

Rudolf Bernet

I limiti della libertà in relazione a dolore e sofferenza

Centre for Phenomenology and Contemporary Philosophy

University of Leuven, Belgium

Finland

e-mail: rudolf.bernet@kuleuven.be

If one relates the experience of suffering to the concept of freedom, one thinks in the first place about the wish of the sufferer to free oneself from his/her suffering. Although the distinction is fluid, it is useful to distinguish between the suffering and the pain one suffers. It is also important to remember that trying to free oneself from one's suffering often implies a denial of suffering. All modalities of the negation of one's own suffering operate with the problematic concept of a subject who relates to his suffering as an object of representation. This negative freedom of a liberation from suffering can be contrast-ed with the positive freedom of a pathic subject who behaves towards his own suffering in a way that is both enduring and creative. It is true that when dealing responsibly with the suffering of others, one does not enjoy the same positive freedom as when dealing with one's own suffering. Nevertheless, the ethical obligation associated with co-suffering is primarily directed towards the negative freedom of liberation from the suffering of others. In this new form of negative freedom, too, treating the suffering of others as an object of representation plays a role that is as crucial as it is problematic.