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Review

Andrew Laird, *Powers of Expression, Expressions of Power. Speech Presentation and Latin Literature*. Oxford: Oxford Classical Monographs 1999. Price £50.00. ISBN 0–19–815276–0.

This volume represents an examination of a range of texts and genres, both in Latin and Greek, in investigating the problems of the representation of speech in ancient literature. It is perhaps significant that the work's subtitle is 'Speech Presentation and Latin Literature', the 'and' signifying that Laird's interests go well beyond Latin literature. What follows is a long review, but this is an important book, which should do much to stimulate not only Latin studies, but also offers insights on language and ideology of a more general character.

A short introduction begins the book in which L. uses the modern example of two different reports of a meeting between Ian Paisley and John Major in 1994, one from Paisley himself, and one from Sir Patrick Mayhew, the then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, to show how the presentation of speech, whether direct or indirect, can be a much more subtle process than we might think. This small example is an illustrative foretaste of the book's ability to challenge preconceptions in reading.

The first chapter of the book is entitled 'Speech and Symbolic Power: Discourse, Ideology and Intertextuality'. L. shows how there is a clear need to consider speech as existing in a relationship with power, starting with the example of Telemachus telling Penelope not to speak in *Odyssey* 1. However L. wisely avoids the trap of only considering speech 'in terms of a crude binary system of ownership versus deprivation' (11), exemplifying more subtle encodings and variations of the relationship between speech and power in Horace *Sat.* 1.6, and reminding us forcefully of the ironic poise and fluency in Horace's after-the-event account of his first

tongue-tied meeting with Maecenas: L. usefully reminds us that it is possible to view texts themselves as discourses. Later in this chapter L. offers an extremely valuable discussion of intertextuality. L.'s take on this vexed topic goes beyond the usual Latinist's acquaintance with Conte and Hinds, since L. looks back to Kristeva, and in doing so, notes how later scholars have somewhat hijacked the term, since in its Kristevan conception, intertextuality is a purely linguistic, rather than literary, phenomenon. L.'s point is a simple but striking one: "the very detection of an intertext – no matter how palpable, demonstrable, and well-attested – is in the end ideologically determined" (37). Even "to 'see' a Homeric intertext in Virgil is an act of *interpretation* , not plain description" (38). Though strongly put, this is a useful reminder that interpretations of Virgil that are based solely on the appeal to Homer are perhaps more arbitrary than we might think. The same could perhaps be said too for a reading of Statius's *Thebaid* where Virgil was privileged at the expense of Lucan. The end of this first chapter sees the intriguing suggestion that intertextuality can be seen as allied to speech presentation. Paradoxically, L. situates intertextuality at the least intrusive end of a scale which has direct discourse at the opposite end, where a character's speech intrudes (and replaces) discourse of the narrator; this point is illustrated with a discussion of Donatus's account of Virgil reciting *Aeneid* 6 to Octavia and her tearful reaction.

The second chapter begins with a critique of narratology, which arises from a discussion of Socrates's discussion of narrative in the third book of Plato's *Republic*. Here L. argues that the conventional separation in modern narratology between 'narrative' and 'story' collapses. The case for this is supported by appeal to Plato, where L. convincingly shows how the divide between, for example, *logos* and *lexis* is by no means clear cut. This section of the work is a useful caution against the tendency to see narratology as a method which can be applied to a text in a hermeneutically sealed manner: "narratology has been seen as a fragile dualism open to deconstruction: every 'story' turns out to be a – 'narrative'"(62). The remainder of the chapter examines Plato's strictures against direct discourse in the *Republic*, and at the same time points out that direct discourse is at times the narrative mode of Platonic dialogue. Thus at *Republic* 394b-c, where Socrates discusses the three types of utterance, L. points out that direct discourse is exactly the mode used in this passage by Plato, who, for all his (or Socrates's) scepticism about it,

uses direct discourse to represent the debate in the *Republic* itself. Similarly, as L. points out, the *Theaetetus* is cast in a dramatic form; one might further speculate that Eucleides's account of how Socrates told him about the discussion that took place may indeed raise the possibility that Socrates himself, in reporting the dialogue, may not have used direct discourse. The status of direct discourse as 'what was actually said' is thus problematised.

