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Klooster, Jacqueline

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CHAPTER 4

Apollonius of Rhodes

Jacqueline Klooster

Introduction

Speech in the *Argonautica* is, like so much else in the epic, often measured against the way Apollonius' most important predecessor Homer treats it. On a purely quantitative level the difference is immediately clear. Homer is, as Aristotle already noted (*Po*. 1460a5–11), a most 'mimetic' poet, in the sense that he often leaves the speaking to his characters (Homer →). In the *Argonautica*, the narrator is responsible for 71% of the text.[1] Rather than giving his characters the floor, or letting secondary narrators recount long stories, he is prominently present throughout, commenting on the action, 'like the sheep dog who barks and nudges his flock down the path.'[2] Besides, he is of course present in the many geographical, ethnographical and mythological digressions. As remarked in *SAGN* I, the Apollonian narrator has decidedly Herodotean traits.[3]

Despite, or perhaps rather because of, the fact that they take up less space in the narrative, Apollonius' speeches in the *Argonautica* have a number of distinctive characteristics. Before delving into these more technical aspects, I want to consider the broader thematic importance of speech for the narrative of the *Argonautica*.

Speech as a Theme

In the *Argonautica*, the theme of human communication is of prime importance. For one thing, it is clear that the success of the Argo's quest does not so much depend on physical force as on *persuasion*, diplomatic or erotic. Throughout we find frequent discussions among the Argonauts about the

1 Hunter 2015: 141–142. For a description of the speeches in the *Argonautica*, see Ibscher 1939.

2 Beye 1982: 13; on the prominence of the narrator see also e.g. Hunter 2015: 116–146; Cuypers in *SAGN* I: 43–62; Morrison 2007: 271–311.

3 See now also Morrison's 2020 monograph on this topic.

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respective merits of violent action or diplomacy for their quest, and in particular in their approach to the ruthless Colchian king Aeetes (2.1219–1225, Peleus: force; 1277–1280, Ancaeus: diplomacy or force). There are certain crew members who consistently favour physical violence (Idas, Telamon, Heracles). Jason's deeply held preference for diplomacy over violent encounters, on the other hand, is expressed most clearly at 3.186–190:

> 'No, first it is better to meet [Aeetes] and seek his favour with speech. Often, you know, that which prowess could scarcely accomplish, speech easily brings to a proper conclusion, when it is appropriately soothing.'[4]

This captures well the dominant sense that force should only be applied once diplomacy has failed. Throughout, Jason is indeed a hero of words rather than deeds (think of his characteristic ἀμηχανίη, 'helplessness'),[5] and his speeches are mostly qualified as μειλίχιος ('sweet');[6] he never speaks in anger. He can be seen attempting to console, flatter and reassure his interlocutors, often successfully. Several scenes symbolize the opposition between diplomacy and force, such as the election of Jason over Heracles as the leader of the Argonauts (1.331–352);[7] the disastrous murder of the Dolionian people (1.947–1056), strangers whom the Argonauts initially approach in friendship and with whom they fight only as a result of a misunderstanding; and the encounter with the brutal Amycus, whom the Argonauts initially approach politely, but later beat to a pulp because of his violent defiance and threats (2.1–96).[8] The emblem of Aphrodite (representing φιλία and πειθώ, 'love', 'persuasion') mirroring herself in the shield of Ares (νεῖκος, 'strife') on Jason's cloak (1.742–743) captures the theme succinctly; it is the combination of Jason's persuasion and erotic appeal and the force and physical courage of the crew that make the quest for the Fleece successful.

4 All translations are taken from Race 2008.

5 1.460, 1286; 2.410, 623, 885; 3.423, 432. See Klooster in *SAGN* IV: 109–134.

6 E.g. 1.294. It may be noted that the epithet μειλίχιος is repeated numerous times to characterize his words: of the 19 occasions on which roots of the word *meilikh-* occur, seven are associated with Jason speaking.

7 In the Greek imagination, the strong man Heracles is notoriously laconic; in the *Argonautica* he only speaks twice, briefly (1.345–347, declining leadership; and 1.865–874, upbraiding the crew for their dalliance on Lemnos). Apart from these speeches his main acoustic contribution consists of indistinct and desperate roars at the loss of Hylas (1.1272).

8 Beye 1969: 31–55. On the theme of order versus chaos in the *Argonautica*, see Clare 2002; on diplomacy, see Mori 2008.

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Next, the *opposition between deceptive versus truthful, open speech* figures prominently in the epic. The Argonauts never use deception among themselves (with the notable exception of the 'testing' of the crew by Jason, 2.622–638). This is because the patently democratic community of the Argonauts is bound by a common goal and free and open speech is important for them, cf. e.g. 3.171–175 (Jason to the crew):

> 'My friends, I will state what I myself favour, but it befits you to accomplish its end. For in common is our need, *and common to all alike is the right of speech*. And if anyone withholds his thoughts and counsel in private, let him know that he and he alone deprives this expedition of its return home.'

