CROSSCURRENTS

PULLING DOWN THE SKY

Envisioning the Apocalypse with Keith Haring and William S. Burroughs[1]

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Midway through *Apocalypse* by Keith Haring (1958-1990) and William S. Burroughs (1914-1997), an anonymous narrator tells John, the seer and author of the Book of Revelation, "don't bother. . .with all that junk" because "it's time."[2] Capturing the urgency of apocalyptic discourse, this 1988 collaboration, which includes ten prints by Haring and poetry by Burroughs, reverses the apocalyptic trajectory of its apparent, albeit distant, source text, Revelation. In lieu of depicting a recognizably male John being taken into heaven (Rev 4:1), Haring illustrates a hybrid woman/machine pulling down a tangled tape-like sky. Burroughs writes: "Caught—burn—in New York beneath the animals of the village—with madness—the Piper pulled down the sky."[3] Through image and text these two artists queer the perspective of Revelation, replacing the otherworldly vantage point of apocalyptic with an earthly view, specifically from Greenwich Village, a center of queer culture in the 1980s. With this shift of perspective, we glimpse in the pages of this slim book both a queering of the ancient Book of Revelation, written in the first-century CE, and a queer "revelation." This queering of the text, which disorients Revelation's narrative and symbols, involves a critique of phallo-centric culture, embodied in white, middle-class religiosity. Moreover, rather than depicting John the Seer as an authority whose visionary account cannot be altered or amended (Rev 22:18-19), Haring and Burroughs offer an ambivalent eschatology, vacillating between end-time hope and anti-social negativity.

Engaging apocalypse queerly

Not known for their subtly, Haring, whose pop art style captured the spirit of the late 1980s, and Burroughs, a founding figure of the 1960's Beat movement, borrow the title *Apocalypse* directly from the Book of Revelation, an apocalypse written in the late first-century CE and the final book of the Christian Bible. The ancient text begins with the Greek word *apokalypsis* or "apocalypse," when transliterated into English. "Apocalypse" serves as the text's title and is traditionally translated as "revelation." Apocalypse also becomes a designation for a genre of literature for which Revelation is often thought of as a model.[4] By adopting this title, Haring and Burroughs signal that their project revisions the canonical text. Biblical scholar Vincent L. Wimbush describes this type of appropriation as "signifying on" the text, a practice in which conventional and socially powerful scripts are leveraged, especially by those outside of the dominant culture, to address new contexts and create new meanings. There are a variety of reasons why interpreters signify on scripture, although the practice often involves using texts that have shaped a community's identity, for good or ill, to challenge and reimagine that identity. Through the practices of signification new scriptural traditions emerge, a phenomenon that Wimbush terms "scripturalization."[5]

Focusing on African American biblical interpretation, Lynne St. Clair Darden explains that even scholarly analyses of texts function as scripturalization.[6] This seems especially true when the scholar understands herself as a "carrier of cultural memory," a process that entails both "looking (and talking) back while moving forward, reshaping identity construction and in so doing reshaping the discipline itself."[7] In other words, as a queer identified biblical scholar and as someone invested in queer cultural memory, my reading of Haring and Burroughs' signification on Revelation makes me as much of a "scribe," to use Darden's language, as Haring, Burroughs, and even John. By exploring *Apocalypse* as a scripturalization of Revelation in this essay, I effectively extend the queer canon, the ever-shifting collection of texts and traditions with which queer communities engage.[8] Making this claim is not intended to be an act of hubris; rather, it is an acknowledgment that I am embedded within an interpretive community and a recognition that my decision to engage

Haring and Burroughs' work is motivated by a sense of shared community with other queer readers of Revelation.

The understanding of Haring and Burroughs as part of a queer community coalesces around a shared subversive affect, a "queer" posture toward social norms, especially *vis-à-vis* sexuality. Even before the emergence of the academic field of "queer theory,"[9] Burroughs titled his semi-autobiographical novel, written in 1952 and published in 1985, *Queer*. The work explores its male protagonist's "tearing ache of limitless desire,"[10] a desire for a mysterious drug indigenous to South America, sex with a reluctant male lover, and the boys he encounters in his travels. Highlighting the non-normative aspect of his subject's desires are themes of violence, filth, excess, and negativity. These themes are even more pronounced in Burroughs' later work, especially *Naked Lunch* which was put on trial in Boston in 1962 for obscenity. The negative reception of what would eventually become Burroughs' most famous work, stemmed, as Frederick Whiting argues, from the close connection readers drew between the narrative and Burroughs himself, a gay man and heroin addict with a penchant for violence.[11] Although the LGBT community has not always embraced Burroughs, especially given his racist and misogynist views, resistance to all types of constraint was the hallmark of his work and life.[12]

Shaped by a different era than Burroughs, Haring's life and work similarly involved subverting cultural norms.[13] Having left a conservative home in Pennsylvania, Haring lived as part of the queer community in New York City's Greenwich Village, where he hung out in clubs, like Club Paradise and Club 57, and curated art exhibits.[14] While today many people associate Haring with his commercially palatable and profitable images, such as the Madonna and Child on the "Very Special Christmas" album series, much of his work pushed the boundaries of the acceptable. At least once in his journals, he expresses concern about his work being deemed as obscene.[15] Many of the pieces produced by Haring dealt with sex, rendering the supposedly titillating mundane (i.e., decorating a surface with numerous small penises) and the mundane subversive (i.e., Mickey Mouse masturbating).[16]

Eschewing any form of control was a characteristic of Burroughs that Haring emulated. Even before meeting the elder artist, Haring adopted Burroughs' "cut-up" technique, which Burroughs learned from fellow

poet and artist Brion Gysin. Burroughs believed that this style of writing and art-making, which involves cutting up and rearranging extant texts, which or pieces of art to create new texts and meanings,[17] possessed revelatory potential, since it allowed the writer or artists to bypass the ways in which language, thought, and imagery were controlled by cultural norms and systems.[18] Inspired by Burroughs, who he heard about in a 1978 radio broadcast,[19] Haring used the technique in some of his collages and performance pieces. In one case, he rearranged the letters (skipping a couple and adding some extra) of "First National City Bank" into the words "LICK FAT BOY AS ART SIN NO IF." This effectively shifts the meaning of the letters from financial to sexual cipher.[20] This practice of reinterpretation or signification evokes Revelation's literary style, which famously "almost, but not entirely" quotes texts and images from the surrounding context.[21] Throughout Revelation's text, it seems as if John has employed the cut-up technique with the writings of what would become the Old Testament and especially with the prophets. This appropriation of earlier authoritative texts underscores for John that this apocalypse is not of his own making; rather, he asserts it comes from God (1:1). Burroughs' hope to bypass systems of control through this method parallels the claims of apocalyptic seers and authors, such as John, who present themselves as conduits for the divine (1:1). Burroughs similarly understood morphine, which he called "God's Own Medicine," as providing him access to unhindered creativity and the truth he presented in his work.[22] (Students and readers often wonder whether John's Revelation was similarly inspired, as well as questioning his mental health.)

