for Ella and Eva, six and nine years old respectively (Bockris 27). Shortly after that, in the spring, Julia received a note that Yurko was still alive—he had left his identification with a dead soldier by mistake—later immersed in the conflict of the First World War.

From 1914 to 1916, Julia experienced extreme poverty, almost starving to death on multiple occasions and having her home burned to the ground as the war spread into the Carpathian Mountains. By 1919, Andrei had created enough of a life in the United States that he sent for Julia five separate times, although none of the letters containing the money made it to her. By 1921, Julia had had enough. Borrowing approximately $160 from a neighborhood priest, Julia immigrated to Pittsburgh, in search of her husband. Julia gave birth to three sons in the United States—Paul (born 1922), John (born 1925), and André (born 1928). Julia instilled in her sons a respect for the Catholic tradition, a commitment to family, and an open attitude toward all. She spent Andy’s childhood protecting him fully, while simultaneously showing him a love that he would cherish throughout his lifetime. While the details of this period are important, what is most crucial to understanding the practices of Warhol’s hypermodern narrative is Julia’s decision
to move into her son’s world in New York City in 1952, at the beginning of his commercial art career.

The relationship between Warhol and his mother, especially as years went on, remained close, existing in a symbiotic relationship. Warhol would constantly reach out to his mother—either himself or through others. In fact, in a postcard from Paris France during Warhol’s *Flowers* exhibition in the Sonnabend Gallery, Gerard Malanga sent Julia a postcard, dated May 5, 1965, that simply stated: “Dear Mrs. Warhol. Andy told me to drop you a line to say that everything is O.K. I’m watching out for him. Love, Gerard” (“Postcard”). Through the practices of Julia, one comes to understand a deeper than originally understood hypermodern narrative that existed for Warhol. Julia permitted a symbiotic dependency that led Warhol to demand the same from others. As his first assistant, Julia was particularly influential beginning when Warhol had his first breakdown associated with St. Vitus Dance. In the spring of 1952, Julia made the decision to move from Pittsburgh to New York City, to live full time with Warhol. As Bockris describes, it was clear from the beginning that Julia would “dedicate her life to supporting his efforts” (98). While Julia suffered from a number of issues (becoming severely dependent upon alcohol with a number of mental issues), she and Warhol appeared to trade personalities, and her sole purpose was to support his artistic endeavors at the expense of her own well-being. Warhol came to expect that from others—and this practice became a hypermodern exemplification of identity shaping. The interpretation of the codes that Julia engaged in enforced, in Warhol, a dependency upon others to assist him in shaping his ideas, practices, and beliefs. Julia was the first to offer these practices to him.

In addition, Julia instilled in Warhol a deep commitment to the Byzantine Catholic faith. The two would spend hours at the St. John Chrysostom Byzantine Catholic Church, where
Warhol totally immersed himself in the Byzantine iconography, with his mother at his side. The visual communication associated with the iconography encapsulates Eco’s semiological project, and offers a glimpse into the power of the image as symbolic, communicative, and formative. According to Watson, the icon was the “mediator between the believer and the holy figure—the presence of the icon offered contact with the divine” (Watson 7). It was through Byzantine iconography that Warhol first experienced art, and Julia would fill his childhood and adulthood with these images. Julia also acted as icon to Warhol, mediating his life as the Pop Artist and his life as a devout Byzantine Catholic child and man. This connection to iconography through Julia is the first point at which Warhol extended himself through others in a hypermodern practice of commodifying others.

Warhol, unquestionably, came to commoditize his mother—both for what she stood for and for the hypermodern practices that she engaged in that contributed to Warhol’s own narrative formation. She set the stage for Warhol’s ability to engage in a mass commodification of others—offerings others up for the purposes of identifying hypermodern values in an aesthetic contribution to understanding philosophy of communication ethics situated within history. As an icon, Julia mediated Warhol’s public and private dichotomies. However, Julia, as a commodity, established Warhol’s career. His next step in a hypermodern mass commodification of persons was to the Superstar. After Julia enforced within him a dependency upon the human person, Warhol began to seek out others in order to push his ability to encapsulate hypermodernity further. The Superstar, or Warhol’s selection of non-famous vulnerable individuals to create films for his Factory, became the next metaphor for Warhol’s commodification of persons.

5.3.2 The Superstar: Edie Sedgwick
The tragedy of the life of Edie Sedgwick is one, once learned, not easily forgotten and, yet, exists under the blanket of Warhol’s life and career. Edie came from a family deeply entrenched in United States history—and could trace lineage to just before the United States was born. Edie Minturn Sedgwick, the seventh child to Francis and Alice, was born on April 20, 1943 just after the family had moved from Cold Spring Harbor, Long Island to a fruit ranch in Goleta, California, just outside of Santa Barbara. Edie’s childhood was difficult. Her parents resembled the extremes of extroversion and introversion, and Francis struggled with bipolar disorder (shortly after her birth, Francis purchased a 3,000 acre cattle ranch in the Santa Ynez Valley in a manic display). Edie would accuse both Francis and her older brother of making “sexual advances” toward her from the age of seven onward (Watson 20). According to Watson, Edie would eventually walk in on her father and his mistress. Upon her discovery, Francis physically assaulted her, proclaimed her as insane, and had a local doctor inject her with tranquilizers to keep her quiet. Eventually, Francis and Alice sent Edie sent to the Katherine Branson School at the age of fourteen for various eating disorders, including Bulimia.

When Edie turned fifteen in 1958, she enrolled at St. Timothy’s. At first, she thrived. Within six months, however, she began to have public outbursts and private destructive tendencies, later identified as symptoms of another bout of Bulimia and Anorexia. In the fall of 1959, she did not return to St. Timothy’s, but lived under the protection of her parents. They took her to Austria in the hopes of offering her respite, but quickly realized that Edie needed medical help. In the fall of 1962, she enrolled at Silver Hill, a “private psychiatric hospital in New Canaan, Connecticut” for the price of $1,000 per month (Watson 39). By the spring of 1963, Edie’s weight, health, and behavior had stabilized. Subsequently, Edie received a day pass. She left the hospital, met a Harvard student, and had her first sexual encounter, ending up pregnant.
and receiving an abortion a few weeks later. At twenty, Edie finally left the rotation of hospitals that had characterized her world.

She moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts in the fall of 1963, studying under her cousin Lily Saarinen art and sculpture. However, tragedy struck again, when, on March 4, 1964, Edie’s brother, Minty, the closest to her of all the siblings, hanged himself at Silver Hill, the very psychiatric hospital that Edie had spent time in to recover from her own psychiatric issues. The next night, Edie met Chuck Wein, one of the most important men in Edie’s short life. Chuck and Edie would spend the next few days talking about the tragedy of Minty, and Chuck immediately began to feel that it was his duty to rescue her, first vowing to “wean her from the many pills prescribed by her psychiatrists, moving from eight Nembutals a day down to two” (Watson 142). Chuck celebrated her twenty-first birthday with her, which also signaled the moment that Edie inherited her trust fund from her maternal grandmother—at $10,000 a month, Cambridge suddenly no longer held the possibilities it once did. She moved to New York City in the spring of 1964.

Edie was eventually “installed” in an apartment on East Sixty-fourth street, located between Madison and Park Avenue (on the same block as some of the Rockefeller family) (Watson 154). With no one to supervise her, Edie’s Bulimia continued to rage, and, within the first six months, she spent approximately $80,000 of her trust fund. By the conclusion of 1964, Edie rose in stature in New York City’s social sphere, granted access by creating relationships with the men that achieved the fame she, herself, aspired for—men like Bob Dylan and Bobby Neuwirth. By the time Christmas approached, her father demanded her return to California for the holidays, while simultaneously forbidding her closest brother Bobby to return due to his “increasingly strange behavior” (Watson 180). Though Edie had desired to spend the holidays
with her brother, she returned to California. On New Year’s Eve, Bobby crashed into the side of a bus as he raced along Eighth Avenue, dying at the age of thirty-one after twelve days of unconsciousness. On that same day, Edie crashed her father’s Porsche during a “joyride” right into a light pole (Watson 180). While many agreed that it was shocking that Edie had survived, that day marked the second major loss that Edie would struggle with throughout her life.

1965 dawned the “year of the superstar,” linked directly to Warhol’s Factory (Watson 183). On March 26 of that year, movie mogul and producer Lester Persky threw a celebration for the birthday of Tennessee Williams. It was at this party that Andy Warhol would meet Chuck Wein and Edie Sedgwick. While Edie did not know much about Warhol, he was certainly fascinated with the young and beautiful socialite. Understanding how much publicity Edie could (and did) generate, the two would form an unlikely partnership that plagued Warhol for the rest of his life. Edie dyed her brunette hair a silver color, and adopted a style and manner that was identical to that of Warhol’s. Edie’s practices molded the Factory hypermodern narrative, influencing the career and thought of Warhol. With the advent of the superstar in 1965, Edie came to embody the ideals that Warhol had publicly proclaimed since his rise to Pop Art prince.

Edie and Andy’s symbiotic relationship perpetuated practices in the Silver Factory that embodied a hypermodern narrative. Warhol craved fame, but was “socially inept, shy, and timid” (Finkelstein and Dalton 47). Edie, on the other hand, possessed wealth, status, and an enigmatic personality that drew everyone to her. Edie provided Warhol with the ability to engage in a hypermodern quest for acceptance through the practices of attending to one another completely, emulating one another in dress and in manner, turning both Warhol and Edie into mass commodities for public consumption. Truman Capote remarked that Andy wanted to be Edie—everything that she was and had possessed (Finkelstein and Dalton 48-49). Edie’s wealth and
status drew Warhol to her and, subsequently, opened up avenues for jealousy and envy. The cultural codes that Edie lived by enacted textual evidence that Warhol interpreted as meaningful and as communicatively necessary in his own pursuit of selfhood. As mentioned in her biographical commentary, Edie came from a long line of wealthy individuals, “steeped in tradition, custom, habit, their past so present that the present came to seem unreal” (Finkelstein and Dalton 4). However, Edie’s childhood and disturbing past led to a lack of control apparent in most realms of her world—her drug use, her spending habit, and her desire to be more than Warhol’s Superstar.

Edie’s circle of friends enhanced the Factory’s reputation as well as opened up space for practices that characterized the “Superstar” in hypermodernity. Her rampant drug use perpetuated the “superstar” environment. Edie would eventually die of an overdose on November 16, 1971, but her addiction drove her to new levels while participating in the Warhol hypermodern narrative. Edie would star in a number of Warhol’s films, including Vinyl, Poor Little Rich Girl, and Beauty #2, receiving little money and hardly any acclaim for her talents. Robert Rauschenberg, a fellow Pop Artist, remarked that Edie “was an object that had been very strongly, effectively created” (Stein 250). Edie joined the Silver Factory to establish her own identity as an actress. However, Edie is the exemplar of Warhol’s hypermodern mass commodification of persons, as she quickly and solely became a Warhol Superstar.

The most well publicized event of the Warhol-Edie relationship that characterizes hypermodern practices in totality occurred on October 8, 1965, at a retrospective at the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Newspapers estimated that between 2,000 and 4,000 individuals attended the event, when estimates counted 1,000 for audience participation. When Warhol and Edie arrived, pandemonium ensued. According to Watson, no
spare inch of space existed inside of the retrospective. The crowd treated Warhol and Edie as if they were *celebrities*, and not Superstars. They embodied both a Pop Art flair and the hypermodern practices that were rampant in American society writ large. However, with such little space, soon the ICA had to remove the art from the walls. In addition, Warhol, who had always been afraid of a crowd, could not find it in himself to interact with the thousands gathered for one small glimpse. They eventually pushed their way to a staircase sealed off at the ceiling. At that point, Edie was given a microphone—and whispered to the crowd, “Oh, I’m so glad that you call came tonight, and aren’t we all having a wonderful time? And isn’t Andy Warhol the most wonderful artist!” (qtd. in Watson 247). The two eventually escaped through the roof, where someone had chopped a hole with an axe. However, this event deeply characterized the mass commodification of persons in the form of Edie, the Superstar.

Edit’s troubles as a deeply troubled drug addict were transformed into a commodity for Warhol—who surrounded himself with what he had identified as hypermodern practices in an age of lack of regard for norms, rules, and standards. As a Superstar, Edie desired nothing more than to transition into celebrity. However, she never made that leap. As the event in Philadelphia showed, Warhol had turned Edie so much into a commodity that she could only celebrate the celebrity of Warhol. His most famous Superstar, Edie’s purpose, much like Julia’s, was to support Warhol’s efforts in his quest for infamy as the Pop Artist. In addition, Edie became a Superstar for standing in front of a camera and for, essentially, being herself, embodying hypermodern practices and behaviors. Edie lived in the present, afraid of the future and disregarding the past. She consumed for the purposes of attaining status, and found community with like-minded individuals that engaged in the same hypermodern practices. Her inability to transcend into celebrity would ultimately be her downfall, as Warhol’s ability to turn her into a
commodity for public consumption inevitably consumed her entirely. She approached others as commodities as well, asking only how they could serve her purposes in finding and obtaining fame. Edie eventually left the Factory in 1966, angrily accusing Warhol of standing in the way of her transitioning into a celebrity. She joined forces with Bob Dylan. Edie would tragically overdose on November 16, 1971 before she ever had the ability to gain the hypermodern attention that she so desperately desired. As the quintessential Superstar, Edie did not have the ability to break out on her own. Lacking the drive to become a celebrity, Billy Name, the one individual in the Factory, apart from Warhol, had the ability to achieve such status.

5.3.3 The Celebrity: Billy Name

Billy Name was born William George Linich on February 22, 1940 in Poughkeepsie, New York to a “flapper-type” mother and a “gangster-type” father (Watson 14). His father was a member of the ironworkers union and so, as a young boy, Billy immediately learned how to play the role of the apprentice. Even as a young child, Billy was both quiet and reserved, seeking to read philosophers like Henri Bergson rather than engage in sports of spend time with other children throughout his school years (though he would eventually be elected to class president in his senior year, 1958). As a young man, Billy knew he was homosexual, although could not fully express that part of his identity. Watson quotes Billy as saying: “I was an outsider, but I was a person in Poughkeepsie with a secret. That made all the difference” (qtd. in Watson 15). He emulated the stars of the silver screen like Marlon Brando and James Dean, while, simultaneously, immersed himself in the world of the Beat Generation. Upon graduation in 1958, Billy moved to New York City without any idea or plan for the future.

Upon arrival in New York City, Billy assumes a style of “existential angst,” further perpetuated by his penchant for the Beatniks (Watson 58). He began 1960 as a waiter at
Serendipity 3, a restaurant on East Sixtieth Street frequented by Andy Warhol in the early 1960s. Serendipity 3 became a local hotspot for poets, artists, and the avant-garde—as well as the underground homosexual scene. Billy would meet many individuals through his job at Serendipity 3, including Nick Cernovich, an award-winning lighting designer who would work for many downtown theaters and groups. Billy would begin his “first apprenticeship” with Cernovich, and learn the “trade” of lighting, which would become his avenue into Warhol’s Silver Factory, as well as the way of life known as Zen (Watson 61). Billy eventually left the city for southern California until the spring of 1963, on a hiatus for exhaustion and low metabolism. Billy was constantly working and taking a number of drugs that washed out his pallor, left him physically weak, and in need of care. Upon returning to New York City, Billy threw himself into lighting design, and even worked on The Billy Linich Show. However, when it was over, Billy collapsed in his apartment, completely drained.

Billy spent the summer of 1963 in this state, surrounded by friends named Ondine (a Silver Factory regular), Freddie Herko, and another man named Richard Stringer. His group of friends was amphetamine addicts, and offered Billy methamphetamine to give him more energy. This, according to Billy, was the beginning of intense amphetamine use (Watson 96). Fueled by his new drug addiction, Billy spent the following three weeks silvering his apartment with Reynolds aluminum foil. He also began to host hair-cutting get-togethers, which primarily consisted of Billy cutting the hair of his close friends, and rampant drug use by those close friends. One of Billy’s close friends, Ray Johnson, brought Andy Warhol to his apartment in December of 1963 to attend a hair-cutting party. Billy recalls: “the lights were set so when Andy came in, he walked into a silver jewel” (qtd. in Watson 119). Warhol was immediately taken with the entire setup, and asked Billy if he would be interested in filming this activity (this
was around the time that some of Warhol’s most important films like *Eat, Sleep,* and *Kiss* were created. Warhol also asked Billy to silver his Factory.

Billy arrived at the Factory a little later, but did not begin to create the Silver Factory until January of 1964. He was, at first, restricted to daylight hours, but then made an incredibly important decision to move into the “northwest corner of the space,” where he would remain for the four years (Watson 121). Upon moving in, Billy took Reynolds aluminum wrap (with a staple gun and glue), as well as DuPont Krylon Paint, and created a space that reflected the 1960s completely. In Warhol’s words: “It was the perfect time to think silver. Silver was the future, it was spacey […] And silver was also the past—the silver screen—Hollywood actresses photographed in silver sets” (qtd. in Watson 123). Billy covered the entire floor in silver, which he called both an environment and a sculpture—in fact, a work of art, reflecting both hypermodern preoccupation with fame and status as well as a strange unification of past and future into an ambiguous present. He also would create the music that would fill the Factory’s space, eventually settling upon an atmosphere of chaos and mechanical reproduction.

Billy’s practices would inherently contribute to the hypermodern narrative of the 1960s Silver Factory. Billy created the silver in the Silver Factory. Although a direct byproduct of his drug use, Billy’s hypermodern practices created the very narrative that propelled Warhol’s career. What made Billy the celebrity—even though he became a commodity for Warhol—was Billy’s total morphing into a form that suited the atmosphere of the Silver Factory. Following the insights of Gamson, a celebrity in the hypermodern American consumer and capitalist culture is one that exists as total commodity. Warhol brought Billy into the Factory as an assistant, and he eventually moved into the Factory full time. He was often referred to as manager of the Factory and, under his management, much of the drug use that came to characterize the Factory began to
ensue—although always out of the eyesight of Warhol himself. He also became the “official recorder” of the Factory, taking snapshots and videos of the inner workings of the environment, and developing them in his darkroom, in which he lived (Bockris 202). This practice was exceptionally hypermodern, and became the ground from which Billy’s celebrity status achieved its pinnacle importance. As the person that recorded the workings of the Silver Factory, Billy became the keeper of this (in)famous world. Though a true commodity in that Warhol used Billy to create the Factory itself and created in Billy a symbol of the Factory, Billy’s celebrity status granted him access to everyone’s lives, which he was permitted to record and exploit himself.

