The epic poem of Apollonius, dealing with the story of the Golden Fleece, should have had Jason as its hero. The fact is, however, that Jason, according to Garspeken, lacks any heroic virtues. This has led Lawall to speak of Apollonius' Jason as 'anti-hero' who is gradually educated against his will by a series of different adventures. Consequently scholarly opinion has tended to condemn it as heroic epic in the sense of the Homeric epic. Whatever it be, the weakness of the character of Jason, or the suggestion of Gaunt that the story of the Golden Fleece may not be well adapted to the demands of the epic, what has saved the Argonautica in part is the tendency, shared by all Alexandrian poetry, to concentrate on individual scenes, such as the events at Colchis described in Book 3. And here again it is not Jason who lends splendour to these events, although he undergoes ordeals worthy of a hero and in a heroic manner; rather it is Medea who is portrayed as a proper heroic character as were Circe and Nausicaa of whom she is indeed a kind of blend. Because Jason is the object of Medea's awakening love, the poet must of necessity place him, according to Händel, on a higher level than his comrades. But as Medea's role increases, so the heroism of Jason decreases, and we, indeed even she, come to realize that she is the key figure on whom everything depends. This is confirmed by Medea's prophetic dream (616-743). In fact it is only Medea that is portrayed in any detail, as Fränkel has rightly observed, and in such a manner that her inner life has become for Apollonius a theme in its own right, drawn with psychological insight from a spirit near to that of modern man, a theme which Händel consequently calls the Psychology of Love (die Psychologie der Liebe). It is not the heroic as such but rather the erotic that becomes the real theme. These two motives—the heroic and the erotic are treated alternately in Book 3, but with a marked difference. In his treatment of Jason and the heroic, Apollonius keeps

4. Gaunt op. cit. p. 120; T. B. L. Webster, Hellenistic Poetry and Art, London, 1964, p. 78.
6. See also Händel op. cit. pp. 105 and 106.
11. Händel op. cit. note 1 p. 93.
within the form and techniques of the Homeric epic, but when he deals with Medea, we are transferred into a world where the soul forms the basis for reaction and action as opposed to the Homeric where normally human reason serves as the point of departure. A comparison between Homer and Apollonius clearly indicates that Apollonius asserted himself as poet precisely in this respect, namely psychological characterization, or the portrayal of emotions in conflict. Fraenkel observes that “for the Homeric man there is no threshold to separate will to action from carrying that will out, a threshold before which a man can stand hesitant, like Hamlet”, or, we may add, like Apollonius’ Medea. Homeric man has no hidden depths and “in general all the elements in a person—limbs, intellect, feeling, will—cooperate sympathetically for practical ends, without conflict or complications... nor is he capable of development.”

This theme of the psychology of love is developed in five stages throughout Book 3:

1. Lines 275-298 when Medea meets Jason and Eros inflicts on her the pain of love;
2. lines 451-471 in which the poet describes her anguish when Jason undertakes the task imposed upon him by the king;
3. lines 616-743 containing Medea’s prophetic dream and her interview with her sister;
4. lines 744-824 describing Medea’s night of anguish and doubt, and her final decision to aid Jason;
5. and finally lines 912-1145, the meeting and love-scene between Jason and Medea at the temple of Hecate.

The culminating point of her conflict is reached in the fourth passage. Here at the end, by Hera’s prompting, she arrives at a firm decision, and henceforth she is urged on by the force of certain love. The task imposed on Jason, and which he could not have accomplished unaided, is decided in his favour by means of her charms. The aim of this paper is to trace this psychology of love briefly in the first three passages with a more detailed discussion of the vital fourth passage.

1. In the first passage Apollonius relates how Eros shoots at Medea the arrow of love, which he calls a messenger of pain. Like a flame it burns deep inside her, and coils round her heart like a waxing fire consuming all the twigs.

12. See H. Gundert, Archilochos und Solon, Darmstadt, 1972, p. 85; Chr. Voigt, Ueberlegung und Einscheidung, Berlin, 1933; B. Snell, Aischylos und das Handeln im Drama, Leipzig, 1928; also Händel op. cit., p. 100.
14. Lesky, op. cit., p. 71, holds that there are new colourings in the Odyssey as compared with the Iliad, notably that “the potentialities of psychology are more deeply explored”.

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Speechless amazement seizes her soul, her heart pants in her breast through anguish, all remembrance has left her, her soul melts within with the sweet pain, and her cheeks turn now white, now red in her soul’s distraction.

