

THE SEMANTICS OF ΕΝΑΓΩΝΙΟΣ IN GREEK LITERARY CRITICISM

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INTRODUCTION

THE WORD *ἐναγώνιος* figures prominently in ancient Greek rhetorical theory and literary criticism. We find it especially in such works as Demetrius' *On Style*, Longinus' *On the Sublime*, and the critical essays of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, but also in the scholia on the *Iliad*.¹ The term is applied in different contexts, and can be used to describe various aspects of oratory and literary writing. An orator or poet himself can be called *ἐναγώνιος*, but the same word can also be applied to his speech or poem, a scene or event in the narrative, the style of a text, or certain specific figures of style.

The etymology of this technical term seems obvious enough: *ἐναγώνιος* is someone who enters a contest or battle (*ἀγών*). Since the noun *ἀγών* itself carries different connotations ("contest," "debate," "speech," but also "struggle," "battle," or "action"), it is not surprising that lexica such as LSJ distinguish different meanings of the term *ἐναγώνιος*: (I) "of/for a contest"; (II) "of/in/for battle"; (III) in rhetorical contexts: "suited for forensic oratory/debate"; and (IIIb) in the context of stylistic theory: "energetic, vivid."² This basic categorization is useful as a general description of the semantics of the word *ἐναγώνιος*. The interpretation of the term in specific passages, however, has in many cases proven to be difficult, especially in the field of rhetoric and criticism.

This article aims to answer two separate questions. First, how are the different semantic categories, which are distinguished in LSJ, actually related to each other? In particular, we will discuss the connection between "suited for debate" (LSJ III) and "energetic, vivid" (LSJ IIIb). Second, what is the precise nuance of *ἐναγώνιος* in stylistic contexts? Apart from "energetic" and "vivid"

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1. The works mentioned here constitute the corpus of our research, but we will occasionally discuss examples from other authors as well. References to the rhetorical works of Dionysius of Halicarnassus follow the edition of Aujac (1978–1992). Translations are our own unless otherwise noted.

2. LSJ's categories III and IIIb correspond to the meanings distinguished as I 4 and 5 in *DGE* (Adrados 2009, 1518–19): "(4) en la esfera de la lengua y la ret. *proprio de la oratoria forense, judicial*"; "(5) fig. del estilo: *vehemente, vigoroso, energético*."

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(LSJ IIIb), interpreters and translators employ a number of similar adjectives, such as “vehement,” “exciting,” “contentious,” “aggressive,” and “full of suspense.”³ All these translations can be right and appropriate in specific contexts, but they also have rather different connotations in English. Being more precise about the semantic value of ἐναγώνιος will help us to understand why an ancient critic uses the word in a specific passage.

1. ΕΝΑΓΩΝΙΟΣ IN RHETORIC AND CRITICISM: EXISTING INTERPRETATIONS

Just like LSJ, scholars of ancient rhetoric and criticism usually distinguish between (1) passages in which ἐναγώνιος is directly related to “debate” (LSJ III) and (2) passages of stylistic theory, in which a text (not necessarily in oratory) is labeled “vivid,” “energetic,” and so on (LSJ IIIb).

Various scholars have discussed the first category. The rhetorical lexicon of Johannes Ernesti offers the translation *contentionibus aptum dicendi genus*, “a kind of speech that is suited to debates.”⁴ William Pritchett interprets ἐναγώνιος λόγος as “a speech in a contest of a controversial character,” and notes that Dionysius of Halicarnassus uses both ἐναγώνιον and δικανικόν as “synonyms for forensic oratory, the speeches of the law-courts.”⁵ Donald Russell presumably thinks of debates in the law-courts as well when he translates ἐναγώνιοι λόγοι (Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 10.3) as “real-life oratory.”⁶

Winfried Bühler compares the use of ἐναγώνιος in Eustathius and the scholia on the one hand and rhetorical theory on the other.⁷ He finds two different usages in Homeric philology, where ἐναγώνιος is in some cases connected to the idea of a “debate” (“Szenen mit Redeagonen”), while in other cases it is associated with a “battle” or “contest” (“voll Streit und Kampf”). Bühler argues that in rhetorical theory, however, ἐναγώνιος develops into a stylistic concept, which he proposes to translate as “heftig,” “leidenschaftlich” (“vehement,” “passionate,” cf. LSJ IIIb).

Building on the work of Roos Meijering, René Nünlist has recently re-examined the occurrences of ἐναγώνιος in the scholia on the *Iliad*.⁸ His analysis has the advantage of distinguishing between three items with which the term can be combined: author, audience, and text. He notes that in many passages, “the poet, so to speak, enters a contest (ἀγών), comparable to an orator in a forensic context.” In other passages, however, the term seems to refer more directly to the “agony” on the part of the reader. Finally, for those cases in which ἐναγώνιος qualifies the poem rather than the poet or reader, Nünlist suggests the meaning “full of suspense.”

3. For some of these translations, see LSJ and Nünlist 2009, 142.

4. Ernesti 1795, 105–6.

5. Pritchett (1975, 81–82) also compares Greek ἀγών with Latin *contentio*, “the address of formal debate.” See also Geigenmüller 1908, 59–60. A similar analysis of the term can be found in the discussion of Longinus *Subl.* 25 in Rijksbaron 2006, 129: he understands ἐναγώνιος as “argumentative,” “suited for forensic oratory.”

6. Russell’s translation of Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 10.3 in Russell and Winterbottom 1972, 313.

7. Bühler 1964, 59–62.

8. Meijering 1987, 205 with n. 212 on schol. *T. Il.* 15.64c ex. N; Nünlist 2009, 139–42.

2. ΑΓΩΝ AND ΕΝΑΓΩΝΙΟΣ

Although the scholars mentioned have contributed to our understanding of the word ἐναγώνιος in particular contexts, some important questions are still to be answered. What is the meaning of ἀγών (debate, contest, or battle) in ἐναγώνιος? “Debate” is central to occurrences of the word in rhetorical contexts, but how precisely is a “debate” related to stylistic “energy” or “vividness”? To begin with the first question, let us briefly consider the etymology of ἐναγώνιος. The substantive ἀγών is derived from the same root as the verb ἄγειν: “to bring,” “to carry.”⁹ In Homeric epic ἀγών is generally understood to mean “assembly,” more particularly an assembly that is associated with contests. The word ἀγών refers to the assembly of deliberating men and gods,¹⁰ or the gathering of Greek ships (the phrase ἀγών νεῶν occurs five times in the *Iliad*).¹¹ Further, the gathering of spectators for sport events or battles is frequently called an ἀγών: “the assembly of people gathered together to engage in and view contests.”¹² Due to its association with games, it seems that ἀγών came to designate the competition or contest itself, especially in post-Homeric literature.¹³ Such a contest can be either physical (“battle”) or verbal (“debate”). Both usages of ἀγών have a corresponding usage of the adjective ἐναγώνιος, the second of which will especially concern us here.