Billy and Andy’s symbiotic relationship left Billy mentally weak, and showed insight into Warhol’s ability to commoditize himself and others. By the time that Billy left the Factory in 1970, Billy had gone from a comfortable yet shy man to a hermit, barely emerging from his darkroom at any given moment of the day. He collapsed in upon himself, moving to escape the world of which he served as commodity. After Warhol’s shooting in 1968, Billy could not face the external life that had threatened his own existence. In addition, toward the end of his time in the Factory, Billy began to speak to himself. Warhol himself would comment on the fear that he felt as he would walk past Billy’s darkroom and hear voices, only to find that Billy was alone. Billy believed, at the end of the 1960s, that he was ready to move away from Warhol’s shadow and to attempt his own career in the art space. In addition, Billy found that Warhol was no longer the man that he was before the shooting. Because they existed in such a symbiotic relationship, Billy had no choice but to leave. One day, the members of the Factory returned to find one note from Billy—“Andy, I am not here anymore but I am fine. Love, Billy” (Watson 412). He enrolled immediately into a retreat outside of Poughkeepsie, and began to recover from his drug use.
Billy’s dependency on Warhol was a hypermodern practice that yields significant insights into understanding hypermodernity. His creation of the silver in the Silver Factory encapsulated an obsession with celebrity and commodity culture that privileged hyperconsumption at its core. Billy became a commodity in the name of the Silver Factory, and was a celebrity in that he achieved fame within Warhol’s circle of friends as the keeper of the Factory, as well as outside Warhol’s circle as the man that was the gatekeeper to Warhol’s inner world. In the course of his life, Warhol’s own practices contributed to a hypermodern narrative, revealed in the behaviors and practices of the individuals that characterized the Silver Factory itself. In fact, as understood through the discussion of Julia, Edie, and Billy, the people that surrounded Warhol offered hypermodern practices that further encapsulated Warhol’s project. Narrative practices in hypermodernity emerge in connection to the communication ethics questions that drive commitments to hyperconsumption, most notably exemplified in Warhol’s artistic project and creative feud. The mass commodification of persons, through Warhol’s project, yields significant insights into philosophy of communication ethics. Understanding the relationship between Warhol’s penchant for the commonplace and commodity opens up space for creating narrative practices through this lens.

5.4 Commonplace and Commodity: Narrative Practices in Hypermodernity

Warhol’s elevation of the commonplace, shed light on his contribution to understanding art as communication through a lens of philosophy of communication ethics. Similarly, the practice of hypermodern mass commodification of persons reveals a narrative that privileged the use of others in the quest of caring for the present. The overactive social norm of hyperconsumption knew no boundaries, and Warhol’s life with other individuals demonstrates this entirely. This project highlighted three such relationships—with his mother (the icon), Edie
Sedgwick (the Superstar), and Billy Name (the celebrity). However, much of Warhol’s life and relationships fit this framework. Historical conditions permitted the mass commodification of persons, and such communicative practices created a hypermodern narrative that Warhol responded to and embodied entirely.

Beginning with Eco, the hypermodern practices of the Silver Factory emerged through popular culture and cultural codes, which yields significant implications for philosophy of communication ethics. Eco’s introduction of popular culture as worthy as a subject of study introduced the role of commodity culture in human communication. His project and semiotic framework relates specifically to Bauman’s work on liquid modernity and culture in that the consumer market is driven by mass production and individual freedom to assume and change identity throughout the course of one’s life. Bauman argued that culture today demands that identity may be fluid, allowing for public announcements of changing viewpoints and ideals in the midst of morphing values. A consumer-oriented society moved preoccupation with possession to simply discarding the old in favor of the new, the trendy, and most innovative in all areas of life. Eco similarly highlighted the commodity culture that has grasped the United States of America. Eco’s warning is reminiscent of Hannah Arendt’s dire warning about the abuses of labor—when one confuses labor and “necessity” with labor and “work,” a culture of “greed” invites “consumption without temporal satisfaction”—consumption for the sole purpose of consuming (Arnett 70). Warhol’s influence, framed within a philosophy of communication ethics, manifests in his bridging of high art and the commonplace.

Warhol permitted the hypermodern practices of his colleagues, which occurred simultaneously with his ability to elevate the commonplace through his art, to manifest in the mass commodification of persons. Practices drive narratives, and those narratives yield
significant implications for the study of philosophy of communication ethics. Perhaps even more so than his art, Warhol collected and commoditized others, turning to them for sources of inspiration and for subject matter in his quest to turn art and celebrity on its head in a hypermodern culture. Danto contends that Warhol’s commodification of others is inherent in the repetition that he engaged in producing art (Andy Warhol). The idea of the infinite reproduction and repetition, as explicated through Walter Benjamin, inherently depicts a capitalistic and consumption-based culture, focused on the mass production of both commodities and individuals, like, for example, celebrities. The hypermodern logic of consumer culture is one that flattens objects and selves into commoditized entities, which reflected itself in the flattening of life and human communication inherent within Warhol’s Factory. Warhol tirelessly consumed objects and other individuals, ultimately allowing himself to become a “Pop object fit for consumption,” demonstrating his total commitment to the commodification of the person (Tata 63). Exemplified in the individuals that assisted in Warhol’s most important creative decade, the 1960s, this era positioned the Silver Factory, or what would eventually become Andy Warhol Enterprises, as a small group of individuals who consistently worked with Warhol and rewrote the hypermodern narrative of New York City life, even for little or no pay and through films, silkscreens, and writings. These individuals would become the Silver Factory Superstars.

Warhol brought together a diverse group of people, and made art through a dynamic and consistent attitude that attracted people and inspired them to engage in work, centered upon what Warhol called “business art.” Warhol believed in the corporatization of the avant-garde art that characterized his career, stating that “being good in business is the most fascinating kind of art,” reflecting hyperconsumption inherent within his own practices (Warhol 92). Warhol’s unassuming manner invited the vulnerable, the meek, and the desperate. His rhetoric appealed to
the vulnerable—those whose dreams would never be realized in Hollywood but may be realized through Warhol. Warhol’s associates in the Silver Factory were almost universally disturbed, misled young individuals with big dreams and little reality. Warhol commented that the more one surrounded himself or herself with people like the Superstars of the Silver Factory, the easier it was to lose oneself in those individuals’ vulnerabilities and problems. His commitment to the vulnerable attracted the lost, and his celebrity status served as a beacon of possibility for those who sought more. The Factory was about history, in that these vulnerable individuals recognized in Warhol their own chance to live within what was clearly a turning point in history.

The practices exemplified by these individuals offer a glimpse into the hypermodern narrative that Warhol responded to, embodied, and communicated about through his creative feud manifesting in a variety of media and communicative outlets. His employment of communication styles and hypermodern practices gave rise to a narrative that manifested in the assumption of all that gathered in the Factory that the hypermodern narrative trumped all other communication ethics questions. Warhol’s creative feud began in the elevation of the commonplace through his artistic works, and continued in his participation in the mass commodification of persons, evident in his relationships with others and the practices embodied by others. Each of these facets of Warhol’s project culminates in the final metaphor of this project—chasing artificial light in hypermodernity. Warhol’s quest to revolutionize art and culture begins and ends with his quest for taking the ordinary object and turning that object into a divine, or sublime, standard of transcendence. Pop Art via Warhol was more than the simply admitting the commonplace into the realm of elite art, based upon principles of equality of all artistic endeavors. Infinity, repetition, and the philosophical nature of Warhol’s life and works
reflect the consumer culture that sheds, reflects, and invites artificial light on mass-production as culturally significant and communicative behaviors.
Chapter 6:
Chasing Artificial Light: The Writings of Andy Warhol

Warhol’s creative feud manifested in the constraints of his historical moment, in which he embodied practices that led to both an obscuring of genuine pathways toward a philosophy of communication ethics and an opening to countering the problematic communicative patterns characterizing the period. Hypermodernity, as understood by Gilles Lipovetsky, emerged in the 1950s during a transformation of culture into a continuation of modern dispositions toward individualism situated within patterns of association with hyperconsumption and excessive performative of identity. This historical condition gained traction during the 1960s in the midst of Warhol’s productive Silver Factory years. At its core, hypermodernity emerged as a social preoccupation with hyperconsumption as a form of class and status, a temporal fear of the future riddled with ambiguity in the face of relentless progress, and a re-emergence of the need for self-expression in the public, private, and social spheres of life. These major characteristics offer what Hannah Arendt termed artificial light in the midst of dark times. Throughout his writings, Warhol attends to the artificial and genuine light manifesting in what this project considers to be the dark times of hypermodernity. His written texts act as commentary on his own embodied encounter with a philosophy of communication ethics situated within hypermodernity; he announces his own desire to chase artificial light and, simultaneously, offers counters in the form of genuine light embedded in the practices of his narrative.

“Chasing Artificial Light: The Writings of Andy Warhol” offers an examination of Warhol’s written words to examine the final major metaphor of his creative feud. Artificial light blinds individuals in the midst of dark times through a lack of distance and lack of reflection, obscuring genuine light apparent to those that are willing to engage in a thoughtful encounter.
with the historical moment. The work of Hannah Arendt begins this reflective examination of artificial light, detailed through five of her major works and guided by the work of Ronald C. Arnett, communication ethicist and scholar responsible for the introduction of Arendt’s political philosophy into the study of communication ethics. Through Arendt’s work, two primary texts written by Warhol offer understanding of artificial light in hypermodernity: 1) *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol: From A to B and Back Again*, and 2) *Popism: The Warhol Sixties*. In each of these primary texts, the interplay of artificial light, genuine light, and dark times emerge in Warhol’s creative feud as formative for providing a window into his importance in philosophy of communication ethics. Finally, the unification of the metaphor of ‘chasing artificial light’ with the two other exemplary metaphors of his project (the elevation of the commonplace and the mass commodification of persons) permits the argument for the importance of Warhol’s project in a philosophy of communication ethics framework.

Warhol’s understanding of hypermodernity and artificial light offer hope and warning. Zygmunt Bauman introduced the metaphor of ‘hunting’ as primary in a “liquid modern” society, exemplifying Warhol’s hypermodern caution manifesting in his writing (Bauman 27). One chases artificial light in hypermodernity by escaping the limits of the unification of modern and postmodern cultural values and norms, desiring the experience of self-expression and freedom of individual choice regardless of consequence. However, the end of the hunt is both unthinkable and impossible. One perpetually chases artificial light in total avoidance of “personal failure” (Bauman 28). When one privileges the hunt for self-expression and choice at all costs, one loses oneself to artificial light. Arendt offers a philosophical framework that offers guiding light in understanding the dangers of the hypermodern hunt obscured by such practices.

6.1 Artificial Light: Modernity to Hypermodernity through Hannah Arendt
Warhol lived in the midst of hypermodernity, an amalgamation of modern grand narratives concerned with individual autonomy, progress, and efficiency as well as consumerism and consumption formulated through petite narratives masquerading as grand narratives. Hypermodernity manifests in the midst of questions of temporal significance, where identity is hyperperformed as a means of social gratification. The work of Arendt, who critiqued modernity for ushering in “dark times,” requiring a communication ethic to “counter its sedative artificial light,” considers the final metaphor of Warhol’s project, one that manifested in his pursuit of selfhood (Arnett 1). Arnett penned a comprehensive examination of Arendt’s work introducing Arendt to the subfield of communication ethics. Artificial light offers a sense of false assurance in unflinching commitment to modern notions of progress and efficiency. Within hypermodernity, Warhol’s project, framed into a philosophy of communication ethics, contends with Arendt’s notion of artificial light, suggesting that artificial light acts as an embodied practice.

Arnett considers Arendt’s project to be one beginning with dark times, in which paradigmatic assurances are no longer available, calling individuals to identify and celebrate “genuine light” when so much deception and blind commitment has become veiled in the darkness as “artificial light” (3). Arendt’s critique of modernity as the privileging of the individual, standing above a historical moment, offers forms of artificial light that remove distance between individuals embedded within their historical moments, obscuring the need for reflectiveness and thoughtful engagement of communication ethics. Warhol’s writings offer temporal glimpses of hypermodern artificial light in which individuals sought a hyperperformance of identity through hyperconsumption. Following Arnett’s close examination of Arendt’s work, the articulation of Arendt’s political philosophy and communication ethics
offers Warhol’s writings as exemplifications of artificial light in hypermodernity. Five of
Arendt’s works contextualize Warhol’s depiction of artificial light through guiding philosophical
frameworks: 1) Love and Saint Augustine, 2) Between Past and Future, 3) The Human
Condition, 4) Eichmann in Jerusalem, and 5) Men in Dark Times. For Arendt, artificial light
blinds with its unreflective masking of the darkness inherent within particularly modern
practices. As Lipovetsky suggests, modernity did not end with the rise of postmodernity and
hypermodernity. In fact, hypermodernity is the amalgamation of modern impulses and
postmodern fragmentation. As such, Arendt’s project continues to counter the darkness that
descends in hypermodernity, obscured with artificial light, through the genuine hope of a
philosophy of communication ethics.

6.1.1 Love and Saint Augustine

Hypermodern identity engages the fullness of self-expression without ground in an active
tradition or narrative practice. Arendt’s work, Love and Saint Augustine, the major work
originating from her 1929 dissertation, turns to the interplay between identity and existential
demands, understanding identity to be derivative in the meeting of and responsiveness to others.
Turning to Augustine in the midst of artificial light in 1930s Germany, as Hitler came to power
under the guise of rescuing a failing German economy, Arendt considers identity to be an
existential demand in the face of lack of direction. Arendt uses Augustine’s voice to distinguish
between cupiditas, or love that possesses a self unhindered by human ties and ground, and
caritas, or love that is rightly ordered and responsive to Others, finding identity in relation, for
Augustine, to God. For Arendt, the fear of loss drives modern society, encountered in the face of
a future that is unknown and ambiguous—a symptom of hypermodernity. Only through one’s
identification with eternity, or a present bounded by past and future, can that fear dissipate.
A person becomes enslaved to *cupidtas*, unaware that sociality is illusory, obscured by artificial light that never reveals a person’s identity. For Augustine and Arendt, possession should not drive life, but responding to others must emerge as central. Arendt contends, through Augustine’s existential phenomenology, that *cupidtas* is characterized by a constant fear of losing what one has, and never obtaining what one desires; much like hyperconsumption for the purposes of achieving status, the future is too ambiguous to be concerned within anything but the self in the present, achieving one’s goals. *Caritas* emancipates one’s self from earthly possessions and allows an individual to experience a future of possibilities with and among others.

Arendt’s *Love and Saint Augustine* depicts a rightly ordered world that views the social as purely impersonal, standing in isolation as a subject of faith, concerned with God as the maker of identity at a personal level and a human level. Dark times result in a moment characterized by confusion, concern, and limitless confidence. Augustine offers a phenomenology that acknowledges the formative power of existence and our subsequent responses to existential conditions. In hypermodernity, artificial light in connection to identity results in *cupidtas*—from hyperconsumption that rids the human person from a derivative understanding of selfhood to an originative self that finds the self through his or her purchasing power. A philosophy of communication ethics, understood through Arendt, concerns itself with human conditions, finding respite in confusion by meeting existence as it presents itself to us in the foreseeable moment, tied always to past narratives and turning toward a future self in a world with others. The drive to possess is artificial light, blinding us to our responsibilities. Situated within a temporal moment of fear of the future, one’s present is lost to the genuine light of phenomenological responsiveness to community and to others.
6.1.2 Between Past and Future

As the desire to possess takes hold of a hypermodern present, the active notion of tradition, which emerges in Arendt’s 1961 work, *Between Past and Future*, loses traction and is eclipsed into a commoditized past. In this collection of essays, Arendt posits: what is the nature of the present, situated in between the past and the future? How do we engage the present while still attending to the past, which shapes us, and the future, to which we belong? For Arendt, the present is revelatory, which she terms as the ‘between’—no one can possess this space. The between is not the link that shapes the past and the future. Rather, it stands as a “dwelling place” where tradition invites the active meeting of present conditions inherent within the human condition (Arnett, *Communication Ethics* 48). Arendt published *Between Past and Future* at the beginning of the 1960s, at the same time that Warhol began his hypermodern creative feud through Pop Art. The metaphor of tradition overlaps the two projects and invites a close read of the relationship between the two.

For Arendt, tradition situates an active space that attends to past and future through interpretation, labor, and leisure. The human person cannot attend to existence with the darkness that descends upon the future when the past of tradition ceases to inform the present. Hypermodernity invites a lack of faith in the future, for the future is far too ambiguous and uncertain. Such an ambiguous future threatens one’s identity. Thus, tradition, as a shaper and guide for discourse and action, contends with artificial light by providing genuine hope for those that walk in blindness. A present tradition calls forth action that bridges temporal gaps and shapes human practices. As tradition is further ignored, the world is left to a hypermodern condition of suspicion, where all that is certain is the progress of mankind and the possession of
the space of the between, the revelatory. For Arendt, history has morphed into a blind march of progress, and the West has lost tradition, which manifests in a sense of meaninglessness.

