A functional analysis of Keith Haring's subway drawings

by Charlie Gaillard

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor
of Arts with Honors in Art History

Michael Lewis and C. Ondine Chavoya, advisors

Williams College
Williamstown, Massachusetts

May 23, 2016

Acknowledgments

This thesis would not exist without the advice and support of many people.

Thanks to Michael Lewis and C. Ondine Chavoya for their guidance; to Michelle Apotsos for helping me navigate African rock art; to Guy Hedreen for his fantastic Methods class; to EJ Johnson for leading me into art history in the first place.

Thanks to Christopher Pye for introducing me to Saussure, and to John Kleiner for his lectures.

Thanks to the thesis class for their constant support, and for producing some wonderful and inspiring work this semester.

Thanks to Bill Beckley for his help throughout this project, and especially for his willingness to sit for a short interview.

Thanks to Tom and Peg Gaillard for seeing me through.

Thanks to Cat Dickinson for her keen eye and constant encouragement.

And thanks to Luke Warren for always being willing to listen.

Contents

0. Order

This paper was initially conceived in response to what seemed to me a curious lack of critical writing on the work of Keith Haring. It's true that, during his lifetime, Haring existed in some ways outside of the 'art world'; after seeing a Frank Stella retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art in 1988, Haring wrote that "in [MoMA's] eyes I don't exist."[1] These days (largely due, no doubt, to the lateral influence of the art market) Haring's work may be found in museum collections around the world (even MoMA's).[2] Still, this acceptance has not, I think, brought with it a corresponding body of Haring scholarship—collections like Elizabeth Sussman's *Keith Haring* (1997), Götz Adriani's *Keith Haring: Heaven and Hell* (2002), and Jeffrey Deitch's *Keith Haring* (2008) represent steps in the right direction, but they are by no means exhaustive.[3]

I'm not exactly sure why this is the case, although I suspect it has something to do with Haring's *Journals* (first published in 1996, six years after the artist's death). If anything, they show that the foremost authority on Haring's work was, well, Haring: dense and articulate, the *Journals* constitute a remarkably cohesive record of his work and influences, complete with its own internal bibliography of texts "read/consulted."[4] Still more intimidating—at least to the prospective Haring scholar—is the main thrust of his writing, which seems to both preempt and invalidate future analysis:

> I have nothing specifically to communicate [Haring wrote in 1978] but
> this: that I have created a reality that is not complete until it is met with

the ideas of another human being (or, I suppose, animal), including myself…It has infinite meanings because it will be experienced differently by every individual.[5]

Again and again, Haring returns to this idea; it's one of the most well-trodden themes in his *Journals*.[6] But if we are to take him at his word here, as I am wont to do, it means reckoning with an approach that seemingly short-circuits the scholarly apparatus, stripping away its authority by reducing any "reading" to a subjective response, one of "infinite meanings," all equally valid (or equally invalid). How, then, to say anything truly substantive about Haring's work?

0.1 A note on Haring and 'the obvious'

Before answering that question, some words about why it's worth asking in the first place. Because, one might object, isn't it *obvious* that anyone can think anything they want about any work of art? And it's not as if Haring was the first to say so: in an essay published fifty years earlier, to give just one example, Jan Mukařovský writes that art tends to function "merely as an external signifier for…subjective states of mind aroused in individuals."[7]

I don't argue that Haring's claim is on some level an obvious one. What I do argue, however, is that this claim has a different inflection when expressed by a young artist as opposed to a theorist—an observer. They're on opposite ends of the aesthetic experience. Which is to say, it's 'obvious' that a given message might become scrambled as it makes its way from sender to receiver. But what if the sender announces that, in fact, the message is *supposed* to get

scrambled? At the very least, I think, it should give us pause—it seems to call into question what counts as 'receiving the message.'

Basically, the distinction I want to make—which is a crucial one for Haring—is between the 'obvious' and the *act* of 'pointing out the obvious.' That is: 'obviously' viewers can make what they want out of Haring's drawings; for Haring to 'point that out,' indeed (as I argue) to tailor his images to that effect, is something that warrants close scrutiny.

0.2 Methods

And so, once more: how can I (or anyone) lay claim to a body of work designed to accommodate "infinite meanings"?

It is at this impasse, paradoxically, that my study of Haring begins— basically by sidestepping it. This is not to ignore the individual-reception issue, which is, more or less, the *praxis* of Haring's artistic project, but rather to look at it laterally, not head-on. Following his *Journals*, my approach starts with an understanding of Haring's image as one made with the purpose of 'opening up' to interpretation. Laid out in the following pages, accordingly, is what I've termed a *functional analysis* of Haring's work—a study of how his pictures unfold.

Haring writes that his work has "computer capacities," which suggests what is perhaps a useful analogy.[8] A personal computer does not presuppose intimate knowledge of its workings; it's effective whether or not the user knows

anything about circuitry or coding. Haring's images work that way, too. Their

seeming simplicity belies a complex apparatus—or, perhaps more accurately, a

complex apparatus governs their simplicity (Pl. 1). One can 'use' Haring's

images without understanding (or even seeing) this apparatus. But to parse it

yields, I argue, a number of insights—some of them revelatory—about the

nature of his artistic program.

My approach is, in other words, a kind of 'reverse-engineering' of Haring,

and to that end I've taken up his tools—namely semiotics, a branch of linguistics

dealing with meaning-making and the study of signs. After moving to New York

City in 1978, Haring enrolled in the School of Visual Arts (SVA), where he took a

series of semiotics classes with Bill Beckley (an artist who was showing with the

Tony Shafrazi gallery at the time). They proved to be formative: while Haring's

writings make his debt to semiotics very clear (in his *Journals* and elsewhere),[9]

his intersection with the field has never before, to my knowledge, been explored

at length. This oversight is especially confounding given that Haring's time at

SVA saw both the birth of his iconic visual "vocabulary" and the beginning of his

subway drawings, a series of public chalk works that helped launch Haring's

artistic career. I intend here to start to fill that critical gap; as such, in order to

hew as closely as possible to this formative period, I have decided to focus my

semiotic lens on Haring's subway work (later documented, with photos by

Tseng Kwong Chi, in a 1984 book called *Art in Transit*).

