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Keeping one's identity, changing one's role: shifting speech and power dynamics in divine epic councils (*Od.* 1.26–95, 5.1–27 *Il.* 4.1–72 *Arg.* 3.1–113)

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Abstract

Conversations can reveal the shifting nature of power relations between speaking characters. Especially in epic tradition, which includes a high proportion of speech and hence speech exchanges, the different characteristics of a character's speeches across similar scenes allow for different evaluations of their effect on the interlocutors. This paper focuses on the presentation of Athena's (and consequently her interlocutors') role in a number of divine councils (*Iliad*, *Odyssey* and *Argonautica*) by examining her words both in terms of the speech mode used and its particular style as well as the various types of power incorporated. Her repeated presence in councils shows her use of different speech elements in her talking through which she either foregrounds or challenges the type of power she possesses in her relations with others. These speech and power-related elements affect her characterisation and reveal her dynamic textual role across epics. Intertextual and intratextual links within epic tradition disclose more clearly the variability of relational speech and power patterns across a character's words and their consequences for the shaping of the speaking character's role in a given scene and across similar scenes within the epic genre, which retrospectively have an impact on the ultimate narrative end.

Keywords

divine assemblies; shifting speech and power relations; relational speech; speech modes; relational power; types of power

1. Introduction

Speech is a prominent aspect of the epic genre in antiquity.[1] Indeed, the high proportion of speaking, and especially directly, in ancient epic from Homer onwards forms a key part of the generic character of epic.[2] Speech in epic largely takes the shape of conversations between characters, since conversation is a principal mode of both communication and presentation in ancient epic.[3] Talking, thus, influences the way that a story is told and further reveals crucial aspects of the interlocutors' own role and character as well as the relationship between the participating speakers. One such key conversational aspect is the depiction of power relations between speakers,[4] which are articulated both explicitly, through what characters say directly, indirectly or in speech mention[5] and implicitly, through the rest of the ways that characters interact, influence or participate, for example, through the use of silence[6] or through the depiction of their emotional state[7] or other actions. This paper examines the contribution of such relational speech and

1 I use the *Loeb Classical Library* for all my quotations.

2 All epics in my analysis contain a large proportion of quoted speech, the majority of which takes place as part of dialogic interaction; monologues and soliloquies are relatively rare: the *Iliad* consists of 45% direct speech, the *Odyssey* of 67% (including books 9–12), the *Aeneid* of 47% (including books 2–3), the *Metamorphoses* of 52%, including the speeches of embedded narrators. Even the *Argonautica*, which has a much lower proportion of quoted speech, still consists for nearly a third of direct speech (29%). See Laird (1999: pp. 153–154), who provides statistics of direct speech for a number of other epics (32% in Lucan's *Pharsalia* and 31% in Silius Italicus' *Punica*). For direct speech in Roman epic, see Helzle (1996) and Laird (1999: p. 154, n. 2, 3). On percentages of speech in epics, see also Avery (1937); Highet (1972); Beck (2012).

3 In the *Aeneid*'s assemblies, in book 10, for example, Venus describes Jupiter's supremacy in a straightforward way in her conversation with him, e.g. *o pater, o hominum rerumque aeterna potestas* (*Aen.* 10.18). However, despite Venus' description of Jupiter's power, he eventually succumbs to her speech partly because of the display of her emotions and grants her will regarding Aeneas' and the Romans' fate.

4 By 'power relations' I mean the relation that is created between the characters in an episode with regard to power of some kind. Relational power is not depicted in a universal way; on the contrary, it emerges through a number of different types of power. These types of power are in all speech exchanges relational and indicate that a character can be superior or inferior to his interlocutor in various aspects. Power is not an one-dimensional term. It always reveals the relational aspect of power between the speakers of a conversation: influence/persuasion in love-issues, persuasion, knowledge, eloquence, status quo, martial power, leadership.

5 On speech modes, see Laird (1999: pp. 87ff., chapter 3) for a thorough presentation of speech modes, e.g. direct speech, free direct speech, indirect speech and free indirect speech. See also his chapter 5, pp. 154–155 for an extended bibliography on speech modes in epics and p. 87, n. 25, for an extended bibliography on the definition and function of speech modes in different areas of speech treatment. See also de Bakker & de Jong (2022: pp. 6–14) on modes of speech and their functions.

6 On silence, especially for sociological issues, see Basso (1970); Tannen & Saville-Troike (1985); Tannen (1985); Scollon (1985); Chafe (1985); Philips (1985); Tannen (1985); Jaworski (1993: pp. 1ff.); Berger (2004); Saville-Troike (2006). On literary/linguistics studies on silence, see Heilmann (1956: pp. 5ff.); Goldman-Eisler (1958); Arlow (1961); Hawkins (1971); Jensen (1973); Bruneau (1973); Longo (1985: pp. 242ff.); Thalmann (1985a, 1985b); Schön (1987); Scarpi (1987); Ciani (1987); Bilmes (1994); Kurzon (1998); Itakura (2001); Ephratt (2008: pp. 1910ff.); Kraus (2010); McNeill (2010). On censorship, see Momigliano (1942); Mortley (1986); Syme (1986); Feeney (1992); Ziogas (2015: pp. 115ff.) and Baltussen & Davis (2015: pp. 1ff.). On *aposiopesis*, see Alexander (2001).

7 For example, Hera's smile at the end of *Iliad* 1 and during her dialogue with Athena and Venus in *Argo-*

shifting power dynamics to the presentation of individual characters, especially Athena, as well as their relationship to other participating deities.