1. Corresponding with ἀγών “contest,” “battle,” we find ἐναγώνιος “of a contest,” “of a battle” (cf. LSJ I–II). Typically, a god presiding over a contest is called (ἀγώνιος or) ἐναγώνιος.¹⁴ Similarly, all sorts of things associated with battles can be described by this adjective: from a battle dance (ὄρχησις ἐναγώνιος) to the closing of the ranks on a battlefield (πύκνωσις ἐναγώνιος).¹⁵

2. When the contest is a verbal one (ἀγών “debate”), it can either be the debate between citizens in the assembly or law court, or it can be a dramatized debate in the theater.¹⁶ In some cases, the word ἀγών does not signify the debate itself, but rather a speech delivered in the context of such a debate.¹⁷ The usage of ἀγών “debate” is of central concern to us, because it forms the basis of the rhetorical use of the term ἐναγώνιος.

9. For the etymology of ἀγών, see Beekes 2010, 18. On the meaning of ἀγών, see esp. Ellsworth 1971, 1974, 1976a, 1976b (cf. below); and Barker 2009, 8–9.

10. See, e.g., *Il.* 18.376, 23.258.

11. See, e.g., *Il.* 14.428. Because the phrase occurs only in the part of the *Iliad* in which the ships are the object of the war between Greeks and Trojans (Books 15, 19, 20), Ellsworth (1974, 262) argues that ἀγών νεῶν means “the assembly of ships as the object of contest” (our emphasis).

12. Ellsworth 1974, 259. In his dissertation, Ellsworth (1971) argues that ἀγών does not mean just “assembly,” because the notion of contest, games, competition, or battle is always relevant.

13. For ἀγών as the “assembly” at games, see *Il.* 23.373; for ἀγών referring to the competition itself, see, e.g., Hdt. 2.91 and Pl. *Leg.* 658a. Ellsworth (1976a) rejects the meaning “assembly,” “gathering” that some scholars adopt for certain occurrences of ἀγών in post-Homeric literature (Aesch. *Ag.* 845; Pind. *Pyth.* 10.30; etc.).

14. See Pind. *Pyth.* 2.10: ἐναγώνιος Ἑρμῆς (“Hermes, lord of the games”). Cf. Hesychius, s.v. ἐναγώνιος. The phrase ἀγώνιοι θεοί (Aesch. *Ag.* 513; *Supp.* 189, 242, 333, 355) means “gods of the games”: Ellsworth (1976b) rejects the interpretation “gods in assembly.”

15. For the battle dance, see Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 7.72. For the closing of the ranks, see Polyb. 18.29.3.

16. See, e.g., Pl. *Ap.* 24c; *Resp.* 494e; Eur. *Phoen.* 588.

17. See, e.g., Dion. Hal. *Letter to Ammaeus* 1.3.2, *Isoc.* 2.6 (cf. section 4.1 below).

3. FROM DEBATE TO STYLISTIC CONCEPT: ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

We have seen that many scholars distinguish between two usages of ἐναγωνίος in rhetoric and criticism: “suited for debate” (LSJ III) and “vivid,” “energetic,” “passionate,” and so on (LSJ IIIb). Although these two categories are normally not connected explicitly, they appear in fact to be related. The most relevant characteristic of a debate (ἀγών) seems to be that a speaker, his adversary, and the audience are *directly involved* both with the subject at stake and with one another. In rhetorical theory, this active engagement is primarily associated with a debate, but it is also relevant to many other communicative situations, such as narrative texts in which the narrator presents himself as “involved” in his story. The narrator may also draw the audience into his narrative, “engaging” them just like the listeners of a forensic or deliberative speech. In such contexts, ἀγών can refer to the engagement itself, while the narrator or listener can be called ἐναγωνίος. “Vivid,” “energetic,” or “passionate” can all be correct translations of the term, if we understand them to point to one underlying meaning, that is, “involving” or “engaging.” In other words, the connection between “suited for debate” and the stylistic concept of “vividness,” “energy,” and so on lies in the direct involvement that a debate shares with engaging narrative.

A comparison of three passages (to which we will return in section 4) can illustrate this interpretation: in the first example the notion of oratorical “debate” (ἀγών) is clearly present, whereas in the second and third examples the precise meaning of ἐναγωνίος is in the first instance less obvious.

(1) κράτιστον δὲ ἐπιτήδευμα ἐν διαλέκτῳ πολιτικῇ καὶ ἐναγωνίῳ τὸ ὁμοίωτατον τῷ κατὰ φύσιν.

The most effective style to cultivate in political, i.e., debating, oratory is that which most resembles natural speech. (Trans. Usher, adapted)¹⁸

In the immediate context of this passage (*On Isocrates* 12.3), Dionysius censures Isocrates for his “juvenile” figures of speech, which he supposes are not at home in the context of a formal debate. The formulation διάλεκτος ἐναγωνίος refers to language that is suited to debates (compare Ernesti’s *contentionibus aptum*).

Longinus *On the Sublime* 25 is a famous passage in which the term ἐναγωνίος causes more difficulties. In his discussion of figures that contribute to sublimity, Longinus considers the so-called historic present, which introduces past events “as happening at the present moment”:

(2) ὅταν γε μὴν τὰ παρεληλυθότα τοῖς χρόνοις εἰσάγῃς ὡς γινόμενα καὶ παρόντα, οὐ διήγησιν ἔτι τὸν λόγον ἀλλ’ ἐναγωνίον πρᾶγμα ποιήσεις.

Again, if you introduce events in past time as happening at the present moment, the passage will be transformed from a narrative into a vivid actuality. (Trans. Fyfe and Russell)

18. Usher translates ἐν διαλέκτῳ πολιτικῇ καὶ ἐναγωνίῳ as “in political and forensic oratory,” but ἐναγωνίος seems to embrace both deliberative and forensic oratory, i.e., all debating oratory: see text 5 below.