Arendt contends that modernity has shed the shackles of authority in favor of personal freedom. The exertion of authority appears to place individual freedom at risk. Arendt suggests that the West has lost the idea of Roman tradition, which permitted authority to be derived from outside of one’s own self. Authority manifested in a “public standard” that calls “oneself and others into accountability” (Arnett, *Communication Ethics* 54). Real freedom, says Arendt, is present in the interspaces of life, or the places between ideas and persons specifically housed within the public sphere open to difference, dissent, and change. For Arendt, this may begin with standards imposed in the educational system, but as a whole, the problem is situated in the hypermodern condition of attentiveness to mass culture and society, where an individual is called to conform and, yet, is totally isolated in an endless pursuit of status and acceptance. Culture, in the hypermodern condition, becomes another commodity, utilized in the exchange of other values. Culture as a function privileges the removal of interspaces as well as hyperconsumption, granting status to personal taste rather than public and communal standards. This, for Arendt, is the dangerous condition of modernity—the public privileging of utility in the midst of directionless action and lack of traditional ground. The loss of public standards calls forth a reimagining of the human condition, which Arendt believed to be one of public action and embeddedness within temporality and history. A new human condition belies the tradition and action needed to care for and reclaim the public sphere.

### 6.1.3 The Human Condition

In response to the loss of tradition and authority, Arendt calls forth a questioning of the constant demand for progress in an age where individualized freedom manifests in the blurring
private and public spheres of life, culminating in a social world. *The Human Condition’s* first publication took place in 1958, around the same time as the launch of Sputnik. For Arendt, the launching of Sputnik inspired the globe to celebrate the release of humankind from the confines of the physical space of Earth. Yet, this was a cause for lament, for Arendt, who believed that the protection of the physical space of Earth cares for the human condition writ large. Arendt’s discussion of the human condition is ontologically rooted in the differentiation between labor, work, and action. As part of the human condition itself, Arendt situates these three human behaviors within the *vita activa*, or public life.

For Arendt, labor aligns itself with the production of life processes, a necessity in keeping with survival. Work actively engages the creation of products and artificial objects that transcend the mortality of earthly creators. Finally, action, for Arendt, is the sole unmediated activity of the human condition, which “corresponds to the human condition of plurality” (*The Human* 7). Action is the public and political human storytelling, precipitated by thinking that influences the ‘doing’ of political and public contribution. Action, thus, must take place constantly and continually with others. The construction of the world, thus, is communicative, disclosing one’s identity through the revelatory power of speech with others. The public domain is the space in which labor, work, and action find meaning. Arendt’s concern for solitary and purely private life manifests in her belief that such a life is not a human life.

For Arendt, the move away from action rises in the “modern amalgamation of undifferentiated space,” resulting from an “unbounded optimism in the inevitability of progress” (Arnett, *Communication Ethics* 68). This amalgamation was termed the *social* by Arendt. The social, in Arendt’s estimation, denies a participant any freedom or individuality, but depends upon the conformity of blurring public and private spheres in one nation-wide community. For
Arendt, mass society puts at risk public and private spheres of life, where the possessive nature of hypermodernity and hyperconsumption as a common form of practice rejects differentiation and public standards of excellence. Arendt calls for a return to the differentiation between these realms, beginning with a look at the public sphere of life to make relevant, once again, the behaviors associated with distinctive spheres. A hypermodern consumer culture revels in the social by erasing distinctions between labor, work, and action, and demanding production and labor as a means of consumption. In modernity, pure acting subsumes contemplation, losing meaning and public standards to guide human life. However, Arendt reminds us that the surest way to emerge from artificial life is to engage in a philosophy with roots in practicality. Thus, communication ethics in dark times begins with the call to attend to the ground, or tradition, that we come from in addition to remaining the creator of the story of the human condition. The collapse of public and private spheres into the social realm usher in dark times obscured by artificial light; the hope, for Arendt, is for reflection. In a hypermodern moment, the privileging of consumption, self-expression, and hyperperformance reject reflective attitudes toward the ‘why’ of human behavior. Arendt’s reclamation of the public sphere ushers forth a warning for a return to reflection and thoughtful engagement of others.

6.1.4 Eichmann in Jerusalem

Arendt’s most important discussion on reflection and thought emerge in her work, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*. ‘Banality of evil’ calls for individuals to reflect upon decisions in the ordinary contexts of everyday existence. In the work, she describes Adolf Eichmann, his actions during World War II, and his ensuing trial as exemplary of how evil manifests in the banality of unreflective and blind commitment to artificial light. Eichmann serves as a representation of dangerous thoughtlessness in moments of ethical
demands. He served the Nazi regime, moving Jewish people into countries other than their own and sending them to various concentration camps, eventually maintaining organization in Theresienstadt, Czechoslovakia. Repeatedly, throughout his trial, Eichmann maintained that he acted in order to formulate identity through the work that he did—his bureaucratic job dictated his decisions. Arendt contends that in a modern society, individualism emerges in conformity, privileging the sense of belonging at the expensive of embedded responsiveness through a philosophy of communication ethics and basic attentiveness to humanity. Unthinking communicative patterns and decisions creates a void of unreflective distance from any given situation, masking the ethical implications of action upon another human being. Within this unreflective distance, Eichmann committed his greatest atrocities.

Eichmann did not live within reality, but engaged in the chasing of artificial light, characterized by blind commitment embedded in questionless devotion to authority. His inability to question the commands of his Nazi superiors permitted the atrocities for which he later involuntarily claimed responsibility. Eichmann’s unreflective stance from the human beings that were murdered resulted from thoughtless behavior in which he simply followed the orders of the organization—the Nazi party—to whom he had given his loyalty and devotion. Eichmann was duty-bound to the organization and to the advancement of his career, without any moral consideration of his actions. At his trial, Eichmann contended that he did his duty in regards to his nation and his job—“he not only obeyed orders, he also obeyed the law” (Arendt, Eichmann 135). Eichmann never believed that he did anything wrong. In fact, he maintained the reasonable nature of his actions, rejecting personal responsibility for the murdering of the Jewish people that he either transported or organized in some capacity; he harbored no hatred toward Jews nor did he ever directly kill another human being.
Eichmann stands as a representation of the evil that humans are capable of when blindly chasing artificial light in various forms—attentiveness solely to bureaucracy, for example, that forces our identity to assume thoughtless actions devoid of a sense of responsibility for others. The power of reflective thinking offers a revelatory space for genuine light, emergent in communication ethics as a counter to lack of consideration of the importance of the public sphere. Human reflective thought is necessary in order to engage another human being in this historical moment—hypermodernity. Arnett contends, through this work of Arendt, that our “focus of attention” shapes our identity (Communication Ethics 103). Within hypermodernity, the practices of hyperconsumption and hyperperformance create social worlds and communal ties based around the linkage of consumerism, commodification, and personal identity. Arendt’s critique, while tied to the specifics of the extreme forms of banality of evil, offers a warning to hypermodernity. Within ordinary existence, evil manifests in the total focusing upon the obsession of belonging at the expense of all values and tradition. In dark times, unreflective commitment to bureaucratic demands results in a loss for humankind. To understand dark times, one must engage in a thoughtful response to the demands that existence makes of us.

6.1.5 Men in Dark Times

The notion of ‘dark times’ is central to Arendt’s work, coined by Bertolt Brecht in his poem To Posterity. In Men in Dark Times, published in 1968, Arendt analyzes ten individuals, termed lamp holders by Arnett, who, immersed in dark times, permitted genuine light to burst through the darkness. In this work, Arendt offers that, in the midst of dark times, artificial light can obscure the genuine light offered by lamp holders and holy sparks, or the flashes of genuine light present in the midst of darkness. For each of the ten individuals selected in the work, Arendt describes “carrier[s] of light in the midst of darkness” that manifests in the meeting of

Each individual offered genuine light in the midst of darkness, situated within public contexts. Lessing (1729-1781), a major German author, lived through a time frame that bore witness to the American Revolution as the precursor to the French Revolution. During that time, Lessing contended that one must publicly question acts and decision making to ensure that tradition still embeds the public actors engaged in everyday existence. Rosa Luxemburg (1871-1919) and Isak Dinesen (1885-1963) were two women who countered exclusionary practices in the public arena that forced an unwanted identity upon those not granted equal access. Each woman offered public critiques of imposed systems to offer the power of thinking and judgment in the midst of systematic dark times. Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli (1881-1963) and Hermann Broch (1886-1951) were men of faith that attended to the power of lived tradition in the public sphere, recognizing that genuine light manifests in a person’s capacity to walk on one’s own, against mass society, to uphold the ethical imperative to engage tradition in the public sphere. Karl Jaspers (1883-1969), Walter Benjamin (1892-1940), and Bertolt Brecht (1889-1956) chose intellectual pursuits in favor of upholding communication ethics in the public sphere; Jaspers adhered to the unifying power of communication, Benjamin attested to the need to recognize the potency of traditions in the present, and Brecht attended to the voices of the marginalized. Finally, Waldemar Gurian (1903-1954) and Randall Jarrell (1914-1965) spoke to the power of public and personal friendship that countered problematic communicative behaviors.
Each individual, through the writings of Arendt, sought to meet darkness as it manifested in the public sphere with the pragmatic assumption that one cannot ignore darkness and, thus, must use what presents itself. *Men in Dark Times* offers the beginnings to understanding Arendt’s project, which seeks to offer a response to artificial light and a pragmatic path to countering that artificial light through a philosophy of communication ethics. This work attends to the necessity of light in the face of darkness, and calls forth the recognition that ethics demands that we care for the public domain, which can foster diversity and genuine holy sparks. Arendt’s warning and call yields significant implications for Warhol’s project as a creative feud in hypermodernity. Following Arendt’s call, an explication of Arendt’s counter to artificial light structures the contribution of the writings of Warhol to a hypermodern philosophy of communication ethics.

6.1.6 Arendt’s Project: Countering Artificial Light in Dark Times

Communication ethics that emerge in the span of dark times must embrace darkness in order to generate any hope of distinguishing between artificial light and genuine light. Arendt’s project suggests that there are individuals who care for genuine light in the face of dark times, excluding the desire to imbue the world with what Arnett considered to be animism in modern spirits of progress and optimism. The animism of modernity imposes an undue optimism in efficiency and process that ultimately creates opportunities to chase artificial light. Efficiency, as in the case of Nazi Germany, sheds the shackles of responsibility to others in the hope of progressing at an unlimited pace. Processes privilege efficiency in the hopes of attaining the new and innovative, forsaking public evidence, debate, and attentiveness to the ground upon which we stand. Communication ethics understands that process is not neutral; it must assume background narratives and foreground contexts.
Arnett’s introduction of Arendt into the study of communication ethics signifies Arendt’s rhetorical contribution to understanding the central component of tradition in making sense of existential demands. Arendt does not abide by the “false optimism” of progress and, instead, considers dark times to be any historical moment that is both “unresponsive to alterity” and unnecessarily confident in culture’s capability to triumph in an age of the new, the innovative, and the unquestioned (Arnett, *Communicative Ethics* 248). Dark times are not limited to grand-scale problems, but manifest in moments with inherent disregard for existential and historical demands, such as hypermodernity as understood by Lipovetsky. The differentiation of public and private spheres of life allows the public to offer genuine light as opposed to undue darkness. For Arendt, tradition, as the gap between past and future, acts as a bridge for understanding the ground from which we act and speak, terms that are identical for Arendt. She celebrated uncertainty and ambiguity, inviting the revelatory as the space of tradition.

When uncertainty and ambiguity reign in a given historical moment, Arendt contends that it is in the separation of public and private perspectives that can give insight into how to attend to and care for a given environment. The differentiation of public and private reclaims the ground needed to engage in active and reflective deliberation. Deliberation permits story-centered action and contemplation, which manifests in praxis, or theory-information action. Arendt’s project acknowledges that existence requires us to meet it as it presents itself, regardless of whether or not we agree with what is before us. Through deliberation and story-laden action, one can engage a *vita activa* responsive to dark times. Each of Arendt’s major works brought forth primary metaphors that frame Warhol’s creative feud in the context of philosophy of communication ethics. Those include: 1) a derivative ‘I’ attentive to *caritas*, in *Love and Saint Augustine*; 2) tradition in *Between Past and Future*; 3) the contemplative engagement of the public sphere, in
The Human Condition; 4) the need for reflective engagement with attentiveness to the dangers of bureaucratic control, in Eichmann in Jerusalem; and 5) the pragmatic call to attend to dark times, in Men in Dark Times. Arendt’s rhetorical call asks us to engage in meeting existence, assume deliberative responsibility, and respond to story-centered action as a response to dark times. One must reject artificial light in the hopes of generating holy sparks, lighting the way through dark times.

6.2 Artificial Light and Holy Sparks: The Writings of Andy Warhol

Either in modernity or in hypermodernity, dark times call forth both artificial light and holy sparks. Arendt argues against artificial light, contending that it obscures holy sparks and genuine light as one navigates darkness. For Arendt, existence, deliberation, and story-centered action involve a return to tradition that lives in the gap between past and future. Genuine lamp holders offer an embedded attentiveness to creating opportunities to move beyond artificial light. Warhol both rejected artificial light and embodied hypermodern artificial light, suggesting that dark times requires a constant reflectiveness in order to counter problematic practices. Warhol’s writings offer a temporal glimpse into dark times, calling forth artificial light, and announcing hypermodernity in action. Two selected writings of Warhol offers insight into hypermodern dark times, and the instances of artificial light that Warhol battled with and embodied in his life, works, and art. His creative feud with hypermodernity manifested as both commentary and embodied practices, of which Warhol offered artificial light and holy sparks in a contested commitment to uncovering hypermodernity. An analysis of both The Philosophy of Andy Warhol: From A to B and Back Again as well as Popism: The Warhol Sixties offer a temporal glimpse of hypermodern artificial light. While Warhol penned other works (for example, The Andy Warhol Diaries and a: A Novel), these two works have been selected as the most direct
accounts of Warhol of public culture, hypermodernity, and his role in identifying and responding to American consumer assumptions. Driven by Arendt’s major metaphors, Warhol’s work offers a continued interpretation of hypermodernity in the context of dark times.

6.2.1 The Philosophy of Andy Warhol: From A to B and Back Again

First published in 1975, Warhol’s ‘philosophy’ manifested as a compilation of tape-recorded conversations between Warhol and his assistant, Pat Hackett, as well as his colleague Bob Colacello, who claimed that he and Hackett ghostwrote most of the philosophy. The Philosophy of Andy Warhol begins with a conversation between A (presumably Warhol) and B (who stands for anyone because A simply “can’t be alone”) (Warhol 5). Warhol notoriously called his colleagues and friends to avoid being alone during either his early mornings or late nights at home. As A and B communicate with one another, they reflect upon the nuances of their daily routines. A comments to B that he has been termed a ‘mirror’ by society writ large, and reflects that, as a mirror, he feels as if he is nothing—superficial, empty, and lacking any depth. He is simply a reflection of society and culture. As a reflection, Warhol begins to offer musings on a variety of topics that reflect hypermodern dark times immersed in chasing artificial light. Those topics are divided into themes that Warhol specifically utilized in The Philosophy of Andy Warhol as well as the common threads that he creates. Warhol begins his philosophy by tackling the idea of love in a hypermodern moment, a topic that he notoriously was incapable of digesting and understanding throughout his life.

6.2.1.1 Love

Warhol’s entrance into the topic of love is his acknowledgement of the symbiotic relationships that he formed with individuals in the Silver Factory, reflecting the hypermodern mass commodification of people rampant in his historical moment and throughout his life.
Warhol began receiving psychiatric treatment after vicariously assuming the mental health problems and issues of his friends—or his Factory coworkers. Warhol’s history of his own mental health issues—including St. Vitus Dance as a young boy—warped his capacity to reflect upon his own psychiatric needs. Here, Warhol slips into his tendency to lie, reminiscing about a childhood in McKeesport, Pennsylvania and leaving for New York City at the tender age of eighteen (Warhol was born in the Hill District of Pittsburgh, grew up in Oakland, and went to college at Carnegie Tech, moving to New York City upon graduation).

One of the first hypermodern values that Warhol raises in the text, which illuminates the chasing of artificial light, manifests in his discussion of the various roommates that he had upon arrival in New York City. Of all of the roommates that he had (at one point, he lived with seventeen other individuals), Warhol claimed that they never shared lives or problems. He describes himself as a loner, now, and laughs at the irony of it. Before, Warhol says, when he would have given anything to have others to surround him with, no one accepted his offers of friendship. When he decided to protect himself by defining himself as a loner, he achieved fame, recognition, and the love and support of many. He says, “As soon you as stop wanting something you get it. I’ve found that to be absolutely axiomatic” (Warhol 23). As an axiom, Warhol’s description points back to Arendt’s discussion of a derivative I in favor of an originative I in Love and Saint Augustine. Rightly ordered love, as an axiom, meant that, for Warhol, rejecting cupiditas allowed one to actually achieve the heart’s desires. This could function as a form of artificial light, if one still harbors the desire. In regards to the problems that he began to accumulate as a loner surrounded by others, Warhol found respite in his tape recorder, arguing that problems became opportunities in that they produced fascinating and entertaining tapes. Thus, when a person’s problems became commodities, the hypermodern world felt right.
Warhol turns to a character known as “Taxi,” describing Taxi as one of the most fascinating persons that he had ever met. Warhol’s description leaves little doubt that Taxi is a pseudonym for Edie Sedgwick. Warhol laments how selfish Taxi was, about how addicted to drugs she had become, and about how horrified he became when he realized that Taxi could not be saved. His discussion of Taxi falls in the middle of Warhol’s discussion of love. He says that Taxi eventually moved on to The Definitive Pop Star (Bob Dylan), and suggests that this was for the best, as Dylan knew how to care for her better than those within the Silver Factory. For Warhol, love must be reciprocal—you put in the same amount of energy as that of the other person. However, in hypermodernity, and exemplified in his relationship with Taxi/Edie Sedgwick, the reality of loving another person is not nearly as wonderful as the fantasy of it. Love, says Warhol, “can be bought and sold” (Warhol 51). It is simply another commodity in a world of nothing but commodities—or cupidtas, offering an originative ‘I’ that lives and breathes without recognition of an Other. Thus, when one chases love in hypermodernity, one is simply chasing artificial light. This love is simply the love that a person has for the commodity—for the product—and originates within the self and his or her purchasing power. One continues to chase after the commodity of love in the hope of escaping failure within finding love with another. Warhol both embodied this and integrated this failed hypermodern quest within his philosophy.