Even though apocalyptic literature is arguably a literature of critique, typically aimed at political and social structures, the relationship between queer interpreters and apocalyptic literature and rhetoric is ambivalent.[23] This is especially the case with the Book of Revelation, since its canonical status grants it an authority that makes it an effective tool for oppressing those of non-normative identities and ways of being in the world. As many LGBTQ Christians have been reminded in sermons and by "well-meaning" church members, outside of John's vision of the New Jerusalem, "are the dogs and sorcerers and fornicators and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood" (22:15).[24] Anti-LGBTQ hate groups, including Westboro Baptist Church, leverage Revelation's rhetoric to justify their vocal opposition to anyone who identifies

with or supports those on the queer spectrum.[25] Given its history as a "text of terror" for queer individuals and communities, biblical scholars J. Michael Clark and Tina Pippin maintain that, "the Apocalypse of John cannot be revised, reconstructed or retrofitted to our present context."[26] They find no way of reading Revelation that promises liberation or justice for those on the LGBTQ spectrum and offer a "resounding 'No!' to any redemptive project on this this text."[27] Rather, they suggest Revelation only offers liberatory possibility through acts of resisting the text.

Resisting Revelation does not necessarily mean ignoring the text, and some queer interpreters find apocalyptic texts, like Revelation, productive sites for scripturalization. Apocalyptic imagery and narratives have been a powerful resource for making sense of the impact of AIDS upon the gay community. One of the most notable examples is Tony Kushner's Pulitzer prize-winning play *Angels in America*, which premiered in 1991.[28] Apocalyptic imagery continues to be deployed in queer productions as a tool of critique and as a creative resource, ranging from David LaChapelle's photographic critique of both the art world's obsession with celebrity and consumerism in his piece *Black Friday at the Mall of the Apocalypse and Casino*, which also served as a Kardashian family Christmas card,[29] to a Chicago drag and burlesque troupe that hosts a "Queerpocalypse" event as a way of combatting gender conformity.[30] This last example, in particular, points to how the queer lenses of drag and camp can be brought to bear on apocalypticism as a way of highlighting the constructed nature of end-time imaginings. Thus, in their 2011 and 2014 advertisements for the show the group proclaimed, "It ain't the end of the world, it's a revelation!/The End is Queer!!!!"

While the term "queer" has been used in relation to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered identities, first as a slur and then as a powerful form of self-naming, contemporary queer theorists resist understanding it in terms of any certain fixed identity or entity.[31] Instead, queer might better be understood as "positionality" that challenges the supposed stability of gender and sexual identities, highlighting the ways in which these identities are ideologically constituted.[32] This is a political posture, as it challenges the social currency afforded those who inhabit or embrace non-normative genders, sexualities, and familial configurations. This perspective might aim for some type of transformative end, a hope to open up possibilities for those outside of the dominant culture.

Heather Love notes the paradox here of a movement that "dreams of a future founded on a history of suffering, stigma, and violence."[33]

Love's description of the difficulty inherent in articulating a future queer vision points to an ongoing tension within queer theory over the end or aim of queerness and queer projects. Heterosexual culture demands individuals to think in terms of "straight time," organized along the lines of heterosexual reproduction. Straight time imagines a trajectory of life-events that appear "natural," as they are organized around "a biological clock for women and by strict bourgeois rules of respectability and scheduling for married couples," according to theorist Judith Halberstam.[34] This trajectory ultimately serves to fill the ranks of the state with future citizens. This raises the question of what "queer time" looks like. Is the queer end imagined in negative terms, as resistance to the reproductive norm of straight time, a view articulated by Lee Edelman? This anti-social eschatological understanding locates queerness within the individual's resistance against social norms, norms that circumscribe difference and individual delight, in favor of protecting the future for "the Child."[35] In response to this, some queer theorists, such as José Esteban Muñoz, imagine the end as horizon, an openness to the future. For Muñoz, queerness involves thinking about future possibilities that allow for a "belonging-in-difference" which addresses oppressive social and political asymmetries.[36] As we will see, Haring and Burroughs' signifying on Revelation engages in critique of the text, while redeploying its images to reveal queer visions of the end.

Worshipping the great red phallus

"Apocalypse" in its ancient context describes the event of an unveiling, a revealing or even an act of "unhiding."[37] This raises the question of what, exactly, does an apocalypse reveal. In the case of Revelation, according to biblical scholar Eugene Boring, John questions, "Who, if anyone, rules in this world?"[38] To this question, John receives a relatively clear answer: God and the slaughtered Lamb, also known as Christ (5:8-14). Seated upon the heavenly throne together, these two exercise power over *everything*. Inherent in this assertion is a critique of the dominant political and social order that would purport to fill the role of the divine, those human powers who seem to rule, but are simply the embodiment of Satan (12:9-12).

The introduction to Haring and Burroughs' *Apocalypse* opens with a pronouncement that similarly addresses the question of who rules, although they approach the question from a more oblique angle. Referencing December 25, 1 AD, the day traditionally recognized as Christ's birth, Burroughs describes mariners on the coast of Tuscany proclaiming, "the Great God Pan is dead!"[39] The advent of Christianity ushers in the demise of this goat-figured deity who is associated especially with the erotic and the arts. Pan's death involves his being "neutralized, framed in museums, entombed in books, relegated to folklore." Christ's birth sucks creativity from the earth. However, at the same moment as Burroughs announces Pan's death, artworks leave their frames and words their pages. Thus, Pan persists in the "realm of imagination, in writing and painting and music" and "one rent in the fabric is all it takes for pandemonium to sluice through."[40] This pandemonium fills the pages of *Apocalypse*, including text and images, as Pan "whips screaming crowds" and the planet "[pulls] loose from its moorings, careening off into space spilling cities and mountains and seas into the Void faster and faster." *Apocalypse* reveals that ultimately no one and/or nothing rules the world; instead, Pan pushes the world and, specifically, NYC to go "OFF THE TRACK OFF THE TRACK."[41]

The rushing, swirling, careening movement of Burroughs' prose challenges any sense of control. This openness to chaos puts *Apocalypse* somewhat at odds with Revelation, as John tries to find order in the midst of chaos, numbering and sequencing plagues that befall the earth and its inhabitants (e.g., seven seals, seven trumpets, seven bowls of plague). Still, just like *Apocalypse*, things in Revelation tend to resist ordering. For instance, a chapter of text in which John describes the sealing of 144,000 from the tribes of Israel and worship of the Lamb occurs between the opening of the sixth and seventh seals (Rev 7). The seventh seal does not even resemble the other seals, which unleash destruction upon the earth, as the final seal leads to half an hour of silence in heaven (8:1). Likewise, the blowing of the seven trumpets is interrupted by two unrelated scenes, along with the first and second references to the passing of three woes (9:12; 11:14). By embracing the bedlam of apocalyptic rhetoric, Haring and Burroughs point to the futility of John's attempts at organization and order.

While Burroughs' text answers the question of "Who rules in this world?" with descriptions of a world that will not be controlled, Haring's

opening illustration approaches the question from a different angle. Here, Haring depicts an erect phallus, bright red, surrounded by a swarm of anonymous humans (see cover image). The monolith, resembling a mushroom cloud as it spews semen over the crowd, appears as an object of awe. In other artworks, Haring depicts the phallus as an object of worship, an idea that resonates here. For example, in a 1981 untitled piece, Haring parallels the worship of the phallus, protruding through a "glory hole," to the worship of a dog standing on a podium surrounded by people "worshipping" it, much like popular depictions of the golden calf in Exodus.[42] Likewise, a 1988 painting by Haring titled *The Great White Way* appears as a priapic icon. In the large, pink-colored penis filled with line drawings, Haring combines phallic images and symbolic references to Christianity, commerce, technology, and militarism.[43] The overall composition of the piece evokes traditional depictions of the last judgment, such as Michelangelo's painting of *The Last Judgment* in the Sistine Chapel, with some bodies tumbling toward hell and others being lifted into heaven. For Haring, the phallus is a religious object—an idol.