Since Longinus' observations on the use of a present tense pertain especially to (historical) narrative—he cites an example from Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* (7.1.37)—it is not immediately obvious to what “debate” (ἀγών) the adjective ἐναγώνιος would here refer. In the first instance one might therefore be tempted to interpret ἀγών here as “action” or “battle” rather than “debate,” and hence to interpret ἐναγώνιος as “full of action/battle” (cf. Bühler's “voll Streit und Kampf” above, p. 96). But this interpretation would not take into account the contrast that Longinus draws between διήγησις (narrative) and ἐναγώνιον πρᾶγμα. As we will argue below (section 4.2), Longinus' formulation suggests that the historic present transforms a narrative about the past into an “engaging reality,” which draws the reader into the narrative.

The following scholion on the *Iliad* describes the poet Homer as ἐναγώνιος. Unlike Euripides, who usually gives away the plot, Homer keeps his audience in suspense by only planting a “seed,” that is, by briefly suggesting only part of the events that will form the narrative (schol. T *Il.* 15.64–77):

(3) Ζηνόδοτος ἐνθένδε [*Il.* 15.64] ἕως τοῦ “λίσσομένη” [15.77] οὐδὲ ἔγραφεν· εἰκόασι γὰρ Εὐριπιδεῖοι προλόγοι ταῦτα. ἐναγώνιος δὲ ἔστιν ὁ ποιητὴς καί, ἐὰν ἄρα, σπέρμα μόνον τιθεῖς, . . .

Zenodotus omits [the fourteen lines] from here [15.64] to “supplicating” [15.77]. For they are similar to a Euripidean prologue. However, the poet is [not boring like Euripides, but] exciting and, if anything at all, puts only a seed . . . (Trans. Nünlist)¹⁹

Nünlist's translation, “exciting,” is well chosen: the point is that Homer involves his readers in his narrative, by showing them only a glimpse of what is going to happen.

4. THREE USAGES OF ΕΝΑΓΩΝΙΟΣ IN LITERARY CRITICISM

We have argued that the missing link between ἐναγώνιος “suited to debate” (LSJ III) and ἐναγώνιος as a stylistic concept (LSJ IIIb) lies in the notion of engagement. This overarching idea of active involvement connects the three examples discussed above (in section 3), which represent three common usages of ἐναγώνιος in ancient literary criticism:

1. ἐναγώνιος “suited for performative oratory”: the term ἀγών can especially refer to forensic and deliberative oratory, which is associated with a “performative” style (λέξις ἀγωνιστική or ἐναγώνιος)

2. ἐναγώνιος “actively involving”: the term ἀγών can also refer to the engagement or involvement on the part of the audience

3. ἐναγώνιος “full of suspense”: a specific type of involvement (ἀγών or ἀγωνία) is the excitement of the reader who is eager to hear how the narrative will develop.

When we examine these three usages, we will find that the first category (“suited for performative oratory”) is common in more traditional rhetorical

19. For a discussion of this passage, see Nünlist 2009, 39–40 and section 4.3 below.

works like the treatises of Demetrius and Dionysius (4.1), whereas the second (“actively involving”) is especially relevant to Longinus’ *On the Sublime* (4.2). There is an obvious connection, however, between Longinus’ use of the term and the third usage (“full of suspense”), which is prominent in the scholia on Homer (4.3).

4.1. First Usage: “Suited for Performative Oratory”

We have seen that ἀγών can be a speech in the setting of a forensic or deliberative debate. Dionysius of Halicarnassus frequently calls these forensic and deliberative speeches ἐναγώνιοι λόγοι rather than ἀγῶνες. Compare the following two quotations (*On Isocrates* 2.6 and *On Demosthenes* 45.1):

(4) τοιγάρτοι τὰς μὲν ἐπιδείξεις τὰς ἐν ταῖς πανηγύρεσι καὶ τὴν ἐκ χειρὸς θεωρίαν φέρουσιν αὐτοῦ οἱ λόγοι, τοὺς δὲ ἐν ἐκκλησίαις καὶ δικαστηρίοις ἀγῶνας οὐχ ὑπομένουσι.

For the same reason his [i.e., Isocrates’] speeches will bear recitation on ceremonial occasions, and private study, but cannot stand up to the debates in the assembly or the law courts.

(5) ἐκ δὲ τῶν ἐναγωνίων αὐτοῦ λόγων, ὅποσοι πρὸς δικαστήρια γεγόνασιν ἢ πρὸς ἐκκλησίας, τεκμαίρομαι ὅτι ταύτην τὴν γνώμην ὁ ἀνὴρ εἶχεν.

From his ἐναγώνιοι λόγοι, as many as have been composed for the law courts or for the assembly, I infer that he [sc. Demosthenes] held the above opinion.

Clearly, ἀγῶνες or ἐναγώνιοι λόγοι are at home in the law courts and the assembly. These terms thus cover the γένος δικανικόν (forensic oratory) and the γένος συμβουλευτικόν or δημηγορικόν (deliberative oratory). Although Aristotle in his *Rhetoric* already presents these two kinds of oratory as two distinct genres, he assigns to them one single style, for which he significantly uses the term λέξις ἀγωνιστική, that is, the style that is suitable for an ἀγών. This is sometimes translated as the “performative style” so as to draw a contrast with its foil: the λέξις γραφική or the “written style.”²⁰ The performative style requires a performance (ὑπόκρισις), whereas it loses its force when it is read. The written style has opposite qualities: it is suitable for private study and appears meager in a real-life performance.²¹ The distinction between the two styles, however, is not as clear-cut as it may seem in the first instance. Some speeches, for instance, require a written style. These are the speeches that belong to Aristotle’s third genre of oratory: the γένος ἐπιδεικτικόν or epideictic oratory.²² Exemplary for this genre are the panegyric speeches of Isocrates.²³ Some ancient rhetoricians associate these panegyric speeches with

20. Arist. *Rh.* 1413b. For a discussion of the performative and written styles, see Innes 2007, 151–76.

21. Arist. *Rh.* 1413b: ἔστι δὲ λέξις γραφικὴ μὲν ἢ ἀκριβεστάτη, ἀγωνιστικὴ δὲ ἢ ὑποκριτικωτάτη. (“The style of written compositions is most precise, that of debate is most suitable for delivery.” Trans. Freese.)

22. Arist. *Rh.* 1414a: ἡ μὲν οὖν ἐπιδεικτικὴ λέξις γραφικωτάτη· τὸ γὰρ ἔργον αὐτῆς ἀνάγνωσις. (“The epideictic style is most like writing; for its objective is to be read.” Trans. Kennedy.)