6.2.1.2 Beauty, Fame, and Working for It All

Just as love exists as a commodity in American consumer culture, beauty is a commodity available to anyone and everyone, at a point in their life trajectory that manifests as the utilization of commodities enhancing (or hiding) physical features. Warhol argued that being beautiful is not enough in a hypermodern culture because to be beautiful is to simply be. He
much preferred the communicators of his day, who actually did something of tangible importance in the world. Warhol lived a life where he was constantly concerned about his physical appearance. As a condition from St. Vitus Dance, Warhol developed a skin condition, leaving his physical features constantly red and blotchy. His physical problems became his entrance into considering the world of beauty, fame, and attention. Warhol’s strategy—and what he would advocate in his philosophy—was the preemptive announcement of his physical and beauty issues, ensuring the off-limits nature of his own ailments.

Because of his own struggles with his physical appearance, Warhol contended that the easiest way one might achieve beauty is through cleanliness—for example, his favorite thing to wear was a clear pair of blue jeans, because, by their very nature, they must be washed frequently and, in addition, were “so American in essence” (Warhol 66). Beauty, for Warhol, was entirely subjective and in the control of the person being evaluated in such terms. One might wrap their bodies in jewelry, which, inherently, did not make a person more beautiful but allowed the person to feel more beautiful. Beauty, thus, for Warhol is completely hypermodern—left open to hyperconsumption to achieve a particular status within a culture obsessed with celebrity, beauty, and fame. Warhol contends that “whenever people and civilizations get degenerate and materialistic, they always point at their outward beauty and riches […]” (Warhol 70). Thus, in American hypermodern society, what equalizes everyone marks the sign of civilization (for example, Warhol identifies McDonald’s as a mark of beauty for its equalizing power throughout the globe).

Equality between celebrities and persons fascinated Warhol. In his Philosophy, he expands upon this in his discussion of fame, which, like beauty, he ironically illustrates as unimportant or overemphasized. Like beauty, one’s “aura” acts as a superficial yet public
comment that transcends verbal communication. He contends that being famous is not as
important as one might imagine—after all, if he had not been famous, he would not have been
shot. However, Warhol was notorious for his drive to achieve fame. In a moment of irony, he
condemns fame, and argues that every announcement of one’s name in news, media, or in public
should result in pay for the use of their name, their product. Warhol moves to discussing the
media of television, arguing that the famous often retain various “on” personalities to secure a
public image (Warhol 81). Thus, the public image is the image needed to attain status and public
position. A hypermodern individual engages in hyperconsumption and hyperperformance of an
identity with the goal of maintaining a competitive edge under the paradigm of consumption.
Warhol, this is why he utilizes Superstars rather than celebrities—Superstars, as amateurs, reveal
their true selves in hyperperformance.

Some individuals spend their entire lives pining for or lamenting a famous person,
wasting precious time, forgiving sins, and idolizing a person who may, or may not, be
completely false. Thus, fame is simply hypermodern artificial light. Warhol writes that you can
be a “crook,” and, still, you maintain a celebrity status because American culture simply desires
one thing—the star (Warhol 85). In Eichmann in Jerusalem, Arendt lamented the desire to
follow the bureaucrat for his or her own career, ignoring the genuine light in reflecting on our
own decisions. However, just as with beauty, a star simply exists—it is not an active
communicative engagement but an existential condition that, because of hypermodernity,
manifests as personal identity. One chases fame because American hypermodern culture
privileges fame. It is the consumption of status-seeking behaviors, just like beauty—and it
requires work.
For Warhol, the unification of fame and beauty culminates in reflections upon the nature of work. After the shooting in 1968, Warhol claimed that he felt as if he simply watched things happen to him—that he passively viewed life as something that you both had to work at and watch, as if it unfolded on a television screen. For Warhol, however, work is art, and he embodied his art as a way of living. He ties this to a hypermodern desire to consume and produce, writing that: “being good in business is the most fascinating kind of art” (Warhol 92). Thus, when he reflects on his Factory, the people that he has worked with, and those that he is employed, he refers to them as “hyperstars,” or extremely talented individuals who defy any trace of marketability. Warhol likens this to saving leftovers, hoping to recycle that which goes unwanted and unloved by society writ large. After all, says Warhol, life is the most difficult thing one has to work at to be successful within, and so the only thing qualified to provide instructions to you would be a boss that understands you at your core—your beliefs, values, desires, etc.

Nothing worth having materializes without a sense of work—including beauty and fame. This is inherently American and hypermodern. Warhol states “people don’t want to work at something unless there’s a glamorous name tagged to it” (Warhol 99). What emerges as hypermodern situated within philosophy of communication ethics is the assertion from Warhol that work acts as an equalizer in American culture. Money allows the attainment of every product, service, or status affirming object. For example, a Coca-Cola costs the same for an ordinary individual as it does for Elizabeth Taylor. No one can purchase a better hot dog, says Warhol, for a hundred thousand dollars than the dollar hot dog at the ballpark. For Warhol, “the idea of America is so wonderful because the more equal something is, the more American it is” (101). Thus, the combination of beauty, fame, and work equate to one’s understanding of
hyperconsumption within hypermodernity. Everyone has access to beauty and to fame. Everyone, with work, can achieve a level of celebrity emphasized by American culture. Those culturally celebrated and revered products are equally available throughout the American and cultural landscape. This, for Warhol, defines his present—not tradition, which should live within this gap but the hyperconsumption that ignores genuine lamp holders. Through this reflection, Warhol begins to move into his personal world, and opens up, after acknowledging the achievement of fame through work, reflections on more private areas of life, leading him to consider the relationship between time and death in life.

6.2.1.3 Time and Death

Warhol begins his reflections on time and death by articulating how important work remains to him, constituted as a lifelong communicative value. Because he values work, he recognizes the commodification of time in a hypermodern American culture. One tends to privilege specific events in a person’s life as altering or shaping time from there on out. However, as Warhol argues, even the smallest events can unexpectedly alter time forever. What Warhol contends, however, is that time is not as active as one always anticipates. Warhol writes: “they always say that time changes everything, but you actually have to change them yourself” (Warhol 111). The passing of time does not mold or shape the world. Just as beauty and fame require work, time does not change one’s life—one’s actions and decisions ultimately shape the world around us.

At the end of his life, Warhol says that he wants to disappear completely—not to leave leftovers. However, Warhol purports not to believe in death, as no one has ever been around to verify that it occurs or what actually takes place in the process. Before one disappears, however, one must work to save and to value time properly. Thus, says Warhol, he purposefully intends to
make himself as unattractive as possible. Most people leave the unattractive alone, and this becomes Warhol’s primary way of saving time. Ironically, however, the ability to save time by protecting it illuminates the chasing of artificial light in hypermodernity. Time becomes a precious commodity that one must bargain for and purchase in the hopes of insulating oneself in an increasingly chaotic world. Warhol’s reflections suggest that one must purchase time through bartering one’s beauty, fame, and work. Yet, hypermodernity is an ironic interplay of the desire to be an individual mixed with a desire to maintain a role in one’s community. In *Men in Dark Times*, Arendt offers examples of those who bridge this interplay and act within a narrative that protects the community without a sole desire to fit into that community. As Warhol continues to reflect upon time, death, and his own well being, he is left to consider the role money and space has played on his own creative feud, in his quest for understanding time and death as hypermodern values.

### 6.2.1.4 Economics, Atmosphere, Success, and Art

Money, for Warhol, is the ultimate artificial light. Thus far, in *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol*, every theme that he has explicated upon alters and shapes how one spends funds and what one spends funds on. While he writes on economics and money as if deifying the object, one recognizes inherent within the writing an ironic suspicion of the privilege granted to money in hypermodernity. For example, he immediately acknowledges that money often creates an aura of suspicion—individuals often render judgments on whether or not someone possesses wealth based upon a number of superficial factors. This alone is a driving factor for hyperconsumption in Warhol’s hypermodern age. Money is the answer, says Warhol, to almost every problem. Life exists as a commodity. Warhol even goes so far as to suggest that one may purchase friends and people. Warhol writes, “Money is my MOOD,” and considers the value of money as more than
just an ability to consume products—it drives life (Warhol 136). As the great attracter, money matters, regardless of how earned. And just as he renders this claim, Warhol argues that not everyone should have access to money—for money gives us a sense of who is important and who is not. Money is the great artificial light of hypermodernity. It grants privilege and status while simultaneously creating divides and forcing individuals to engage in hyperconsumption and hypercommodification in order to achieve equalization with others.

When one finally achieves a status in terms of wealth not offered to everyone, Warhol contends you can see that in that person’s personal space. He believes that the manifestation of wealth is one big empty space, and claims that wasted space is any home or personal space that hangs art on its walls. Here, Warhol contends that this is why he has moved to Business Art. “Art Art” cannot support space, as it requires the purchasing and exchanging of money, and most individuals do not support the abstract (Warhol 144). However, Business Art can support its own space. He believes in not wasting space with art and, yet, as a creator of art, inspires others to waste their space. Warhol’s notion of space goes beyond the physical boundaries of one’s home, and he subsequently turns to media as another form of space.

Media has permitted the transgression of physical spaces, and allows a person to inhabit multiple places and spaces at once, says Warhol. Regardless of the chosen media, one can inhabit more space than they are entitled to, and they do not have to leave the empty space of their home to accomplish this. Warhol calls the telephone the “most intimate and exclusive of all media,” and suggests that one foster relationships through this medium (Warhol 147). For Warhol, the ability to create space through communication is exceptionally impressive and totally out of his reach, and thus, the medium of the telephone suffices for his ability to form spaces with others. Acknowledging his inability to foster human communication in the most effective manner,
Warhol calls himself a “space artist” in that he produces art as communication in great quantities to engage in dialogue with others (Warhol 148). However, there are many other ways to evoke communicative patterns, and Warhol contends that the greatest sense of all is smell, which can be the ultimate transporter to the past, evoking feelings of nostalgia more than any other sense.

For Warhol, space and ability to utilize space to communicate is an essential element to life in a hypermodern moment. Each space suggests different practices that constitute narratives. Warhol contends that he prefers the city life, which permits an attitude of work, rather than an attitude of relaxation. What Warhol suggests through his montage of thoughts on space is the idea that atmosphere is a commodity in a hypermodern moment. One’s ability to identify atmosphere leads one to desire a specific type of atmosphere. For example, in most restaurants with a higher price point, the owners are attempting to sell atmosphere over quality of food. Warhol also states that he hates to fly, but loves the atmosphere of an airport. Thus, he renders another comment upon artificial light. The meaning behind a given activity almost becomes obsolete, as the superficial atmosphere becomes the commodity worthy of hyperconsumption.

Success in American hypermodern culture allows one to selectively choose which atmosphere they respond to most fully. For example, Warhol is back speaking to B again in a hotel lobby in Rome, remarking that their success permits them to sit within that atmosphere and to gaze at the people around them. Success is the entrance to various modes of living, and Warhol achieved his through his creative feud. When Warhol discusses his art with another individual named Damien, he is quick to contend that creating art is nothing special—it is simply another job. Damien questions how that could be—artists take risks by communicating about something and allowing critics to judge it as simply good or bad. For Warhol, art always displeases critics at first. It takes a minimum of a decade for anyone to recognize art as valuable.
Warhol made a decision, when he began to consider art as Business Art, to attend to his critics because, as Andy Warhol Enterprises, he was responsible for a number of employees who deserved to work at a place with positive reviews. Otherwise, Warhol would disregard reviews and continue to create on his own. Here, Warhol insists that everything is nothing. He engages in an argument with B and Damien, but stands strong in his conviction that there is not one element of life that he would not term ‘nothing.’ While the three speak in circles around one another, Warhol is contending that life is simply subjective—and most of the world, while some claim can be seen as objective, is understood and interpreted through a subjective lens. Thus, everything is nothing until someone makes it something. Something obtains currency in culture and society by someone else’s judgment—and this is the role of his art. The public sphere grants this standard. Yet, in hypermodernity, the social sphere, understood by Arendt, categorizes this subjective notion of success and excellence. No public standard allows for this cultural currency. Warhol thus turns to conclude *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol: From A to B and Back Again* under this train of thought, remarking on the role of his philosophy in everyday existence.

**6.2.1.5 Titles, Tingles, and Underwear (or Shopping at Macy’s on Saturdays)**

Warhol’s conclusion of his work manifests in three separate areas woven together as a reflection of his philosophy in action. First, Warhol tackles his idea of ‘titles’ by explicating a conversation he had with B while they were engaging in Business Art in Torino, Italy. He calls B early to wake him, reflecting on how much attention he requires when he is traveling—if he does not have adequate television (and only American television will do), he requires B to constantly interact with him. B orders room service, and they gather in Warhol’s hotel room. At that point, they recall a conversation they had with some of the royalty in the room about a particular Italian
prince, and Warhol reflects upon the need to protect those around you that are like you—B is Italian, and, thus, when he criticized this Italian prince, he was violating a Warhol rule.

Specifically, however, the title that matters in this theme is the title of ‘disciplined,’ and B questions Warhol on how he is able to maintain his discipline. Warhol claims that he is not disciplined; he simply follows what others ask him to do with a three part rule: 1) do not complain about a circumstance that you are in the midst of; 2) if something feels surreal, pretend as if you are in a movie; and 3) after the circumstance is complete, blame someone else. While B questions this motto, Warhol contends that discipline is simply identifying what you really want. However, contends B, what if what you really want is all the champagne in the world? Warhol says, if you want all the champagne in the world, you will undoubtedly develop a double chin. Thus, the idea of champagne might be enticing, but that idea is merely artificial light—misplaced values. When one possesses discipline, one must be attentive enough to reject artificial light and go after correctly placed values.

Warhol then moves to a theme titled “The Tingle,” and begins by reflecting, as he had at the beginning of the work, on how much he depends upon talking to any of the B’s, particularly in the morning. He depends upon those conversations to hear as much about events and other individual’s lives, even if he had experienced them himself. For Warhol, other perspectives and interpretations make the larger picture. In particular, he recounts a conversation with one B, who violates the unspoken rule of allowing Warhol to call them first. On this day, B calls Warhol (A) and proceeds to give him a detailed description of her desire to clean and maintain her apartment, her physical body, and her life. As B describes her morning of cleaning, she remarks that in 1973, all cleaning products were scented lemon. This year (presumably 1974), all cleaning products marketed their “tingle” (Warhol 203). Thus, as B describes her day in cleaning, one gets
the sense that this marketing ploy infiltrates her very being. Cleaning creates a tingle—a joy—in
her world. Warhol then designates a significant portion of the work to describing B’s
conversation, in which Warhol sets the phone down on a number of occasions to complete other
tasks like eating breakfast and answering the door.

Throughout the conversation, Warhol does not speak—he simply allows B to express the
tingle of cleaning, which surpasses all other activities. Eventually, Warhol begins to doze off,
awakened only by the doorbell. He sets the phone down to answer it, and when he returns, B
immediately chastises him. She depends upon the intimacy of “ear contact,” and Warhol had left
her (Warhol 225). Thus ends his discussion of the tingle. While Warhol himself offers no
commentary on the meaning behind the conversation (and perhaps there is none), the
conversation between B and Warhol deeply represents hypermodernity. B’s desire to clean and
experience this tingle is only meaningful when superficially shared with Warhol, who grants
legitimacy to her actions by listening. However, he is not listening for much of the
conversation—she simply talks to describe her value of cleaning. Lipovetsky contended that
hypermodernity privileges an obsession with self-cultivation that takes the form of hyper-
performing one’s identity and values. B embodies this fully, and chases artificial light in this
hyperperformance. Her actions are only granted legitimacy by Warhol’s attending to the
performance, and Warhol grants this to her in a final submission to hypermodernity.

*The Philosophy of Andy Warhol* ends with a chapter titled “Underwear Power.” Warhol
contends here that purchasing and consumption is the most American activity of all socially and
culturally accepted practices. Warhol recounts a Saturday when he asked one particular B to
accompany him to Macy’s, where he always purchased his underwear. For Warhol, the
consumptive pattern of purchasing underwear reveals a good bit about a person’s character. The
B that Warhol had called, at first, found flaws with Warhol’s Saturday activity—his “extremely definite taste,” said Warhol, severely limited his “buying power” (Warhol 230). However, upon convincing B to go to Macy’s on that Saturday, they arrive to find a swarm of individuals entering the store. While many races, ethnicities, and genders poured into Macy’s doors, Warhol remarked that they were all American, meaning they possessed the look of purchasing in their eyes. Warhol continues to reflect upon his purchasing power, and his desire to find his particular brand of underwear, although the salespeople in Macy’s attempted to persuade him to purchase brands that are more expensive. He, however, paid for his fifteen packages of three-pack Jockey underwear (with cash, which feels much more like buying than if you charge your purchase), and takes B to lunch. They stop at Gimbel’s first to look at their used jewelry, which Warhol had seen advertised. The salesperson, however, is so cold and distant, that Warhol leaves, feeling his purchasing power must be used elsewhere.

Thus ends The Philosophy of Andy Warhol: From A to B and Back Again. Perhaps more than any of his other works, this philosophy is the most direct look into Warhol’s hypermodern narrative from his own perspective (although translated by some of his assistants). The work is a direct reflection of the many instances of artificial light in hypermodernity. The culmination of the work reveals that, at its core, American culture, according to Warhol, are products of nothing more than money and consumption, a sentiment echoed by Lipovetsky in his analysis of hypermodernity. Much of the philosophy of communication ethics questions that emerged in this period were connected to consumption. The philosophical themes interwoven by Warhol all come back to commodifying some of the most important values considered by human kind. For Arendt’s five major themes, each manifest in Warhol’s discussion—the cupiditas of consumption, the lack of an active tradition in the present, the contemplative engagement of the
public sphere, the blind commitment to bureaucracy to advance oneself, and the ignorance of lamp holders that guide the way to genuine light. Where this work ends, Warhol’s *Popism: The Warhol Sixties* begins, detailing the decade of the 1960s and the actual embodied practices that weave together the themes of Warhol’s ‘philosophy.’ Such themes obtain legitimacy in their hyperperformance, which Warhol reflects upon, interprets, and reconsiders in a reflective engagement with the genuine light of recollection.

