siccas . . . . . *carinas*
canis . . . . . *pruinis.*

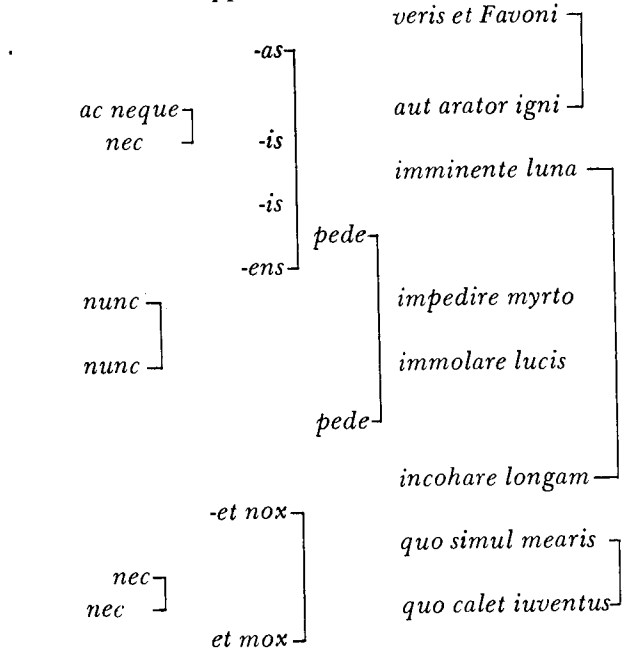
This s-pattern is extended into the poem's central section:

Nymphis . . . . . *decentes*
ardens . . . . . *officinas,*

till, at the half-way point, the s-sounds give way to the rhyme

terrae . . . . . *solutae.*[14]

The schema now appears:



Doubtless there are countercurrents of sound as well. But the overall pattern seems to indicate that Horace composed 1.4 as a thematic and sonic circle with the four lines on Faunus as its center. The ode thus becomes an occasional piece: Horace and Sestius meet to feast and sacrifice in honor of Faunus on his feast day in February,[15] just as the first signs of spring appear on the earth.

2

1.11: WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Tu ne quaesieris (scire nefas) quem mihi, quem tibi
finem di dederint, Leuconoë, nec Babylonios
tentaris numeros. ut melius quidquid erit pati.
seu plures hiemes seu tribuit Iuppiter ultimam,
quae nunc oppositis debilitat pumicibus mare
Tyrrhenum, sapias: vina liques, et spatio brevi
spem longam reseces. dum loquimur, fugerit invida
aetas. carpe diem, quam minimum credula postero.

Please don't try to discern (knowing is wrong)
what is decreed for me
And for you by the gods, Leuconoë.
Don't be consulting vast
Chaldee horoscope-books. Better by far
taking whate'er will be.
If great Jove has ordained more winters still
or if this be your last
Which now, on the opposed volcanic rocks,
cripples the Tuscan sea,
you must ever be wise: strain out the wine
and, as your life is small,
trim luxuriant hope. Now while we speak,
envious time has passed.
Pluck the flow'r of this day, trusting the next
little or not at all.

THE MOST STRIKING single feature of this poem is the concise and confident use of the long Asclepiad line, with

its marked diaereses after the sixth and tenth syllables. The movement is rapid yet emphatic (Heinze dubs it "energische Knappheit"[1]) so as to reinforce the urgent imperatives. Most of Horace's expressions neatly fill a choriamb: *scire nefas, di dederint, ut melius, quidquid erit, seu tribuit, vina liques, dum loquimur, carpe diem, quam minimum.* The use of single choriambic words is particularly adept: the initial *quaesieris,* the powerful *oppositis debilitat pumicibus* (at least as evocative as Tennyson's "Break, break, break"), and finally, that key word in the poem, the lady's name, Leuconoë.

What's in a name? In an ode of Horace, usually a great deal. Pyrrha's name establishes her role as seductress and destructive force in 1.5; Postumus is "a man born after the death of his father, and hence already launched on the cycle of time that Horace describes"[2] in 2.14; Thaliarchus is part of the pattern of green-youth-spring opposed to white-senility-winter in 1.9; Chloë's name provides the clue to the woodland imagery in 1.23; Horace teases Fuscus about his cognomen by introducing Moorish javelins, the Hydaspes, and the torrid zones into 1.22. The list can easily be extended.[3]

A Leuconoë is mentioned by Hyginus as the daughter of Neptune (157) and consort of Apollo (161), and by Ovid as one of the daughters of Minyas (in *Metamorphoses* 4.168 ff. she tells how Vulcan caught Mars and Venus making love). Undoubtedly the melodious name attracted Horace, always on the lookout for choriambic eighths and sixteenths. But as we expect, he worked its meaning as well as its music into the poem.

