

Suffering, the proxy server of death

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In my presentation, I will share some philosophical ideas on 'suffering,' a central notion when considering (mental) health. When analysed, it implies pure passivity. Even resistance against suffering is permeated by this passivity. My claim is twofold: 1) suffering is constitutive of mental health, and 2) beyond its concrete forms, suffering consists of an encounter with a void. This void brings suffering remarkably close to other void encounters, such as art or birth. (cf Otto Rank) I think one might argue that the void encounter inherent to suffering foreshadows death, presumably life's central void. Suffering could be seen as death's proxy server in life.

Reflecting on suffering as a void experience which anticipates death has at least a double rebound: as an indeterminate encounter, or an encounter with an indeterminate, suffering could suggest that death itself only enhances the encounter – in an incremental way (Kazakhstan). He has taught continental philosophy and ethics at Leiden University (NL). He is active on various boards, both nationally and internationally. His current research focuses on exceptional states of consciousness in relation to philosophy. Together with Mahmoud Masaeli (Ottawa University), he edited a series of books on global ethics, development, and spirituality.