

Schnecken, Schlitzmonger, and Poltergeist Andy Warhol in German — translations and cultural context

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Judging by the art-historical and art-critical reception in the 1960s, it is fair to say that the West German fascination with Andy Warhol was not solely with his work but also with his persona—by way of his published statements.¹ From the beginning, he was quoted in the West German press and art-historical literature. The German translations of Warhol's texts mirror the evolution of the critical reception he and his art experienced in West Germany over the course of several decades. His most famous interviews did not need to be translated to be understood. His first two books to be rendered in German, on the other hand, posed unique challenges, and were advertised as American avant-garde literature. The titles he is best known for today appeared in translation only after his death.

The way West Germans perceived and discussed contemporary art in the 1960s—the conception even of what qualified as contemporary art—was shaken in its foundations by the appearance of Pop art and, in its wake, of pop culture. From the beginning, Pop art's most controversial American protagonist was Andy Warhol, who divided the West German public on the question of whether his art, films, persona, and statements were critical or affirmative of consumer culture.

The reason why this particular question was so important to Warhol's West German audience can be found in the pervasive ideology of the so-called Frankfurt School of critical theory, which paved the way for the popularisation of Pop art. As neo-Marxist intellectuals (among them Theodor Wiesengrund Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse, and Erich Fromm), they developed in their writings and teachings widespread and well-accepted theories of life under capitalism. The School's academic centre was the Institute for Social Research (associated before and after WWII with Frankfurt University and located in the years of exile in New York). Critical theory was formative for West German society of the 1950s and 1960s and had a significant impact on the public reception of art as well. It will be shown in the present paper that West Germans found the philosophical and sociological reasoning for considering Warhol's art as socially relevant in the teachings of the Frankfurt School. Equally, the why and how of the translations of his writings can only be understood in the context of the cultural discourse initiated by the Frankfurt

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¹ The focus of the present text is on the reception of Warhol in West Germany, which reunited with East Germany in 1990. In my research for this text, I did not come across an East German reception of Andy Warhol, which is not to say, however, that there was none.

School. Ultimately, this unique cultural historical nexus is the foundation for the history of Warhol in German translation.

'Pop art', the name coined for the British and American art movement, risked severely hampering its public reception in West Germany.² In the early 1960s, the German verb '*poppen*' was a colloquial term for 'having sexual intercourse'.³ While it is an old truism that sex sells and while Pop art in its first decade did sell in West Germany more than elsewhere, the years before the student movement of 1968 and the subsequent sexual liberation were extremely conservative and restrictive in this country regarding any link between art and sexuality. Prior to the late 1960s, art reception and appreciation in West Germany were considered elite, lofty, and intellectual pursuits. The history of the German translations of Warhol's books then mirrors a democratisation of art criticism and consumption that was initiated by Pop art and that came to benefit subsequent art movements.

The reception of Pop art in Germany

There are no comprehensive studies on either the early art-historical reception of Warhol's art in West Germany or the German translations of his books. However, in recent years a small number of publications have devoted themselves to the reception of Pop art in West Germany, and it is in these studies that Warhol's role in the success story of Pop art in West Germany has been considered by scholars.

In 2000, Jochen Link completed a dissertation at Stuttgart University on the reception of Pop art in West Germany.⁴ This study offers a comprehensive overview of Pop art's reception in daily and weekly publications. While intellectuals and critics were unfavourable toward Pop art at first, it was soon embraced by younger West German audiences who enjoyed the sensibility of Pop not only in art but in their general lifestyle as well. Between 1959 and 1972, Pop art had its internationally strongest market in West Germany.

² Rudolf Zwirner has suggested that it was this idiom that presented the initial challenge to Pop art in West Germany: 'In the early 1960s, the German public was very skeptical of it [Pop art]. Abstraction was still considered the gold standard in art whereas the blunt concreteness of Pop art was thought to be vulgar. Especially since in Cologne the word '*poppen*' was primarily associated with sex.' See Rudolf Zwirner, *Ich wollte immer nur Gegenwart. Rudolf Zwirner Autobiografie*, written by Nicola Kuhn, Cologne: Wienand, 2019, 102. All translations, unless otherwise noted, are by the author.

³ Elsewhere, Zwirner claimed that the association of 'pop' with '*poppen*' meant that the movement to Germans would be 'Fuck art' (Rudolf Zwirner in an interview with Jochen Link, recorded by Link in 'Pop Art in Deutschland. Die Rezeption der amerikanischen und englischen Pop Art durch deutsche Museen, Galerien, Sammler und ausgewählte Zeitungen in der Zeit von 1959 bis 1972', PhD dissertation, Stuttgart University, Stuttgart, 2000, 131). The standard German dictionary *Duden* confirms this colloquial usage of '*poppen*'; see https://www.duden.de/rechtschreibung/poppen_kopulieren_Geschlechtsverkehr, accessed 1 June 2021. According to this source, etymologically, the word 'probably imitated sounds and movements'.

⁴ Link, 'Pop Art'. This dissertation is available in major German libraries as a photocopy but for unknown reasons was not published as is customary in Germany.

Link concluded that while Pop art had passed its zenith in the US by 1965, its popularity peaked in West Germany later. Between Pop art's first appearance and 1972, West Germany saw fifty-seven museum exhibitions devoted solely to Pop art, two of them dedicated exclusively to Andy Warhol.⁵ Of the ninety-five Pop art exhibitions staged by galleries, fourteen focused on Warhol's work.⁶ Public museums acquired ten of his paintings while twenty-seven Warhol paintings became part of two major private collections, amassed by Peter Ludwig and Karl Ströher, that subsequently went on display in museums.⁷ By 1976, according to the catalogue of an exhibition held that year at the Nationalgalerie Berlin and the Kunsthalle zu Kiel, there were thirty-eight paintings and 284 works on paper by Warhol in public West German museum collections.⁸

The critical and public reception of Warhol's art and writings

Reading early West German art criticism of Pop art today, one is struck by the intellectual intensity and gravity of the texts. Pop art was not merely subjected to aesthetic criteria, but to cultural and sometimes political utopian ideas. Pop art's high visibility in West Germany led to discussions among both critics and a wider public over how this new art movement would and should be treated. What should be the theoretical tools for dealing with Pop art? All art-critical writings from that time show that the reception of Warhol's works and persona in West Germany was part of a wider discourse on Pop art and its art-historical and sociological relevance.⁹ Any consideration of the translations of Warhol's writings must therefore take into account the context of this discourse, which was initiated by the Frankfurt School.

During World War II, while in exile in New York, Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer authored the book *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, which was published in 1947 and had a major impact on West German intellectuals in the following decades. Adorno and Horkheimer's study encompassed an art theory that linked aesthetic to social perspectives. From the 1950s through the 1990s, *Dialectic of*

⁵ Link, 'Pop Art', appendix 9.

⁶ Link, 'Pop Art', appendix 20.

⁷ Link, 'Pop Art', appendices 12 and 16 respectively. Karl Ströher, in a much-noted private deal, bought the Leo Kraushar collection in 1968. Peter Ludwig acquired Pop art works individually and (through Rudolf Zwirner) at the auction of the Scull collection in 1973. Other German collectors, like Wolfgang Hahn in Cologne or Heinz Beck in Düsseldorf, had less financial power but bought early.

⁸ See Dieter Honisch and Jens Christian Jensen, eds, *Amerikanische Kunst von 1945 bis heute. Kunst der USA in europäischen Sammlungen* (exhibition catalogue, Nationalgalerie Berlin, Kunsthalle zu Kiel), Cologne: DuMont, 1976, appendices AI and BI.

⁹ Catherine Dossin has outlined the cultural and sociological circumstances that promoted the positive reception of Pop art by the German public, among them Germany's moral debt to the US and its subsequent wish to 'escape from Germanness'. See Catherine Dossin, 'Pop begeistert. American Pop Art and the German People', *American Art* 25:3, Fall 2011, 109.

