

4. Why might making sense of moral responsibility be thought to require us first to be in a position to distinguish sanity from insanity? Can such a view be convincingly maintained?

In her paper 'Sanity and the metaphysics of responsibility' Susan Wolf argues that 'Deep Self' views such as that of Frankfurt, Watson and Taylor fall short of giving us an adequate account of moral responsibility. She refers to them as 'Deep Self' views because they all hold that one has free will and can be held morally responsible when they are acting from their deep self. For instance Frankfurt defines the deep self in terms of one's higher order volitions. Meaning that for Frankfurt if you can be in a position to endorse certain desires, choosing what desires you want to have and which you don't then you have free will. Or in other words freedom of the will for Frankfurt is the freedom to will whatever you want to will. Wolf however casts doubt upon this view by discussing a thought experiment. She argues that suppose there was an evil dictator named Jojo who was brought up with a warped outlook on the world and believes that it is good to torture people and really values torturing people. Using Frankfurt's view of responsibility it would appear that Jojo has free will because he can have second order volitions, or in other words he can want to want to torture people. However by our usual conditions of responsibility, such as those that would be used in a court room, we would say such a person with such a warped outlook on the world is insane and not responsible for their actions.

Assumes that there is objectively a state of being sane and insane rather than it being subjective and relative to your culture. Assumes that there is an ultimate reality and moral good we can measure ourselves against.

Does her view of sanity work? She defines sanity as "the minimally sufficient ability to cognitively and normatively recognise and appreciate the world for what it is". Whenever we do something wrong it is because we are not in touch with reality or even insane? She says other explanations such as laziness or greed are possible to she says. Only when we do morally right things are we responsible because if you do something morally wrong then you are out of touch with reality? Can't people be sane, knowing right from wrong, and still do the wrong thing. It assumes that as soon as we know the right thing to do we will do it?

An implication of her view is that Jojo is not responsible for his actions. However we would want to say that Hitler is responsible for his actions. It