

# Second Philosophy

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Led by	Reflection Freenote
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## INTRODUCTION

### *Evolutionary Perspectives on Guilt and its functionality as a behavioral motivator*

- I. The essential Evolutionary Psychology perspective is that Guilt, like all primal human emotions promote survival in the Neolithic context. As the human environment is altered by progressing civilization, these primal reflexes become ever more inappropriate to the stimuli to which they are attached.
- II. Small human teams on the edge of survival tend toward high degrees of natural altruism (platoons in war, gangs in neighborhoods, even sports teams are modern remnants of this natural hominid bonding).  
  
Self-sacrifice is natural and constant self-critical analysis of whether one has done enough for the group is constantly counterbalanced by the very concrete and often heroic actions and benefits which the person's behavior regularly produces. Thus in the Neolithic context an individual experiences ongoing regular primal validation (survival itself and valuation of other team members).
- III. Agricultural transition, increases pursuit of selfish self-interest. In the Neolithic context the reality of survival as a group phenomenon ("if we do not hang together we will certainly hang separately") is obvious. With agriculture, surpluses are such that, theft and other antisocial behaviors no long realistically constitute a survival risk for the group.
- IV. IV. Episodic antisocial behavior increases in response to this environmental change as well as reduction in group eradication of sociopathic genetic patterns thus allowing these traits to be passed on. Evolving culture responds with a variety of social engineering innovations, including explicit morality- based social systems with guilt/shame as primary motivators attached to systematic punishment of wrong-doers.
- V. While external social sanction and conditioning of guilt and shame is very helpful, sanctions of guilt and shame which reside in individual minds is even more effective, and religious systems use shame/guilt and promises of afterlife pleasure/pain as motivators.
- VI. Highly rigid authoritarian societies provide strong environmental supports for pro-social behavior as defined within that cultural context. So guilt/shame as conditioned in childhood, and religious aspiration/anxiety is powerfully augmented by societal sanctions/punishments which make significant deviation from societal rubrics too costly to be risked. (e.g. Saudi Arabia, North Korea).
- VII. In progressing western culture, the primacy of individualism/freedom disrupts environmental structures, and suggests that many value systems are equally appropriate (relativism)
- VIII. Guilt remains a consistent innate attribute of the human brain on a neurological basis, however. So now, guilt along with the concept of free will (to which it is related) requires complex and individual reconceptualization.
- IX. So in a traditional society, one can specify the specific behaviors about which someone should be guilty, while in progressing western culture one must specify rather the honesty, genuineness, or authenticity with which behavior is conducted, which is far more complex, subjective, and prone to deceit (e.g. Heidegger).

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- X. Finally, behavioral research suggests that punishment/guilt induction approaches to behavior management are generally ineffective, (at least in the modern western context where such research has been conducted and where environmental sanctions are weak) and can lead to paradoxical effects (think Jimmy Swaggart, and the high incidence of sexual acting out among fundamentalists)
- XI. So, as relates to philosophical discussions regarding right and wrong, how effective is moralizing, as a method of societal change and what are examples of this occurring in the past (abolishing of slavery in the US? Prohibition of Alcohol?)
- XII. People are generally heavily belabored with guilt/shame, which if defined as the emotion we should have when doing evil with forethought, is relatively uncommon.

### XIII. Conclusions

- a) For individuals, emotions should be analyzed for accuracy, in order to be functional. Guilt should be reserved for when one does evil with forethought. Evil should be defined as mindfully doing harm to others for one's own narrow personal gain. Thus the many things that people do routinely feel guilty about (not working hard enough, making enough money, not helping other people enough, not getting exercise as they should, eating too much, smoking cigarettes, having addictions, etc.) are best detached from guilt and are better managed without it (i.e. a major problem in treating addiction, for example, is that guilt drives addicts to relapse, and when relapse occurs, guilt tends to maintain relapse).
- b) For societies, methods of behavioral management should be sought with empirically demonstrated efficacy. So for example in attempting to assist people with lifestyle modification (eating, drinking, smoking), research demonstrates that shame/guilt/illness based messages are ineffective (i.e. result in denial, repression, ignoring the message), whereas health-enhancing oriented messages, that is positive benefit and reinforcement-based approaches are more effective (with relevance to such issues as global warming, human rights, etc.). Of course as most of this social science research has been done in the permissive environments of the west, such research may not be generalizable or have the same accuracy when applied to more traditional cultures and human environments.