The above aspects are also examined in particular conversational environments in the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey* and the *Argonautica*, namely divine assemblies. According to Pisano, the Homeric assemblies were equal to a 'spatial reality' with connotations of authority. Those located in their center, who could traditionally be Zeus or a deity authorized by Zeus, could hold authority or, if not capable of preserving it, could transfer it to another deity, able to preserve this authority. Respectively, those located outside their center could only applause, shout or remain silent, deprived of any right of speech or type of authority.[8] At the same time, the assemblies were a suitable space for debate and negotiation for the divine sphere,[9] since they aimed at the creation and preservation of harmony among deities, a harmony which eventually extended to the human world. This harmony was ultimately achieved through and due to the eloquence, distribution of power and authority of the participating deities, but was also strategic in the unfolding of the narrative, since the potentialities of the story were debated and eventually decided. Even though in several occasions there were conflicts among gods – usually among the most powerful ones, who had merit in the conversation − the balance deriving from co-operation of the gods was fundamental for the assemblies and consequently the story's fulfilment.[10] Thus, the symbolic character of the assemblies enabled the culmination of order, the fixation of hierarchies and the distribution of power among the divine characters, which were so important for the construction of the narrative and the solution of the heroes' problems.[11]

In accordance to these, in the Homeric assemblies authority was evaluated through its connection to specific powerful objects, such as the sceptre, which bestowed to the holder symbolically the power to act and put others under its power. Due to the orality of the Homeric epics, Zeus – rather than an author or a specific canon – was responsible for symbolically transferring this authority through an artefact to the most powerful character in the assembly. Authority was not entrusted permanently to a specific character, but, instead, a symbolically powerful artefact was transferred between powerful characters so that a nexus of relationships between the gods was retained.[12] In this case, Zeus, even though traditionally holds authority through the divine sceptre from the most important and thus most central position in the assembly as well as guides the rest of the gods, he has to transfer authority to another god, such as Athena or Hera, for

nautica 3 points to a particular emotional depiction, which, however, has different connotations depending on the context of the episode and the identity of her interlocutor.

8 Pisano (2019: p. 109), who analyses mostly the mortal world and especially βασιλεῖς and λαοί. However, the gods' hierarchy functioned in a similar way.

9 I am not going to treat mortal assemblies here. See, for example, Pisano (2019: pp. 31ff., 84ff., 104ff.) and especially chapter 2 for an indicative analysis of Agamemnon's type of power in *Iliad* 1.

10 Bonnet (2017: p. 92).

11 Bonnet (2017: p. 100).

12 Pisano (2019: pp. 82, 87, 94).

the sake of the narrative aims.[13] Thus, another character has to stand in the middle of the assembly's circle, visible by all other gods, so that his (the character's) authority is ensured publicly by them.[14] Given the connection between speech, power relations and their depiction within assemblies, I argue for the acquisition of a god's power according to his role in the assemblies and further to his connection to the narrative end. In light of these parameters, even though Zeus traditionally held the supreme authority,[15] his power was rooted in the gods' community and in the interpersonal dynamics.[16] Similarly, each god, especially these with merit, could contribute to the divine harmony, which retrospectively led to divine and mortal stability.[17]

In light of the above, Athena is able to manifest a variety of powerful or non-powerful behaviours even within one and the same assembly through a variety of verbal or non-verbal reactions. Her repeated presence in divine assemblies shows her acquirement of distinctive talking elements which − occasionally − challenge the type of power she possesses, especially cleverness and knowledge, in her power relations with others. Athena can have her power highlighted or its absence underlined through how she speaks or how her feelings are revealed emphasizing that divine power relations are shifting on the basis of each conversation; in *Odyssey* 1 and 5, she guides the conversation and decisively resolves Zeus' *amechania* about the plan of action towards the mortals; in *Iliad* 4 she shows only silent anger towards Zeus at his suggestion to end the war at Troy, granting thus prominence in the conversation entirely to Hera; in *Argonautica* 3, she herself shows *amechania* with regard to Hera's love-oriented plan for Jason because of her ignorance of Eros. I will argue that depending on the particular epic's narrative aims direct speech can have diverse power-related connotations, which can jointly shed light on a character's portrayal, the allusions created as well as the intertextual relationship of assemblies across the epics.

2. Cleverness and cognitive knowledge in Athena's direct speeches: *Odyssey* 1.26–95 and 5.1–27

The *Odyssey* has two divine councils in key positions, since they have programmatic function, the first at the start of the epic, in book 1, and the second in book 5. Both assemblies are based upon attribution of direct speech to Zeus and Athena, but the content of the speeches reveals that Athena's role as the main helper of Odysseus, her remembrance of Odysseus and knowledge of the nature of his wanderings as well as her cleverness and her plan-devising ability influence or even overcome Zeus' power in both instances. In addition to these, the content of Athena's words to Zeus brings up

13 Pisano (2019: pp. 82ff., 104ff.).

14 Pisano (2019: p. 113).

15 Bonnet (2017: pp. 93, 101).

16 Bonnet (2017: pp. 92–93).

17 Bonnet (2017: p. 101).

the need to focus on Odysseus and his fate. Thus, apart from her role as Odysseus' main helper, Athena is responsible for revealing the first council's multi-dimensional scope on a narrative level, since it serves various narrative needs.[18] The analysis of the *Odyssey*'s assemblies shows that the attribution of the direct speech mode does not itself affect power relations between characters, but, instead, it is the *types* of power which arise that shape power relations further.