It may be noted that this open truthfulness only applies to the mutual relations between the Argonauts; the attitude of Jason towards Medea is markedly less open, as we shall see. The atmosphere at the Colchian court on the other hand is tyrannical and oppressive, full of threats, lies and suspicion. Deceitful speeches and the obscuring of the truth flourish, because freedom of speech can only result in Aeetes' tyrannical anger. Especially Medea is an accomplished liar: she lies to Chalciope about her motives to help the Argonauts (3.688–693); to her handmaidens as she goes out to meet Jason 3.891–912, telling them she will deceive him—a lie about lying. Similarly, and less innocently, she lures her brother Apsyrtus to his death with 'horrendous promises' (αἰνοτάτῃσιν ὑποσχεσίῃσι, 4.456) saying she wants to devise a plot (δόλος) with him against the Argonauts (4.435–441). Also, as suppliant of her aunt Circe and the Phaeacian queen Arete, Medea tells only partial truths (4.730–737, 1014–1048), obscuring in both cases that she has killed her brother Apsyrtus; only the first time is the lie explicitly noted by the narrator.

The other side of the coin in this pervasive atmosphere of Colchian deceit is Aeetes' ungrounded suspicion of the Argonauts' true motives. He does not like communication as such (3.314: 'but what pleasure is there in words?'), and does not believe that the Argonauts have come to take the Fleece peacefully, but fears that his grandsons wish to usurp his position with the help of strangers. Consequently, his reaction consists of disproportionate threats to his own grandsons, despite their truthfulness:

> 'You banded together immediately and came here from Hellas not for the fleece, but for my sceptre and royal throne. If you had not first touched my

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> table, I can assure you that I would have cut out your tongue, chopped off both hands and sent you forth with only your feet …'
>
> 3.375–379[9]

The imbalance between (physically strong) men and (weak) women may explain why women in particular use indirectness and lies (e.g. also Hypsipyle, who hides from Jason the murder of the Lemnian men, 1.834) to deceive or persuade men and get the better of them. In this light, it is ironic that Jason's repeated oaths and promises to take Medea as his wedded wife (3.1128–1130; 4.95–98, 1083–1086) and honour her at his hearth for the rest of her days turn out to be empty lies, as everyone who knew Euripides' famous drama realized. Jason's weapon of choice may be diplomatic speech, but it borders on deceit, and in the end he will behave as treacherously to Medea as she does to her own kin.

Somewhat like speech, but even more so, song can have a *supernatural power of enchantment* (κηληθμός, θέλξις, 1.514–515), a Homeric heritage (→). It can cause both harmonious order and destructive chaos, and besides it is, like diplomatic speech, the opposite of force. Orpheus is a symbol of the harmonizing powers of music and song. His magical power enchants and orders nature and men (the oaks in their neat rows at Zone: 1.26–31; the fishes swimming in the Argo's wake: 1.572–573; the Argonauts dancing in choruses for the gods: 1.1134–1140). His prayers and hymns re-establish the harmony both within the group of the Argonauts after the threat of an internal rift (1.494–515) and the contact between the Argonauts and the gods (e.g. 1.536–546, 1134–1140; 2.685–694). It is no coincidence that his first song is a cosmogony, which symbolically 'orders' all elements of the cosmos, and appoints places to all who live in it (1.494–515).[10] One of his counterparts in the epic is Medea, whose spells and incantations (ἐπαοιδαί) cause chaos, death and disaster (e.g. her enchantments of the moon, the guardian snake of the fleece, Apsyrtus, and Talos), even though they are (at least for the duration of the epic) used for the benefit of the crew. The contrast between these two types of song is symbolically captured in the musical contest of Orpheus and the dangerous Sirens (4.902–911). Taking the theme of (magical/musical) persuasion versus forceful intervention further, we can point to the emblem on Jason's cloak in which the brothers Zethus and Amphion are pictured while building the walls of Thebes (1.736–741). Zethus

9 Cf. 3.397–399 where Aeetes 'ponders in his heart whether he should attack and slay them on the spot or should make a test of strength.'

10 On Orpheus in the *Argonautica*, see e.g. Hunter 1993: 120–121; Busch 1993: 301–324; Scherer 2006: 115 n. 387; Clare 2002: 231–260; Klooster 2011: 75–91.

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does this by forcefully lifting rocks and Amphion by strumming his lyre (and we may assume singing) 'and a boulder twice as big followed in his footsteps.'[11] The opposition is further symbolized in different ways by Orpheus vs. Heracles, or Jason vs. Peleus, Telamon, and Idas, the latter three Argonauts all being emphatically masculine, violent heroes who reject the help of Medea and the use of diplomacy.[12]

A final important theme is *divine communication* and the relaying of hidden knowledge about the future and the will of the gods. The three main facts about divine communication in the *Argonautica* are:

(1) Divine messages are difficult to interpret, being oracular (e.g. the oracle of the Libyan goddesses: 4.1318–1329) or incomplete (Phineus' prophecy: 2.309–425).

(2) They need relaying through a complex and hierarchical system of messengers, since the Olympian gods, let alone of course Zeus himself, hardly ever directly communicate with human beings in the epic[13] (e.g. the case of Glaucus, 1.1315, on which see below).

(3) All divine messages are always true, even if they may be hard to interpret.