### QUESTIONS:

1. How much of individual "moral behavior" is freely chosen and how much is attributable to environmental structures of support/enforcement?
2. Do you respond positively to the moral injunctions of others? (Your own?)
3. Have you found that other people are positively disposed when preached to?
4. What sort of things should someone feel guilty about and why?
5. Is it optimally adaptive to feel badly about only partially attaining our aspirations in living (that is be guilty about not meeting goals)?

### REFERENCE:

A good general review of related topics in Outline form with references: <http://www.wjh.harvard.edu/~mnkylab/lecture.pdf>

News report on some recent research on guilt: <http://news.softpedia.com/news/Why-do-We-Feel-Guilty-61058.shtml>

For a readable review of mass behavioral change research as relates to one public health outcome:

<http://epirev.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/full/25/1/65?maxtoshow=&HITS=&hits=&RESULTFORMAT=&fulltext=Green,+LW;+Kreuter,+MW&andorexactfulltext=and&searchid=1&FIRSTINDEX=0&resourcetype=HWCIT>

Extensive Review of health behavior intervention research: [http://books.nap.edu/openbook.php?record\\_id=9838&page=R1](http://books.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=9838&page=R1)

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## DISCUSSION:

**Renald:** How much of any behavior is "freely chosen"?

**Reflection:** there was some non sequential statements but hopefully not too difficult to follow

**Reflection:** yes, indeed Ren; I would say not much

**Shailey:** I think social norms and the environment do impact on our behaviour

**Simulat:** I wonder how much of our moral sense is inherited, and how much is taught

**Shailey:** the environment sets the boundaries

**Oswy:** Well Ref I would agree that to a degree our moral behaviour is innate and evolved

**Shingles:** One must initially view the moral upbringing each of us is subject to as that, a beginning, there comes a stage in our development (it is possible yet not always attained) where we may reconstruct our moral framework independently. So I must say I think the question is misleading for there is no moral framework without some taught morality or without some freely chosen morality, Reflection

**Makrina:** Doesn't reflection on these norms and one's response give more freedom of choice?

**Shailey:** I agree Shingles and Makrina that the framework develops over time

**Oswy:** agree Shingles that in some sense we do make choices.

**Shailey:** it is influenced by others when we are young

**Renald:** Makrina, that's how I see it working, yes.

**Reflection:** well, shingles, Kohlberg was a psychologist who did a lot of research on this issue, using Piaget's stages of cognitive development as a model, and he found that the vast majority of people never evolve a personal morality at all, that is they simply take what they are given, and mostly try to avoid being punished

**Shailey:** but over a period of time, we learn to deal with it as per our values

**Shingles:** We choose, perhaps in partial ignorance, continually re-evaluating our values, I think, Oswy

**Reflection:** I would agree that where environments are very permissive, a person has greater latitude of response  
Shailey

**Oswy:** But there are some basic things guilt fear disgust etc that we all seem to be born with.

**Shingles:** and when one is not born with them, we call them 'ill' or 'disordered'

**Shailey:** yes, but the degrees to which we abide by them varies from one person to another, Oswy

**Simulat:** there is a wide variation though - some people seem not to feel guilt very much, and others feel it a lot

**Shailey:** yes, Simulat

**Makrina:** How often though are we truly faced with moral 'choice'? Having choice can be frightening.

**Oswy:** But we also appear to be born with an ability to apply ourselves to the environment and thus solve moral problems. We have a certain plasticity of moral outlook.

