

FC31-05

MENTAL DISORDER AND MORAL RESPONSIBILITY

G. Meynen

Philosophy, VU University Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Introduction: Mental disorders are often considered to be able to undermine a person's moral responsibility, at least in some respect. Yet, it is unclear exactly how mental disorders would be capable of compromising a person's responsibility. Sometimes, it is suggested that mental disorders undermine responsibility via some detrimental effect on free will.

Objectives: Establishing to what extent the effect of mental disorder on moral responsibility might be due to an effect on free will, and to what extent other factors might play a role.

Aims: Providing an analysis of the concept of free will and assessing the relevance of the elements of this concept with respect to mental disorders. Second, establishing what other - not free will related - factors might be relevant to the intuition that mental disorders can undermine responsibility.

Methods: Conceptual analysis with respect to free will and moral responsibility on the one hand and specific features of mental disorders on the other.

Results: Some of the responsibility-undermining features of mental disorders could have to do primarily with free will related issues. However, for some other aspects it is less clear. In fact, they might be more epistemic in nature instead of having to do with free will.

Conclusions: The possible effects of mental disorders on moral responsibility are likely to involve also other than free will related factors.