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Title: Technology, psychological doubling and genocide. How remote technology facilitates evil acts as explored through science fiction after World War II.

The terms ‘evil’ and ‘wickedness’ are contentious terms wielded in a range of situations and contexts. Regardless as to how these terms can be defined, acts of genocide are widely considered to be evil operations. It is the subject of genocide that this paper focuses on.

Historian Lewis Mumford claims that genocide was truly enabled through technological progression. Psychologist Robert Jay Lifton argues that the use of technology to enable remote killings allowed Nazis to commit genocide with reduced psychological stress. This inter-disciplinary paper explores the notion of how technology can be seen to facilitate evil acts through remote human action. Using the context of World War II, this paper investigates how gas chambers, saturation bombings and atomic weapons enabled mass murder on an unprecedented scale. Furthermore, this paper documents how the implementation of remote war action leads to feelings of reduced responsibility.

Through the context of real technology, post war literature will be explored with a focus on how fictional technology is portrayed as commissioning greater evil acts such as apocalypse and extinction. Mordecai Roshwald’s *Level 7* (1959) will be predominantly focused on. This text features a fatal nuclear apocalypse through a technological ‘push button attack’ and thus illustrates how easy it is for evil acts to be committed remotely. Focusing predominantly on *Level 7*, this paper will also explore the notion of the psychological double and argue that technology can act as a psychological scapegoat for human evil.

This paper offers a reflection upon the socially relevant concerns of ‘evil’ in war and ‘evil’ technology. Through the historical context and literature texts a dialogue is witnessed between technological development and the potential ramifications on the human world. My research suggests that the human capacity for ‘evil’ acts is both facilitated and excused by technological advancements.

Key words:

Technology

Apocalypse

Genocide

Responsibility

War

Psychological doubling

Extinction

Scapegoat

World War II

Nuclear