**Shingles:** Ok, I acknowledge that perhaps being truly independent in arriving at ones values is impossible, but surely our free-rational thinking can at least influence our moral development, Reflection

**Simulat:** I agree Makrina - when I go to the store I don't have to make a moral choice not to steal

**Shailey:** the extent to which we reflect on our actions and learn also impacts on our moral framework

**Reflection:** actually, sim, it seems as though the large majority of folks have quite a lot of guilt, although often unexamined or acknowledged, although modern people have their guilts all about different things (because from my perspective there is very little actual reality associated with these thoughts/feelings)

**Reflection:** sure, shingles, for bright and introspective people, I think that is true to an extent

**Renald:** Ref, to the extent this guilt is based on anything specific, what sorts of things are there? I'm familiar with this notion of wide-spread guilt, but I have to say I find it puzzling.

**Oswy:** Ref, wasn't the whole import of your intro the idea that we feel unnecessarily guilty about things? ie our stone age sensibility was no longer appropriate?

**Simulat:** interesting Reflection - I guess I just don't probe people much to see if they are feeling guilty

**Shingles:** May I also say that I fundamentally disagree with your definition of 'Evil', too, Ref

**Marya:** I'm curious to understand what it is that makes people believe that concepts of what is moral or immoral is innate?

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**Renald:** Marya, I thought it was the capacity or tendency, rather than specific concepts.

**Reflection:** well, Ren most people will have a feeling of guilt if they don't accomplish what they had in mind to get done today, I think

**Shingles:** I suggest retrospective validation, Marya

**Oswy:** Marya It is innate in the sense that we have a genetic inheritance.

**Renald:** Ref... really?

**Reflection:** yes, Oswy, that was the point

**Marya:** but surely that capacity or tendency can be influenced by other things?

**Shailey:** yes, Marya, our experiences are one of the most important influencing factors

**Reflection:** sure, shingles, please tell me about your definition of evil

**Shailey:** if we feel we can get away, our sense of guilt reduces over time

**Makrina:** Innate can also be meant in the Kantian sense - as an objective (hesitate to use that word) morality that's innate not in a biological sense

**Jen:** I suspect guilt is a very functional feeling for people living in groups to have. There may not be real consequences if I cut in at the front of the line, but there is a civility (support of good working of the group?) that suffers if I do and then if others follow my example. So guilt may be good for us beyond stone-age type survival challenges like stealing food.

**Simulat:** Marya - I'd say that the ability to interpret situations or actions in moral terms is innate - but that the content of our interpretations is learned

**Oswy:** Makrina, if Kant had known about evolution I am sure he would have agreed with it as the source of morality

**Reflection:** Ren, much of the "stress", that is anxiety that people have in living is their guilt at not being able to give their kids what they think they should have for xmas, and things like this. Much of daily stress is about very minor feelings of should/ought that are unaccomplished I think

**Makrina:** maybe - insofar as the theory is grounded in experience

**Shingles:** ok, how you defined it was ' Evil should be defined as mindfully doing harm to others for one's own narrow personal gain.', but I would point out that that is too short-sighted, some people hold negative and disrespectful claims upon others or the environment they are within. It seems entirely plausible then that harming these people would not be 'Evil' if our motivations are self-interested, however, under your evaluations that would be classed as 'Evil', Reflection

**Renald:** Ref... How different is that from shame? I personally associate guilt with having violated ... oh, I see. Hmm

**Shailey:** guilt is not the same as anxiety, Ref. Guilt can make you anxious and stressful but not the other way round

**Shailey:** Guilt also is not always associated with unaccomplished tasks - it is something that you may have or not done and which didn't match with your values, rules, norms

**Marya:** that is interesting Sim - I'm not an expert on where morality comes from, but intuitively I wouldn't think the ability to interpret things in moral terms wouldn't be innate - I would have thought the ability to interpret situations on its own would be, but that the morality behind it would have to be learned via culture and so on.