During both divine assemblies Zeus presides over the council on Mt. Olympus, while the rest of the gods are present.[19] What differs in the two assemblies is that even though the council is summoned by Zeus, only in the first council does he start a direct interaction with the rest of the gods – in which, however, only Athena takes active part – but he does not also initiate a discussion which is focused on the exact situation that the council will be about: Odysseus' fate. Surprisingly enough, Athena is the character that reminds Zeus in direct speech of his responsibility towards the hero,[20] a fact that is not repeated elsewhere in the epic, since no god other than Athena has this type of initiative in the *Odyssey*'s assemblies.[21] More than that, in *Od*. 1.57–62, Athena reminds Zeus of Odysseus' piety, aiming at persuading Zeus to reassess Odysseus' sufferings and reevaluate the hero's difficult situation.[22] By referring to the hero's piety and even though Athena is aware of Poseidon's responsibility for Odysseus' sufferings, she aims at tricking Zeus into excusing himself for these sufferings and act decisively in favor of Odysseus.[23] Despite Zeus' awareness that Odysseus had tricked Polyphemus and caused Poseidon's wrath and despite Zeus' acknowledgement that it was also Odysseus' fault that he suffered,[24] Athena's cleverness, as depicted in her speech, motivates Zeus to help Odysseus, thus enacting her plan. This emphasises her active role in the *Odyssey*, where she is the hero's primary helper[25] and will also create an unexpected turn in the representation of power relations between her and Zeus by showing that Zeus' supremacy is not reflected in his role and action in each of the epic's assemblies. In these respects, Athena as the main helper, strong-headed and a leader herself could offer to the divine community and measure herself against Zeus.[26] Zeus, realising the advantages of a conversation especially with a person of a same hierarchy and status as his, is willing to listen to Athena's voice and plan, giving thus prominence to a deity which is pivotal for the narrative aim. Besides,

18 De Jong (2001: p. 11); Bonnet (2017: pp. 92ff.).

19 *Od.* 1.26–28: οἱ δὲ δὴ ἄλλοι / Ζηνὸς ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν Ὀλυμπίου ἁθρόοι ἦσαν. / τοῖσι δὲ μύθων ἦρχε πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε and *Od.* 5.3–6: οἱ δὲ θεοὶ θῶκόνδε καθίζανον, ἐν δ' ἄρα τοῖσι / Ζεὺς ὑψιβρεμέτης, οὗ τε κράτος ἐστὶ μέγιστον. / τοῖσι δ' Ἀθηναίη λέγε κήδεα πόλλ' Ὀδυσῆος / μνησαμένη.

20 *Od.* 1.59–62: οὐδέ νυ σοί περ / ἐντρέπεται φίλον ἦτορ, Ὀλύμπιε. οὔ νύ τ' Ὀδυσσεὺς / Ἀργείων παρὰ νηυσὶ χαρίζετο ἱερὰ ῥέζων / Τροίῃ ἐν εὐρείῃ; τί νύ οἱ τόσον ὠδύσαο, Ζεῦ.

21 See above, f. 8.

22 West & Heubeck & Hainsworth (1990: p. 203) on mortals' predetermined fate.

23 De Jong (2001: p. 14); West & Heubeck & Hainsworth (2003: p. 204).

24 West & Heubeck & Hainsworth (1990: p. 208).

25 De Jong (2001: p. 11).

26 Bonnet (2017: pp. 103–111).

the holding of authority enables the effectiveness of her speech.[27]Athena's familial relationship to Zeus also enforced Zeus' willingness to keep pace with her point of view: her power, which is cleverness, derives from the fact that she was born, without a mother, out of Zeus' skull, full grown, fully armed. This excuses her privileged relationship to Zeus[28] and explains also the fact that he holds so long a conversation with her during the assembly.[29] Despite Zeus' unquestionable power in assemblies, he reasonably steps back in favor of the assembly's harmony, which is eventually carried out in the last book of the *Odyssey*, as I will show below.

Athena in her final direct speech proposes two solutions for Odysseus' return. First, she suggests that Hermes is sent to Calypso in order to permit the hero's return home (*Od.* 1.83–87). Second, she suggests her own role in the solution of this problem (*Od.* 1.88–89). According to de Jong,[30] the council in *Odyssey* 1 keeps the readers aware of Odysseus' destined return to Ithaca due to Athena's intervention, it informs about the sequel of the story to come and explains the narrator's earlier brief remarks about Odysseus past with Calypso.[31] Thus, Athena has a leading role in serving all these purposes, excusing for another time her overwhelming presence in the *Odyssey*'s first assembly. Her importance for the establishment of the narrative plot is pivotal. This shapes the power relation between the two gods which contrasts with the apparently traditional pattern according to which Zeus has supreme power in assemblies, e.g. *Iliad* 8.16–17: γνώσετ' ἔπειθ' ὅσον εἰμὶ θεῶν κάρτιστος ἁπάντων. The brief references to his power in the introductory sections of his speech by the primary narrator (*Od.* 1.8, 5.4) or even in his interlocutor's speeches (*Od.* 1.45, 1.81) present some traditional characteristics of his power, but also tend to be more formulaic[32] and are therefore repeated across the epic regardless of the conversational situation between characters. Although unnamed gods are present at both councils (*Od.* 1.26–27, 5.3), the focus is on Athena, who takes the responsibility to give counsel on the hero's future by the proposal of two different plans.[33] In addition to these, Athena brings into the conversation Telemachus (*Od.* 1.88–95), whose presence creates a short narrative pause between the end of *Odyssey*'s council in the first book and the beginning of the council in the fifth book. Telemachus will be responsible for sorting out the unfavorable situation with the suitors back at Ithaca until Odysseus arrives in order to rebalance the

27 Pisano (2019: pp. 91–92).

28 Pirenne-Delforge & Pironti (2016: p. 77).

29 Bonnet (2017: p. 95).

30 De Jong (2001: p. 10), who distinguishes the functions of the council as practical, structuring and expositional in order to describe the various needs it serves.