Enlightenment was the most influential critical standard text in West German academic discourses on art.¹⁰

Not just some, but all West German reviews and critical texts in art magazines reflect their authors' familiarity with the ideas of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* in an ongoing and, for a long time, undecided discourse of whether Warhol criticized or celebrated American consumer culture. Adorno and Horkheimer, in their consideration of 'Kulturindustrie' (culture industry), condemned tendencies that in the 1960s were being described as central to Warhol's art: the culture industry's proximity to advertising, imitation, repetition, boredom, mechanical reproduction, amusement, film stars that had become brands themselves. Much of what was castigated as 'culture industry' was fundamental to ideas associated with Warhol's art, as these two statements from *Dialectic of Enlightenment* suggest: 'Beauty is whatever the camera reproduces'; 'What is new, however, is that the irreconcilable elements of culture, art, and amusement have been subjected equally to the concept of purpose and thus brought under a single false denominator: the totality of the culture industry. Its element is repetition.'¹¹

I would like to argue that Adorno and Horkheimer's ideas constituted *the* matrices against which West Germans (whether they were followers or critics of the New Left) listened to Andy Warhol's proclamations and read his books, which in turn they employed to interpret his art. One West German critic, Andreas Huyssens, remarked that 'Warhol naively praises the reification of modern life as a virtue.'¹² Others would argue an opposing view, which equally was a reaction to Frankfurt School ideas, such as Jürgen Wissmann, who stated:

Warhol, who believes that 'everyone should be a machine', understands the assimilation to his world not as a lamentable subjugation under a dictatorship of civilization. He can even admit that it was precisely objectivity that helped him 'to like things (of our world)', thereby opening up the problem of Pop art to becoming a sociological one.¹³

¹⁰ For a brief historical assessment of the relevance of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* for post-war German intellectual history, see, for example: Christoph Menke, 'Theodor Wiesengrund Adorno', in *Ästhetik und Kunstphilosophie. Von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart in Einzeldarstellungen*, ed. Julian Nida-Rümelin and Monika Betzler, Stuttgart: Kröner, 1998, 5–15. When I was a student of art history and American studies at Frankfurt University in the early 1990s, there was an unspoken expectation for all students to be intimately familiar with the writings of the Frankfurt School.

¹¹ Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment. Philosophical Fragments*, ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, tr. Edmund Jephcott, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002, 119 and 108.

¹² Andreas Huyssens, 'The Cultural Politics of Pop: Reception and Critique of US Pop Art in the Federal Republic of Germany', *New German Critique*, no. 4, Winter 1975, 85. Huyssens early made the case for reading the German reception of Pop art against Marcuse's theory.

¹³ Auch Warhol, der glaubte, 'daß jeder eine Maschine sein sollte', empfand die Angleichung an seine Welt nicht als beklagenswerte Unterordnung unter eine Diktatur der Zivilisation. Er konnte sogar gestehen, daß gerade die Sachlichkeit ihm dazu verhalf, 'die Dinge [unserer Welt] zu mögen', womit das Problem der Pop Art sich zu einem soziologischen Thema

Whichever the stance on Warhol, the criteria to which West German critics subjected his thinking and art were those established by the Frankfurt School.

Rainer Crone, promoter of Warhol as a Marxist artist

The most curious offspring of the leftist West German reception of Warhol's work were the neo-Marxist writings of art historian Rainer Crone who in the 1970s and 1980s devoted several monographs as well as a notable exhibition to the American Pop artist.¹⁴ Like most left-wing writers of his time, he sought to bolster his arguments by referencing the writings of the idols of Marxist ideology, among them philosophers Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Walter Benjamin, playwright Bertolt Brecht, and his contemporary, writer and cultural critic Hans Magnus Enzensberger. Crone argued that because of Warhol's technology-based approach to making art (Crone was referring to silkscreen-print and film), Warhol must be considered a Marxist artist. In his 1972 monograph on the artist, Crone included a brief essay titled '*Marx und Warhol*' by the political activist filmmaker Emile de Antonio, a friend whom Warhol credited with helping him have his artistic breakthrough.¹⁵ In the context of Crone's book, this essay reads like a testimonial from a Warhol intimate confirming Crone's thesis.

Crone understood Warhol to be pursuing in his art a revolutionary aesthetic as propagated by Walter Benjamin and Bertolt Brecht (an approach that for good reasons has not withstood criticism).¹⁶ He proposed: 'Within the context of the North-American situation Andy Warhol can be named as one of the authors who represent a conception of a critically and "politically" potent art.'¹⁷ When

erweitern könnte; Jürgen Wissmann, 'Pop Art oder die Realität als Kunstwerk', in *Die nicht mehr schönen Künste. Grenzphänomene des Ästhetischen*, ed. Hans Robert Jauß, Munich: W. Fink, 1968, 530.

¹⁴ Rainer Crone, *Warhol*, Stuttgart: Hatje, 1970; Rainer Crone and Wilfried Wiegand, *Die revolutionäre Ästhetik Andy Warhol's* [sic], Darmstadt: Melzer, 1972; Rainer Crone, *Andy Warhol. Das zeichnerische Werk 1942-1975* (exhibition catalogue), Stuttgart: Württembergischer Kunstverein, 1976, and *Das bildnerische Werk Andy Warhols*, Berlin: Wasmuth, 1976.

¹⁵ Emile de Antonio, 'Marx and Warhol', in Crone and Wiegand, *Revolutionäre Ästhetik*, 13–15.

¹⁶ For an early criticism of the shortcomings of Crone's methodological approach in his interpretation of Warhol, see Huyssens, 'Cultural Politics', 93–4. Huyssens stated Crone's argument in a much more lucid manner than Crone himself: 'The technical innovation at the heart of Warhol's work is the use of photography combined with the silk screen technique. Because this technique makes the unlimited distribution of art works possible, it has the potential to assume a political function' (Huyssens, 'Cultural Politics', 93). Another criticism of Crone's approach is Siegfried Salzmann, *Kult Star Warhol Star Kult (Kunst und Öffentlichkeit, 2)*, Duisburg: Museumsverein Duisburg, 1972.

¹⁷ Daher kann im Kontext nordamerikanischer Verhältnisse Andy Warhol als einer jener Autoren angeführt werden, die eine Konzeption einer kritischen und 'politisch' wirksamen Kunst vertreten; Rainer Crone, 'Zur revolutionären Ästhetik Warhols', in Crone and Wiegand, *Revolutionäre Ästhetik*, 11.

substantiating this claim proved difficult, Crone resorted to a watered-down line of argument while holding fast to his claim that Warhol's work was the embodiment of Marxist art: 'Whether the artist is aware of this conception nor not, whether it is brought on knowingly or (as bourgeois interpreters would have it) "intuitively" is irrelevant for the meaning and impact of this conception: It is not about the person Warhol but the works he confronts us with'.¹⁸

Disapproval of Crone's approach soon followed. In his sharp and sceptical analysis of 'cult star Warhol', museum director Siegfried Salzmann showed himself to be appalled by Crone's methodological deficits and ultimately by the cult he and others were making of Warhol: 'Crone isolates artist and work from their reality, the American setting, i.e. from their socio-economic base—an especially problematic undertaking in the case of Pop art.'¹⁹ Salzmann's analysis was only one in a group of art historiographic books and articles that started appearing in West Germany almost at the same time that the reception of Warhol and his work set in and that called for a critical analysis of the art and the artist.

As extreme as Crone's hermeneutical approach to Warhol was, even within the West German context, he must nevertheless be credited with publishing some of the earliest monographs on the artist, lavishly illustrated, and with being one of the first art historians to recommend Warhol's early, pre-Pop art oeuvre for serious critical consideration—and not just in his country. Moreover, in his 1976 exhibition catalogue devoted to Warhol's drawings, we find the first translation, in excerpts from chapter one, of *THE Philosophy of Andy Warhol*.²⁰ A German translation of the entire book was to appear only in 1991, to be discussed below. In Crone's catalogue, the passages of the artist reflecting back on his childhood in Pittsburgh and on his early years in New York function as an autobiography of Warhol before he was famous.

Warhol interviews and statements in translation

The first decade of the critical reception of Warhol's art in West Germany was dominated by art-philosophical and art-sociological questions that were ultimately left unresolved. By the early 1970s, the unforeseen art market success of Warhol's work in this country perhaps rendered these questions, if not moot, then at least of

¹⁸ Ob diese Konzeption dem Künstler bewußt oder unbewußt ist, ob sie wissend oder nur 'intuitiv' (wie bürgerliche Interpreten meinen) gebracht wird, bleibt für den Wert und die Wirkung dieser Konzeption unbedeutend: Es geht nicht um die Person Warhol, sondern um die Arbeiten, mit denen Warhol uns konfrontiert; Crone, 'Zur revolutionären Ästhetik Warhols', 11.