One might wonder why Haring, an openly gay man, depicts the phallus in such a negative way. In art school, the artist, as Haring himself explained, was "totally obsessed with sex and that became the subject of my work."[44] An instructor confirmed this noting, "One time, I said to the class, 'Choose a subject and develop it.' Keith brought in 300 drawings of penises! And they were good. They were witty."[45] However, as feminist critics have observed, the phallus is not equivalent to the penis; rather, the phallus functions as a symbol of patriarchal power and authority, qualities that not everyone who has a penis possesses.[46]

Even though there is nothing exactly like Haring's "Great Red Phallus" (my language) in Revelation's pages, the image is arguably the artist's signifying on the text. Like other ancient apocalyptic texts, such as the Book of Daniel, Revelation mockingly depicts objects of false worship as hybrid beasts, replete with multiple heads and horns, a not so ambiguous phallic reference (13:1: 17:3). Specifically, Revelation describes a "Great Red Dragon" (12:3), who eventually morphs into a multi-headed and horned Beast worshipped by the people of earth (12:3; 17:3).[47] Throughout the text, this Beast is associated with political power and control, and eventually its heads and horns are revealed to be kings and those who would be kings. They are the powerful and the mighty (17:9-12). John

portrays this Beast as the enemy of God and of those who follow God and he clearly wants his audience to hate these figures. In engendering this hate, the author scripts what can only be called an apocalyptic "dick-measuring contest." Faced with the popularity of the multi-horned Beast that rules the earth, God and the Lamb, who also has seven horns (5:6), revel in their own power by unleashing plagues, armies, and wrath upon the earth.[48] The Lamb ultimately appears as a warrior on a white horse with a sword protruding from his mouth, again suggesting a phallus, to battle the Beast (19:11-16). Before describing the deaths of the Beast and his armies, the author of Revelation reminds his audience that Christ will "rule. . .with a rod of iron" (19:15). In other words, as biblical studies scholar Stephen D. Moore writes, the text is a "male fantasy of phallic proportions."[49]

Depicting the "Great Red Phallus" as an object of worship in *Apocalypse* reveals the phallocentrism at the center of Revelation. By depicting the phallus as an idol, which Haring understands in negative terms, he spurns the very image of hyper-masculinity and straight masculine ideals. Again, this is not the only place where Haring visualizes this concept. Indicative of this resistance to phallocentrism was a campaign in which Haring created and displayed posters emblazoned with "Clones Go Home" to discourage hyper-masculine gay males out of the experimental East Village. His close friend and fellow artist Kenny Scharf explained,

> Clones were like all the guys that were pretending they were super-macho and big. We were completely the opposite. It wasn't about being a macho-man or trying to prove that. The thing about clones is they were reacting against the straight world but they were embracing the ideal of a straight man.[50]

The critique of hyper-masculinity embodied in "Clones Go Home" intersects with Haring's rejection of the conservative Christianity of his youth and his criticism of whiteness. Writing in his journals in 1987, Haring dismissed what he called "control religion," further explaining that, "Most white men are evil. The white man has always used religion as the tool to fulfill his greed and power-hungry aggression."[51] Religion, for Haring, was a means of controlling others for wealth and power. This is arguably the embodiment of the phallus. This phallus, moreover, is white. Thus, Haring tries to disidentify with his own whiteness, writing, "I'm

sure inside I'm not white." In some sense, Haring's disavowal of phallic power must include, for him, disavowal of his racial identity.[52] Thus, while the author of Revelation asserts the power of the divine phallus over the kings of the earth, Haring rejects this understanding. The Great Red Phallus may rule the world, but for Haring this is a reality to be rejected and resisted.

The whore, the beast, and the demon-sperm

As the Great Red Phallus looms over the crowd, it threatens to cover the people of earth with semen. Although heterosexual culture might prompt us to interpret semen or sperm as something "life-giving," in Haring's context this is an especially alarming image. Rather, coming from the fluid is a pair of two-horned sperm or "demon-sperm," a common symbol that Haring uses to denote AIDS. This ominous pair floats above the crowd.[53] Simply put, death threatens the crowd overshadowed by the monstrous phallus. Likewise, art, creativity, and expression, as represented in twin images of the *Mona Lisa*, are at risk of being damaged by the phallic-fluid. The eyes of Mona Lisa are crossed out to suggest the death wrought by AIDS. The threat of the demon-sperm depicted in this opening image was especially terrifying when Haring and Burroughs were working together. By 1988, there already had been over 60,000 deaths from AIDS in the U.S. and the number continued to grow at an alarming rate.[54] The threat was tangible for Haring, who embraced and acknowledged his promiscuity and predicted he would die from the disease.[55] In fact, after years of watching friends and lovers die, Haring was diagnosed with AIDS the year he and Burroughs completed *Apocalypse* and he passed away in early 1990.

Even before the advent of what was described early on as the "gay-related immune deficiency" or GRID, the religious right in the US rhetorically cast homosexuality as an apocalyptic contagion. American evangelical author David Wilkerson, for instance, warned of the "Homosexual Epidemic" already in 1974, seven years before the first cases of AIDS would be diagnosed.[56] Thomas L. Long explains in *AIDS and American Apocalypticism*, Christian fundamentalists easily turned to apocalyptic discourses to leverage the AIDS crisis for their own agenda. Aspects of the disease, especially the cancerous "spots," Kaposi's sarcoma, were easily aligned with images from the apocalyptic storehouse, such as Revelation's

reference to "foul and painful sore[s]" which come when an angel pours out a bowl of plague upon those who worship the Beast (16:2). More importantly, anxieties about the spread of the disease allowed the religious right to effectively employ an apocalyptic dualistic rhetoric of "us versus them" in order to solidify their own identity and political power.[57] Those on the right were clearly "of God," while those dying of AIDS and those caring for them were cast as followers of the Beast. For many at that time, AIDS was a clear indication of God's judgment upon gays and those who "tolerated" them.[58]

As someone living within a community embattled over AIDS, Haring's perspective on the disease was decidedly different than those who cast it as God's wrath. Haring does describe AIDS as a "new plague" in his journal; however, in so doing he does not depict it as God's punishment for homosexuality or any other "sin."[59] Rather, Haring portrays AIDS as a weapon in the arsenal of those who control, oppress, colonize, and dominate. In his criticism of "white men," mentioned above, Haring described AIDS as "their evil disease."[51] This understanding of the disease appears as well in the illustrations of *Apocalypse*. The demon-sperm emerges out of images related to the structures and norms of American culture, conformity to which is carefully mechanized and monitored. In one of the first images in *Apocalypse*, the demon-sperm seeps out of a bottle a mother uses to feed her infant (Fig. 1). This found picture of white mother and child, an image one might see in magazines from the 1950s, suggests a nostalgic version of domesticity and an idealized version white, middle-class domesticity.[60] That the embrace between the mother and child is facilitated by machines, added to the found image by Haring, supporting the baby's head and legs and pulling the mother down to the child, suggests the control of cultural norms and expectations, something both Haring and Burroughs decried. In this way, *Apocalypse* implicates traditional notions of the family, including idealized notions of race and gender, in the spread of the disease. Moreover, Haring adorns these figures with bishops' miters, visually connecting them to the authority of the Church. The irony is that in this period of time, the religious right depicted AIDS and homosexuality as a threat to children.[61] Here, however, Haring's imagery uncovers and reverses this rhetoric, depicting the true threat as the traditional family and religion. Thus, the image of the mitered infant and mother, perhaps also an

Figure 1. Keith Haring and William S. Burroughs, *Apocalypse*, 1988, silk screen print, 97 × 97 cm, p. 6. Keith Haring Artwork © Keith Haring Foundation. [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

allusion to the Madonna and Child, sit atop a pyramid, which one scholar reads as Haring's representation of the entrance to hell.[62] Similarly, in a pit at the base of the pyramid someone appears to be drowning, underscoring that this is not an image of salvation.[63]

Burroughs's understanding of AIDS aligns to some extent with that of his collaborator, even though his explanation for the disease reflects a belief in aliens. In journals written late in his life, Burroughs maintains that AIDS was part of a conspiracy authored by officials in the US government and "the Grays," aliens bent on controlling the earth. Because the Grays require human fluids, blood and semen, to help them rebuild their own race, they work with the government to weed out "undesirables" with the AIDS virus. These "undesirables" include people of color, people

that Burroughs characterizes using racial slurs, and "queers," with whom he identifies.[64] Even though this understanding of the disease may reflect Burroughs' drug-fueled paranoia, he still understands it as a weapon wielded by those in power against the more vulnerable. For both artists, AIDS stems from an abuse of power and oppression and is not an apocalyptic punishment.