31 De Jong (2001: p. 10).

32 On formulaic repetitions in Homer, see e.g. Fantuzzi (2001: pp. 173–174, 177ff.); Rengakos (2001: pp. 193–195). There are of course hundreds more studies on formulaic repetition. In the Hellenistic period and consequently in Apollonius formulaic repetition is largely absent, as a result of text being now composed with the help of writings. Cf. Foley (1995) on formulaic repetitions regarding silence and their relation to *kleos*. See Nishimura-Jensen (1998: pp. 456ff.) on a different way of exploiting silence in Apollonius by heralds as compared to Homer.

33 Bonnet (2017: pp. 103ff.).

hierarchies there and therefore complete the narrative's aims.[34] At the end of her conversation with Zeus, Athena is the goddess who stresses out the suitors' presence, who Odysseus will have to face at the moment of his return and turns the readers' mind in his favor. This sympathy towards the hero is important for the final act against the suitors, since it restores the situation at Ithaca and explains Athena's acts during the epic as a whole. Thus, Athena needs to have the primary role in the assembly with Zeus since she is going to continuously act as a supporter to Odysseus and lead the storyline to an end.[35] Zeus is presented in ἀμηχανία:[36] his questions emphasise his helplessness and his need to find a companion in order to create the epic's storyline.

The divine council of book 5 is an extension of the divine council of book 1. The situation in the mortal sphere has definitely changed, since Telemachus' knowledge that Odysseus is alive is important for the realisation of his maturity trip and thus the gradual preparation of their reunion in Ithaca.[37] Despite the fact that it was Athena's decision to take the action slow until Zeus with her focus again on Odysseus, *Telemachy* in the meanwhile prepared both the reader and the narrative for Odysseus' gradual return. The power relation between Zeus and Athena seems to have been transferred from the earlier council, whose action has been postponed for four books, but remains ultimately the same: Zeus tells Athena to take care of Telemachus, an idea which, however, Athena had proposed already in the first council (*Od.* 5.22–27). Zeus tells Hermes to visit Calypso, which similarly Athena had proposed that he should do so in the first council (*Od.* 5.29–42). Zeus' knowledge depends on Athena, since she is the goddess who proposes the plan. More than that, Zeus is aware of the fact that Athena is responsible for devising the plan (*Od.* 5.23–24: οὐ γὰρ δὴ τοῦτον μὲν ἐβούλευσας νόον αὐτή, / ὡς ἦ τοι κείνους Ὀδυσεὺς ἀποτίσεται ἐλθών) and has the power to accomplish it (*Od.* 5.25–26: Τηλέμαχον δὲ σὺ πέμψον ἐπισταμένως, δύνασαι γάρ, / ὥς κε μάλ᾽ ἀσκηθὴς ἣν πατρίδα γαῖαν ἵκηται). The control of the progress of the epic on both occasions belongs to Athena, with the second assembly being an actual and vivid actualisation of the declarations of the statements in book 1, taking into account the new situations present. Both direct speeches of the gods are presented as in the *Odyssey* 1: Athena is concerned, but Zeus calms her down by recognising her importance and pivotal contribution to the plot of the epic. Her main role as Odysseus' helper is constantly at the forefront, since her cleverness matches Odysseus' cleverness and thus a strong personal bond is created, which affects her acts and thoughts in his favor.[38] This bond is, however, also responsible for Athena's unmatched contribution to the plot, since she becomes a significant tool for the narrator throughout the epic, until it reaches its end.[39]

At the very end of the epic in *Odyssey* 24, the resolution of the storyline is achieved by

34 West & Heubeck & Hainsworth (1990: p. 218).

35 De Jong (2001: p. 11).

36 However, Zeus tells Hermes to obey his command and he does obey (Od. 5.43 and 5.29ff. for Zeus's speech). Hermes' silence is also an indication of his responsibility to carry out the divine plans made by superior deities.

37 West & Heubeck & Hainsworth (1990: p. 220); Jones (1988: pp. 496ff.); de Jong (2001: pp. 123–124).

38 *Od*. 13. 256–310.

39 De Jong (2001: p. 11).

Zeus' and Athena's consensus.[40] Even though Athena, as she does in the council in book 5, wonders[41] first directly about Zeus' final decision, as if he had to decide on his own,[42] Zeus with the formulaic repetition of phrases of the previous councils again directly reminds Athena of the importance of her contribution (*Od.* 24.478–481 and *Od.* 5.22–27).[43] Besides, it was Athena's plan, what they both executed.[44] This aspect reveals further that the primary narrator grants Athena a major role in the *Odyssey*'s assemblies due to the fact that she is Odysseus' helper despite Zeus' unquestioned power. The use of the sentence ἔρξον ὅπως ἐθέλεις (*Od.* 24.481) proves that Zeus does not dictate to Athena, but simply proposes what seems to him the better solution. His wish to impose peace and φιλία (*Od.* 24.485–486: τοὶ δ' ἀλλήλους φιλεόντων / ὡς τὸ πάρος, πλοῦτος δὲ καὶ εἰρήνη ἅλις ἔστω) as well as Athena's command for νείκος to stop[45] (*Od.* 24.543–544: ἴσχεο, παῦε δὲ νεῖκος ὁμοιίου πολέμοιο, / μή πως τοι Κρονίδης κεχολώσεται εὐρύοπα Ζεύς) prove their equal importance for the final completion of the epic. Consequently, the content of both assemblies aligns with the narrative's end. At the same time, especially the first council, makes up for Athena's frankness, explains her equal or more power as compared to Zeus and presents her as the leader of the story to an end, which affects positively both the mortal and the divine world.