2. The second passage reflects Medea’s thoughts of anguish and grief, and contains her words of despair concerning her own fate and that of Jason. This movement from thoughts to words or speech is an important characteristic of the fourth passage as well, as we shall presently see. In her love for him she fears his death, and mourns him as if already slain by the oxen. In her monologue we see her in a desperate shifting mood: if it be his lot to die, then he must die, but on the other hand she would that he rather live. But if he dies, let him know that she at least did not rejoice in his cruel fate.

3. The third passage contains her famous dream and her interview with Chalciope. She dreams that Jason has come not for the ram’s fleece, but to take her away as his bride; that she herself accomplishes the task imposed upon him; that her parents however set this at naught, because it is the stranger whom they have challenged. When contention arises between them and Jason, she is asked to decide the matter. She chooses Jason, and their cry of wrath awakes her from sleep. In her grief and anguish she decides to confide in her sister. But shame keeps her back, and we once again detect her shifting mood: thrice she tries to leave her room, and thrice she checks herself, the fourth time she falls on her bed writhing in pain.15 Told by a maid of Medea’s distress Chalciope rushes to Medea’s chamber to find out what has caused her grief. Again we see her wavering whether to tell Chalciope or not. At last she discloses her dream to her sister. Amid many tears Chalciope prompts her to save Jason and his comrades. Medea agrees and promises to bring the charms, without her parents’ knowledge, to Hecate’s temple. Chalciope withdraws to make known to her sons the help promised by Medea. Medea is left alone, and is seized again by shame and hateful fear for devising such deeds for a man in her father’s despite. Then follows her night of fear and doubt, described in the fourth passage.

It is important to note that the following passage, the vital fourth, reflects these three passages both in contents and structure in general, although in a much more elaborate and systematic form. The following are some of the most important motives taken from these three passages and which are reflected in the fourth:

1. The cares-of-love motif forming a circular pattern in the first two passages;

2. The metaphor of love as a burning flame, expanded into the simile of the waiving fire;

15. For this same motif “thrice... and the fourth time”, see Hom. II. 17, 319–332; 16, 698–711. Fenik, Typical Battle Scenes in the Iliad, Hermes Einzelschriften, Heft 21, 1968, p. 154. writes in this connection: “It is a regular stylistic feature for a situation to be carried to the extreme and the consequences then averted only by some kind of intervention”. Here it is Medea’s own psychological distress that keeps her from going to her sister.
3. Her physical distress: her panting and throbbing heart, her speechlessness, her tears of pity and grief, her cheeks turning now pale, now red;

4. Her psychological distress: her soul’s distraction, her anguish, her fear, and her shifting mood concerning Jason’s life and probable death as well as her own fate, and her moment of truth when she must decide and choose between Jason and her parents.

INTERPRETATION OF LINES 744–824

A. Structure in general
The basic pattern of Medea’s conflict can be compared to the movement of a pendulum as is evident in the formula entha kai eniha (651, 758, 771) or allote-allote / alludis allai (683-4, 766-767, 794), and which finds its embodiment in the simile of the quivering and darting reflection of a sunbeam from water upon the walls of a house (756-759). This movement is basic to the whole structure of the passage and becomes a well-suited device to portray her psychological conflict. In accordance with this basic pattern and by means of the method of discourse analysis I have divided the passage, which forms a well-knit unit, as will be indicated below, into six main sections (A–F), each section is again subdivided into smaller units (a b c d etc.). The passage is set in a frame which I have called, for reasons that will become clear, the symbolical level (A and F). Her physical and psychological distress, noted in the previous passages, occur again, but now on a much larger scale, indicated here as the physiological level and the psychological level. The psychological level covers the larger part of the passage (C, D and E), being the most important aspect of Medea’s conflict. This in turn reveals a continuing movement of growing tension in this conflict set out in three phases:

a. her conflict as expressed through her THOUGHTS (C)
b. as expressed through her WORDS (D)
c. and as expressed through her ACTION or ATTEMPTED ACTION (E)

I have indicated above that in the second passage her internal conflict has been expressed through her thoughts and her words. In the fourth passage then another and indeed final phase in this struggle is added, namely her conflict as expressed through her action or attempted action. For this reason inter alia we

16. Discourse analysis is the method by means of which the structure and meaning of a particular text is established. It consists in marking off the text in cola and commata. A colon consists of the subject-noun and verb of a sentence (together with a possible direct and indirect object) as primary elements together with all other elements which (a) are syntactically linked to one of the primary elements and (b) function as qualifications or extensions of one of the primary elements. There is in addition the provision that such a resulting configuration of primary elements and extensions should not in itself be embedded in some other unit, for in such a case it does not constitute a separate colon on its own. The extensions or qualifications are called commata. See H. C. Du Toit, What is a colon?, Neotestamentica 11, 1979, Supplement pp. 1-10, and J. H. Barkhuizen, Structural Text Analysis and the Problem of Unity in the Odes of Pindar, Acta Classica six 1976, p. 1-19.
are justified in calling the fourth passage the culminating scene in her struggle. The physiological level is represented by the symbol B.