The third chapter considers 'Speech Modes and Literary Language'. Students will welcome L.'s analysis of the several possibilities open to writers in presenting speech. Instead of the familiar distinction between Direct and Indirect Speech, L. shows that there are more subtle categories such as Reported Speech Acts. L.'s example of a Reported Speech Act is a good one: he cites the song of Iopas at Virgil *Aen.* 1.742–6, and argues that the list of indirect questions in the passage is not mimetic of actual questions asked by Iopas in the course of song, but more a summary of the content. L.'s point could be further strengthened by comparison with similar passages such as Statius, *Theb.* 12.797–809, where Statius declines to continue his story with various subjects such as the funerals of the Argive dead, all of which are expressed in indirect questions. There is an important discussion of Free Direct Discourse, which L. treats not as being constituted simply by the absence of a declarative verb. Instead L. treats the term as embracing utterances which whilst grammatically in direct speech should be considered as not necessarily constituting a verbatim representation of an initial utterance. This alerts us to the possibility of looking more closely at, for instance, the practice in epic of ascribing a single speech to a number of speakers, or to occasions where phrases like "with some such words" appear after (or before) the direct speech, raising the possibility that we are not as close to the original words as we might think. Here L. treats speech modes as a branch of syntax and poses the question as to whether there is such a thing as 'literary syntax'. The answer is similar to L.'s take on intertextuality: "Literary syntax is in the eye of the beholder, and the capacity to behold it is pragmatically – or ideologically – determined" (115). In reaching this conclusion L. rejects the notion that even a device such as Free Indirect Discourse, which can be exemplified by for instance Virgil *Aen.* 4.283–4 *heu quid agat? quo nunc reginam ambire furentem/audeat adfatu? quae prima exordia sumat?*, should be considered as exclusively literary, noting that the device can

even be used in first-person narrations, and by children when ascribing thought to animals or dolls.

The fourth chapter of the book considers historiography. As one might expect, L. builds on scholars such as Woodman who have cautioned against the naïve identification of ancient historical writing as a species akin to the work of a modern professional historian. Again we find L. arguing that the difference between 'fictional' and 'factual' narrative is "culturally determined", depending on whether we decide to view the text as historical or not prior to reading it (120). Addressing the issue of speech presentation, L. examines the use of the phrase *ipsa uerba* by Tacitus at *Ann.* 15.67 to refer to the direct speech given to Subrius Flavus when answering Nero's enquiries about the conspiracy in which he had been involved. L. contrasts the use of direct speech for Subrius Flavus's speech with the use of indirect speech to refer to Seneca's last words at *Ann.* 15.62 and 63, and argues that we should be more careful about avoiding the easy assumption that direct speech in 'factual ' narrative is always to be considered veridical. As L. goes on to show, Tacitus is equally capable of using 'ipsa uerba' to refer to *indirect* discourse, as at *Hist.* 3.39, where he reports a comment of Vitellius. The discussion of the vexed problem of Thucydides 1.22 is similarly subtle: L. points out that the anxieties of scholars about the direct speeches in Thucydides stem from our expectation that they should be true. L. points out (151) that there is a sense in which all historiography is in fact presented discourse, as the narrator presents the utterances, spoken or written, which make up the evidence for each single fact. This allows a striking conclusion (152): "Factual narrative – like any direct discourse it may contain – is rhetorical and provisional. Fictional narrative – like any direct discourse it may contain – is authoritative and absolute."

The fifth chapter deals with Virgil. In the first section L. considers the opening of the *Aeneid* and argues that the manner in which speeches are presented, both on the divine and on the mortal level, contributes to the credibility of Virgil's account. Thus Juno's first speech (*Aen.* 1.37–49) and Aeneas's first speech (*Aen.*1.94–101), are examples of Free Direct Discourse. Here I would insist on understanding *talia* in *Aen.* 1.50 and 1.94 as "such words". L.'s translations, "these things" and "these words" miss the point that L. himself has made earlier (pp. 93–4), that words like *talia* imply a less certain version of the speech.[1] Oddly, the speeches of Neptune (*Aen.* 1.132–41) and Aeneas (*Aen.* 1.198–207), are labelled 'Stan-

dard Direct Discourse' (p. 162), even though Virgil uses the word *talia* on both occasions (*Aen.* 1.131, 1.208), which again suggests the more uncertain category of Free Direct Discourse. A valuable point made about the opening of the poem is the suggestion that Juno is like a divinity in a tragic prologue who "helps to establish the reality of the story in which he or she is about to be involved" (p. 164).