3. A change of speech and power dynamics: Hera's adaptation to Athena's Odyssean speech and power in *Iliad* 4.1–72

Athena's presentation differs in *Iliad*'s 4 divine assembly, where the Olympian gods again are seated in a council summoned by Zeus (*Il.* 4.1–3). As the first speaker in the conversation, Zeus talks directly to all gods who are present (*Il.* 4.14), but in the first lines of his speech he mentions in particular three goddesses: Hera, Athena and Aphrodite.[46] Hera is mentioned first, placed emphatically as the first word of the second line of Zeus' speech and Athena is, again emphatically, placed at the end of the same line. This structure of

40 Louden (2005: p. 95) on Zeus's trust in Athena in the Homeric epics.

41 Here Athena asks Zeus about his thought regarding Odysseus' fate, but in book 5 she did not utter any questions, but just stated her own thoughts.

42 *Od.* 24.473–476: ὦ πάτερ ἡμέτερε, Κρονίδη, ὕπατε κρειόντων, / εἰπέ μοι εἰρομένῃ, τί νύ τοι νόος ἔνδοθι κεύθει; / ἢ προτέρω πόλεμόν τε κακὸν καὶ φύλοπιν αἰνὴν / τεύξεις, ἦ φιλότητα μετ' ἀμφοτέροισι τίθησθα.

43 τέκνον ἐμόν, τί με ταῦτα διείρεαι ἠδὲ μεταλλᾷς; / οὐ γὰρ δὴ τοῦτον μὲν ἐβούλευσας νόον αὐτή, / ὡς ἦ τοι κείνους Ὀδυσεὺς ἀποτίσεται ἐλθών; / ἔρξον ὅπως ἐθέλεις· ἐρέω τέ τοι ὡς ἐπέοικεν and τέκνον ἐμόν, ποῖόν σε ἔπος φύγεν ἕρκος ὀδόντων. / οὐ γὰρ δὴ τοῦτον μὲν ἐβούλευσας νόον αὐτή, / ὡς ἦ τοι κείνους Ὀδυσεὺς ἀποτίσεται ἐλθών; / Τηλέμαχον δὲ σὺ πέμψον ἐπισταμένως, δύνασαι γάρ, / ὥς κε μάλ' ἀσκηθὴς ἣν πατρίδα γαῖαν ἵκηται, / μνηστῆρες δ' ἐν νηὶ: παλιμπετὲς ἀπονέωνται respectively.

44 Bonnet (2017: p. 100).

45 Fantuzzi & Hunter (2004: pp. 97–98) on *neikos* and *philia* at the beginning of the epic between Zeus and Hera. See also Bonnet (2017: p. 100) on the rejection of violence.

46 *Il.* 4.7–11: δοιαὶ μὲν Μενελάῳ ἀρηγόνες εἰσὶ θεάων, /Ἥρη τ' Ἀργείη καὶ Ἀλαλκομενὶς Ἀθήνη. / ἀλλ' ἦ τοι ταὶ νόσφι καθήμεναι εἰσορόωσαι / τέρπεσθον· τῷ δ' αὖτε φιλομμειδὴς Ἀφροδίτη / αἰεὶ παρμέμβλωκε καὶ αὐτοῦ κῆρας ἀμύνει.

the sentence has two implications. Hera is the deity who has the greater authority in the epic, since she is not only placed before all the other gods, but also marks the beginning of the thought of Zeus. More specifically, Hera's identity is not accidental: she is Zeus' sister due to their equal birth from Kronos in the *Iliad* and legitimate wife. Thus, she stands on equal footing with Zeus as well and the rate of her status is also equal to his.[47] For these reasons, she is going to challenge Zeus and offer her perspective in order to establish herself among the divine elite and contribute to the realization of the cosmic order and the mortals' fate.[48] As her presence in other Iliadic books proves, e.g. in books 3, 8 and 14, she protests, claims her power and dignity and even tricks Zeus in achieving what she wants.[49] Her anger culminates against anything that is against her rank and *time*,[50] as already shown in *Theogony* and *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, where her *eris* is capable of ending up in a cosmic crisis.[51] Hera, just like Zeus, is able to share her power but also act alone in the Homeric epics, showing thus the dynamic of conflict in the epics.[52] Here, Hera is the key character, as she convinced Zeus to go ahead with the Achaean war against the Trojans − which largely reminds the reader of Athena in the *Odyssey*'s assemblies − a fact that contributes to the achievement of the narrative aim and to the reassuring of the Achaeans' victory. Even when she succumbs, the nature of the assemblies, which aim at harmony, show that Zeus always holds back violence and even when he threatens her, Hera has her own space to display her status and merit.[53] Similarly, Athena will be an important auxiliary deity, but in a lower position as compared to Hera.[54] Athena's proximity and privileged relationship with Zeus is respected by Hera in this assembly and gradually leads to their common act. As happens in both councils of the *Odyssey*, Zeus does not claim to have authoritative power, but divides it − and especially the power to decide the course of events − between the most prominent gods.[55] Hera and Athena represent deities of Louden's epic triangle[56] who are going to have a decisive

47 Pirenne-Delforge & Pironti (2016: pp. 30, 47).

48 Bonnet (2017: p. 103).

49 For her tricks and seductiveness, see also Pirenne-Delforge & Pironti (2016: pp. 42–46). See also other myths, e.g. *Aeneid*, where she antagonises Zeus by hindering Aeneas' journey to Italy, Pirenne-Delforge & Pironti (2016: pp. 74–76, 88–90) and Bonnet (2017: pp. 93–96, 103). On Hera's dominant role in other epics and especially the *Aeneid*, see Coleman (1982: pp. 149–152). See also Pirenne-Delforge & Pironti (2016: pp. 27ff.) for Hera's depiction in Homeric Hymn and Pindar.

