

NARRATIVE UNITY IN THE ARGONAUTICA, THE MEDEA-JASON ROMANCE

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In the last two centuries, criticism of Apollonius Rhodius has too rarely exceeded faultfinding. Although there is a more perceptive evaluation of him in the recent interpretive studies by Adolf Köhnken and Gilbert Lawall—Köhnken asserting that in the Hylas and Amycus episodes Apollonius improved on his models, Theocritus' *Idylls* 13 and 22,¹ and Lawall discerning profound unity in the poem, which he considers "a metaphysical portrayal of the human condition"²—in general the criticism of Apollonius has been characterized by censoriousness and numerous invidious comparisons between him and Virgil. Already in antiquity Macrobius (*Sat.* 5.17.5) had praised Virgil for achieving in the Dido episode, by refinement of style, greater verisimilitude, or *speciem veritatis*, than Apollonius had effected in the story of Medea. In the nineteenth century, certain critics with romantic affinities were so enamored of Dido that J. W. Mackail, for instance, believed he saw in Dido's tale "something different, something greater indeed, deeper and more majestic" than he saw in Apollonius' story of Medea.³ Unless he had been read by Virgil, would Apollonius have been mentioned at all?

Similarly, within this decade, Brooks Otis has assumed the nineteenth-century manner of praising Virgil by belittling his model Apollonius, particularly when he is discussing their respective narratives

¹ Adolf Köhnken, *Apollonios Rhodios und Theokrit* (Göttingen 1965) 118: "Apollonios achtet auch mehr als Theokrit darauf, dass Form und Inhalt sich ergänzen, der letztere aber den Vorrang behält."

² Gilbert Lawall, "Apollonius' *Argonautica*: Jason as Anti-Hero," *YCS* 19 (1966) 122.

³ *Lectures on Greek Poetry* (London 1926) 263.

of Medea and Dido.⁴ Otis believes that Virgil's version of the love affair is more "psychologically *continuous*" (62) than that of Apollonius. He criticizes Apollonius for stylistic "discontinuity" (69), his "shifts" (70) and his "twists" (88), and he says that the Medea affair has a "superficial and extrinsic" connection with the whole plot (90). Medea's hesitation, moreover, in approaching Chalciope (*Argon.* 3.645-55) does not have "any special *moral* content" (77),⁵ since Apollonius, Otis says elsewhere, "has nothing like Virgil's moral tone and purpose to maintain" (90).

There are three allegations in Brooks Otis' analysis of the Medea-Jason narrative which I shall attempt to refute. Because the wedding of Medea and Jason, in his opinion, was unnecessarily and unnaturally postponed until long after their betrothal, Otis implies that (1) Medea's pre-marital chastity was doubtful; (2) her love was not psychologically credible; (3) the course of her romance was not narrated by Apollonius in a structurally coherent manner. These charges are serious, but I believe that there is sufficient evidence in the text of the *Argonautica* not only to disprove the strictures of Otis, but also to prove that in the love story of Books 3 and 4 there is psychological and structural unity. Medea did love Jason, but because by loving him she had shown herself faithless to her father, Aeetes, and to Apsyrtus, her brother, she was filled with such fear of her powerful and violent father that she could not enjoy the full pleasure of her betrothal and marriage. Both anxiety and love struggled for control of her actions, and Apollonius described, sometimes with clinical detail, the violent agitation which the alternating ascendancy of each of these emotions caused in her heart.

Apollonius, we must admit, was less than realistic when he neglected to describe boat accommodations for Medea, the only lady aboard during the Argo's return voyage, at least until it reached Corcyra.⁶ No woman, not even Atalanta, who wanted to join them (*Argon.*

⁴ "The Subjective Style," Chapter 3 in *Virgil: A Study in Civilized Poetry* (Oxford 1963) 41-96. Otis summarizes this chapter in an article, "The Uniqueness of Latin Literature," *Arion* 6 (1967) 193-95.

⁵ The italics in the quotation are those of Professor Otis.

⁶ At Corcyra, Queen Arete gave Medea twelve Phaeacian slave girls (4.1221-22) who thereafter accompanied her on the Argo, but again Apollonius did not mention their accommodations. He obviously thought such details beneath the dignity of the epic.