And yet, because semiotic theory is deployed in Haring's work, my own

use of semiotics as an analytical tool raises unique difficulties. I'd like to

acknowledge— if not wholly resolve—some of those questions here, by way of introducing my methodology; an awareness of these points of friction, perhaps more than anything else, has guided the nature of my study.

My approach, focused as it is on one moment in Haring's career (quite literally: he came up with his image-repertoire in a single week in 1980)[10] treats Haring's subway drawings as a complete and 'frozen'—in semiotic terms, *synchronic*—system.[11] But I've tried to stay receptive to the ways his images refuse to be pinned down so neatly. Even now, I've found, they continue to work on me.

My aim is to denote the function of Haring's work without compromising it, which means staying conscious of the status of my text as a *metalanguage*, a sign-system that represents another sign-system.[12] Mine is, I hope, a sympathetic metalanguage—one that allows for the ways Haring's work informs my own, and not just the other way around. That is, my own semiotic construct is (ideally) *complementary* to Haring's, overlapping but not identical; part reconstruction, part invention.

I've organized my paper to reflect this. The section headings are lifted from an enigmatic declaration in Haring's journals: "ORDER-FORM-STRUCTURE-MATTER" (Pl. 2).[13] Here I've turned them toward my own use, as follows:

0. *Order*: introduction; methodological overview; some contextual notes.
1. *Form*: investigation of some salient formal aspects of Haring's subway drawings.
2. *Structure*: parsing the semiotic properties of said images.

3. *Matter*: i.e., "Why does it matter?"—a look at the self-described "social responsibility" of his work.[14]

0.3.   The semiotic moment

In his seminal *Course in General Linguistics* (1916), Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure hypothesizes an as-yet-unrealized "semiology"[*] as a kind of *ur*-discipline—the study of "the life of signs within society," a "general science" of which linguistics would be only a part.[15] Looking back, it's not hard to see (even here, in its moment of conception) why the semiotics is no longer as visible as it used to be: Saussure's grand, totalizing vision was, in some ways, too big for its own good. And, indeed, its edifices no longer stand on solid ground. Structuralism has begat post-structuralism.

Haring first entered Professor Beckley's semiotics classroom at SVA in 1978, at a time when the field's foundations were beginning to tremble. The French critic Roland Barthes, whom Haring read and admired,[16] is an emblematic example. Having written *Elements of Semiology*, a 'conventional' semiotics primer, in 1964, by 1970 Barthes had published the groundbreaking (and rule-breaking) *S/Z*, a study of Balzac's story *Sarrasine* that ran counter the "bourgeois ideology" of the sign as a stable entity.[17] This work (and Barthes's subsequent output), along with Jacques Derrida's interrogations of Saussure, heralded the advent of deconstruction.[18]

---

[*] A French variant of the word "semiotics."

But it took some time for their ideas to truly take hold, and indeed semiotics remained more or less comfortably established through the end of the decade. *Semiotica*, an international journal dedicated to the subject, was founded in 1969;[19] Umberto Eco published his *Theory of Semiotics*, a kind of rigorous scaling-up of Barthes's *Elements*, as late as 1976. As 1980 approached, therefore, so did a confrontation: 'mainstream' semiotics would have to face the Derridean challenge.

One may, as Beckley notes, discern a vague art-historical/political dimension to this trajectory.[20] If '60s counterculture in the United States reflected a kind of semiotics-inflected impulse, a questioning of cultural codes or "myths" (to use Barthes's term, from his 1957 *Mythologies*), then the '70s seemed to ask, 'Where do we go next?' And art started to become ever more abstract, unmoored, Conceptual.

It's rather suggestive, I think, that Haring's early work roughly coincides with both the Neo-Expressionist return to painting and the beginning of the Reagan presidency. In a way, the '80s ushered in a kind of retrenchment, with the avant-garde reembracing physical media as mainstream politics skewed right once more. But things weren't as "clear-cut" as they used to be.[21]

Some of Haring's first public works were made out of newspaper headlines, scrambled and wheatpasted around the city: "MOB FLEES AT POPE RALLY," "REAGAN SLAIN BY HERO COP" (Pl. 3).[22] Awkwardly subversive, in their defamiliarizing and re-presenting of public discourse they seem to constitute a

preliminary semiotic reckoning with the ever-more-diffuse *langue* of a new decade.

His subway drawings would soon follow. While visually distant from these cut-ups (they are largely *sans* text, representational, etc.), I think they represent the continuation of the same impulse. Haring's eyes were still trained on the 'signs' of culture; his art was, once more, a renegotiation of semiotics vis-à-vis art—and vice versa—in a thoroughly 'modern' world.

1. Form

For Haring, the 'form' often supercedes the 'formal.' As a poor student at the School of Visual Arts, he found himself "inhibited" by expensive canvases, preferring to paint on cheap paper; ultimately, Haring decided, material was a "lesser" artistic element."[23] To regard a work's material properties as "sacred" or "valuable" only prevented him from fully engaging with the creative process.[24] Inveighing against painters (like Julian Schnabel) too invested in the "problem of the 'surface,'" Haring writes that

> material should be at the service of the painter, not a prerequisite to the painting itself…All the unnecessary application of wax, straw, towels, broken plates, chairs, utensils and wood constructions, which serve to "build up" the surface, is merely an excuse for not knowing what to paint![25]

This idea holds true for the subway drawings, where Haring's choice of medium—white chalk on black paper—must be seen as primarily a practical one. In an interview with John Gruen (author of *Keith Haring: the Authorized Biography*), Haring recounts the beginning of his subway work as follows:

> It was [around Christmas of 1980] that I saw my first empty black panels. These black paper panels were used to cover up old advertisements on the subway platforms…[and] I immediately knew I had to draw on top of them. The panels were covered with a soft matte black paper, which was *dying* to be drawn on.[26]

And yet, in spite of his seeming disdain for its material properties, Haring's work in some ways hinges on its very materiality. His entire subway project, for example, relied on the fact that a certain kind of paper was used to cover up old advertisements; Haring himself goes on to note that "if it had been shiny paper," not matte, "none of this would have happened!"[27] It reflects a certain opportunism—the subway series was not planned in isolation, but instead came about in response to certain conditions. In other words, the material properties of these works *are* important—even critically so—insofar as they represent a space *physically coterminous* with the artist.