B. Outline

A. SYMBOLICAL LEVEL:
   a. Night and Darkness
   b. Yearning for Sleep
   c. Silence and Darkening Gloom.

B. PHYSIOLOGICAL LEVEL:
   a. Cares-of-Love motif
      fire metaphor
      Agony-of-love motif
   b. Throbbing heart motif
      sunbeam simile
      Throbbing heart motif

C. PSYCHOLOGICAL LEVEL: PHASE 1: HER THOUGHTS
   a. Her doubts concerning the charms
   b. Her doubts whether to live or to die
   c. The charms and her fate.

D. PSYCHOLOGICAL LEVEL: PHASE 2: HER WORDS
   a. Her despair and pain—fire metaphor
   b. Her wish to have been dead
   c. Let Jason die: her parents' wrath
   d. Let Jason live: her sorrow if he dies
   e. Death wish
   f. Her disgrace and the people's mockery
   g. Death wish.

E. PSYCHOLOGICAL LEVEL: PHASE 3: HER ACTION
   a. The casket with drugs: her sorrow
   b. Death wish
   c. Fear of death vs. joys of life
   d. Wish to live.
   e. The casket with drugs: her joy

F. SYMBOLICAL LEVEL
   a. Medea's joy and expectation
   b. The light of the dayspring
   c. Awakening of the city.

C. Detailed analysis of the meaning and structure of the passage

Sigla:  A . . . main sections
        a . . . various units
        1 . . . cola
        1.1, 1.2, etc. . . . commata
SECTION A: SYMBOLICAL LEVEL: Lines 744–750

a. 1. Night did then draw darkness over the earth
   2. and on the sea sailors from their ships looked towards the Bear and the stars of Orion
b. 3. and the wayfarer and the warder longed for sleep
   4. and the pall of slumber wrapped round the mother whose children were dead,
c. 5. nor was there any more the barking of dogs through the city
   6. nor the sound of men's voices
   7. but silence held the darkening gloom.

Structure: The passage then begins with a description of night, darkness, a yearning for sleep—even in the case of a mother bereft of her children—the absence of any sound from man or animal, closing again with the opening motif of darkness, so that right from the beginning we are conscious of this to and fro movement underlying the structure of the whole passage.

We have in this opening section what is known as an intensifying preamble, a device by which a writer uses varying or similar elements or images or symbols to focus on a particular object. Here night and darkness suggest sleep, longed for by the sailors, the wayfarer, the warder and the bereaved mother. Sleep in its turn suggests the silence of man and animal, connected again with darkness. And this all serves as foil to Medea's night of fear, unrest and anguish that follows. Darkness and silence, while for others symbolizing sleep and rest from all cares, even those brought about by death, call to mind for Medea uncertainty, doubt, struggle and restlessness.

The background with its symbolical function carefully painted, the poet next leads us into the frightening world of Medea's physical and psychological conflict.


a. 1. But not indeed upon Medea came sweet sleep.
   2. For in her love for Aeson's son many cares kept her wakeful
      2.1 dreading the mighty strength of the bulls
      2.1.1 beneath whose fury he was like to perish by an unseemly fate in the fields of Ares.
   3. And a tear of pity sprang from her eyes
   4. And ever within anguish tortured her
      4.1 a smouldering fire through her frame
      4.2 and about her fine nerves
      4.3 and deep down beneath the nape of the neck

17. The translation which follows is more or less that of R. C. Seaton, Apollonius Rhodius, Loeb Classical Library. The text is taken from the Oxford edition by H. Fraenkel.
4.3.1 where the pain enters keenest

4.3.1.1 whenever the unwearied Loves direct against the heart their shafts of agony.

b. 5. And fast did her heart throb within her breast

5.1 just as a sunbeam quivers upon the walls of a house

5.1.1 when flung up from water

5.1.1.1 which is just poured forth in a cauldron or a pail may be

5.2 and hither and thither on the swift eddy does it dart and dance along.

6. Even so the maiden’s heart quivered in her breast.

Structure: This section contains a description of her physical pain, divided into two units, each characterized by two motifs: the agony-of-love motif and the throbbing heart motif, both forming a circular pattern, while in between we find the fire metaphor in the first and the sunbeam simile in the second unit.