A proliferation of seers, both human and divine, in the *Argonautica* marks the importance of divine communication: Mopsus, Idmon, Orpheus, Phineus, Glaucus, Triton, and, of course, the god of prophecy Apollo. Together with the Argonauts, the human seers struggle to grasp and interpret divine language and signs, and respond appropriately.[14] It is attractive to relate this theme of divine communication to the way the narrator of the *Argonautica* represents himself, viz. as a singer who receives information about primeval heroic events from the Muses, who are cast as the ὑποφήτορες (a rare coinage that equals προφῆται) of his song.[15] Combined with the invocation of the oracular god Apollo at the opening of the poem, this means that the narrator poses as relaying an obscure divine message about the heroic past to his narratees, a message whose origin (Apollo) is brought to him by the Muses as oracular priestesses of the god. In doing this, he moreover needs to get to terms with alternative accounts sung by other bards. This explains his doubt as to the details of many of the events he recounts (on which more below), although remarkably enough, this does not pertain to his representation of the speeches of his heroic characters.

11 See *SAGN* II: 73–74.

12 See Lawall 1966: 121–169; *SAGN* IV: 109–134.

13 This applies to Zeus in Homer (→), the Homeric epics (→) and drama.

14 Feeney 1991: 89: 'the complex pessimism of the epic … the clammy atmosphere of uncertain confusion.'

15 See Gonzaléz 2000: 270–292; Klooster 2011: 209–225.

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Modes of Speech in a Post-oral Epic

The *Argonautica*'s stance towards orality is twofold. On the one hand we find clear signs of its written character (e.g. general complexity of literary allusion, reduction of repetitions and formulaic verses), on the other hand the fiction of an oral community in which the narrator operates is upheld throughout. Written sources are never mentioned.[16] The numerous interactive particles (που, ἄρα, δή) contribute to this impression of the narration of the *Argonautica* as a speech act.[17] An instance of quasi-oral self-interruption can be found in 4.1510–1512, where Mopsus is killed by stepping on a Lybian asp, and the narrator remarks that this snake's bite is incurable,

> … even if Paean (if it is right for me to say this openly, εἴ μοι θέμις ἀμφαδὸν εἰπεῖν) should apply antidotes.

Similarly, the narrator asks the pardon of the Muses for recounting a story (4.982–986), interrupts himself in a longwinded digression about the herald Aethalides (1.648), or urges himself to remain silent about the rites of Hecate (4.247–249). As Cuypers points out, these idiosyncrasies make the narrator resemble Phineus, who also interrupts his own prophecy (2.388–391) in order not to anger the gods again, as he had done when he revealed the whole future to those who came to seek his oracles (2.179–186).

Also frequent are the narrator's appeals to the Muses as tellers of truths about the past, and his references to 'singers of old' (1.18), 'rumour' (κλέος, φάτις) and to other apparently oral sources, which are quoted either to support or to contradict the story.[18] The opening of the epic is particularly remarkable from this point of view:

> Beginning with you, Phoebus, I shall recall (μνήσομαι) the renowned deeds (κλέα) of men born long ago …
>
> 1.1

> As for the ship, *the songs of former bards still tell* (ἔτι κλείουσιν ἀοιδοί) how Argus built it according to Athena's instructions. But now I wish to relate the lineage and names of the heroes …
>
> 1.18

16 With the exception of an inscribed map depicting the route from Egypt to Colchis, 4.259–293.

17 Cuypers in *SAGN* 1: 61.

18 See e.g. Morrison 2007: 271–311 on this feigned orality.

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> First then let us mention Orpheus, whom, *it is said* (φατίζεται), Calliope herself once bore near the peak of Pimpleia …
>
> 1.24

We find similar narratorial comments as well as Muse invocations throughout, for instance at the openings of book 3 and 4,[19] where the narrator with increasing insistence addresses the Muse, first begging her to stand by his side, and eventually *personally* to tell the tale of Medea's flight, expressing his own ignorance:[20]

> Come now, Erato, stand by my side and tell me how from here Jason brought the fleece back to Iolcus with the aid of Medea's love …
>
> 3.1–2

> Now, goddess, you yourself (αὐτὴ νῦν) tell of the distress and thought of the Colchian girl, O Muse, daughter of Zeus, for truly the mind within me whirls in speechless stupor, as I ponder whether to call it the lovesick affliction of obsession or shameful panic, which made her leave the Colchian people.
>
> 4.1–5

We might well imagine that the ensuing accounts of Medea's actions are really spoken by the Muse herself. By weaving so many references to speaking, singing, and hearing into his text, the narrator presents himself as being in constant dialogue with 'an oral tradition', even if he does not go so far as to actually stage a dialogue with the Muses like his contemporary Callimachus does.

Despite this feigned orality, the banning of verbatim repetition of speeches such as we find in Homer (→) is a tell-tale sign of the *Argonautica*'s written character. Whenever an Apollonian character covers the same ground as another character or the narrator, we find no repetition in DD but the mere use of RSA (like in the *Homeric Hymns* (→)), e.g. 1.845–848:

> Then the women came to the shore in well-wheeled wagons, bringing many guest gifts, as soon as [Jason] *had announced from beginning to end the entire proposal Hypsipyle had declared when she summoned him*.

19 On the addresses to the narratee, see Byre 1991: 215–227. On the apostrophes to characters and gods, see Klooster 2013: 151–164.