**Reflection:** I would say shingles that if a person is generally destructive in society, then to sanction them, is not for my narrow personal gain, but rather is for the social good, and so would fall under my definition

**Simulat:** I see your point Shingles - is it evil to harm evil people in your own self interest? For instance is self defence evil

**Marya:** but I do agree with Jen there - that it could well be part of what we are as social creatures - we do what we do to make life compatible with others

**Reflection:** Shailey, I actually believe that physiologically, guilt is a flavor of anxiety, and when we treat people with clinically significant guilt problems we are treating anxiety (or stress, if one prefers)

**Shingles:** You can go further too Sim. If one believes in free love and promiscuity, is he then Evil if he sleeps with another man's woman? Who has made the error, the man who made the selfish claim on the woman or the man that defied it?

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**Reflection:** agreed that guilt is not just about unaccomplished tasks, Shailey, that is merely a common example of an innocuous stimulus which often has this emotional response

**Oswy:** I think we need to keep in mind that we evolved as group /social creatures and this must have a great bearing on what we feel guilty about.

**Renald:** Ref, that's interesting. I guess I've just never called such things "guilt" on my own behalf.

**Simulat:** Shingles - I'd guess in a situation like that its a matter of a trust being violated

**Shingles:** ok, I must regretfully accept that, Sim ;)

**Marya:** I would think neither would be doing anything 'evil' per se - I suspect the 'guilt' or wrongdoing lies with the woman (so yes, agree with Sim there)

**Reflection:** agreed Oswy about the social imperatives to which our guilt is attached mostly

**Shingles:** yes, that's true, the man cheats on nobody, yet the woman does in that example, Mar

**Oswy:** I don't think we can escape the fact that we were and are social creatures

**Reflection:** sure, Ren, I think that is the normal thing, we do not use the term with ourselves for the myriad ways in which we feel self-punitively bad on a daily basis for generally inconsequential issues

**Renald:** Ref... if we don't use the term that way... why are we using the term that way?

**Shingles:** Do you think that guilt perhaps is blocking or diminishing of our positive energy, Reflection?

**Makrina:** is there justified guilt and unjustified guilt? How does one know the difference?

**Jen:** I feel guilty when I don't accomplish what I want to in a given day.

**Shingles:** very good question, Makrina

**Reflection:** Ren, if you mean using here, that way, it is because I believe it accurately applies. That is, when I castigate myself for not having done something on my list, for example, I feel bad about that, which is a guilty feeling, and this feeling is actually quite powerful from a psychological and physiological perspective

**Oswy:** Ref I thought that it was significant that you contrasted the imperative of the individual with the imperative of the social creature. There is a huge potential to clash here and to give rise to guilt. Perhaps we can see here two evolving imperatives ie the individual and its needs with eh older social and its needs giving rise to guilt.

**Seaplane:** wondering if guilt is associated with a sense of obligation (or more accurately the failure to meet a perceived obligation) whereas other kinds of anxiety may not have that tie

**Reflection:** yes, Shingles, I think it is very much an unseen emotional ether which we move through, and do not see, which robs life of much of its joy

**Shingles:** I think the majority of guilt is unjustified, personally, Makrina

**Renald:** Seaplane, yes, that's how I've understood it.

**Reflection:** yes, Makrina, I think there is accurate and inaccurate guilt, and finding the differences, is the test of wisdom in life experience, I think

**Makrina:** Great - no easy answers!

**Patrick:** Guilt in many ways reminds me of pain--in one way it is good because it is a stimulus to change. In other cases, it is bad because some continue feeling guilty without taking action to change behavior.

**Simulat:** is guilt the same as regret?

**Oswy:** Do I plough my own furrow as it were and ignore the social whole or do I limit my individual self realisation of the needs of the group?

**Reflection:** yes Oswy, I agree, that is the clash, as long as we lived in traditional societies, I think was not so much of a problem, but in a society like ours based on self-definition, it is quite significant

**Renald:** However, I've tended to reserve "guilt" for the feelings associated with obligations to others, rather than when I've only let myself down

**Shingles:** The thing is, that we must remember, that moralizing is an immoral act, Reflection & all

**Reflection:** yes, sea, guilt is just one kind of anxiety, there are many others not associated with guilt at all

**Patrick:** I think regret is a subclass of guilt, sim

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**Oswy:** It is why I think that Guilt is still necessary to remind us of our social obligations.