1.772-73), had accompanied the men during their outward voyage, and the eventual need for a lady's stateroom or equivalent could not have been foreseen. Phineus had only warned the Argonauts that when they reached Aeaea they should "seek out the trickish help of the Cyprian goddess" (2.423-24).⁷ Out of idle curiosity, therefore, we might well ask whether or not Medea was embarrassed by the curious stares of sailors. As Thomas Means, in a generally unsympathetic article, remarked, "This Love-in-a-Life-Boat aspect of the plot leaves several delicate matters untouched."⁸

But such incidental observations violate the spirit of Apollonius' epic, which is economical in plot and stately in tone. The poet, as the ship is about to depart, directs our attention to Jason's victory speech (4.190-205), while Medea, who won the quest-object for him, sits protectively on the golden fleece, side by side with the steersman, Ancaeus, and Jason, the captain of the ship.⁹ This is the single image that Apollonius provides us of Medea on board, but it is memorably resplendent. The romantic critic Sainte-Beuve visualized Medea perfectly, "près de Jason à la place d'honneur, glorieusement assise à la poupe sur la merveilleuse toison."¹⁰

The day-to-day arrangements of Medea's passage to Greece were of no concern to Apollonius. He assumed that they were appropriate for a virginal heroine. And if Medea was foresighted enough to anticipate Queen Arete's misgivings about the chastity of an unmarried girl sailing with a lusty crew of foreign sailors, and stated that her

⁷ George E. Duckworth, *Foreshadowing and Suspense in the Epics of Homer, Apollonius, and Vergil* (Diss. Princeton 1933) 83, notes that by keeping both characters and readers ignorant of future events in Colchis, "Apollonius strives to increase the interest of his readers."

⁸ Thomas Means, "Incidental Observations on the *Argonautica* and *Post Homerica*," *CJ* 46 (1951) 337. Means' hostile approach to the *Argonautica* may be illustrated by his assertion that the first phase of the Argo's voyage is "about as lively as the pages of the Congressional Record" (335).

⁹ See *Argon.* 4.187-89: τῷ [fleece] δ' ἐπὶ φᾶρος / κάββαλε νηγάτεον: πρύμνῃ δ' ἐνεείσατο κόυρη / ἀνθέμενος; 4.209-10 [Jason] ἄγχι δὲ παρθενικῆς κεκορυθμένους ἰθύντῃρι / Ἀγκαίῳ παρέβασκεν. The first quotation is mistranslated by Seaton (London 1912), "He led the maiden to the stern and seated her there"; by Rieu (Harmondsworth 1959), "He led Medea aft, found her a seat." Rather translate with George W. Mooney, ed. *The Argonautica of Apollonius Rhodius* (London 1912) 313: "He . . . placed it [the robe-covered fleece] upon the poop, setting the maiden thereon."

¹⁰ Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve, "De la Médée d'Apollonius," *Revue des Deux Mondes* (1845: 3) 898.

maiden's belt was "undefiled and untouched" (4.1025), that is no reason to assume cynically that she was protesting too much. Neither on the ship nor during the busy stopovers on the Brygean Islands, where Apsyrtus was murdered (4.456-73), nor at the port of Aeaea, where the murder was expiated through Circe's ministrations (4.704-17), did Medea have physical relations with Jason.

Professor Otis finds it "hard to understand or accept" Apollonius' "insistence on Medea's chastity prior to a proper marriage in Greece" (p. 64). According to Otis, she had a "curious 'marriage'." He seems to question her chastity by inferring sexual immorality from her antisocial behavior: a girl who was an "experienced witch" was probably experienced in every way. She could hardly have been an "ingenue."

Medea *was* a witch, but if she had had sexual experience before her marriage, Apollonius would not have hesitated to suggest it. For Apollonius, who always maintained his epic gravity, was nevertheless a master of the playful sexual innuendo. Lemnos, the island of lonely women, must have been for the Argonauts a sailor's dream come true, yet Apollonius did not describe the men's sexual moods and fantasies, probably because the masculine viewpoint would have been too candid to suit his allusive poetic style.¹¹ The women's repressed excitement at the Argonauts' arrival was more to the poet's liking.¹² His tone was gracefully ironic¹³ as he described the loud silence which followed

¹¹ Professor Lawall (above, note 2) 151 somewhat distorts the conformation of the Lemnian episode by representing the city of Myrina as a kind of brothel. Apollonius saw the Argonauts as desperately needed husbands who had been sent by Aphrodite's will to father sons on the Lemnian women (*Argon.* 1.850-52).

¹² Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Hellenistische Dichtung* 2 (2nd ed., Berlin 1962) 220: "Seine Darstellung behandelt die Sage von der Seite der Frauen aus, in deren männerlosen Staat er [Apollonius] uns führt."

¹³ Franz Stoessl, *Apollonios Rhodios: Interpretationen zur Erzählungskunst und Quellenverwertung* (Bern/Leipzig 1941) 40 recognizes the irony of the Lemnian scene, but chooses a poor analogy: "In der ganzen Behandlung der Lemnierinnengeschichte liegt viel vom Witz der aristophanischen Ekklesiazusen." Aristophanes' comedy is much franker than that of Apollonius. As Wilamowitz (above, note 12) 220 remarked, "Die heikle Geschichte . . . wird aber mit der sorglichsten Wahrung des Anstandes behandelt." This opinion is shared by Alfred Körte, *Die hellenistische Dichtung*, 2nd ed. Paul Händel (Stuttgart 1960) 139: "Dezenz ist ein wichtiger Wesenszug seines Erzählens." For further commentary on Apollonius' ironic comic style in this section, see my University of California (Berkeley) 1963 dissertation, *Apollonius Rhodius* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms No. 64-5280) 92-97; Köhnken (above, note 1) 44, note 3.