¹⁹ Er isoliert Künstler und Werk aus ihrer Realität, der amerikanischen Umwelt, also von ihrer sozio-ökonomischen Basis, bei Pop-Art ein besonders problematisches Unterfangen; Salzmann, *Kult Star*, 9. I understand the extensive art and cultural historical review of the American scene in Crone's 1976 monograph on Warhol as Crone's direct rebuttal to and defense against Salzmann's criticism.

²⁰ Andy Warhol, 'DIE Philosophie des Andy Warhol', tr. Christa von Goßler, in Crone, *Das zeichnerische Werk*, 13–14.

little interest any longer except to a few theoreticians. Pop art had conquered West German museums, galleries, and homes.

In this first decade the West German critical reception turned to three sources for quoting Andy Warhol: interviews by Gene Swenson of 1963 and Gretchen Berg of 1966, and the catalogue of Warhol's first European museum exhibition, held in Stockholm in 1968. Certainly, the most widely distributed and most often quoted of these texts was what we now know to have been a fully reworked interview, conducted and then heavily edited by critic Gene Swenson with the artist that was first published in the US in *ARTnews*.²¹

The Swenson and Berg interviews

The earliest of at least three German translations to appear within the decade of the Swenson interview's publication can be found in Rolf-Gunter Dienst's 1965 monograph *Pop-Art. Eine kritische Information* (A critical information).²² The translator was Marguerite Schlüter (1928–2018), then head of the publisher Limes Verlag that released Dienst's book. She took it upon herself to translate the Swenson interview. A renowned publisher and art lover, she made available German editions of the writings of Truman Capote (a Warhol favourite) and the Beat poets, and even faced pornography charges upon publishing William S. Burroughs's *Naked Lunch*, a novel mentioned by Warhol in Swenson's interview. Schlüter won acclaim for her translations from English, French, and Italian.²³ Since she would have had to pay a translator, her decision to translate the Warhol interview herself may have been a way to keep down costs on the production of Dienst's book as well as to ensure the good quality of the translation. Hers became the most often quoted German translation of the Swenson interview in the years after its publication.

Two passages in Schlüter's translation stand out. The first cannot be anything but a veritable reading mistake: Schlüter translated the quip 'I think everybody should like everybody' as 'I think everybody should *act* like

²¹ Gene Swenson, 'What is Pop Art? Answers from 8 Painters, Part I', *ARTnews*, 62: 7, November 1963, 26, 60–61. For a transcript of part of the tape-recording that was made for this interview, see Jennifer Sichel, "'What is Pop Art?' A Revised Transcript of Gene Swenson's 1963 Interview with Andy Warhol', *Oxford Art Journal*, 41: 1, March 2018, 85–100. For a German translation of this article and the interview transcript, see Jennifer Sichel, "'Was ist Pop Art?' Überarbeitetes Transkript des Interviews von Gene Swenson mit Andy Warhol aus dem Jahre 1963', in *Andy Warhol Exhibits. A Glittering Alternative*, ed. Marianne Dobner (exhibition catalogue, mumok, Vienna), Cologne: Walther König, 2020, 253–68.

²² Rolf-Gunter Dienst, *Pop-Art. Eine kritische Information*, Wiesbaden: Limes, 1965, 126–30, translation of the Swenson interview by Marguerite Schlüter. For reasons of economy, I skip discussion of a fourth, the most recent translation, by Magda Moses and Bram Opstelten, offered in *Pop Art*, ed. Marco Livingstone (exhibition catalogue, Museum Ludwig, Cologne), Munich: Prestel, 1992, 56–57.

²³ Carsten Pfeiffer, 'In memoriam Marguerite Schlüter', 14 May 2018, <https://buchmarkt.de/menschen/in-memoriam-marguerite-schlueter>, accessed 16 May 2021.

everybody'.²⁴ What a curious slip! Yet, it is an understandable one, since Schlüter's version was much more in alignment with the thought of the previous sentence, 'I think everybody should be a machine', offering an exposition on what Warhol might have meant with this often-quoted sentence. Pop art meant 'liking things' (*die Dinge zu mögen*), her translation continued, missing a second chance, provided by a parallel sentence structure, to catch her mistake.

In a passage where Warhol talked about his commercial drawings, Schlüter consciously overstepped her role as translator by interpreting 'feeling' ('those commercial drawings would have feelings, they would have a style') as 'aesthetic feeling' (*ästhetisches Gefühl*).²⁵ Here she seems to have been tempted to interpret Warhol's claim, 'they would have a style', as explanatory.

In 1970, a German translation of the Swenson interview was commissioned for the catalogue of an exhibition of the Ströher collection.²⁶ Unlike in the Dienst monograph, this time the translators seem not to have been chosen primarily for their literary merits but because they were available locally in Darmstadt where Ströher lived and where the exhibition of his collection was held, at the Landesmuseum Darmstadt. Possibly because of the limited space (the text ran parallel in German and English in the catalogue), the interview was shortened in both languages. Cut were the introductory exchange, the commercial-art question and answer, and Warhol's expounding on his 'pornographic pictures'. While the latter two omissions seem obvious choices because they constitute digressions in the interview, the first omission discarded two sentences that would have been of interest to West German readers: first, the reference to Bertolt Brecht, the most important German playwright and theatre theoretician of the twentieth century and one of the icons of Marxist ideology; second, the quip that Warhol was best known for in West Germany by 1970 and that could be interpreted as a follow-up to his mentioning of Brecht: 'I think everybody should be a machine'. Since the neo-Marxist school of Pop art interpreters had hinged many of their arguments on these two references, could it be that the capitalist industrialist Ströher was especially keen on eliminating them from the interview, thereby significantly reducing the fodder for such interpreters?

The Darmstadt translation's omission of the Brecht passage is a refusal to interpret Warhol as an artist critical of capitalism. Having the Warhol interview edited to reflect Ströher's anti-Marxist interests makes sense in light of the teachings of the Frankfurt School. In their chapter 'culture industry', Adorno and Horkheimer had considered the relation of forms of low to high art in capitalist societies and drew a pessimistic picture of what they viewed as the failing Enlightenment agenda to educate the individual. Instead, they observed in various art forms a reification of the individual under late capitalism. In the 1960s, this line of thinking to many West

²⁴ Ich glaube, daß jeder wie jedermann handeln sollte; 'Andy Warhol', tr. Marguerite Schlüter, in Dienst, *Pop-Art*, 126.

²⁵ Dienst, *Pop-Art*, 128.

²⁶ Gerhard Bott, ed., *Bildnerische Ausdrucksformen 1960–1970. Sammlung Karl Ströher im Hessischen Landesmuseum Darmstadt*, Darmstadt: Roether, 1970, 437–39. The interview was translated by Dieter Abel and Ellen Jones.

German critics seemed to be confirmed by Pop art. Accordingly, it has recently been argued that it was Adorno's 'negative verdict of mass culture [that] structured for decades especially the leftist intellectual objections to dealing with pop as a phenomenon of post-war society in no other manner than by rejecting it'.²⁷ This line of argument explains how industrialist Ströher could stay politically conservative — not in spite of, but *by* collecting, Pop art.

Only one year after the Ströher catalogue, in 1971, art history professor Bernhard Kerber included passages, again in both English and German, from the Swenson interview in a monograph claiming to look at the 'theoretical foundations' of American art.²⁸ Kerber's selection centred on the 'I want to be a machine' quip and included the Brecht introductory sentence. Interestingly, Kerber also offered his readers the first (and to my knowledge only) German translation of parts of the Gretchen Berg interview and in addition a passage from Bruce Glaser's interview with Oldenburg, Lichtenstein and a very reticent Warhol, published in 1966.²⁹ Kerber's pickings from these texts far exceeded his own comments, which served to highlight Warhol's insinuations 'I don't want to get too close' and 'It's indifference', respectively. Kerber did not explicitly have to cite Bertolt Brecht for Germans to know that he was reading Warhol's art through the playwright's concept of the alienation effect, a central element of Brecht's revolutionary approach to dramaturgy (the so-called epic theatre). Brecht used the alienation effect in his plays to break with the mimetic and empathic tradition of theatre prevalent since Aristotle and to make the audience critically reflect on the play from an uninvolved and therefore supposedly objective standpoint. This approach is made most evident in the role Kerber assigned Warhol's audience: 'The stance of the uninvolved chronicler leaves the verdict up to those who interpret it, thereby reflecting back on them. Not Warhol, but the viewer, is biased. Diametrically opposed positions are possible'.³⁰ The direction Kerber gave his Warhol interpretation, using his selections from the three Warhol interviews as well as his own brief remarks, was intended to position the artist in a neo-Marxist lineage.