In the statement “But not indeed upon Medea came sweet sleep” we have the climax of the opening preamble, serving at one and the same time as link between sections A and B. For in contrast with the rest of the city, enfolded in darkness, silence and sleep, Medea’s chamber now becomes the scene of an intense and bitter conflict of body and soul.

Unit a: Her fear that Jason may be killed by the bulls is a motif taken from the second passage, but here her physical pain caused by that fear is expanded with remarkable insight into the Greek physiology of the time, as Fraenkel,\(^\text{20}\) Solmsen,\(^\text{21}\) and Webster\(^\text{22}\) have shown. And this affliction of pain, true to the concept of the science of his day, gains in vividness by transforming it into the metaphor of a smouldering fire through her frame, by conveying her physical symptoms through metaphorical language. It reminds us of Sappho (Frg. 31) and is also echoed by Theocritus (Id. 2).

Unit b: Closing unit a with the agony-of-love motif, the poet makes mention of Medea’s heart. This word (prapidessin) serves at the same time as link with unit b which is in its turn framed by this very heart motif, kradie picking up the word prapidessin. To emphasize the throbbing of her heart, Apollonius turns to a traditional epic technique by comparing it with the darting movement of a sunbeam. But it is important to note that the function of this simile is not confined to her physical reaction, but it serves indeed as a simile of the whole psychological conflict that follows in sections C–E. Fraenkel\(^\text{23}\) wrongly confines its function to the immediately following section C. It will, however, become abundantly clear that it points backwards and forecastwards setting the basis for the

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22. Webster, op. cit., pp. 72 and 78.
whole passage, and it can even be seen as the central symbol or image of her struggle throughout the whole of book 3.

SECTION C: THE PSYCHOLOGICAL LEVEL: PHASE I: HER THOUGHTS: Lines 766-769
a. 1. And she THOUGHT:
   1.1 now that she would give him the charms to cast a spell on the bulls,
   1.2 now that she would not.
   b. 1.3 and that she herself would perish
   1.4 and again that she would not perish,
   c. 1.5 and would not give the charms
   1.6 but just as she was would endure her fate in silence.

As was indicated above, there is a distinct development of psychological tension reflected in her thoughts, words and action. Each of these phases represents the idea inherent in the simile, namely her shifting mood from doubt to certainty, from death to life, and from fear to joy. Thus by means of a traditional epic medium the visible and realistic event of a quivering sunbeam becomes an allegory of a psychological event: the real movement of the sunbeam becomes the movement of her soul. Here we have indeed one important difference between Homer and Apollonius: the psychological application of a traditional device, the simile.²⁴

Structure: Observe the rhythm and movement of the pendulum: now—, now not: and would— and would not—but would, the formula alloite men—alloite de followed by the de kai—out'—ou—all(a) replacing that of entha kai entha of line 758, which will be picked up again in 771 in the form entha . . . è entha.

Unit a deals with the whole crux of this book: the charms to aid Jason, while unit b touches on a very important secondary theme, her life or her death, i.e. her own fate. Unit c is a combination of units a and b, reflecting the negative side of unit a, viz. not to give the charms, and ending with her dreadful fate, her aitê, a word which serves as link with the following section, and which will later be echoed in one of her own cries of despair in section D, line 798. Section C may thus be viewed as introduction to sections D and E seeing that all the elements contained in C are expanded in D and E.

SECTION D: PHASE 2: HER WORDS: Lines 771-801
Due to the fact that this section contains 31 lines, I will discuss it in the following combination of units: a and b, c and d, e f and g.

a. 1. Then sitting down, she wavered in her mind,
   2. and SAID:

²⁴ See also Webster op. cit. pp. 72–73, and Lesky op. cit. p. 734, who writes in this connection: "Illustration of emotions by means of similes, found in Homer only in an initial stage, has been developed by him with great skill", and the similes' "free spontaneity as we know it in Homer has been restricted in favour of a more direct bearing on the action".
2.1 Poor wretch—must I toss hither and thither in woe?
2.2 On every side my heart is in despair
2.3 nor is there any help for my pain,
2.4 but it burneth ever thus.

b. 2.5 Would that I had been slain by the swift shafts of Artemis
   (i) before I had set eyes on him,
   (ii) before Chalciope's sons reached the Achaean land.
2.6 Some god or some fury brought them hither for our grief, a cause
   of many tears.

Unit a: The opening phrase "she wavered" (doassato) clearly indicates that
the poet is continuing the movement of the darting sunbeam: the shifting mood
of her thoughts is transformed into the shifting mood of her words, confirmed
by the phrase entha... entha (771). The phrase "she wavered" is thus
expanded by the two phrases "Must I toss hither and thither" and: "On every
side my heart is in despair", introduced by her first cry of despair: dele egò.
Touching on her pain and despair Apollonius also repeats the image of the
burning flame of the first passage as symbol of her burning pain.