23. Isocrates declares that he gave no oral performances, claiming that his lack of voice and courage led him to write speeches to read (e.g., *Panath.* 12.9–10). See Innes 2007, 155.

a reading audience rather than performance.²⁴ In text 4 above Dionysius makes this point when he describes Isocrates' speeches as suitable for ceremonies (ἐν ταῖς πανηγύρεσι) and private study (ἐκ χειρὸς θεωρία). Speeches in the performative style, however, are to be delivered in front of an actual audience and not to be as intensively studied as the epideictic texts.

Aristotle states that great precision (*akribēia*) is characteristic of the written style, since the texts in this style are to be read and studied over and over again. Figures of speech, such as asyndeta and repetitions, make a poor showing in a study chamber, but they are all the more effective in the heat of a debate. In performance, precision is therefore not the prime virtue and rhetorical figures are no vice. Dionysius and Demetrius seem to share Aristotle's analysis, albeit that they do not mention the λέξις ἀγωνιστική. They do, however, use the word ἐναγώνιος in the same context. Demetrius (*On Style* 193) describes the "disjointed style" as follows:

(6) Ἐναγώνιος μὲν οὖν ἴσως μᾶλλον ἢ διαλελυμένη λέξις, ἢ δ' αὐτὴ καὶ ὑποκριτικὴ καλεῖται· κινεῖ γὰρ ὑπόκρισιν ἢ λύσις. γραφικὴ δὲ λέξις ἢ εὐανάγνωστος. αὐτὴ δ' ἔστιν ἢ συνηρημένη καὶ οἷον ἠσφαλισμένη τοῖς συνδέσμοις.

The disjointed style is probably more suited to performance [ἐναγώνιος]. It is also called the style of the actor [ὑποκριτικὴ], since the broken structure stimulates performance. The most pleasant to read is the written style. It is compacted and, as it were, consolidated by the conjunctions.

Demetrius opposes the "disjointed" style to the written style, and he calls the former ἐναγώνιος. We have good reasons to identify the disjointed, ἐναγώνιος, style with Aristotle's performative style. Both bear the use of asyndeta and both require performance (ὑπόκρισις). Dionysius of Halicarnassus puts it similarly, when he explains that Isocrates' composition is certainly not ἐναγώνιος (*On Isocrates* 2.4–5):²⁵

(7) οὐδὲ τὴν σύνθεσιν ἐπιδείκνυται τὴν φυσικὴν καὶ ἀφελῆ καὶ ἐναγώνιον, ὥσπερ ἡ Λυσίου, . . . ἀναγνώσεώς τε μᾶλλον οἰκειότερός ἐστιν ἢ χρήσεως.

Nor does he [sc. Isocrates] display a composition that is natural, simple and suited to performance, like Lysias' composition, . . . it is rather more suitable for reading than for practical use.

In the context of debate, ἀγών, ἀγωνιστικός, and ἐναγώνιος all deal with performative oratory: debates in the courts and the assembly. A speech or a style can therefore be called ἐναγώνιος when it is suited for such performative oratory. Forensic and (especially) deliberative speeches also seem to be on Dionysius' mind when he describes his own *Roman Antiquities* as ἐναγώνιος. His history of early Rome is full of political speeches, and will thus please "those

24. This is not to say that epideictic oratory is not also performative, but in ancient theory, the λέξις ἀγωνιστική ("performative style") is especially associated with forensic and deliberative oratory, whereas panegyric speeches like those of Isocrates are not necessarily performed for an audience.

25. A different view is found in Philostr. *VS* 505 ed. Olearius: Philostratus characterizes Isocrates' *Archidamus* as ἐναγώνιος: "The whole speech is ἐναγώνιος, so that even the myth in it, the story of Heracles and the oxen, is expressed with vigour and energy [σὺν ἐπιστροφῇ]" (trans. Wright). Note, however, that Philostratus also associates ἐναγώνιος with "intentness," "vehemence" (ἐπιστροφή) and seems to imply that myth in principle belongs to a different style: the same idea is found in Longinus 9.13–14 (discussed below, section 4.2).

who occupy themselves with political debates.”²⁶ Centuries later, Eustathius still uses the term ἐναγώνιος in a similar sense. The commentator argues that Book 9 of the *Iliad* is very ἐναγώνιος, and he adds that it “has much power of forensic rhetoric”: in the Homeric passage, the Greek ambassadors speak first (attempting to persuade Achilles), and Achilles answers them.²⁷ Here, the connection between ἐναγώνιος and debate is again obvious.

4.2. Second Usage: “Actively Involving”

We have seen that Eustathius describes the embassy to Achilles (*Iliad* 9) as ἐναγώνιος. Longinus qualifies the entire *Iliad* as ἐναγώνιος. Unlike the commentator, however, the author of *On the Sublime* does not seem to have debates in mind when he applies the term to Homer’s epic. In his comparison of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* (*On the Sublime* 9.12–14), he argues that the former epic is the work of a young poet, whose intense drama captivates the audience, whereas the latter is the product of an aged storyteller. In this passage (9.13), we recognize a second usage of the term ἐναγώνιος, namely “engaging,” “actively involving”:

(8) ἀπὸ δὲ τῆς αὐτῆς αἰτίας, οἶμαι, τῆς μὲν Ἰλιάδος γραφομένης ἐν ἀκμῇ πνεύματος ὄλον τὸ σωματίον δραματικόν ὑπεστήσατο καὶ ἐναγώνιον, τῆς δὲ Ὀδυσσεΐας τὸ πλέον διηγηματικόν, ὅπερ ἴδιον γήρωος.

For the same reason, I think, while the *Iliad* was written in the heyday of his genius, Homer made the whole piece dramatic and engaging, whereas most of the *Odyssey* is narrative, which is characteristic of old age.

In the first instance, one could be tempted to understand Longinus as drawing a distinction between an epic of many debates (*Iliad*) and an epic of narration (*Odyssey*). But although Longinus’ use of ἐναγώνιος (here and elsewhere) indeed seems to build on Aristotle’s terminology of ἀγωνιστικός, his focus is clearly different.²⁸ Just like Aristotle, Longinus refers to the communicative situation that connects speaker (or narrator) and listener, but for the latter the focus is not on debate or “performance,” but rather on the “involvement” of the audience. It is the engagement of the audience that connects the exciting and moving *Iliad* with the performance of drama (hence the term δραματικόν, literally “dramatic”):²⁹ just like the spectators of drama, the readers (or listen-

26. Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.8.3 presents his own work as “a combination of every kind, forensic, speculative and narrative [ἐναγώνιος τε καὶ θεωρητικῆς καὶ διηγηματικῆς], to the intent that it may afford satisfaction both to those who occupy themselves with political debates [τοῖς περὶ τοὺς πολιτικοὺς διατρίβουσι λόγους] and to those who are devoted to philosophical speculations, as well as to any who may desire mere undisturbed entertainment in their reading of history [εἰ τισιν ἀσχλήτου δεήσει διαγωγῆς ἐν ἱστορικοῖς ἀναγνώσμασιν]” (trans. Cary). The distinction between ἐναγώνιος and διηγηματικός is equally important in Longinus (*Subl.* 9.13 and 25; see section 4.2 below).