²⁷ ... strukturiert seine negative Bewertung des Begriffs 'Massenkultur' für Jahrzehnte insbesondere linksintellektuelle Bedenken vor, sich mit Pop als Phänomen der Nachkriegsgesellschaft anders als ablehnend auseinanderzusetzen; Stefan Greif, 'Einleitung. Theodor W. Adorno, Résumé über Kulturindustrie (1963)', in *Texte zur Theorie des Pop*, ed. Charis Goer, Stefan Greif and Christoph Jacke, Stuttgart: Kröner, 2013, 14.

²⁸ Bernhard Kerber, *Amerikanische Kunst seit 1945. Ihre theoretischen Grundlagen*, Stuttgart: Reclam, 1971, 213, translator unnamed.

²⁹ Kerber, *Amerikanische Kunst*, 214. Like the passages from the Swenson interview, these texts too are presented in both English and German. The Bruce Glaser interview was originally published as 'Oldenburg, Lichtenstein, Warhol: A Discussion', *Artforum* 4: 6, 1966, 20–4.

³⁰ Die unbeteiligte Chronistenhaltung überläßt dem Interpreten das Urteil, das auf diesen zurückfällt. Nicht Warhol, sondern der Betrachter ist Partei. Diametrale Positionen bieten sich an; Kerber, *Amerikanische Kunst*, 128. Kerber, in his own art-historical writing, mirrored this approach, requesting that his readers, too, use their critical faculties to arrive at their own view of the art presented.

Kerber was one of very few West German art history professors at the time to include contemporary art in their curriculum.³¹ In his defence, he may have felt justified in instrumentalizing his three source texts if thereby he could argue for a theoretical foundation of the art of his day and justify its relevance and validity for academia.

The Stockholm catalogue

For a wider audience it was the Warhol quotations from the catalogue *Andy Warhol*, which accompanied the 1968 retrospective at Stockholm's Moderna Museet, that popularised Warhol's thought and ideas in West Germany. West Germans who did not get their hands on one of the thousands of copies printed for Moderna Museet were able to read Warhol's quips in the German exhibition catalogue of the underfunded and watered-down version of the Stockholm exhibition that was shown at Berlin's Neue Nationalgalerie in the spring of 1969 in tandem with a show featuring highlights from the Ströher collection (including eighteen Warhol works).³² The fact that (in contrast to their Swedish colleagues) the West German editors did not bother to translate the English quotes is an indication that they expected readers to be able to understand them or even to be already familiar with them.

Warhol's quips from the Stockholm catalogue were quoted by critics but translations seemed unnecessary for this purpose. Siegfried Salzmann's 1972 pamphlet *Cult star Warhol* is a case in point. The author headed every chapter with a Warhol quote, starting with 'Thirty are better than one', which he related to Warhol's use of seriality and which, he lamented, made 'the correspondence to consumerism directly visible'.³³ The closing paragraph of Salzmann's booklet had the heading, 'In the future everybody will be world famous for fifteen minutes', taken from the Stockholm catalogue, which he cited to underline his view that Warhol had become the star of the fame he himself had invented.³⁴

'Well, gehn wir' und ich sag, 'All right': Warhol's books in translations

West German art historians observed and commented on Warhol's mid-1960s claim that he decided to turn away from painting and to devote himself to film. In West

³¹ For a report on the reception and treatment of Pop art in German art history departments in 1970, see the article by Peter Sager, 'Pop-Art oder wie tot muß eine Kunst sein, um Kunstgeschichte zu werden', *Das Kunstwerk*, 23: 9–10, June–July 1970, 37–38. Sager's inquiry revealed that many art history professors considered Pop art to be of relevance foremost to the social sciences, not to art history.

³² *Andy Warhol. Ausstellung der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst e. V. (Kunstverein Berlin) und der Nationalgalerie der Staatlichen Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz in der Neuen Nationalgalerie Berlin, 1. März–14. April 1969* (exhibition catalogue, Nationalgalerie Berlin), Berlin: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst e. V., 1969.

³³ ... macht damit die Korrespondenz zum Konsum unmittelbar sichtbar; Salzmann, *Kult Star*, 3.

³⁴ Salzmann, *Kult Star*, 13.

Germany he was perceived as the leading underground filmmaker of the time. It was noted, too, that with his silver clouds of 1966 and the Brillo boxes of 1964 he had made his mark in sculpture. Therefore, when he turned to books starting in 1967 with the release of *Andy Warhol's Index (Book)*, in West Germany this activity too was considered a serious expansion of his artistic activities.³⁵ His venture into writing seemed to West German critics and the public to be a consistent next step.

Index (Book) was never translated into German (nor has the 'German interviewer' who featured in that book been identified), and neither were *Exposures* (1979), *America* (1985), or *Party Book* (1988). The earliest Warhol titles to appear in German editions were *a: A novel* (1968) and *Blue Movie* (1970).³⁶ Both were instantly considered works of underground literature in West Germany. Neither book ever became a bestseller, and they are both out of print. However, *a* and *Blue Movie* contributed to Warhol's image in West Germany around 1970 of being an avant-garde artist not only in the fields of painting, sculpture, and film, but also in literature.

The publishing history of Warhol's more mainstream, bestselling titles in German began only after Warhol's death in 1987 when Knauer, a publisher of popular and light literature, issued a German edition of the posthumous *Andy Warhol's Diaries* (1989), *Das Tagebuch*, in 1989, translated by Judith Barkfelt.³⁷ Two years later, it was also Knauer who commissioned Regine Reimers to undertake the German translation of *THE Philosophy of Andy Warhol: From A to B and back again* (1975): *Die Philosophie des Andy Warhol von A nach B und zurück*. In 2006, on the eve of the twentieth anniversary of Warhol's death in 1987, this translation was licensed — surprisingly, given its multiple errors, without any revisions — to the more prestigious S. Fischer Verlag where it has been in print ever since.³⁸

Warhol and Pat Hackett's *POPism: The Warhol Sixties* of 1980 was not available in German until 2008 when Nikolaus G. Schneider crafted a worthy translation for art book publisher Schirmer/Mosel: *POPism. Meine 60er Jahre*.³⁹ To this day, *Tagebuch*, *Philosophie* and *POPism* are commercial successes in Germany and often can be found in tall stacks at museum bookshops. *a: A Novel* is presently available in English paperback only.

³⁵ For an overview of Warhol's pre-1960 book production, see *Reading Andy Warhol. Author, Illustrator, Publisher*, ed. Nina Schleif (exhibition catalogue, Museum Brandhorst, Munich), Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2013.

³⁶ Andy Warhol, *a. Ein Roman*, tr. Carl Weissner, Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1971; Andy Warhol, *Blue Movie. Der ungekürzte Dialog mit über 100 Photos (pocket, 21)*, tr. Hans Hermann Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1971.

³⁷ Andy Warhol, *Das Tagebuch*, ed. Pat Hackett, tr. Judith Barkfelt, Munich: Droemer Knauer, 1989.

³⁸ Andy Warhol, *Die Philosophie des Andy Warhol von A nach B und zurück*, tr. Regine Reimers, Munich: Droemer Knauer, 1991; Andy Warhol, *Die Philosophie des Andy Warhol von A nach B und zurück*, tr. Regine Reimers, Frankfurt a. M.: S. Fischer, 2006.

³⁹ Andy Warhol with Pat Hackett, *POPism. Meine 60er Jahre*, tr. Nikolaus G. Schneider, Munich: Schirmer/Mosel, 2008. Among other projects, Schneider is the translator of all titles by Slavoj Žižek for the prestigious publisher Suhrkamp.

The avant-garde titles

In 1971 the Cologne-based publisher Kiepenheuer & Witsch (KiWi) added both *a. Ein Roman* and *Blue Movie* to its list, which featured, besides socially critical non-fiction and leftist fiction, American avant-garde poetry and literature. A classic among its 1969 titles became the anthology *Silver Screen. Neue amerikanische Lyrik*, edited by the poet and literary editor Rolf Dieter Brinkmann, that comprised poetry by some of North America's underground poets, many of whom were Warhol acquaintances: Robert Sward, Kenward Elmslie, Dick Gallup, Michael McClure, Aram Boyajian, David Ray, Paul Blackburn, Ted Berrigan, Tom Clark, Larry Fagin, Lenore Kandel, Gerard Malanga, John Giorno, Ron Padgett, Frank O'Hara, Anne Waldman, John Perreault, Peter Schjeldahl, Lewis Warsh, Edward Field, Douglas Blazek and Charles Bukowski.⁴⁰ Their poems were printed both in English and German and were translated by the editor himself as well as the writer and translator Carl Weissner (1940–2012), among others. KiWi also published a tome of poems by Frank O'Hara and, starting in 1971, several titles by William Burroughs.