In *Apocalypse's* subsequent illustrations, Haring associates the demon-sperm more closely with the "villains" of Revelation. In one illustration, a small demon-sperm slips from the closed mouth of a figure that combines aspects drawn from Revelation's image of a Great Whore identified as "Babylon" (ch. 17) with those of the Beast with seven heads (ch. 13).[65] In his rendering of this hybrid image, Haring places a found image of a woman's head upon Babylon's beast-like body, colored bright red, with six low-hanging breasts. A bald figure, which could be read as either an infant or bald male, nurses at one of her breasts. In this image, which evokes both the possibility of the maternal act of nursing and nursing as a sexual and taboo act, Haring captures John's blurring of traditional feminine categories when describing Babylon as the "Mother of Prostitutes" (Rev. 17:5). Although she "feeds," this "mother" simultaneously destroys; a bunch of limp and perhaps decaying (indicated by wavy lines) bodies hang from her hand. Moreover, protruding from the butt of Babylon's body is what appears to be a funnel into which buildings have been put, seemingly to be ground or distilled. For Haring, Babylon is a destructive machine, the system, out of which AIDS emerges. In a 1987 journal, Haring wonders whether AIDS could be the idea of "some lesbian, man-hating, right wing, 'Christian', Nazi, racist, lab scientist bent on destroying the 'conspiracy of men who love men' with no understanding of history or nature? Radical right-wing feminist from S.C.U.M?"[66] Even though Haring understands AIDS as part of a system of oppression, *Apocalypse* maintains the misogyny of Revelation, which depicts evil in feminine terms. As is often the case, a rejection of white, heterosexual male power is not equivalent to acceptance of all difference.

Just as Revelation includes two related depictions of Babylon the Great Whore, in chapters 17 and 18, Haring and Burroughs' *Apocalypse* includes a second vision of the hybrid Whore. In this rendering the same found image appears, although with wrinkles drawn on the face, on a red, elongated body, which appears to teeter forward.[67] A large green

blob to the Whore's right and a beast's head appears above her. Coming from the beast's mouth is something like a word "bubble," although it is filled with black dripping ink and not words. Like John's description of Babylon, here the Whore is adorned in a way that signals wealth and luxury. She wears an elaborate crown with lines radiating from it and two detailed necklaces. In her one visible hand, she holds a cup full of something foul (again indicated by wavy lines), an explicit reference to the Great Whore in Revelation, who holds "in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her fornication" (17:4). Two images of demon-sperm appear above the cup. Again, the Whore seems to be the source of AIDS. In the upper-right of the illustration, a man hangs by his feet from a rope, his hands bound, and his penis either erect or hanging down on account of gravity. The man's mouth is open, and his tongue falls out. Here, Haring alludes to the writings of Burroughs where images of erotic hanging and erotic asphyxiation often appear, evoking the coalescence of death and pleasure.[68] Given the appearance of the Whore and the hanging man together, it seems that the Whore brings the disease to those engaged in non-reproductive sexual acts, such as erotic asphyxiation. Again, Haring underscores the evil of AIDS, a weapon of the white male systems of power to control erotic pleasure.

Elsewhere in *Apocalypse* the demon-sperm appears with "666" (Fig. 2), a number that Revelation characterizes as the "number of the Beast." In the ancient text, "both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave" are "marked on the right hand or the forehead," so that they are able to buy and sell (13:16-18). No one, in other words, escapes the power and pull of the Beast. Here, the demonic image of AIDS, depicted with a broken horn (a possible allusion to Revelation's characterization of one of the Beast's heads as wounded [13:3]), emerges out of a hole in the palm of a hand, denoting the nail hole in Christ's hand.[69] The hand comes from an outstretched arm that Haring has drawn on a found image of a girl at her first communion. While the original image suggests purity and youth, Haring adds Medusa-like hair and grotesque bird-legs to the girl's picture: The pure and innocent transforms into the hybrid and impure. Again, this queer *Apocalypse* alludes to Christianity and its structures as the source of death, symbolized by the deadly virus, for the hole in the girl's hand simultaneously evokes her accepting her first communion. Moreover, as it is the girl's right hand, it seems that the sacred host of

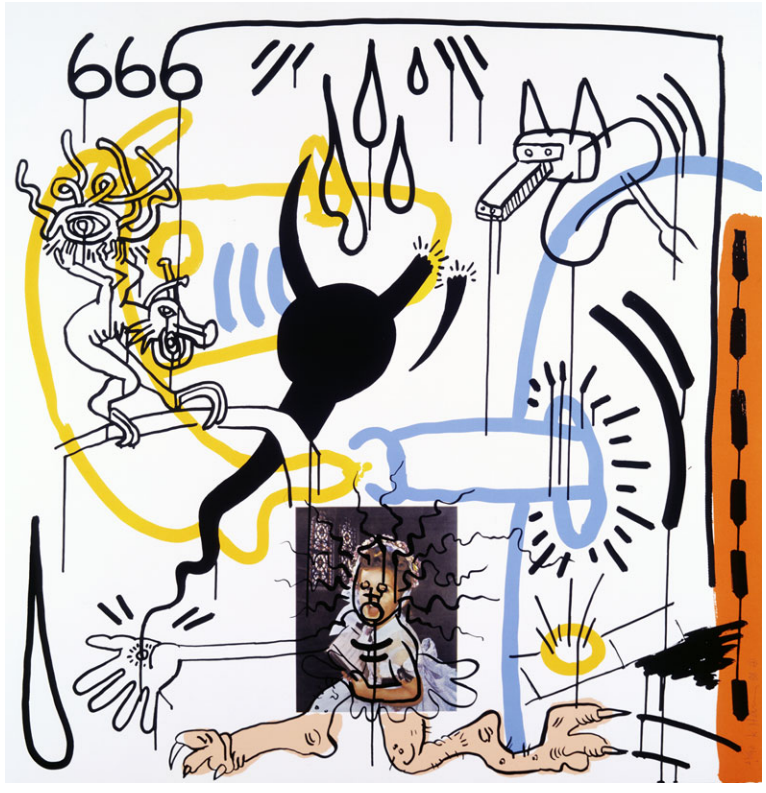

Figure 2. Keith Haring and William S. Burroughs, *Apocalypse*, 1988, silk screen print, 97 × 97 cm, p. 16. Keith Haring Artwork © Keith Haring Foundation. [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

communion might be the "mark of the Beast." Even the pure and innocent child is caught up in the nightmare system of the Beast, the religious, social, political, and economic powers that control. Given this, it is not surprising to see that Haring includes the image of a penis protruding from a glory hole, spewing semen across the image.

