

GRAMMAR AS DOGMA  
OR AS SOCIAL SCIENCE?

TITLE PAGE:

Grammar as Dogma or as Social Science?

Of all the dogmas of antiquity, the grammatical dogma is the last to persist. The Schools have shelved Euclidean geometry, Ptolemaic astronomy, Galenian medicine, Roman law and Christian dogma most radically. Ancient grammatical dogma still dominates.

This essay tries to show that grammar need not be dry as dust but the of our actual experiences of reason, creativity, authority and communion. It tries to deliver our educational system from a wrong bases which today makes it necessary to remedy the wrong basis by a number of social sciences like "human relations", "psychology", "sociology" etc. If the social value of grammar could be tapped in the beginning, it would be superfluous to bring in all kind of remedies against the ravages wrought in human hearts and brains by the grammatical dogma.

As these grammatical prejudices are polluting the mental stream at a very early age, the harm in most cases is never repaired. Later epochs will look with amazement at the grammatical rack on which we torture ourselves and our little ones.

The worst sinner always must be made the first convert before a specific sin can be healed. Grammar being the most obsolete and poisonous element in our social instruction, society cannot expect much health unless this element is converted into a positive asset. I propose to show that the low grade grammar of our primary schools can be graded up. Higher Grammar, as well as Higher Mathematics, are available. When witches were burned, higher mathematics came to our rescue.

Higher Mathematics by including infinity, enabled us to decipher the secrets of mass and energy, time and space of nature. The world ceased to be magic and bewitched. Its electronic order stands revealed, with the help of higher mathematics.

Higher Grammar, by including emphasis and drama will enable us to decipher the secrets of social movement, masses and persons, diseases and cures of the body politic. Higher grammar will develop the same respect for the dignity of the social processes of speech which higher mathematics have bestowed on Nature's laws. Low Grade Grammar has degraded speech into a wilful tool of a man's mind. Higher Grammar will reverse this. Speech will stand out as the field of energy within which man receives or loses his mind, changes or opens it. The dogmatic grammar belittles speech as a in the mind of our school children. Higher grammar will make it look great and lawful. It will prevent many cases of schizophrenia which stem from the terrors of the grammatical dogma.

The worst sinner is of course as the word conveys our grammar school's tradition <sup>from</sup> Latin and Greek sources. The Greek and Latin names and tables of grammar have been handed to us because we had to learn French, German, Spanish or Russian, or English itself. The wrong Alexandrian <sup>table</sup> table of grammatical values is with us everywhere.

This table looks quite innocent. It usually runs:

amo	I love
amas	thou loveth
amat	he loves
amamus	we love
amatis	you love
amant	they love

or; I kill, you kill, he kills, we kill, you kill, they kill.

And we all learn these lists to gain access to a language. What can be important about such a list?

We wish to contrast this list by another to invite conflict immediately. Our "crucial" list would place:

ama	(amate)
amen	(amemus)
amatus	(amant)
amaviaus	

as equivalents in emphasis. In our list, each personal state, thou, I, it, they, we is identified with a special fundamental social reaction. In the Alexandrian list, all persons are put through the same drill. They all seem to speak in the same manner. It is here that the fatal error has crept in. Much of our confusion about social relations and much of our ignorance about speech can be directly traced to this error.

In listing

amo
amas
amat
amamus etc.

the impression is conveyed that all these sentences can and should be treated as of the same social character. The effect on any reader of such a list will be that any indicative is spoken with the same degree of emphasis. We contradict. We say that amat and amo and amas are worlds apart in social emphasis and therefore cannot be taught as homogeneous. The Alexandrian list is insincere. It is a very late compromise in which superficially all persons seemed to have access to one and the same mode, the indicative; in our lives, to this day, the indicative forms no continuum of amo amas amat. Nor must it ever form it. To the contrary, we must get rid of this list because it induces people to think and act wrongly in Society and to overlook the difference in emphasis between amas, amo, amat.

I am confident that I can prove these points in the following pages.

1. amat is spoken without emphasis, as a fact. Amo and amas cannot be spoken without grave social consequences. Hence, they presuppose emphasis, whereas we must learn about emphasis as the social element in grammar.
2. The political qualities of our various crucial utterances can be evoked by an up-to-date grammar or they can be repressed and destroyed by the prevailing grammar. The crucial proof of 1 and 2 is furnished by the current confusion between history and science. History has an emphasis which science cannot have. History cannot be science because it requires emphasis.