KiWi viewed Warhol's two titles as fitting for its program of American underground literature. This can be deduced from the fact that they put two expert translators of American literature on the job to translate them: Carl Weissner for *a* and Hans Hermann (1937–2003) for *Blue Movie*, respectively.⁴¹ While the former made his place in literary history with German translations of Charles Bukowski, Allen Ginsberg, and Bob Dylan, the latter translated books by William S. Burroughs, Jack Kerouac, and Don DeLillo.

a. Ein Roman 1971

Andy Warhol's book *a: A Novel* was intended as a provocation right from its title and down to its format. Drawing on tape recordings he had collected in several encounters with his friend Ondine, the book's drugged protagonist, Warhol turned these tapes into a book with the help of some non-professional typists. The result, a mix of often incoherent dialogue and faulty typing, was considered by some simply trash, but by others (including the West German literature establishment) as the literary equivalent to his underground films. KiWi took *a. Ein Roman* into its programme because it regarded the title as a key work of contemporary American literature.

For his translation of *a: A Novel*, Weissner could rely on his familiarity with street slang and colloquial American speech acquired during a two-year fellowship in New York from 1966 to 1968. His use of filler words in German such as 'oh', 'aah',

⁴⁰ On Warhol's connections with underground poets in the 1960s, see Reva Wolf, *Andy Warhol, Poetry, and Gossip in the 1960s*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997.

⁴¹ For biographical information on Weissner, see https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carl_Weissner (accessed on 1 June 2021). His papers are kept at Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach; see <https://www.dla-marbach.de/find/opac/id/BF00036095/> (accessed 1 June 2021). For biographical information on Herrmann, see Helga Pfertsch, 'Nachruf: Hans Hermann', *Übersetzen*, 1, 2004, 7.

‘well’ and ‘yeah’, while startling at first, clearly was meant to make the setting feel authentically American. Weissner rarely arrived at questionable solutions, but occasionally one slipped in, such as this passage attributed to Sugar Plum Fairy: *‘und jemand sagt, “Well, gehn wir” und ich sag, “All right”*, for which he could have found a fully German solution such as: *“Auf, gehn wir” und ich sag, “In Ordnung”*.⁴² Actual mistakes are rare, for instance when Weissner translated ‘campy’ as ‘irre’ (crazy), ‘twinge’ as ‘Knacks’ (crack), or ‘tacky’ as ‘schäbig’ (run-down) and ‘problematisch’ (problematic).⁴³

In most instances Weissner omitted the typographical errors of the original (of which there are many), but he reproduced capitalising, even when incorrect. He also kept all names—except for two: The Mayor (Rotten Rita) is referred to as ‘*der Bürgermeister*’, and, inexplicably, Sugar Plum Fairy in the German translation figures as ‘*Bonbon-Fee*’ (Lozeng Fairy). Overall, the text reads well in German and conveys a good idea of the original to readers, which is a remarkable accomplishment, since the multitude of highly unusual spellings and typographical errors, quirky layout and disjointed language make this book seem virtually impossible to translate.

Some of the funniest dialogues centre around the phonetics of the German-sounding words ‘*Schnecken*’, ‘*Schlitzmonger*’, and ‘*Poltergeist*’. The protagonists, high on drugs, come up with endless variations and puns of these words, causing a lot of chuckling among them. These tongue-twisters offer easy entertainment in sound and in print.⁴⁴ In the translation, Weissner did not have to trouble himself with the variations; they work just the same in German.

The translator took his greatest freedom with the playful and quirky running headers. Only sometimes did he replicate the ones provided in the original. In many instances he picked them himself and most chapters feature a mix of the original running headers and those chosen by Weissner. In some, however, there is complete congruence, as in chapter 4, section 1, for example; in others, there is not one match, as in chapter 16, section 1:

⁴² Warhol, *a. Ein Roman*, 362.

⁴³ Warhol, *a. Ein Roman* 246, 377, 16; Andy Warhol, *a: A Novel* (1968), London: Virgin Books, 2009, 234, 359, 11.

⁴⁴ The variations of ‘*Schnecken*’ (which literally means snails in German), occur throughout chapter 1, section 1. Judging from the context, in which Danish pastry is mentioned, this probably referred to a pastry such as raisin bun (Rosinenschnecke) or the like (Nuss- or Mohnschnecke), a sweet treat based on a yeast dough. The variations of ‘*Schlitzmonger*’ and ‘*Poltergeist*’ are to be found in chapter 6, section 2. In the case of the latter, the typing incorrectly introduced the letter ‘ü’ which is not available on American keyboards and therefore must have been added in the editing process. The dialogue even addresses this (false) use of an ‘umlaut’ (for ‘Umlaut’, i.e., vowel mutation; see Warhol, *a: A Novel*, 132).

Everybody's taking off their clothes	<i>sie sehen alle aus wie Atlantic Beach</i>
the tarture of the businessman	<i>Judy de Pasta</i>
on my ass a whole fucking night	<i>den Taxifahrer blasen</i>
"Duchess, goodnight"	<i>Ah, Gott segne Kate Smith</i>
adio mio filio	<i>Wir machen keine unsauberen Sachen</i>

In the latter examples, Weissner endeavoured to keep up the wild and intriguing style of selecting the running headers from the text on the double-page where they appear.

The due date for Weissner's manuscript was November 1970, which was barely a half year after he had signed the contract with KiWi in June of that year.⁴⁵ According to the contract, Weissner received 10,000 Deutsche Mark for translating *a* inside five months.⁴⁶ While this was a nice sum at the time, the honorarium probably took into account the large volume of the book (473 pages), the brief time allotted for the translation, and its avant-garde character.

In Weissner's papers there survives a transcript of a promotional text for Warhol's novel. A West German public radio station, Westdeutscher Rundfunk, WDR, commissioned it in 1971, the year of *a. Ein Roman's* release. The publicly funded WDR pursued an ambitious program in support of Pop art for both their radio and TV stations. In 1966 they aired the feature documentary 'Pop art in America'. In 1969, the TV station showed on fifteen Saturday evenings an impressive program of fifty works of underground films, among them Kenneth Anger's *Fireworks* (1947) and Warhol's *Mario Banana* (1964). The person responsible for this programming told a reporter that their American partners 'hardly believed that this was possible on German television'.⁴⁷

The manuscript is titled '*Vorspann zu: "Andy Warhol. A [sic]"*', a teaser for a fifty-minute reading by lay actors of excerpts from Warhol's novel.⁴⁸ This teaser featured a few prominent characters from the novel: Drella (the Warhol character in the book), Ondine, Roxanne, Billy and Duchess, who all put in appearances with sappy quips, though not necessarily from *a. Ein Roman*, as well as two speakers who explained the concept and importance of the book as an avant-garde title. Drella's utterances are all from the Stockholm catalogue and were translated into German for the occasion.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ KiWi had signed the contract on 15 May 1970, Weissner on 10 June of the same year. A copy of the contract is held in the Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach, MLA, Weissner, Carl, HS.2013.047, 'Übersetzungsvertrag'. Cited with kind permission of Mike Rettenberg for the estate of Carl Weissner.

⁴⁶ Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach, MLA, Weissner, Carl, HS.2013.047, 'Übersetzungsvertrag'.

⁴⁷ Anonymous, 'Underground Film. Was alles möglich ist', *Der Spiegel*, no. 40, 1969, 234.

⁴⁸ Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach, Weissner, Carl, HS.2013.047. The program was scheduled to be broadcast on 9 April 1971. It is uncertain if the program was produced as intended. But if so, it was very likely based on Weissner's translation.

⁴⁹ Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach, Weissner, Carl, HS.2013.047. The document includes one page, as the headline states, with translations after some of the Warhol quotes in the Stockholm catalogue, a selection of which was used in the radio script.