There then follows further discussion of the use of Free Indirect Discourse in the *Aeneid*. L. notes such examples as *heu, quid agat?*, used of Aeneas at *Aen.*4.283 and 12.486, and contrasts it with the Direct Discourse of *quid ago?,* used by both Dido (*Aen.* 4.534) and Turnus (*Aen.* 12.637). L.'s comment is a good example of how the investigation of speech presentation can be so productive: "The implication might be that he [Aeneas] has more self-control than Dido or Turnus because he does not actually give voice to his doubts or anxieties, yet we are still meant to see that he suffers them" (173). L. also points out that there are times when Free Indirect Discourse exists on the margins of speech and silence (183), which then leads into a discussion of silence in the poem.

One famous silence discussed is that of Dido in *Aen.*6. L. sees a contrast between the silence of Ajax in *Odyssey* 11 and that of Dido (p. 184): "In contrast to what we shall see in Virgil, the audience are not really led by Odysseus's closing plea to expect any words in response." While one might take issue with this analysis of *Odyssey* 11 (and note that Odysseus does go on to say that Ajax might have spoken to him in the contested lines at *Od.* 11.565–7), L. nevertheless usefully draws attention to Virgil's creation of the expectation of a reply from Dido, an expectation that is of course frustrated. In this connexion, L. also notes that Dido's averting of her gaze at *Aen.*6.469–70 recalls the movement of her eyes at *Aen.* 4.363–4, where she *does* go on to make a speech. To this I would add that the language of *Aen.*6.467–8, *talibus Aeneas ardentem et torua tuentem/*lenibat dictis *animum lacrimasque ciebat* ironically recalls the language of *Aen.*4.393–4 *at pius Aeneas, quamquam* lenire *dolentem/solando cupit et* dictis *auertere curas,* where it is Aeneas who is silent, despite his desire to console. There is thus a further dimension, since Aeneas, who was silent before is given a speech of consolation in Book 6 (which fails), while Dido, who has so much to say throughout Book 4, is silent in Book 6. Another silence discussed is that of Ascanius, when Aeneas bids him farewell in a speech at *Aen.* 12.435–40. Here L., commenting on the link with the scene of farewell between

Hector and his family in *Iliad* 6, argues that Virgil's presentation , where there is no reply, contrasts with *Iliad* 6 where Andromache speaks, and suggests that Virgil "offers a world in which authority has the last word, and in which the emotions of subordinate characters are denied expression" (p. 194). Here one could alternatively – and L. in any case rightly argues that intertextuality is in the eye of the beholder! – develop the well-known parallel between *Aen.*12.435–6 *disce, puer, uirtutem ex me uerumque laborem, / fortunam ex aliis* and Sophocles, *Ajax* 550–1, to argue that the Sophocles is to the fore here, especially as Eurysaces, the son of Ajax, not only makes no reply to his father's speech, but is in fact silent for the entirety of the play. The examination of examples of silence culminates in the silence which surrounds the longest speech of the poem, Aeneas's narrative to Dido in Books 2 and 3, which, L. argues, can be seen as a reminder that epic itself might be a discourse of power: "Both Virgil's text and Aeneas's text alike leave no room for reply" (204).

The next chapter considers the *Satyricon* of Petronius, and concerns itself with the issues of 'taste' and also that of objectivity which have played such an important part in classical studies. L. notes that the divide which has often been felt to exist between Encolpius's narration of the *Cena* and his narrations in the remaining portion of the novel can be understood in terms of speech presentation: thus L. points out how little Direct Discourse there is from Encolpius in the *Cena.* He also remarks on Encolpius's use of verse: "By occasionally using poetry Encolpius becomes a *literary figure* in two senses: he speaks to his addressee as a man of letters and, secondly, as a literary creation, he mediates to the reader of the *Satyricon* the discourse of another artist, Petronius the author" (235). There is also some good discussion of Eumolpus's use of literary texts: L. points out that another level of similarity between Eumolpus's civil war poem and Lucan is the similarity of method in speech presentation (236–9). L. then moves on to the issue of Vulgar Latin in the *Satyricon,* and argues powerfully that the identification of vulgarisms of style is as ideological an act as the identification of intertexts (251–2). L. deftly cuts through the obfuscatory agenda lurking behind the readiness of scholars to distinguish between the elegant Latin of Encolpius and that of the freedmen at the *Cena* , as if the latter were somehow a true representation of 'vulgar' speech (254): "Yet in the last analysis, Echion's speech – form and content – is attributable to Encolpius who relays it to us. We may regard Encolpius as playing up anomalies in Echion's language. His 'por-

trayal' of a freedman's speech has to be a gross distortion: it exposes an assertion of the superior status of speakers like Agamemnon and himself. Such distortion is common even in purportedly disinterested accounts and representations of popular speech today."

