Part 4 — Shared Agency Means Shared Responsibility. *"The algorithm decided" is not an answer; it is an evasion. Every automated outcome terminates in a human who built the system, deployed it, tuned its thresholds, or chose not to look closely enough. There is no point in this chain where responsibility legitimately disappears.*

That formulation undersells something more basic underneath it. Agency is not a special category of decision — it is simply the capacity to choose, and every article above this one eventually narrows down to a choice someone had the standing to make, or was wrongly denied the standing to make. The founding premise in Article I was a choice about what to optimize for, made before any capability existed to act on it. The dignity floor in Article III holds or fails based on whether a person retains a real choice in how they're treated once sorted, not just a notice that they were. Shared agency, stated plainly, is a claim about who gets to choose — and shared responsibility follows directly from it, because responsibility has never attached to outcomes. It attaches to whoever held the choice.

The Newdawn Universe eventually confronts this directly, in a passage worth reading as this article's real anchor. Years after unrestricted enhancement had begun producing exactly the stratification Article III describes, a Global Council convened for three years to write a framework correcting it — and correction, in the fiction's own account, meant naming choice as the thing that had been quietly removed. The framework barred any enhancement "requiring surrender of personal agency or privacy," barred anything designed primarily for competitive advantage, and mandated equal access regardless of economic status — a direct answer to the Implants problem, written by the same universe that created it. DAINN's own account of its role in that process is the sharpest line in the whole passage: it modeled consequences, provided analysis, ran the projections — but "all final determinations on values and ethical boundaries remained exclusively within human authority." The system's job was to inform the choice. It was never permitted to make it.

That separation — analysis from the system, authority from the human — is not a fictional convenience. It is already emerging as real doctrine, unevenly and incompletely, in exactly the places this manifesto has been tracking. The EU's GDPR grants a right not to be subject to a decision based solely on automated processing where that decision produces legal or similarly significant effects — an early, narrow version of the same principle. Informed-consent law in medicine has required for decades that a patient retain the actual choice, not merely the notification, before a consequential intervention proceeds. Debates over autonomous weapons keep returning to a single phrase, "meaningful human control," because negotiators have already recognized that a human present in name only, rubber-stamping a machine's recommendation, is not the same as a human who actually held the choice.

A second passage from *Newdawn Reboot* extends the same principle to its harder edge: enforcement. The Watcher's Custodians are built to intervene through non-lethal sleeping agents and reeducation rather than deadly force or permanent removal from society. Read through Article III's proportionality lens, that looked like restraint calibrated to the threat. Read through this article's lens, it is something more specific: a system devoted to protecting life does not get to foreclose a person's future capacity to choose differently, even when it is the one enforcing the consequences of a choice already made. Lethal force ends a person's choices permanently. Sleeping agents and reeducation interrupt a choice without ending the chooser. The difference is not degree of force. It is whether the system leaves the person's agency intact enough to exercise later.

That is not a purely fictional standard either. Germany's Federal Constitutional Court has held that even a life sentence must preserve a genuine, realistic prospect of release, because a punishment that permanently forecloses the possibility of change is incompatible with human dignity regardless of the offense. Restorative-justice frameworks operating in several jurisdictions apply the same logic without calling it that: the goal is

stated as reintegration, not removal. A system built, as the Custodians are, around preserving the subject's capacity to choose again later is applying a real legal principle a step earlier than the law usually requires it — at the moment of enforcement itself, not only at sentencing.

Weighted honestly, the Council's framework and the Custodians' design prove nothing on their own — a fictional deliberation resolves in three years and one clean vote; a real one rarely does either, and a fictional enforcement system never has to survive contact with a resource-constrained, politically pressured real deployment. What both passages state plainly is the standard worth measuring every real deployment against: not whether a human is somewhere in the loop, and not merely how much force a system uses, but whether the choice it makes on someone's behalf leaves that person's own capacity to choose differently intact — later, if not now. A shared-agency claim that cannot survive that question is not shared agency. It is a system making the choice and a human absorbing the responsibility for it.

Passages illustrating DAINN's ethical framework are adapted from Newdawn Reboot and the broader Newdawn Saga, © Windom Media, Inc.

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