Speaker 1 starts off: 'There is Warhol wallpaper, a Warhol rock 'n roll group and nightclub show (the Velvet Underground), an Andy Warhol perfume, and now there is also an Andy Warhol novel'.⁵⁰ Speaker 2 cites John Perreault's favourable review of *a* for the *Village Voice*, thereby implying an American appreciation of Warhol's book. Next follows a German translation of extracts from the American book cover blurb, recited, as the stage direction requests, 'luridly with an echo' (*reißerisch mit Hall*). This ends the teaser. The manuscript does not reveal which passages from *a. Ein Roman* followed in the program.

The blurb for the German translation of *a* was identical to the American blurb except for the first few sentences, which clearly sought to market Warhol to the West German audience as an avant-garde author on equal footing with Warhol, the nationally recognized avant-garde filmmaker. The book was a collective work, the text explained. 'Warhol's conviction: **People are so fantastic, and Everybody is always being creative** works surprisingly well for **a** as it does for his films'.⁵¹ The latter quotation especially would have rung a bell with a West German audience familiar with the art and teachings of Joseph Beuys. 'Everyone is an artist' is one of Beuys's most often-cited statements.⁵² The analogy was likely intended by KiWi.⁵³

In 1973, two years after *a. Ein Roman's* release, KiWi recognized that Warhol's title would not carry its weight in terms of returns. KiWi licensed the book to Bertelsmann, then a subscription-based publisher who could offer lower prices to a wider audience, reaching book clubs in all the German speaking countries. To Bertelsmann, it must have been Andy Warhol's by then household name — not the literary ambitions of his novel — that made the title seem an attractive offer to middle-class subscribers.

By 1973, Warhol's *a. Ein Roman*, had attained the status of an artwork in its own right in West Germany. In the Braunschweig Kunstverein show, *Andy Warhol*,

⁵⁰ Es gibt Warhol-Tapeten, eine Warhol-Rock-'n-Roll-Gruppe und Night-Club Show (The Velvet Underground), es gibt ein Andy-Warhol-Parfüm und jetzt gibt es auch einen Andy-Warhol-Roman; Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach, MLA, Weissner, Carl, HS.2013.047, 'Übersetzungsvertrag'.

⁵¹ Warhols Überzeugung [sic]: **Menschen sind so phantastisch und Jeder ist immer kreativ** bewähren sich in **a** genauso überraschend wie in seinen Filmen; Warhol, *a. Ein Roman*, blurb, bold type in the original. The faulty German grammar is corrected in the above translation.

⁵² Jeder ist ein Künstler; Joseph Beuys in an interview with Peter Brügge, 'Die Mysterien finden im Hauptbahnhof statt', <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-13508033.html>, 04.06.1984, accessed 1 June 2021. Beuys had propagated this conviction long before it appeared as a snappy slogan and in print in this 1984 magazine article.

⁵³ As early as the late 1960s, Warhol and Beuys's art and personae were perceived in Germany as parallel and certainly comparable phenomena. A discussion of this fascinating contemporaneity, however, is beyond the scope of the present paper. For excellent considerations of the Beuys–Warhol association, see, for example: Trevor J. Fairbrother, *Beuys and Warhol: The artist as shaman and star*, Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1991; Theodora Vischer, *Joseph Beuys. Die Einheit des Werkes. Zeichnungen, Aktionen, Plastische Arbeiten, Soziale Skulptur*, Cologne, 1991, 50; and Rudolf Zwirner, 'Wie Warhol in Europa und Beuys in den USA reüssierten. Ein Beitrag zur händlerischen Rezeptionsgeschichte. Ein Vortrag', *Sediment*, 3, 1998, 30–44.

which included paintings, works on paper, and films, the German edition of *a* made the exhibition's checklist (no. 18).⁵⁴

For a dust jacket designer, KiWi used the renowned Hannes Jähn (1934–1987).⁵⁵ He adapted the big 'a' as the page-filler for the front cover of *Roman*, and mirrored it on the back and chose black instead of the (not mirrored) red letter in the American edition (fig. 1). Also, he found stylish solutions for the placements of 'Andy Warhol' and 'k&w', the only other elements on the cover.

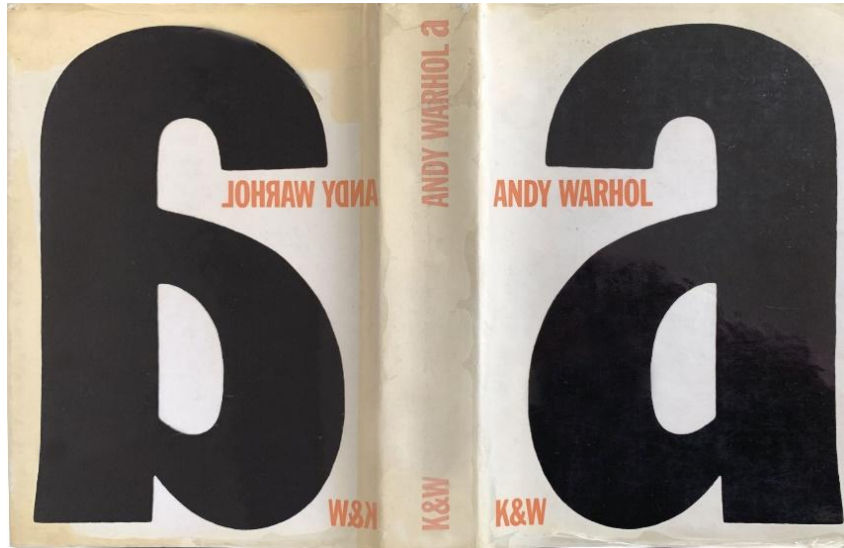


Figure 1 Andy Warhol *a. Ein Roman*, first German edition, Cologne: KiWi, 1971, dust jacket, designed by Hannes Jähn, courtesy of Kiepenheuer & Witsch

Blue Movie 1971

Just as he had for *a. Ein Roman*, Jähn provided an attractive design for the German edition of *Blue Movie* (fig. 2), the printed dialogue of Warhol's film (1969), which in the US was censored because it focused on a couple having casual and unstaged sex. Both dust jackets were based on those of the American editions but carried Jähn's mark. *Blue Movie* appeared as a title in KiWi's *Pocket* series, whose overall design was in Jähn's charge. For *Blue Movie*, he used the same, blue-tinted photo as the American edition, but he had it bleed out to the borders, and he also mirrored it on the back cover. The blurb was moved to the inside of the book. In Jähn's cover, the typography is more subdued than in the American edition, having been moved all the way up to the top border and featuring 'ANDY WARHOL' right next to 'BLUE MOVIE' in black bold capitals in the first line. This design sought to align it with other titles in the *Pocket* series that also made use of photography and were directed at a readership of leftist and provocative titles.

⁵⁴ Heinz Holtmann, *Andy Warhol. Bilder, Grafik, Filme*, Braunschweig: Kunstverein Braunschweig, 1973, no. 18. *Index (Book)* was also on the checklist (no. 17).

⁵⁵ For a synopsis of Jähn's career as a dust jacket designer, see Klaus Detjen, 'Fotografisch: Hannes Jähn', *Außenwelten. Zur Formensprache von Buchumschlägen (Ästhetik des Buches, 9)*, ed. Klaus Detjen, Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2018, 38–45.

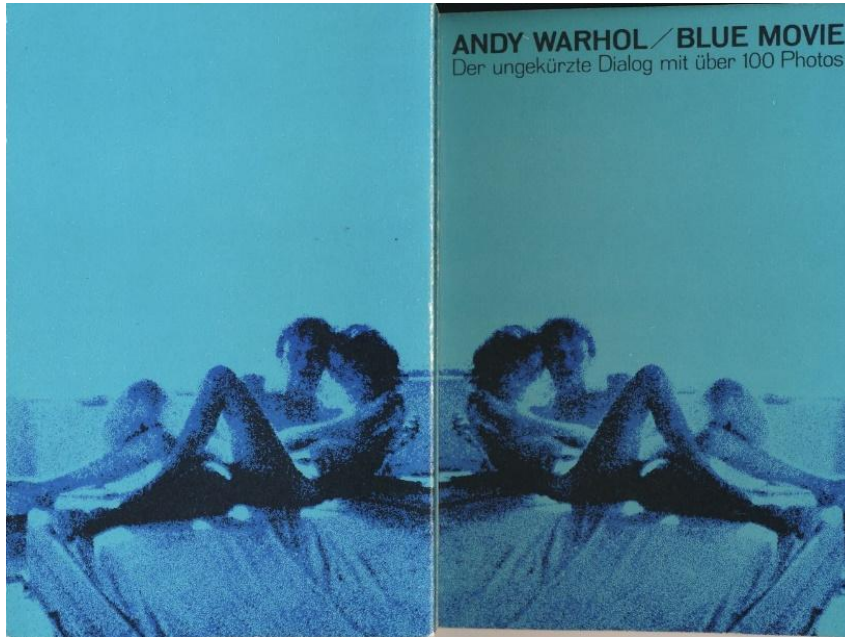


Figure 2 Andy Warhol, *Blue Movie. Der ungekürzte Dialog mit über 100 Photos*, first German edition, Cologne: KiWi, 1971, cover, designed by Hannes Jähn, courtesy of Kiepenheuer & Witsch, © ARS / The Andy Warhol Foundation 2022.