Queen Hypsipyle's suggestion that they bribe the men to stay out of town (I.668); the ambiguous roar (ἀγορή πλητο θρόου, I.697) of approval for the old woman Polyxo, who suggested that they might not want to live alone when they were old (!);¹⁴ the women's excited shrieking (ἐπεκλονέοντο γυναῖκες / γηθόσυναι ξείνῳ, I.783-84) as they charged toward their bashful hero (ἐπὶ χθονὸς ὄμματ' ἐρείσας, I.784);¹⁵ the whole city reeking with the smoke (καπνῷ κνισήεντι περίπλεον, I.858) of appreciative sacrifices to Aphrodite. All was described most decorously, but the sexual undertones were clearly evident.

Just as the Lemnian affair was described in a comically suggestive manner, so (I now believe)¹⁶ was the affiliation between Hylas and Heracles intended to be ironically humorous. Despite A. S. F. Gow's contention that in the *Argonautica* there was an "omission of any tender relation between Heracles and Hylas,"¹⁷ there is presently a consensus among certain scholars that in Apollonius, as in Theocritus' *Idyll* 13, Hylas was the beloved μεράκιον of Heracles and also of Polyphemus, both of whom were overly crazed by his abduction.¹⁸ Only Polyphemus, who had left his comrades behind in camp, heard Hylas' cry and was panicked. This mighty hero (ἥρως, I.1240) howled (μεγάλ' ἔστενεν, I.1248) and stalked around in a circle (ἀμφὶ δὲ χώρον / φοίτα, I.1248-49).¹⁹ Seemingly, he overreacted, unless we infer,

¹⁴ Wilamowitz (above, note 12) 220, note 2: "Den Antrag auf Zulassung der Männer mit Rücksicht auf Nachkommenschaft (natürlich nur darum, wenigstens redet niemand von dem wahren Grund) stellt Hypsipyles alte Amme."

¹⁵ The scholium to I.783 misses the point of ἐπεκλονέοντο, which it says is a poor verb to use ἄμα τῇ χαρᾷ: κλόνος γὰρ ἡ παραχή (Wendel, *Scholias* 68). As Stoessl (above, note 13) 40 remarks, "Der Scholiast hat den Humor der Stelle nicht verstanden. . . . Gegenüber diesem Treiben der Weiber wird—wieder mit feinem Humor bemerkt—Jason, der Führer der Argonauten zum schüchternen Knaben."

¹⁶ I no longer maintain my previous position, stated in my dissertation (above, note 13) 56, that Apollonius "chooses to ignore Heracles' notorious sexual prowess."

¹⁷ *Theocritus* 2 (2nd ed., Cambridge 1952) 232.

¹⁸ Köhnken (above, note 1) 75 says of Heracles' affection: "Herakles kann Hylas nicht nur wegen seiner Dienstwilligkeit geschätzt haben, sondern muss mit ihm darüber hinaus eng verbunden gewesen sein." Köhnken lists some corresponding secondary references on p. 75, note 2.

¹⁹ Since Polyphemus' panic at losing his beloved is naturally the first reaction, I cannot accept (as Lawall [above, note 2] 127 does) Hermann Fränkel's transposition of lines I.1250-52 (in which Polyphemus is said to draw his sword) immediately after I.1242. See his *Apollonii Rhodii Argonautica* (corr. ed., Oxford 1964) 52. The simile comparing

as Apollonius desired, that Polyphemus loved Hylas and was therefore forced into unusual and (to us the observers) *comic* behavior. Polyphemus' reaction, however, was only a prelude to that of Heracles, who, when he heard the news of Hylas' disappearance, broke into a sweat (κατὰ κροτάφων ἄλῃς ἰδρώς, 1.1261) and galloped (γούνατ' ἔπαλλεν, 1.1270) and bellowed (μεγέλη βοάσκειν ἀντῇ, 1.1272) like a stung bull. All these laughable contortions were caused by a lost boy, but such is the irony of love.

These two episodes reveal that, although Apollonius' descriptions of sexual love were seemly and indirectly described, he did not shy from the subject. Medea isolated with the sailors was a potentially comic figure, and Apollonius could have toyed with the sexual irony that was inherent in Medea's very situation. But he did not, I suspect, because the tradition which he was following had described her love affair in mostly epic and tragic terms. Medea was a sorceress, a powerful heroine, whose marriage, far from being merely "curious" (Otis 64), was in the poet's estimation her reward for her pre-eminent services to Jason, commander of heroes.