Throughout *Apocalypse* Haring and Burroughs explicitly signify on the text of Revelation, redeploying its images to critique the dominant culture, a culture that worships the phallus and that, according to the artists, uses AIDS as a weapon against queers. Even though evangelical Christians at the time may have believed Christianity and the Church as a site of salvation, Haring and Burroughs' associate it with death. Burroughs expressed his pointed criticism of evangelical Christianity in his

journal, deploying his characteristic humor: "Deeply spiritual, I detest Bible Belt Christianity—dead, suffocating under layers of ignorance, stupidity and barely hidden bigotry and vicious hate. Holy-roll away from me!"[70]

Queering the end

Revelation's narrative ends with not one but two visions of a New Jerusalem, one in which the city descends "as a bride adorned for her husband" (21:2) and one in which John is taken to see the city (21:10). These twin visions introduce a detailed rendering of the city as a foursquare construction with famous references to gates made of pearl and a street of gold (21:10-27). This opulent city will be where God dwells with God's people, even wiping away their tears and providing them the water of life, suggesting a respite from despair, pain, and persecution (21:4-6). As the culminating vision of the Christian Bible, John's vision of the New Jerusalem has had an indelible impact on views of heaven and afterlife among Christians and those within Christian contexts. It is typically an image of hope and comfort.

Despite the importance of the New Jerusalem in the ancient text, in *Apocalypse* Haring and Burroughs eschew the imagery of the city or even heaven more generally. In contrast, the final illustration of their text evokes and merges traditional Christian depictions of the Crucifixion and Last Judgment. In Haring's illustration, a skeleton arm, holding a key in its boney fingers, emerges out of a spiral, which looks like the head of a fern. The skeleton arm crosses, horizontally, a thorny, green branch creating a cross. The combination of the green plant, which even has sprouts and leaves, and the skeleton arm implies the closeness of life and death.[71] Elsewhere, Haring similarly depicts a skeleton, holding a key, ejaculating over flowers, bringing them to life. This sense that death is not an end appears in Haring's journals, where he explained, "Nothing is an end because it always can be a basis for something new and different."[72] A found picture of Christ wearing a crown sits atop the cross with black and yellow lines radiating from the image suggesting Christ's radiance. Haring has drawn two tears tumbling down Christ's face.

The reason for Christ's tears is unclear, although two images in the lower half of the illustration may provide the answer. On the right side of the illustration, Christ's left, a large mouth appears with bodies

tumbling out. The image evokes traditional medieval renderings of hell's "mouth," often found in "apocalypse-cycles."[73] Following the text's personification of hell or hades (6:8), these illustrations render hell as a monster with a large maw with which it eats those who are evil. Evoking this tradition, Haring depicts the mouth of what appears to be a fish. However, in this version the bodies fall *out of* the mouth, rather than being fed *into* it by demons or angels. Given this movement out of hell's mouth, *this* seems like an image of resurrection, life overcoming death, although it is a very human or un-glorified event. The fish-like appearance of this hell-mouth, moreover, conjures the story of Jonah, a prophet who is swallowed by a great fish and then vomited out. This was a popular metaphorical depiction of resurrection in early Christian iconography, as well as a popular story in modern American evangelical sermons and Sunday school lessons.[74] The bodies first spewed out of the fishy mouth of hell, rendered in the graphic style so associated with Haring and all clearly male, tumble ungracefully out of the maw and appear to land hard on the ground. The first body appears crumpled from hitting a solid surface. If this is resurrection, it is awkward and painful. Perhaps it is the image of the male body in pain that offers redemption from the "sin" of hyper-masculine power and privilege.[75]

To the viewer's lower left in this final illustration a two-horned figure, a visage of the god Pan, looks out at the viewer. His expression could be interpreted as a bit of a smirk, appreciating the persistence of life when the Christian religion has brought death. Burroughs' text captures the spirit of this resurrection, which, if brought by Pan, involves chaos:

> Skyscrapers scrape rents of blue and white paint from the sky, the rivers swirl with color, nitrous ochres and reds eat through the bridges, falling into the rivers, splashing colors across warehouses and piers and roads and buildings, AMOK art floods inorganic molds, stirring passion of metal and glass . . .
>
> LET IT COME DOWN
>
> Caught in New York beneath the animals of the village, the Piper pulled down the sky.[76]

Here, on the final page of *Apocalypse*, the Piper pulls down the sky- . . .again. Because of this life, characterized by the freedom of imagination and art, runs "AMOK." That the sky has already been pulled down,

midway through the text, raises the question of whether the sky can or will stay put. Even though this seems to be the end, things are left unfinished and open. The openness of *Apocalypse*, its resistance to closure and clear answers, is just one of the ways that this collaboration functions as a queering of John's apocalyptic narrative and apocalyptic discourse in general.

By refusing to engage the image of the New Jerusalem, *Apocalypse* rejects Revelation's understanding of the end. One way this can be understood is as a rejection of the "bride" of the Lamb, who is imagined in masculine terms, and a rejection of marriage as an end. Haring and Burroughs resist the heterosexual desire that informs much of Revelation's narrative, a text that persuades or even pressures an assumed heterosexual male-identified audience to embrace one "woman," the future city of God.[77] In so doing, *Apocalypse* arguably "ups the queer ante" of apocalyptic discourse by embodying what Lee Edelmann terms the "*sintho*mosexual," the one who embraces sex without possibility of reproduction and exhibits a *jouissance* that is unconcerned with maintaining the social order.[78] Especially within the context of HIV/AIDS, the queer or *sintho*mosexual signifies the overlap between pleasure and death. Moreover, by challenging the social order, by being willing to choose pleasure with the threat of exclusion and death, the *sintho*mosexual can never be included in the social, revealing that the social necessarily implies boundaries and categories of exclusion.[79] This does not change once homosexuality becomes socially acceptable; instead, the socially sanctioned (married?) homosexual is no longer queer. The queer, the one who embraces the self in excess, reveals that there will always be someone who does not fit the vision of a New Jerusalem.[80] Rejection of the New Jerusalem marks a rejection of domestication and an embrace of the self. It is also a willingness to do so even though the possibility leads to an end or *the* end. Burroughs seemingly captures this version of the queer affect when he dismisses utopic thinking in his journals, commenting, "Utopia. Where is the challenge? Where is the fear? Where is the enemy?" and "All utopias are bullshit."[81]

From another angle, one can argue that *Apocalypse's* erasure of the New Jerusalem and John's vision of the future opens up a space for further thinking about a queer future apart from the confines of the Holy City. Idealized social structures, such as heavens and utopias, necessarily

create both insiders and outsiders. And, even though many see the New Jerusalem as the image of hope, there appears to be a parking lot situated just outside the pearly gates where "the dogs and sorcerers and fornicators and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood" remain (22:15). Given this list of outcasts, we can imagine that this is where queers and junkies, like Haring and Burroughs respectively, would be relegated or, perhaps, where they would choose to cruise. Alluding to this is the fact that some interpreters of Revelation read "the dogs" as a reference to those who are sexually transgressive and, specifically, as males who engage in sodomy. Eric A. Thomas, a biblical scholar who self-identifies as a single-gender-loving Africana man, troubles this association, noting that there is no ancient historical evidence for such a reading.[82] However, as Thomas notes, the dog imagery is something through which queer interpreters can "disidentify"; that is, while "the dogs" may be used by non-queers, such as the author of Revelation, to describe pejoratively those on the outside, queer readers can recognize these dogs as our own. As Thomas explains, "Rather than disavowing the connection made between dogs and homosexuals, I disidentify with it. Instead, thinking with the 'dogs outside'. . .I imagine New Jerusalem as a kind of queer failure and rationale for radical erotic subjectivity from the margins."[83] Haring similarly disidentifies with the image of the dog, often depicting dogs in his artwork and sometimes depicting humans having sex with dogs, alluding to "doggy style" or anal sex.[16]