#### 1. AMATUR

Amatur, he is loved, is an objective statement. Some fact is reported of somebody who is neither the speaker or writer nor the listener or reader. He usually does not know that people speak of him. On the other hand, it is equally noticeable that neither the speaker nor the listener has any stake in the sentence "amatur". In "amatur", the process of love has been made powerless. This is no small achievement. Of love we can only speak in fear and trembling if we speak of it in the first or second person. The third person neutralizes the power of love. The objects of science are made

powerless. God in prayer, God in the ten commandments -- is the living God. God as the object of theology is powerless, a mere third person. If somebody third is said to be in love, the sentence ranks with "it rains" or "it shines". Usually, such a statement is called objective. This term is quite in order under one condition. The objective statement "it rains" or "he loves", not only abstracts from the speaker but from the listener as well! "Objective" then, is a two-fold negation of relationship. The objective is removed from the speaker as well as from the listener, Usually in modern thinking this twofold quality of "the objective" is neglected; "objective" seems to be anything to which the subject is indifferent or from which the subject has detached himself. This reduces the linguistic situation to a monologue of a thinking subject who thinks an object. We refuse to the plenitude of grammar by the important rule that "amat" abstracts from two people instead of from one. The "subject" to whom the sentence "He loves", is a detached statement of fact, must be dissolved into two people, a subject and a praeject: The speaker and the listener. Only then can we fathom the depth of the abyss between the objective third person in amat and the two conversing people who exchange their views about him as subject and praeject. To come to real grips with any objective statement and to assign it its place in social life, it is useful to replenish the sentence amat into its full setting of a conversation:

John says            amat. Bill may reply "amat sed non amat". In this dialogue, the reply may be affirmative or negative. In both manners, the addition of the reply makes it clear that A and B debate the truth about tertius. A fact in the outer world is in a debate to which the two speakers do not contribute any personal attitude on

their part.

2. AMO

If we now turn to *amo* or *ams*, these forms are not conveying objective facts primarily. They are, it is true, called indicatives, in Alexandrian. But this omits one half of the sentence's significance: *amo* has a double emphasis compared to *amat*. A man who says *amo*, is doing two things at once: He is involved in an act and besides he confesses it. In such an entanglement, obviously his confession can only be undertaken if it does not cancel out the act. Obviously certain acts may be cancelled out by being confessed! The first person who speaks of himself runs a risk which he does not run in speaking of somebody else! He runs the risk of destroying the act to which the sentence testifies. It is true that in many cases, I can admit that I *am* doing this or that without destroying the deed in the admission. Destroying them in such cases seems an exaggeration. Why should I not say: I laugh, I scorn, I travel by train? Now it is true that these sentences usually do not brook destruction of the act they describe. But we have not claimed that they destroy. We have claimed that they involve a risk to the speaker. And of this, there can be no doubt: Any act divulged while in process, can be interfered with. The first person (I) who says to anybody else what "I" *am* doing, makes his act vulnerable by intervention from the outside. Any act can be stopped. And the speaker who says what he is doing or going to do, invites disaster, or if he says what he has done, invites criticism!

A man in his five senses will not speak of his own deeds in the first person if he does not have to. The lid will be clamped down on

his mouth by the pressure of risk and danger. And it is possible to determine the quantity of emphasis which is required to pry this lid off open.

The emphasis with which a man is compelled to speak up, amo, must overcome the resistance of the social pressure which warns him not to invite interference! Amat, he loves, involves ordinarily no risk to the speaker. He may murmur detachedly and indifferently. But "amo" makes a difference. The speaker of a sentence in the first person cannot help changing his own social situation simply by divulging any act, thought, feeling, intention of himself. Therefore it takes an emphasis to say "amo" which is absent in "amat". This emphasis must be strong enough to break down the caution which advises us not to speak! For this reason, the most difficult sentence to pronounce of all human sentences is amo. For while the sentence: I eat, I sit down, concerns a moment of our lives, amo concerns the final direction, and its lasting destination. There is much more danger that people can interfere with my description of a lifetime act than with a ten minute luncheon. Hence, we do not say publicly amo. We say this perhaps to the person in question, but to nobody else. To our families we say: we are engaged to marry, which brooks little interference. And to the rest of the world we proclaim we are husband and wife which brooks no interference whatsoever.