**Simulat:** I'd have put it the other way around Patrick :-)

**Makrina:** Ren, is there much difference - or is letting oneself down a letting down of an internalized other/they?

**Oswy:** I don't see guilt as a bad thing. I need my guilt to be human

**Reflection:** hahaha Makrina, well the easiest question to ask, is, have you hurt someone, for some selfish motive, and with forethought? If not, then guilt is likely to be inaccurate, in my view

**Renald:** Makrina... in some cases that's doubtless true. Maybe in all cases, and I'm just in denial. But even so, it's a useful distinction.

**Reflection:** yes, Patrick, very good, the thing about accurate guilt is that it gives you something to do differently, while inaccurate guilt just runs you in circles of chronic frustration

**Simulat:** hurt is a pretty vague term there though Ref

**Makrina:** What if I'm about to hurt someone, with forethought, but for a reason that if I'm not selfish, I will suffer?

**Shingles:** guilt is like a muzzle, to keep a pack of dogs in check, yes its valuable on the IF you require social cohesion, but I think it comes with our rationality that we see the majority of social bonding is based not on self-sacrifice but self gain

**Seaplane:** is guilt an appropriate response when one fails to help others who are suffering, when you have not caused that suffering but only failed to relieve it?

**Oswy:** Shingles we all gain by being in the group?

**Shingles:** one would hope so, yes. Where one does not, what becomes of him, Oswy?

**Reflection:** well, sim, that's about as simple as I can make it (there as got to be some ambiguity, or how could I get away with stuff!!!!)

**Oswy:** Seaplane You raise an important point about the limits of guilt. Am I to feel guilty because I did not save a starving person in Asia tonight?

**Simulat:** Shingle - aren't most of our moral actions pretty automatic though? I mean, most people are pretty good, just because that's the way they are - they don't rationally choose to be good

**Renald:** Seaplane, Oswy, that seems a false dilemma

**Reflection:** Makrina, if you practice awareness and self-reflection about accurate guilt you will suffer less. So when I discipline my children, it is for their, and my and societies, good, but I will have some pain.

Remembering that it is right to do, reduces my guilt at causing them pain

**Oswy:** I think the anti social person is in a pretty bad situation shingles?

**Shingles:** but at the same time certain individuals' immoral actions seem just as automatic and without rational thought, Sim

**Seaplane:** why false, Ren?

**Patrick:** Hurting someone else with my words has always been hard for me to define. If I attack someone personally that is something to feel guilty over, but if I say something that I hold to be true and its content offends someone else then I do not believe there is anything about which to feel guilty.

**Shingles:** however, I referred to the person that is part of a group at a cost to themselves, what happens to them then, Oswy?

**Oswy:** Seaplane, it seems to imply that your guilt only extends to your immediate group?

**Reflection:** good question Seaplane, about failing to help others, the problem with this in practice, is that there is no upper limit to that. I can always have done more to help others, and so we have to be aware that we ourselves deserve nurture, and rest from obligation

**Renald:** I think feeling guilty at failing to ameliorate others' suffering IS appropriate... but broadening it beyond one's reach is... what's Ref's term? "Inaccurate" :-)

**Seaplane:** ok, Ren and ref. your points are well taken

**Reflection:** I would agree with you totally Patrick, as regards statements to others.

**Oswy:** Shingles. I think there is something Kantian about this ie we have a sense of duty ie duty to our group regardless of the consequences. It may mean you have to make sacrifices. If you don't then you give up the advantages of group living?

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**Oswy:** It may mean even that you have to make sacrifices.