Unit b: The violence of her pain with no aid to still it, prompts her to wish
to have rather died before becoming involved in Jason's venture. This death
wish of Medea constitutes the basic theme of section D, which began in section
C units b and c. By attributing her pain and grief to the workings of some god
or fury, Apollonius keeps within the traditional concept of man in the power
of the gods. But he will expand this concept by presenting man's conflict and
struggle against his fate as a humanly realistic and convincing one, and one
independent of divine intervention.

Her despair, pain, and subsequent wish rather to have died, now drive her
to desperate fatalism in unit c.

c. 2.7 Let him perish in the contest if it be his lot to die in the field,
2.8 For how could I prepare the charms without my parents' knowledge?
2.9 What story can I tell them?
2.10 What trick, what cunning device for aid can I find?
2.11 If I see him alone, apart from his comrades, shall I embrace him?
2.12 Ill-fated that I am!
2.13 I cannot hope that I should rest from my sorrows even though he
   perished.
2.14 Then will evil come to me when he is bereft of life.
2.15 Perish all shame,
2.16 perish all glory.
2.17 May he—saved by my effort—go scatheless wherever his heart
   desires.

More precisely the reason for her fatalism is her fear of her parents and
Jason, the characters, we are reminded, of her dream (third passage). That
dream, in which she chose Jason and brought the wrath of her parents upon herself, is now emerging from her subconscious and becoming a dreadful reality. Knowing what the outcome of that dream was, she is panic-stricken by the idea that she will have to face both whatever she decides to do. And this again is the reason for her second cry of despair: 

"dusmoros!" With this second cry of despair her mood begins to shift again. Her fear of her parents is overpowered by her love for Jason. Life without him seems to be unbearable, and her cry of fatalism: "Let Jason die!" now becomes with the movement of the pendulum one of defiance: "May Jason live!" No, he will go scatheless saved by her charms. At this stage it would seem as if everything is decided and clear-cut. But true to his intention to depict a human being involved in a humanly realistic conflict, Apollonius lets the pendulum of her soul's struggle move yet again. Her defiance retains a note of despair: "May he live, but: May I die." This wish to die, already noted in unit b, now gains in intensity in the following three units, e-g.

e. 2.18 But as for me—on the day when he bides the contest in triumph
—may I die
2.18.1 either straining my neck in the noose from the rooftree,
2.18.2 or applying to my skin ointments destructive of life.

f. 2.19 But even so—when I am dead—they will yet hurl taunts against me.
2.20 and every city far away will ring with my doom,
2.21 and the Colchian women—tossing my name on their lips hither and thither—will revile me with unseemly mocking:
2.21.1 the maid who cared so much for a stranger that she died,
2.21.2 the maid who disgraced her home and parents, yielding to a mad passion.

2.22 And what disgrace will not be mine?
2.23 Alas for my infatuation!

2.24 Far better would it be for me to forsake life this very night in my chamber by some unforeseen fate
2.24.1 escaping all slanderous reproach
2.24.2 before I complete such nameless dishonour.

Even in her wish to die, we detect her wavering mind. Medea is uncertain even how she must kill herself. At each turn of a mood we become more aware of the psychological insight with which the poet is depicting her conflict. Lesky\textsuperscript{25} states that this care taken in motivation is a characteristic of Hellenistic poetry.

By taking lethal drugs Medea is of course acting in line with her character, seeing that she is after all a sorceress. In fact, in the end this will be the method to which she will turn. But at this stage the poet succeeds in painting a human being caught in the web of utter despair and uncertainty.

\textsuperscript{25} Lesky op. cit. p. 735.
And yet again she wavers, again her mind is tossed hither and thither. For her wish to die is clouded by yet another fear: disgrace and mockery from her people, even when she is dead. Observe again the constant movement of the pendulum!

Four aspects in unit f need our attention:

1. Her fear of disgrace and mockery on the lips of her people and of people all over the world is in the eyes of the ancient world a real fear. Apollonius is here following another traditional concept: what people will think and say of you after death. From the times of Homer the Greeks attached great importance to this aspect. For despite such movements as those of the Orphics and the Eleusinian Mysteries the Homeric concept of a gloomy life after death persisted throughout ages of Greek thought, and in the face of that darkling and unreal existence and all the suffering that man must bear in this life, the only compensation was a glorious name on earth. Once again we notice that the poet is at pains to motivate every turn of mood.

