

Levinas, Language & Psychology: A Study of Case and a Case Study

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Abstract

In *Otherwise Than Being*, Levinas (1981/2011) uses the grammatical category of the ‘accusative case’ as linguistic scaffolding for his phenomenology of the self *accused* into being by the Other. The main argument for deeming Levinas’ linguistic analogy accurate is his point that the word ‘self’ does not exist in the nominative case (which indicates the noun qua subject), thereby suggesting that, grammatically, the self can only arise from something other than itself. The main argument against Levinas’ use of the ‘accusative case’ in helping convey his notion of an accused subjectivity is that the said case is a misnomer, having been derived from a mistranslation from Greek to Latin and, as such, has nothing to do with accusation. Using one of Levinas’ mother tongues as a guiding example, the present paper recuperates the linguistic analogy of grammatical case and endeavors to explore what the other six cases in the Russian language can open up with respect to Levinasian thought. Moreover, a combination of the accusative, vocative and dative cases will be applied to a clinical case example in order to illuminate how it can inform clinical practice.