In the biography of Juan Rivera, aka Juanito Xtravaganza, Haring's partner for three years, Arnaldo Cruz-Malavé aligns Haring's artistic vision to his discovery of a multi-ethnic queer community in the NYC club scene.[84] Perhaps Haring gained his apocalyptic insight on the dance floor of the famous New York disco he frequented, Paradise Garage. Thomas, who explains that Paradise Garage was a place where people of all gender and sexualities partied, imagines this particular club as a site of queer apocalyptic hopefulness, writing, ". . .we will take our shirts off in the Paradise Garages of our imaginations, chanting to Gloria Gaynor's 'I Will Survive'—we will vibe to house music all night long."[85] The critique of Revelation and Christianity leveraged by Harings and Burroughs in *Apocalypse* allows queer interpreters who follow in their wake a chance to imagine a New Jerusalem for ourselves, a new world where we leave the

power of the phallus behind and embrace instead the pandemonium revealed when the sky is pulled down to earth.

Apocalypticism in the U.S. is closely associated with American evangelical Christianity and movements that have experienced apocalyptic disappointment, such as the Millerites who first expected Jesus' return in 1844. Rarely, in my experience, do people connect apocalyptic thinking and perspectives with queer interpretation. To this point, previous readings of *Apocalypse* have attributed Haring's apocalyptic imagery to his Christian upbringing and his onetime involvement with the Jesus People, an evangelical Christian movement popular among youth in the 1970s.[86] Haring even recalled to his biographer that he was obsessed with the movement and, influenced by the writings of the famous apocalyptic author Tim LaHaye, Haring believed he was duty bound to convince others that the "Second Coming" of Christ was near.[87] He was admittedly influenced by evangelical apocalypticism and this clearly appears in his artwork, especially the illustrations of *Apocalypse*. At the same time Haring was involved with the Jesus People, he was aware of his attraction to boys and men and struggled to fit in with Christians. He describes, for instance, participating in a church camp talent show where he did a strip-tease, dressed as a woman, which even included jumping out of a make-shift cardboard cake.[88] Even early in his life Haring "queered" Christian culture. This is the value of thinking in terms of signifying on scripture or scripturalization. Together, Haring and Burroughs, queerly signify upon a text, Revelation, that has had profound influence on American culture and, more specifically, a profound influence on Haring. In so doing, they create a new apocalyptic vision that critiques the phallo-centric culture of white Christianity and points to the possibility of a queer future. While Haring and Burroughs together are not entirely convinced of the possibility of a queer future, *Apocalypse* unsettles Revelation in a way that anything is possible. Pan cannot be contained.

Notes

1. Thank you to the participants of Elon University's Center for the Study of Religion, Culture, and Society's "On the Edge of Apocalypse" Symposium, February 9-10, 2017, for the thoughtful feedback on an early version of this paper. An even earlier version was shared in the section on Contextual Biblical Interpretation at the 2014 Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in San Diego, CA. Thank you to the Keith Haring Foundation for their generosity in allowing me to use images from *Apocalypse* in this publication.

2. Haring, Keith and William S. Burroughs, *Apocalypse* (New York: George Mulder Fine Arts, 1988), p. 13. The pages of *Apocalypse*, which was published in booklet form, are unnumbered. For the purposes of this article, I begin numbering with the first verso page, which is text. Since every other recto page is an illustration, they are assigned even numbers.
3. Haring and Burroughs, *Apocalypse*, p. 13.
4. For a discussion of "apocalypses" and "apocalyptic literature," see Collins, John J., "What Is Apocalyptic Literature?" in *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature*, ed. John J. Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 1-16.
5. Wimbush, Vincent L., "TEXTures, Gestures, Power: Orientation to Radical Excavation" in *Theorizing Scriptures: New Critical Orientations to a Cultural Phenomenon*, Vincent L. Wimbush, ed. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2008), pp. 1-20.
6. St Clair Darden, Lynne, *Scripturalizing Revelation: An African American Postcolonial Reading of Empire* (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2015), p. 24. For another treatment of scripturalization and Revelation, see Hidalgo, Jacqueline M., *Revelation in Aztlán: Scriptures, Utopias, and the Chicano Movement* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).
7. Darden, *Scripturalizing*, p. 33.
8. The idea of a "Queer Codex" emerged as part of the conversations at the 2014 Transdisciplinary Theological Colloquium at Drew Theological School. The papers from this conference were published in an edited volume, and the idea of codices is proposed within Jacqueline M. Hidalgo's engagement with Cherríe Moraga's idea of a Chicano Codex. In her work, Moraga develops an idea of Chicano Codex consistent with the tradition of Meso-American codices. Unlike a European "book" or collection of books (i.e., canon), these codices are interpreted and performed; thus, their meanings are fluid. Hidalgo relates this idea to Wimbush's idea of scripturalization, noting that interpretation is necessarily the creation of new texts. Eric Thomas builds upon these insights especially in relation to Revelation. See Hidalgo, Jacqueline M., "Our Book of Revelation . . . Prescribes Our Fate and Releases Us from It": Scriptural Disorientations in Cherríe Moraga's *The Last Generation*" in *Sexual Disorientations: Queer Temporalities, Affects, Theologies*, ed. Kent L. Brintnall, Stephen D. Moore, and Joseph A. Marchal (New York: Fordham University Press, 2017), pp. 113-132; and Thomas, Eric A., "The Futures Outside: Apocalyptic Epilogue Unveiled as Africana Queer Prologue" in *Sexual Disorientations: Queer Temporalities, Affects, Theologies*, eds. Kent L. Brintnall, et al. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2018), p. 101.
9. Queer theory emerges as a field in the 1990s, although it is anticipated in work of scholars such as Gayle Rubin, whose influential essay, "Thinking Sex" was published in 1984. See Rubin, Gayle, "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality" in *Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality* (Boston, MA: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984). For an introduction to the history of queer theory, see Sullivan, Nikki A., *A Critical Introduction to Queer Theory* (New York: New York University Press, 2003).
10. Burroughs, William S., *Queer*, 25th Anniversary Edition, Kindle Edition (New York: Penguin Books, 2010), loc. 1492. Although it was published in 1985, *Queer* (written in 1952) reflects values and perspectives that challenge many modern sensibilities. As Oliver Harris, editor to the 25th edition notes, the novel, set mostly in Mexico, "reveals just how ugly the Ugly American can be." See "Editor's Introduction," in *Queer*, 25th Anniversary Edition, Kindle Edition (New York: Penguin Books, 2010), loc, 264.