This becomes clear in looking at Haring's line. It is, in Haring's work, a site of breakdown: a dual signifier of the simultaneous presence and absence of the artist, a form that, while indexical to Haring's (physical) hand, also serves as a figure for his artistic project. The line *is* Haring, I attest, in a very real sense; and, like Haring, it is always *in motion*.

In his *Journals*, Haring tends to write the word in all caps: "LINE."[28] While periodically mentioned, he never treats it at length; it seems for him self-evident, somehow beyond analysis. "The line determines the work," Haring writes, but he's largely content to leave it at that.[29]

It reflects the fact, I think, that Haring's preoccupation with line significantly predates the semiotic project later expressed in his subway images. He started drawing cartoon characters, he says, when he as about four years old, making "simple line drawings…with one line and a cartoon outline," and, by all accounts, this remained Haring's preferred mode.[30] "From the first, Keith loved line," recalls his high school art teacher (in Gruen's *Authorized Biography*): "he wasn't too interested in rendering a realistic, three-dimensional drawing, but anything that lent itself to line pattern, he loved."[31] Barbara Schwartz, one of his professors at SVA, notes later that Haring's "strong suit was line, and his weak suit was color."[32] It raises an interesting possibility: that Haring gravitated to semiotics as an expression of his line—which is to say of his nascent artistic ethos—and not the other way around. (In his *Journals*, Haring describes his semiotics course as "timely," writing that its concepts "fit into place.")[33]

In any case, Haring's subway drawings represent a moment of cohesion, a union of the personal and the theoretical expressed in linear form. Its efficacy as the vehicle for Haring's program, I argue, derives from certain theoretical properties of line as well as Haring's own, unique *modus operandi*.

Wassily Kandinsky, of whom Haring was a devotee,[34] writes that line is a "time element," a track made by a moving "point."[35] Which means, in this case,

a track made by a moving *person* (Pl. 4)*.* This may be rather obvious, but for

Haring it's vitally important nonetheless: his line is, first and foremost, a record

of the artist's motion. Noting that he is ultimately "disinterested" in "finished

products," Haring writes in his *Journals* that, instead, he is "more concerned

with becoming involved with the area that surrounds the physical reality of my

body."[36] In entries from his early time at SVA, Haring—interested in cultivating a

"mind-to-hand flow"[37]—describes working with "words and images as related to

muscle patterns" and painting with "three-foot-long brushes…using two hands

simultaneously."[38]

Pushing toward a kind of 'instantaneity' in his own work, Haring quickly

recognized a certain spiritual affinity with the burgeoning New York City graffiti

scene. "The forms I was seeing [on the trains] were very similar to the kinds of

drawings I was doing," he says, noting especially their "aggressively fluid lines,

which were done directly on the surfaces, and without a preconceived plan."[39]

That "hard-edged black line" of graffiti, Haring came to realize, was the same

line he "had been obsessed with since childhood!"[40]

The leap from subway trains to empty subway ads, in other words, was a

short one, and Haring's technique—fast, public, improvisational, virtuosic—

certainly owes a lot to that of early graffiti. But it's worth noting Haring's

connection to graffiti culture, like Basquiat's, has been in many ways

overemphasized; hip-hop pioneer Fab Five Freddy notes that while Haring "got

into [the] whole graffiti thing," he ultimately "wasn't really that much a part of

it."[41] And, indeed, in important ways Haring's line doesn't quite fit the graffiti

ethos. It is both temporal—chalk, of course, being subject to erasure, especially in such a public place—and "tactile," which is to say that his line is more emphatically indexical to its own *act of creation* (its creator, its time and place of making).[42] It is a line that demands to be understood as (Haring writes) an "instant response to pure life."[43]

Kandinsky also notes that all lines "carry the seed of a plane"—in other words, that the *raison d'être* of line is space-making.[44] It bears out even on a purely visual level: as Rene Parola notes in her introduction to *Optical Art: Theory and Practice*, the eye "insists" on ascribing line to the positive figure (i.e., an outlined form).[45] That is, as a formal element the line tends to defer constantly to something else—it *directs* meaning without retaining any. This is particularly true in thinking of the line as a border between two spaces, where it functions in purely abstract terms (to denote "difference").

While this is certainly the case in the subway drawings, where line acts to separate figure from ground, it's also worth noting that the act of creating an image, for Haring, is one of division: to paint is to excise the picture from himself, delivering it to the individual viewer for interpretation.

> Although the act of painting itself is…the result of only *my* own intentions and actions, as soon as another person has seen the painting there is an association and inevitable exchange of thought. The painting is then no longer in my hands. My interest in it is gone for the most part.[46]

Particularly salient for Haring in all this is a kind of two-tiered theoretical play with line as a motion-element, which may be laid out as follows:

(a) line denotes the *motion of the artist*, insofar as it is a record of the circumstances of its own creation; and

(b) line is the site of constant *semantic motion*, constantly redirecting meaning toward the positive element it describes.

These are not separate points. I separate the two only to show that they are, in fact, connected: that, more than either one individually, Haring is interested by the motion generated between these tiers. Take, for example, the 'action lines' that surround many of his figures. The movement of Haring's hand correlates directly to the movement referenced by the line itself—it is 'pure' motion that cuts, unadulterated, through the picture.

That is, I want to conclude this section by suggesting that Haring's line is the site of perpetual *motion* in the form of *collapse*. It is a line that radically effaces the distinction between art and artist, art and viewer—paradoxically, by constantly creating distinctions and then breaking through them. And in this, as will be shown, it is eminently suited to Haring's semiotic program.

2. Structure

A semiotic 'reading' of Haring's subway drawings, which I intend to attempt here, presupposes the merit of approaching his work as a 'text.' Here I take my cue, once more, from Haring's *Journals*—the distinction between words

and pictures (or, rather, lack thereof) being a recurring theme therein. "Paintings," he writes, "can be read as words."[47]

In fact, Haring goes even further, claiming that his images constitute a certain *kind* of text: poetry. To wit:

> Keith Haring thinks in poems.
> Keith Haring paints poems.
> Poems do not necessarily need words.
> Words do not necessarily make poems.[48]

In situating his images within the realm of the 'poetic,' Haring presents them as what semiotician Umberto Eco calls "aesthetic texts."[49] ("Aesthetic" is understood here as a generalized form of "poetic.")[50] The "message" of such texts, Eco says, "assumes a poetic [i.e., aesthetic] function…when it is *ambiguous* and *self-focusing*."[51] If indeed Haring's images work as "poems," then it is by virtue of these two criteria.

