



Fables of Responsibility: Aberrations and Predicaments in Ethics and Politics

Thomas Keenan

Stanford University Press (1997)

Abstract

This book offers an analysis of the ways a linked set of ethico-political concepts - responsibility, rights, freedom, equality, and justice - might be re-thought, in view of the linguistic deconstruction of their underlying principle, the individual human subject. In a series of readings of contemporary thinkers and their philosophical antecedents the author argues that an encounter with the difficulties of reading language, precisely what resists the immediate comprehension or mastery of a subject, enables in turn a new thought of rights and responsibility. The book is driven by a sense that literary and theoretical questions, and the ideas or concepts they appeal to or provoke, play a critical role in the way we think about and experience politics. The author seeks to harness this specialized discourse in order to consider what ethical and political thinking might learn from literature and its theorists.

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