What significance does Horace find in λευκὸς νόος? Collinge, with most up-to-date commentators, sees "a Pindaric 'pallid wit' (*Pyth.* 4.109)";[4] the girl is plainly silly, as is evidenced by her compulsive chasing after soothsayers. This reading is not unattractive. 1.11 will then be a companion piece for 1.23: Horace is in love, now with Chloë, now with Leuconoë (*quem mihi, quem tibi finem* shows the mutual regard in 1.11), but in neither poem has he been

able to domesticate his distracted mistress. Chloë is afraid to face the sudden springtime of her own maturity, and Leuconoë is given to star-gazing. One timidly clings to the past, the other obsessively peers into the future. Horace's message to both is a predictable, common-sense "live in the present."

But if simple-mindedness were all the name Leuconoë implied, the poem would have to be taken as tongue-in-cheek; the urgent expressions *scire nefas* and *ut melius* would be patronizing, even snide; the winter scene in line 5 would be gratuitous picture-painting; *vina liques* could just as well be an injunction to any household duty—perhaps "tend to your knitting." Small wonder Collinge can only conclude that the poem ends with a "heaping" of "old saws,"[5] that "Horace does no more than say 'carpe diem' in a series of aphorisms piled up in an almost Gilbertian manner."[6] I suspect that Leuconoë's plight *is* similar to Chloë's, that silliness *is* implied in her name. But this is not the whole story by any means.

For Commager, Leuconoë means "clear mind":[7] the girl's one passion is to see into the future. As an interpretation this has undeniable merits: Horace's shocked reaction to the girl's superstition (*scire nefas . . . ut melius*) will not be indulgent persiflage, but Stoic conservatism; the "old saws" will express this disapproval in more characteristically Horatian (i.e. Epicurean) terms; the puzzling *vina liques* will be "opposed to the obscure prophecies of Babylonian astrologers."[8] With Commager the poem is essentially serious. It "might almost be a more explicit redaction of the Soracte Ode":[9] *tu ne quaesieris* echoes *fuge quaerere, vina liques* recalls *benignius . . . deprome merum,* and both poems feature wintry seascapes. But "clear mind" alone will not explain winter's intrusion in 1.11. In fact, it leaves unrelated most of the overtones in the poem's words and images.

As Horace singles out *vina liques* from among all the domestic tasks a peaceful homebody must perform, one is tempted to go Commager one further and read the name

as "pure mind": the girl is a pious and innocent miss whose appropriate duty it is to strain wine of its impurities. This will give a still more satisfactory explanation of *scire nefas*: a person who lives *puriter* (as Catullus claims to have done) will want to avoid what is *nefas* and will find positive thinking (*ut melius*) persuasive. In addition, the wintry sea dashed against the rocks can "represent the sinister side of life (pain, trouble, the approach of death) and its effect on the mind."[10] Leuconoë wants the answers to life's mysteries, and Horace suggests that superstitious excesses ill accord with true purity of intention. The difficulty with this reading is that λευκός is not synonymous with, but only suggests, *purus*.

Most simply, Leuconoë means "white mind." And what, we may ask, does "white" mean in Horace's Odes? After the rash of recent exegeses of the Soracte ode it would be unwise to suggest any meaning for "white" which is not connected somehow with "death." In that poem, white, senility, and death are associated motifs, if not all aspects of the same inevitable force. In 1.4, another variant of the *carpe diem* theme, *acris hiems* and *prata albicant* and *pallida Mors* are white pictures which green springtime, for the moment, opposes. It is true that the whiteness of a swan's plume or a girl's shoulder can suggest to Horace other things than death. But winter's white means only one thing. I suspect Leuconoë, who thinks white, is plagued by thoughts of death. If the *finem* at the beginning of line 2 does not imply this, the wintry seascape in line 5 does.

This interpretation will allow the other three to function throughout the poem as well: (4) Leuconoë thinks about death; (3) she is a circumspect, even pious girl, but (2) her obsession drives her to superstitious attempts to clear away her fears and (1) this is silly, for if she could live in the present, Horace might even be able to make love to her. All the associations that cluster about her name are called into play.