2.1. Ambiguity

"Semiotically speaking," Eco writes, "ambiguity must be defined as a mode of violating the rules of the code."[52] By "code," Eco here refers to the attendant systems that render a message legible—it's often synonymous with 'convention.'[53] This notion can be applied in a number of ways: there are lexical and grammatical codes that make words and sentences legible just as there are cultural codes that make certain items of clothing (for example) socially 'legible.' (A t-shirt and blue jeans 'reads' differently than a tuxedo.)

Ambiguity, then, according to this model, arises from a disjunction between a message and its code(s). As might be expected, this can happen at any number of interpretive levels. The "totally ambiguous" sentence "wbstddd grf mu," to use Eco's example, violates "both phonetic and lexical" codes; the sentence "John has a when" is syntactically ambiguous; and so on.[54] (To expand this set of examples beyond the strictly linguistic: one might imagine that wearing casual clothes to a black-tie affair might be similarly 'illegible.') Eco is careful to note, though, that ambiguity alone is not necessarily indexical to an "aesthetic effect," which has as much to do with the code as with the message.[55] That is, in certain contexts, "John has a when" might be read 'aesthetically,' while in others it might be deemed mere nonsense.

This, I want to point out, provides a theoretical ground for some of the ideas expressed in the previous section. Indeed, in some sense, we may read Haring's line as fundamentally *ambiguous*. It is a line, after all, that works against its own demarcating code: by bringing its motion- and time-related elements to the fore, Haring runs counter to the traditional idea of line-as-boundary; instead, he recasts line as a site of semantic 'collapse.' Rather than 'circumscribing' or 'defining,' line, for Haring, establishes a zone of ambiguity.

But while this effect inheres in his line, as I've suggested, it doesn't stay there. The mode of aesthetic ambiguity is, essentially, *movement*: it "incites" us, as Eco puts it, "toward…discovery."[56] That is, it's a move *outward*, it goes beyond form. After all, every line, as Kandinsky writes, "carries within it…the

desire (even though deeply hidden) to give birth to a plane."[57] And so from line to plane.

Still, as with Kandinsky, Haring's picture-plane is more or less a mapping-out of his line: an extension of it, the continuation of an impulse. Accordingly, as with his line, Haring's figures are *animated* by ambiguity: they make and break their own codes in equal measure. This may be seen in their schematic iconicity—his images (people, dogs, pyramids, etc.) are both eminently legible and completely blank (Pl. 5).

This is, in effect, another double move. But now, insofar as it engages the semantic content of Haring's images, it's a move that occurs at the level of *signification*—which, of course, means considering them as signs, i.e., semiotically.

Following Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics*, semiotics typically describes the sign in terms of expression and content, typically referred to as *signifier* and *signified*, respectively.[58] The signifier, Roland Barthes writes (in *Elements of Semiology*), is roughly analogous to what I've here previously referred to as "form": it is the "material" side of the sign that stands in for some kind of conceptual content (the signified).[59] The 'whole' sign, then, may be understood as a new (third) term representing the union of signifier and signified.

Of course, not all signs are alike, and Barthes distinguishes between them on the basis of the relationship between signifier and signified. He calls words "unmotivated" signs, for example, since there is no apparent correlation between a given sequence of letters and the concept they represent.[60] In

contrast, Haring's signs (as with all representational art) may be considered "motivated"—they bear a visual resemblance to what they refer to.[61] These are what are often called "iconic" signs.

But all this (viz., signification) doesn't just happen in a vacuum, as Eco's theory of codes reminds us. Indeed, we may begin to understand the *signifying* ambiguity of Haring's images by looking at their own denotational codes of iconicity. They are, as I've said, schematic—"an indication of the entire object with a minimum of lines," as Haring writes.[62] But, in reducing the signifier to a minimum of representational elements, his figures lose specificity. They are thus *by necessity* outlines: Haring's search for universal clarity (or perhaps 'recognizability') leaves them perpetually empty. Which is to say ambiguous: his figures are at once perfectly clear (thanks to that "tactile, really sharp, crisp" line) and eminently nonspecific, capable of 'indicating' but not telling.[63] Haring's 'dogs,' as he says, look "more like *symbols* of animals as opposed to specific animals."[64]

In other words, Haring's image of a dog (Pl. 6), for example, certainly denotes 'dog,' but only uneasily. This is true in its self-relation—that tentative move from signifier to signified—but also in its relationships with other figures. In his discussion of the *syntagm*, or the combination of signs, Barthes notes that associative constraints tend to diminish as one moves from simple to complex units of language.[65] For example, letters may only be arranged in a relatively prescribed way; words in a sentence less so; and sentences in a paragraph least of all. Haring's image-combinations exploit this freedom. If his image of a

dog is, as I've described, rather 'uneasy,' combining it with other forms—human figures, pyramids, flying saucers—only makes it more so (Pl. 7).

That is, Haring nurtures the ambiguity of his image by making its syntagmatic associations insistently opaque, working against the codes of representational art. His 'zapping' motif (again, Pl. 7), which shows up in many of the subway drawings, is a paradigmatic example. Depicted as a current of lines from one figure to another, as a relation it is both direct and non-specific. Are these rays harmful? Helpful? Both? Haring himself is rather unhelpful here, describing his 'zapping' only as a transfer of power that 'activates' the receiver.[66]

In other words, not only Haring's figures but their *syntagmatic relations* are ultimately 'empty' (ambiguous). In the same way that his signifiers can only 'indicate' their signifieds, these relationships are somehow schematized, serving as generalized stand-ins for various modes of interaction. One might look, by way of example, at the 'sound lines' that Haring adds to the mouths of his dog-images to indicate 'barking': as in a silent cartoon, these lines are, in a sense, meant only to depict *themselves*— signifying *that a sound is being made*, instead of the particular quality or content of that sound. In such a way do the interactions between Haring's figures signify 'interaction' more than anything else.

And yet the fact of their ambiguity mobilizes our response to Haring's images. His juxtapositions charge the frame with latent meaning; his figures are *all* 'zapped,' 'activated' by their own opacity. Haring deliberately introduces

these lacunae into the signifying mechanism, in other words, to induce an aesthetic response.