6.2.2 *Popism: The Warhol Sixties*

Co-authored with assistant Pat Hackett, Warhol’s *Popism: The Warhol Sixties* offers a personal account of Pop 1960s in New York City. Warhol provides autobiographical information about his creative feud during this time, but the work centers upon the announcement of the artificial light that festered in hypermodernity. Warhol describes and contextualizes each year with an attention to detail that reveals the hypermodern values that influenced social constraints and ultimately created his brand as a Pop Art artist. For Warhol, 1960 dawned as an age of Abstract Expressionism, a movement primarily associated with elite art that considered culture at an abstract level. However, in the same year, Pop Art exploded on the scene, taking the cultural values and transforming them into personal morals, and at the same time taking personal values and creating a hypermodern culture, all of which manifested in the communication patterns inherent in the historical era. The Abstract Expressionists had largely rejected hypermodernity, but Pop Art celebrated the mundane, the commonplace, and celebrated hypermodern artificial light by attending to the major questions that characterized the moment.

Warhol begins by reflecting upon his relationship with Emile de Antonio—De—who was one of the first major art critics to appreciate Warhol’s bridging of commercial art and elite art. Warhol found in De a fellow spirit that recognized the brilliance of Warhol’s “hard” style of
painting—a style that offered cold communicative patterns related to commonplace hypermodern values and artificial light (Warhol and Hackett 7). In 1960, Warhol met a number of significant individuals in the New York City art scene that would have influence over the rise of Pop Art, including Ivan Karp, Leo Castelli, and Henry Geldzahler. With the help of these three, Warhol would begin to understand the impact he would have on the world.

Warhol, at the beginning of the decade, would realize that many of his fellow Pop Art artists, including Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg, disliked him because he was far too overtly homosexual. The tradition of Abstract Expressionism privileged a toughness that encapsulated all men. Warhol, however, launched into a creative feud that both permitted the announcement of his identity while meeting the historical moment in the midst of artificial light. The 1960s changed tradition in both the art world and in mass society. As Arendt contended, tradition lives in the gap between past and future. However, in dark times, artificial light can obscure genuine light. Working within Lipovetsky’s framework, hypermodernity exaggerated the modern impulses of individualism, privileging artificial light and permitting tradition to become another commodity within a consumer culture. Thus, Warhol’s introduction into the art world required attentiveness to the pulse of changing traditions and new hypermodern values.

Warhol began his career in the 1960s by asking others for influence and ideas in terms of hypermodern values. For Warhol, Pop Art took the outside and moved it inward, and thus his style was to identify cultural norms and comment upon by creating an image. Many of his friends and colleagues, however, realized that Warhol’s work still found grounding in commercial art, though he contended to have left that part of his career behind. In reality, Warhol was acting as a communicative agent, embedded in a philosophy of communication ethics. Warhol argued that his movement into elite art was simply a matter of “marketing,” in that he
knew the “taste of the ruling class” and could identify those around him who could promote his work effectively (Warhol and Hackett 21). Just as Arendt considered the dangers of unreflective commitment to the bureaucrat in the hopes of advancing one’s career, Warhol identified the major players that would advance his own art, and followed their lead to capitalize on their currency in the world of elite art. For over a year, Warhol worked to find the right gallery to market his hypermodern creative feud that seemed to play with the artificial light extensively identified in his historical moment. Finally, Warhol found Eleanor Ward, who allowed Warhol to open at the Stable Gallery in 1962.

In the 1960s, Warhol identified that the most popular forms of art were the forms that left an environment just as it was. For example, he writes that “playing up what things really were was very Pop, very sixties” (Warhol and Hackett 24). Just as Arthur Danto contended in The Transfiguration of the Commonplace, Warhol recognized that the definition of art hinged upon the historical moment and communication ethics. As he grew more productive and attentive to his task, he began to search for an assistant. His first assistant, Gerard Malanga, began working for him at the beginning of 1963 for $1.25 an hour. As he and Malanga began to churn out some of his most important silkscreens, Warhol identified shifts in public trends that resulted in a chasing of various forms of light—artificial and otherwise. By the summer of 1963, Warhol purchased a 16-mm camera, a Bolex, and began to create and market underground films.

At this time, the rise of amphetamines began to take hold of much of the scene surrounding Warhol. Though he maintained that he would stay away from the drugs, he admitted to taking a fourth of a pill of Obetrol a day (a diet pill) to maintain both his weight and his focus. His focused work resulted in more and more acclaim. By October of 1963, he secured a show at the Ferus Gallery in Los Angeles, which he rode cross-country to with other friends.
Remarkably, as Warhol drove west, he began to see that Pop Art was everywhere—a product of culture and society and mass values. Warhol contended that, within this insight, the future confronted him, with its roots in the present and in the past, a rare instance where Warhol counters the artificial light of hypermodern fear of the future. Arendt considered, in *The Human Condition*, the importance of meeting the present through the active life, uniting speech and action as basic human functions in the public sphere. For Warhol, the manifesting of Pop in culture simply meant that Pop, as a way of life, engaged a social sphere that blurred public narratives with private practices.

Warhol reflects that, as he continues to write about his life in this work, he feels that he is being given an education into both his identity and the ability to interpret the role that his art and film played in the categorizing and capturing of his historical moment. For example, Warhol often maintained that he liked and desired “boring” things (Warhol and Hackett 50). However, Warhol, in what may be a moment of irony or a genuine instance of artificial light, contended that the more that you looked at the same thing over and over again, the more the meaning of that particular object disappears. The lack of meaning allows for an empty feeling, which he categorized as desirable. Warhol pursued this lack of meaning, and found the “amphetamine men” or “A-men,” including Billy Name and Freddie Herko, who would become major players and significant influencers of his work and his life. Warhol described these individuals as the leftovers of the entertainment industry, in a continuation of his *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol: From A to B and Back Again*.

Before 1964 began, Warhol would move to 231 East 47th Street, which would become the Silver Factory. Warhol would insist that he never witnessed the rampant drug use in his space, and many would detail that they were careful to shield Warhol from this behavior, though no one
doubted that he knew the influence of the behavior. In fact, Warhol commented upon that amphetamine became common throughout all classes in that it enabled people of all status to stay thin enough and stay up late enough to maintain the current fashion trends. Lipovetsky’s logic of fashion, which ruled everyday existence, as the mark of what one must attend to, emerged even in the underground drug scene. One of the individuals that ensured Warhol’s ignorance of these practices was Billy Name, responsible for the silvering of the Factory. For Warhol, the color silver represented the eternal movement toward the future, of progress, of, essentially, artificial light, which emerged in Billy Name’s philosophical, yet often disturbed, mind.

In 1964, Warhol began to manifest as the Pop Art Prince, whose work existed in the midst of dark times. He would often work from early afternoon until 4:00 -5:00 a.m., encouraging gossip and competition between and among his Factory co-workers, which he would then document with his 16-mm camera and Billy’s photographic skills. Warhol also implemented an open-door policy that permitted chaos, all documented and utilized in his hypermodern feud. During this time, Warhol lamented his desire to achieve fame and celebrity, but claimed, simultaneously, that he lived by a philosophy that his achievement would occur outside of his control. The artificial light of fame lost battle to a tradition of faith in hard work and attentiveness to present circumstances.

Warhol began to move in art collector circles as well, meeting and befriending Bob and Ethel Scull, who achieved infamy for their extensive Pop Art collection. Widely regarded with suspicion for his openness related to his sources of inspiration, Warhol collaborated with a number of different individuals to eventually achieve notoriety in a number of industries. In particular, Warhol worked with his Superstars to achieve the celebrity status that he so desperately desired. In 1965, Warhol met one of his most important Superstars, Edith Minturn
Sedgwick. Warhol’s attraction to Edie is quintessentially hypermodern; her family, deeply American, could be traced to the Pilgrims, and they had endless supplies of money. The relationship between Edie and Warhol exemplified a symbiotic dependency that would come to categorize Warhol, the person. The privileging of status offered, for Warhol, another instance of cupiditas, which manifested in his love for status and wealth, and, as Arendt would say, privileged an originative ‘I’ that lacked attentiveness to the other.

In the spring of 1965, the “Fifty Most Beautiful People” party occurred in the Factory, and came to stand out in the 1960s Silver Factory as one of the most hypermodern events to take place in the space. Celebrities such as Judy Garland, Tennessee Williams, Allen Ginsberg, and William Burroughs crowded into the Factory, representing all of the artificial light Warhol glorified and chased throughout his life (including the wealth and status that he achieved vicariously through his associations with people like Edie). Malanga would comment that it was at this event that “the stars went out and the superstars came in,” the attention focused almost exclusively on Edie (Warhol and Hackett 105). Throughout the duration of her association with Warhol, Edie’s star would shine bright, and she brought many individuals into the Factory’s orbit. For example, she quickly began to spend time with Bob Dylan, Al Grossman, and Bobby Neuwirth.

Edie’s drug problem, for which Dylan exclusively blamed Warhol, would eventually cause her death in 1971. However, Warhol would maintain his innocence in Edie’s dissolution. He stayed silent for he realized that he could not change Edie; a person changed when they were ready to, and, thus, he maintained a distance that some argued was beyond impersonal. However, Warhol never shied away from capturing Edie’s plight on the camera. In fact, that was his great attempt in his films, to capture the real and allow others to be themselves in front of the camera.
He announced his retirement from painting in 1965 in order to pursue this passion, chasing his obsession with the new and innovative to obtain celebrity. For Warhol, celebrity and fame began to fall into his lap, as he and Edie quickly became a cultural and media couple, noted for where they went and what they did, regardless of the specifics. This notation permitted Warhol to embody the artificial light of fame, turning himself into the art exhibit in order to generate public support and acclaim. For example, Edie accompanied Warhol to a retrospective at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Over four thousand guests jammed into two rooms, forcing the removal of all art. The art opening had quickly turned into a mass media event, in which, Warhol realized, he and Edie were the exhibit—not the paintings nor the story. This, for Warhol was Pop Art (although, Warhol credited Pope Paul VI’s tour of New York City to be the most Pop public appearance of the 1960s, of which the pope defined everything as wonderful). This missed the basic lesson that Arendt offered in *Men in Dark Times*. Genuine light manifests in the public figures that question cultural norms that counter communication ethics and narratives that offer meaning. Warhol’s own consideration of Pop Art missed the nuanced genuine light emergent in the protection of narratives that still manifested in the public sphere.

By 1966, Warhol’s new interest moved into music, and specifically with the Velvet Underground. Creating a partnership between the band and German singer Nico, Warhol began to explore new and uncharted ground, uniting various forms of media in one general experience. This began in January of 1966, during several events. One event took place at the Delmonico Hotel, during a gathering of over three hundred psychiatrists. In addition, Warhol staged ‘Andy Warhol Up Tight’ at the Cinemathèque on 41st Street. During January and February, Warhol had attempted to secure an airplane hangar discotheque for what was first the Erupting (not yet
Exploding) Plastic Inevitable (EPI), and in March, they began to embark on college tours—first at Rutgers and then at the University of Michigan—where they played for upwards of 700 students. Eventually the airplane hangar fell through, but Paul Morrissey secured the Polsky Dom Narodny, also known as the Dom, which permitted Warhol’s vision to come to fruition.

For Warhol, this introduction meant that, simultaneously, Warhol had projects running in dance, music, art, fashion, and film. His creative feud had morphed into a multimedia experience, with his name in lights in an incredible number of industries. Warhol’s attentiveness to this multimedia experience stemmed from what appeared to be both a desire to be innovative and a desire to adhere to the tradition of art in the face of changing historical moments. As outside visitors would comment, the Silver Factory appeared to be a “juncture in history,” revolutionary and, yet, not explicitly identifiable (Warhol and Hackett 173). For Warhol, his creative feud resulted in his understanding that artificial light manifested in hypermodernity as a turning away from conformity. However, so many desired non-conformity, and thus, non-conformity required mass-production in order to satisfy hypermodern consumers. Thus, artificial light appeared to perpetuate the problem.

During 1966, Warhol began to film Chelsea Girls, which became a 3-½ hour documentary (or some sorts) of the lives of the members of the Silver Factory, sitting in various rooms in the Chelsea Hotel. Chelsea Girls was the defining film for Warhol’s career. Met with attention, both positive and negative, the film further propelled Warhol into the category of celebrity. In addition, Max’s Kansas City, a new hangout on Park Avenue South, began to permit the unification of Pop Art and pop culture, and appeared to be the surface space where inspiration grew. As Warhol’s celebrity and fame increased, much of his inspiration and his work became an inherent part of everyday existence. By the conclusion of 1966, Warhol had begun to
turn toward various other pursuits, privileging Pop as a way of life and a philosophical method that contended with the art of everyday living.

In 1967, the success of underground films such as *Chelsea Girls* prompted other major studios to begin to normalize underground content in mainstream films, as well as create brands that would specialize in that subject matter. At the same time, Pop Fashion began to gain popularity, signaling significant social changes that went “beyond fashion into the question” of sexual and gender identities (Warhol and Hackett 208). Hyperperformance of identity manifested in existence with permission granted by the underground films that Warhol continually produced at quick paces. It was with this mindset that Warhol took *Chelsea Girls* to the Cannes Film Festival, seeking out an understanding of hypermodernity across international contexts. During his travels with his fellow Factory workers, he continued to implore them to inhabit and embody the practices of hyperconsumption, making sure to acknowledge that every superstar that he had lost contact with had been over dependency on him for money.

The Factory, during the year of 1967, was a microcosm of attitudes and personalities related to Pop Art in hypermodernity. Warhol’s entourage also began to heavily focus on attending parties and achieving fame in the New York City social scene. In this moment, Warhol reflected, the two American societies of intellectual and meaningful as well as Pop and superficial united in the public sphere. For Warhol, “Pop America *was* America, completely” (Warhol and Hackett 220). Essentially, any one had access to elite art and culture because the elite was no longer outside of the everyday person’s grasp. It was also during this year that Paul Morrissey began to implement order and a business-like structure to the Factory, acting as office manager. The point, for Warhol, was that the conclusion of the decades began to bear witness to
a change in priorities, as the hyperperformance of identity became an individualized pursuit in this historical moment.

At the same time, the Factory increasingly became targets for the open attitude related to drug-use and homosexuality. For Warhol, this increasingly shed light on the hypocrisy of the elite forms of culture in American society. However, Warhol contended that the Factory countered the artificial light of hypocrisy in the United States. He vehemently believed that people should make judgments based on truthful performances of selfhood. The Factory permitted that. As such, as 1967 began to blend into 1968, Warhol watched youth culture more than ever before, attending to emergent values through his open door policy at the Factory and visits to Max’s Kansas City. Eventually, Warhol began to believe that the amphetamine culture of the Silver Factory was becoming too much, and he turned increasingly outside of that sphere for influence and companionship. His attentiveness to the youth and to other class statuses revealed his understanding of youth counterculture.

For Warhol, two forms of counterculture existed—ones that attempted to make counterculture a commercial success and the other that intended to keep counterculture outside of mass society. Warhol contended that the only way to engage in counterculture was to create, do, and say radical things as conservatively as possible, “like McLuhan had done—write a book saying books were obsolete” (Warhol and Hackett 250). By 1968, a year that Warhol describes as perpetually violent, people had begun to step away from amphetamine and began to chase artificial light in the form of consumerism, the dominant paradigm of hypermodernity. For example, by the end of January, Warhol had taken the Factory out to Arizona to film Lonesome Cowboys mimicking John Wayne as a way to ensure the success he had envisioned for his own western film. In that same year, Warhol’s Silver Factory building was set to be demolished, so
the Factory moved to 33 Union Square West, and set the space up to resemble business—not a chaotic scene.

The most important event of 1968 took place on June 3; Valerie Solanas walked into the Factory and shot Warhol, nearly killing him. For Warhol, the shooting became a turning point in Warhol’s hypermodern creative feud. It had simply been “timing” that nothing had happened to Warhol before that moment; he had surrounded himself with creative but disturbed individuals, and had opened a door to violence that was a direct result of a lack of counter to artificial light (Warhol and Hackett 279). The blurring of public and private lives, the thoughtless banality that resulted in unreflective behaviors with others, and the disregard of tradition as an active and formative present allowed Warhol’s life to come to a chaotic head, resulting in this traumatic event. Warhol left the hospital on July 28, and subsequently spent his life emotionally and physically scarred, depending on the people around him to care for and protect him. By September, he was back at work. However, he was concerned that he would lose his creativity, which he largely attributed to the wild individuals associated with the Silver Factory that no longer felt welcome at 33 Union Square West.

The hypermodern desire to achieve celebrity status ends Popism: The Warhol Sixties. He described the last sixteen months of the decade of the sixties as confusing at best, as he began to experiment with other forms of media, including print publications. In the age of machinery, Warhol found that other technological and media outlets were available. He became obsessed with tape recording the people around him, and began to lose all shackles of the Silver Factory in a move toward a new hypermodern era filled with celebrity and hyperconsumption. Arendt understood the generation living the 1970s to have experienced identity crises, as a direct result of an “earlier era better understood not as a public domain but as a place filled with a ‘society of

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celebrities” (Arnett 171). Both The Philosophy of Andy Warhol: From A to B and Back Again, as well as Popism: The Warhol Sixties offer exemplifications of the strange feud that Warhol embodied during a moment of chasing artificial light. He recognized, fought against, and succumbed to false values and obscured realities. His writings offer an interpretation of the communication ethics battle that he waged every day of his life, suggesting that his creative feud may act as both artificial and genuine light, emerging through his phenomenological experience.