The reading "white mind" also affords the richest insight into the poem's imagery. Horace's seascape is made

white by specifying the rocks as *pumicibus*. Verrall[11] tries to be even more specific: he cites the very breakwater—the Pontus Julius, completed in 37-36. But this hardly explains the porous volcanic rock Horace introduces into his picture. One rather recalls the Italian film *L'Avventura*, in which white islands of volcanic ash in the *mare Tyrrhenum* are used to symbolize loneliness and isolation. There is no reason to suppose that Horace did not have such bleak and beautiful shapes in mind. But even if we take the traditional explanation (the rocks being gradually eaten away, made porous by the waves' pounding[12]), the image may still be white—and connected with *vina liques*, for the Romans purified their wine by straining it through snow.[13] Sea water slowly eating through white rocks and wine filtered through snow—in both choriambic pictures we have a liquid life-image acting on a white reminder of death. It is difficult to dismiss the intimations of this similarity—and of the difference, which is striking and apposite: in the seascape, the corrosive waves are themselves destroyed on the pumice-rocks, and the three heavy choriambic words suggest that it will always be so; in the filtering process, wine, the symbol of "commitment to present life,"[14] is purified, and the effect of the choriambic phrases is hopefully brisk. While nature's elemental struggle is unending and purposeless, our lives may have some brief meaning.

Horace ends 1.11 with a three-line enjoinder to live in the present. Predictably, his familiar life-images, wine and roses, appear. The concluding lines are no series of "old saws," rattling along like the patter in a lyric Gilbert wrote for Sullivan. If any ghost from the musical theater must be invoked at this point, surely it is Wagner's—the predictable leitmotifs recur, but reshaped and reharmonized masterfully to suit the context: "Leuconoë, you should be putting your house in order; there is wine to be strained, the vine to be pruned; the day has come to full bloom—pluck it now." There is no "heaping" here—only two[15] familiar motifs freshly stated. One might even say

the passage is constructed so as *not* to give the impression Collinge draws from it. Notice how Horace's advice has progressed from negative to positive, from perfect subjunctive to present subjunctive to present imperative. Thus gradually and indirectly are we made to feel the increasing urgency. Time is running out. Or rather, as the future perfect *fugerit* indicates, time "will be—has already flown." In addition, *fugerit* colors the next phrase, *carpe diem.* Out of context the familiar tag seems simply a metaphor from pruning; in the context we cannot be quite so sure. Time is some winged thing, and we must catch it while it passes by. Does *fugerit . . . carpe* imply rose or butterfly? There is an almost Empsonian ambiguity about it which Heinze's "Rosen sind ein Symbol der *flüchtigen* Lebensfreude"[16] does nothing to dispel.

Now that we have discussed the interplay of words, sounds, and images in 1.11, we might pause to ask ourselves how valuable such structural analysis is. Does it provide insight into the creative process? Can we see through the poem into the mind and heart of the poet? Can we rehearse the genesis of the ode to Leuconoë?

We can say that Horace found the "commitment to present life" a congenial, even prepossessing theme, and looked about for different ways to express it. *Solvitur acris, Vides ut alta, Persicos odi, Aequam memento,* and *Eheu fugaces* are all distinctive variations, stemming from seasonal, festive, literary, political, and personal experiences. The astrological craze in imperial Rome provided yet another way of treating the theme, and Horace chose to address his poem to one of the gullible. The name Leuconoë may have come from a Greek original, Alcaeus perhaps. In any case it was a happy choice, for not only did it fill a choriamb and so determine the poem's meter, it could imply that the lady was (1) immature, (2) curious to know the future, (3) concerned about living *puriter* and (4) white-minded, i.e., symbolically obsessed with thoughts of death. The gods must dole out this girl's time, not in years,

but in winters; the future she seeks to know must be painted white. And though wine and flowers will do, as usual, to represent the present, these can be introduced so that the wine (strained) will reinforce (4) the wintry image and (3) the idea of pure living, while the flowers (pruned) depict (2) the need to cut short future hopes and (1) the importance of living and loving in the present. Content with his ingenuity and armed with a notebook of choriambs (and perhaps a fragment of *Lyra Graeca*), Horace set to work, making the sounds currents, and cross-currents of meaning with the metaphors.

Si fuit ut faceret! All the neat schematization fails absurdly, as it must, when the poem is re-read. Artistic creation is one thing, aesthetic appreciation another. Between the artist and the reader (or listener or performer or critic) stands the art-work itself. We the public have always found subtleties, nuances, relationships which the artist could never have calculated. But then it is our role to appreciate, his to create, and this he must do as his genius moves him. Horace chose his words, rhythms, and images consciously and with great care. It appears that he was able to organize these into significant patterns. But no poet perceives, perhaps no true poet cares to perceive, all the import of his words and pictures as they fall into the metrical molds.

Sometimes the import escapes even the perceptive analyst. Didn't we miss a dominant metaphor in 1.11—from horoscope reading: *finem dederint . . . numeros . . . tribuit . . . plures . . . ultimam . . . spatio brevi . . . diem . . . postero*?

WORD, SOUND, AND IMAGE IN THE ODES OF HORACE

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