20 Morrison 2007: 271–311 signals the growing insecurity of the narrator.

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Something similar occurs when a RSA replicates or precedes a broadly similar but not identical DD in the immediate context, and thus avoids the impression of redundancy that would occur had two similar speeches been included, e.g. at 1.265–267:

> And then Jason sought to assuage their [his parents'] pain with encouraging words, but he told the servants to take up his armaments for war.

Afterwards (1.295–305), a full DD speech reveals the kind of assuaging words Jason apparently also spoke before.

Aside from this, we find frequent instances of RSA whenever characters are said to engage in some clearly circumscribed speech act, such as consoling, begging, jesting or conversing with one another, or singing some ritual song. In these cases the exact *Wortlaut* of their speeches is not rendered, but the shared cultural knowledge of narrator and narratees presupposes that they can easily imagine it, as is once even made explicit by the narrator (1.457–459):[21]

> Afterwards they told stories to another in turn, *of the kind young men tell as they enjoy themselves over meal and wine, when unbridled rudeness is absent*.

In the RSAs representing song and prayers, the cult titles of gods or hymnic refrains are often repeated, which makes them sound as a kind of apostrophe e.g. at 3.858–862:

> Its sap like the black juice of a mountain oak [Medea] had collected in a Caspian shell to prepare the drug, after bathing herself seven times in ever-flowing streams and calling seven times *on Brimo, the youth nourisher, Brimo, the night wanderer, the infernal goddess, queen of the nether dead …*[22]

As we shall see, this practice is varied upon in a complex passage where the narrator actually interrupts his rendition of Orpheus' song for Apollo to apostrophize the god.

The *Argonautica* contains relatively few examples of ID. An interesting instance is the episode at the court of king Lycus (2.762–771), where Jason's

21 Similarly, but of emotions: 3.815; 4.1165–1166.

22 See also 4.1706–1709 (Apollo) and 4.1196–1200 (Hera). Another example in 2.702; incidentally, Hdt. 1.44.2 provides an interesting parallel.

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full report of their journey up to this point is rendered in this speech mode. We might say that it offers a kind of analeptic counterpoint in ID to the prolepsis in DD that is found in the extensive prophecy of Phineus in the same book (2.309–425). Despite what we might expect, Jason does not leave out any of their less heroic or successful enterprises, such as the dawdling at Lemnos, the leaving behind of Heracles, or the unfortunate encounter with the Doliones. Another example is found in a scene at Circe's palace, and concerns the report of Medea's flight with the Argonauts (4.732–736). In this case, the report shows that Medea is not entirely truthful, because she 'avoided to mention the murder of Apsyrtus', 'but she did not fool Circe', as the narrator points out immediately (4.736–737). Both these IDs are analepses of the main story of the narrator and call to mind Odysseus' long report to Penelope in Homer's *Odyssey* 23.310–341 (→).

We also find some unusual examples of ID that concern Orpheus. At 1.496–511, in the context of the cosmogonic song of Orpheus, the construction initially uses the repeated ID marker ὡς ('how') but from 1.507 it is left out and the voices of Orpheus and the narrator blend:

> He sang how the earth, sky and sea, at one time combined together in a single form, through deadly strife became separated from each other, and how … and how … and how … And he sang how … and how, through force of hand, he ceded rule to Cronus and she to Rhea, and they fell into the waves of the Ocean. These two in the meantime ruled over the blessed gods …
>
> 1.496–507

This is the only passage to display the downshift principle which is characteristic of oral grammar. In such a patently non-oral epic as the *Argonautica*, this makes it attractive to interpret it as a significant choice of the narrator, so giving rise to the theory that Orpheus is in fact cast as a text-internal alter ego of the narrator.[23] Moreover, Apollonius here imitates the model of Homer (→), who performed the same metaleptic sleight-of-hand in connection with the songs of Demodocus.

The second, more complex example, also involving metalepsis, can be found in 2.705–711, where the narrator interrupts his account in ID of Orpheus' song to Apollo with an apostrophe to the god:

23 Fränkel 1968: *ad* 1.23; Hunter 1993: 120–121; Cuypers in *SAGN* 1: 58.

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> (Orpheus sang) How once upon a time beneath Parnassus' rocky ridge, the god killed monstrous Delphynes with his arrows, when he was still (ἔτι) a naked boy, still (ἔτι) delighting in his long locks—be gracious (ἱλήκοις), lord, your hair is always (αἰεί) unshorn, always (αἰέν) unharmed, for such is right (θέμις), and only Leto herself, Coeus' daughter, strokes it with her dear hands—and often did the Corycian nymphs … encourage Orpheus …

What happens here is complex, but similar to the apostrophes to gods in RSA discussed above. I would suggest that in fact the narrator is correcting what was from Orpheus' point of view an understandable mistake. Orpheus, living in the heroic age, when the world was still young, assumes that a time may come in which young Apollo's ephebic hair will be cut. The narrator, living in a later age, knows that this is mistaken: Apollo is an eternal ephebe, and forever young. Since Apollo is a god, he can be addressed and sung of both by the speakers in the epic narrative and by the narrator and his narratees (a clear example of metalepsis or blurring of the boundaries between different levels of narration).[24]

Finally, we find two speeches by Aeetes to the Colchians, relayed in ID at considerable length by the narrator, about Aeetes' plans to trap and punish the Argonauts, before and after the contest of Jason, in 3.579–605 and 4.228–236. Scholars have suggested that the intended effect is that the whole speech would have been 'too long' to represent directly, Aeetes' long-windedness being a sign of his tyrannical nature.[25] It seems likely that the choice for ID is also meant to signal the unilateral communicative situation of tyranny: in the council meetings of the Argonauts, the exchanged speeches are always quoted in full signalling that each participant can contribute freely and add something new. The Colchians never talk back, not even in a collective *tis*-speech; they are represented as a numerous, faceless mob with no distinctive voice, afraid of the tyrant. They do not need to be quoted; perhaps this is the reason why the narrator foregoes quoting Aeetes in DD as well. His speeches are not part of a real dialogue anyway.