Warhol’s battle with artificial light, best described in these two primary accounts, offers insight into the challenging nature of an embodied philosophy of communication ethics; living the historical narrative and simultaneously countering the problematic behaviors. Arendt’s project, exemplified through five major metaphors, offers exemplification of Warhol’s creative feud in the midst of hypermodernity. He engaged hypermodernity on its own terms, and offered insight into his phenomenological quest that further contextualizes a historical moment situated in dark times. Warhol both embodied and countered many of the hypermodern values that manifested in the cultural norms apparent in his dark times. Uniting the work of Arendt with the writings of Warhol, hypermodernity offers a similar narrative to Arendt’s work, and calls for the reflective engagement of a philosophy of communication ethics in the hopes of identifying genuine light.

6.3 Engaging Hypermodernity: Warhol’s Quest in Artificial Light

Through Warhol’s writings, the notion of artificial light and genuine light reveal the specific practices that comprised the hypermodern narrative that Warhol pushed back against, suggesting a reflectiveness that manifests as one recounts one’s own position within a historical moment. Warhol’s project exemplifies Arendt’s rhetorical warning. In a particular historical moment, it falls upon the shoulders of those that live within that period to create and interpret the
meaning of events and human communication. We must begin with the “communicative gesture of understanding,” by identifying the questions that are emergent in a particular moment and by, simultaneously, refusing the “impulse” to reveal an “an unexamined answer prematurely” (Arnett, *Communication Ethics* 147). This requires reflection and thoughtful engagement with others. As we narrate a particular moment, a philosophy of communication ethics recognizes the need to meet with existence in order to understand.

In *Creating a Cultural Atmosphere*, an essay included in her work, *The Jewish Writings*, Arendt argued that culture becomes the overarching foundation of value when religion becomes nothing but a secularized creation, and human meeting is propelled by cultural norms rather than traditional values associated with a moral or ethical narrative (such as religion). Such is the hypermodern condition that that Warhol met and contended with during his lifetime. His desire to elevate banality and the commonplace, however, mixes artificial light and genuine holy sparks. According to author Michael Angelo Tata, whose work on Warhol connects him to religious notions of sublimity, Warhol’s ability to attend to the “thinness of the superficial” can open up a “profound abyss of meaning,” acting as a counter to the artificial light that his work often framed (Tata 14). Within this framework, one may engage Warhol’s creative feud through a philosophy of communication ethics that recognizes the crucial need to reflect and interpret the commonplace as a facet and characteristic of hypermodernity. The thinness of the superficial emergent in Warhol’s work acts as a reflective counter to non-reflective engagement of the superficial and the meaninglessness of hypermodernity.

Arendt’s project calls forth a public life with attentiveness to reflective action and speech, pulling apart the social to gain clarity of mind and heart in dark times. Arendt termed modernity a harbinger of danger when engaged unreflectively, thoughtlessly, and without ground. She did
not, however, back down from dark times; rather, she detailed the communicative practices
needed in the midst of dark times to call forth genuine light. Arendt’s rhetorical warning
manifests as hope resting within a philosophy of communication ethics attentive to the dangers
of artificial light. Similarly, Warhol’s project both narrates and counters artificial light in dark
times—in hypermodernity, which has not lost some of the dangers that Arendt witnessed during
her historical moment.

Lipovetsky’s contribution to philosophy of communication ethics unmasks the dark times
of hypermodernity that resonate in today’s communicative environment, resounding within
Arendt’s modern warning. As Lipovetsky contended, in hypermodernity, “the past seduces us,
while the present and its changing norms govern us” (61). The governance of the prevailing
cultural norms and values guide communication ethics questions that render our ability to
identify genuine light inadequate at best, removing space for reflectiveness in an increasing
social sphere. His concerns, much like Arendt’s concerns, were the engaged thoughtlessness that
increasingly gave itself over to the whims and demands of a present moment, where all that one
can do is celebrate one’s self in the present in a constant fear of an uncertain future driven by
relentless progress. Warhol encountered this concern and narrated a culture that gave itself over
to a hypermodern narrative, offering in his place a passive window into this hyperconsumptive
realm.

Chasing artificial light in the midst of the dark times of hypermodernity obscures the
importance of reflective engagement in a consumer culture. Warhol’s writings depict the
interplay of an embodied narration of a historical moment, exemplified throughout his life and
works. At the core of Warhol’s feud, the major metaphors detailed throughout this project
converge as practices embedded within a hypermodern narrative. Part II of this project has
unmasked the hypermodern metaphors that comprised Warhol’s creative feud. The elevation of the commonplace, the mass commodification of persons, and the chasing of artificial light surround hypermodernity’s preoccupation with the amalgamation of modern individualism, postmodern fragmentation, and the exemplification of identity through hyperperformance and hyperconsumption. Warhol’s creative feud lasted throughout his lifetime, and yields profound implications for the study of philosophy of communication ethics, specifically attentive to the prophetic nature of Warhol’s work.

Part III, the final section of this project, offers implications for Warhol’s introduction into the study of philosophy of communication ethics in hypermodernity. Stephen Koch remarked of Warhol that his space, his life, and his works were the mirror’s space. His “responsibilities were the mirror’s responsibilities, his replies the mirror’s replies. A man had transformed himself into a phenomenon; one looked into him and saw—a scene” (13). Guided by the insights of philosophy of communication ethics, Warhol’s creative feud exists as a mirror held up to a hypermodern society. He permitted his identity to be molded and shaped by the artificial light and guiding narratives of a historical period framed by its celebrity-obsessed consumerism that privileged the need to perform identity. Warhol, as a hypermodern mirror, can guide human communication and philosophy of communication ethics today, by unpacking his insights as a framework for both narration and knowledge of his historical moment.
Chapter 7:

A Return to André Warhola: A Philosophy of Communication Ethics in Hypermodernity

“The door of the future is closed, and knowledge of it is a dead option, and this is what makes narration possible and all that narration presupposes; the openness of the future, the inalterability of the past, the possibility of effective action” (Danto, Narration 363).

This project culminates in advancing Warhol as an exemplar of a philosophy of communication ethics in hypermodernity tied to the power of narrating history imbued with human interpretation and meaningful consequences. Warhol’s creative feud does not center upon the aesthetic acceptance of his art and films. Rather, Warhol’s project hinges upon his communicative capability, utilized through various forms of media, to engage his historical moment as a communicative prophet, one who recognizes the communicative landscape before others around him or her can. Ronald C. Arnett advances this metaphor in his work on Arendt, suggesting that a communicative prophet responds to the historical moment before it is commonplace to acknowledge and reflect upon the ethical and communicative environment. Calvin Tomkins, art critic and New Yorker columnist, identified Warhol as a communicative prophet, in other terms, stating that: “Always somewhat unearthly, Warhol became in the 1960s a speechless and rather terrifying oracle. He made visible what was happening in some part of us all …” (qtd. in Bockris 335). A hypermodern communicative prophet, Warhol’s project, framed within a philosophy of communication ethics, points to the emergence of hypermodernity which raised significant philosophical and communicative questions with relevancy to contemporary culture, society, and an increasingly ambiguous and uncertain communicative landscape.

“A Return to André Warhola: A Philosophy of Communication Ethics in a Hypermodern Age” offers Warhol as an exemplar of the power of narration in philosophy of communication ethics. An overview of Arthur C. Danto’s project, Narration and Knowledge, draws forth
distinctions between narration as communication, history, and the significance of knowledge in the context of philosophy of communication ethics. Next, the major communication ethicists detailed in this project, situated in and through the perspective of Danto’s work, offer a ground that situates Warhol’s major contribution. Next, an analysis of Andy Warhol, communicative prophet, offers an explication of his creative feud within the framework offered by Danto and a philosophy of communication ethics, attentive to the major hypermodern metaphors that encapsulate his feud. This project culminates with a detailing the major implications emergent in the analysis of Andy Warhol for the study of communication, considering his significance tied to the necessity of narration in a philosophy of communication ethics.

Lipovetsky and Sébastien Charles wrote: “philosophy’s task is to make reality intelligible and nothing more; its role is to shed a little light, not to give us the keys to happiness, which, as is quite obvious, nobody holds” (Lipovetsky and Charles 86). A philosophy of communication ethics narrates a period of time with inherent moral/ethical questions and concerns related to human existence, to the ‘why’ of background assumptions and practices, and to the temporal dynamics of understanding human communication and interpretation in all spheres of life. Warhol exemplifies this, and his project offers a significant hermeneutic entrance into interpreting various forms media as narrative driven and communication based, informing a philosophy of communication ethics that considers our ability to respond to, interpret, and gain clarity of understanding in historical conditions. Peter Schjeldahl wrote that, between 1962 and 1964, Andy Warhol was a great modern artist, “looking forward and backward in cultural time” (qtd. In Bockris 189). Warhol, the artist, lived as a historical being, attending to history, culture, and ethics within his hypermodern age. His creative feud offered insight into a philosophy of communication ethics within hypermodernity that attended to human communication.
Recognizing his communicative landscape as a moment of change, Warhol offered a narrative of hypermodernity open to the task of human interpretation, offering no clarity of meaning, but endless possibilities.

7.1 Interpretation and Narration as Historical Meaning

Warhol, communicative prophet in a hypermodern age, enacts the philosophy of history and of art advanced and theorized by Arthur C. Danto. Danto contended that historical knowledge is a temporal relationship between past and present, as the future remains unknown to us. Explicitly, it is the task of the historian to engage in the task of narration to uncover meaning, as history, for Danto, is always incomplete and open to the reality of future events shaping the “contemporary narratives of the past” (Goehr lvii). Danto understands narration to be the task of storytelling and narrative to be the story. His definition of narrative, philosophically informed from a variety of disciplines, situates the understanding of narrative as the act of storytelling, the story, and the collective response to the tradition engaged in the storytelling. Danto’s *Narration and Knowledge* seeks to uncover the ability to interpret and identify the meaning of a historical event of a given historical period in the context of the temporal relationship between past, present, and future under the assumption that narrative will guide this communicative process.

Danto wrote the bulk of the content of his work during the 1960s, at the same time that Warhol’s project gained traction, infamy, and attention. The 1985 edition of *Narration and Knowledge* is the unification of four of Danto’s essays and works. Those include: 1) *Analytical Philosophy of History*, first published in 1965; 2) “The Problem of Other Periods,” a presentation delivered in 1966 to the American Philosophical Association; 3) “Historical Language and Historical Reality,” a presentation delivered in 1967 to the American Historical Association and later republished in *The Review of Metaphysics*; and, finally, 4) “Narration and Knowledge,”
written for presentation to the International Society for Philosophy and Literature and later published in *Philosophy and Literature*.

Danto first publication of the *Analytical Philosophy of History* occurred at a similar time as Thomas Kuhn’s *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, a groundbreaking work that further contextualized Danto’s project. Kuhn’s project, as well as Danto’s, began to question attempts at integrating natural science and the humanities, questioning the ability to understand human action and interpretation under the umbrella of scientific methodology as the paradigm of the moment. In an introduction written in 1984 for the 1985 reprint of the work, Danto contends that narration is the primary mode in which we, as humans, present our world, reflective in our desire to represent our world and reflect the image of our interpretation. In *Narration and Knowledge*, Danto undertakes the desire to separate, delineate, and structure the modes of human narration apart from scientific inquiry, ultimately arriving at a post-historical age. For Danto, post-history, just like post-art, means that history is never complete. Knowledge, formed from history, can never find culmination nor an end, as our human interpretations of events and descriptions mold and shape, forever reconsidering the ethics and values embedded in our ability to communicate with others.

**7.1.1 Substantive and Analytical Philosophy of History**

Danto begins by drawing a distinction between philosophy of history and history, as well as a substantive philosophy of history and analytical philosophy of history. First, substantive philosophers of history, like the ordinary historian, attempt to give accounts of past occurrences, but extend that practice into the future by offering accounts of the whole of history. Analytical philosophers of history, which Danto includes himself in, actively apply philosophy to social and “conceptual” problems immersed in the “practice of history” (Danto, *Narration* 1). For Danto,
substantive philosophy of history concerns itself with attempting to uncover a theory of the whole of history; this manifests in two separate forms. First, a descriptive theory shows patterns in the past that project into a future, allowing the claim to be made that future happenings will repeat the patterns of the past. Second, an explanatory theory accounts for patterns in terms of cause.

Lydia Goehr penned the introduction of *Narration and Knowledge*. In it, she offers that Danto’s driving desire in his work is to discover the historical conditions upon which a historian can write about particular events. Historical discourse depends upon openness to interpretation and temporality. He is concerned with the “gap” between the participants in history and the interpreters of that history, privileging the interpreters in granting knowledge but acknowledging the necessity of the participants (Goehr xxi). For Danto, narratives cannot reproduce the past in perfect replication, because a narrative is never complete. The knowledge of a narrative is never-ending, because temporal conditions feed into one another deriving identity and power through their interconnectedness. Echoing Arendt’s discussion of tradition as the active gap between past and future, Danto further argues that the past and the future ground both the present to highlight the act of communication and narration.

The concern is that substantive philosophy of history, seeking out theory, attempts to meld history to scientific understanding by gathering data and reducing that data to future explanations. These theories, like paradigmatic scientific theories, make claims on the future that enforce those events to fit within predetermined patterns, disregarding the notion of interpretation, providing meaning. As Danto says, we cannot often understand meaning in an episode appropriately until the entirety of the plot has passed. Then, historical knowledge emerges that relates to the meaning of the information. The substantive philosopher of history
attempts to act as prophet. Danto does not understand the prophet along the thought of Arnett and Arendt, but as one who “treats the present in a perspective ordinarily available only to future historians, to whom present events are past, and for whom the meaning of present events is discernible” (Danto, Narration 9). Significance and meaning manifest in the forms of stories, which provide a context and criteria that allow sense-making to occur by participant and interpreter alike. The substantive philosopher of history attempts to tell the story before the story can unfold on its own with fact and interpretation united.

7.1.2 Temporality, Meaning, and Historical Knowledge

For Danto, temporality acts as the fulcrum point upon which meaning and history emerges, situated within the communication of a human interpreter. The past is incomplete, remote and experientially inaccessible before events have unfolded in their unique temporal location. Thus, as analytical philosophers of history, our “knowledge of the past is limited by our knowledge (or ignorance) of the future” (Danto, Narration 18). The temporal position of both the philosopher and the historical event significantly influence the interpretation of that event’s significance and meaning. Historical significance, says Danto, can be dependent upon non-historical significance, such as locality and provincialism, human bias, and present demands. Danto raises three objections to the possibility of genuine historical knowledge, and unpacks all three at great length. Those include: 1) that historical statements are meaningless because meaning is derived from experience, and we can, thus, not verify those statements experientially; 2) that the first argument may be guilty of confusing the term meaning with reference, but this raises the question of whether or not there exists anything for historical statements to be about; and 3) that historical statements are made by people, who have biases and motives for making such statements.
Danto considers the meaningfulness tied to experience argument via a theory of knowledge and a theory of meaning. He contends with a philosophically advanced process of verification that rests within our ability to obtain knowledge through the experience of given propositions. The claim to knowledge presupposes that the conditionals I utter will come true based on the content of that knowledge. However, under this model, we can only verify the past through objects and effects from the past in the present and future (a sentiment echoed by John Dewey). We experience the past in one single, “time-spread object” that goes from the date of the event to an object effected by that event, imbued with ‘marks of pastness’ (Danto, *Narration* 39). Thus, the only way to verify the past is to identify the marks of pastness, which manifest as evidence. However, our place in a range of space and time creates issues related to his principles of verifiability. This model situates and projects the understanding of knowledge of the past as communicatively possible but with constraints in the ability to speak about the past without subsuming it into the present or future.

Through various other philosophers and models, Danto considers the various concerns related to the past as both meaningful and verifiable in principle. For example, I cannot verify that Caesar died in 44 B.C. if, in fact, I was not there in the time or space locality. Thus, statements about the past cannot be verified for meaning phenomenally, meaning that actual and possible experiences cannot give statements about the past meaning. Here, Danto advocates for *tensed* statements about the past to combat this first objection to historical knowledge. Tensed sentences situate the speaker in terms of a present, past, and future tense that signifies the speaker’s position relative to time and space. Danto refers to these tensed sentences as ‘historical sentences’ as the manner by which history should be presented to us. The historian utilizes historical sentences with the gift of recognizing and interpreting the past and acknowledging that
this one interpretation may change as different descriptions of historical events give that particular event various meanings. In addition, ‘historical sentences’ are dependent upon anachronistic knowledge, granted by narration. Truth and meaning, in a tensed sentence, are dependent upon that statements “time of […] utterance” (Danto, Narration 56). Thus, historians cannot make timelessly true statements; statements conditioned by tense for the tensed statement permit accounts for interpretation, time, and space conditions affecting the reliability of the statement itself. Of course, meaningfulness, when understood as verifiability, suggests that meaning can emerge regardless of truth-value. However, says Danto, meaningfulness emerges under the appropriate historical conditions, once an event as truly unfolded. Some events hold no meaning, even in the act of witnessing them. It is only after the event has past that meaningfulness is given. Thus, an event lacks experiential verification in terms of meaning, even in the midst of the event itself.

Danto then analyzes the objection to historical knowledge based upon reference. The historical skeptic understands that one cannot ascertain the truth or falsity of sentences—tensed or otherwise—based upon the surface read of a sentence. Recognizing that we stand in temporal distance from a particular event, the skeptic does not deny the “rules of meaning in our language,” but, rather, finds fault in the rules of reference, asking if experience genuine relates to anything (Danto, Narration 65). The problem is that a false reference can still offer, in part, meaning to the utterer. So, questions Danto, what would stop, in this world, a historian from simply writing fiction and calling it history? What would be the point of historians working their way through evidence, contending with the past, and performing their job, if there is no difference whether historical/tensed and tenseless statements were false? The argument is odd, says Danto, because, conceptually, temporal language tethers us to our own pasts.
If we claim there is no future, this does not require the same level of revision that claiming there is no past would mean. After all, there is a past that we have experience of, for “the present is very much the effect of the past” (Danto, *Narration* 71). If we consider our temporal language, Danto offers two significant terms into this discussion—a past-referring term, which logically creates a reference to a previous event or object, and a temporally neutral term, which does not refer to past or future events or objects. Unpacking several examples, Danto arrives at the conclusion that past-referring predicates are dependent upon temporally neutral predicates, just as tensed sentences presuppose tenseless (timeless) sentences, and offer immediately a need for reference. In this case, past-referring predicates give us important information related to current events and objects with reference to the past. For example, when one claims to have a scar, one is referring to both the current scar and the assumptive inference that references a previous event that created the scar. This is not the same thing as pointing out a small white mark on your skin (a temporally neutral predicate), which creates no reference. For Danto, however, this is simply presupposing the attack that created the objection in the first place. We must take seriously the formative power of communication to truly understand the rebuttal of this objection, for language establishes causality. We embody language, which permits the organization of experience in logical and causal manners—he calls this Historical Instrumentalism. Such a mode of interpretation creates a depiction of our ability to describe our temporal condition in reference to our experiences. However, the use of temporal language, embodied in the philosophical frame laid out by Danto, must be relative to the evidence collected by ordinary historians.