50 Pirenne-Delforge & Pironti (2016: pp. 74–75).

51 Pirenne-Delforge & Pironti (2016: pp. 88–91).

52 Pirenne-Delforge & Pironti (2016: pp. 60, 91).

53 Bonnet (2017: pp. 93, 96). See e.g. *Il.*18.168, where Hera bribes Iris without Zeus' knowledge and *Il.*21.328ff., where she gives orders to Hephaestus on attacking Xanthus. Louden (2005: p. 95). See *Il.* 24.65–76, *Od.*12.337–388, 13.128–145 on Zeus' balanced power in the epics.

54 Aphrodite represents the opposing side of the battle and even though she is similarly prominently placed in Zeus' speech, her role is not significant here.

55 Cf. *Iliad* 8.7–27, where Zeus claims the absolute power.

56 Zeus presides while holding unquestionable power, discusses primarily the heroes' fate − even though additional purposes might initiate the council − and supports his aims across the epics, even if he does not intervene directly into events on earth. Louden identifies primarily a god who is the hero's supporter and meditates for his success and a god who is the hero's opponent and opposes his purpose and voyage.

role in the outcome of the battle between the Greeks and Trojans, which accounts for Zeus' dependence on them. Again, as he does in the *Odyssey*, he asks his interlocutors to provide a solution to the current situation on the battlefield, even though he does not fail to reveal his own thought (*Il.* 4.17–19).

Lines αἱ δ' ἐπέμυξαν Ἀθηναίη τε καὶ Ἥρη· / πλησίαι αἵ γ' ἥσθην, κακὰ δὲ Τρώεσσι μεδέσθην (*Il.* 4.20–21) reveal that both Hera and Athena mutter against Zeus. Athena keeps her silence and is stirred by anger − which is an unexpected representation with regard to her depiction in the *Odyssey*'s assemblies. Hera, on the other hand, even though in anger, responds directly to Zeus. In this scene, silence does not carry any connotations of power. Even if Athena does not reply directly, her muttering with Hera as well as her anger prove that she actually does have a specific point of view, which, however, is expressed through Hera's words. Athena, thus, by remaining silent she reveals her emotional state. This indicates not only her inferior status to Zeus, but also her role − once more − as the deity of secondary importance in contrast to Hera. Athena leaves to Zeus' wife, Hera, to do all the protesting, maybe also being aware of their recurring in the *Iliad* as a husband and a wife. Hera's direct response is of particular importance since she not only assents, unwillingly, to what Zeus says in a defiant tone through the use of the imperative ἕρδ' (*Il.* 4.29), but she also speaks as the representative of the other gods· she proclaims their common disagreement, as shown in *Il.* 4.29: ἀτὰρ οὔ τοι πάντες ἐπαινέομεν θεοὶ ἄλλοι. This is therefore an indication that she both stands in a superior position among gods due to the fact that she is Zeus' wife, a fact that gives her slightly more power to oppose to him and that she has at least enough power to obstruct Zeus himself, at least to some degree.[57]

Zeus and Hera's conversation leads to a mutual yielding to one another: Zeus yields to Hera first: ἔρξον ὅπως ἐθέλεις· μὴ τοῦτό γε νεῖκος ὀπίσσω / σοὶ καὶ ἐμοὶ μέγ' ἔρισμα μετ' ἀμφοτέροισι γένηται (*Il.* 4.37–38)[58] and Hera follows after his example: ἀλλ' ἦ τοι μὲν ταῦθ' ὑποείξομεν ἀλλήλοισι, / σοὶ μὲν ἐγώ, σὺ δ' ἐμοί (*Il.* 4.62–63). This shows the first establishment of a balance between them. Hera points out Zeus' authoritative supremacy: εἴ περ γὰρ φθονέω τε καὶ οὐκ εἰῶ διαπέρσαι, / οὐκ ἀνύω φθονέουσ', ἐπεὶ ἦ πολὺ φέρτερός ἐσσι (*Il.* 4.55–56) and σὺ δὲ πᾶσι μετ' ἀθανάτοισιν ἀνάσσεις (*Il.* 4.61), which shows that Hera emphasises the aspect of Zeus' power, something that Athena did not have the need to do in the *Odyssey*'s assemblies, because her words alone were powerful enough to achieve their end, even though later, in *Odyssey* 24, a similar idea of Zeus' power is expressed outside the immediate context of the assembly. But, simultaneously, Hera emphasises her own value and strength, which are applied to more terrains of power than the shorter reference granted to Zeus, as shown in *Il.* 4.57–61: ἀλλὰ χρὴ καὶ ἐμὸν θέμεναι πόνον οὐκ ἀτέλεστον· /

His schematic categorisation applies to both Homeric epics. For example, in the *Odyssey*, Zeus is the sky father, Athena the hero's mentor and Poseidon the hero's opponent. The same triangle appears also in the *Iliad* where Zeus, Athena/Hera and Apollo carry out in turn same responsibilities, even though in the latter epic the epic triangle revolves around different heroes and situations, e.g. Hector, rather than only Achilles.

57 See Winterbottom (1989: p. 33) on Zeus' lack of knowledge of his responsibility to mortals, as opposed to his description in *Metamorphoses* 1, where he is fully capable of dealing with the mortals' cases and shows fully his power over the gods and mortals.