**Reflection:** yes, Ren (and thank you so much for being quite reasonable and using my word:))))

**Seaplane:** even so, I am wondering if the wealthy nations of the world owe some obligation to relieve the suffering of peoples in the third world

**Seaplane:** and perhaps we should feel a little guilt if we continue to ignore them

**Shingles:** ah Kant. I don't agree with his Categorical Imperative, by the way. However, yes we have a duty to the beauty and incredible infinity of the Universe but we do not have a duty to a group that is either in ignorance or disagreement with that principle, Oswy

**Renald:** Seaplane... that raises the question of collective guilt, which is perhaps interesting.

**Seaplane:** ah, collective guilt...thanks Ren, that was what I was after

**Marya:** Seaplane, perhaps the wealthier nations would feel more guilt and responsibility for third world nations, if third world nations were to adhere to the group mentality or 'way' of those wealthy nations - there seems to be a clear evolutionary aspect there (to my mind)

**Reflection:** Seaplane, the challenge, with telling others (or myself) about my obligations is that it can cause resistance. It is better to define the positive elements for a person, that they will feel so good about being helpful (which is generally true) rather than focusing on the obligation that they are shirking

**Oswy:** Sea there was once a thought experiment that said if you did not help it was equivalent to sending a poisoned cake to help the poor ie you killed them. on the other hand you could argue you cant feel guilty about everybody and everything it would be inhuman . You have an obligation first to your nearest and dearest. I think that is evolved.

**Shingles:** moralizing has always been a paternalistic and very dark act

**Simulat:** Seaplane - the wealthy countries already provide a lot of economic aid - and maybe more should be provided. But how about cases like Darfur? Should we feel guilty about not getting stuck in that tarbaby?

**Renald:** Marya... that's an excellent point. I don't agree with the perspective, but it's very real.

**Makrina:** But that's to get someone to fulfil an obligation - not whether it's right for them to feel obligated.

**Renald** winces at tarbaby.

**Shingles:** ?

**Reflection:** well another aspect of accurate responsibility, is that I cannot have responsibility for things which I do not control. Wealthy nations do not actually control the fate of poor ones (or even their own). And so the issue would be can more be reasonably accomplished and how, while recognizing fully what is already done (and which objectively is not necessary to do)

**Oswy:** Shingles Kant hits the idea that you have a duty regardless of consequences. A sort of must that you just have to fulfil. What the limits are of this duty is very vague I admit.

**Marya:** well Ren, think about it from this angle - why would a wealthy nation want to financially support a system that is not going to be advantageous to them? I mean in the sense of say a non democratic third world country - a democratic wealthy society is going to have a problem with empowering in any way, a system that is not in line with democratic thinking (so from an evolutionary perspective - I'm thinking this could be derived from a group survival inclination)

**Shingles:** he mistakenly omits the possibilities of rational human groupings behaving in a way contradictory to the Divinity of the Universe, Oswy

**Oswy:** Marya It may be that we just have a sense of pity for the individuals involved and we can't help ourselves but to think in that way.

**Makrina:** What someone may feel is someone else's obligation may or may not be a true obligation - how is this determined?

**Marya:** so we feel less guilt about nations or 'peoples' that are not 'like us' and more guilt for those that are

**Reflection:** agreed Marya, and this goes to the control issue. One of the problems with paternalism, is that to take responsibility, you must take control, and to take control is also with enormous (that is, greater) problems

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**Renald:** Marya, all that does is point up the problem of assigning responsibility to groups for the unrelated suffering of individuals outside a group.

**Marya:** I'm not sure what you mean by assigning responsibility to groups there Ren?

**Shingles:** Why is the possibility of taking control angst-ridden, I would find such possibility exciting, why do you not, Reflection?

**Reflection:** well shingles, the US has taken control and responsibility in Iraq, and that does not excite me :))

**Oswy:** Marya, I give money to individuals who are dyeing on my TV screen. I think about their ideology later. That's just what humans do when they are confronted with individual human misery.

**Renald:** If individuals suffer, and others have a responsibility to ameliorate that suffering, the group membership of those suffering should be irrelevant. Groups such as nations have interests, obviously. But the suffering of an individual is... individual.