If their signification thus seems incomplete (broken) at the realm of denotation, Haring's images then "urge" us, as Eco describes, "to an interpretive effort."[67] This means moving from the realm of the syntagm into that of (in Barthes's terms) the *system*, or the set of associations attendant to any series of signs.[68] If the syntagm is a "chain" of signifiers, Barthes writes, akin to the 'horizontal axis' of language, the system is the corresponding 'vertical axis'—a series of related "fields" connected by various formal (phonetic/visual) or semantic affinities.[69]

This act of invoking the system, or drawing on these sets of associations to synthesize a more complete signification, is called *connotation*.[70] It functions by 'taking over' a preexisting sign, relegating it to the expression plane of a new one. For example, to stick with Haring's dog-image, one might say it *denotes* 'dog' but *connotes* 'home,' or 'loyalty,' or 'traditional values'—or any number of other, associated meanings. Barthes illustrates the concept as follows, the lower level being denotation ('dog') and the upper connotation ('loyalty,' e.g.):

Signifier		Signified
Sr.	Sd.	

Fig. 1

As Barthes notes, this is a fairly ubiquitous cultural mechanism. "Society," he writes, "continually develops, from the first system which human language supplies to it, second-order significant systems."[71] Signs are constantly appropriated and reappropriated: a brand name might connote 'luxury,' for example; a book might connote 'literature'; a tattoo 'rebellion'; and so on. In all these examples, and as Barthes points out, the "signified of connotation…is at once general, global and diffuse."[72]

This is particularly salient in the case of Haring's images. Generally speaking, connotation operates independently of the 'original' sign—a book 'means' something on its own, for example, before being repurposed as a signifier of 'literature.' But Haring's drawings, 'empty' as they are, seem to *actively* court a connoted meaning. "I am merely the middleman," he writes:

> I gather information, or *receive* information that comes from other sources. I translate that information through the use of images and objects into a physical form. The duty is then out of my hands.[73]

Or, as he says elsewhere, "I am constantly being bombarded with influences from my environment…I only wish to throw some of them back."[74]

2.2. Self-focusing

Thus Haring's images are, in some sense, *constructed* as culture experiencing itself (Pl. 8). In this way they function as a "self-focusing" text: this is, though, I want to suggest, an atypical aesthetic experience insofar as it is somehow short-circuiting. The drawings less 'focus one's attention' on their

physical presence (the normal aesthetic function, according to Eco) than on their attendant interpretive mechanisms.[75] Haring's drawings themselves, he writes,

> are not as important as the interaction between people who see them and the ideas they take with them…—the thoughts and feelings I have evoked from their consciousness as a result of their contact with my thoughts and feelings as seen *through* the physical reality of images/objects.[76]

They perform a quasi-mirroring function. Haring's way of working—as noted earlier—binds him thoroughly to the *form* of the work, an act that binds this viewer just as thoroughly to its *content*. This sets up the artist as our analogue: Haring's creative process (in making the work) reflects ours (in interpreting it).

3. Matter

"In the midst of a complex and sophisticated society, the cave drawing was making a comeback," runs the voiceover at the beginning of *Drawing the Line*, a 1990 made-for-TV documentary about Haring.[77] A rather facile formulation, maybe, but one that I think is absolutely true—at least in a manner of speaking. Indeed, the comparison it evokes (Haring with early art) is crucial in understanding the function of his subway work.

The *Journals* leave no doubt that early art loomed large in Haring's imagination. It is old forms that garner his unalloyed admiration—Chinese and Japanese calligraphy,[78] Egyptian hieroglyphs.[79] "There is a lot to be learned," he

says, from ancient symbolism.[80] Haring's writing evinces a certain nostalgia, a sense that, by evoking such forms, he is trying to reach *beyond* the apparatus of a 'complex and sophisticated society' in order to access something more pure—a kind of "basic structure."[81]

This sense, rather understandably, is paired with a profound suspicion of the 'modern.' Haring perceives a threat, or at least a challenge, in the accelerating pace of technological growth:

> The silicon computer chip has become the new life form…If the computer continues to make the important decisions, store information beyond our mental capabilities, and program physical things (machines), what is the role of the human being?[82]

Even if this kind of paranoia wasn't exactly uncommon in the Cold War era, Haring's aversion to technology and modernity was particularly acute. The devastating 1979 nuclear meltdown at Three Mile Island, as Natalie Phillips notes in "The Pop Apocalyptic," occurred less than fifty miles from Haring's home town of Kutztown, Pennsylvania,[83] and left clouds of "radioactive steam" drifting over the Susquehanna Valley for days afterward.[84] Julia Gruen, Haring's former assistant (and now executive director of the Keith Haring Foundation), remembers that the event shook him deeply: "Haring always made a point about how close he was to Three Mile Island and how scary it was."[85] Later that year, Haring participated in the first antinuclear rally in Washington, D.C.[86]

Enigmatic as his images are, it's hard not to trace some of Haring's iconography—pyramids, flying saucers, glowing rods—back to these anxieties.

(In his work, he notes in an aside, "there is possibly…more meaning representationally than I would like to admit.")[87] One particularly pointed image (Pl. 9) shows a monstrous creature dragging a crawling figure on a leash, exhaling (in a speech bubble) a Bohr-esque diagram of an atom; in another panel, the creature is revealed to be a mask-wearing man. Dogs are shown barking around his feet. Other pictures hint at similar themes: a mushroom cloud on a television screen, pyramid-worshippers, a man being electrocuted.

I point all this out not in an attempt to 'fix' the meaning of any one image, but merely to suggest that Haring's images, despite their seeming 'timelessness,' are invested in their own temporality. It's worth noting here, I think, that text in the subway drawings (when it appears) typically serves to indicate the current year: "MORE TO SEE IN 83," "HAPPY NEW YEAR NEW YORK CITY 83" (Pl. 10), "USA 84," etc. A handful of Haring's images even depict clocks outright. These time-elements condition each image's system of associations; rendered (outlined) and inserted into the picture plane, time becomes a semiotic unit. How do these pictures interact with their age?

But we already know the answer, thanks to the TV documentary's helpful voiceover. Haring's pictures, as reincarnated "cave drawings," try to move *past* the *present*. This is, of course, *the* Haringian move: a 'breaking-through.' Haring's line stamps his drawings as "instantaneous," that is, *de facto* 'modern'; his forms, in evoking the past, question that classification in the same breath.