24 Cf. Klooster 2013: 151–164.
25 Cf. Hunter 1989: *ad* 3.579.

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Direct Discourse

Typically, speeches in DD in the *Argonautica* only occur when they add new information to the plot or characterize the protagonists.[26] They are usually between 8–20 verses long, but some shorter (e.g. 2.287–290, Iris) and a few (much) longer speeches also occur (e.g. 1.793–834: Hypsipyle; 2.309–425: Phineus). Formulaic modes of address mostly boil down to simple formulas like κλῦτε φιλοί, ὦ φιλοί, δαιμόνιε ('listen friends, friends, strange fellow'), *vel sim*. There is also a sense that characters have less 'time' for speechifying, as Hunter remarks apropos of 2.1165–1166, when Jason addresses the sons of Phrixus, whom they have found shipwrecked on the island of Ares: 'But we will talk of these things at a later time; now first put on clothes.'[27]

Speech and Repetition

Whenever we find exceptions to the rule that a speech introduces new information, the repetition is either partly different from what came before, or the context (e.g. the reaction to the speech) is of direct interest for the plot. For instance, when in 3.320–366 the sons of Phrixus and Jason speak to Aeetes to explain their quest, it is not so much the content of their speech as the unreasonable and frightening reaction of Aeetes (3.372–381) that is relevant to the plot.

A striking example of significant repetition-cum-alteration of information is found in the episode on Lemnos, where the narrator tells what happened to the Lemnian men before the arrival of the Argo (they were all killed by the women), after which we get to hear the lengthy 'cajoling' (αἱμυλίοισιν) and deceitful speech of Hypsipyle (1.793–834), introduced by her, ironically, with 'I will tell you truthfully' (ἐξερέω νημερτές). Like all good liars, notably the Homeric Odysseus, Hypsipyle only tells a partial lie. Her account up until 1.820 is indeed mainly true, if perhaps biased (the men did fall in love with their Scythian captives) but what comes after is a lie. The men did not depart for Scythia with their new wives, but were killed *en masse* by the Lemnian women. The narrator, in the capping attributive discourse, explicitly points out the deceit:

26 For a complete overview of direct speech in Greek epic, see the online database dsgep .ugent.be compiled by Berenice Verhelst.

27 Hunter 2015: 138: 'Homeric characters always had time to talk'.

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> She spoke, glossing over (ἀμαλδύνουσα) what act of murder had been carried out against the men.
>
> 1.834

This deceitful story is remarkably successful, and we find no sense that lies in general ought to be punished, since it is this lie that persuades the Argonauts to enter the city and beds of the Lemnian women, and so helps repopulate the island; we might see this as an instance of the force of πειθώ, to be preferred over νεῖκος.

Two significant repetitions of speeches first presented as DD can be linked to the theme of divine communication. The long prophecy of Phineus in DD (2.388–391) is repeated and elaborated by the narrator throughout the rest of book 2, so strengthening the impression that his tale of the Argo's journey is truthful; throughout the Argonauts refer back to his directions. The second instance occurs in 4.1347–1362, when Jason repeats the DD oracular speech of the Libyan heroines to his crew in DD. Interestingly, he reverses the order of the oracle's wording. It seems attractive to see this as an example of the difficulty of relaying divine messages.

Who Speaks? Collective Speech, Individual Speakers, Divine Communication, Speaking Objects

The speaking characters are mainly the protagonists Jason and Medea, a number of prominent Argonauts, the divinities Hera, Athena, Aphrodite, and Eros on Olympus, and the individuals whom the crew meet on their way to Colchis and back. Among the 50 or so Argonauts, speaking parts are reserved for Peleus, Idas, Telamon, Heracles, Euphemus, the helmsmen Tiphys and Ancaeus, the singer Orpheus, and the prophets Mopsus and Idmon. The rest may be presumed represented in the general signs of approval (e.g. 1.348, 'and they approved') and the '*tis*-speeches' or collective speeches which express the general mood.[28] The latter occur mainly whenever some disaster strikes, or a seemingly hopeless situation presents itself, e.g. 4.1250–1258, when the Argo gets stuck on the sandbanks of the Syrtes:

> And in despair one asked the other (ἄλλος δ' αὖτ' ἄλλον): 'What is this land called? Where have the storm winds cast us? Would that we had disreg-

28 See on collective speeches and silence in the *Argonautica* Finkman 2014: 73–93.

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> arded deadly fear and dared to speed between the rocks the same way we came. Truly, it would have been better for us, even though going beyond the decree of Zeus, to have perished in attempting some great feat. But now what should we do, if we are compelled by the winds to remain here even for a short time? How desolate is the coast of this vast mainland that stretches before us.'