The next chapter considers the use of the messenger scene. L. offers interesting comparisons between the use of Fama in Virgil's *Aeneid*, where Fama's narrative is partial, and the veridical Fama of Sannazaro's *De partu uirginis*, and suggests that the portrayal of Fama in both epics could be seen as mimetic of the claims of the poets to be writing a mixture of truth and falsehood (Virgil) and pure truth (Sannazaro). L. is keen to draw a distinction in *Aeneid* 4 between Jove's messenger, Mercury, who has the status of divine truth, and Fama, who is much more provisional, but it is worth noting that even Mercury can be influenced by Fama. Commenting on Mercury's reproach to Aeneas as *regni rerumque oblite tuarum* (*Aen.* 4.267), L. remarks that "the narrator had earlier described Aeneas and Dido as forgetful: here (267) the observation is Mercury's own" (p. 269), but in fact *regnorum immemores* appears in the discourse of Fama at *Aen.* 4.194, so that Fama is seen to have an influence even over the gods. L. notes of Fama on p. 272 that most subsequent Latin poets give indirect discourse to Fama ("because Fama does not have a direct source for her message"); this is a modification of his position at pp. 101 and 237–8, where he remarks that Fama never has direct discourse in Latin epic. In fact there is one curious example worth mentioning in this respect: at V. Fl. 2.142–60, Fama makes a speech to Eurynome, telling her of the return of the Lemnian men with Thracian brides. However there are two oddities: firstly Fama speaks in disguise as Neaera (even mentioning the *fama* of her own divorce at V. Fl. 2.158–9), and secondly, Fama has been told what to do by Venus, so that in his case Fama takes on (and parodies) the role of divine messenger, which may account for her use of direct speech. Discussion of this episode might have sat well alongside L.'s discussion of another false message from Venus at V. Fl. 7.266–83, where Venus is disguised as Circe and claims to pass on a message to Medea from Jason. Other poets considered in this chapter include Statius (where L.'s discussion of Theseus's Jovian manner in his dictation speech in Book 12 is especially successful), Ovid and Milton. In the final pages of the chapter L. notes the similarities between Pan in Plato's *Cratylus* and Virgil's canonical account of Fama in *Aeneid* 4. A brief conclusion to the work then offers directions for further research on speech presentation

and reiterates the importance of speech presentation, which might even be considered identical to "discursive representation in general" (308).

A few minor points are worth mentioning. On p. 11, Hor. *Sat.* 1.6 is incorrectly referred to as *Sat.* 1.5. On p. 102, *Hansard* is oddly used to support the claim that formal minutes tend to "eschew direct discourse", when in fact *Hansard* will even record interruptions to a speech made in Parliament. In discussion of Tacitus's decision not to reproduce Seneca's last treatise (pp. 126–31), it might have been worth mentioning Livy's similar decision not to give Cato's speech on the Rhodians (Livy 43.25). And at page 237, n. 61, there is no translation given of the Latin.

Overall this book represents a highly significant contribution to literary studies. This is also a book which can be profitably be read by students: at a stroke, L. has shown that speech presentation and representation is much more than the dusty categories of Oratio Recta and Oratio Obliqua. This exciting approach may even help teachers of language who have to deal with the mechanisms for presentation of discourse in ancient languages. Latinists (and Virgilians) will find many insights, both on the small and on the large scale here, but they should not be the only ones to do so. Oxford University Press would be well advised to issue this book in paperback.

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Note

1. Cf. L.'s similar translations of *talibus ... dictis* as "with these words" at *Aen.* 6.467 (p. 185–6), and *talia* as "these things" at *Aen.* 4.362 (p. 187). Contrast however e.g. *talia fatur* at *Aen.* 8.559, correctly translated as "words like these" (p. 189), which precedes a speech of Evander's which is then followed by *haec ... dicta* at *Aen.* 8.583, a case where Virgil's own practice seems to shift from the more ambiguous *talia* before the speech to the unequivocal *haec ... dicta* at the end.