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Guns and Responsibility

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Guns and Responsibility

Today, the United States has a mass shooting epidemic which begs the question: who is responsible for these tragedies?

Latour argues against the National Rifle Association’s stance: Guns don’t kill people. People kill people. He argues that the inherent nature of the gun changes the relationship between the gun and the person. He states a person’s essence changes when they hold a gun.

On Technical Mediation

Latour argues it is the fault of both the person who pulls the trigger and the technology of the gun itself that is responsible for the gun violence. Latour diagrams how agency is often translated into some other form when those acting upon an object encounter other technologies with potential. For example, an angry person becomes a violent person when they find a gun.

Arendt argues that everyone in a community is responsible for its actions. The only people who are innocent of responsibility are stateless or refugees. Any sort of political allegiance means responsibility for the deeds of the state.

This is a picture of a vigil after the Las Vegas shooting.

This is a picture of House Democrats hosting a sit-in on the House Floor to push gun control legislation.

This is a picture of Napoleon Bonaparte's idea of collective responsibility. After Bonaparte took control of France he stated that he took responsibility for everything France has done from Charlemagne to Robespierre. Napoleon and Arendt agree that as a representative of the body politic all of the past deeds were done in the name of his country and to an extent in his name.

This is a table showing the countries with the most mass shootings, 1966–2012.

In a study of 292 mass shootings, over 90 of them occurred in the United States. The United States has 5% of the world’s population, but 31% of all public mass shootings.