

Through guilt. arendt attempts to define responsibility

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



Through her chapter “ Collective Responsibility”, Hannah Arendt depicts the difference between responsibility and guilt. Arendt attempts to define responsibility that disregards legal or moral terms and puts it in a political belonging or grouping. Through human action, suffering, and belonging, she identifies responsibility by opposing all evil. As a result, she links her theory with her perception of the world around her.

Arendt’s first distinction between responsibility and guilt is clearly depicted as she states, “ Guilt, unlike responsibility always singles out; it is strictly personal. It refers to an act, not to intentions or potentialities” (Arendt 147). Individual responsibility would be seen as collective in Arendt’s eyes, and guilt could be seen as what corresponds to legal or moral action. In her postscripts of the trial of Eichmann, she exemplifies that Eichmann must be trialed for his guilt and not his personal or political responsibility. There is no doubt that Eichmann was politically responsible, but the court dealt with his individual guilt. In “ Collective Responsibility” she takes this a step further, explaining that, “ What she is driving here is a sharper dividing line between political (collective) responsibility, on the one side, and moral and/or legal (personal) guilt on the other” (Arendt 151). Henceforth, what she is arguing is that political responsibility has no moral connotation.

Arendt also goes on to show how fellowship and responsibility have a similar context. Sharing a collective responsibility with other citizens makes someone responsible for acting. This makes someone responsible for their actions and are determined by a group of people in which they belong to. The actions of a group of people in the past that someone may belong to

makes that person responsible for their actions as well. A direct relationship of this can be seen through the process of voting. Today, many people believe that voting may not have an actual impact on the overall governmental process of an election.

In an article titled, " 10 Reasons Why Your Vote Matters-More Than Ever", " Only 46 percent of 18-35 year-olds eligible to vote actually got themselves to a polling place." (Kaufman 1). People who chose not to vote may not have intended to, but they placed themselves into their own type of categorical standing or grouping.

If one participates in a election for their government they are responsible for their actions, which is influencing a political situation. Subsequently, they will be responsible for the policy of that government not because they voted for it, but because the community favored that chosen policy. Therefore, there will be no difference between one who voted for other candidates or one who voted for the winning governmental policy. The collective responsibility of one's acts is independent of that of ones neighbor.