KiWi released the German translation of *Blue Movie* in 1971, the same year as *a. Ein Roman*. The American book launch was in 1970, after the film had provoked a scandal in movie theatres the previous year. By that time, in West Germany Warhol was an established figure of underground film. His films were shown in commercial movie theatres throughout the country and some even on public television. West German movie posters, therefore, could market *Blue Movie* as the latest Warhol ‘sensation’ after *Flesh* (1968) and *Trash* (1970). The West German press had reported on the censorship of the film in New York, which made the marketing of both the film and book all the easier. What the teaser had claimed for *a. Ein Roman*, namely that it was ‘worse than Henry Miller’ (*schlimmer als Henry Miller*),⁵⁶ was a sales pitch that would have worked for *Blue Movie* in West Germany as well. In the blurb for the book (inside the front cover), which was in part a re-write of the one for the English edition, the publisher found yet another, pacifist (and certainly leftist) sales pitch for the volume: ‘*Blue Movie*, says Andy Warhol, is about the war in Vietnam, and its stars do talk about it. More than that, they lead their lives as an alternative to war’.⁵⁷ This description seems to be a promotional strategy aimed at an audience familiar with critical-theory philosopher Herbert Marcuse’s vision of an alternative life of sensual fulfilment.

⁵⁶ Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach, Weissner, Carl, HS.2013.047.

⁵⁷ *Blue Movie*, sagt Warhol, ist ein Film über den Krieg in Vietnam, Auch [sic] darüber reden die beiden Stars. Aber vor allem führen sie ihr Leben als eine Gegenmöglichkeit zum Krieg; Warhol, *Blue Movie. Der ungekürzte Dialog mit über 100 Photos*, Cologne: KiWi, 1971, blurb, inside jacket.

Marcuse was a key figure of the Frankfurt School (both in West Germany and his country of exile, the United States) who, like Adorno and Horkheimer, gave much consideration to the role of art inside a Marxist reading of history. In his influential book, *Eros and Civilisation* (1955), as Stuart Jeffries explains, Marcuse ‘advocated play and art as emancipatory activities that could transform human beings and, in particular change their relationship to labour’.⁵⁸ In Marcuse’s opinion such a history would mean as much the end of class struggle as it would the beginning of a non-repressive — that is, among other things, sexually liberated — society. According to Marcuse, human sexuality was a key element of reconnecting man with nature while ‘advertising, consumerism, mass culture and ideology integrated’ people into a peaceful subordination to a bourgeois life.⁵⁹ To its West German audience, Warhol’s *Blue Movie* then could seem to be a successful realisation of Marcuse’s utopia of a sexually liberated society free from the constraints of capitalism.

The film was taken up in West Germany by Constantin Film, then a distributor of independent movies to commercial movie theatres. As is still the case with most foreign films in Germany and as was done with the other Warhol films released in this country, *Blue Movie* was dubbed. The script was based not on Hermann’s translation but on one crafted by dubbing author Joachim Brinkmann (1928–2015). Constantin Film issued at least three different posters and a set of lobby cards to promote the film throughout West Germany. Because of the scandal at the film’s American release and its almost having been censored in the US and because in West Germany the film reached a considerable audience, the publisher KiWi was justified in having hopes to sell the book well. It was reasonable to expect that the film crowd was also the audience for the book.

The layout of the German edition of *Blue Movie* runs parallel to that of the American edition, with the photographs connecting, in many instances, to the dialogue. To achieve this congruity, the page breaks needed to correspond, and the German text could not be much longer than the original. This consistency was achieved in part by a slightly wider format (approximately one additional centimetre in width) and in part by Hans Hermann’s disciplined translation.⁶⁰ The page breaks of the English and German editions are not completely identical but run remarkably close. The German text is a word-for-word translation that nevertheless works for the atmosphere of the dialogue. A mistranslated word is rare (for

⁵⁸ Stuart Jeffries, *Grand Hotel Abyss. The Lives of the Frankfurt School*, Frankfurt and New York: Verso, 2016, 289.

⁵⁹ Jeffries, *Grand Hotel Abyss*, 284.

⁶⁰ In the archive of KiWi, which is today kept at Historisches Archiv der Stadt Köln, there are only two documents (A 680) relating to the contract with Hermann: the publisher’s request to Hermann, dated 9 October 1970; and a confirmation of receipt of the translation as well as a copy of the money transfer of the honorarium, 2,500 Deutsche Mark (however, it is unclear if this is the full amount or only a part of the honorarium), dated 19 November 1970. These documents indicate that Hermann delivered the translation within one month of having received the commission.

example, ‘rooftop apartment’ for ‘loft’),⁶¹ there are a few typos only (such as ‘*Lifeboy-Seife*’ for ‘Lifebuoy soap’),⁶² and some rare unfortunate choices for interjections (as ‘*ähem*’ for ‘uh’, throughout). However, the merits of Herrmann’s translation prevail. A case in point is the solution he found for Viva and Louis Waldon’s duet of *In the Mood for Love*, where he managed to keep the meaning of the lines, rhyme, and wit all without exceeding the space available to him.

Die Philosophie 1991

Of all the Warhol titles that became available in German editions, the most negligent and faulty was that of *Philosophy* for Knauer publishers: *Die Philosophie des Andy Warhol von A bis B und zurück*. Unfortunately, to this day no other German publisher has seen the need to commission a new translation, one that this great book really deserves. As Patrick S. Smith aptly characterized it, *Philosophy*, based in part on interviews and, like *a*, on tape recordings, is a ‘careful assemblage of his own “readymade” and “found” material’ that has been crafted (with the help of those acknowledged in the ‘Dedication’) into a witty and readable collection of thoughts on pop culture.⁶³

The trouble with the German translation starts with the title. Apparently, the translator, Regine Reimers, worked after the American paperback edition which omitted the capital *THE* in the title, which was prominent on the dust jacket of the first American hardcover edition and was chosen by Warhol on purpose.⁶⁴ Next, a glimpse at the dedication gives a first indication of Reimers’ rather loose manner of translating. She writes, for example ‘Brigid Polk, my beautiful visavis at the other end of the line’ for ‘to beautiful Brigid Polk, for being on the other end.’⁶⁵ Beyond finer details that torpedo Warhol’s wit, puns, and frequent double-entendres, it is the translator’s carelessness that most distorts the English original: carelessness in omitting or adding spacing before first lines, in adding or dropping capitalisation at will, and in generously using filler words where the original has none.

Readers of the German edition of *Philosophy* unwittingly face distortions to the table of contents, and, as a consequence, to the respective chapters. Why, for instance, change ‘Andy puts on his Warhol’ to ‘Andy puts on the Warhol’ (*den Warhol*)? Why translate ‘My first scene’ as ‘my first stage appearance’ (*erster Auftritt*)? Why not use ‘*Nostalgie*’ but ‘*wehmütige Erinnerung*’ (wistful remembrance) for ‘nostalgia’? Why change ‘drag queens’ to ‘*Transvestiten*’ (transvestites)? Why garble Warhol’s lovingly termed ‘good plain look’ as a ‘conventional appearance’

⁶¹ Warhol, *Blue Movie*. *Der*, 10, and Andy Warhol, *Blue Movie: The Complete Dialogue with Over 100 Photos*, New York: Grove Press, 1968, 10.

⁶² Warhol, *Blue Movie*. *Der*, 18, and Warhol, *Blue Movie: The*, 20.

⁶³ Patrick S. Smith, *Andy Warhol’s Art and Films*, Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1986, 183.

⁶⁴ See Lucy Mulrone, *Andy Warhol, Publisher*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2018, 114.