amo

"Promessi Sposi" (Manzoni's great novel)

sumus

maritus and uxor

sumus

could be enclosed in concentric circles

Maritus  
uxor promissimus  
mea  
amo  
est  
uxor sua

Then it is clear, that amo can never be as general or as public a sentence as amat because it invites the risk of rivalry, jealousy, wrath. To the world, if I am intelligent at all I shall not say amo but uxor mea est. That is, I shall transform the first person sentence into a third person sentence. By saying uxor mea est, I have chosen the objective term which involves no risk of interference, which does not need any emphasis on my part and which does not have the character of a confession.

We conclude that amo is made of absolutely different stuff than amat and the history of language proves our point. Amo is an emphatic form, a Subjective exclamation which is quite wantonly inserted into the Alexandrian table as an Indicative. The first form singular did not originate with the indicative. The tables of the indicative borrow it. Amo is in a class of forms with Alas, Behold, see, Verily, as an emotional form. Amo and amat belong to two different situations of expression.

### 3. AMAS

The rift between amo and amat, however, is not wider than the rift between amas and amat.

*And the Degrees of Emphasis separated the persons of grammar. Degrees of emphasis*

f. The achievements of the various persons.

By now, the reader has been enabled to free himself from the Alexandrian Table of Grammar with its impotent I love  
you love  
we love etc.

Potent love, if in the first person, risks confession, if in the second person, risks a demand, if in a third person, explains a phenomenon, and if in the "We" form, narrates the story of how at least one I and One you came to be called "We".

Degrees of Emphasis separated the persons of grammar. Now let us ask: what purpose serve the persons, in the survival of our own biographical existence? Why is it indispensable for us to

- a. confess
- b. demand
- c. explain
- d. narrate ?

We are beset by difficulties which the Alexandrian grammar and the Alexandrian logic have confused and confounded as though they all were of one type. The moderns who still believe in this Greek logic, tell us that we are beset by problems of one kind or another.

The achievement of a true grammar consists in dissolving this brew of an ocean of problems. Man is not beset by a welter of problems. Man is exposed to four provocative difficulties which by no means all are "problems". Our grammatical insight can prove this.

In the outer world of mechanics, gravity, technicalities, we indeed have problems. Will the motor start? Will the stock exchange go down? These questions as they are worded about the third person: It, must be answered before our technical problem is solved. A problem deals with things, with its, A problem leaves the man who asks about it, unchanged. I look at a problem with or without interest, but I am stable. The problem may be in flux.

But I also am in a dilemma. I have to decide what to do. What shall I do? is not at all a problem, but reveals a dilemma. What is the will which I should fulfill? In a dilemma, I am plastic wax, I am changeable and wish to be changeable. I am at the crossroads and I am trying to elicit a command: Go, Come, Rebel, Obey. I wish to be the demand's and the command's second person singular. I am longing for a clear order.

Consequently, problems are solved by an other authority than dilemmas. Science solves problems. But conscience solves dilemmas.

And there is a further achievement for which I must be transformed into one more person of grammar.

## II

I not only have to make decisions from science and decisions from conscience. I also have secrets and I have to decide when to reveal them. If I am in a rotten club, with bad manners, and I wish to withdraw my membership, I am not in a dilemma and I am not faced with a problem. Most people ignore the fact that this is a third situation. They say: You have there quite a problem. However, nothing is unknown in the world's reality: The Club, let us assume, is corrupt, and I am through with them. ~~But~~ I do not need any further scientific inquiry. Also, my conscience is not bothered. This is not a question for the Confessional. Charles Taft, recently, pointed out that the decision to fire a worker, was one of the nastiest a man could have to make but that the Christian Churches offered little help in this and similar troubles. He meant to point out, that it was not lack of knowledge of the facts nor a question between a man and his maker, which here was involved. The nastiness came from the situation that you had to tell the man that he was through. You had to tell him. In the telling, you became self-conscious of your sad role as the man who did the hiring and firing. And self-consciousness rules over our decisions to reveal secrets, or to cancel engagements. Both these utterances put us to shame, in the eyes of many, or we feel ashamed. Because we all blush when the community is murdered with in which we were members. Here we were honored members of a club. It is true, they have gone to seed. But as a members, it gives me the creeps to tell them so. Shame is the pain of a dying community, of the group dying within us. Sex has nothing to do with shame, but partnership and membership has. Shame is the pain of cutting the ties which tied us to one group and to forsake membership in it. Not conscience, not science can help us in these steps from old loves to new ones. Self-consciousness can simply regulate the timing of these steps which are the very essence of life, growth, change, ~~it~~ in other words of the man behind the speaker or listener, the whole man who is more than the speaker of one rash word by which he became a member, more than the listener who once was impressed by the suggestion to join. In Self-consciousness, we realize the cruel fact that he who spoke in us and he who listened in us, actually was not the whole me; now, another particle of this me, formerly inarticulate, formerly so hidden that I was not even aware of the fellow in Me, comes to the fore and speaks up.

