

The imperative of the social link: a polite imperative?

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Analyzing this little reference received from «grammar, which knows how to dictate laws even to kings and imperiously make them obey its laws¹ », this mode of conjugation, which we have written into the 1st title of our Meeting in Madrid, what can it tell us for our School?

Indeed, the imperative is first and foremost that of the word. About which Lacan said psychoanalytic experience had "...rediscovered in man the imperative of the Word as the law that shaped him in its image". We have perhaps somewhat lost sight of its importance, so busy returning from taking note, ² thanks to Lacan reader of Sade, of the reverse of the Kantian categorical imperative, the imperative of jouissance, and dealing with it.

The imperative is not conjugated in the first person singular.

It is a mode that is propitious to a link, whether it pertains to a command or to a prayer.

This linking effect has to do with the fact that the signifier commands. The signifier is first of all imperative, Lacan insists in his Seminar³, for in the lines that follow, he invites us to realize of what these particular social links, the analytic discourse, is made. In any case, it cannot escape the imperative.

This is precisely how the fundamental rule of the analytic disposition is formulated: « Say! »

But to say whatever comes is not so easy, speaking « about » is not the essential point in a psychoanalysis. And speaking « to » and speaking « for » structurally produce an ordering. From the moment I speak, « it is stronger than me, I order myself », observes Aragon.

Paradoxical imperative of the analytic rule which invites disobedience with regard to this ordering and commanding effect of language, which leads straight to « offending against grammar », as Molière shows it. A happy offense with regard to the unconscious, to the point that Lacan may have wished to eliminate grammar, preferring logic to specify the structure of the unconscious.⁴

So, it is not surprising to find in the comments following this remark of Lacan's this delicious reference to *Les bigarrures du seigneur des Accords*, written by a French author at the end of the 16th century, when grammar had not yet reached its full charge and who, four centuries before Freud, managed « to say this sort of flux [...] in which the always individual unconscious is specified ».⁵

1.- MOLIERE, *Les femmes savantes*, Act II, scene 6, in *Œuvres complètes* tome 4, Paris, Garnier-Flammarion, 1979

2.- J. LACAN, « The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis » in *Écrits* (trans. Bruce Fink) New York: W.

W. Norton & Company, 2006 p. 264

3.- J. LACAN, Seminar Book XX, Encore (trans. Bruce Fink), W.W. Norton, New York, 1998, p. 31

4.- J. LACAN, Le séminaire livre XXIV, L'insu-que sait-de l'une-bévue s'aile-à-mourre, lesson of January 11, 1977, unpublished. 4

5.- ibidem

In fact, Lacan noted it in the margins of his teaching, as language becomes more general, it becomes less suited to speech and when it becomes too specific to us, it loses its function of linking.⁶ Regarding this antinomy inherent in the relations of language and speech, do we not await some clarification from one who has experienced it in his/her analysis and who advances to the dispositif of the Pass?

When the object (a) holds the place of the command⁷, as logically occurs in the analytic discourse, there is a possible effect of emptiness of the word itself which allows one to expand a little beyond the signifier's command.

This is what could indicate what we call a polite imperative: please note that we are meeting in the beautiful city of Madrid beginning July 14, 2023.

English translation by Devra Simiu

6.- J. LACAN, « The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis" in *Écrits* op.cit.. p246

7.- J. LACAN, *The Other Side of Psychoanalysis* (trans. Russell Grigg), New York, W. W. Norton & Company, 2007, p.106