Similar speeches also occur to voice the feelings of other crowds, as happens in the remarkable set of two *tis*-speeches in the first book, where the feelings of the people of Iolcus are expressed. First we hear their stunned reaction to the command of Pelias to send off the heroes, attributable to the men (1.240–246); second the emotional lament of the women sympathetic with the fate of Alcimede, Jason's mother (1.251–269). The speeches thus seem to express the gendered perspectives of the people of Iolcus to the quest: bafflement and an attempted analysis of the situation versus empathy and sadness at the departure of so many young men.[29] As already noted, the Colchians are never represented in *tis*-speeches: they remain a voiceless entity.

In many of the individual episodes, there are speeches for individuals who are encountered on the way: Hypsipyle, Cyzicus, Amycus, Phineus, Lycus, the sons of Phrixus, Aeetes, Circe, Alcinous and Arete. With one exception, we never hear that these foreigners speak a different language than the Greek heroes. Apollonius adheres to the convention of shared language (Introduction→), which means that all characters are simply able to communicate with each other and all speak Greek (or at least, their speeches are in Greek). The only exception is Circe, with whom Medea speaks in her own language, Colchian (4.730–732, Κολχίδα γῆρυν ἱεῖσα). As always, the breach of the convention is significant: it underlines Medea's deceitfulness and tendency to hide the truth, for she does not only speak a language the Argonauts cannot understand, but, as we saw earlier, she also hides the truth about Apsyrtus from Circe. She gives 'very much her own "Colchian" version of events.'[30]

On their journey the Argonauts also meet a number of gods. Communication with them is usually difficult, their words or signs being either hard to interpret, incomplete or in any case the result of elaborate relaying strategies and hence 'lost in translation'. As noted, the Olympian gods never directly address the humans within the narrative.[31] They only speak among each other, as in the scene on Olympus at the opening of book 3, where Hera, Athena, Aphrod-

29 See Finkmann 2014: 74–75 on this scene.

30 Hunter 2015: *ad loc.*

31 Some analepses suggest that this was not always the case: Argos made the ship with the

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ite and Eros are depicted as conversing and making deals among themselves about the future of Jason and Medea. If Olympian and other major gods wish to communicate with humans, they usually do so through wordless signs such as bird omens, barking dogs, or apparitions (e.g. 1.1083–1102: Mopsus interprets the cries of a halcyon; 1.1140–1148: the appearance of spontaneous growth of plants, fawning wild animals and a gushing spring after the propitious sacrifice of the Argonauts for Rhea). Alternatively the gods send messengers (Glaucus, Iris). But this is not always as straightforward as it sounds, as may be illustrated by the example of Glaucus. At 1.1315, he meets the Argo to tell them to stop looking for Heracles, whom they have accidentally left behind. The accident, as it turns out, was providential: it is the will of Zeus, as Glaucus tells them. The narrator however calls Glaucus the ὑποφήτης ('messenger', 'prophet') of Nereus; he was not sent directly by Zeus, then. This allows us to establish the following hierarchy: Zeus-Nereus-Glaucus-Argonauts.[32]

Normally, these messengers and other minor, often local, divinities (Circe, Thetis, the Hesperides, the Libyan goddesses, Triton), operate on more or less the same level as the human characters, communicating with them through speech despite their supernatural abilities and strange looks (fishtails, tree-barks).[33] The knowledge of these divine characters is superior to that of the Argonauts: they are aware of all the Argonauts have done and encountered and know what fate awaits them, as for instance the Libyan goddesses explicitly state, echoing the Homeric Sirens or Hesiod's Muses (4.1319–1320: ἴδμεν … ἴδμεν …). They can thus serve as helpers or guides, providing directions for the onward journey. Some of the divine helpers of the Argo, however, express themselves in particularly obscure and oracular language, which needs the concerted efforts of the crew to be understood. An example is the oracle of the Libyan heroines, who tell Jason to urge the crew to 'carry their mother', as soon as 'Amphitrite unyokes Poseidon's chariot'. Jason fails to understand their words but repeats them nonetheless to his crew. After the miraculous appearance of

instructions of Athena (1.19); Hera appeared to Jason in the guise of an old woman (3.66–74).

32 Klooster 2011: 222–223.

33 It may be noted that the Libyan goddesses call themselves αὐδήεσσαι (4.1322). As the Homeric scholia show, it is unclear whether we are to understand this as 'famous' or 'using human language.' The Apollonian scholia *ad loc*. gloss it as 'coming to speak with humans,' but this raises the question of what makes the heroines different from other divine interlocutors. It may well be that Apollonius comments on the debated meaning of the Homeric word by using it in a context where both meanings are possible. For Apollonius' use of Homeric scholarship, see e.g. Rengakos 1994.