3.1   Haring and the 'primitive'

But what kind of past is being evoked? Haring's images (with the exception of his pyramids) aren't identifiably indebted to any specific traditions, and his view of early cultures—as expressed in the *Journals*—is schematic and totalizing, completely suffused by his own distaste for the 'modern.' Ancient peoples are imagined to have had a "rich, meaningful existence," unlike Haring's "deluded" contemporaries.[88]

His looking-back is a primitivism: a mutually constitutive relation of "binary opposition," as Mark Antliff and Patricia Leighten note in *Critical Terms for Art History*.[89] Haring uses the word himself on multiple occasions,[90] writing, for example, that his art "is associated with…so-called 'primitive' cultures by their use of linear, two-dimensional, and even decorative elements."[91]

"Primitive" is usually paired with a qualifier in the *Journals;* the phrase "so-called 'primitive'" appears twice, and he notes at one point that he "hates that word."[92] Still, tentative though it may be, Haring's primitivism should not go uninterrogated; in fact, looking at his project in those terms yields some valuable insights.

Chief among these is the fact that "primitive" itself, as Antliff and Leighten note, may be described in semiotic terms: as a label, it "empties its referent of historical contingency and cultural specificity and instead subsumes it within an unchanging 'nature.'"[93] That is, it's an act of connotation (following Barthes)—but one that plays out on a societal scale. To see Haring's pictures as a kind of

enacted primitivism, then, is to see them not as 'timeless' but as cultural artifacts.

The above mechanism, I want to draw out, operates more or less along what might be termed the time-axis. This is, I think, the general nature of Haring's primitivism. His is a temporal Othering: the opposition is 'then' versus 'now,' less (as is often the case with primitivist discourse) 'Western' versus 'non-Western.' In fact, Haring seems to invoke the temporal binary as a *universalizing* measure: more than anything, the past seems to signify, for him, a time of paradisiac unity. "There is a common denominator that runs through all time, all peoples," he claims:

> People are the same (or similar) all over the world…[they are] different only because people are committed to the idea of 'different' cultures and different 'nationalistic values.'[94]

It's a notion that helps round out the implications of Haring's primitivism. His forms trade on the temporal connotations of 'primitive' art in order to access the "common denominator" of the human condition—which, of course, exists only as a figment of our (modern) cultural imagination.

3.2. A semiotics of prehistory

Still, Haring's work is not altogether divorced from a certain historical sense; they may be cultural artifacts, in other words, but culture has its own history.

The 'primitive,' as Haring deploys it, tends to connote 'prehistoric,' or more properly 'pre-' or 'proto-linguistic.' "I am intrigued with the shapes people choose as their symbols to create a language," he writes.[95] Haring's semiotic project, I argue, echoes the *original* semiotic project—the original sign-making. While themselves thoroughly 'modern' products, as noted above, his subway images—marked on the walls of today's 'cave'— are positioned as functionally analogous to the efforts of ancient man.

Indeed, Margaret Conkey, in "Materiality and meaning-making in the Palaeolithic arts," describes such proto-linguistic images as the forerunners of Eco's 'aesthetic text': they are, she writes, interpretational loci in which "the rule breaking-roles of ambiguity and self-reference are fostered and organized."[96]

As a way of materializing (individual) experience, and thus opening it up to collective determination, Conkey claims that these early pictures are properly understood not as "the 'mere embroidery' of reality, but [as] a way of knowing it, of coping with it, and of (potentially) changing it."[97] To put it another way, their function was not merely language-making but world-making, *culture*-making.

Rather understandably, then, these ancient images follow closely Barthes's notion of the cultural "myth," his term for a kind of systemic mode of connotation that operates within established societies. As with Barthes's myths, the purpose of such symbols is not to "fix" meanings but to "galvanize" them,[98] continually establishing and breaking through various levels of signification. As new meanings are linked to the images, each image is (following Barthes) constantly re-*formed*, that is, recast as the signifier in a new sign. This

accordion-like process of expansion and collapse that leaves them less empty

than 'open,' charged with latent associations. "Truth to tell," Barthes writes,

> what is invested in the [myth] is less reality than a certain knowledge of
> reality; in passing from the meaning to the form, the image loses some
> knowledge; the better to receive the knowledge in the concept. In actual
> fact, the knowledge contained in a mythical concept is confused…it is a
> formless, unstable, nebulous condensation, whose unity and coherence
> are above all due to its function.[99]

"In this sense," he concludes, "the fundamental character" of the

myth—and, I want to add, the proto-linguistic image—"is to be *appropriated*."[100]

With each new (re)appropriation, the codes at work in the process of

signification become more and more apparent, their "semiotic possibilities"

more visible.[101] In consequence, as Terence Hawkes notes in *Structuralism and

Semiotics*, the viewer/reader is "forced…to 'rethink' their whole arrangement

and, ultimately, that of the reality they encode."[102]

In effect, then, what we may discern in the drawings of early man is the

original instantiation of a cultural process that continues unabated today.

Indeed, in a certain sense the continuous flux of signification *is* culture: by

externalizing—materializing—an iconography of the world as they saw it, these

ancient artists provided a site for the collective negotiation of a social 'reality.'

I want to note, too, that this whole process—a carefully marshaled

ambiguity meant to "galvanize" meanings and produce discourse—engages the

notion of iconicity.[103] Archaeologist Michael Herzfeld, drawing on Eco's

discussion of the subject in *A Theory of Semiotics*, writes that, while not

"*obviously* arbitrary," iconic relations,

> because they either 'look natural' or can be 'naturalized'…lend
> themselves with particular ease to totalizing cultural ideologies. It is not
> that iconic relationships are actually less arbitrary than, say, symbolic
> ones; they are, however, iconic in virtue of their *appearing* to be so.[104]

"Iconicity," he observes, "is a cultural relationship"—that is, the process of

cultural negotiation extends to the very form of these early images.[105] It is for

this reason that such drawings, despite their 'ambiguity,' are largely

representational and not abstract; roughly the same, I argue, is true for Haring's

work.