The plot of the *Argonautica* has been labeled by Brooks Otis as an "essentially non-psychological, non-empathetic plot—a plot of physical action and adventure."²⁰ The word *essentially* should be underscored, since parts of the *Argonautica*, especially the third book, have always been celebrated for their portrayal of love psychology. Recently, Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg in their book, *The Nature of Narrative*, have praised Apollonius for refining the interior, or psychological, monologue by setting it within a mind tormented by a dilemma: "The credit for this development in narrative must go to

Polyphemus to a frustrated lion (1.1243–47) better illustrates his emotional derangement than his desire to drive off possible attackers with a sword. Thus states Hartmut Erbse, "Versumstellungen in den 'Argonautika' des Apollonios Rhodios," *RhM* 106 (1963) 233.

Lawall 127, note 15, considers ἀἴψα (1.1250) out of place if the line is kept in its traditional position, but Apollonius uses this adverb elsewhere (1.1221) to announce and resume the action after an interruption in the narrative.

²⁰ Otis (above, note 4) 95. See also 62: "Virgil's narrative is psychologically *continuous* in a way that Apollonius' narrative is not"; 90–91: The *Aeneid* "is psychological and subjective, not what the hero does or encounters (as in the *Argonautica*) but how he deals with his own emotions."

Apollonius of Rhodes—a narrative artist who has nothing like his due acclaim—though he undoubtedly learned something from the Greek tragic dramatists.”²¹ Professor Otis also believes that Apollonius’ descriptions of Medea’s burgeoning love and her painful submission to it “are, in themselves, a remarkable description of a single psychological process in all its successive stages,”²² but he points out what he thinks is the psychological flaw when he adds that the first portions of Medea’s story “are neither followed up nor integrated with the other sections save in respect to their quite superficial relation to the plot.” In other words, the description of Medea’s love affair, in its entirety from start to marriage, does not seem psychologically true or authentic.²³

This supposed “letdown” in the Medea narrative is an old criticism that can be traced back to the nineteenth-century romantics’ fondness for passionate sentimentalism. A feeling of psychological slackening, particularly between Books 3 and 4 of the *Argonautica*, led to the popular theory (which Otis has revived) that there was a kind of anacoluthon in Apollonius’ delineation of Medea’s character.²⁴ In Book 3, it was believed, our poet portrayed Medea as an innocent girl who was victimized by passion; at the beginning of Book 4, however, Apollonius abandoned this construction of her character and proceeded to describe her as a callous witch. This split-woman interpretation of Medea was based on the hypothesis that sometime, in the interval between the actions of Books 3 and 4, Medea stopped loving Jason,²⁵ and thus the abrupt loosening of emotional tension and psychological

²¹ (New York 1966) 181. On 195, Scholes-Kellogg call the roll of honor in psychology: “That knowledge of feminine psychology which Jung praised in Joyce owes much to Joyce’s sensitivity and to his marriage, no doubt, but also owes something to Tolstoy and the narrative tradition going back through Stendhal, Chaucer, Boccaccio, Ovid, and Vergil, to Apollonius of Rhodes.”

²² Otis (above, note 4) 64.

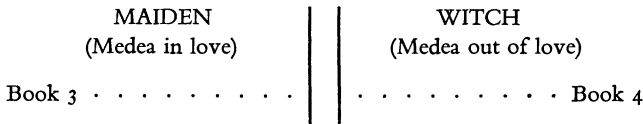
²³ Cf. Otis (above, note 4) 65: “Nor can we accept so gauche a termination to so passionate a beginning.”

²⁴ This interpretation seems to have originated with Erwin Rohde, *Der griechische Roman und seine Vorläufer* (4th ed., Hildesheim 1960) 112: “dem zwiespältigen Charakter der Medea.” It is echoed by Christ-Schmid-Stählin 2 (6th ed., Munich 1920) 145: “In Medeias Charakter klafft ein Zwiespalt zwischen weichlicher Verliebtheit und kühner Tatkraft.” This interpretation was adopted by Wilamowitz (above, note 12) 214: “der Bruch in der Charakteristik Medeias.”

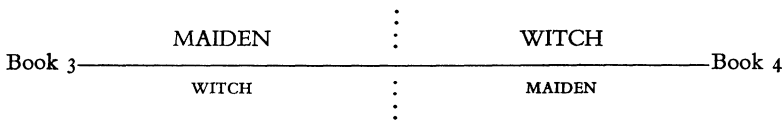
²⁵ Wilamowitz (above, note 12) 212: “Erst nach dem Ausgange des Kampfes kommen wir wieder zu Medea. . . . Verblasst ist die Liebe zu Iason.”

interest was neatly explained. As Wilamowitz said, "There was no longer any vestige of love," after Jason and Medea left Colchis, "either in him or in her, not even when they were married; Medea, moreover, had lost her young maid's nature and was hard, calculating, and cold like a witch."²⁶

Undoubtedly this oversimplified vertical dichotomization of Medea, which may be diagrammed:



disregarded Apollonius' fusion of both sides of Medea's character in both books. In 3, the nubile girl was nevertheless an awesome priestess of Hecate (3.251-52, 842), and she was avoided by the common people because she had the evil eye (3.885-86). In 4, the sorceress was still an innocent child. Although she practiced magic and bewitched Apsyrtus (4.442-44) and Talos (4.1669-72), she was pitied for being a suffering innocent (*αἰνοπαθής*, 4.1078) by the wise queen, Arete.²⁷ So the following diagram:



illustrates that Medea's polarized character is more properly divided by a horizontal line. The vertical dots which demarcate Book 3 from Book 4 may be retained, however, since Apollonius emphasized in 3 (as indicated at the left with large capitals) Medea's girlish traits and in 4 (indicated at the right with large capitals) her frightening magical powers. The beginning of Book 4, therefore, does distinguish a new, inverted scheme of characterization, but the two main components of that characterization are the same as in Book 3.