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a giant horse out of the sea (representing the unyoking of Poseidon's chariot) Peleus understands the oracular metaphor, and explains to the rest that this is their cue to take the Argo (their mother, who has carried them so far) upon their shoulders and carry her in turn (4.1318–1379).[34]

Besides humans and gods there are also objects and animals endowed with human speech, such as the divine keel beam of the Argo, cut from the prophetic oaks of Dodona by Athena (1.525–527), the speaking ram on which Phrixus once flew to Colchis (1.763–773), a talking crow (3.932–937), the Moon, Mene, who may of course be regarded as a goddess (4.55–65), and a prophetic clod of earth in a dream, which had been given to Euphemus by Triton, and was destined to become the island Calliste, later known as Thera (4.1741–1753). Not all of them have speeches in DD. Remarkably enough the words of the speaking ram and of the speaking beam of the Argo (traditional elements of the myth) are only represented in RSA or brief ID. Some apparently rather gratuitous minor characters, like the speaking crow (Hera's messenger) scolding Mopsus for not understanding that Jason and Medea should be left to talk alone together (3.932–937) and the speaking moon, gloating over Medea's lovesickness (4.55–65), do get to express themselves directly. One effect of these supernatural speakers, which increase in number and visibility as the epic gets underway, is that they heighten the magical atmosphere of the narrative that gets stronger towards the end. At the same time, something of the spirit of the Hellenistic epigram and Callimachus' poetry (→) with its speaking objects and animals also seeps into these scenes, especially those of the ironically commenting crow and moon.

Types of Speech

Rightly or wrongly, Medea's soliloquies (3.464–470, 637–644, 771–801) have gone down in literary history as the first *monologues intérieurs* of Western literature, and have been appreciated as amazingly realistic expressions of the emotional processes in the heroine's psyche.[35] In these soliloquies, and in her

34 Cf. also the words of the clod in Euphemus' dream, explained by Jason in 4.1741–1753. A parallel for such group discussions of oracles and their interpretation can be found in Hdt. 7.142–144.

35 Scholes-Kellogg 1966: 181–182, but see Fusillo 2008: 147–166. Indeed, Homer (→) already has his heroes speak to their own 'soul/heart', so that the whole debate seems somewhat misguided.

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vivid dreams, Medea veers between shame, anger, dread and desire; they stress her isolation, and point ahead (in the story-world, that is) to the disturbed and disturbing creature she is in tragedy. In all three of them she qualifies herself as δείλη/δείλαιη ('wretched'), and seems completely at a loss to understand or get to grips with her situation, alternatively wishing for Jason's death, her own, or an escape together.[36]

Due to the nature of their quest the Argonauts often find themselves either in situations where they must hold a council about the course of action, or in situations where they must introduce themselves and be introduced to strangers and/or ask directions or favours. With the noted exception of Medea, speakers are therefore portrayed either in dialogues or in meetings with more participants. Aside from Medea's soliloquies, whose random inconsequentiality is meant to reflect her inner turmoil, Apollonius' speeches show a tendency toward rather predictable structures. They can mostly be recognized as belonging to a specific 'genre' of speech act, many of which were introduced in the epic tradition by Homer (→), such as assembly speech, prayer, supplication, request for information, hymn, or prophecy.

In most opening speeches in dialogues we can identify the following pattern:

(1) phatic communication: vocative and verb marking a specific claim to attention (e.g. 'listen my friend'; 'be gracious, Queen'; 'hear my prayer, goddess');
(2) question (an informative question or a rhetorical question); (τίπτε, τί);
(3) a factual explanation/assurance for the background of the informative question (marked by τοι or γάρ) or an impossible wish expressing the feelings that prompt the rhetorical question (εἴθε *vel sim.*);
(4) directive or a request to the addressee.

A typical example can be found in Jason's first speech to Medea (3.975–979):

> 'Why (τίπτε), maiden (παρθενική), are you so afraid of me, when I am all alone? I assure you, I am not (οὔ τοι) an insolent braggart as other men are, nor was I before, when I lived in my own country. So (τῶ), young woman, do not be too much in awe of me either to ask for anything that pleases you or to say something.'

36 On the characterizing function of the soliloquies, see Klooster in *SAGN* IV: 95–96 with references. Papadopoulou 1997: 641–664 discusses the way in which the great third soliloquy (3.772–801) is based upon and relates to Euripides' *Medea* 1021–1055.

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Assembly Speeches and Divine Council

The Argonauts as a group show a predilection for democratic decision-making and deliberation among themselves. Although there are some moments of disagreement and misdirected anger, especially at the opening and near the beginning of book 3, their deliberations are remarkably often unproblematic, the typical procedure being that Jason, or one of the prominent other heroes proposes something, and invites the group to contribute their opinion, to which the usual reaction is 'they all approved' (1.348). The notable exceptions occur when Idas challenges Jason's authority (1.460–495), when Telamon gets angry at the leaving behind of Heracles (1.1290–1295) and when Idas feels uncomfortable about leaving their fate in the hands of women, as the gods (and the sons of Phrixus) advise (3.557–563). But even these problems are always quickly solved and harmony returns; the *Argonautica* is in this sense not an epic about resentful anger or discord, like the *Iliad*.