⁶⁵ Brigid Polk, meinem schönen Visavis am anderen Ende der Leitung; Andy Warhol, *Philosophie*, ‘Widmung’. (This and all subsequent citations are to the 2006 S. Fischer edition of *Philosophie*.)

(*biederer Erscheinungsbild*)? Why are Warhol's 'Stars on the Stairs' standing on 'marble stairs' (*Marmortreppen*) in the German edition? Why decide on a redundant bi-lingual solution for the header of the last chapter: 'Unterhosen—Underwear Power' and not choose one? All these decisions only foreshadow the imprecisions, unfortunate choices, or plain wrong translations that follow in the text itself.

What these infelicities mean for the book can be demonstrated in one of its most fabulous passages, Warhol's verbal self-portrait in chapter one.⁶⁶ Here Reimers disfigured 'bored languor' as 'temperamentless character' (*temperamentloses Wesen*), 'enthralled secret knowledge' as 'standing grandiosely above things' (*das grandiose Über-den-Dingen-Stehen*), 'wispy hair' as 'those few bushels of hair' (*die paar Haarbüschel*), 'the graying lips' as 'colourless lips' (*farbloße Lippen*), 'the cords of the neck standing out around his Adam's apple' as 'the hair stubble near the large Adam's apple' (*die Haarstoppeln an dem großen Adamsapfel*). Warhol's memorable concluding sentence, 'I'm everything my scrapbook says I am', is distorted into 'This is how I am, this is what it says black on white in my scrapbook' (*So bin ich, so hab' ich's schwarz auf weiß in meiner Kritikensammlung stehn*).

For a publisher like Knauer to accept such a flawed translation is one thing. We must suppose that they simply wished to add Warhol's book as a biography of sorts to their series of artist's lives (including, as the ad in the back of *Philosophie* indicates, Zelda Fitzgerald, Juliette Greco, Katherine Mansfield, Nina Kandinsky, Marc Chagall, and Salvador Dalí). Their readership would not have been very discriminate when it came to language. But the prestigious publisher S. Fischer who licensed the title in 2006, fifteen years after its first German release, should have taken the trouble to revise Reimers' work or to do better by Warhol and to commission an entirely new translation.

POPism 2008

The German translation of *POPism*, first published in English in 1980, appeared in 2008, too late to leave any mark on the early German reception of Warhol and his art. The publisher's blurb advertised *POPism. Meine 60er Jahre* as 'the authentic artist's autobiography of the late twentieth century—revealing and amusing, vain and intelligent, and, from the first to the last line, POP'.⁶⁷ The book figured as Warhol's memoir of his first decade as Pop artist and was written by him and his friend Pat Hackett at a time when the historicization of Pop art was a *fait accompli*.

While the German blurb's claims can be dismissed as marketing strategy, the first question that comes to mind in looking at Schirmer/Mosel's German edition is: Why had they decided to go with 'POPism' instead of 'POPismus', as the proper German term would be? There is 'Impressionismus' and 'Expressionismus', so why not 'POPismus'? Was it that they wanted the title to sound not universal but American?

⁶⁶ Andy Warhol, *THE Philosophy of Andy Warhol (From A to B and Back Again)*, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975, 10, and Warhol, *Philosophie*, 18.

⁶⁷ ... die authentische Künstlerautobiographie des späten 20. Jahrhunderts – aufschlussreich und amüsant, eitel und intelligent und von der ersten bis zur letzten Zeile POP; Warhol, *POPism. Meine 60er*, dust jacket blurb.

As American as Warhol was in the popular imagination? The colours for the text on the cover—blue and red on white—as well as the photo selected for the cover confirm that this was their strategy (fig. 3): A 1964 photograph by Bob Adelman of Warhol pushing a grocery cart through a supermarket aisle. The cart is filled with Brillo boxes, Campbell's soup cans and Coke bottles, Warhol's insignia. Everything—the man, the art, the book—was meant to signal: 'Amerika'.⁶⁸



Figure 3 Andy Warhol, *POPism. Meine 60er Jahre*, first German edition, Munich: Schirmer/Mosel, 2008, cover, photograph © 2022 by Bob Adelman / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, courtesy of Schirmer/Mosel München.

The translator, Nikolaus G. Schneider, did an excellent job with this book. Generally, he dares to be free in his translations rather than going about his task word by word, and that is often to the benefit of the text. In the case of *POPism*, this practice paid off. Unlike Reimers in *Philosophie*, Schneider observed all formal givens (paragraphs, capitalisation, and other modes of stressing words, and so on) of the original in his text. What is more, he endowed it with a flow remarkably close to the English text. He even achieved the unlikely feat, in some instances, of keeping the German shorter than the English. Consider, for example, the opening line of chapter '1964': '1964 war Jugend angesagt' for 'Everything went young in '64'.⁶⁹ Or: 'Man lernt was, wenn man über sein Leben schreibt' for 'One of the things that happens when you write about your life is that you educate yourself'.⁷⁰ Schneider's is a superior kind of non-verbatim translation, one that would be becoming to *Philosophie* as well.

⁶⁸ The credits incorrectly claim that Adelman's photo dates to 1962 but this is too early since Warhol first showed the *Brillo* series in 1964.

⁶⁹ Warhol, *POPism. Meine 60er*, 113, and Andy Warhol and Pat Hackett, *POPism: The Warhol Sixties*, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980, 87.

⁷⁰ Warhol, *POPism. Meine 60er*, 81, Warhol and Hackett, *POPism: The Warhol Sixties*, 59.

Evidently, what was marketed with the German edition of *POPism* was no longer the avant-garde or underground artist Warhol whom KiWi had tried to push with its early 1970s releases of *a. Ein Roman* and *Blue Movie*. *POPism*, the most polished and artistically least unconventional of Warhol's books, was to present him to a German audience twenty-eight years after its first release as mainstream — as history. With its German edition, Schirmer/Mosel advertised Warhol in 2008 as an embodiment of Pop art, as a desirable commodity, as something universally recognizable and likable, as a personification of America.

In conclusion

Whereas *a* and *Blue Movie* had been considered literary projects and were treated as such by West German publishers, Warhol's later books held an interest for a wider audience, possibly because they promised to reveal something about the man, Andy Warhol. Even though the English originals of *Philosophie*, *Tagebuch* and *POPism* were easier reads than *a* and *Blue Movie*, the change in audience led to the creation of German translations of these more mainstream publications. The fact that it was Knauer and not a more ambitious publisher who took up Warhol's *Philosophie* and *Tagebuch* and that they did so in 1991 and 1989 (the release dates of the English editions having been 1975 and 1989, respectively), when the influence of the Frankfurt School was waning, is an indication that the German neo-Marxist ideas were losing their hold on the general reception of Warhol. The intended and actual audiences for Warhol's titles had changed significantly since the early 1970s. While it was initially intellectuals (art historians, art critics, academics, gallerists, and others), the audience later widened to encompass all those who enjoyed art as a mere leisure activity or as — *horribile dictu* to Adorno and Horkheimer — entertainment. Consequently, the general conception of Warhol's writings had shifted as well: from avant-garde literature to a popular read.

By 1996 the standard German dictionary *Duden Deutsches Universalwörterbuch* explained that the term 'pop art' derived from 'popular art = *volkstümliche Kunst*' (folksy art).⁷¹ No mention was made of its early association in the West German reception with the verb '*poppen*'. In a way, this translation of 'popular' as 'folksy' blends out the historical dilemma posed by the initial appearance of Pop art in West Germany. '*Volkstümlich*' entails 'well-liked', the other meaning of '*populär*'; but it certainly does not suggest a relation to things sexual. This link — and with it that to the critical theory of the Frankfurt School — today is no longer part of either the critical or popular perspective in Germany on either Warhol or the historical movement called 'Pop art'. The shift over time in both the choice of Warhol books to translate and in the meaning of 'pop' echo the move away from critical theory as the prevailing ideology behind the German reception of Warhol's art.

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⁷¹ 'Pop-Art', *Duden. Deutsches Universalwörterbuch*, 3rd rev. ed., Mannheim, Leipzig, Wien, Zürich: Dudenverlag, 1996, 1166.

curated the exhibition and edited the catalogue *Reading Andy Warhol* at Museum Brandhorst, Munich, the first international consideration of Warhol's book oeuvre. In 2016 she published the monograph *Drag & Draw. Andy Warhol. The unknown Fifties*.

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