Medea's several outbursts of anger in the fourth book have been construed as indications of Medea's new, entirely loveless self, the

²⁶ Wilamowitz (above, note 12) 213. Similarly, Adalgott Hübscher, *Die Charakteristik der Personen in Apollonios' Argonautika* (Diss. Freiburg i. d. Schweiz 1936) 16.

²⁷ Körte-Händel (above, note 13) 197: "Im übrigen ist die Medea des iv. Buchs keineswegs eine scheussliche Zauberin, von der aller Liebreiz eines Mädchens abgefallen wäre."

barbaric identity that Apollonius got from Euripides.²⁸ Perhaps rightly so, but if she sometimes hated with a vengeance, she was never relentlessly angry, for Medea's fits of anger, *pace* Wilamowitz' theory of her dead affection, did not belie her genuine love for Jason. When she was placed in temple custody to await her disposition by the Brygean authorities (*Argon.* 4.338-93), Medea boiled with rage. "I hope you think of me someday," she threatened, "when you are cramped with pain, and I hope the fleece vanishes like a dream into the darkness and my Furies hound you from your homeland" (4.383-86). Thus intimidated, Jason changed his plans in order to assuage her anger and, instead of appeasing the Colchians, decided to murder their leader, Medea's own brother Apsyrtus—a plot in which Medea was a willing accomplice (4.414-16). Her anger at Jason had been only momentary.²⁹ When she and Jason had come to an understanding—Apollonius' word is *συμβάντε* (4.421)—Medea's hostility diminished and she worked closely with Jason to execute her brother's murder (4.452-81), a treacherous act that by its very cruelty argued the intensity of a love so violent that Apollonius was led to apostrophize it as *Σχέτλι' Ἔρωσ* (4.445).³⁰

²⁸ Wilamowitz (above, note 12) 214; Alfred Körte, *Hellenistic Poetry*, tr. Hammer-Hadas (New York 1929) 220; J. C. Wordsworth, *Adventures in Literature* (London 1929) 186; Paul Händel, *Beobachtungen zur epischen Technik des Apollonios Rhodios* (Munich 1954) 117. Händel in his revision of Körte (above, note 13) 169-71 modifies his former views in *Beobachtungen* and now considers Apollonius' characterization of Medea in Book 4 to be consistent with that in Book 3 (see also my note 27).

²⁹ So Otis (above, note 4) 87: "Medea's accusations of ingratitude, rehearsal of her pitiful plight (if deserted), and threats to become Jason's avenging fury . . . are over as soon as they are pronounced." Otis rightly contrasts Dido's fury at Aeneas, which is permanent: "the necessary result of a pre-determined process," or Rome's destiny.

³⁰ I cannot agree with Professor Otis that Medea's "witch-like connivance in Apsyrtus' death is *simply* [my italics] the price of the marriage that she so single-mindedly seeks" (87). Medea, like everyone in the *Argonautica*, is victimized by fate and its agents the gods (Hermann Fränkel, "Das Argonautenepos des Apollonios," *Mus. Helv.* 14 [1957] 9, rightly calls Apollonius' plot "eine Kette von Zwangslagen"). She tells Jason that Apsyrtus' murder is the price of evil, which itself was *θεόθεν* (4.413; cf. *γνώ δέ μιν* [Medea] *Αἰσονίδης ἀτὴν ἐνπεπτηγυῖαν / θευμορίη*, 3.973-74). And the apostrophized Eros was said to have cast *στυγερὴν ἄτην* (4.449) into Medea's heart. An ineluctable love, therefore, was the major cause of her misery. She was not just scheming for marriage, but she was also the pitifully abused victim of Eros. The poet shows his pity when he calls her *δυσάμμορος*, 3.809, and *σχετλίη*, 3.1133; and Duckworth (above, note 7) 12, notes the deep pathos that is implied in the latter adjective. Cf. the standard translations, "Poor wretch!" (Seaton), "Poor girl!" (Rieu), and "La malheureuse!" (F. Vian, *Apollonios de Rhodes: Argonautiques Chant III* [Paris 1961] commentary *ad loc.*).