11. Whiting, Frederick, 2006, "Monstrosity on Trial: The Case of 'Naked Lunch,'" *Twentieth Century Literature* 52(2), July 1, pp. 145-74.
12. See Russell, Jamie, *Queer Burroughs* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2001); Penner, James, *Pinks, Pansies, and Punks: The Rhetoric of Masculinity in American Literary Culture* (Urbana: Indiana University Press, 2011).
13. Roth, Ronald C., "From Irony to Apocalypse: The Evolution of Keith Haring's Social Critique" in *Keith Haring: Journey of the Radiant Baby*, ed. Ronald C. Roth (Piermont, NH: Bunker Hill Publishing, 2006), p. 36.
14. Cruz-Malavé, Arnaldo, *Queer Latino Testimonio, Keith Haring, and Juanito Xtravaganza: Hard Tails* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 86.
15. Haring, Keith, *Keith Haring Journals*, Kindle Edition (New York: Penguin, 2010), Sept. 13, 1987.
16. Cruz-Malavé, *Queer Latino Testimonio,* p. 70.
17. This is a style of creation also employed by the Surrealists. Jonathan Weinberg, "Making It Young" in *Keith Haring: Journey of the Radiant Baby*, ed. Ronald C. Roth (Piermont, NH: Bunker Hill Publishing, 2006), p. 27.
18. Lardas, John, *The Bop Apocalypse: The Religious Visions of Kerouac, Ginsberg, and Burroughs* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), pp. 233-36; Tytell, John, *Naked Angels: Kerouac, Ginsberg, Burroughs* (New York: Grove Press, 1991), pp. 116-7.
19. Haring, *Keith Haring Journals*, Jan. 11, 1979, July 15/16, 1986. See also, Weinberg, "Making it Young"*,* 26.
20. Weinberg, "Making it Young," p. 27.
21. For a modern discussion of Revelation as pastiche, see Fletcher, Michelle, *Reading Revelation as Pastiche: Imitating the Past* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017).
22. Burroughs, William S., *Last Words: The Final Journals of William S. Burroughs*, Kindle Edition (New York: Grove Press, 2007), Dec. 31, 1996.
23. Pippin, Tina and J. Michael Clark, "Revelation/Apocalypse," in *The Queer Bible Commentary* (London: SCM Press, 2006), p. 755. Pippin and Clark attribute this to apocalyptic literature's tendency toward legalism and exclusivism.
24. All quotations from Revelation are taken from the New Revised Standard Version.
25. Westboro Baptist Church, "God Hates Fags," accessed May 29, 2018. http://www.godhatesfags.com/.
26. Pippin and Clark, "Revelation/Apocalypse," p. 768.
27. Pippin and Clark, "Revelation/Apocalypse," p. 754.
28. For a discussion on the significance of Kushner's play in relation to apocalypticism, see Long, Thomas L., *AIDS and American Apocalypticism: The Cultural Semiotics of an Epidemic* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2012), pp. 141-76.
29. The image, which also served as a Christmas card for reality TV's Kardashian family, can be accessed at online at David LaChapelle, "LaChapelle Studio," accessed May 28, 2018. http://www.lachapellestudio.com/portraits/kardashians-black-Friday-at-mall-of-the-apocalypse/
30. For instance, the Chicago-based burlesque, drag, and performance group Ties and Tassels has hosted three "Queerpocalypse!" shows which they describe as an "epic battle against gender conformity through drag, camp, burlesque, circus, song and dance performances." Ties & Tassels Productions Facebook Page, accessed March 8, 2019, www.facebook.com/Ties-Tassels-Productions-TT-173478589337649/

31. Even though some writers and activists describe "queer" as an "umbrella term" encapsulating the myriad identities within the moniker LGBT, queer theorists generally reject this idea, since that only links the term to a set of stable identities.
32. See Sullivan, *A Critical Introduction to Queer Theory*, p. 44.
33. Love, Heather, *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 1.
34. Halberstam, Judith, *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* (New York: NYU Press, 2005), p. 5.
35. Edelman, Lee, 2007, "Ever After: History, Negativity, and the Social," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 106(3), June 20, pp. 469-76.
36. Muñoz, José Esteban, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), p. 20. It is important to note that Muñoz does not reject all negative affects; rather, his understanding of queerness is one that makes room for critique as a way of constructing futures. The queer end, however, is not critique alone.
37. duBois, Page, *Out of Athens: The New Ancient Greeks* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), p. 152.
38. Boring, Eugene, 1986, "The Theology of Revelation: The Lord Our God the Almighty Reigns'," *Interpretation* 40, pp. 257-69.
39. The imagery of mariners on the coast announcing the death of Pan echoes Revelation's depiction of mariners lamenting the demise of the city, depicted as a woman, Babylon (Rev 18:17-19).
40. Haring and Burroughs, *Apocalypse*, p. 1.
41. Haring and Burroughs, *Apocalypse*, p. 3.
42. Cruz-Malavé, *Queer Latino Testimonio*, p. 71.
43. An image of this painting is viewable at the website for the Haring Foundation. See "The Keith Haring Foundation," accessed May 29, 2018. http://www.haring.com/!/art-work/74#.VGK9-vTF_xU. For a discussion of the phallus in Haring's artwork, see Verzotti, Giorgio, "Radiant Eros: Keith Haring and Sexuality," in *Keith Haring: Heaven and Hell*, ed. Götz Adriani (Karlsruhe: Hatje Cantz Publishers, 2002), pp. 96-104.
44. Gruen, John, *Keith Haring: The Authorized Biography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), p. 39.
45. Gruen, *Keith Haring*, p. 38.
46. Moore, Stephen D., *God's Beauty Parlor: And Other Queer Spaces in and around the Bible* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), p. 221, n. 7.
47. Revelation actually describes a Dragon and two Beasts, although the imagery and identification of these overlap. The Dragon, which is equated with Satan, becomes the First Beast, when it falls from the sky and appears on the shore in Rev 13:1. Both the Dragon and the First Beast have seven heads and ten horns, but the Dragon has seven crowns on its heads and the First Beast has ten crowns on its horns. The Second Beast, which only has two horns, functions as a representative of the First Beast. This Beast encourages the people of earth to worship the First Beast by performing various signs (13:11-15). Later in Revelation a woman, identified as the Great Whore, appears riding the First Beast (17:3). When I use the term "Beast," I mean the First Beast, which appears to be a manifestation of the Dragon, aka Satan.

48. The relationship between God and the Slain Lamb in Revelation is quite close; at times, the figures seem to share space on the throne of heaven (e.g., 7:17).
49. Moore, *God's Beauty Parlor*, p. 180.
50. As quoted in Weinberg, "Making it Young," p. 23.
51. Haring, *Keith Haring Journals,* Mar. 28, 1987.
52. I owe this insight to Mel Ah Mu, my partner, with whom I discussed many of the ideas in this essay.
53. The term "demon sperm" is Haring's. Robert Farris Thompson, "Introduction," in *Keith Haring Journal* (New York: Penguin, 2010), pp. xv-xlii.
54. For statistics about AIDS diagnoses and deaths over a thirty-year period, 1981-2011, see "Thirty Years of HIV/AIDS: Snapshots of an Epidemic," amfAR, The Foundation for AIDS Research, accessed May 29, 2018. http://www.amfar.org/thirty-years-of-hiv/aids-snapshots-of-an-epidemic/.
55. Gruen, *Keith Haring*, p. 185; Haring, *Keith Haring Journals,* Mar. 28, 1987.
56. Long, Thomas L., *AIDS and American Apocalypticism: The Cultural Semiotics of an Epidemic* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2012), pp. 5-6. See also Dickinson, Peter, "'Go-Go Dancing at the Brink of the Apocalypse': Representing AIDS," in *Postmodern Apocalypse: Theory and Cultural Practice at the End*, ed. Richard Dellamora (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), pp. 219-40.
57. Long, *AIDS*, p. 9.
58. Pastor and founder of the Moral Majority, Jerry Falwell proclaimed, "AIDS is not just God's punishment of homosexuals. It is punishment for the society that tolerates homosexuals." As quoted in Petro, Anthony M., *After the Wrath of God: AIDS, Sexuality, and American Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 24. For discussions of the diverse Christian responses to the early AIDS crisis and how American evangelical Christians have continued to address AIDS as a moral and spiritual issue, although generally abandoning the stereotypical apocalyptic rhetoric of "God's wrath," see Petro, *After the Wrath of God*.
59. Haring, *Keith Haring Journals,* Sept 9.
60. Galloway, David, "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell," in *Keith Haring: Heaven and Hell*, ed. Götz Adrian (Karlsruhe: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2001), p. 55.
61. One the first public cases in which the fate of children was employed as a way of stigmatizing homosexuals was actually pre-AIDS, the 1977 attempt to repeal Dade County, Florida's gay equal rights legislation. Actress Anita Bryant was the famous face associated with this campaign. For a discussion of this in relation to American apocalyptic thinking, see Long, *AIDS*, pp. 3-4.
62. Melcher, Ralph, "Keith Haring: Heaven and Hell," in *Keith Haring: Heaven and Hell*, ed. Götz Adriani (Karlsruhe: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2001), p. 23. In her work on Haring's use of Christian imagery, art historian Natalie E. Phillips suggests that Haring's depiction of the demon-sperm, AIDS, in *Apocalypse* reflects a belief that AIDS was a sign of the end of the world. She suggests that the influence of conservative Christianity in Haring's youth, which likely included the infamous works of Tim LaHaye, might have shaped his view of the end-times. While this might have been the case, Haring's interest in semiotics, which he studied in art school, suggests a more complicated understanding of religious symbolism. Moreover, neither his journals nor sources that recount the perspectives of those