27. Eust. *Il.* 2.642.5–7 ed. Van der Valk: πάντο δὲ ἐναγώνιος ἡ ῥαψοδία καὶ πολλὴν ἔχουσα δύναμιν ῥητορείας δικανικῆς, ἐν οἷς οἱ μὲν πρέσβεις λέγουσιν, ὁ δὲ Ἀχιλλεὺς ἀντίλεγαι. Eustathius next observes that in *Iliad* 9 Homer best demonstrates the rhetoric that belongs to a political speech (τῆν ἐν λόγῳ πολιτικῷ ῥητορικῆν). Cf. Bühler 1964, 60.

28. Longinus employs the term ἀγωνιστικός twice (in 22.3 and 23.1): the latter passage especially suggests that Longinus uses ἀγωνιστικός in the same sense as ἐναγώνιος (“engaging,” “involving”).

29. Longinus’ association of ἐναγώνιος and δραματικός matches Aristotle’s juxtaposition of ἀγωνιστικός and ὀπικρτικός (*Rh.* 1413b). Likewise, Demetrius’ performative style (λέξις ἐναγώνιος) is “the style of the ac-

ers) of this epic experience the narrated events as if they are direct witnesses. When hearing the *Odyssey*, on the other hand, the audience experiences a relaxed distance to the story. The term διήγησις here implies detachedness on the part of the listener:³⁰ apart from a few storm scenes and such highlights as the Cyclops adventure (*On the Sublime* 9.14), this epic presents the stories of Odysseus as taking place in the remote and “mythical” past: they are entertaining, but they lack the urgency of the Iliadic scenes. The mythical relaxedness of Odysseus’ adventures precludes any active involvement on the part of the reader or listener.³¹

The centrality of the notion of active “engagement” in Longinus’ usage of ἐναγώνιος can also be seen in his use of the substantive ἀγών, for example, in his discussion of apostrophe (*On the Sublime* 26.3):

(9) καὶ ὅταν ὡς οὐ πρὸς ἅπαντας, ἀλλ’ ὡς πρὸς μόνον τινὰ λαλήῃς
 Τυδεΐδην δ’ οὐκ ἂν γνοίης ποτέροισι μετείη
 ἐμπαθέστερόν τε αὐτὸν ἅμα καὶ προσεκτικώτερον καὶ ἀγῶνος ἐμπλεῶν ἀποτελέσεις, ταῖς
 εἰς ἑαυτὸν προσφωνήσεσιν ἐξεγειρόμενον.

When you appear to address not the whole audience, but only a single individual,
 “Of Tydeus’ son you could not have known with which of the hosts he was fighting”
 [*Iliad* 5.85]
 you will move him more and make him more attentive and full of active interest, because
 he is roused by the appeals to him in person. (Trans. Fyfe and Russell, adapted)

This passage shows us that ἀγών can specifically refer to the involvement of the listener or reader of a literary text. The word ἀγών can be used in this way, it seems, because “involvement” is an aspect of the communicative situation that is typically associated with a performative speech (ἀγών). But the same involvement can also be relevant to different communicative situations of literary (and narrative) texts, including Homer’s *Iliad*.³² By using the second person formulation οὐκ ἂν γνοίης (“you could not have known”), Homer directly addresses the listener, who is thus roused (ἐξεγειρόμενον) and feels engaged in the fights between Diomedes and his Trojan enemies.³³ This is the meaning of ἀγών in text 9 (“involvement,” “active interest”), which also explains the use of the term ἐναγώνιος at the beginning of the same chapter on apostrophe (*On the Sublime* 26.1):

tor” (ὀποκρικτική): Demetr. *Eloc.* 193, see text 6 above. All this goes back to Plato’s contrast between narration (διήγησις) and the mimetic or dramatic mode (μίμησις). In the discussion of Homer’s *Iliad* (*Rep.* 392a–394b), it is claimed that the narrator, when using direct speech, “does his best to make us think that it is not Homer but an aged priest who is talking” (393b, trans. Lee).

30. Compare Dionysius’ association of διήγησις with ἀόχλητος διαγωγή, “undisturbed entertainment” (*Ant. Rom.* 1.8.3: n. 26 above).

31. The contrast between the two Homeric epics (Longinus 9.13–14) is presented in terms of urgent actuality (*Iliad*) versus relaxed storytelling (*Odyssey*): in the latter epic, Homer has grown old, so that he does not preserve the characteristic qualities of his *Iliad*: “the flood of moving incidents in quick succession, versatility, actuality, and abundance of imagery taken from real life” (τὴν πρόχυσιν ὁμοίαν τῶν ἐπαλλήλων παθῶν, οὐδὲ τὸ ἀγχιστροφὸν καὶ πολιτικὸν καὶ ταῖς ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας φαντασίας καταπεπικνωμένον).

32. For a similar use of ἀγών in the sense of “involvement,” see Longinus 15.1, where visualization (φαντασία) is said to contribute to the “engagement” of the audience.

33. Cf. Ernesti 1795, 4: [*auditor*] *veluti occupatur oratione ita ut in societatem adfectus et actionis eius, qui dicit, adducatur.*

(10) ἐναγώνιος δ' ὁμοίως καὶ ἡ τῶν προσώπων ἀντιμετάθεσις καὶ πολλακίς ἐν μέσοις τοῖς κινδύνοις ποιούσα τὸν ἀκροατὴν δοκεῖν στρέφεσθαι.

Equally engaging [i.e., as the historic present] is the change of persons, and it often makes the listener feel himself set in the thick of danger. (Trans. Fyfe and Russell, adapted)

For Longinus, the “change of persons” (*On the Sublime* 26–27) is one of the grammatical figures that can be a source of sublimity. Apostrophe belongs to this category, because it can be understood as a change from the third to the second person. Apart from Homer’s γνοίης mentioned above, Longinus gives examples from *Iliad* 15.697–98 (φαίης), Aratus *Phaenomena* 287 (μὴ περικλύζοιο), and Herodotus 2.29 (πλεύσειαι, ἤξειεις). In all these instances, the use of the second person engages the listener, who thus becomes an active part of the narration. The unexpected use of the first person (*On the Sublime* 27) is related, but different: here it is the narrator himself—not his listener—who becomes engaged in the narrative by turning (as it were) into one of his own characters.