**Patrick:** Oswy, there is a group we have identified that do not have empathy that we call sociopaths. Is the potential for guilt a part of some people's genetic makeup?

**Shingles:** One anecdotal example is not sufficient to disinterest one from taking control, sorry, Reflection

**Simulat:** yeah - that's the issue with control Ref - one may want to control, but can one ?

**Reflection:** Renald, we do not really live as individuals, although we may perceive it that way. So as members of societies, we cannot be completely unaffected by the ways in which larger societies (for your benefit I will not call them paramecia) relate:))

**Shingles:** with a strong enough will and good application, yes one may, never absolutely, but fleetingly, yes, Sim

**Oswy:** Patrick. Yes I think the capacity for guilt, sympathy and so on are very much related to evolutionary features. We just can't do any other when faced with humans in distress.

**Jen:** even if someone can seize control, she might have a realistic understanding of her ability to direct things well (or not so well at all).

**Shingles:** great question, Patrick

**Reflection:** hahahah, agreed shingles, but I have examples everyday of human suffering that I do not wish to take control of, because this would infantilize the people, and deprive them of their own human growth process

**Simulat:** Shingles - there have been many examples in the last 50 years of very powerful nations trying to control much smaller nations with very little success

**Shingles:** excellent attitude, I must congratulate you at that, Reflection

**Renald:** Ref, I don't think I understand, but I didn't mean to suggest that anyone is unaffected by... anything.

**Reflection:** said differently, to be a benevolent despot has it's drawbacks I think (Plato notwithstanding)

**Shingles:** well, they have certainly had a very palpable influence on those 'smaller' nations, but you can never control anything absolutely, Sim

**Marya:** Oswy and Ren - I understand what you're saying, and I think a lot of people obviously **do** react that way - most of us do contribute to this or that charity - but we do draw a line at what level we involve ourselves in the problems of those that are not in our 'group'. And I do think that most people don't think too deeply about it, and I don't think most people feel responsible to a degree where they would be willing to sacrifice their lifestyles to change that. And, I think that is human nature – not saying I'm right about this ... this is just what I think.

**Shingles:** and the more complex a thing, the harder it is to influence, Sim

**Renald:** Marya, as a descriptive statement, that seems exactly right.

**Reflection:** well Ren, you seemed to be saying that it is essentially individual to individual, and I am essentially saying that you are part of a corporate entity (as is the other person) and that those greater corporate realities will mostly determine what goes on

**Oswy:** Surely the core of this debate is that we have evolved innate characteristics such as guilt sympathy etc. We cannot escape these. Yet we also have a certain plasticity of mind that allows us to formulate morals to apply to our particular environment. There is thus a potential clash between the innate and the chosen.

**Shingles:** and if apathy for the third world is the consensus, why on earth feel guilty for it?

**Simulat:** Shingles - often the powerful nation has been driven away. More often the result of attempted control has been a disaster

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**Shingles:** I can only ascribe that to poor method, or too the other group retaliating more effectively. Yet still ne group prevails and another is defeated, Sim

**Oswy:** Marya, I don't disagree and I think this reflect the dilemma we all face.

**Marya** nods

**Reflection:** This is the end of our appointed hour, and I invite you all to continue as you would like. Thank you all for coming and providing such interesting and insightful observations. It has been helpful to me:))

**Shingles:** I already addressed that: and if apathy for the third world is the consensus, why on earth feel guilty for it? To Oswy & Marya

**Simulat:** Thanks Reflection - very interesting topic

**Renald:** Ref, yes. All I meant is that the suffering of another is no more or less because of the politics of their governing authority -- or any other aspect of that authority's "flavor".

**Marya:** Shingles, maybe because we recognise that they are people, just like us in most ways, despite our 'instinctive' reactions

**Reflection:** yes, I agree with that Oswy about the clash, except for chosen, I would use the word "conditioned" and that probably makes a bit of a difference