2. Not only does her constant shifting of mood confirm the general function of the sunbeam simile, as I have suggested at the beginning, but by using the phrase “tossing my name on their lips hither and thither” (me...phoreousai...alludis allai) (793-794) Apollonius is consciously pursuing this very image of the darting sunbeam upon the walls of a house.

3. Observe thirdly how the visions of her dream again emerge from her subconscious. The women mocking “the maid who disgraced her home and parents”, and “the maid who cared so much for a stranger” refers once again to the characters of her dream, and the conflict of choosing between them.

4. Finally this unit is closed by her last cry of despair: Alas for my infatuation! The word which is used here is atê, the same word used earlier on in section C, and one which is of course familiar and important in the context of Homer’s epic (cf. e.g. I 501 ff., K 391). Medea senses she is in the grip of the god’s power, or, as Fraenkel neatly refers to her situation: “Das Ich im göttlichen Kraftfeld”. For this reason the pendulum of her mind moves back to that extremity which now seems to be the only solution: death. In the final unit (g) of this section we have the climax of the death theme of unit b and e. This is confirmed by the fact that while in unit e she had at least some definite means of committing suicide in mind—either by hanging herself or taking lethal drugs—here, undoubtedly under the influence of her atê, she wishes to die by ‘some unforeseen fate’. And so Apollonius has brought Medea on the brink of self-destruction and the final phase of her conflict is reached: Medea in action.

SECTION E: PHASE 3: MEDEA IN ACTION: Lines 801-821

a. 1. She spake

2. and brought a casket—

wherein lay many drugs for healing,
others for killing,
3. and placing it upon her knees she wept.
4. And she drenched her bosom with ceaseless tears,
5. and they flowed in torrents as she sat,
bitterly bewailing her own fate.

b. 6. And she longed to choose a murderous drug to taste it,
7. and already she was loosening the bonds of the casket,
eager to take forth,
UNHAPPY MAID

c. 8. But suddenly a deadly fear of hateful Hades came upon her heart.
9. And long she held back in speechless horror.
10. And all around thronged visions of the pleasing cares of life.
11. She thought of all the delightful things that are among the living,
12. she thought of her joyous playmates, as a maiden will.

d. 13. And the sun grew sweeter than ever to behold,
seeing that in truth her “nous” yearned for all.

b. 14. And she put the casket again off her knees,
all changed by the prompting of Hera.
15. And no more did she waver in purpose,
16. but longed for the rising dawn to appear quickly,
16.1 that she might give him the charms to work the spell,
as she had promised,
16.2 and to meet him face to face.

Structure: I have called this section the casket-scene, the motif of the casket
with its drugs beginning and closing it, having as its theme: life is sweeter than
death. We have thus in a circular pattern a movement from sorrow to joy, from
death to life.

Medea then at last attempts to kill herself. At this stage, in comparison with
the Homeric epic, we may recall how in the Iliad (1) Achilles for instance attempts
to kill Agamemnon and how short-lived his determination to do so was, and fur­
thermore how soon the goddess Athene appeared and decided for him. Medea’s
attempt at suicide, however, comes after a prolonged and intense struggle, and
even now, at this crucial moment, Apollonius cuts short her attempt by first
depicting her amid ceaseless tears. Here, for a moment, but with the desired
effect, the poet returns to a physiological level of description describing to us her
physical reactions in the face of death. And by means of the phrases ‘drenched’,
‘ceaseless tears’, ‘flowed in torrents’ the poet is still lingering on the idea of a
prolonged conflict. This lingering effect of unit a is carried into the following
one before resuming the action. But here in unit b the focus is to create tension
by means of the phrases ‘longed to choose’, ‘already she was loosening’ and
‘eager to take forth’. And when at the end he calls her ‘unhappy maid’ we sense
her imminent destruction. By calling her thus Apollonius is of course echoing
her own cries of despair, and by means of verbal association creates a growing feeling of utter despair throughout this passage. I refer in this instance to *moirēi* (754)—*moira* (779)—*dusmoros* (783)—*moron* (806)—*dusammoros* (809) together with *atēn* (769)—*atēs* (798)—*potmon* (793)—*potmōi* (800)—all emphasizing her dreadful fate.

But when the pendulum, true to the pattern of the passage, swings away from the approaching disaster, we feel relieved: her hand, eager to take forth the drugs, stops in mid-air. The action is again interrupted, and the psychological effect convincing. Observe how the two extremities of the pendulum are represented in unit c by two sets of opposing phrases: deadly fear—hateful Hades—speechless horror vs. the pleasing cares of life—delightful things—joyous playmates. The last movement of the pendulum is thus towards joy and delight. This gains in strength in unit d. Here notice the following:

1. The phrase 'grew sweeter' shows that even when certainty dawns upon her, it does so not at once, but gradually. Throughout his whole characterization of Medea in Book 3 this was the poet's set purpose: to draw us a truly human picture with a detailed observation of human nature under great stress. He leaves no room for any short-cut solutions and decisions as did Homer.27

2. The word 'nous' is of the utmost importance here: the 'nous' is our faculty of reason.28 By introducing this word here the poet makes his message clear: her soul's struggle is over. And now, and only now, her reason takes over and prompts her to final action.