Problems are discussed. Dilemmas are weighed. But secrets are revealed, and open commitments are cancelled and ~~re~~inded. With regard to problems, I am the ruhende Pol in der Erscheinungen ~~F~~ Flucht. With regard to dilemmas, I am plastic. But with regard to coming out in the open or remaining silent, I am ripe or not ripe. As the problems, in case One, are the exciting part of the universe, the third person speaks of them. It is hard; they are complex. He is a tough nut to crack, we will say when a problem is discussed. With a dilemma, we pray for God's will, for a doctor's prescription (the most modern form of craving a solution for a dilemma is going to the doctor; hence the contradiction that the same modern mind who ignores dilemmas and calls everything a problem, adores the doctors and exalts them into his high priests, for himself, his children, his marriage, etc. What he really wants is a person to tell him, what you really want, is a person to tell you. As it is so difficult to have God tell you in your own conscience you, go to the doctor. And now the doctor, for your good money, tells you what to do.

### III

The doctor is your conscience, not your scientist. Make no mistake. He does not know more, but he accepts you as the anvil or as the iron on the anvil and he is paid for being the hammer who makes the decision.

What then, shall we make of the man who says: Good Bye, or who says, I love you? This We and I, risks his whole past and his whole future, in such Declarations of Interdependence or of Independence. This I claims the rank of a creative agent in the universe as he times the decisions and declares that "THE HOUR HAS COME". The man who reveals a secret and knows what he does, Jesus says in the famous Logion of the gospel of Luke, is divine; for with him, history is in the making, and an epoch is made. If on the other hand, he remains committed to his group and goes on speaking of them and himself as We, he recreates the past of his community once more. If I am self-conscious that they won't accept me as an American, I may continue to say: We Americans, in stubborn obstinacy, or I may challenge "them", and shout: Not me. And those Americans ... In other words, the man who says we and the man who says, I, are the two polarities of our human existence in the coal group. We is the form by which I continue the tradition; I, is the form by which I start a new one.

Why does a man tremble to say: I love you. Because this begins a new chapter in his life. Nothing can remain the same, after this is said. A man who is a candidate for high office, similar to a lover, reveals his most secret ambition, and whether he wins or loses the election, nothing is quite the same after his putting his candidacy. We and I, then, are the constant affirmations of social loyalty and social emancipations. They and you are the constant distinctions between the irrelevant part of the universe, the world with its problems, and the relevant part of the universe, God and his commands to my conscience. We founded this republic.

I defy your power politics.

Go and enlist.

They are successful,

are four original sentences about a man and his country. And they are a complete arsenal of higher grammar, as they show him going through the transformations of the various persons, We, I, you, they, by which we express our fundamental enmeshments into real life.

But it is not enough to speak of the man's dilemmas and problems in this his cosmic dance through his various relations with his society. There are two more things: secret conviction maturing to utterance, and open renown or reputation, decaying to hypocrisy. The man who speaks, shares a reputation, id est, a name of the group to which he seems to belong. We all appear to be Americans, or Germans or something until we renounce this "We-ness". A man, then, has a social reputation by all the names which cloak his social existence. And he has a self-conscious urge to reveal who he really is, by coming right out with his statement, his claim, his candidacy, his confession of whom he really loves and whom he really hates.

Dilemmas are solved by God, Problems by science. Names and secrets rearrange our relations with our fellow men.