Later, when the Argonauts had reached Corcyra, the imminence of Medea's extradition to Colchis again excited her anger. This time, however, she turned her indignation against Argonauts other than Jason who she thought were not sufficiently active in her defense. Once more she threatened them with possible retribution from the gods (4.1042-43), and once more her anger was quickly calmed when the Argonauts promised their support (4.1053-54). Through the intervention, moreover, of the Corcyrean queen, Arete, and the goddess Hera (4.1199-1200), Medea celebrated her marriage with Jason at last. This marriage, although it was "hasty" and perhaps "curious,"³¹ was nevertheless miraculously complete and resplendent, the irrevocable seal upon the love of Jason and Medea. Bridesmaids prepared the wedding couch, golden with the covering fleece and brilliant with floral bouquets, while the lusty Argonauts sang the wedding song to the accompaniment of Orpheus' harp (4.1141-60). Among legendary heroes, clearly, even hasty weddings were highly elaborate, and there was no lack of the guests, dancers, banqueters, and gifts that are even now customary at Greek weddings (4.1182-1200).³²

³¹ Otis (above, note 4) 64. The hastiness of the marriage is natural, since Jason and Medea, although they had wanted to be married in Aeson's house (4.1161-64), were forced by the threatening Colchians to marry sooner. If Medea had remained unmarried, she would have been taken back to Colchis (4.1107-9).

³² Lines 4.1182-1200 describe the dawn-time arrival of women and gift-bearing country people who are sent by Hera (4.1184-85) to provide festive gaiety for a wedding that by necessity was speedily arranged and secret. The lovely scene is an excellent example, as Ludwig Klein said, of Apollonius' *Bildhaftigkeit* ("Die Göttertechnik in den Argonautika des Apollonios Rhodios," *Philologus* 86 [1930-1931] 238). Hermann Fränkel in his Oxford text (above, note 19) 217 has suggested transposing these lines to a position after 4.1169, although the resulting juncture between 4.1181 and 1201 would then be very rough ("fortasse quaedam interciderunt inter 1181 et 1201," explains Fränkel). Hartmut Erbse has objected that if Fränkel's transposition is accepted, Apollonius (incredibly) would be describing Greek women going out to a country cave at night to view a marriage between strangers, since the wedding is said to have occurred at night (αὐτονυχί, 4.1130). See Erbse (above, note 19) 249.

Dawn, however, in the *Argonautica* frequently betokens, like a poetic alarm, the beginning of busy activity (1.519-23, 1273-75; 2.164-68, 720-21; 4.885-87, 1223-25). So in 4.1170 ff., the coming of dawn signalizes the onset of a new day's bustle and the arrival on this particular day of wedding guests: Ἦως δ' . . . λῦε κελαινὴν νύκτα . . . ἐν δὲ θρόος ἔσκειν ἀγνυαῖς (4.1170-73). There is an exact parallel in 3.823-24: τῇ δ' ἀσπασίον βάλε φέγγος / ἡριγενής, κίνυντο δ' ἀνὰ πολίεθρον ἑκαστοι. And cf. Apuleius, *Met.* 11.7.16-18 Frassinetti: "nec mora cum noctis atrae fugato nubilo sol exurgit aureus, et ecce discursu religioso ac prorsus triumphali turbulae complent totas plateas."

One scholar, Adalgot Hübcher, believed that, in the marriage scene, the silence between the bridal couple (for Apollonius recorded no dialogue) indicated mutual hostility. If Jason and Medea had loved each other, Hübcher thought, the poet would have made them talk about their feelings.³³ But Hübcher's romantic sensibility was outraged by what was essentially a straightforward, though not unpoetic, description of a Hellenistic wedding, and his strange *ex silentio* argument for the protagonists' dead love was based upon Wilamowitz' own unjustified conclusion that at Jason and Medea's wedding, "Sie haben beide keine Freude mehr im Herzen."³⁴ In the period between their engagement and marriage, according to Wilamowitz, *eine innerliche Entfremdung* had set in.

We have noted above, however, that Medea's wedding was described by Apollonius as a highlight of his epic and the climactic event in the series of Medea-Jason episodes.³⁵ By suggesting that the lovers were alienated when they were married, Wilamowitz and his disciple Hübcher implied that the love story ended tragically. But although this theoretical alienation attracted scholars who saw it as a clever literary foreshadowing of the eventual denouement known from other Medea stories, the estrangement hypothesis is contradicted by Apollonius' own words at the conclusion of the wedding scene. He said that even if the happiness of their marriage was menaced by their fear of the Colchians, Jason and Medea were nevertheless "joined in sweet love" (*γλυκερῇ περ λαινομένων φιλότῳ*, 4.1168). It would

³³ Hübcher (above, note 26) 16. But, as Professor Donald Norman Levin—to whom I owe many improvements on these pages—has suggested in a letter dated June 3, 1967, could not Jason and Medea simply have been speechless with emotion in the same way they were reduced to silence at their first meeting (*Argon.* 3.967–70)?