3. Finally observe the image of the sun symbolizing joy, life, certainty, anticipating the final section of the passage in contrast with the opening images of night and darkness.

The section is closed with the casket motif of the opening. There it moved her to bitter tears, here at the close it brings her joy and expectation. Notice again the following:

1. The continuing image of light in the phrase 'the rising dawn' with the same symbolical function as indicated above. She now longs not for death but that the dawn may appear quickly.

2. The use of the word *boulas* in 818 which has been translated as 'purpose'. The word *boulas* of course continues the thought expressed in the word *nous*, and just as the word *nous*, represents human reason as opposed to the soul, represented by *thumos* or *kradīē*. What we have called the struggle of her soul

27. See Gundert op. cit., p. 85: "Kommt der homerische Mensch in einen Zwiespalt, so legt er sich in seinem 'Mut' die Möglichkeiten des Handelns auseinander, um dann plötzlich das Richtig zu wissen und zu tun"; also Dihle, Griechische Literaturgeschichte, Stuttgart, 1967, p. 366: "Das Wesen eines homerischen Helden manifestiert sich ohne unerklärten Rest in seinem Tun", "ein unvermutet e r Entschluss ist schnell auf das im Grunde gar nicht überraschende, situationsgebundene Eingreifen eines Gottes zurückgeführt."

28. Compare Fraenkel, Early Greek Poetry, p. 78: "Thymos is . . . the organ of moods and emotions . . . Rational. . . is *nous*, that is, insight, understanding, thought, and even plan"; and also Lesky op. cit, p. 71: "Thymos (is) concerned especially with the emotions . . ., *phren* . . . intellectual activity . . ., *nous*, imagination, conception."
is in fact the struggle between her soul and her reason, her *thumos* and her *bouleumata* or *nous*. To this struggle we shall refer in our conclusion.

3. Finally the gods' motivation is mentioned in the person of Hera. At the beginning of book 3 (first passage) we have read how Eros directed his shafts at her heart, while here at the close of the fourth passage Hera terminates her struggle. The difference between Homer and Apollonius becomes apparent: in the latter the gods initiate and terminate the human struggle, but that struggle is nevertheless presented as real, intense, prolonged and convincing, in such a manner that we may even regard the divine apparatus in Apollonius as superficial in regard to the actions of man. Händel\(^\text{29}\) puts it thus: "Die Götter erscheinen ja als Kräfte, durch die der Dichter das freie Spiel des Seelischen in den Grenzen der Überlieferung hält". In Homer human will and divine purpose are closely interwoven, or, as Lesky\(^\text{30}\) states: "Divine command and human action . . . appear as two spheres which complement each other . . . The interrelation of these two spheres in Homer's world is quite unreflecting and poses no problem". But Medea's awakening love in Apollonius forms a motivation independent from divine influence, or, to put it in the words of Lesky:\(^\text{31}\) "While in Homer man's actions are determined by his own impulses and the influence of the gods simultaneously, the duality of motivation has now (in Apollonius) resulted in separate spheres of action. The divine plot takes place on an upper stage; its connection with earthly happenings is neither indissoluble nor irrevocably necessary", while Dihle\(^\text{32}\) also refers to these two spheres as a literary technique, a "Götterapparat" in Apollonius.

SECTIO N F: THE SYMBOLICAL LEVEL REPEATED: Lines 822–824

a. 1. And often did she loosen the bolts of her door,
   1.1 watching for the faint gleam.

b. 2. And welcome to her did early dawn shed its light.

c. 3. And folk began to stir throughout the city.

Structure: This final section recapitulates in the most concise form\(^\text{33}\) in chiastically contrasting terms the beginning of the passage.

1. Unit a looks back at section B ff.: though still awake as at the beginning, her heart is now filled with joy and expectation, intensified by her watchful excitement.

2. Unit b again looks back at the beginning of section A: for in the place of night and darkness we now have the light of early dawn.