It is from this use of ἀγών (“involvement,” “active interest”) that we can also understand the other occurrences of ἐναγώνιος in Longinus’ *On the Sublime*. Let us now reconsider his observation on the historic present (*On the Sublime* 25), already cited above, which in Longinus’ treatise directly precedes the discussion of apostrophe:

(2) ὅταν γε μὴν τὰ παρεληλυθότα τοῖς χρόνοις εἰσάγης ὡς γινόμενα καὶ παρόντα, οὐ διήγησιν ἔτι τὸν λόγον ἀλλ’ ἐναγώνιον πρᾶγμα ποιήσεις.

Again, if you introduce events in past time as happening in the present moment, you will transform the passage from a narrative into an engaging event.³⁴

The historic present (*On the Sublime* 25) and the use of the second person (*On the Sublime* 26) are explicitly connected by the term ἐναγώνιος. These two grammatical figures (the change of person as well as the change of tense) involve the listener in the narrative, by bridging the distance in time between the narrated events and the moment of narration.³⁵ Just as in his comparison of the two Homeric epics (text 8 above), Longinus here contrasts ἐναγώνιον with narrative (διήγησις). A plain narrative would—it is suggested—report past events by the use of past tenses: Longinus implies that an audience would listen to such a story with a relative detachedness: it would be entertaining, but not directly engaging. However, when the present tense is used, the events from the past seem to happen at the present moment (ὡς γινόμενα καὶ παρόντα), so that the listener is captivated: the narrative acquires a certain actuality and becomes an engaging event.

34. Russell’s translation “vivid actuality” rightly expresses the idea that events are presented as directly relevant to the audience at the moment of narration. In Russell and Winterbottom (1972, 486), Russell renders ἐναγώνιον πρᾶγμα (*Subl.* 25) as “a thing of immediate urgency” and he repeats the word “urgency” at the beginning of Longinus 26. Sicking and Stork (1997, 131) translate ἐναγώνιον πρᾶγμα as “drama,” which rightly brings out the contrast with διήγησις. The crucial point of this dramatic effect, however, is that both the historic present (*Subl.* 25) and the imaginary second person (*Subl.* 26) engage the audience and draw them into the narrative. On Longinus’ interpretation of the historic present, see also Boter 2012.

35. Cf. Russell 1964, 143: “to annihilate distance in time.”

4.3. Third Usage: “Full of Suspense”

We now move to our third category, which is especially relevant to the scholia on Homer.³⁶ As in Longinus, the use of ἐναγώνιος and cognates in the scholia is not directly associated with the realm of debate. The scholiasts agree with Longinus that the *Iliad* is ἐναγώνιος and that it establishes ἀγών on the part of the audience, exciting their active interest. (Again, we might interpret that this engagement of the audience is similar to the involvement that debaters as well as their witnesses would experience in the heat of an urgent debate.) The scholiasts, however, use ἀγών in a more restricted sense than Longinus. This can be observed in the following scholion (schol. BPQ *Od.* 5.379): when Poseidon speaks threatening words that anticipate the impending sufferings of Odysseus, Homer apparently stirs the ἀγών of his audience:

(11) πάλιν ἄλλων δεινῶν προσδοκίαν ὑποβάλλει ἀνακτινῶν ἀγῶνα τῷ ἀκροατῆϊ.

Again he [sc. Homer] raises anticipation of other disasters, stirring the audience's tense expectation.

A keyword in this passage is anticipation (προσδοκία). Homer, through the words of Poseidon, hints at future events and thus triggers the curiosity of his readers.³⁷ As we will see below (text 14), the audience could be called ἐναγώνιος in the general sense that it is involved in the story. This sense, however, may here be narrowed down, because the audience is involved in a very specific way: it is tensely awaiting the future events in the narrative. To convey the concept of suspense the scholiast in the above example uses the word ἀγών. Elsewhere, the scholia prefer another term for this restricted sense of ἀγών, namely ἀγωνία. This seems to be the scholiasts' *terminus technicus* for “suspense”: a subtype of the more general “involvement” for which, as we have seen, Longinus prefers the term ἀγών. When a commentator says that the audience is in agony, he means that it is listening with bated breath: the listeners are in suspense.³⁸ Compare the following two quotations (schol. bT *Il.* 7.479 and Demetrius *On Style* 216):

(12) προκινεῖ καὶ ἀγωνιᾶν ποιεῖ τὸν ἀκροατὴν ἐπὶ τοῖς ἐσομένοις ὁ ποιητής.

The poet stirs the audience and brings it in tense anticipation of the things yet to come.

(13) δεῖ τὰ γενόμενα οὐκ εὐθὺς λέγειν, ὅτι ἐγένετο, ἀλλὰ κατὰ μικρόν, κρεμῶντα τὸν ἀκροατὴν καὶ ἀναγκάζοντα συναγωνιᾶν.

It is necessary to tell the events not directly, i.e., [to tell merely] that they happened, but to reveal them gradually and to keep the reader in suspense and to force him to share the distress [i.e., with the characters]. (Trans. Innes, adapted)

36. For the scholia on Homer we have used the edition of Erbse (1969–1988).

37. The expression κινεῖν ἀγῶνα (“to stir anxiety”) is also found in schol. bT *Il.* 8.80.

38. Nünlist (2009, 139–42) discusses the use of ἀγωνία and ἐναγώνιος in the scholia. He also connects these terms with the concept of suspense. *DGE* (Adrados 2009, 1519) lists a separate meaning of ἐναγώνιος that is related to ἀγωνία, “angustia.”

