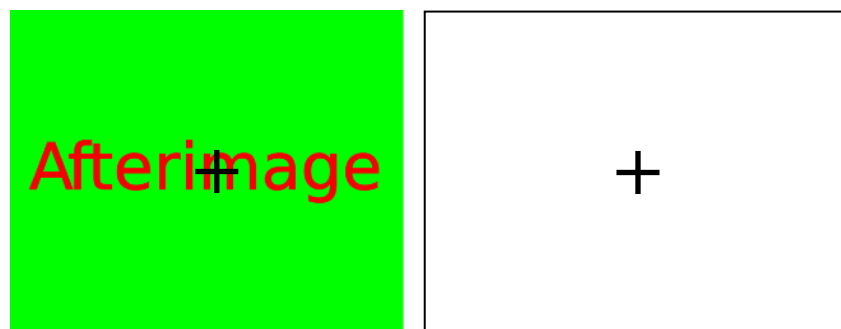


Homeostasis

We must remember some basics. Freud faced the issue of how the physical human body is able to maintain balance — homeostasis — in the face of stimuli from both inside and outside. In many respects, the human's neural systems (which extend out into the world, beyond the brain and even beyond the fingertips), are like any other system's ability to survive attacks. The simplest solution, based on the pleasure principle, had to be abandoned for one that could take into account how people often seem to work against their own self-interest; how they include self-sacrifice; how they enjoy pain and suffer from pleasure; and how the low-energy state sought by the system actually resembles a Nirvana-type simulation of death. The complex "solution" was far from resolved, and Lacan sought to qualify it by introducing the idea of the subject's construction of the Other in the contexts of language (the Symbolic), how the Other must be constructed as lacking, or not fully knowable, and how the subject bases its idea of wholeness on external structures.

It is not often discussed that the figure-ground function (perception's "need" to distinguish things that move and, hence, could be objects of desire or threat) is related to homeostasis. Just as staring at a color



then quickly looking at a white surface will result in reversing the color to its complementary. Complementarity is the way the brain FINISHES itself ("neural finality") — and by this token the death drive should be the title of a session at the WAAC conference on Finishing. (After all, the "end of architecture," an obvious reference to Nirvana, is already included as a suggested theme.) In the *Antiquissima*, Vico discusses this phenomenon in relation to metaphysical points, suggesting that his idea of *conatus* (the principle of motion that itself does not move), indicating THAT he was aware of some connection between homeostasis and *conatus*, using the metaphysical point as an intermediary.

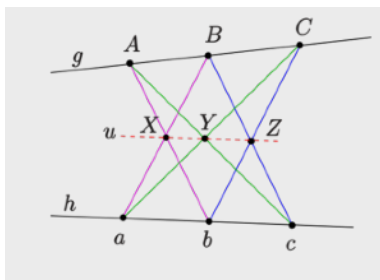
Painters aware of the complementary color shift attended to the color of shadows, which were not to be made by simply "graying" the background color but by introducing the complement. As the eye looks from light to shadow, complementarity adjusts for the change in light level by supplying the "missing element."

Conatus itself is the logic of the homeostatic function, put in terms of reverse engineering. Where the neural network *responds* to changes to restore rest, conatus is the "apparatus of rest-restoration," set in place before stimuli take place, insuring that the organism *can interact with its environment*. Without this functionality, the organism would not see or feel anything, but simply be overwhelmed by the content of

the senses. Conatus insures that the perceptual system can convert stimuli into *responses*, and when language is involved, these interactions are combined with physical sensations to create the sensorium, which effectively extends the neural network *virtually* into the environmental setting to create a single organ. Lacan's formula of "organs without bodies" is thus more informative and accurate than Deleuze's "bodies without organs." The body without organs is in fact the (Lacanian) subject "between the two deaths," where again the binary derived from the relation of going in and going out are conflated. Going out is constituted by the order (1) literal death followed by (2) Symbolic death; going in is (1) Symbolic death, such as Antigone's, experienced before (2) literal death. You never have one without the other, as in the case of *Antigone*, where Polynices is the first type of order and Antigone the second. This is why the number of the Labyrinth is 14, cited by Borges as infinity.

Suggested end-note

Conatus' "homeostasis" principle is that, for something to change, something must remain the same. This is nothing less than an adaptation of the figure-ground distinction, where the ground (incontinent because we can't see all of it at the same time) must be pushed down and back in order for the figure (continent, because we can draw a line around it, and because figures tend to be mobile in comparison to the space around them). In the above argument that connects conatus to neural networks' need to restore balance/rest, the function of conatus is clear. *It must be already in place* for the organism to have any meaningful experiences of the Imaginary. But, the first *moment* of this meaningful experience may set up this capability "at the moment in which it is needed." This is another case of where the effective mechanisms of something are recognized, experientially, as second but are logically first, since what we encounter and "count as" being first is actually dependent on the logical structure of what came before but which was *latent*. This relates to my favorite joke, that Oscar Levant said that he "knew Doris Day before she was a virgin." Virginity becomes a metonym, and a metalepsis at that! It is *one* signifier that works in — and requires — *two* contexts. In the first, a virgin is a virgin up to the time that she isn't. In the second, virginity is a construct, something that can be put into place Symbolically after the "real thing" has been long gone.



Pappus' Theorem involves showing that two lines at any angle to each other can be equipped with three points each that will determine the existence and position of a third line. The third line corresponds to *conatus* in that, no matter how we arrange the points ABC and abc, *there will always be this third line*. But, we see that the third line "had to exist" virtually *before* the other two lines were drawn, seemingly at random, and before the points on them were "chosen," also seemingly at random. Pappus has given us a mathematical formula for conatus, and also explained why the neural

network must have conatus working in advance of stimulation "logically," but that this logic will not be evident until, in experience, *the first thing happens*. The logic will be activated as a logical primary, and THIS IS THE LOGIC OF PHANTASY.

Lacan “knows this without knowing it,” and so it is psychoanalysis’s primary case of *kenosis*. He knows it because he knows that $a/1$ is equal to $a/1+a$, and he sees that the a must be equivalent to the Fibonacci \emptyset . The \emptyset is the principle, and all of the “instances” of a , where it is added and subtracted in the process of showing powers of a , are counted (first, second, third, etc.) *each time* the power increases, and this count is the “arithmetic” evenly-spaced scale that is juxtaposed to the second, logarithmic arrangement that goes from 1 to increasingly smaller values. Lacan’s attraction to the slide-rule analogy is based on his desire to show the “audio-active” (metonymic) double functionality of the signifier (any signifier). This doubling is the force and counter-force of stimulation, the ability to match incoming disturbance with internal counter-action. But, this “logic” must be present for stimulation to be counter-acted in this way. Without using the word, Lacan has defined *conatus*, and shown how it is logically first but experientially second, both outside (in stimulation) and inside (neural homeostasis) at the same time.