³⁴ Wilamowitz (above, note 12) 199. Cf. Rudolf Pfeiffer, "The Future of Studies in the Field of Hellenistic Poetry," *Ausgewählte Schriften* (Munich 1960) 152: "Wilamowitz and his followers . . . were not quite immune against romantic infection." Brooks Otis, "Housman and Horace," *Pacific Coast Philology* 2 (1967) 20: "Men such as . . . Wilamowitz . . . did not effectively dispute the prevailingly romantic view of either Greek or Latin literature."

³⁵ After her wedding, Medea figured in only one episode, the bewitching of Talos (4.1638–72). Here, no mention was made of love, since that theme culminated in the marriage which had been Medea's reward for her help in acquiring the fleece, the goal of the entire expedition. The excitement and fascination inherent in the besting of Talos kept Apollonius from omitting this celebrated episode, although he had completed Medea's role in the Argonautic plot and did not necessarily have to re-introduce her as a protagonist.

be very hard to reconcile this physical consummation with Wilamowitz' theory of emotional estrangement.

Not unrelated to scholars' strictures on the incompatibility of the infatuated Medea of Book 3 with the lovelorn Medea of Book 4, were their objections to the seeming stylistic disjunction between Book 3, which followed the course of Medea's budding passion, and Book 4 (especially its beginning), which introduced new themes. If the plot lacked coherence, that was because there was no psychological unity. "Apollonius shifts his scenes almost arbitrarily," concludes Professor Otis, "as the time-schedule of his essentially non-psychological plot demands."³⁶

An especially difficult shift occurred at the beginning of Book 4, where Apollonius said in a new proem that Medea did not run away—as the concept of structural congruity would apparently demand—for love of Jason, but from *fear of her father*. "Into Medea's heart," he said, "Hera flung an excruciating panic (*φόβος*), and the girl trembled like a delicate fawn that has been terrified by dogs barking in the deep underbrush of the forest" (4.11–13). Her fear of being punished by her savagely angry father (*ἄμοτον κεχολωμένος*, 4.9) induced the hysterical symptoms customarily associated with panic: burning eyes, ringing ears, and gagging throat (4.16–19). Though virtually paralyzed, Medea was galvanized by Hera, who induced her to escape not with her lover, but with the sons of Phrixus, her cousins (4.22). And, in fact, when Medea finally approached the Argonauts' camp, she called sharply, not to Jason, but to the youngest of her

³⁶ Otis (above, note 4) 92. Professor Otis, I believe, objects to the lack in Apollonius of symbolic connectedness even more than to the lack of psychological unity. He states that Apollonius' omission of "symbol or motif structure" results in the poet's "failure to assimilate the conventional epic elements of plot or style to the 'psychological' sections of the narrative" (95). To Otis, one of the most important qualities, if not the most important, of Virgilian epic is its interlocking symbolic structure which he believes gives life and unity to cold, discursive myth. "Virgil is an author," he has more recently explained, "who enters into his readers' and characters' feelings in order . . . to suggest the symbolic relevance of even the most incredible scenes" (*Ovid as an Epic Poet* [Cambridge 1966] 323). It is not psychology itself, therefore, that he admires in Virgil so much as a literary by-product of psychology: subjective symbolic illustration of an epic theme (e.g. Dido's *furor* perfectly exemplifies inveterate Carthaginian hostility). Otis' preference for psychological symbols causes him to discredit Apollonius for not possessing a style which the poet never attempted.

cousins, Phrontis, and from across the river came Phrontis' answering cry (4.70-73).

A poor scenario, this, for meeting the exacting standards of some artless rationalist. Because Medea loved Jason, such a man might claim, she should at least have called him when she was in trouble, and Ludwig Klein, not surprisingly, since he was baffled generally by the structural organization of the *Argonautica*, believed that the divinely inflicted panic which actuated Medea was a make-shift motivation of Medea's escape, a sorry expedient necessitated by the poet's inability to grasp even elementary principles of narrative structure.³⁷

A fairer critic, however, should appreciate that, in the beginning of Book 4, by motivating Medea's escape from Colchis with φόβος, Apollonius was not confused, nor did he intimate that Medea was reacting against her passion for Jason. Instead, she was reacting to the hostility of her father Aeetes. "She knew," Apollonius clearly stated, "that her father had discovered her treachery and soon she would pay the full price" (4.14-15).³⁸ She loved Jason, but quite naturally feared her father, a hot-tempered man, who she knew was not likely to forgive her abetting a crime against him and the Colchian state. Aeetes had declared, in Medea's presence (3.250), that if the Argonauts had not eaten at his table, he would have cut out their tongues and chopped off their hands (3.377-81). Later, in a public assembly (3.576), he had threatened to burn the Argo and avenge himself horribly on the Greek outlanders (3.606-8).