Text 12 comments on a nighttime scene in the *Iliad* (7.479), in which Zeus devises evil (κακά μήδετο) for the Greeks and Trojans, while “thundering terribly” (σμερδαλέα κτυπέων). As Nünlist points out, Zeus’ thunder has a similar effect as “narratorial prolepsis.” We know that something is going to happen. But what? The reader is kept in suspense, and “his direct involvement and empathy makes him respond to the events as if he were present himself.”³⁹ The citation from Demetrius (text 13) supports this interpretation. When an author reveals the events not all at once but only gradually, then the reader will be literally in suspense (κρεμῶντα) and he will suffer along with the characters in the story (συναγωνιᾶν).⁴⁰ The prefix συν- reinforces the involvement of the audience with the narrative and its characters.⁴¹

The reader will thus experience agony, if the author does not give all relevant information at once, but strategically mentions one thing and postpones another: the organization of the information in the text is of crucial importance. The technical term for this organization in the scholia is οἰκονομία.⁴² It is the gradual distribution of information that causes the ἀγωνία (“suspense”). When a Greek and a Trojan warrior meet each other on the battlefield, Homer makes sure that the first man to attack misses, thus making the audience ἐναγώνιος (“in suspense”) about the outcome of the fight (text 14: schol. T *Il.* 16.463–76b).⁴³ The situation described by Homer can itself also be called ἐναγώνιος, “full of suspense” (text 15: schol. b *Il.* 22.274 a²/b²):

(14) κατ’ ἀρχὴν πολλάκις ἀποτυγχάνοντας ποιῶν τοὺς βάλλοντας ἐναγώνιον ποιεῖ τὸν ἀκροατήν.

Causing the warriors to miss often at first he [sc. Homer] keeps the audience in suspense.

(15) ἐναγώνιον ποιεῖ τὴν στάσιν διὰ τῆς ἀποτυχίας, καὶ μικροῦ δεῖν τῆς νίκης ἐλπίδας Ἐκτορι δίδωσιν.

He [sc. Homer] makes the situation full of suspense because of his [sc. Achilles’] failure, and he almost gives Hector hope of victory.

It will be clear that in the context of tense anticipation, ἐναγώνιος means “in suspense” or “excited” for the audience⁴⁴ and “full of suspense” or “exciting”

39. Nünlist 2009, 140.

40. Demetr. *Eloc.* 216 cites a passage from Ctesias on the death of Cyrus. Because of his mastery of suspense, Demetrius (215) calls Ctesias a “poet” and “an artist in vividness” (ἐναργείας δημιουργός).

41. According to Demetrius’ summary of Ctesias frag. 24, Parysatis “felt both joy and anguish” (ἡ δὲ ἤσθη καὶ ἠγωνίασεν) when the messenger reported the victory of her son Cyrus, postponing the news of his death. Thanks to Ctesias’ gradual exposition, the reader will share Parysatis’ emotions (συναγωνιᾶν). Longinus *Subl.* 22.4 refers to another kind of suspense with the same vocabulary (ἀγωνία, συν-). He states that hyperbaton carries (συνεπισπόμενος) the audience with it to share in the dangers of its long inversions. The audience also shares with the speaker the danger of losing the thread (συναποκτινδυνεύειν) by means of agony (ὕπ’ ἀγωνίας). The suspense is here caused by the anxious anticipation of the outcome of the grammatical structure of the sentence rather than of events in the narrative.

42. This is an important term in the Homeric scholia: see Meijering 1987, 181–200.

43. A modern discussion of this typical structure of the Homeric battle scene, already noticed by ancient readers, can be found in Fenik 1968.

44. Another example of this type is schol. bT *Il.* 8.217a.

for the narrative itself.⁴⁵ Let us now return to the aforementioned scholion T II. 15.64, where a contrast is drawn between Homer and Euripides:

(3) Ζηνόδοτος ἐνθὲνδε [II. 15.64] ἕως τοῦ “λισσομένη” [15.77] οὐδὲ ἔγραφεν· εἰκόασι γὰρ Εὐριπιδεῖω προλόγῳ ταῦτα. ἐναγώνιος δὲ ἐστὶν ὁ ποιητῆς καί, ἐὰν ἄρα, σπέρμα μόνον τιθεῖς, <ὡς τὸ> “κακοῦ δ’ ἄρα οἱ πέλεν ἀρχή” [II. 11.604]. τάχα δὲ ὁ ταῦτα ποιήσας καὶ τὸ “ὄχόμεθ’ ἐς Θήβην” [II. 1.366] καὶ τὸ “ἤρξατο δ’ ὡς πρῶτον Κίκονας δάμας” [Od. 23.310] <ἐποίησεν>.

Zenodotus omits [the fourteen lines] from here [15.64] to “supplicating” [15.77]. For they are similar to a Euripidean prologue. However, the poet holds suspense and, if anything at all, he would have planted only a seed; such as “this was the beginning of his [sc. Patroclus] evil.” The one who composed these lines [sc. 15.64–77] is perhaps the same who composed “we went against Thebe” and “he [sc. Odysseus to Penelope] began how he first defeated the Ciconians.” (Trans. Nünlist, adapted)⁴⁶

This passage well exemplifies the third usage of ἐναγώνιος. Homer is preeminently a poet who creates suspense: he does not give his entire plot directly away, but he spins the events out through gradual exposition. He only “plants a seed” of what is coming. He does that with phrases such as “this was the beginning of his evil,” not spelling out future events but merely hinting at them just enough to arouse the anticipation of his audience. What, then, about the lines that Zenodotus omits? In these lines Zeus explains to Hera his plans for the further course of the war. He reveals that Hector will kill Patroclus, that Achilles in revenge will kill the Trojan leader and finally that the Greeks will conquer Troy under the guidance of the goddess Athena. This exposition of future events could hardly be called “planting a seed”: it is harmful to the suspense—at least according to our source. The scholiast refers to two other passages, where Achilles and Odysseus directly narrate their adventures without creating suspense. This procedure reminds the scholiast of the narratives in Euripides’ prologues (we might think of Aphrodite’s announcement of the coming events in *Hippolytus*). For Zenodotus, the presence of a storyline that is not ἐναγώνιος is an important criterion to determine whether a given passage in Homer is genuine or spurious.

5. ENGAGING THE AUDIENCE

The three usages of ἐναγώνιος that we have distinguished must not be seen as three separate meanings: they are, as we have seen, conceptually connected. Be it in the context of rhetoric, the criticism of sublimity, or narratological comments on the *Iliad*, ἐναγώνιος is associated with an audience that is closely involved with the text at hand. Take Dionysius’ ἐναγώνιοι λόγοι:

45. On the importance of the reader’s expectation and “hope” (ἐλπίς) in the scholia, see Nünlist 2009, 149–51. Schol. T II. 12.199a describes another scene from the *Iliad* as ἐναγώνιος: the Trojans succeed in their mission to chase the Greeks back to their ships, but they postpone the final strike in order to deliberate about tactics. This scene is ἐναγώνιος because it triggers the audience’s curiosity about the outcome of the expedition.