3.3. Don't call it a comeback…

By way of returning to Haring, I want to lay out some particularly salient

points from the previous discussion (of what I've referred to as proto-linguistic

art—see 3.2). As a semiotic project, these early works evince a number of

marked similarities to the way I've thus far characterized Haring's subway

drawings, namely in

(a) their status as an 'aesthetic text' (à la Eco) and cultivation of ambiguity,
    aimed at
(b) 'opening up to' and mobilizing meanings;
(c) 'rule-breaking' mediated through materiality (a process of re-formation,
    as with Barthes's myths); and
(d) self-reference that manifests as a form of cultural discourse.

Haring's work trades on the myth of the 'primitive' itself in order to access (or at least connote) a moment in which the codes of culture had yet to be realized. Again and again, his *Journals* describe the search for something *fundamental*, an image that can cut through to anybody, anywhere:

> There is within all forms a basic structure, an indication of the entire object with a minimum of lines, that becomes a symbol…Possibly that is why I am so inclined to use calligraphic images, hieroglyphic forms, basic structures that are common to all people of all times.[106]

This is not to claim that Haring's subway drawings are meant to simply replicate the culture-making enterprise of early artists. Instead, they expand it. In invoking the 'primitive' vis-à-vis the 'modern,' Haring extends the "rule-breaking" mode of the aesthetic text into the temporal realm: his images bring culture face-to-face with its own origins, which is to say its own substance, the manner of meaning-making that constitutes its very *form*.

In this I discern the core didactic or *functional* element of Haring's work, which, as always, is in the service of some kind of 'collapse.' His introduction to *Art in Transit* is instructive in this regard:

> The [subway] drawings are designed to provoke people to think and use their own imagination. They don't have exact definitions but challenge the viewer to assert his or her own ideas and interpretations. Sometimes, people find this uncomfortable, especially because the drawings are in a space usually reserved for advertisements, which tell you exactly what to think.[107]

Pointedly interspersed between the dry signifiers of everyday life, Haring's drawings function in the service of nothing less than a radical

expansion of the aesthetic experience. If Pop sought to bring the mundane into the art 'realm,' Haring seeks to reverse that current—to charge the mundane with artistic energy (to "zap" it, activate it, like one of his flying saucers).

I call his work 'radical.' I mean this in comparison to the context in which it was made—that is, public spaces dominated by desiccated signs, stale signifiers, pictures that "tell you exactly what to think." But in a broader sense, I want to make clear, Haring's images aren't radical at all—which, I think, is the point. The substance of culture, after all, as Conkey points out, is *motion*, a process of "unlimited semiosis," a continuous unspooling of meaning(s). "Those who engage with…images," she writes (adding that she means "images in the widest possible sense"), "not only begin to 'see the world' differently, but learn how to create a new world."[108] Or, in Haring's case, an old world.

3.4. Coda

When I asked Bill Beckley about Haring, he said he remembered Haring's eyebrows the most. They were "always raised in half circles," Beckley told me, "as if he was permanently amazed."[109]

I have my own small 'myth' about Haring. I like to imagine that his eyes were open just a little bit wider because he saw just a little bit more, something—down in the subway, among the people, the crowds, the noise— that he couldn't quite articulate, at least not with words. From an entry in Haring's *Journals*, November, 1979:

Art experience as opposed to daily life—if artists expand those
boundaries—these ways of seeing (and they are) to include daily life—if
artists see life—experience life as art—if the qualities called art become
the same qualities of a special experience of daily life—are people who
experience this special thing—are they having an art experience?[110]

I think Haring's drawings ask us that question, too. But only by showing us
what was already there.

Endnotes

[1] Keith Haring, *Journals* (New York, NY: Viking Penguin, 1996), 276.

[2] Ibid., 401.

[3] Elizabeth Sussman, *Keith Haring* (New York, NY: the Whitney Museum of American Art and Bullfinch Press, 1997); Götz Adriani, *Keith Haring: Heaven and Hell* (Ostfildern: Hatje Katz, 2001); Jeffrey Deitch, *Keith Haring* (New York, NY: Rizzoli, 2008).

[4] Haring, *Journals*, 90.

[5] Ibid., 18-19.

[6] cf. Haring, *Journals*, 17; 37; 46; 48; 117.

[7] Jan Mukařovský, "Art as Semiotic Fact," in *Semiotics of Art*, ed. Ladislav Matejka and Irwin R. Titunik (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1984), 4.

[8] Haring, *Journals*, 136.

[9] See: ibid., 60, 90, 93, 95, 129; Keith Haring, *Art in Transit: Subway Drawings* (New York, NY: Harmony Books, 1984), iv; as qtd. in John Gruen, *Keith Haring: the Authorized Biography* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1991), 54.

[10] Robert Farris Thompson, "Introduction," in Haring, *Journals*, xx.

[11] Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. Wade Baskin (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2011), 81.

[12] Roland Barthes, *Elements of Semiology*, trans. Annette Lavers and Colin Smith (New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 1977), 92.

[13] Ibid., 64.

[14] Ibid., 128.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Haring, *Journals*, 91.

[17] Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: an Introduction* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 121.

[18] Ibid., 119.

[19] Walter de Gruyter Foundation, "Semiotica," 2016, <http://www.degruyter.com/ view/ j/semi>, accessed April 19, 2016.

[20] William Beckley, interview by author, New York, NY, April 8, 2016.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Gruen, *Authorized Biography*, 57.

[23] Haring, *Journals*, 21-22.

[24] Ibid., 22.

[25] Ibid, 159-160.

[26] Gruen, *Authorized Biography*, 68.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Haring, *Journals*, 128.

[29] Ibid., 158.

[30] Gruen, *Authorized Biography*, 9.

[31] Ibid., 18.

[32] Ibid., 38.

[33] Haring, *Journals*, 60.

[34] Ibid., 59.

[35] Wassily Kandinsky, *Point and Line to Plane* (New York, NY: Dover Publications, 1947), 65; 114.

[36] Haring, *Journals,* 40.

[37] Gruen, *Authorized Biography*, 44.

[38] Ibid., 44-46.

[39] Ibid., 44.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid., 67.

[42] Ibid., 68.

[43] Haring, *Journals*, 14.

[44] Kandinsky, *Point and Line*, 94.

[45] Rene Parola, *Optical Art: Theory and Practice* (New York, NY: Beekman House, 1969), 20.

[46] Haring, *Journals*, 46.