58 Fränkel (1975: p. 66).

καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ θεός εἰμι, γένος δέ μοι ἔνθεν ὅθεν σοί, / καί με πρεσβυτάτην τέκετο Κρόνος ἀγκυλομήτης, / ἀμφότερον, γενεῇ τε καὶ οὕνεκα σὴ παράκοιτις / κέκλημαι. The references to Zeus are placed before and after the references to herself, placing Hera emphatically at the centre. This might point to her will to equate their power, since she adds that their common strength will guide the rest of the gods (*Il.* 4.63: ἐπὶ δ' ἕψονται θεοὶ ἄλλοι / ἀθάνατοι), even though Zeus is led to send Athena to stir battle (*Il.* 4.64–65: σὺ δὲ θᾶσσον Ἀθηναίῃ ἐπιτεῖλαι / ἐλθεῖν ἐς Τρώων καὶ Ἀχαιῶν φύλοπιν αἰνήν). Athena is cast again in the role of an auxiliary deity, accounting for her silent role in the previous lines of the episode. Hera, as in *Argonautica* 3, stirs the conversation and Athena plays second fiddle in Hera's presence. Athena does not show a dynamic presence in the assembly.

4. Lack of speech, lack of power: Athena's intertextual reading in *Argonautica* 3.1–113

Athena's portrayal in *Argonautica* 3 differs as compared to the Homeric epics. At the very beginning of the third book three goddesses, Athena, Hera and Aphrodite take part in a private divine conversation that has been long postponed − when compared to the early appearance of such meetings in the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad* − since the beginning of the epic.[59] Zeus, who has an active role in the other assemblies of the epics, is absent and, more than that, deliberately excluded from the goddesses' conversation. Instead of Zeus, Hera, Athena and Aphrodite are presented in a part of the epic[60] where the narrative's focus is on the preparation for the Argonauts' voyage and its final resolution through the emphasis on Medea and her love for Jason.[61]

According to Lennox,[62] the first part of the meeting revolves around Hera and Athena and reminds the reader of the corresponding episode in *Iliad* 4.7ff., where Hera and Athena take part in a council and are responsible for making decisions concerning the progress of the storyline. At the beginning of the divine conversation with Athena, Hera takes the responsibility of addressing directly her interlocutor and articulating her exact thoughts. Hera, who gradually will have the most central role among the three, wants to help Jason since she was wronged by King Pelias in the past.[63] Her first speech is direct, but in a non-authoritative way, as the use of πείραζε shows in line 10 according

59 Lennox (1980: p. 47). See *Arg.* 3.8–10. Cf. the postponed divine council in *Iliad* 4 (in my view, the assembly at the end of book 1 is different in its aims and has a more comic character) and *Aen.* 10, where there is a direct interaction between Venus and Jupiter that substitutes the decrees usually presented early in the councils of the rest of my epics. For the overall Hellenistic character of the scene and the goddesses' behaviour, see Gaunt (1972: pp. 124–125), but cf. also Lennox (1980: p. 69).

60 This part of the epic is in its exact middle, giving it particular emphasis.

61 Lennox (1980: p. 70). See also ibid. 47, where he mentions that these goddesses may have been linked to Jason's voyage in other literary traditions, see Pind. *Pyth.*4 and Val. *Arg.* 6.467ff.

62 Lennox (1980: p. 70).

63 *Arg.* 1.12–15.

to Hunter,[64] which possibly suggests that Hera anticipates Athena's refusal to help. The non-authoritative character of her speech is further suggested by her careful choice of opening words: αὐτὴ νῦν προτέρη, θύγατερ Διός[65] ἄρχεο βουλῆς. / τί χρέος; ἦε δόλον τινὰ μήσεαι, ᾧ κεν ἑλόντες / χρύσεον Αἰήταο μεθ' Ἑλλάδα κῶας ἄγοιντο (*Arg.* 3.11–13). Hera is aware of Athena's ability to initiate plans and tricks in order to accomplish the gods' will. However, Hera's literary memory cannot be applied to this conversation. Athena, in this assembly, is not able to create a plan to help the Argonauts and is not given the resourceful character that she once had in the assembly of the gods in *Iliad* 8.35–37.[66] Athena herself does not claim her supremacy in that role despite her literary past and reassures her interlocutor in her own direct speech, immediately afterwards, about this inability (*Arg.* 3.19–21: ἀλλά τοι οὔ πω / φράσσασθαι νοέω τοῦτον δόλον, ὅς τις ὀνήσει / θυμὸν ἀριστήων· πολέας δ' ἐπεδοίασα βουλάς). After this first exchange Hera eventually proposes a plan, establishing thus her greater power for resourceful thought, a fact that is underlined by the primary narrator in *Arg.* 3.23–24: αὐτίκα δ' Ἥρη / τοῖον μητιόωσα παροιτέρη ἔκφατο μῦθον. According to Hunter, Athena's response highlights further her inability to think specifically of amorous situations due to her status as a virgin,[67] which also explains her silence in the later meeting with Aphrodite who is bestowed with the responsibility of persuading Eros, the amorous god, to incite Medea to fall in love with Jason.[68] During her conversation with Hera some lines later, Aphrodite in her words also reinforces Athena's point of view by turning down arms and battles in favor of love, despite the fact that Hera herself assures Aphrodite about needing help in enlisting Eros, as shown in *Arg.* 3.84–86: οὔτι βίης χατέουσαι ἱκάνομεν, οὐδέ τι χειρῶν./ἀλλ' αὔτως ἀκέουσα τεῷ ἐπικέκλεο παιδὶ / παρθένον Αἰήτεω θέλξαι πόθῳ Αἰσονίδαο.