3. And finally unit c looks back at the image of silence in section A: for in

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30. Lesky op. cit., 72–73.
31. Lesky op. cit., p. 734.
32. Dihle op. cit., p. 364.
33. This is the usual way in which Greek poets begin and end a poem or a section. See e.g. Alcaeus 41 LP, Pindar O1, 2. Theocritus 1, 11 etc.
place of a city wrapped in silence and sleep, we can now almost hear the early hustle and bustle of an awakening city as the folk begin to stir and start on a new day, unaware of Medea’s night of fear and doubt.

Symbolically and structurally Apollonius has completed his picture of Medea’s conflict.

CONCLUSION
In my introduction I have referred to Apollonius’ anti-heroic Jason and the key role of his Medea, which he has drawn with such remarkable insight into the human soul placed under great stress.

How did this come about?
To answer this question we shall have to turn to earlier literary sources. And the two sources at our disposal are the 4th Pythian Ode of Pindar, and the Medea of Euripides.

(a) In his customary fashion Pindar drew the story of the Argonauts with a few brilliant strokes, and in the tradition of choral poetry both Jason and Medea are depicted as typical heroes endowed with great virtues. It is obvious that Pindar’s concept of Jason and Medea could not have had any decisive influence on Apollonius.

(b) When we turn to Euripides the picture becomes clear: it is precisely in his Medea that we experience the same anti-heroic Jason, and at the same time the first traces of the concept of a psychological characterization of Medea. This aspect of her character is shown most clearly in the famous monologue in lines 1021–1080. Here we see her involved in an intense internal conflict, viz. whether to kill her children or not. Here we detect the selfsame movement of the pendulum from certainty to doubt and vice versa. Although the context in which her conflict is described is not the same, and the outcome of that conflict is horribly different, Apollonius must surely have grasped the possibilities for his concept of Medea. It is as if he wished to demonstrate that this double personality of Medea as sorceress and loving mother as we see her in Euripides can indeed be traced back to Colchis, where she was involved in a similar conflict between soul and reason, thumos and bouleumata, whether to remain true to her parents and her people, or to yield to her passion for Jason, the foreign intruder.

One may of course argue, as Kitto did, that Medea’s internal conflict in Euripides is a theatrical representation rather than a convincing psychological struggle. One may further argue that, objectively seen, her conflict in both Euripides and Apollonius is completely futile, that in both cases the outcome of that conflict has been decided for her beforehand. In the case of Euripides the bride of Jason has already been poisoned, and the children’s death is therefore

34. See Gaunt op. cit., p. 117 n. 35.

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inevitable—whereas in Apollonius’ version the victory of Jason over the bulls and the attainment of the golden fleece is after all a prerequisite for the story. As far as Euripides is concerned we may echo the statement of Viljoen 37 that ‘it is a dramatic necessity of the tragedy in order to reveal the whole Medea’, and as for Apollonius, we have already pointed out that the psychology of love has become for him a theme in its own right. Whatever our explanation may be, the portrayal of rationally incompatible features within a single human soul, and the intensity with which they have been portrayed by these two poets must rank as two of the great achievements in ancient Greek literature, revealing at the same time Euripides’ tremendous influence on Hellenistic literature.

The following outline of the relevant passage in Euripides’ Medea may serve for purposes of comparison with that of Apollonius:

A. Introductory Scene:
(1021–1039) 1. The fate of Medea’s children: motherless will they abide in this city.
   2. By going into exile she will forfeit the joy of their marriage.
   3. For naught she nurtured them: the loss of their support in old age. Her life bitter bereft of them.
   4. Their fate: they will no longer behold her with loving eyes, but pass into another world.

B. Her Conflict
(1040–1048) 1. Their loving eyes let her falter: she will not kill them.
(1049–1055) 2. But she cannot let her enemies go unpunished. Her hand must not falter: they will die.
(1056–1059) 3. Yet the joy of her children’s company lets her hesitate again: thumos: do not do this deed.
(1060–1066) 4. But she must kill them else her enemies will ill-treat them. And Jason’s bride is already dying: their death is inevitable.

C. Farewell Scene
(1067–1069) 1. Since she will kill them, she will take leave of them.
(1069–1075) 2. Their physical charm.
(1976–1077) 3. She sends them away lest their charm may let her falter again.
(1078–1080) 4. The horror of her deed.
   Justification: thumos vs. bouleumata.

37. Quoted with kind permission of the Classical Department of the University of South Africa: G. van N. Viljoen, The Medea of Euripides, University of S.A., Study Guide 3 Greek 1, p. 178. See also A. Lesky, Psychologie bei Euripides, in Euripides, ed. by E. R. Schwinge, Darmstadt, 1968.
Acta Classica is published annually by the Classical Association of South Africa. The journal has been in production since 1958. It is listed on both the ISI and the SAPSE list of approved publications.

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