closest to him during his art career indicate that pre-millennial apocalyptic beliefs were especially meaningful to him. Still, Phillips is one of the few scholars who has closely examined Haring's notable use of Christian imagery. See Phillips, Natalie E., *The Pop Apocalyptic: Keith Haring's and Kenny Scharf's Remaking of Contemporary Religious Art* (ProQuest, 2009) and 2007, "The Radiant (Christ) Child: Keith Haring and the Jesus Movement," *American Art* 21(3), September 1, pp. 54-73.

63. In addition, the cracking egg to the viewer's left may also be related to AIDS, as elsewhere Haring depicted the "demon-sperm" emerging from a cracked egg. See Thompson, "Introduction," pp. xv-xlii.

64. Burroughs, *Last Words,* Feb. 3, 1997.

65. Haring and Burroughs, *Apocalypse*, p. 8.

66. A photograph of this May 22, 1987, journal page appears in Adriani, *Keith Haring: Heaven and Hell*, 180. S.C.U.M. or "Society for Cutting Up Men" was an organization imagined in a manifesto by Valerie Solanas, lesbian writer famous in part for shooting Andy Warhol in 1968. See Fahs, Breanne, 2008, "The Radical Possibilities of Valerie Solanas," *Feminist Studies* 34(3), October 1, pp. 591-617.

67. Haring and Burroughs, *Apocalypse*, p. 18.

68. Morgan, Ted, *Literary Outlaw: The Life and Times of William S. Burroughs* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2012), p. 223; Miles, Barry, *Call Me Burroughs: A Life* (New York: Grand Central Publishing, 2014), p. 354. The most well-known image of hanging in Burroughs' work is a scene in *Naked Lunch* where three characters engage in hanging, fucking, cannibalism, and masturbation, Burroughs, William S., *Naked Lunch: The Restored Text*, Kindle Edition (New York: Grove Press, 2009), loc. 895-921. Hanging is also a major theme of Burroughs novel *Cities of the Red Night* (New York: Viking Press, 1981).

69. For a discussion of Haring's depiction of holes in humans and things, see Phillips, "The Radiant (Christ) Child."

70. Burroughs, *Last Words*, loc. 2740.

71. See Thompson, "Introduction," p. xxxii.

72. As quoted by Thompson, "Introduction," p. xv.

73. *Apocalypse* follows a long tradition of illustrated versions of Revelation. Perhaps, as early as the 5th or 6th centuries CE, Revelation circulated as an illustrated text. These medieval "apocalypse-cycles," which were manuscripts separate from the rest of the New Testament, could include as many as eighty distinct illustrations, as well as allegorical interpretations and/or commentary on the text of Revelation. The tradition of using illustrations to interpret and illumine Revelation continued past the medieval period, through the work of artists such as William Blake and Max Beckmann. Beckmann's apocalypse-cycle, commissioned during World War II, anticipates the work of Haring and Burroughs by graphically capturing the chaos and violence of Revelation, including its sexual violence. For a discussion of medieval apocalypse-cycles, see Klein, Peter K., "Introduction: The Apocalypse in Medieval Art," in *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, ed. Bernard McGinn and Richard K. Emmerson (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), pp. 159-99. For a more general introduction to Revelation in art, see O'Hear, Natasha and Anthony O'Hear, *Picturing the Apocalypse: The Book of Revelation in the Arts Over Two Millennia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

74. For a discussion of the popularity of Jonah imagery in early Christianity, see Jensen, Robin Margaret, *Understanding Early Christian Art* (London: Routledge, 2013), p. 172.
75. Brintnall, Kent L., *Ecce Homo: The Male-Body-in-Pain as Redemptive Figure* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).
76. Haring and Burroughs, *Apocalypse*, p. 21.
77. See Pippin, Tina, *Death and Desire: The Rhetoric of Gender in the Apocalypse of John* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992). Even though Revelation employs an understanding of sexuality based upon the gender binary, it is possible to read the vision as somewhat queer, given its eschewal of reproduction in a political and social context in which that was the expectation. According to John, those who become and/or inhabit the New Jerusalem are male virgins. For a discussion of this imagery, see Huber, Lynn R., 2008, "Sexually Explicit? Re-Reading Revelation's 144,000 Virgins as a Response to Roman Discourses," *Journal of Men, Masculinities and Spirituality* 2(1), pp. 3-28.
78. Edelman, Lee, 2007, "Ever After: History, Negativity, and the Social" *South Atlantic Quarterly* 106(3), June 20, p. 473. As Edelman explains, the term "*sinth*omosexual" comes from French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, who uses the term *sinthome* to describe the thing that continually resists unity. See "Ever After," p. 472.
79. Caserio, Robert L., Lee Edelman, Judith Halberstam, José Esteban Muñoz, and Tim Dean, 2006, "The Antisocial Thesis in Queer Theory" *PMLA* 121(3), May 1, p. 821.
80. Edelman, "Ever After," p. 473.
81. Burroughs, *Last Words*, Mar. 1, 1997, Mar. 11, 1997.
82. Thomas, "The Futures Outside," pp. 96-97.
83. Thomas, "The Futures Outside," p. 97. The concept of "disidentification" is articulated by Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia*, p. 169.
84. Cruz-Malavé, *Queer Latino Testimonio*, p. 86. The importance of Rivera's relationship to Haring has often been overlooked, as he has been cast as someone primarily interested in gaining off of Haring's death. (Rivera was cut out of Haring's will shortly before the artist's death.) For a discussion about the importance of acknowledging the relationship Rivera, see the interview with Cruz-Malavé about his book *Queer Latino Testimonio*, Charlie Vazquez, "Art's Forgotten Widow" *The Advocate*, January 16, 2009. https://www.advocate.com/arts-entertainment/books/2009/01/16/arts-forgotten-widow.
85. Thomas, "The Futures Outside," p. 105.
86. See Phillips, Natalie E., *The Pop Apocalyptic: Keith Haring's and Kenny Scharf's Remaking of Contemporary Religious Art* (ProQuest, 2009) and 2007, "The Radiant (Christ) Child: Keith Haring and the Jesus Movement," *American Art* 21(3), September 1, pp. 54-73.
87. Gruen, *Keith Haring*, pp. 14-5.
88. Gruen, *Keith Haring*, p. 14.