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## Grammatical meaning and the interpretability of Case

How rational is Case? Why does it exist? Case-marking in natural language has been one of the most persistent obstacles in the attempt to make principled sense of the organisation of grammar, and to trade apparently arbitrary syntax-internal principles for conditions imposed by the semantic or phonetic interfaces. It thus tends to confirm a traditional picture of grammar as a 'module' containing an 'autonomous' syntax-component. Unsurprisingly, therefore, no philosophy of language textbook even includes a discussion of Case: Case is irrational. I will argue that this puzzle reflects a deeper one that the field currently faces: what is grammar, in the first place? Why is it there? How, if at all, does it impact on meaning and cognition? It is purely arbitrary? A solution to these questions depends on a conceptual shift, and in particular on answering, in a principled way, what difference it makes to the organisation of meaning in human thought that we process meaning with a grammar, in addition to a lexicon. Some kinds of meaning depend on grammar, while others do not. With that shift in place, Case is rationalizable as tracking the build-up of grammatical meaning in the brain.