Danto contrasts the relativism argument against historical knowledge with openness to the role of human interpretation and bias in every facet of human existence. He adopts three
significant terms to unpack the argument: 1) history-as-actuality, or the events of the past experienced by past humans; 2) history-as-record, or the documentation that categorizes history-as-actuality after it has come to pass; and 3) history-as-thought, or thinking about history-as-actuality through history-as-record. According to Danto, this perspective argues that history fails to look through the veils of interpretation to get to objective meaning. However, says Danto, it is our temporal communication that pushes us to see present objects beyond their present form, to look beyond the physical objects to determine meaning. Just as Vico argued that language and history arose together, according to Danto, language gives us insight into history. Communication demonstrates that we are always in the process of experiencing a present, which connects to the past and referring to a past. For example, just as Marcel Proust experiences the present tasting of his madeleine, soaked in tea, he is also experiencing his past with his aunts and the town of Combray. In light of this, experiences offer pathways to interpretation, which create meaning between and among others.

7.1.3 Experience and Interpretation

Danto acknowledges that our experiences in the past will distort our experience of and actions within the present. This is an argument raised throughout the study of communication ethics. For example, Hans-Georg Gadamer rescued prejudice from its Enlightenment constraints to argue that human bias is simply our way of looking at the world based upon such experiences in our particular pasts. Thus, many argue that the sciences are a superior discipline, as they are devoid of ethical and biased considerations. However, says Danto, “the slightest familiarity with the history of science would contradict” such an accusation (Danto, Narration 96). Even an objective scientist, coldly examining his study, contends with ethical implications, and each observer works within a dominant paradigm (of which, Thomas Kuhn addressed at the same time
that Danto penned this work). Human bias does not alter the validity of the experience of history. Furthermore, human bias does not force history into the realm of relativism. Human behavior insists upon approaching ideas with biases and various interpretations, but this is not unique to history or to the humanities. It is not the historian alone who approaches a topic with bias. As readers, we house our own interpretations, which further lend insight into the central role of hermeneutics in life. Bias raises questions of ethics, and, specifically, various interpretations often illuminate the communication ethics adopted by various individuals grounded within narratives.

Goehr insists that Danto’s project is a response to the “warfare between philosophy and history,” which mirrors the war between philosophy and other disciplines such as art and the humanities (Goehr xxi). For Danto, the three objections to historical knowledge open up the remainder of his project, of which he intends to prove that historians do not reproduce the past, but organize the past. Specifically, he contends that the main difference between history and science is that they organize phenomena in different patterns. “History tells stories,” says Danto (Narration 111). Those stories seek to answer historical questions, rooted in spatio-temporal regions of existence. For Danto, we cannot ever possess perfect knowledge of history and of historical questions. Just as in a picture, we can simply capture some elements and represent them in some form, which is not inherently an entire and pure reproduction. Furthermore, the task of the historian is to offer interpretations of past events, and a perfect account finds an end in human interpretation.

7.1.4 Chronicle and History

A distinction between chronicle and history lends clarity to this insight. Chronicle is the simple, straightforward account of an event that has recently transpired. “Proper” history
chronicles an event and then “assigns meaning” to that particular event (Danto, *Narration* 116). Chronicles, says Danto, are plain narratives, and proper history manifests as significant narratives. Significant narratives move beyond the retelling of history without meaning and, in addition, cannot exist within a substantive philosophy of history (for we cannot know what the future holds nor what it means as of yet without the ability to interpret). Yet, full accounts of meaning are not available to some significant narratives, for we do not have all the conceptual (or presupposing behavior) and documentary (or history-as-record) clarity of understanding based on documentation. Danto turns to Peirce’s abduction, or the human process of grouping information together manifesting at an explanation for the information and then developing a hypothesis. In instances where we cannot have access to points of information, we must narrate the history-as-record through grouping and explaining, always grounded in human interpretation. Narratives act in this fashion, grouping together events and making sense of significance through human communication. Narratives offer four specific forms of significance for Danto: 1) pragmatic, or ethically significant; 2) theoretically, or evidence in relationship to a general theory; 3) consequential, or logically connected to the idea of importance; and 4) revelatory, acting as the space of the between or the gap of knowledge that moves us to further hypotheses, assumptions, and questions.

Most importantly, Danto contends that significant narratives are plain narratives adding an ethical-moral interpretation of an event, compatible with the telling of an event in a direct manner; it simply influences the interpretation of readers and audience. A narrative, furthermore, finds location in time and space, and thus must answer specific historical questions. Narratives offer a philosophy of communication ethics, uniting the background “why” of foreground practices and assumptions. They are, however, never complete because we are temporal beings,
attempting to organize through human communication in order to engage in sense-making. This process cannot be idealized, says, Danto, and thus, narrative sentences create the condition from which one may speak on the past appropriately and with enough temporal distance to uncover both significance and historical fact.

Narrative sentences find life in the ability to interpret and understand history in relation to present events that imbue those past instances with specific meanings. The past, says Danto, contains within it potentiality for revision, though not change, in that those events live forever in a chronological order but can be revised in terms of meaning by narrative sentences and historians. Danto raises this point by creating an Ideal Chronicler, who is capable of objectively detailing the passing of time in a machine-like fashion that creates the perfect account of an event. However, Danto says, even that Ideal Chronicler cannot have access to the future. The predictions of a historical future are not like those of a scientific future (i.e., a meteorologist can predict weather). This is because narrative sentences can only be uttered by someone who both is on the other side of the range of time needed to categorize history but also because that communicator has access to another event that provides further meaning for the event. His example is of the sentence, “The Thirty Years War began in 1618.” One could not know that the war would last thirty years until 1648, when the war’s conclusion would create further meaning to that narrative sentence. The past is unalterable, but it can change, when events obtain new properties because of new events. Thus, sentences, appropriately tensed, permit the understanding of historical significance.

7.1.5 History, Significance, and Knowledge

Temporal structures, or events discontinuous in the temporal lapse of another given event, provide historians with various places to ground interpretation. These contexts offer
horizons of interpretation that create new meaning. For example, Romanticism emerged as Romanticism because of the various temporal structures incorporated by Romantic classicists, none of whom could have known the eventual significance of these nuances. Danto contends that, during Romanticism, one may have predicted this significance. However, there still exists a possibility that predictions in the future could not come true. In order for this to become history, we must wait for future interpreters to connect this past with present events and significance. Danto shifts into a nuanced discussion of the importance of grammar in contending with our ability to narrate the past in order to arrive at historical knowledge, particularly related to claims, rooted in temporality, that speak to truth, falsity, and future predictions. What Danto, inescapably, arrives at is that notions of time in communication are rooted in temporal rules. When cannot predict that future, nor can one predict meaning. Thus, we depend upon the chronicler of the significant narrative to yield communicative insights into what will eventually become past.

Danto extends an examination of a principle of covering laws, or general theories, to counter the move of science to create all of experience to be observable and quantifiable under scientific theories and paradigms. However, says Danto, human behavior is neither predictable nor explainable in terms of general or covering laws. Historical explanations depend upon narratives. Language permits change to occur, through the stories we tell others about temporal events situated in the human condition. The chief task of narration, for Danto, is to “set the stage for the action” which permits one to identify a temporal end (Danto, Narration 248). The role of narrative in history is to understand and identify meaning in change. History reveals the meaning situated within the unfolding of change, aiding us in identifying the temporal aspects of our own everyday situatedness within history itself. The project of history and of narration understands
the relationship inherent within temporal unfolding, and the impact of social individuals, or
groups of being, and individual human beings that belong in a continuum of cultural explanation.
In the writing of history, says Danto, we select specific individuals to study because they are
significant in that they exemplify great historical changes in behaviors and attitudes in a
particular social and historical context. They represent changes that took place in society.

The consequences of actions and attentiveness to communication ethics are not know to
us in the midst of our historical moment; they emerge in the revelatory space of the present,
which is future to the past. For Danto, other historical periods offer temporal glimpses of
communication ethics and emergent historical questions that drive human behavior and action.
The historicity of history, or “historically effected consciousness” that contextualizes history,
gives us opportunities to embrace and interpret various historical moments from the vantage
point of our own (Gadamer, Truth 312). Danto says that it is the language utilized by individuals
within a historical period that give us insight into a way of life, which we, otherwise, do not have
access to. Living within a changing historical period, it is only through retroactive attentiveness
that we generate meaning and, for those living in the period, we are unable to achieve this
consciousness until things have changed. Historical explanation, then, acts as a revelatory space
living between language and reality and separated by the lapse of temporality. Historical reality
emerges through those that live as both within their historical period and aware that history
manifests in the lived experience of changing times. There are, says Danto, those that live in a
historical period and live their lives in terms of historical representations, which impart
knowledge upon those who come after them.

Historical accounts manifest both the transpiring of events and the meaning of those
events as time passes. History is never complete, and, thus, life is open to interpretation and re-
interpretation. For Danto, “we live in the light of historical truth” (Danto, *Narration* 341). One who exists historically, furthermore, is one who recognizes that the events that one is living through will find meaning and acceptance as embedded within an account only understood and told in a future moment. It is the task of historians to understand the Other in the context of their historical moment. Danto’s project undertakes the task of demonstrating how both language and communication creates our particular relationship with temporality, granting us access to knowledge that reveals human behavior, intention, and patterns in the context of a philosophy of communication ethics. Danto’s project significantly creates the ground from which Warhol’s contribution and introduction into philosophy of communication ethics can take place. From the ground laid out by Danto in *Narration and Knowledge*, temporal distance creates the condition for historical knowledge. Distance becomes the space in which the revelatory power of human communication reveals the communication ethics situated within a historical period. This understanding reveals the central metaphors of history, temporality, and distance in the study of philosophy of communication ethics situated within hypermodernity, revealing the central characteristic of distance in the process of narration that permits genuine understanding of communication ethics and historical questions to emerge.

### 7.2 The Necessity of Distance

Danto’s project uniquely opens a hermeneutic entrance into Warhol’s project framed as a philosophy of communication ethics. Danto contended that it is a gift of a chronicler to grant us access to obtain genuine historical knowledge. Warhol fulfilled Danto’s call, recognizing his present as “historical,” and conscious of the fact that the meaning of his moment revealed in “historical retrospection” (Danto, *Narration* 342). He acted under the framework imparted by Danto of a historical figure, responding to historical conditions without clarity of meaning,
comforted in the face that great change was taking place and would eventually gain recognition in at a future date. As a witness to these events, however, one must still interpret the witnessed account, discerning meaning through the process of distance and narration. Throughout this project, the voices of significant communication ethicists have framed Warhol’s creative feud within a philosophy of communication ethics revealed in the distance of narration. Turning to these major voices, the relationship between distance and philosophy of communication ethics further contextualizes the implications of Warhol’s life and works.

7.2.1 Hannah Arendt

Arendt’s understanding of distance is revelatory in nature, offering the metaphor of interspaces to permit clarity of insight and opportunity for reflection in the meeting of the historical moment. In Men in Dark Times, Arendt contends that freedom in the public sphere is dependent upon the notion of interspaces that exist between persons and ideas, accounting for difference and perspectives that create a thriving public arena. For Arendt, the public nature of interspaces permits an engagement not accessible in private contexts. In On Revolution, Arendt acknowledges that, without the gift of distance, we cannot recognize the “Otherness” of both ideas and persons (Arnett, Communication Ethics 82). In essence, distance permits clarity of ideas that allow genuine access to given conditions. Furthermore, distance permits clarity of judgment, introducing human interpretation as fundamental in this public positioning of reckoning with communication ethics. Furthermore, in Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy, Arendt adamantly contends that distance is a necessity; without it, communication ethics rests in a temporality of judgment that cannot adequately discern the ethical questions presented to us in the public sphere. Finally, in Essays in Understanding, Arendt contends that any capacity to derive meaning is contingent upon our ability to understand. If we, as Arnett suggests, are the
ones called to make sense of historical questions, we must seek to understand through pragmatically engaging in distance that allows contemplation. Arendt situates distance as a primary condition upon which we are able to gain true understanding of an ethical response needed in dark times.

7.2.2 Walter Benjamin

In his essay, “The Destructive Character,” Benjamin privileges distance through a primary metaphor of destruction, which he suggests will make space for possibilities not yet foretold and not yet understood. Viewed as a redemptive metaphor, Benjamin suggests that destruction acts in creating distance that permits the possibilities otherwise unavailable to us. Through his larger body of work, Benjamin works with connections to art that culminate in an interplay closely aligned with philosophy of communication ethics. He suggests that art reveals the particularities of given historical moments. As the rise of mechanical reproduction as a way of life complicates the ability to discern genuine communication ethics and historical questions, Benjamin contends that reproduction calls into question tradition, and, subsequently, shakes the cultural ground needed for distance and opening in engaging the public sphere. Benjamin, echoing Danto, suggested that human interpretation presents opportunities for engagement of change, and that art can communicate specifically because of the distance necessary between art object and interpreter, grounded in temporal dimensions. Benjamin responds specifically to modernity, like Arendt, and carries forth the need for distance and destruction that protects both culture and history through the engaged individual in a particular historical moment, allowing the opportunity to emerge for creativity and social change. Benjamin situated distance as a necessary response to the constraints that limit one’s ability to engage in true historical understanding.
7.2.3 Zygmunt Bauman

The distance necessitated in Bauman’s *Culture in a Liquid Modern World* builds upon his exemplification of modernity melting into a postmodern condition that called for the dissolution of borders throughout various cultures. He drives his discussion on distance through the primary metaphor of *diaspora*, which, he contends, is a postmodern result of rejecting groups throughout the world and enforcing globalization. This project, says Bauman, removed physical distance at the same time that increased difference and contentious viewpoints condemned to smaller spaces. Without distance, those viewpoints clashed into a global condition of limitless conflict and lack of understanding between and among cultures. While offering a different understanding of the notion of distance, Bauman grounds his work through a sociological viewpoint on culture by defending the European Union, suggesting that it is the clash of perspectives that create significance. However, culture, even in the midst of an increased distance to create common ground that situates human communication, social life is in a constant state of flux, propelled by desires to explore identity and recognition with and among others. Bauman situates his call for distance differently than Danto, Arendt, and Benjamin. However, his understanding of culture suggests that the lack of distance creates an inability to attend to another in a manner that respects the ability to raise various perspectives. Those differing viewpoints offer new interpretations of meaning and, therefore, create new opportunities for understanding existence.

7.2.4 John Dewey

The metaphor of distance does not drive the pragmatist John Dewey’s project in an explicit understanding. Yet, his philosophical project offers significance tied to reflection that further contextualizes Warhol’s creative feud in the context of Danto’s work. First, pragmatism, as a 20th century branch of philosophy, emerging in the United States, and attentive to the act of
everyday understandings of meaning in existence, speaks to the communicative process of discerning meaning as part of the experience of life. Dewey primarily considered democracy, education, truth, knowledge, aesthetic, and ethics through practically considering the “dialectical relationship” emergent between persons, arriving at closer understandings of human interaction (Arnett and Holba 137). Dewey worked with instrumentalism, which evolved as inquiry into the nature of human interpretation without falling into the extremes of objectivism and subjectivism. In *Art as Experience*, Dewey considers the moral cultivation inherent within the experience of a work of art. He suggests that, in the approach to a work of art, one must interact with the art object as a viewer that presupposes a distanced space, offering opportunities for interpretation. Furthermore, one feels immediate experience through distanced reflection. Thus, in Dewey’s pragmatism, attentive to everyday experience, art acts as a deliberate reflection of moral cultivation that requires distance for interpretation and reflection. Just as historical knowledge emerges in temporal distance, moral cultivation, through Dewey, requires attentiveness and reflection outside the realm of immediacy.

7.2.5 *Umberto Eco*

The notion of distance as granting a specified type of knowledge through interpretation is present in Eco’s semiotic theory, thought not explicitly termed distance. Eco’s semiological inquiry engages the notion of text as the space in which questions of interpretation are most clearly understanding, dependent upon a distanced relationship between author and reader. Eco delineates the different between an Empirical Reader and a Model Reader to ground intentionality and interpretation in meeting particular texts. He states that an Empirical Author creates with intention and with a particular meaning in mind, always aimed at a Model Reader. However, that Model Reader offers no guarantee that meaning will be interpreted the way that
the Empirical Author intends. The Empirical Reader acts upon a text through engaging that text with distance from the author, and thus can only issue an interpretation outside of the author’s boundaries (Eco, “An Author”). For Eco, interpretation of texts closes eventually, as interpretation must exist within limits placed by cultural codes and historical and temporal progression. Through the necessary distance between author and interpreter, meaning emerges, based upon the acquisition of a particular text from a particular temporality.