46. Nünlist 2009, 39. We have changed “the poet is exciting” into “the poet holds suspense”: Nünlist himself (2009, 142 n. 27) proposes “full of suspense” as a translation of ἐναγώνιος, and the notion of suspense appears to suit this context particularly well. On the narratological technique of “planting a seed,” see De Jong 2001, xvii–xviii.

performed in court or council, these speeches present serious, urgent situations (ἐν σπουδῇ καὶ κακοῖς) to the audience.⁴⁷ Every frivolity is inappropriate in such matters that concern war and peace or danger: the listeners need to be directly involved with the subject at stake. Such proximity between text and audience can also be brought about in narrative texts: for Longinus, the use of historical present creates an ἐναγώνιον πρᾶγμα because it bridges the time between the narrated event and the present (text 2 above). The scholiasts on Homer associate ἐναγώνιος with situations that keep the reader “in suspense” about the outcome of an exciting event. Whereas a διήγησις creates, as we have argued, a certain relaxed detachedness from the text at hand, a passage that is ἐναγώνιος annihilates the distance between the text and its audience.

We may note that the different usages of the noun ἀγών that we have considered have a similar interconnection as those of ἐναγώνιος. A reader or listener can be filled with ἀγών, if he displays an active interest in the text. This is particularly obvious when Longinus calls the reader of *Iliad* 5.85 ἀγῶνος ἔμπλεων (text 9 above) or when a scholiast comments that Homer stirs his audience’s ἀγών (text 11). Essentially, an ἀγών, whether an athletic contest, a military battle, or a debate, is an actively engaging event, a competition, capable of going either way: since the outcome is “in suspense,” the audience is drawn into the (narrated) situation.

Having now discussed both the most typical usages of ἐναγώνιος and the unifying concept behind it, we may observe that some recurrent notions are frequently found in the context of the term ἐναγώνιος in all its usages in literary criticism. These features are all related to the active involvement of the audience. Some of these notions are the following: urgency, danger,⁴⁸ truth/realism,⁴⁹ naturalism of style,⁵⁰ and forceful emotion.⁵¹ It is not without cause that these distinct notions are associated with ἐναγώνιος: they seem to derive from the communicative situation in which the audience is closely involved with the narrated text. Urgent or dangerous situations, for instance,

47. Dion. Hal. *Isoc.* 12.4.

48. Longinus *Subl.* 26.1 (text 10 above) calls the “change of persons” ἐναγώνιος, as it often takes the audience into the thick of danger (πολλάκις ἐν μέσοις τοῖς κινδύνοις ποιῶσα τὸν ἀκροατήν). For a similar idea, compare Longinus’ discussion of hyperbaton (*Subl.* 22.4), which involves the “danger” of losing the thread (the word ἐναγώνιος does not occur here, but the effect seems to be similar).

49. For the association of ἐναγώνιοι λόγοι with ἀλήθεια, see, e.g., Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 45.4. Longinus *Subl.* 9.13 distinguishes between *Iliad* (δραματικὸν and ἐναγώνιον) and *Odyssey* (διηγηματικόν), and goes on to point out that the *Iliad* is full of images drawn from “real life” (ἀλήθεια), whereas the *Odyssey* shows Homer’s wandering in “the fabulous and the incredible” (τοῖς μυθώδεσι καὶ ἀπίστοις). See also Philostratus *VS* 505 ed. Olearius (n. 25 above).

50. According to Dion. Hal. *Isoc.* 12.3 (text 1), the best style in deliberative and forensic oratory (ἐν διαλέκτῳ πολιτικῇ καὶ ἐναγωνίῳ) is “the one most resembling what is according to nature” (τὸ ὁμοίωτατον τῷ κατὰ φύσιν). On Dionysius’ views on natural style, see De Jonge 2008, 255–73. The notion of natural style seems to be also relevant to the use of the term ἐναγώνιος in Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 4.8–9: Dionysius’ rewriting of Herodotus 1.6.1 results in a style that is “more direct and engaging” (ὀρθὸν μᾶλλον καὶ ἐναγώνιον). For this passage, see further De Jonge 2008, 385–88.

51. For the close connection between emotion (πάθος) and the term ἐναγώνιος, see, e.g., Dion. Hal. *Thuc.* 23.6, and *Thuc.* 48.1: the words of Hermocrates (Th. 6.77.1) are “full of engaging emotion” (πάθος ἐστὶν ἐναγωνίου μεστά). Longinus 15.9 states that the rhetorical use of imagery (φαντασία) brings into speeches “elements of excitement and emotion” (ἐναγωνία καὶ ἐμπόθη). Dionysius describes his reading of Demosthenes’ speeches as an especially emotional experience (Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 22.2–3): his emotional engagement with Demosthenes closely corresponds to Longinus’ observations on the overpowering effects of the sublime: cf. De Jonge 2012, 286–87.

naturally incite the interest of the audience. When the author wishes to grab the attention of the reader, he should use material that is credible or realistic, without engaging in linguistic playfulness, and he should excite the emotions of his audience so as to draw them into his story. Some instances of *ἐναγώνιος* will display many of these notions in their context, while others will display only one. We have seen, for example, that a critic may use the word *ἐναγώνιος* without any implication of urgency or danger (e.g., Longinus 26.2 on Herodotus 2.29): “engaging” language can also be used in relaxed and peaceful situations.

CONCLUSION

In mapping the semantics of *ἐναγώνιος*, we have argued that the concept of “engagement” plays a central role in the use of this term in ancient literary criticism. The direct involvement of speaker (or narrator) and audience forms the bridge between the general usage of the term (“suited to debate,” LSJ III) and its usage in stylistic theory (“energetic,” “vivid,” LSJ IIIb). The translations that scholars adopt for the latter category (“vehement,” “exciting,” “contentious,” “aggressive,” and “full of suspense”) can all be appropriate in particular contexts, but it is possible to be more precise about the semantic value of the term. When interpreting *ἐναγώνιος* in a specific context, it is always helpful to think of the active engagement that characterizes the communicative situation, not only of a debate, but also of certain forms of narrative in prose and poetry. In these situations, the word *ἐναγώνιος* hints at the close interaction between a speaker, narrator, or poet on the one hand and his audience on the other: all participants in the communicative situation are directly concerned with one another and with the subject that is at stake in the speech or narrative. Although Demetrius, Dionysius, Longinus, and the scholiasts on Homer’s *Iliad* seem to exploit the flexibility of the term *ἐναγώνιος*, it turns out that there is an obvious semantic unity in the distinct usages of the term, which helps us to understand many passages of ancient Greek literary criticism.

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