[47] Ibid., 13.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Umberto Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1976), 262.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid., 32.

[54] Ibid., 262.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid., 263.

[57] Kandinsky, *Point and Line*, 95.

[58] de Saussure, *Linguistics*, 65.

[59] Barthes, *Semiology*, 47.

[60] Ibid., 50.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Haring, *Journals*, 48.

[63] Gruen, *Authorized Biography*, 68.

[64] Ibid., 57 [emphasis added].

[65] Barthes, *Semiology*, 70.

[66] Gruen, *Authorized Biography*, 57.

[67] Eco, *Semiotics*, 263.

[68] Barthes, *Semiology*, 71.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid., 89.

[71] Ibid., 90-91.

72 Ibid., 91.
73 Haring, *Journals*, 48.
74 Ibid., 40.
75 Eco, *Semiotics*, 263.
76 Haring, *Journals*, 40 [emphasis added].
77 *Drawing the Line: A Portrait of Keith Haring*, directed by Elizabeth Aubert (1990; Carversville, PA: Kultur).
78 Gruen, *Authorized Biography*, 44.
79 Haring, *Journals*, 48.
80 Ibid.
81 Ibid.
82 Ibid., 23.
83 Natalie Phillips, "The Pop Apocalyptic: Keith Haring's and Kenny Scharf's Remaking of Contemporary Religious Art" (dissertation, University of California, Irvine, 2009), 30.
84 Susan Reed, "Ten Years Later, Nuclear Ghosts Still Haunt Three-Mile Island," *People*, April 1979.
85 Ibid.
86 Ibid.
87 Haring, *Journals*, 48.
88 Ibid., 213-214.
89 Mark Antliff and Patricia Leighten, "Primitive," in *Critical Terms for Art History*, ed. Robert S. Nelson and Richard Shiff (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 170.
90 See: Haring, *Journals*, 128; 129; 213; 244; 357.
91 Ibid., 244.
92 Ibid., 128.
93 Antliff and Leighten, "Primitive," 170.
94 Haring, *Journals*, 130.
95 Haring, *Journals*, 48.
96 Margaret Conkey, "Materiality and meaning-making in the Palaeolithic 'arts,'" in *Becoming Human: Innovation in Prehistoric Material and Spiritual Culture*, ed. Colin Renfrew and Iain Morley (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 184.
97 Ibid., 185.
98 Ibid.
99 Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Richard Howard and Annette Lavers (New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 2012), 228-229.
100 Ibid., 229.
101 Terence Hawkes, *Structuralism and Semiotics* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2003), 117.
102 Ibid.
103 Conkey, "Materiality," 184.

[104] Michael Herzfeld, "Meta-patterns: archaeology and the uses of evidential scarcity," in *Representations in Archaeology*, ed. Jean-Claude Gardin and Christopher S. Peebles (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992), 68-69.

[105] Ibid., 69.

[106] Haring, *Journals*, 48.

[107] Haring, *Art in Transit*, v.

[108] Conkey, "Materiality," 184.

[109] Beckley, interview, April 8, 2016.

[110] Haring, *Journals*, 84.

Plates

[Not available in the online version.]

Works cited

Adriani, Götz. *Keith Haring: Heaven and Hell.* Ostfildern: Hatje Katz, 2001.

Antliff, Mark and Patricia Leighten. "Primitive." In *Critical Terms for Art History*.

      Edited by Robert S. Nelson and Richard Shiff. Chicago, IL: University of

      Chicago Press, 1996. 170-184.

Barthes, Roland. *Elements of Semiology*. Translated by Annette Lavers and Colin

      Smith. New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 1977.

————. *Mythologies*. Translated by Richard Howard and Annette Lavers. New

      York, NY: Hill and Wang, 2012.

Beckley, William. Interview by author. New York, NY, April 8, 2016.

Conkey, Margaret. "Materiality and meaning-making in the Palaeolithic 'arts.'" In

      Becoming Human: Innovation in Prehistoric Material and Spiritual Culture,

      edited by Colin Renfrew and Iain Morley, 179-194. New York, NY:

      Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Deitch, Jeffrey. *Keith Haring.* New York, NY: Rizzoli, 2008.

Drawing the Line: A Portrait of Keith Haring. Directed by Elizabeth Aubert. 1990.

      Carversville, PA: Kultur. Film.

Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory: an Introduction*. Minneapolis, MN: University of

      Minnesota Press, 2008.

Eco, Umberto. *A Theory of Semiotics.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press,

      1976.

Gruen, John. *Keith Haring: the Authorized Biography.* New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1991.

Haring, Keith. *Journals*. New York, NY: Viking Penguin, 1996.

————. *Art in Transit: Subway Drawings*. New York, NY: Harmony Books, 1984.

Hawkes, Terence. *Structuralism and Semiotics*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2003.

Herzfeld, Michael. "Meta-patterns: archaeology and the uses of evidential scarcity." In *Representations in Archaeology*, edited by Jean-Claude Gardin and Christopher S. Peebles, 66-86. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992.

Kandinsky, Wassily. *Point and Line to Plane*. New York, NY: Dover Publications, 1947. Print.

Matejka, Ladislav. "Postscript: Prague School Semiotics." In *Semiotics of Art*, edited by Ladislav Matejka and Irwin R. Titunik, 265-290. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1984.

Mukařovský, Jan. "Art as Semiotic Fact." In *Semiotics of Art*, edited by Ladislav Matejka and Irwin R. Titunik, 3-9. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1984.

Parola, Rene. *Optical Art: Theory and Practice*. New York, NY: Beekman House, 1969.

Phillips, Natalie. "The Pop Apocalyptic: Keith Haring's and Kenny Scharf's Remaking of Contemporary Religious Art." Dissertation, University of California, Irvine, 2009.

Reed, Susan. "Ten Years Later, Nuclear Ghosts Still Haunt Three-Mile Island."

    People Weekly, April 3, 1979, 64.

de Saussure, Ferdinand. *Course in General Linguistics*. Trans. Wade Baskin.

    1916. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2011. Print.

Sussman, Elizabeth. *Keith Haring.* New York, NY: the Whitney Museum of

    American Art and Bullfinch Press, 1997.

Walter de Gruyter Foundation. "Semiotica." 2016. <http://www.degruyter.com/

    view /j/semi>. Accessed April 19, 2016.