Although the conventional picture of Medea as a pathetic, star-crossed innamorata may not readily fuse with her Apollonian image as an enemy of the state, it is nevertheless true that the sweet young girl was a disobedient daughter and traitorous princess. Apollonius' structural problem, therefore, was to accommodate Medea's essential character of woman in love to her partly extrinsic character of public enemy. He could have articulated her two characters by explaining her criminal activity as the issue of her great love for Jason. That is, in fact, how Apollonius explained her original crime of treacherously

³⁷ Klein (above, note 32) 232 states that Hera's instilling fear in Medea (*Argon.* 4.22) is "eine Hilflosigkeit des Dichters."

³⁸ Hermann Fränkel (above, note 30) 10 accurately observes that Medea's love for Jason "verlosch momentan [my italics], verschüttet von der eigenen Not." Her panic is temporarily predominant.

giving the foreigner Jason some fire-repellent salve with which he met the impossible terms that Aeetes had imposed as the price of the golden fleece (3.1022-62). Apollonius, however, did not explain her subsequent felonies of helping Jason to steal the fleece and murder Apsyrtus solely as the consequences of her love, although he could easily have done so. For a motive, he chose rather to emphasize a panic impulse which resulted naturally from the fear of her father that was an important integrant in the total complex of her emotions.³⁹ She could not love Jason without enraging her father, since as an invading foreigner Jason was not the man Aeetes would have chosen for her husband.⁴⁰ She could not help Jason without betraying her father and fatherland because Jason was an enemy of the state which her father Aeetes ruled (3.375-76).

Since Medea could not love without fear, Apollonius did not construe all of Medea's actions in the light of her passion alone. That way he would have oversimplified the story, although he might thereby have made it more straightforward. What Apollonius did was to keep Medea's zigzagging course between lover and father at the structural center of her love story. Sometimes Medea loved, sometimes she was afraid. And although, psychologically speaking, she felt both emotions at once, Apollonius described them one at a time and then usually in terms of their effects, not as emotions *per se*.

The new prooemium, or re-invocation, of Book 4 is the formal link between the section in which love is emphasized as the motive of Medea's actions (Book 3) and the section in which fear is emphasized as the motive of her actions (Book 4). "Now tell me, Muse," began Apollonius, "holy daughter of Zeus, how the Colchian girl schemed and labored; for my mind is dizzy with confusion (*ἄμφασίη νόος ἔνδον ἐλίσσεται*), and I know not if I am to say that she abandoned the Colchian tribes out of pain from an ill-starred love or out of sudden panic" (4.1-5).⁴¹ While pretending to be perplexed by the necessity of choosing between two alternative reasons for Medea's

³⁹ Fear motivates the theft in 4.85-88. Fear is emphasized as one motive of the murder in 4.410-20, yet love is also called a motive in the "Cruel Love" apostrophe (4.445-51). Here we see Medea's dual motive-forces closely linked.

⁴⁰ *Argon.* 3.639, 793-97.

⁴¹ M. L. West, ed. *Hesiod: Theogony* (Oxford 1966) lists nine examples of re-invocation in Greek literature, including the poem of *Argonautica* Book 4.

escape (love or fear), in accordance with the conventional purpose behind the figure of speech called *dubitatio*,⁴² our poet was actually bridging the arbitrary and pre-arranged shift in motivational emphasis from love to fear. A prooemium, therefore, which incorporates within itself a transition between modes of interpreting Medea's frantic crimes should not be construed, as some scholars construed it,⁴³ to be the effect of a psychological split in Medea's character.

Her love was not dead. When later on Corcyra the threat of Colchian reprisal was averted by Medea's marriage to Jason (4.1119-20), her fear subsided somewhat and her love re-emerged during the embraces of their wedding night (4.1168). Because her ambivalence between Jason and Aeetes had been resolved in favor of Jason at her father's expense, however, Medea's solution to her emotional crisis only intensified the fear of her father which her falling in love had originally induced. Medea would certainly be punished, as she intuited,⁴⁴ but those events were beyond the scope of Apollonius' epic. Her love had motivated capital offenses which in turn generated still crueler crimes and threat of punishment so great that even the pleasures of her marriage had not and would not allay the misfortunes of her life.

⁴² According to one definition, in the figure *dubitatio* "artificialiter simulamus nos . . . res invenire, non paratos venisse" (Heinrich Lausberg, *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik* 1 [Munich 1960] 383).

⁴³ Körte (tr. Hammer-Hadas [above, note 28]) 218: "Apollonius must himself have sensed this cleavage in the character of Medea; he indicates as much in the proem to the fourth book." See also my note 24.

⁴⁴ See *Argon.* 3.1132-36. In 3.1132 I prefer (*contra* Fränkel) to follow the mss. and read *ἐργ' αἰδήλα κατεργήγησεν ἰδέσθαι*, "she shuddered when she saw her unforeseeable deeds." For the poetic tradition behind this particular phrasing, read Vian (above, note 30) 136. Since Jason had just hinted at a proposal of marriage (3.1128-30), the "deeds" that Medea foreboded were her foreign marriage and the unknown hazards that she sensed it would inevitably lead to.