The division of power in this first set of speeches highlights a number of new aspects regarding the participating speakers and also presents a surprising reversal in the depiction of patterns as they are known from the Homeric epics. The emphasis on Athena's lack of resourcefulness sheds light on both Hera's and Athena's characterisation in the epic as well as their different perspective on the matter under discussion. The inclusion of this conversation between Athena and Hera early in the assembly scene of *Argonautica* 3 has implications for the role of Athena herself, but also for the epic's different perspective and organisation. In *Arg.* 1.18–19 and 1.109–112, Athena provides instructions (cf. ὑποθημοσύνῃσιν, 1.19, 1.112) for the building of the Argo. These instructions resemble Hera's description of the role Medea should play for Jason (cf. τὸν δ' ἂν ὀίωκείνης ἐννεσίῃσιν ἐς Ἑλλάδα κῶας ἀνάξειν, *Arg.* 3.29–30).[69] The verbal correspondence

64 Hunter (1989: p. 98).

65 Hunter (1989: p. 98) on Hera's approach to Athena as if Hera was a mortal.

66 ἀλλ' ἦ τοι πολέμου μὲν ἀφεξόμεθ', ὡς σὺ κελεύεις. / βουλὴν δ' Ἀργείοις ὑποθησόμεθ', ἥ τις ὀνήσει, / ὡς μὴ πάντες ὄλωνται ὀδυσσαμένοιο τεοῖο.

67 See Hunter (1989: p. 99).

68 *Arg.* 3.84.

69 *Arg.* 1.18–19: νέα μὲν οὖν οἱ πρόσθεν ἔτι κλείουσιν ἀοιδοὶ / Ἄργον Ἀθηναίης καμέειν ὑποθημοσύνῃσιν and *Arg.* 1.109–112: αὐτή μιν Τριτωνὶς ἀριστήων ἐς ὅμιλον / ὦρσεν Ἀθηναίη, μετὰ δ' ἤλυθεν ἐλδομένοισιν. / αὐτὴ γὰρ καὶ νῆα θοὴν κάμε, σὺν δέ οἱ Ἄργος / τεῦξεν Ἀρεστορίδης κείνης ὑποθημοσύνῃσιν.

between the roles of Athena and Medea points towards an important revelation: Athena will not have her traditional role from the *Odyssey,* where she was the main hero's divine helper. The epic's central adviser changes along with the epic's aims, since the voyage's challenges in the *Argonautica* are different from those in the *Odyssey* and a different type of planning is required. The reader may also recall *Arg.* 3.1ff., which addresses the Muse Erato, who is traditionally absent from other epics and associated with love; the address thus prepares the reader for the erotic character of the second half of the *Argonautica*. At the same time, Erato's presence prepares the reader for the fact that not only Athena but also the second half of the epic will be of a different character. Jason will need another helper and the conversation between Athena and Hera is a prelude to the understanding of this difference Hera smiles before her final direct speech: τὴν δ' Ἥρη ῥαδινῆς ἐπεμάσσατο χειρός, / ἦκα δὲ μειδιόωσα παραβλήδην προσέειπεν (*Arg.* 3.106–107). This reminds the reader of the Olympian scene with the divine council in *Iliad* 4; there, Zeus tried to rebuke Hera and Athena, but in the end, they managed to outmaneuver Aphrodite. Even though in the *Iliad* Hera and Athena win the argument in the council, in *Argonautica* 3 it is ironic that Athena and her warlike characteristics do not have a pivotal role and instead they need their opponent's, namely Aphrodite's, assistance for achieving their common end according to Lennox.

5. Conclusions

To sum up, Athena is portrayed through a threefold prism on the basis of the depiction of her speech as well as the amount and type of power to her divine interlocutors which creates an important intertextual dialogue between the three assemblies outlined above. In the *Odyssey*'s 1 and 5 divine assemblies, Athena stands out from the mass of the deities due to her privileged relationship with Zeus as well as her pivotal role as Odysseus' and the narrator's helper. She possesses a type of power, namely cleverness, which is lacking (in this case) from traditionally powerful Zeus and the rest of the divine mass. Athena's direct speech is used to express her cleverness which is both important for shaping further her relational power with Zeus and lead to the completion of the narrative's aims. Her depiction in the rest of the assemblies reveals that her character does not remain unchanged throughout the same speech exchange situations across epics. In *Iliad*'s 4 assembly, Athena is overshadowed by Hera and does not carry a pivotal role as in the *Odyssey*. This change is due to Hera's depiction in the *Iliad*, as a goddess of an equal merit to Zeus, who is able to preserve the harmony between them or challenge Zeus directly. Athena's emotional reaction, her anger, accounts for the importance of her presence, since anger is indicative of her disagreement with Zeus. However, her angered silence allows Hera to create her own and more important, as compared to Athena, relational power with Zeus in the assembly. Athena, thus, does not carry the same degree of power, e.g. cleverness, as in the *Odyssey* and does not use any speech mode to express her mind. Rather Hera becomes the means of revealing indirectly Athena's mind. The intertextual dialogue of both these assemblies with *Argonautica*'s 3 assemblies creates an important reversal with

regard to Athena's relational speech and power with Hera and Aphrodite. Athena uses her direct speech to deny any type of knowledge rather than to ensure her possession of it. Due to the epic's overall different character which makes love a much more prominent theme – especially in its second half, Athena's presence is not important for the evolution of the epic narrative and she emphatically points out her refusal to acquire any other form of power. In addition, Hera guides the conversation because the enactment of her plan is closely connected to the epic's narrative end, where Jason is going to overcome Pelias, a mortal who disrespected her. Direct speech carries opposite connotations as compared to the *Odyssey* and allows for Athena's variable characterization across the assemblies. Thus, divine assemblies in epic tradition show that speech and power are always relational and depend on each scene's circumstances which are liable to change and modification. This influences the contribution and importance of a goddess on each given assembly, which affects the intertextual dialogue existing between similar speech exchange situations. In connection to each epic's narrative end, a character's speech along with the power bestowed on it is enforced or weakened so that the characters align with the epics' aims.

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