



# **The Paradox of Power and Weakness: Levinas and an Alternative Paradigm for Psychology (SUNY series, Alternatives in Psychology)**

*George Kunz*

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*Offers an alternative paradigm for psychology, one that reflects Levinas's criticism of a self-centered notion of identity. Reveals the secret of an "authentic" altruism through a phenomenology of both power and weakness, and of the paradoxes of the weakness of power and the power of weakness.*

The metaethical philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas challenges Western egocentrism by describing the self as egoic yet nevertheless ethically called to transcend its own obsessions, compulsions, and addictions, and to respect and serve others. While power is powerful and weakness is weak, power can sabotage itself, and the weakness of others has power to command our attention and service. Levinas makes distinctions that offer psychology the basis for an alternative paradigm open to paradox. In *The Paradox of Power and Weakness*, George Kunz shows how the analyses of hagiography, cynicism, and limits on altruistic behavior by radical altruism contribute to this psychology of ethical responsibility for social sciences.

George Kunz is Associate Professor of Psychology at Seattle University.

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