The Argonauts' democratic procedure is echoed in the meeting of the Lemnian women. First Hypsipyle and then Polyxo speak in order to reach a decision on what to do about the Argonauts camped outside the city walls. The plan of Polyxo (invite them in and have babies with them) seems to please them a lot (1.696–697): 'she spoke and the assembly was filled with clamour, for her speech pleased them.' In the reign of Aeetes, on the other hand, democratic procedures are out of the question. As noted, all the Colchians can do is listen silently to Aeetes' threats and obey, or make indistinct and threatening noises against the Argonauts (3.1370–1371: 'The Colchians roared loudly, as when the sea roars as it crashes against jutting rocks …')

In book 3, where the scene is set on Olympus, there seems to be some social comedy intended in the interaction between bossy Hera, Athena (who is usually clever, but naïve in matters of the heart, and hence prefers Hera to do the talking with Aphrodite) and the wily and ironic goddess of love, the ineffectual mother of unruly Eros (3.6–166). They test each other (3.10, πείραζε), make sarcastic remarks (3.51–54, κερτομέεις), smile meaningfully at each other (3.100), and deal in empty reassurances (3.108–111 '[Eros] will change his ways later'). Not only does this scene demonstrate the subtle art of getting your way, but it also once more emphasizes the elaborate process of divine influence on human life: Athena and Hera wish to help Jason, so they talk and decide to call on Aphrodite. Aphrodite is prevailed upon to go and talk to her impertinent son Eros. She promises him Zeus' beautiful childhood toy; after ineffectively trying to get his mother to hand him the toy immediately, Eros agrees and flies off to pierce Medea's heart with his arrows, so that she will help Jason. That this will lead to murder and chaos on the human level is not a matter of concern for these divine ladies and spoilt child.

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Attributive Discourse and Characterization through Speech[37]

It is never hard to catch the tone or intent of speeches in the *Argonautica*. Individual speeches are always introduced or capped by the narrator with verbs or adjective formulas explaining the tone of voice, often with a moralizing slant. Thus words can be characterized as μειλίχιοι, αἱμύλιοι before speaking. Afterwards a speech is often evaluated in brief terms by the narrator, who may do so by including the listeners' focalization of the speech, a device already found in Homer (→) e.g. 'and the helpful strategy pleased them (ἐπίρροθος ἥνδανε μῆτις)' (2.1068). Adverbs/ial constructions and participles practically always qualify verbs of speaking or speakers (θαρσαλέως, ἐπιφραδέως, ἐπιρρήδην, κατὰ μοῖραν, ἀμηχανέων, μέγα φρονέων). Verbs of speaking often generically qualify the kind of speech that follows or precedes (ἐριδαίνω, παρηγορέω, κυδαίνω, λίσσομαι, ἀπειλέω). In addition, non-verbal physical signs nearly always accompany speeches to indicate the mood in which a character expresses them (see below for examples).

With the exception of the scenes in Colchis, there is little room for ambiguity on the part of the speakers, or for misunderstanding on the part of the primary narratees. The omniscient narrator makes sure that his narratees can always be certain of the emotion with which words are being expressed by characters: tears, smiles, joyful or surprised exclamations, and red-hot flushes of shame or joy. In extreme cases, *speechlessness* (i.e. a terrified, helpless, or love-stricken silence) becomes the dominant emotion.

Of course, these explicit speech qualifications and evaluations make it easier for the primary narratees to form a picture of the personalities of the epic's characters. Thus we note that Aeetes is always angry or threatening; Jason is either 'at a loss' (ἀμηχανέων) or trying to persuade, console, flatter or appease his interlocutors. Medea, as noted, is isolated in her feverish soliloquies that violently veer between contrary emotions. Her early speeches are practically all accompanied by tears. Her first speeches to Jason are moreover coloured by blushes and melting glances. Once she has fled the palace, she only utters tearful supplications, threats, curses and dire incantations. Among the Argonauts, traditionally laconic Heracles hardly ever speaks; Idas is usually angry or makes hybristic remarks; Orpheus mainly sings or provides instructions; and Mopsus and Idmon interpret divine signs and instruct. The only hero who seems to have a more varied repertoire is Peleus, who sometimes offers help, sometimes interprets and sometimes protests against the course of things.

37 For a full treatment of characterization in the *Argonautica*, see Klooster in *SAGN* IV: 109–134.

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Conclusion

The way speech is employed in the *Argonautica* is subtle, consistent, and rich in significance. Speech as a theme is important on several levels of the narrative. In the first place the epic creates an opposition between force and diplomatic speech as alternative ways of obtaining one's heroic goals. Second, the Argonauts' democratic open community where free and truthful speech thrives is set up against the Colchian tyranny where threats, deception and suspicion rule. The gendered aspect of the opposition lies-truth is also important: because of their physical weakness women are depicted as more prone to lies and deception than men. The enchanting power of words and song is another essential theme in the epic. Finally, divine communication and its problems determine the action in the narrative, but also inform the stance of the narrator.

From a formal point of view, it is remarkable that whilst *writing* his epic, the Apollonian narrator takes on a feigned 'oral stance', nevertheless curtailing some of the 'oral' characteristics of his epic, such as the typically Homeric repeated speeches. The variation between DD, ID and RSA reveals a rational pattern, where the amount of information already known to the narratees offered in a speech usually determines the form of speech chosen. Apollonius furthermore employs the possibilities inherent in RSA and ID to blur narrative boundaries, and merge his own voice with those of his characters. By creating significant speech contexts and introducing and capping his characters' speeches with evaluative words that signal his focalization, finally, he provides a clear, at times almost over-determined, characterization of his speakers.

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