7.2.6 Hans-Georg Gadamer

The metaphor of distance is a central feature in his work *Truth and Method*. Gadamer suggests that tradition lies at the heart of this argument, for tradition allows that “part of the past that is not past offers the possibility of historical knowledge,” much like Danto (*Truth* 301). Specifically, a notion like ‘classical’ often does not require the necessity of historical distance as it is certainly timeless in its ability engage in classical nuances in the current historical moment. However, historical understanding depends upon and is aware of the nature of historical distance. Under the subheading of ‘The Hermeneutic Significance of Temporal Distance,’ Gadamer states that the task of hermeneutics is to affect change and reach agreement through attentiveness to text. The hermeneutic circle, or the interplay of part and whole in reaching understanding, is commonly attentive to understanding as both a “movement” of tradition and interpreter alike (*Truth* 305). Understanding, subsequently, is a product of content, and the story told by a given text rests in between its unfamiliarity and comfort, between what, historically, the intention of the text was and the distanced interpretation of that given text. In this, says Gadamer, true understanding requires that one foreground the temporal distance and that distance’s significance for the ability to grasp meaning. Like Danto, Gadamer suggests that the “real meaning” of a text is not contingent upon that intention of the original author, nor that author’s original audience
Present in works of art, we approach the text with prejudice and experience that object with a sense of historical and temporal distance. However, this is where the true meaning of history and interpretation can and does emerge. Gadamer reminds us that this task is never finished and never complete. Temporal distance is a constant process that introduces new interpretations with every age. Gadamer’s reading reflects a highly historicized understanding of distance that creatively suggests the need, to borrow Danto’s terms, the historian and chronicler alike.

7.2.7 Charles Taylor

In *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*, Taylor explicates the role of distance related to art in the creation of modern identity. He contends that art is communicative, and that it illustrates, illuminates, and chronicles the moral sources of selfhood apparent within particular historical moments. He rejects authorial intent in favor of the role of interpretation, which echoes the work outlined by Danto. The art object does not speak to its audience in oratory form but symbolizes the public good in a visual image of the important interplay of artist and culture. This symbolic form is open to audience interpretation. This interplay, which often dialectically opposes artist and culture in history, creates, for Taylor, distance that permits attentiveness to particular ideas and values. He points to Warhol who exemplified this. For Taylor, art acts as a revelatory space that requires a particular consciousness to interpret and shift into the modern moral sources of selfhood apparent in everyday existence. Art, thus interpreted, understands the world and creates opportunities to interpret the world, searching for meaning in the mundane. For Taylor, in his historical moment, the art object offers a distance and space that transfigures the meaningless into an object worthy of appreciation through the distance that is engage between artist and interpreter. Thus, distance, for Taylor, allows one to find sources of
selfhood in a unique art object, which creates moral sources and foundations for communication ethics in the public sphere.

7.2.8 Engaging Distance to Carry Meaning

Utilizing the voice of Alasdair MacIntyre, Ronald C. Arnett and Annette Holba contended that distance and responsiveness allows one to understand the “emergent questions’ within a particular moment (39). Specifically, historical distance creates the demand for attentiveness to emerging questions and the opportunity for response within an interpretative horizon of possibilities that allow new interpretations to surface new meaning. The increase in distance leads to an increase in insights and engagement that open up possibilities for understanding and human communication. This insight acknowledges the central role of bias from the interpreter, but acknowledges that human bias is a product of narrative. The voices of the major communication ethicists utilized in this project have all privileged, commented upon, and relied upon the notion of distance to suggest that the pathway to understanding communication ethics lies in the historical and temporal distance between author or historical moment and interpreter. It is through that distance that meaning emerges, granting genuine light in dark times to uncovering the places for healing and responsiveness, identifying values and emergent questions that demand our attention. It is from these voices, ethicists, and from Danto’s project that Andy Warhol’s genius and creative feud gains saliency in the study of philosophy of communication ethics, fulfilling the genuine calls for narration and distance that lend insight into hypermodern times.

7.3 A Beginning: Returning to Warhol

In the pursuit of sources of selfhood, Warhol chronicled hypermodernity, permitting the framing of his creative feud within a philosophy of communication ethics that uncovered the
questions and values that matter in this historical moment. Danto suggests that historical stories and narratives demand the communication of stories, passed along between and among others to gain salience in the public sphere. Historical narratives must be embodied communication, present in human interaction and engagement with others. Thus, Warhol’s project, folded into a philosophy of communication ethics, tells the story of the rise of hypermodernity. Warhol uniquely introduced a paradigm of commodity culture and subsequently destroyed the paradigm by capturing hypermodernity for philosophy of communication ethics. His significant narrative chronicled a historical moment and offered an ethical interpretation read as a superficial elevation of the commonplace, a mass commodification of persons, and the emergence of artificial light. Warhol lived a life attentive to the fragmenting narratives that comprise hypermodernity. Warhol did not seek to answer the historical questions of hypermodernity; but, as Danto suggested in his work, significant narratives do not seek to confirm theory like science does. The narrative of the historical moment seeks to uncover historical questions outside of covering laws or general theories.

In the midst of communicating his historical moment for the benefit of future interpretation, Danto suggests, Warhol held a mirror up to the American consumer culture and to the historical moment, allowing society writ large to observe a reflection of culture, even if that reflection did not resonate with a resounding and immediate warning. This world, says Danto, was, and is, driven by repetition and reproduction, seeking a banality of everyday living that hid in hyperconsumption, combatting the “unforeseen dangers” of an uncertain hypermodern future (Danto, Andy Warhol 126). This hypermodern world that Warhol represented in his artistic and creative feud is simply a reflection of us—of all the “imperfections that afflict even the stars and the celebrities” that suffer along with us, even if hidden from view (Danto, Andy Warhol 127).
Warhol’s natural inclination toward philosophy offered beginnings of answers to emergent historical questions, the start of Danto’s historical narrative.

Danto contended that, in the midst of his historical moment, one could not appreciate Warhol’s philosophical attentiveness to emergent communication ethics questions. The historical knowledge needed to appreciate Warhol’s ability to capture his historical moment could not have existed while he was creating and making much of his art. It is in this manner that this project contends that Warhol fulfilled Danto’s description of living historically. He recognized the significant changes, trends, and undercurrents of his historical moment. While he could not predict their meaning in the future, Warhol acted as a communicative prophet, recognizing the landscape surrounding him before others around him could understand and appreciate the ethical considerations apparent in his hypermodern age. Stephen Koch, one of Warhol’s associates in the Factory, remarked that, through the work of Danto, one can sense the theme of death and “ending” that Warhol’s “visual tradition” encapsulates (Koch iii). Warhol’s gift was that he possessed the uncanny capability to force the world to watch the historical moment unfold, imbuing it with meaning, even if that meaning was simply only that of observing.

For observing is what Warhol was most adept at, and what he was most known for in his circle of colleagues, friends and family members. Many, including Koch, argued that Warhol existed as a voyeur in his historical moment as a “man who absents himself” (Koch 41). In this, Warhol also maintained a distance between himself and the world around him. Abiding by a metaphor of distance in a variety of contexts, Koch also remarks that Warhol became even more remote in his historical moment, revealing the intensity of value and emotion within a given context. Thus, Warhol achieved impersonality as a human being that permitted, at a superficial level, an uncanny capability to live historically, recognizing the change in his moment and
holding up a mirror to it to ensure that, one day, historical knowledge emerged in the manifesting of communicative meaning. This is most prevalent in the images that Warhol created; as the images were granted immediacy in their presentation of the elevation of the commonplace, Warhol’s philosophical technique of distance granted the image a communicative power by ensuring an aesthetic that privileged space between artwork and interpreter.

Living historically, Warhol kept a significant narrative, housed within a chronicle imbued with a powerful ability to capture one’s imagination for its ability to identify the emergent questions apparent within hypermodernity. However, it was more than Warhol’s artwork that communicated hypermodernity situated within temporality. Warhol lived historical and as an art object himself. He transformed his life into a hypermodern quest, searching for selfhood. In his pursuit of selfhood, Warhol encountered hypermodernity without clarity of significance. However, he recognized Danto’s call to tell the story of his times. By transforming himself into an art object, Warhol found both protection and distance in the public sphere while simultaneously removed himself from the “dangerous, anxiety-ridden world of human action and interaction” (Koch 23). Warhol recognized, within hypermodernity, that values of hyperconsumption and hyperperformance granted a person status and social standing, influencing a person’s public and private identity. In a world increasingly characterized by Arendt’s social sphere, one’s ability found ground in the present, through the purchasing power one possessed, and an increased attentiveness to the self. Because of that, Warhol’s commercial art infiltrated the elite world, and, at the same time, as an art object, Warhol permitted his very selfhood to be a product ready for consumption.

Koch turns to Baudelaire in his evaluation of Warhol. He contends that Warhol acted as the master of the passive aesthetic, for as he turned himself into a commodity, he simultaneously
shielded himself from an increased sphere marked by communicative patterns that individualized narratives and isolated the individual from particular narrative structures. For Koch, Warhol exemplifies Baudelaire’s notion of the dandy. The dandy’s aesthetic qualities are cold and distance, superficial and steadfast. As an object of consumption, the dandy stands firm in a “latent fire which makes itself felt, and which might, but does not wish to, shine forth” (Baudelaire qtd. in Koch 114). Superficially cold and distanced from the historical moment, the aesthetic quality of Warhol, the commodity, obscured his greatest contribution to his historical moment. Warhol was more than the image he imparted, acting as a true communicative prophet, who chronicled and communicated the story of communication ethics in hypermodernity that now has meaning for those in the present to reflect upon and to interpret in an increased hypermodern public sphere.

What Baudelaire adds to this conversation, through the insights of Koch’s work on Warhol himself, is the description of a human being that is enraptured by the image, and lives publicly and simply through the projection of an image of himself or herself. Thus, the dandy is an idealized version of a public figure, an “envisioned man […] who […] images himself” (Koch 114). For the dandy, life is a superficial attentiveness to the power of the internal desire to engage existence as Other. Warhol’s hypermodern quest is the unfolding of both the communicating of hypermodernity and his quest for sources of selfhood in a hypermodern moment. As he increasingly repressed various facets of his selfhood, he continued to internally imagine a world transfigured. This is a form of narcissism, says Koch utilizing Baudelaire, in which one is so concerned about one’s very selfhood that one isolates oneself, terrified of the communicative power of others to interrupt the hyperperformance and protection of one’s projected identity.
Returning to the work of Charles Taylor, the hypermodern identity finds roots in what Taylor contends are the three most significant characteristics that constitute the modern identity: those include 1) the modern turn toward interiority, 2) the elevation of ordinary life, and 3) the extreme desire to express one’s inner sources of selfhood (Taylor, Sources x). Taylor’s project sought to reclaim the modern identity by focusing upon the need to understand communication ethics situated within the world, permitting background narratives to provide the structures that our identities can pull from. However, the moment has upended narrative frameworks, which act as necessary signposts for human interaction and ethical questions. As much as Baudelaire’s dandy sought to turn away from others, Taylor rescues identity by reminding his audience that to be a self is to be a self with others. Furthermore, narratives can create spaces that permit the discernment of values and questions within social constraints. Taylor’s project, aligned with the work of Danto yields an important turn toward Warhol’s own creative feud.

Taylor offers the metaphor of moral topography, which provided a map of one’s internal and external construction of selfhood, permitting interpretation of the self as the self encounters public goods and narratives. Finding moral topography in hypermodernity proved to be Warhol’s life project. Regardless of his success or failure in finding it for himself, he provided the narration and narrative necessary for present reflection and interpretation, signaling the most meaningful elements of Warhol’s creative feud in the context of a philosophy of communication ethics. In his biography on Warhol, Koch terms Warhol as both an artist and a “social creature, a sort of wordless, parvenu Proust” (Koch x). Much of Warhol’s work reacts to a hypermodern vie Bohème. In Koch’s explication, three major sectors divide Bohemia—upper, middle, and lower. All three influenced Warhol in unique ways. First, Upper Bohemia was a place that Warhol both adored and lusted after. Within Upper Bohemia resides all the fame and celebrity, the narcissism
and the self-love, that Warhol would eventually turn into his work with *Interview*. Middle Bohemia was a place that Warhol would turn from most of his life. Koch describes Middle Bohemia as the place where “artists claim[ed] to be distanced from the mainline middle class not by style but by an idea of some sort, some actual belief concerning something other than themselves” (Koch x). Koch claimed that Middle Bohemia served as the place from which Warhol could react to. Finally, Lower Bohemia was the space that Warhol began in, the space where the creative spark of the Silver Factory emerged, and a place that, while Warhol would never own or acknowledge, he lived within for a period of time. What is important to note in Koch’s explication is that Warhol’s primary focus as an artist was to create a communicative bridge between Upper and Lower Bohemia, particularly during the 1960s through an attentiveness to the moral topography influencing his sources of selfhood.

The case for Andy Warhol as a hypermodern and historical artist centers upon the mirror of culture that he identified himself to be in his pursuit of understanding his sources of selfhood. As a communicative prophet, Warhol saw within his historical moment ethical questions that lacked clarity of meaning but not significance. Koch remarked that it would be meaningful to know if Warhol ever realized that in his “incapacities and his fears” was the mirror of culture, and what this project has argued to be hypermodernity (Koch xvii). One cannot engage in authorial intent in understanding Andy Warhol, however. It has been the argument of the ethicists utilized in this project, including Taylor, Dewey, and Danto, that authorial intent does not assist in uncovering the significance of anyone’s work, and particularly Warhol’s creative feud. More specifically, the aesthetic quality of the work Warhol engaged in finds no alliance with the merits of his creative feud. Koch described Warhol as a man to whom the world
happened to, and who witnessed the world has it occurred, granting historical knowledge framed within understanding philosophy of communication ethics in hypermodern times.

Warhol utilized art situated within attentiveness to communication ethics, echoing the insights of Scott Stroud, who adopts the perspective of John Dewey. In *John Dewey and the Artful Life: Pragmatism, Aesthetics, and Morality*, Stroud contends that art is both explicitly communicative and deeply important for moral cultivation, as it attends to actual lived experience. He states that the art object itself does not have moral value nor property, but that the art object propels an experience that is rooted in the present between artist and interpreter. Cultural significance infuses art situated in historical times, as it represents a particular past that allows present interpretation to create meaning. It evokes reflection and unites an experiencer with artist in a communicative exchange. Stroud’s most important argument, for the purposes of this project, manifest in his work when he contends, through the work of Dewey, that art is communicative and evocative. Fulfilling Danto’s requirements on narration and knowledge, philosophy of communication ethicists, such as Stroud and Dewey, open up art as both a necessary medium in communication and a direct access point for understanding about human value and cultural norms. Warhol expanded upon this by directly creating art that attended to hypermodern values as they unfolded, with the realization that an audience member would interpret the meaning in the future. Thus, meaning would be determined outside of his control.

Thus situated, Warhol offered his aesthetic creative feud by attending to philosophy of communication ethics during the rise of hypermodernity. Sébastien Charles offered an interpretative read of Lipovetsky’s work, suggesting that hypermodernity replaced the notion of postmodernity in its uniting of modern values of freedom and equality with the postmodern fragmentation of “institutional brakes” that curtailed individual self-expression and rampant
individualism, generally speaking (Charles 9). Lipovetsky warned of a hypermodern age that lived inherently within a present time, ignoring consequences in the future and commoditizing the past for purely consumptive purposes. He suggests that, in hypermodernity, rather than generate interpretative historical knowledge by considering the past, we simply use the past as a form of mass entertainment. Taking up his call, Warhol weaves together the insights of Stroud, Dewey, and Danto to narrate his historical moment, recognizing that it is a time of change, but constrained by his temporal position. Recognizing those values, one can see his attentiveness to emergent question situated in his art, films, and writings. Koch contended that “Warhol is a way of looking at the world, and all his work in whatever medium manifests that way” (30). As a way to look at the world, one must utilize Warhol in the study of philosophy of communication to understand the background ‘why’ of foreground communicative behaviors.

In *Encounters and Reflections: Art in the Historical Present*, Danto dedicates a chapter to Warhol, suggesting that Warhol’s contribution to art obliterated the argument that the only criterion for defining a work of art relies upon visual elements. Danto says that Warhol’s work is not *tenseless*, as understood in *Narration and Knowledge*, but a specific result of a historical moment resulting in a revolution in all areas of life and existence. He says that Warhol’s most important work came from a time when we “were all living in history instead of looking backward at what had been history” (Danto, *Encounters* 293). In the end, Warhol’s project, framed within philosophy of communication ethics, announces the rise of the hypermodern mindset, signaling the need for philosophy of communication ethics now more so than ever before. An engaged encounter with a historical moment such as hypermodernity calls into question the meeting between human persons, and the ethical assumptions that drive such meaning.
It is through the communicative art and creative feud of André Warhol that our current moment finds access and historical knowledge of the emergent questions and situated cultural norms and values inherent in hypermodernity. However, Warhol’s largest contribution is in the ability he granted to us, in this moment, to gain access to historical knowledge. He was never concerned with the aesthetic judgment of his work; it was meaningless whether one found the art beautiful or aesthetically pleasing. Rather, one celebrates Warhol’s gaze into a hypermodern moment for the inspiration he took from the lives of ordinary Americans. With the finger on the pulse of American consumer culture, Warhol organized communication ethics for the future to interpret and to find and create meaning. Koch contended that Warhol was the superstar that he sought to create in others around him. He became a fixture in that “pathological American dream” of consumerism and celebrity-obsession, reflected upon it, and encapsulated that, living life historical for our advantage in the future (Koch 121). In the pursuit of his sources of selfhood, Warhol granted access to the past through art as communication and moral cultivation, revealing emergent questions that privileged various values and contended with human communication in a hypermodern era.

Under this condition, Warhol pursued a life deeply hypermodern, while simultaneously permitting interpretation present in temporal distance. Warhol’s creative feud is a call to all who study philosophy of communication ethics that we are historically-situated beings. The emergent questions that demand our response are a product of our history. Furthermore, there exists, in a variety of media, those who live their lives historically, to grant and permit access to moments of time and change. In a February 1968 retrospective exhibition in the Moderna Museet gallery in Stolkholm, Warhol contributed to the catalogue by stating that, “in the future, everyone will be world-famous for fifteen minutes” (Warhol and Hackett, 130). While Warhol has gained
recognition in many spheres of life, his introduction to the study of philosophy of communication ethics comes at a moment of need, situated within the continued values of hypermodernity. Thus, Warhol’s fifteen minutes of fame have not yet begun.
Works Cited


